

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The present writer chooses the novel The Catcher in the Rye because it brings up the issue about depression that happens to most of the teenagers around the world who are still unsure or are still searching for their identities. Problems of disharmonies in family, bad neighbourhood and problem at school are the main problems that the teenagers should go through every day.

The author, Jerome David Salinger, at his teen age also faces the same problems or even worse like most teenagers. He is a person who has a bad relationship with his family. His cold relation with his father has a big effect on his life. His vision in his writing style is also influenced by his experience in joining the World War II at a very young age to see the brutality of a savage war. Two of J.D. Salinger's short stories, I'm Crazy and Slight Rebellion off Madison, which were published in periodicals during the 1940's, were also written in the same style like in The Catcher in the Rye, which was enhanced by the teenage slang of the 1950's.

This novel contains swears, angers and every simple thing happens to teenagers, like mostly that happen to the protagonist, Holden Caulfield, issues such as

inadequacy, alcoholism, and suicide are cluttering his mind and fueling his cynicism. Still he manages to hang onto his ideals. That is, until his sanity comes into question.

Ever since its first publication in 1951, this novel has been judged as a controversial novel. This novel has no moral lessons instead of criticism for American society at that time. Years after its first publication, this novel becomes one of the best literary works in America. It brings great curiosity to the present writer to read and analyze how this novel is concerned as a controversial novel while it becomes the author's masterpiece in his works a few years later.

Through Holden Caulfield, a teenager who witnesses many social trashes and his dissatisfaction and a very sharp criticism towards the social condition in his point of view, the present writer can see many suppressed elements in human's heart, as they are never satisfied in many aspects in their life. 'This novel really provokes us to rebel against ourselves or people around us. Holden's candid outlook on life reflects issues relevant to the youth today, and thus the novel continues to be used as an educational resource in high schools throughout the State'

(<http://www.levity.com/corduroy/salinger1.html>)

The present writer would like to analyze the protagonist's characteristics, Holden Caulfield and search for causes that trigger Holden to be such a controversial character according to the society at that time. How he interacts and his way of thinking are unique. The present writer would also like to find out the author's intention in writing this novel and what he wants to tell through the protagonist in this novel.

## **2. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Based on the background of the study, the present writer states the problems as:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist characteristic?
2. What are the problems faced by the protagonist because of his characteristic?
3. What is the purpose of the author in creating such a controversial character?

## **3. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

In writing the thesis, the present writer would like to:

1. Describe the protagonist characteristics and life
2. Explicate the problem faced by the protagonist
3. Explain the author's purpose of creating such a controversial character

## **4. METHODS OF RESEARCH**

The method of research used by the present writer is library research. First of all, he begins by reading J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye. He also reads some books which are relevant to the topic being discussed. Then he gathers some information from the internet which supports this research. Finally he uses the data he collects for analysis from which he draws a conclusion.

## **5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

The present writer divides the thesis into three chapters. In the first chapter, the present writer presents the Introduction, consisting of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research and Organization of the Thesis. In the second chapter, the present writer presents analysis

of the protagonist character in J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye. Afterwards, the present writer concludes his analysis in the third chapter. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendix, consisting of the Biography of J.D. Salinger and synopsis of The Catcher in the Rye.