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Nihilism in *The Catcher in The Rye*
by J.D. Salinger

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation*

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Abstract

It is said that great literature is often deeply philosophical, and great philosophy is often great literature. *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), a controversial novel by J.D. Salinger, ranks among the great works of literature. The study under consideration approaches the novel from a nihilistic perspective by exploring nihilism themes that may frame Holden as a nihilistic hero and the novel as a nihilistic literary work, thereby expanding the meanings readers can derive from this American novel. Nihilism is used as a theoretical framework because it is foremost an attitude of revolt, which is what best describes the protagonist's case against his society. This work also uses a psychological dimension, where light is shed on themes such as isolation, illusion, and depression.

Key words: J.D. Salinger, Nihilism, isolation, illusion, depression