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LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA

War and memory in For Ésme – With love and Squalor by J.D.

Salinger

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Introduction

Throughout the history of mankind its often impulsive and irrational nature has lead into disaster in more than one occasion. Violence acts a fuse for something far more intricate

and dangerous: War, a word that itself has the power to fright and enthrall the masses in the form of collective hysteria, desperation and uncertainty. Wars shape, affect and modify the way citizens perceive its nation and other countries. All of the sudden, embarrassing diplomatic feuds are meant to be forgotten for the sake of a treaty that eventually will force this solid wing to cooperate together in order to pursue a common goal: Defeat the enemy and even gain control over them.

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Little is known about the real horrors of war and this story has clearly two sides: The ones who go and put their lives at stake in the name of the State; those who defend their country with honor, courage and devotion, conviction and pride. These men are the ones who are thrown to the wolves and will end up devoured by fear and loneliness, stung by a storm of bullets, heartbroken and famished. A strikingly enthusiastic and patriotic side is shadowed by doubt; constant reminders of how fragile human life is and how evil can tear apart a marriage, a family, demolish a gigantic wall of racism and sexism, to divide but at the same (and quite ironically) to unify people in hopes of finding healing.

Healing, mercy and peace are treasured in a sea of cruelty and constant restlessness. Times like these imply a series of questions that cannot be answered laconically: Why do wars exist? How can we stop that madness? A sense of hopelessness fill the air and consequently, the lungs of freethinkers and writers whose only aim is to capture the essence of war and illustrate atrocious events as a sort of historical document. Denominated *war literature*, this genre often carries negative connotations; either 'unnecessarily violent' or 'unnecessarily pitiful'. The truth is that war and its horrors have affected and shaped humankind, so it is no surprise to find recollections of such events in classic works as *The Iliad* (Homer) and contemporary novels like *War in Peace* (Leo Tolstoy), in which the moral of the story is to show us how greed and power are a disastrous combination, but also, how wars can be caused by the most insignificant details.

On the other side, I firmly believe most works on war literature were intended to recreate the dark but heroic atmosphere of the time as an emotional exorcism for those who fought during an armed conflict. A print which lies deeper than any war tattoo, wound scar or inlayed bullet: Severe psychological and emotional long-term effects on war combatants fictionalized and transformed into literary artifacts such as autobiographies or

memoirs. From the semi autobiographic *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Erich Maria Remarque), to the extraordinary narrative on *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bells Toll* (Ernest Hemingway) and even the postmodernism of *Gravity's Rainbow* (Thomas Pynchon) every single piece of writing from the previously mentioned has a personal undertone in them. Remarque, Hemingway and Pynchon were conscripted into the army in their respective countries: Germany and the United States.

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Ironically, during the World War II, considered the most devastating war in history, Germany and the United States became enemies. Allies and Fascists marched all across Europe to burn it into flames. An incalculable number of civilians and soldiers perished during the six years the war lasted and innocence was interrupted by an atomic bomb. A drastic change in citizen's lives was carried by this immediate need of defending their country. Mostly young men were called to war and mothers, sisters and wives were left behind. These young men returned home with severe physical and psychological impediments caused by the life in the trenches. Among these soldiers, there was Private Jerome David Salinger.

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Before J.D. Salinger's most popular work, 'The Catcher in the Rye' went through public scrutiny and censorship, before it became one of the most representative pieces of Twentieth Century American literature, the often misunderstood Salinger exploded his own War War II experiences in a series of short stories, such as *A perfect Day for Bananafish* and *For Esmé-With Love and Squalor*. *For Esmé- With Love and Squalor* (originally published by *The New Yorker* in 1950) might be considered one of the most underrated stories in Salinger's collection. The fear and strife of a young private during World War II, whose only entertainment and emotional sustain is to recall a meeting he had with a young girl who he refers to as Esmé. This story represents a commonly unexplored side of Salinger's early pieces of writing. While *Nine Stories* (1953) is permeated by the post-war, *For Ésme...* constitutes a previous attempt of constructing a social critique with a less pessimist tone and more social conscience than *The Catcher in the Rye*.

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Therefore, the main character becomes a spokesperson for all of the war combatants or at least the younger ones. His emotions and perception of reality are a reflection of what Salinger experienced during his time on duty with the U.S. Army: Fear,

loneliness, loss of faith, loss of innocence. The opposition between love and war, innocence and corruption were often used by Salinger as a mean for a *Quest*, a mission in which the character will find its true self. The Quest is not exclusive for adults in their early 40's or existentialists; The *Quest* is an everlasting process with everlasting consequences and leads to enlightenment or self-destruction.

This vastly mentioned concept among Salinger's publications is a lot more common between young characters rather than adults. Adults mostly represent a sense of falseness, cruelty and shame. Shame, a feeling that most U.S. citizens experimented when the World War II ended and stood face to face with the question: *Was it worth it?* Salinger's attempt to recreate the World War II angst and uncertainty in *For Ésme- with Love and Squalor* is an opportunity to reflect on how his least explored works are a precedent for his most popular writings, but most important to emphasize the impact of his own war experience in a socio-historical and socio-cultural level to the previously mentioned short story.

J.D. Salinger constitutes an important part of the post-war literature with *The Catcher in the Rye* (published in 1951), but to believe that it fully represents him as a writer is to have a partial idea of his great contribution to American contemporary literature. The wide range of themes managed by Salinger is a sign that he was able to feel sympathetic for the human nature having as a precedent that we are complex beings: Religion, philosophy, monotony, innocence, maturity, falseness, love and hate.

For Ésme... proves that war should not be underestimated as a cause of madness and desperation. Injuries can be treated with total success and it seems to be easier to overcome the fact of losing a limb than to overcome war psychological traumas, constant nightmares and a wrecked persona. It took six armed conflicts for the U.S. to react to the effects of combat in their soldiers (The U.S. Civil War, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, the Gulf War and Iraq). In a way, wars represent what J.D. Salinger always tried to express through his works: Despise for the world of adults, a world filled with nothing but squalor in which love and truth are a treasure to be found.

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Chapter I

The war that changed the XX century

Ia. Origins, development and consequences of World War II

On September 2nd 1945, the global frightening came to an end. This was the day World War II was finally over after six years of intense military movement across Europe and part of Asia. Entire cities (or at least most of Europe) became ruins, the people's morale was low and economy was on the verge of another crisis similar to the one experienced in the late 20s, commonly referred to as *The Great Depression*. World War II also set a precedent in terms of armed conflicts: The number of casualties of civilians and soldiers is both gigantic and still imprecise. From the Jewish persecution or Holocaust to the Japanese civilian victims of the atomic bombing, war crimes exceeded cruelty and injustice. The last half of the XX century was severely affected by this war and its consequences, not only the economical or diplomatic ones but culture and society in general. Since then, peace became the last frontier and for a moment, nations were unified in order to reach it.

Although the term 'World War' might imply that every single country in the world was involved in the conflict, there were only seven nations actively participating. From Europe: Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain, from America, the United States and from Asia, Japan. The Soviet Union, also played an important role during the World War II and its aftermath, but its participation was overshadowed mostly because he acted as single unit and did not joined any of the existent coalitions. It is stated that the conflict originally started with the German invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939 but according to James Dunnigan in *Dirty Little Secrets of World War II* (1994), the actual roots of the dispute date back from 1935, when this nation renounced to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and rearmed again. Germany was followed by the Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Nevertheless, apparently the main reason to reject disarmament was a form of revenge to the defeat of such nations in the previous World War. The World War II was imminent and represented a new opportunity to regain lost territories in Europe, to subjugate small countries and install authoritarian governments. Nations worldwide expected the worst from Germany. Its intentions were not seen as harmless from the very moment they renounced to the Treaty of Versailles. In 1937, *The War Policy Act* was passed by the United States congress in order to allow the current president to sale arms to foreign nations, as well as to provide financial and moral support to any other country with

similar political inclinations and values. On September 3rd, 1945 Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States along with Great Britain and France (known as the Allies) declared the war to the *Third Reich*, headed by the Austrian-born German politician and active member of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers Party), Adolf Hitler. The fascist dictator Benito Mussolini from Italy and Hirohito, Emperor of Japan completed the Axis (formed with the signs of the *Anti-Comintern Treaty* in November 1936).

From 1936 on everything was aligned: Allies versus Axis. Small or impoverished nations were either controlled or 'bought' by one of the two sides. The destiny of foreign citizens in rival territory was unknown: To be captured and murdered along with other comrades or to be repatriated. Religious beliefs, sexual tendencies and different race were severely punished (as in the Holocaust), and as a consequence, human rights were violated. The use of violence to gain respect and power were fought with a heavier dose of violence. Troops and armament were less scarce than food and although money flowed thanks to the military activity, average citizens had to double its efforts to have a modest live. Patriotic propaganda was printed, aired or televised and bombarded citizens with the purpose of gaining followers. A display of heroism filled the trenches and fear, sickness or death emptied them. Families were destroyed and innocence interrupted when the first atomic powered bomb put an end to the war. Values and morale were replaced by evil and injustice.

Ib. The United States participation in World War II

By the summer of 1940, United States still remained as a neutral nation and did not show any support to Great Britain or France yet. Politicians, diplomats and even philosophers argued about the possibility of avoid direct involvement in the conflict in order to protect the nation. On the other hand, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's determination to become

the United States into an 'arsenal of democracy', a concept completely opposite to the Nazi Party and ideology (*The National Geographic Society, 1975*), almost immediately guaranteed America's participation in World War II. Thus, diplomatic feuds as economic restrictions against Japan and constant threats by the German government, culminated in the infamous surprise attack to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7th, 1941. Mixed feelings and reactions were exteriorized not only by the American government but the citizens. When the Army started recruiting male civilians and thousands of voluntaries headed to mobilization centers, going to war was not an option... It was an obligation and a gesture of patriotism. The whole country was involved in a conflict and "the American dream" seemed to have come to an end.

'The American dream' had actually been replaced by a nightmare. Soldiers were sent to fight a war and winning was the ultimate goal. The country started to become obsessed with the idea of defeating the *Axis* (Germany, Italy and Japan) not just because the contempt manifested towards their atrocious crimes but to defend its honor. This obsession shaped and changed the United States culture, social organization, patterns and even routines. One of the most intriguing and interesting aspects of the participation of the United States in the World War II is how the social structures, roles and customs changed. Mothers, wives, sisters and sons were left behind and soldiers were sent to Europe and Asia, specifically Japan. The male population had been reduced almost drastically (except for children and senior citizens) and, for a moment, it seemed like women were in charge of everything and most important, a nation predominantly patriarchal became matriarchal in order to sustain the core of the American empire and values: Family.

In addition, a few women were sent to war as nurses but the great majority, often labeled as submissive, showed their support to their fathers, husbands and brothers by taking care of their business or industries. Young women abandoned their schools and were hired in a variety of positions, from secretaries to 'riveters'. The sexist wall disappeared and all of the sudden, the women's work was valued. Although the roots of chauvinist behavior in American society still remained, being a woman during World War II was synonymous of hard work and discipline, commonly high appreciated values in the labor market.

‘To the Americans war is a business, not an art’, stated Denis Brogan (1944), a British political scientist, when the United States started to produce a gigantic, almost unbelievable amount of armament, vehicles and aircrafts for its Army. Not even the German or Japanese Army could provide such enormous quantities of material aid to their respective troops. Although the effects of *The Great Depression* were still present by the time the World War II began and it cause armed conflicts to cease because of the impossibility of acquiring war supplies, it was this last event the one that influenced the recovery of the United States from its economical crisis. The rate of unemployed people became lower thanks to the war supplies industries that hired almost everyone, in spite of their gender or race. Not the women’s hard work was appreciated; the African-American community had a chance to climb the social ladder by making an incursion into the labor market. Sadly, the immigrant populations from German, Italian and Japanese descendant were discriminated and often called ‘spies’ or ‘traitors’. The Japanese-American community was specially treated with spite and forced to stay at special designed areas similar to the German concentration camps for the Jewish people.

Ironically, while the war supplies industry was on full speed producing from simple uniforms to the newest aircraft paraphernalia and the minorities occupied positions exclusively reserved for white men, the production of basic supplies for civilians declined and the rural areas of America emptied as farmers and their entire families left their hometowns in order to get a better life. In addition, food were rationed and money did not had as much importance as *ration stamps*, coupons and little tokens handed to the American housewives in order to acquire groceries. Each coupon or token had a determinate value and it could not be traded for money. Socially accepted drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes were scarce and products tagged as ‘banal’, from women’s make-up to toys were difficult to find in large amounts.

The rationing of food and also raw material affected even the most ordinary and simple daily use objects: *Gas stamps* (similar to *food stamps*) were distributed in order to reduce the use of gasoline in the country and invest more of this raw material on military vehicles and aircraft. The use of sugar in any kind of dessert or beverage that was sold was strictly controlled and the use of metal for kitchen utensils and farm tools was replaced by

other materials. The economic and materialistic aspects were a lot easier to adapt to than the profound emotional impact on the American family and its values.

The typical American soldier was a family man. When ordinary family men were conscripted to the American Army, a society typically patriarchal suffered from disintegration. Without the presence of a father figure because of the war and a mother busy earning a wage to sustain her family, children lacked of parental guide and affection. A whole new generation of juvenile delinquents filled the streets and secretly expressed their opposition towards war and what it caused to their families. Some children had the chance to meet their fathers until the war ended mostly because they were unborn or newborn when they were sent to combat.

In addition, values were on detriment and 'being patriotic' a concept by those whose relatives died on the front while they were trying to defend the nation. A constant state of relentlessness paralyzed America and suicide rates reached a peak. By 1945, the only American dream was to bring the troops back home and win the war in order to retrieve peace. Finally, a discouraged German Army officially surrendered on May 8th, 1945 (Victory in Europe Day or VE Day) after Adolf Hitler committed suicide in April that same year. Half of the Axis collapsed but the Japanese Army continued repelling the American Army's action until August 15th, 1945 when Japan surrendered after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, preceded by the *Potsdam Declaration* (an ignored ultimatum called by the Allies). *Little Boy* and *Fat Man* (the names given to the two atomic bombs released) devastated the two Japanese cities in a matter of seconds. Thousands of Japanese citizens died and others got seriously injured by radiation. The world's innocence died and a flash in the sky announced the end of the World War II and the beginning of a new type of passive-aggressive conflict: Cold War.

Ic. The effects of war on the U.S. Militia: A psychological, emotional and sociological point of view

By 1943, the German's morale started its downfall by a series of defeats against the American Army. Such events ennobled the U.S. as a country and its government anticipated an 'imminent victory' over the Axis, therefore a careful planning on how and

when the troops be returned home was lead although the militia had to face up several issues during this planning. First of all, the war ended sooner than expected in Europe with the surrender of the Nazi Army but Japan was still trying to avoid American artillery. Those troops conscripted to European countries were released and sent home by the VE Day. Secondly, the army recruited soldiers until August, 1945, a few years after the war officially ended. Privates had to serve a determined amount of time in spite the war was already over and finally, although the number of casualties in the U.S. Army were high, almost 11 million U.S. Army personnel (in general) had to be returned back home.

The Allies celebrated its triumph over the Axis and welcomed the troops by organizing parades in the most important cities of the United States, but even in small towns the thrill of receiving their heroes was present. People cheered their 'home boys' and being a soldier was considered a high honor. In reality, what civilians did not know was that privates were completely exhausted, not only physically but psychologically and emotionally. After being conscripted to a foreign country or overseas, soldiers returned home to 'live a normal life' again. The wives and children they left behind were there to be taken care of now, instead of finding jobs and put aside their 'regular duties and activities'. The father figure became predominant again but women gained some self-confidence and awareness of their actual capacities on any aspect.

Taking part of society again was an enormous step on a veteran's life. After a certain period of time serving the army, sharing and living with other men in the same situation, the life in the suburbs represented an opportunity to settle and recover from the traumatic experiences involved with war. The truth is that most of the American veteran's that fought during the Second War suffered from some sort of psychological or emotional long-term effects, not to mention the physical ones. Isolation, fear and anxiety were also common among the troops. Life's frailty was put to the test on every battle, assault operation or routine walk. Despite the fact that soldiers frequently became closer to each other, as in a brotherhood, collective survival was secondary. Ordinary topics represented an escape from daily conversations that involved the horrors of war and military strategies.

The emotional balance and mental sanity of war combatants were suddenly determined by utterly simply aspects of their duties as soldiers: How to dig a trench long

and deep enough to protect their physical integrity, the one that in case of being untidily dug will become more like a grave than a shelter. Also, the importance of keeping their feet dry and warm in order to prevent trench foot, an irrelevant matter for civilians, but a merely survival requirement for combatants. The importance of the prevention of trench foot were deliberately ignored by some members of the U.S. army as a trick to be sent back home. Soldiers in poor physical shape or ill were temporary out of service and treated in the U.S. Army medical facilities. When contracting a disease was difficult and the risk of pretending to have one could take a private to military court, a self-inflicted wound was a better choice. The idea of a missed shot hitting one's limb was likely; after all, a battlefield was a soldier's second home.

On the other hand, a foolish display of heroism drove younger privates to refuse any medical assistance to avoid the shame of being sent back to their hometowns before the war was over. In some case, as cited in *Citizen Soldiers (1997)* by an American veteran, 'if you are sick you don't belong to a battlefield, but when you are an immature kid trying to be a hero it is something of a problem particularly when you are trying to prove your courage to no one other than yourself'.

A need for social recognition and praises motivated mostly young American recruits to fight against the Axis. The U.S. government took advantage of this and created special propaganda which target was the American youth. While the participation of pop culture icons on the war as James Stewart, Ronald Reagan (who would become president for two terms in the 80's) or Elvis Presley (due to his initial refusal to go overseas) fueled the interest of young men to join the armed forces but the soldiers fighting one on one with the Axis soldiers did not consider the life on the trenches glamorous at all. Besides from the health issues and a constant fear for death, the lack of proper social interaction turned soldiers into isolated individuals, also sexual frustration contributed in the detriment of the troop's morale and mood swings. The leisure activities were restricted to smoking cigarettes, chanting army songs, 'listening' to foreign radio stations, 'reading' foreign papers or magazines and the occasional *anecdotic conversation*.

The disparity on most soldiers' occupations before war became a sign of how desperate the United States was to recruit men in order to win the war and a guaranteed

topic of conversation during the long walks across forbidden territory. From school teachers to doctors, handy men or writers, linguists and mechanics, their experiences nourished war with humanity and solidarity. All of those memories and experiences were capitulated in the form of diaries and letters to their families and friends, sometimes as a channeled literary catharsis. There is no wonder why entire journals were the inspiration for some authors who served the army and shared their recollections in their novels or short stories. Authors like Ernest Hemingway and his comrade Jerome David Salinger.

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Chapter II

The fictionalized reality of memoirs

Among other things, you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior. You're by no means alone on that score, you'll be excited and stimulated to know. Many, many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now. Happily, some of them kept records of their troubles. You'll learn from them — if you want to. Just as someday, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you. It's a beautiful reciprocal arrangement. And it isn't education. It's history. It's poetry.

Jerome David Salinger

Comentario [J15]: Very pertinent epigraph

IIa. Selfhood: The narrative identity

Unlike the narrative, a story told in first or third person with one or multiple narrators with their own version of a series of events, the memoir is a personal document, one permeated by the intimacy of a recapitulation of personal experiences during a period of time. Although a memoir is partially autobiographical should not be mistaken for an actual biography, in which the aim is to cover all of the aspects of a person's life from birth to present or from birth to death.

In addition, the *narrative identity*, a term coined by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004) constitutes an important role on how memoirs and any other kind of fictionalized reality are structured in a philosophical sense and how this aspect affects the meaning and purpose of the literary document. The *narrative identity* or *selfhood* as Mark Freeman refers to in *Rewriting the Self* (1993) is, in theory, the awareness of your own being and existence as a living creature through the process of a literary transformation into fiction (p.68).

This conversion from facts to fiction is the result of a need for interpretation in our lives, the interpretation of existential matters that we cannot explain in a technical or scientific way and that we constantly defragment in order to find the source of our current status as human beings (p.4). Although the reason to recreate past events into a narration

are self understanding and self-consciousness, according to Freeman it is not a faithful imitation of what life is but a reflection of reality adapted in the literary context (p.7).

Besides from the personal interpretation and motivations to create a work of autobiographical or semi-autobiographical nature, we might consider it also a cultural and historical expression and precedent of our changing times (p.27). These two aspects unify and become an underlying context besides from selfhood and self-awareness in order to complement the work as a whole literary entity. Without these two, the *narrative identity* is merely an anecdote and loses all of its unity and purpose, according to Ricoeur (p.5) in *From Text to Action* (1991).

On the other hand, the manipulation of the narrative identity or selfhood and the historical and cultural aspects are not strictly placed into the narration in an absolute order as Freeman states. In this case, the author is able to connect or give a new order to pieces of information and recollections in the most suitable way according to his or her particular point of view. Legibility and concordance are set by the author on his or her own terms (p.29). This freedom is somehow questioned by Ricoeur, who emphasize the implications of a deliberated manipulation of the story, yet he discusses the overlap between what can be called *historical reality* and *fictional reality*. Fiction cannot be fully conformed only by elements from imagination; it might be based partially on history. As well, the *historical reality* might suffer from a distortion of its factual root (p. 6).

Freeman also points very clearly that although the world we live in as individuals is a perspective of our own reality as well as the self (because they come from our imagination), they are not intended to be imaginary. They exist as a reality and as a manipulation of reality itself. (p.70) As a result of the thorough dissociation made between the real world and fiction, which intention was to provide an enclosed term for both of them, it loses its descriptive character as Freeman and Ricoeur have proven. There are no proportions in which a factual source or fabricated fiction can be used in order to provide a determined meaning to the written work. Hence, Ricoeur describes this phenomenon as a paradox and a characteristic of the narrative in general (productively speaking) (p.6) while Freeman recognizes it as interpretative accounts of someone's life to of unravel his or her whole story as an individual (p.29).

As a result of the extensive work that confers to make a conscious recapitulation of one's current status as a human being in the real world, the author of a memoir is expected to complete a process of self analysis and discovery that is not limited to a simple *revival*. This retrospective's revival is compared by Freeman as the *resurrection of the dead*. A complete metamorphosis of memories and life experiences into a complex, profound expression of selfhood, a re-constructing method of the identity:

‘...a process of breathing new life into language, of imaginatively transforming into something different than anything before’-
Freeman, (1993)

In addition to the re-accommodation of the self to produce a new entity out of the revivalism, the author might contemplate the possibility of impersonate a character far from his or her own truth. In other words, selfhood displaced by what others perceive and expect from ourselves. A new type of selfhood influenced by the power of an alien person whose judgment and ideals are somehow infiltrated into our conscience as Freeman exemplifies with *St. Augustine's Confessions* (p.29, 33) and Jill Ker Conway's *The Road from Coorain* (p.186). This influence creates a state in which the author's self mindlessness of his or her own matters is ‘postponed’ to be re-introduced in later dubitation. The process of self-awareness often extracts the darkest experiences as a part of redemption and as a life lesson, although the possibility of recalling humiliation or distress cannot be avoided (p.36).

Moreover, evoking the most decisive or emotionally traumatic memories in someone's life does not necessarily mean that he or she has already come to terms on the ‘acceptance department’, on the contrary, it triggers the same neurotic feeling as when we first experienced that overwhelming emotion, as in Freud's conception of mourning and melancholia, mentioned by Freeman in Chapter 2 and redefined by Paul Ricoeur:

‘Memory does not only bear on time: it also requires time – a time of mourning’. (p. 74)

The narrative identity and selfhood are not only delimited by realism or the construction of a convincing fiction based on living experiences but the function of memory and its capacity of reviving the past.

Ib. Memory, imagination and the process of ‘fictionalization’

Ricoeur describes a past event, such as a memory as a mental image we keep to ourselves and that can be visual or even auditory, somehow influenced by imagination, which often leads to a suspicion of the actual truthfulness of those facts (p.5). Memoirs as its name explicitly indicates are meant to be constituted by memories and recollections of a certain period of someone’s life. Within the veracity of these statements there is a certain degree of skepticism held by the uncertainty of time. Freeman complements Ricoeur statement by declaring the following:

Consider the countless distortions and falsifications to which recollections are subject. Consider as well that even in the absence of these, one is inevitably remembering selectively, and perhaps conferring meanings on experience that did not possess these meanings at the time of their occurrence. Consider finally that one will no doubt be weaving these meanings into a whole pattern, a narrative, perhaps with a plot, designed to make sense of the fabric of the past. (p.8)

The previous affirmation creates a differentiation for what memory, imagination and the process of fictionalization are as separate ideas but how they intertwine along with the previously mentioned concept of *selfhood* in order to complete the scheme of a memoir.

In the first place memory is an abstract data bank able to recall events on a short or long term. As a consequence, the temporalizing function of the memory (Ricoeur, p. 6) is one of the main obstacles between the reliability on the past memories and its role as a factual source. The longer the event has occurred, the higher is the chance to have deformed the memory and its initial meaning. Secondly, the devaluation of memory represents not only a possibility of distortion or manipulation but a non punctual dichotomy of imagination and reality. (p. 6,7). With ‘non punctual’ I refer to the thin line between memory and imagination respectively described by Ricoeur (p.7) and Freeman (p.47) as *the*

phenomenology of images and memory suffused with hearsay. To support this idea, in *Text to Action*, Paul Ricoeur insists that the reconfiguration of memories into fiction is intended to confer a literary meaning to the piece of work in question, in this case, a memoir:

Narrative fiction, we said, imitates human action, not only in that, before referring to the text it refers to our own preunderstanding of the meaningful structures of action of its temporal dimensions but also that it contributes, beyond the text, to reshaping these structures and dimensions in accordance with the imaginary configuration of the plot. (p.10).

The historical and semi-biographical tone of a memoir might restrict the use of imagination and fantasy to alter memory and recreate an historical significance. In this case, is important to remember and reconsider that although a memoir is based on true events but at the same time is a fictionalized work, “The most obvious distinction to be made between autobiography and fiction is that the first tends to be about things that actually happened, the second not, therefore is more *particularized* than fiction”. (Freeman, p. 114).

With the term *particularized*, Freeman attempts to warn us about the dangers of deliberately modifying historical and cultural traits by making a categorical separation of a biographical document and a fictional work. What are these dangers? Apparently, these are controversy, loss of credibility and the inability to balance the semi-biographical quality of memoirs and their intention as a literary work. (p. 113)

As an example of a *particularized* historical document we can mention A.J. Liebling’s *World War II Writings: The Road Back to Paris /Mollie and Other War Pieces / Uncollected War Journalism / Normandy Revisited (2008)*, a compilation of memoirs from his work as a journalist during the World War II is a work that embodies reality and his own private sentiment during his years as a correspondent for *The New Yorker* (from 1939 to 1943). The purpose of Liebling’s compilation was not intended to be a merely informative document but to show the world how crude and vile World War II was, as well as exteriorize his horror and emotional scars caused by the armed conflict. In this case the historical and cultural aspects of the narration were not only used as a context, but as an essential part of his recapitulations.

Returning to Paul Ricoeur's reflection on distortions and falsifications of the memory process (including historical and cultural traits as well), he stresses effectively the selective quality of this phenomenon. To support this theory Freeman uses Sigmund Freud and his concept of *infantile amnesia* proposed in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1901) to illustrate a self-provoked lack of childhood memories but not only the 'data cluster' corresponding to this period in our lives but the deliberate act of suppressing unfavorable events as a barrier or defense (in psychoanalytical terms) in order to avoid frustration. (p. 37,41,51)

On the other hand, Ricoeur complements Freeman's use of Freud by exploring and comparing melancholia with this voluntary loss of memory in one of Freud's most well known essays, *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917):

"Melancholia confronts us with yet other problems, the answer to which in part eludes us. The fact that it passes off after a certain time has elapsed without leaving traces of any gross changes is a feature that shares with mourning". (Sigmund Freud, p. 74).

The purpose of Freeman and Ricoeur to apply the psychoanalytical concepts of infantile amnesia, melancholia and mourning is to provide an explanation of why human beings discharge negative memories (and emotions) and how they overcome and deal with the traumatic experience itself. This loss of data increases the possibility of using imagination as a complement or substitute for a suppressed reality. As a result of this act of denial, we cannot help to wonder whether if the author wants to prevent us from feeling embarrassed for his or her tumultuous, humiliating experiences or a wish to change it into a new idealistic vision of his or her own persona, as Freeman argues in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

Once more, Mark Freeman exemplifies the 'manipulation' of narrative identity, memory, imagination and fictionalization with the Canadian author Sylvia Fraser and his work entitled, *My Father's House* (1987) in which the aim of punctualizing how she managed to completely forget the sexual abuse she was victim as a child is almost unbelievable, but not as incredible as the fact that when the amnesic state allowed her to

remember again, she was able to connect the missing pieces in her deceitful memory. (p. 150-153)

IIc. The secrecy of symbolism

During chapter number 6, Freeman turned to Frank Kermode's *The Secrecy of Genesis* (1979) for a better understanding of secrecy in the selfhood. Freeman explains how Kermode's premise is based on the implications of our comfort zone has, in which we are able to fluctuate the transparency, the truth of our work as well as its meaning (p.149). Although we can alter our privacy and secrecy (two concepts apparently similar yet different from each other), the reader might be able to untangle the mystery supposed to be conferred to a secret even when the author is not willing to disclose his or her own motives to do so. (p. 150-151)

As illustrated by Freeman in Chapters 5 and 6, Freud's conception of interpretation was limited by his technical point of view on how this interpretative process within hermeneutics was only able to be used as a tool it might be surpassed. The facts obtained by this interpretative process would stand by themselves at some point. Nonetheless, Freeman partially refuses Freud's statement by implying that indeed, interpretation is a methodological process used in order to analyze and extract the hidden messages encrypted in a narrative, yet, the vice of managing a comfort zone in which secrets are still manipulated, restricts the quest for an absolute truth.

What Freeman attempts with the last observation is to wake consciousness about the legibility of secrecy and secrets within the narration that have been limited by the author with the use of literary artifacts. In the same way, in the first chapter of *From Text to Action*, Paul Ricoeur nourishes this idea based on the use of the metaphor and the symbolism, how the 'emplotment' is affected by the construction of an alternate reality based on a re-invented idea, which meaning it's hidden in the intention of the subject.

Furthermore, Ricoeur cites Aristotle by implying that a correct discernment of resemblances constitutes a well constructed metaphor, yet the resemblance is created by the author's imaginary, therefore, the resemblance is subjective and it might not be correctly applied. (p. 9-10). In some cases, the association of an event with the emotional aspect of it

can create a certain sort of symbolism or metaphor with the purpose of suppressing anxiety and distress, as Freeman retakes and illustrates again with Sylvia Fraser incestuous experience: “Furthermore, as a correlate of this act of repression, there was (apparently) also a significant measure of displacement as well, her terrible fears of her father have been transformed into a profound aversion toward the house in which the Fraser family lived.” (p. 153)

The need for suppressing the traumatic event derived into a negative conceptualization of an object, in this case Fraser’s home, is an example of how image and imaginary haunt the author and influence his or her narrative identity and as a result, the secrecy that lies underneath allow us to see a subjective, individualist side of one’s story. Retaking Fraser’s example, Freeman finally considers the rational part that emerges from a troubled mind shadowed by fatalism, as he dismembers the last recollections of Sylvia Fraser as a victim of child abuse and incest, that somehow her eagerness to understand what she actually experience is an of self-acceptance by ‘intellectualizing’ the process of memory and analysis. (p. 159).

Whether is the *intellectualization* of memory and secrecy or the selective aspect of this process, the symbolism and metaphors applied in a narrative such as a memoir, are intended to lead the author to the end of the road of materialization, of a creative work: The ultimate recognition of selfhood and historical awareness of the being.

Chapter III

War and memory: A literary analysis of For Ésme – With love and Squalor by J.D. Salinger

IIIa. J.D. Salinger life and works: Essential anecdotes and bibliography

According to Catherine Crawford in her compilation book *If You Really Want to Hear about It: Writers on J.D. Salinger and His Work* (2006), Salinger has become more than an author, an *affect*. At the same time Crawford uses a colloquial analogy to make reference to the widespread taste and preference for J.D. Salinger not only by other writers but the audience in general:

‘I’m still slightly baffled when I met someone who doesn’t like Salinger. To me, it’s like not liking ice cream. Or gin and tonic. The world he created, though not exactly familiar or even sometimes realistic, is so engaging and passionate that I have no resistance.’ – Crawford (p. 2)

Salinger’s ideals and criteria were somehow embraced by readers whose lives were not far from the fiction he depicted, probably because this sense of *familiarity* or identification was derived from Salinger’s honest and eloquent discourse, as the critic Alfred Kazin mentioned in Crawford’s work (p. 110)

If Salinger based most of his works in real life events that occurred to him and had an impact on his creative process, then it is important to point out those events and writings that were crucial in J.D. Salinger’s life as man and as an author, those in which I

consider this kind of influence is heavier and consistent: *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* from *Nine Stories* (1953).

In 1954, three years after *The Catcher in the Rye* was published, a young aspiring journalist, Shirlie Blaney, who was one of Salinger's students from Windsor High School, in Vermont, got the chance to interview his mentor (p.3). Between the series of questions that Blaney did to the author, there was one that should not be dismissed. Whether if the *The Catcher in the Rye* was merely fictional or it was by any chance autobiographical, to what Salinger responded:

“Sort of, I was much relieved when I finished it. My boyhood was very much the same as that of the boy in the book, and it was a great relief telling people about it” – Salinger, p.4

Both the author and his character Holden Caulfield grew up in the West Side of Manhattan and attended to a private school, although the relation between the character and his creator goes far beyond than that: They showed a great interest in writing in their teenage years (p.3). The aspirational desire of becoming a writer can be seen as a minor theme in *The Catcher...*, nevertheless it might be that sentiment the one provides a solid base for the social criticism displayed in the work.

Although Salinger was already an adult man, a war veteran by the post-war time in the 1950s, Salinger's social circle was mainly formed by his students from Windsor High school. 'Jerry' Salinger (how the youngsters used to call him) was a quiet, low-profile version of Mr. Antolini in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Both Salinger and Mr. Antolini roles as mentors and confidants managed to create a distinction between the passionate, critical moral and intuitive consciousness of Holden Caulfield and his adult counterparts.

The juxtaposition of Salinger's experiences during his teenage years and his vision as a spectator of the American youth as an academic provided to the narration a sense of anecdotic realism to the fictionalization of the plotline, atmospheres and characters in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

In addition to Salinger's anecdotes during his adolescence and his experience as a teacher, we can find another sign that he did not limit his literary creations to these resources. During Blaney's inquiry in 1954, Salinger mentioned his stay at Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. It was during this period when Salinger focused on his writings and by the time he was 21-years-old he managed to get a story published in a small independent magazine called *Story*. (p. 3, 4)

His enrollment in the military academy might represent a prelude for what would constitute one of the most determinant events in the life of J.D. Salinger: His conscription to the U.S. Army in 1942. However, as Salinger himself admitted to Blaney, the army did not meet his expectations because all he wanted to do was to follow his vocation as a writer. Salinger was drafted as other thousands of ordinary male American citizens. (p. 5) This apparent reluctance to serve to the U.S. Army might contradict his daughter's version of Salinger as a man proud of his military career (*Dream Catcher*, 2000).

Nevertheless, the time when J.D. Salinger served the army nourished his creativity and even while he was an active member of the militia, the author did not stop working on his writings. It was during this time when Salinger started to work with *The New Yorker*, which rejected some of his material (surprisingly *The Catcher in the Rye*) but at the same time published other works from his authorship. Alfred Kazin describes him as 'certainly a favorite of *The New Yorker*'. (p. 109)

The inspiration behind a mentally unstable Seymour Glass, a former war combatant during the World War II from *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, might come from what Shirlie Blaney infers:

'At one period all Salinger's heroes either had just gone to a psychiatrist, were going or were about to go.' – (p. 10)

This mental instability is somehow attributed to what Salinger can recall from his post-traumatic stress disorder, of course, as a result from his livings during the war. While in *The Catcher in the Rye*, the *Salingerian* state of mind and tone are prominent and explicit, in *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* the influence is subtle, yet macabre. In this case,

Salinger is 'disguised' as Seymour Glass but his actions and thoughts are taken to a fictionalized extreme. For a moment Seymour Glass represents a mystery to the audience, as well as his stoic behavior. Although the theme of war in *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* is sort of implicit, we can also find evidences that Salinger satirized his failed marriages in the treatment he gave to Seymour and his wife Muriel's relationship. (Havemann, p. 10)

In spite of the fact that a high degree of secrecy is kept by the characters in relation to Seymour's instability after he leave the Army's hospital, still the audience can almost predict the fatal ending. Certainly *A Perfect Day...* is not the only story in which Salinger includes a deeply emotionally and psychologically affected character, scarred by the horrors of war. In *For Éсме – With Love and Squalor* (originally published in 1951) the theme of war is fundamental.

While the anecdotic realism permeates *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, *For Éсме...* manages a dose of both anecdotic and historic realism that confers the story a certain degree of historical accuracy, a reference that is manipulated by Salinger and embodied along with his use of the memory.

IIIb. The Salingerian treatments of war and memory

The literary treatment given to war and memory in *For Éсме – With Love and Squalor* are complementary; we cannot assure the predominance from neither of them in the work, as well as the use of historic facts and fiction. Mark Freeman highlights the assumption that *there are truths beneath the fiction* (p. 11). As I previously discussed in Chapter II, Freeman also emphasize the importance of the *historical reality* and its distinction from what *fiction* is. (p. 114) In the case of *For Éсме...* we can acknowledge the fact that Salinger used fragments of his memories to construct the short story, which its *fictionalized* nature lies in the title itself, on the other hand there is an underlying historic accuracy in the theme of *war*.

As Bryan McAllister-Grande appoints in his article, *J.D. Salinger's Pedagogic Creed* (2001) where he mentions Salinger's particular vision of self-awareness, among other things, the recollections of Salinger during World War II are as rare as limited, although consistent. Biographical documents provided by his daughter Margaret Salinger,

his self-proclaimed 'official' biographer Paul Alexander (*Salinger: A biography*, 1999) and Kevin Slaweski (*Salinger: A life*, 2011), a fanatic of Salinger's work more than a professional inquirer, complement each other with facts of what constituted Salinger's life in the trenches.

Perhaps the most important incidents from Salinger during World War II were his participation in Utah Beach on D-Day (the Invasion of Normandy, France), The Battle of the Bulge, and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps according to Margaret Salinger. (p.58) D-Day or The Normandy Landings represented the most important military campaign from the Allies against the Axis during the World War II. This operation would be the first successful offensive which aim was to debilitate the powerful Third Reich's Army. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings were the second stage of the Allies' plan to defeat a stubborn Japanese Army reluctant to surrender even when they have already lost his power. (*Making Peace*, p. 368, 369) There is no doubt that Salinger experienced war and death at its height. As Freeman states in the first chapter of *Rewriting the Self*:

'We're people, living in history, affecting and being affected by all of the things that happen around us.' – p. 9

This is related to Salinger's ability to acknowledge himself as an active participant in the World War II, but at the same time, this self-consciousness allows to identify his persona as an individual affected by the conflict. He once admitted he checked himself into a hospital in order to treat his post-traumatic stress disorder (an anecdote similar to Seymour Glass in *A Perfect Day...*) and as Staff Sergeant X in *For Ésme*. His voluntary admission into an institution as well as his marriage with a psychiatrist resulted in an interest in psychology and psychiatry. (Havemann, p. 8) These two factors allowed Salinger to place himself in the spectator's side, repeating the *projection* technique similar to the one used in *The Catcher*, as he declared to journalist Lacey Fosburgh in 1962:

'The highest standard of performance a man's own understanding can set for him must ultimately be embodied – however, mystically – in the ordinary, suffering members of the community of his fellows' – Salinger (p. 43)

His disappointment towards the life in the army and how pursuing a military career was rather unsatisfactory than uplifting as his vocation as a writer, became a collective sentiment shared by a high percentage of his comrades. In *G.I.: The American Soldier in the World War II*, Lee B. Kenneth mentions how some of the highest rank members of the Army were in fear because of a possible 'rebellion' from their subordinates, front-line soldiers. Staff Sergeant X in *For Éсме...* displays a lack of interest and irritability as a result of the excruciating long hours on duty and little or no leisure activities.

In addition, *Did War Service Produce International-Mindedness*, an article published in *Harvard Educational Review* by Mahlon Smith, offers another possible cause of the emotional and psychological detriment of the U.S. Army soldiers was their inexperience in military matters and how they acquired knowledge through violence in the battlefield. The psychological and cultural shocks of war were bore by the front-line soldiers more than any other high rank member of the Army. (Ambrose, p. 252) Average citizens like J.D. Salinger that were *dragged* rather than drafted to the army.

In *For Éсме...*, the main character Sergeant X, a married writer is sent overseas to Europe to fight in the World War II. Presumably Sergeant X was a man ignorant of any military doctrine because of his profession or on the contrary, perhaps he had a military education as Salinger in his high school years. Either way, at the cost of his innocent nature or his reluctance to adopt his role as a soldier, his damaged mental and emotional sanity led him to suffer from a nervous breakdown during service.

In a way, Salinger intertwined the intellectualization and fictionalization of the historical background from his memories, yet he kept the vivid realism of war in the gruesome atmospheres and dialogues from his short story ranging from a neutral tone to a sordid stage and finally an optimistic relief. A similar way in which the World War II developed.

Alfred Kazin praised J.D. Salinger for his literary accomplishments not only in *For Éсме ...* but the rest of his bibliography and provided an explanation for Salinger's popularity as an author:

‘A fundamental reason for Salinger’s appeal (like that of Hemingway in the short stories that made him famous) is that he has exciting professional mastery of a peculiarly charged and dramatic medium, the short American story.’ – (p. 111)

The comparison between Ernest Hemingway and J.D. Salinger is, at some point, justified. Not only because both authors included the war as an important theme in some of their works but they shared a profound sense of admiration for each other’s literary style and humbleness. In 2010, Bradley R. McDuffie from the *Edmonton Post*, rescued some excerpts from John Skow’s 1961 article for Time Magazine, ‘Sonny: An introduction’ in which takes an account of Hemingway and Salinger’s meeting in 1944. Hemingway was in Europe during the Invasion of Normandy as a war correspondent.

From what McDuffie could recover from Skow’s article, Hemingway mentions Salinger as ‘Jerry’ from the 4th division of the U.S. Army, whom he met in 1945: A talented writer with no interest whatsoever in his duties as a soldier during the World War II. At the same time, in 1946, Salinger sent a letter to ‘Big Poppa’ (Ernest Hemingway’s alias) shortly after the first one suffered from a nervous breakdown.

Regardless of Salinger and Hemingway’s mutual understanding, the differences between their literary purposes are remarkable. In Jeffrey Meyer’s analysis of one of Hemingway’s most acclaimed novels, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Meyers implies that Hemingway intended to express his political idealism as well as his skepticism about heroism in battle. (*The Spanish Civil War in Literature*, 1990) In *For Ésme*, Salinger did not intend to provide a politic posture to Sergeant X nor a self-existentialist mental debacle derived from a moral dilemma.

Instead, Salinger focused on the loss of innocence and hope not just in the self, but in the humanity using war as an object of criticism and awareness. However, not everything is based on sociological judgments. Another quality in Salinger’s story is the sudden appearance of a dash of hope between chaos. For Sergeant X, a downhearted soldier of the U.S. Army, Ésme and Charles, two British orphans returned him confidence and faith under such tragic circumstances by sending him a simple yet good-intentioned letter. Whether if Salinger deliberately inserted this as Freeman recites, a phenomenon attributed

to a sort of sign with human or godly intention (p. 3), Sergeant X holds to the letter as an opportunity to relief his internal conflicts.

The use of this type of sentimental allegory is recognized by Kazin as Salinger's meticulous narrative style of providing an specific personality to his characters by the way they perform certain tasks or what their interests are. (p. 111, 112, 113) War shaped Sergeant X in *For Éсме...* in the same way war shaped the second part of the 20th Century. War paradoxically affected and benefitted Salinger's status as a writer. War destroyed and rebuilt the contemporary society just as Sergeant X was killed and brought to live again (emotionally speaking) in the battlefield thanks to a girl's altruism.

IIIc. Literary significance of *For Éсме – With love and Squalor*

The literary importance of *For Éсме – With Love and Squalor* relies on the messages that Salinger tried to send to the audience through his vision of war. Definitely he could have had the choice to write his memories based on his military career, yet he tried to construct an accessible literary artifact that might contribute to a better understanding of what World War II and being a U.S. soldier during this period of time meant without using narrative clichés and stereotypical characters. Apart from the moral of the story and history, *For Éсме...* invites the reader to ask him or herself when did innocence was lost and at what point this will irreversibly desensitize our humanitarian consciousness.

Nevertheless, the political and cultural repercussions of the conflict that endured almost until the end of the 20th century were not explored by Salinger in his subsequent bibliography. Salinger's post-*The Catcher in the Rye*- era seems to be as mysterious as Salinger himself in spite of Ernest Havemann's asseveration:

Salinger is unquestionably more read than Nobel Prize winner William Faulkner has ever been and it's probably a stronger literary force than even Ernest Hemingway at the height of his fabulous popularity in the '30s and '40s – (p.6)

The Red Badge of Courage (1895) by Stephen Crane and *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway (1929) might represent two of the most important pieces of war literature in the American history with other subjacent themes similar to Salinger's story. Why is not the case with *For Ésme – With Love and Squalor*?

Catherine Crawford deduces that scarce criticism of Salinger's works in his beginnings as a consequence of a lack of interest and faith in his perdurability as a famous writer prevent Salinger's exposure to formal literary circles. On the other hand, Shirlye Blaney and Ernest Havemann (p. 11) support his idea by implying that Salinger as literary genius was mainly recognized in the 'hipster social scene'. Another factor might have to do with the level of privacy and mystery reached by Salinger which acted as an invitation to 'lurk' into his work and personal life but at the same time repelled the coverage of the press and other specialized literary critics and colleagues. Salinger was so obsessive about not being bothered by anything or anybody that he even confessed to Lacey Fosburgh, one of the last journalists that interviewed him the following:

'There is a marvelous peace in not publishing. It's peaceful. Still. Publishing is a terrible invasion of my privacy. I like to write. I love to write. But I write just for myself and my own pleasure' – p. 43

Is by any chance the premise of *For Ésme* as a work with a social duty a bogus approach? The answer is not clear, not even for literary experts whose opinions and theories are based on Salinger's whim of remaining in the shadows and staying loyal to his own ethics.

Conclusions

Throughout this dissertation we have seen the impact and consequences of the World War II in the 20th century not only as an influence in society and culture but as a major topic in contemporary literature. On the other hand, the use of memory as a literary resource in the creative process of fictionalization provides a distinction between anecdotic realism and historic realism and how these two can be applied on a narrative discourse.

In the case of *For Éсме- With Love and Squalor* by J.D. Salinger we can identify war as fundamental topic, hence Salinger served the US Army during the abovementioned conflict, although the autobiographical nature of the story is transformed into fiction. The fictionalization of Salinger's experience is not limited to depict war merely as an historical event; on the contrary, it illustrates the long-term effects of war in an individual.

The implications of war according to Salinger in this particular story are mainly focused on inner changes rather than external. It is undeniable that the World War II shaped the last half of the XX century because of its economical and sociological implications but for Salinger, the most difficult and important battle to fight was not against Nazis or Fascists. Without question, the author's intention was not to adopt a political stand or display any sort of patriotism. In contrast and at a certain extent, Salinger might seem to have managed to attract the audience's attention to an anxiety disorder that, by the time *For Éсме...* was published it did not have a proper psychological classification and public widespread yet: Posttraumatic stress disorder.

As opposite to *The Catcher in the Rye*, considered as quintessential in Salinger's bibliography, *For Éсме- With Love and Squalor* from *Nine Stories* might be the most empathetic and sensitive story ever written by the author, whether if it was intentional or not. The human quality of the work is displayed not only in the treatment that Salinger gave to war as a conflict that brings affliction, uncertainty and death but also as a tragic event that can unify strangers in order to provide comfort to the defeated.

Comentario [J16]: essay

Comentario [J17]: actually this doesn't happen in chapter 1

In addition to prove that J.D. Salinger changed the face of war and humanitarian sense with *For Ésmé...*, the present **dissertation** allowed us to go into greater depth into his private life, something that according to critics was a really difficult thing to achieve due to the author's reluctance to become a public person in spite of his popularity as one of the best-selling American authors to date. However and paradoxically, these findings as well as the literary significance of the work are somehow limited by the aforementioned drawbacks.

Comentario [J18]: essay

Finally, the contribution of Salinger to the American literature is invaluable in spite of the unknown nature of most of his bibliography. He **chose quality over quantity** and decided to be faithful to his own ideals and narrative style. Salinger was a rebel and a writer: The ultimate critic of **the** social and human behavior. Therefore, he was a man who **exorcised** his demons in the form of fiction and amazed readers with his effective use of the vernacular in a way that other writers would have failed to. He was the man behind an emotionally unstable soldier whose faith and innocence might allowed him to go back home just as his real life comrades. The man who **plead** from the bottom of his heart and conscience that every American soldier would have the chance to return save to home with all of their faculties intact.

Comentario [J19]: I'm not sure about the fact that this is an election

Comentario [J20]: Not needed

Comentario [J21]: spelling

Comentario [J22]: vv tense

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Comentario [J23]: Change to References.
Order alphabetically.
In general, it is good, though there are some authors such as Kermode, McDuffy or Kazin who are not considered here but are mentioned in the text.

Comentario [J24]: Check APA format for same author

Comentario [J25]: Same observation

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