

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

In the 1950s there was a dramatic change in the way American grew up and also in the activities that they were involved in. During that time teenagers saw responsibilities shrink and free time increase (“Teenager Popular Culture – United States 1950s”). The word teenager is used as a title of a new and upcoming age group of men and women that are not longer considered as a kid but not yet adult. These teenagers also had found a new purpose of life, and that was to enjoy their life and to be themselves. During the 50s teenagers were able to go out with friends, buy more clothes, and buy more new music because they had less responsibility and more support from their parents (“The Teenage Rebellion”). It seems that the 1950s was a decade that gave teenagers happy time and happy feelings.

J.D Salinger is a Jewish-American writer in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. He becomes famous through his only novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, the novel that I have chosen to analyse in this thesis. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Salinger talks about the struggle of a teenager in facing the situation of the 1950s. He deals with

a teenager who is confused and depressed by the changes, which brings him to a sanatorium. The novel itself was published in 1951 and listed as a best-seller novel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Despite also receiving some very harsh criticism on grounds of promoting immoral views, the book, ironically became the most taught book of the 20th century with its inclusion in the curriculum of high school literature. A best seller for life, the book has sold over 120 million copies all over the world” (“J.D. Salinger”).

As *The Catcher in the Rye* is a novel about the struggle of the protagonist in coping with the situation he faces, I will analyse the portrayal of the protagonist. Protagonist is “the leading character of a drama, novel or other literary work.” (Shaw 305). By analyzing the portrayal of the protagonist, I can understand better the purpose of the author in writing the novel.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problems I am going to discuss are:

1. How is the protagonist portrayed in the story?
2. What is the author’s purpose of creating such a character?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the study are:

1. To show how the protagonist is portrayed in the story.
2. To show the author’s purpose of creating such a character.

### **Method of Research**

I use library research in writing my thesis. First, I read J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* as a primary text. Then, I take some data from the Internet sites

and sources to support my analysis of portrayal of the protagonist in the novel. In the end, I draw some conclusion.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is organized into three chapters, which are preceded by the Table of Contents and the Abstract. Chapter One contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the analysis of the portrayal of the protagonist in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the summary of the novel and the biography of the author.