

Liberalism's Everybody's Revolution: Cultural Politics in *The Catcher in the Rye*

MIURA Reiichi

HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Concerning the title of the seminar, "Toward a Common Memory of Our Past," I would like to think about the difference between memory and history. What is the difference between looking for a common memory and looking for, say, correct historical understanding of our past? Obviously, the idea of correct historical understanding involves a certain kind of universalism, or implicit insistence that a correct understanding is correct for everyone, while the appeal to a common memory presupposes reconciliation of diverse or even competing memories of "our" past.

In other words, the appeal to a common memory works on the paradigm of Samuel P. Huntington's well-known thesis of clash of civilizations in the sense that it tries to be a remedy for the notorious clash. This means that the concern of our seminar is urgent and timely since it responds to the problems of identity in our globalized, post-Cold War world.

Yet, at the same time, I wonder if our appeal to memory tends eventually to be complicit with the discourses of neoliberalism, which is another salient feature of today's global condition. I would like to suggest that we associate the contrast of memory and history with the two aspects of political justice Nancy Fraser explained in her influential book *Justice Interruptus*: those of recognition and redistribution. In the book, Fraser starts with criticism of "contemporary postsocialist political life" (13), where we see "the rise of a new political imaginary centered on notions of 'identity,' 'difference,' 'cultural domination,' and 'recognition.'" And when the "new political imaginary" virtually makes the commitment to redistribution of wealth, or correction of the gap between the rich and the poor, look unimportant or even obsolete, Fraser insists that political justice is complete only when the both goals of recognition and redistribution are set in proper agenda. My translation of Fraser is, then, that although commitment to a common memory is of course important when it tries to get rid of misunderstandings between different identities, national or ethnic, the commitment is truly meaningful only when it is situated properly in a wider context that does not concern the discourses of identity directly.

I will talk about J. D. Salinger's 1951 novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. I chose the novel for two reasons. The first is to examine the meaning of trauma theory in literary criticism. Literary or cultural trauma theory would be epitomized by such books as Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's *Testimony* (1992) and Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (1996). Professor Torgovnick has also written an impressive book on the topic, *The War Complex*, which demonstrates a nuanced re-examination of trauma theory. So this paper is written under influence of that book. My question here is whether or not *The Catcher in the Rye* could be read as a post-Auschwitz novel.

The other reason for the choice of the novel is that, starting with the novel, I will try to draw a rough sketch of how political resistance in liberal world is imagined in the latter half of the twentieth century. This is an attempt to see a political genealogy from "Slight Rebellion off Madison," the title of Salinger's short story that is later expanded into the novel, through Deleuze / Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* to Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. I would like to argue that if such a context could be posited plausibly, the novel could show the limits of Deleuze / Guattari's and Hardt and Negri's projects.

My argument on trauma theory demonstrates how our paradigm of literary criticism is different before and after the end of the Cold War, while the attempt of genealogy aims to show what continues over the fall of the Berlin Wall. Politics of recognition that lies at the very bottom of the commitment to trauma theory shows the difference between Cold-War liberalism and neoliberalism; yet, if there is a meaningful link between the popularity of *The Catcher* and Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, Salinger's Cold-War novel is considered to prepare neoliberalism as a completion of Cold-War liberalism.

I. Postmodernity of Trauma Theory

As for trauma theory, my interest is not in its theoretical details, but its strong prevalence. A good example is Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-five*. This 1969 novel had been treated as a demonstration of postmodern aesthetic, commitment to fragmentary style, what Fredric Jameson called "blank parody" and "waning of affect," and to both those who appreciate it and those who criticize it, the central problem was its rejection of textual depth. Yet, after PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, was officially acknowledged as a mental illness in 1980s, it became almost impossible not to read the novel as its literary demonstration: Billy Pilgrim, the novel's protagonist, who believes that he travels through time, being once kidnapped by an alien called Tralfamadore, and thus suffers lack of reality, offers a typical case of PTSD that testifies to his experience of Dresden Bombing in World War II. Here, postmodern play of language suddenly turned into a predicament of commemoration.

I would like to think of this sea change as a theoretical matter rather than something idiosyncratic to one author or one work. For the basically same thing

happened to Paul de Man, when his theoretical works, which had been criticized by some as too aesthetic and too esoteric, or too esoterically aesthetic, were suddenly scandalized by the discovery of his war-time writing, which reads more or less anti-Semitic, and, it is in order to re-conceptualize the complicated relation of de Man's theory to the idea of historicity that Felman and Caruth expanded de Man's deconstruction into a theory of trauma and memory. They successfully transformed de Man's aesthetic theory into a political theory of recognition in the 90s.

I believe that examples of such transformation are abundant. In 2001, in a symposium that I also participated in, Professor NAGASAWA Tadashi persuasively argued that postmodern works of Raymond Federman are to be interpreted as testimony of his trauma at Auschwitz. It would be possible to locate at the turning point of this transformation the works of Tim O'Brien whose recurring subject is unrepresentability of the Vietnam War (his masterpiece *The Things They Carried* was published in 1990). Or, it would also suffice to be sure that when the canonical novels on World War II by American authors are considered to be such works that focus on absurdity, unrepresentability and trauma as Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-five* and Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, they replace more naturalist works like Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions* and James Jones' *From Here to Eternity*. On the other hand, the nineties are also when, what we called postmodern theory which are mainly aesthetic theories on architecture and literature or socio-economic analyses on post-industrial society, gave way to new theories on identities such as postcolonialism, queer theory and multiculturalist intervention on canon formation. It is in this context that the notion of memory has become quite important in our critical thinking.

Symbolically, this transformation happened when Frederic Jameson critically argued in his monumental work of postmodern theory, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), that the fundamental problem of our postmodern condition is globalized economic structure's making it almost impossible to grasp our historical present in an appropriate historical context. If the nineties are to be regarded as the watershed decade when the impossible idea of history is supplemented by that of memory with the replacement of Parnassian aesthetics of postmodernism by authentic theories of identities, Jameson's prophecy is, in a sense, fulfilled.

The Catcher in the Rye could make a complicated relation with this sea change. In 2000, J. D. Salinger's daughter, Margaret, published a sensational autobiography *The Dream Catcher*. Margaret Salinger reports in the book: "As a counter intelligence officer my father was one of the first soldiers to walk into a certain, just liberated, concentration camp" (55). Even before Margaret's report, it was widely known that J. D. suffered a certain kind of nervous breakdown after the war, and this is regarded as corresponding to Holden Caulfield's condition, the novel's entirely being his own report of "this madman stuff" (1) and Holden's

being hospitalized in a certain kind of asylum at the present of the narrative. Yet, the effect of Margaret's report is to put the novel not in the post-war context but in the post-Auschwitz one.

This explains the novel's assuming not only post-war character (Holden's self-defining himself as a "pacifist" [46] and his sarcastic wish that "I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it" [141]), but also trauma-like symptoms in the novel. While Holden's mental condition is quite unstable throughout the narrative, the text's salient feature is his inexplicable death-wish of which the text shows no definite reason: at the beginning of the novel, he says, "I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead" (48); after this, he pretends as if he were dying being shot (104, 150), imagines his own funeral (155); in the end, he feels as if he were disappearing and then cries for help to his dead brother Allie (198). If these are because of Holden's trauma, we may understand why Holden is strangely attracted to those who are dead: Allie and James Castle, Holden's former classmate who, bullied by friends, throws himself through a window to his death. If Holden's mysterious death-wish is a displaced expression of trauma, the entire narrative is written as a displaced eulogy for the war casualties. Here, Allie must mean a pun on "allies."

It is important that Castle is forced to death owing to his classmate's bullying, as the novel of an adolescent kicked out of prep schools emphasizes the rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion. Although the reason Holden is not able to fit in to schools is never clear all in all, he complains of Pencey prep that "everybody sticks together in these dirty little goddam cliques" (131) and, explaining how Pencey is "full of phonies," he says, "Everybody was always locking their door when somebody wanted to come in. And they had this goddam secret fraternity that I was too yellow not to join" (167). Holden's sympathy for Castle is that for someone excluded and ostracized. Furthermore, it is because exclusion is imagined as the central crime in Holden's imagination that he depicts in the title scene his utopia as a community of the innocent from which nobody falls off: he wants to be the catcher in the rye who catches "everybody if they start to go over the cliff" and, as he says, "that's the only thing I'd really like to be" (173). When the novel is thus structured, it seems fairly plausible to see it as a traumatic expression at the center of which lies the unrepresentability of Auschwitz, or the crime against humanity that planned the extermination of minorities.

When Shoshana Felman proposed in *Testimony* the possibility that all the modern novels are to be read as testimonial, testimony means not an objective record of historical incident, but a performative act of testifying that communicates unrepresentable singularity of a historical event. The key concept here is "unrepresentability": it is through this notion that Felman conceptualize the literary form of testimony that is essentially different from non-fictional record of history, and, on the other hand, since testimony primarily concerns unrepresentability, it is possible for me to suggest a reading of the novel as a

literary expression of Auschwitz that is never referred to. And this is also a process that justifies the replacement of history, which never reaches the unrepresentable, with memory constructed around the trauma of the unrepresentable.

If a contemporary psychiatrist tried to diagnose whether or not J. D. Salinger's post-war nervous breakdown is a PTSD of experiencing the liberation of a certain concentration camp, what matters there would be the fact that he did not experience the concentration camp but only watched its end. He is not a survivor, but a bystander, which may be found too weak a cause to accredit a post-trauma stress disorder. Yet we find that the notion of authenticity is another recurring topic in Holden's narrative: concerning theater performance, he argues, referring to the Lunts (126), that too good acting is not authentic when it is too real. When he goes to a bar, Ernie's, he says, "if I were piano player or an actor or something and all those dopes thought I was terrific, I'd hate it" and then "If I were a piano player, I'd play it in the goddam closet" (84): another paradox of authenticity. In the novel, the central question in appreciating art is that of authenticity of expression. This question should be put in the novel because the entire narrative stands on the question of the authenticity of the novel itself, told by an unreliable narrator who is mentally unstable. In the sense that the narrative is obsessed with its own authenticity, the novel can still be interpreted in the perspective of post-Auschwitz testimony.

Yet, my reading thus far is of course completely wrong as far as Auschwitz is to be seen as the defining of experience of Jewish people in the twentieth century. For Holden Caulfield is not Jewish: as the text explicitly shows, Caulfield is an Irish name, his father is ex-catholic and he himself is an atheist (112). The novel certainly expresses the trauma-like psychology of post-World War II, but it is not post-Auschwitz, insofar as post-Auschwitz testimony means, or is meaningful as, a narrative that concerns the construction of Jewish identity. It is a post-war novel, but is not post-Auschwitz. In fact, the whole point of my tentative application of trauma theory to the novel is to show how J. D. Salinger's Cold-War imagination is non-racial and how it is rather difficult for us to grasp the non-racial dimension and its significance when we live in the post-Cold War world where memory is supposed to be more valuable than history.

The utopia Holden imagines is a community that is not racialized, following the Cold-War political climate of the US. The utopia is based on a model of the welfare state, or the state that guarantees its own responsibility of securing all its members, which surely is "assimilative" from today's viewpoint. A good way to understand the paradigm that governs the novel would be to be reminded of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, where the crimes of the Nazi's are identified as that of totalitarianism that oppresses freedom and is associated with that of another totalitarian state, the Soviet Union. As a certain kind of the opposite number to this, in the introduction of an analysis of red purge in the fifties, David Caute points out that the exceptional feature of Joseph McCarthy as

a right-wing leader is his utter indifference to the rhetoric of race. In the early 50s, both the right and the left were thinking without the discourses of race. So when Holden criticizes “cliques” and “secret fraternities,” he criticizes not exclusion but oppression of individualist freedom, as contemporary sociological observations such as David Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* and W. E. Whyte’s *The Organization Man* attest. Namely, as for the reason why Holden is kicked out of so many schools so many times, it is possible to imagine that the originary reason is the anti-Semitism that the protagonist suffers; yet, the novel rejects such an interpretation when the hero is named as Caulfield.

I demonstrated this interpretation because I wonder if it is a bad thing that the novel rejects racial rhetoric. My question is, for one thing, whether or not humanitarian intervention into the post-Auschwitz narrative is disturbed when the experience of Auschwitz is not racialized. And, for another, when progressive theorists of identity, such as Judith Butler, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, among others, underline the fluidity of identities, the importance of transgressive hybridity, the critical shift on the process of identification from the essentialist conception of identity, whether or not we wish this deconstruction of identities would ultimately lead to liquidation of the rhetoric of race and ethnicity itself.

I pose these questions in order to critically think twice of the history of our present condition, comparing our Post-Cold War present with the early fifties. Of course, we must not forget that non-racial discourses in the fifties to some serious or even criminal degree stand on the silence of African-American people in the South, or that they virtually function as the suppression of the fact of segregation. So I do not try to suggest, of course, that, in terms of racism, there was a utopia in the fifties; my point here is that we should think that there are different kinds of structure, or even epistemology, of racism and racial discourses between our present and the fifties.

And if there are such differences, our Post-Cold war present would be understood as constituting a new structure of racial discourses that would be epitomized by such paradigms as Francis Fukuyama’s “end of history” and Samuel P Huntington’s “clash of civilizations.” It seems to me that nobody agrees with Huntington’s thesis around here; yet, even if Huntington is a Euro-American-centered horrible alarmist, even if we are trying to overcome the clashes of identity Huntington makes us afraid of, we fundamentally are still working on Huntington’s paradigm as far as we are working on that of identity. (In fact, when we are tempted to criticize Huntington’s Euro-American centrism, we are arguing in his paradigm: we are demonstrating the clash of civilizations.) It is here that we must appreciate the novel’s non-racial imagination; there must be something we learn from the imagination of the 50s. And if Huntington’s argument epitomizes the fundamental factor of the new form of racism in our globalized present, his argument is standing on Fukuyama’s paradigm: clashes of identity comes to the fore in our critical thinking when we have stopped arguing ideological differences. It is something that can be played on the stage where all

of us believe in liberalism. The strange situation regarding Huntington's thesis is same for Fukuyama's: anyone who wants to be critical does not agree with Fukuyama, but I do not find anyone who commits to an ideology that is not liberal.

II. Genealogy of Biopolitical Revolution

To paraphrase what I tried to show so far, while the Cold-War paradigm works in terms of individualism and conformism, as is shown in the books like *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man*, our post-Cold War paradigm works in terms of exclusion and inclusion, where these two paradigms are basically same, as far as we see them in *The Catcher in the Rye*, except for the latter commits to racial discourse and the former does not. This is the reason why the novel reads for us a misplaced novel of Auschwitz testimony where the protagonist fails to be Jewish. My concern for trauma theory started with its association to the notion of memory, where the importance of collective memory always works in relation to the formation of identities, in contrast to the universalist notion of history.

Although I just underlined, by setting us at a distance from racial discourses, the importance of reading the novel in the historical context of the fifties, my point is not that the novel chooses history over memory. The fact is quite the contrary. The well-known opening of the novel reads: "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy child hood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth" (1). It would be problematic to call the novel modernist or late modernist, what is clear here at least is that it starts with departure from realism or naturalism symbolized by Charles Dickens' kind of "crap." If we associate this opening line with *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Holden is American insofar as he starts with the rejection of the past. In this sense, it does not seem to me accidental that in the opening scene, Holden visits his history teacher "Old Spencer" before leaving Pencey Prep, indicating that his main failure in school is his ignorance of history.

The founder of Ford Motor Company once insisted that "history is bunk." It might be true that rejection of history is American; yet, such scholars of Cold-War culture as Thomas Schaub, Lawrence Schwartz and Serge Guilbaut offer a more specific context. The fifties is when the Cold-War regime was established, where a former ally during World War II, the Soviet Union, turned into the States' mortal enemy. It is when the intellectuals' commitment in the thirties and forties to communism and socialism should be liquidated immediately. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. wrote *The Vital Center*, that is, the central book on the definition of Cold-War liberalism, published in 1949, it was when liberalism stopped meaning left-wing progressivism and started meaning to choose a center that is neither left nor right. In relation to this, the fifties is also when literary

modernism was resurrected, epitomized by William Faulkner's re-discovery in 1946 with *Portable Faulkner*, that culminated in his winning of Nobel Prize in 1949. About this literary climate, Lionel Trilling symbolically argues for American literary history's choice of Henry James over Theodore Dreiser in his 1950 *The Liberal Imagination*. Holden's rejection of Dickens happens in this context.

As Fredric Jameson observes in *A Singular Modernity*, it is in this Cold-War context that the modernist conception of pure aesthetics as the autonomous and ultimately apolitical realm is formulated. And this is where we should notice that the novel, being a modernist, or, to follow Jameson's terminology, late modernist project, aspires to be an aesthetic and apolitical work. This claim might be counter-intuitive, or even, politically incorrect. For Holden certainly is concerned with the representation of the excluded. The novel is of course political when we admit the second-wave feminist's invaluable claim that "personal is political." This, however, means, at the same time, that the novel is political only when we expand our conception of what is political. When Holden sympathizes with James Castle, the sympathy is also associated with his attachment to Jane Gallagher who never moves the kings in playing checker (31) and his concern for what became of the ducks in the Central Park lagoon in winter (60). These episodes are fine and moving, but, all in all, they are moving since they are not politically significant. In other words, it may well be possible to regard Holden as a precursor of new left student activists in the sixties; yet he surely is just a precursor and is not a political activist since he does not say anything politically problematic in the older sense of politics. The novel certainly is about an adolescent's rebellion, but Holden's rebellion, as is James Dean's in the 1955 movie *Rebel without Cause* that demonstrates a rebellion of a similar structure, is cultural and not social, as far as his starts with the rejection of "David Copperfield kind of crap" or reflection of history.

Following Hardt and Negri's terminology, let's call Holden's cultural rebellion biopolitical. Biopolitical here means that it concerns cultural realm of life and recognition and is different from the older conception of politics in the sense that it does not concern the social. Holden does not care for social institutions, any kind of ideology or the kind of things politicians are supposed to do, and this is because he is a Cold-War individualist of the Vital Center whose main purpose is a rebellion against conformism. In other words, the novel demonstrates through the figure of Holden the discovery of the new realm of biopolitics as the cultural politics of everyday life, whose feature is its modernist disjunction from the older politics of social formation and social justice that has been central in naturalist novels in the thirties and forties. In fact, I believe that Holden's narrative is appealing since he clearly demonstrates his discovery of inexplicable values in what are excluded in the framework of realist and naturalist manners of writing. What were considered socially unimportant turns into culturally meaningful in his sensitivity.

As biopolitics is cultural politics of everyday life, so Holden's rebellion is the

individualist rebellion in terms of his way of life that does not dare to poke his nose into the adult world of older politics. In the genealogy I am trying to delineate, Schlesinger's *Vital Center* is followed by Daniel Bell's *The End of Ideology* (1960), where biopolitical suppression of the older, social politics are completed with the declaration that our way of life in essence does not concern any kind of ideology or older politics. In this course of history, Holden's adolescent rebellion gained more significance as an apt and appealing example of cultural politics. When Deleuze and Guattari advocates a new kind of revolution whose essence is to negate the suppressive framework in our psychology, that is, the Oedipal triangle, in order to liberate the multiple forms of our desire, Holden's criticism of America that does not depend on anything logical or theoretic, but on his own felt uneasiness with American culture, reads quite relevant. When, then, Hardt and Negri insist us to "become different than you are" (*Multitude* 336) as the foundation of revolutionary program in the contemporary world, we will find Holden to be the one who tried most to escape from the identity the world imposes on him to the degree that he eventually collapses in nervous breakdown. Along with Norman Mailer's "White Negro" (1957), which contends that to be a hipster is the most fundamental way to criticize the contemporary America, the novel makes the starting point of the Cold-War origin of various theories of cultural revolution in the latter half of the twentieth century.

What Deleuze/Guattari and Hardt and Negri think of are new theories of cultural revolution as re-conception of Marxist theory in the framework of the West after World War II. That is, their fundamental premise is commitment to epistemological revolution as opposed to social revolution: what is to be revolutionalized first in their thinking is not our social condition or our social institutions, but our way of life. In this premise, theirs are conceived primarily as cultural project in relation to, or in contrast to, the communist and social revolution that happened in the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China. In other words, their projects are those of liberal revolution since they start with liberal framework. The problem with a commitment to cultural revolution is that, as I am afraid, it is not clear that it can really work as a critique of neoliberal regime, or the oppositional politics in terms of what Fraser calls redistribution. For one thing, the commitment imagines revolution in and of civil society as an autonomous unity separated from institutions when Michel Foucault suggests that the commitment to civil society as the apolitical realm that should gratify our desire actually prepares for the regime of neoliberalism. Or, we should think of the fact that David Harvey, in his criticism of neoliberalism, observes: "The period in which the neoliberal state has become hegemonic has also been the period in which the concept of civil society--often cast as an entity in opposition to state power--has become central to the formulation of oppositional politics. The Gramscian idea of the state as a unity of political and civil society gives way to the idea of civil society a center of opposition, if not an alternative, to the state" (74). Put most simply, commitment to limited government is the other side of

commitment to the autonomy of civil society: when we believe that civil society is the only place where our liberty and equality are realized, we only naturally desire for limited government, where the smaller the government is, the better.

For another, or more simply, we must not forget that Daniel Bell's contention of the end of ideology is repeated in 1989 in the form of Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History" as the declaration that "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (3). Fukuyama's argument has been criticized so many times in so many points, and even Fukuyama himself seems to feel sorry now for having written the piece. Yet the cultural left's commitment to cultural revolution, it seems to me, still evidences our belief that there is no ideology better than liberalism. As far as we believe so, history has ended since the Berlin wall fell. As far as we commit to cultural revolution, we are not yet able to imagine the way to synthesize the politics of recognition and that of redistribution, as Fraser wished.

Reading *The Catcher in the Rye* historically, we find that our present commitment to cultural revolution is a modernist project that emerged as the effect of Cold-War liberalism that despises politics and makes us believe that the only effective politics is biopolitics. And, though I have no intention to glorify the fifties as a good old days, as some conservatives used to do, the novel makes us aware that the racial discourse we want to overcome exactly is the effect of what Samuel Huntington calls "clash of civilizations," that is, the function of post-Cold War neoliberal regime that did not exist in the fifties.

Conclusion

To conclude, I tried to put the novel in the context of a certain genealogy. In the genealogy, the novel is to be seen as the Cold-War origin of the discourses of me-search and self-realization that grows more and more powerful these days. Today's popularity of the novel testifies the genealogy. What is revealing in the genealogy is the fact that Fukuyama's claim of the end of history is understood as a certain repetition of Daniel Bell's claim of the end of ideology. Bell's claim declares the superiority of biopolitics as cultural politics of everyday life, or the politics of our way of life, over the older form of politics that concerns ideology and the social formation of our world. When Fukuyama's victory speech of liberalism is complemented by Huntington's argument, the end of history means our discovery of identity as a new political concept in the biopolitical world. When Deleuze/Guattari and Hardt and Negri respectively advocate for self-realization that implodes the stereotyped conception of identity as critique of the culture we have, Holden seems to be the fittest figure since he works outside of racial discourses. In other words, by reading the novel, we will find those prophets of cultural revolution are also working on the paradigm of self-realization as far as the novel is seen as Holden's quest for his true identity: what lacks in the novel

also lacks in their theorization. From our contemporary eye, the novel clearly delineates what political resistance eventually means in the liberal world after World War II. Yet, the most important point for me is that, even when Holden clearly epitomizes the meaning and the shape of liberal cultural revolution, we are at the same time able to say that his is only a "slight rebellion" imagined by a rich kid living in the upper West Side of Manhattan. The novel clearly shows what is lacked in it. This is a meaning of historical reading: the meaning of reading the fifties novel now. I wonder why the fifties novel written under the trauma of World War II, which is certainly associated with the Cold-War politics of fear that demonizes the Soviet Union, is still popular now in the twenty-first century. My argument started with my vague assumption that the popularity of the novel may explain the rightward tilt in our cultural, or even general, climate in some twenty years, which has culminated in our incapability to criticize the logic of neoliberal market-fundamentalism. The fact that the idea of cultural revolution is rather powerless in order to amend the economic equality is today's problem of ours, that is, what the novel teaches us today. In commitment to cultural revolution, we are trying to make a rich kid's rebellion everybody's revolution.

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