

Tribhuvan University

J. D. Salinger's Existentialist Vision in "For Esme—with Love and Squalor"

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, Tribhuvan University

in Partial fulfillment of the Requirement for

Master's Degree of Arts in English

By

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Recommendation Letter

This research entitled "J. D. Salinger's Existentialist Vision in "For Esme—with Love and Squalor" by Som Nath Khanal has been carried out under my supervision from August 2009 to August 2010 recommend it for viva-voce.

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The undersigned member of the research committee have approved this thesis entitled “J. D. Salinger’s Existentialist Vision in “For Esme—with Love and Squalor” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Som Nath Khanal.

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Abstract

Unlike the majority of society, Sergeant X has a heightened sense of spirituality in J. D. Salinger's "For Esme—with Love and Squalor". He knows that materialistic things and the petty tasks of daily life are trivial. He tries to liberate himself from the banalities of life and give his existence a meaning because he knows that life is finite. For Salinger's misfit hero like him is having a meaningful existence is the most important goal. Like the majority of characters in Salinger's works, the protagonist implicitly asks a "What does our existence do for us?" In his attempts to answer this question and thereby define his existence, he becomes frustrated because he is labeled as freaks or outcasts by the majority of society. He is misunderstood and underappreciated. Still the character makes a difficult struggle to get a meaning of life. By using an analogy of "the sound of one hand clapping," Salinger shows that one form of the individual self is dominant, in most cases the social/materialistic self, and the spiritual component is ignored or overlooked in this story.

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