RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS IN SALINGER

A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS IN THE FICTION OF J. D. SALINGER

By

JOHN ANTHONY BISHOP, B.A.

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AUTHOR: John Anthony Bishop, B.A. (Leeds University)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the full complexity of the religious dimensions in the fiction of J. D. Salinger. Especial attention is given to the author's syncretism and interest in the area where different religious and philosophical frameworks coincide.

The Introduction includes a biographical outline and also correlates the views of critics who have discussed various aspects of Salinger's religious concerns. The following three chapters show the development of his method of incorporating religious ideas into his writing, isolate his major concerns, and analyse the ideas around which the works are structured. A discussion of "Teddy" forms part of the conclusion, since this short story in many ways offers a summation of Salinger's thought.

While focusing on the religious dimension of Salinger's works, this study does not neglect the multiple ironies and ambiguities present in his fiction, maintaining the perspective that they are products of the creative artistic imagination rather than treatises of systematic theology.

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INTRODUCTION

After the publication of one novel, one collection entitled Nine Stories, and some twenty-one other short stories which appeared in various magazines, the steady stream of fiction which had issued from J. D. Salinger's typewriter over twenty-five years finally dried up on July 19, 1965, when "Hapworth 16, 1924" reached the public's eyes in The New Yorker. If the long-awaited second novel is being written, its production remains shrouded in complete mystery. I prefer to think Salinger suffered a fate similar to that which Buddy outlines in "Seymour: An Introduction" when he states, "I say that the true artist-seer, the heavenly fool who can and does produce beauty, is mainly dazzled to death by his own scruples, the blinding shapes and colors of his own sacred human conscience".[1] The result in Salinger's case was not death, but the conclusion that he could best reach his readers by the method suggested at the end of "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters": a blank piece of paper.

Biographical detail concerning the author comes from disparate and dubious sources; the critic's task is confounded by Salinger's having laid a trail of misinformation, the major part of which has since been proved false.

My two chief sources for this introduction are Warren French's book J. D. Salinger[2] and the articles reproduced in Henry Anatole Grunwald's casebook Salinger: A Critical and Personal Portrait;[3] the material which cannot be substantiated by several reliable sources will be avoided.

January 1, 1919 is the date usually given as Salinger's birth date -- the same as he in turn ascribes to Buddy Glass. Both Salinger and his elder sister Doris were born in New York, the city which later strongly influenced his writing. Sol, the author's father, was a rabbi's son who had moved away from his Jewish identity sufficiently to marry Marie Jillich, a girl of Scotch Irish descent, and to become a successful importer of hams. Sol can scarcely have practised orthodox Judaism; religion probably lingered in the background rather than the forefront of Salinger's upbringing. It is the question of Jewish identity rather than the Jewish religion which receives attention in his writing. Even so, there are only two notable examples: Les, father of the precocious Glass children, is descended from a Polish-Jewish carnival clown, while in "Down at the Dinghy" Boo Boo Glass's son Lionel misunderstands the significance of his father's having been called "a big-sloppy-kike".[4] It is safe to assume that Salinger is only passingly interested in ethnic barriers. He was scarcely a child prodigy, although his penchant for

flunking out of educational establishments was less pronounced than Holden Caulfield's. An early interest in drama caused him to be voted "the most popular actor" at Camp Wigwam, Maine, at the age of eleven;[5] a reading of "Hapworth 16, 1924", which describes Seymour's attendance at a similar camp, suggests that many incidents in the fiction have at least a partial basis in autobiographical detail.

Claiming an interest in dramatics and tropical fish, Salinger was enrolled at McBurney School, Manhattan; he dropped out after a year. However, the years which Salinger spent in Manhattan established a love which drew him back many times in later years. It is significant that his most important fiction is directed towards New York life. The Valley Forge Military Academy then took over his education; it was here that he began composing short stories, and entertained aspirations of becoming a Hollywood writer-producer. Sources imply that he would not then have conformed to the stereotype of the loner; he was never a purely social animal, but joined many clubs and edited Crossed Sabres, the academy yearbook. A few undistinguished weeks at New York University then followed, and after a couple of months slaughtering pigs at Bydoszcz in Poland (his father's unsuccessful attempt to apprentice him to the ham trade), he returned to college for half a semester but

"quit like a quitter".[6] Alternately attracted and repelled by professional academics, Salinger returned to New York in 1939 and enrolled for Whit Burnett's short-story writing course at Columbia University. Despite an unpromising start, Salinger finally produced "The Young Folks" which was published by Story; his career as a published author had begun.

A slight cardiac condition prevented Salinger from mainstream participation in the war; 1944 saw him stationed in Tiverton, Devonshire, under remarkably similar circumstances to those of the unfortunate Sergeant X in "For Esme with Love and Squalor". A meeting with Hemingway in France, when Hemingway took out his Luger and shot the head off a chicken, should be noted as an important incident. The shooting clearly affected Salinger. From The Catcher in the Rye onwards, he has always informed the reader of his heroes', and indirectly of his own taste in literature; the school of realism, and Hemingway in particular, comes under strong criticism, while romantic writers and those with visionary power or qualities of meticulous craftsmanship enjoy favour. However, Hemingway's painstaking revisions of his own manuscripts are well known, and Salinger's dislike of him is doubtless a reaction to his personality rather than his art. Critics have not been slow to notice Salinger's romantic leaning, which has furnished

scope for interpretations of his work such as John Lyons offers in "The Romantic Style of Salinger's 'Seymour: An Introduction'",[7] or Carl Strauch in "Salinger: The Romantic Background".[8] Salinger found or made time to write during his period of service; Grunwald informs us that he carried a typewriter around in his jeep, and acquaintances remember him working, crouched under a table, when the area was under attack.[9] Although the influence of war is felt in many of his stories, it is not a subject which he writes about with passion; his principal concern here is the unsettling, psychological effect war exerts on the human mind.

Salinger's return to New York in 1946 ended his military-service; the rumour that he had married a French psychiatrist in the meantime seems quite groundless.[10] He lived on Park Avenue, and in the following year his appetite for Eastern religion came to the surface; it remains unknown when this interest initially developed. Grunwald tells us, "Although this was years before Buddhism was peddled in supermarkets, he eagerly studied Zen, gave reading lists on the subject to his dates".[11] The letters produced in Sumitra Paniker's thesis"The Influence of Eastern Thought on 'Teddy' and the Seymour Glass Stories of J. D. Salinger"[12]confirm that he studied Advaita Vedanta at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York around this

period, but exact dates cannot be supplied. However, I would suggest that the slackening of pace in his creative output in 1948 may indicate that he was devoting more time to study. Although accompanied by a succession of girl-friends, there are no rumours that Salinger was profligate; he clearly valued mental rapport and intellectual communication. He developed a taste for elaborate leg-pulls during this period, and reputedly convinced one girl that he was a goalie for the Montreal Canadiens.[13] This habit extended to his fiction; the critic can sense Salinger laughing behind his work at the confusion he has provoked.

The late 'forties saw a marked change in Salinger's writing. Although "Personal Notes on an Infantryman" published in 1942 contains elemental traces of what Ihab Hassan was later to term "the rare quixotic gesture",[14] the early stories are very clearly the results of a young writer struggling with form, and trying to capture the rhythms of speech in the printed word. They will not be dealt with in this study. The Catcher in the Rye finally attained printed form in 1951; it is characteristic of Salinger's fanatical concern with form and language that the manuscript should have been reworked many times. The novel was not an immediate success, but a flood of reviews caused Salinger's reputation to grow; instead of avidly seeking fame, the

author began to avoid it. He was both lauded as a contemporary Mark Twain, and castigated for his use of "debased" language. Several high-schools banned the work. However, owing to the ameliorating influence of critical hindsight, the passage of time saw initial panegyric and outrage changing to increasingly subtle analyses. The American scene (especially the conflict between the individual and society), human psychology, sociological preoccupations, alienation, the absurd, the loss of love and the quest for tradition were variously suggested by critics as constituting his central area of concern; other critical approaches have focused upon linguistic features, structure and symbolism in attempts to elucidate the novel's meaning. It is an index of the novel's richness that so many approaches may be taken. Other critics suggested that Salinger had become primarily a religious writer, and I will expand upon this idea later, in showing how the novel's substructure of religious ideas givesit direction and meaning.

In 1950, Salinger had been disgusted when the Samuel Goldwyn Studios misrepresented the subtlety of "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut" by turning it into the shallow romance "My Foolish Heart"; he reacted similarly upon the discovery that the editor-to-be of <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u> believed Holden was crazy. He changed publishers, and has never sold the film rights. The demand for personal inter-

views coupled with the apprehension that his work was being widely misunderstood, encouraged Salinger to withdraw from public life. He informed Eloise Perry Hazard: "I feel tremendously relieved that the season for success for The Catcher in the Rye is nearly over. I enjoyed a small part of it, but most of it I found hectic and personally demoralizing".[15] Salinger's friends and relatives were party to the establishment of an elaborate smoke-screen, through which critics have attempted to peer ever since.

"De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" appeared in 1952, and "Teddy" followed a year later; both were collected in Nine Stories -- that part of his earlier writing which Salinger considered worth preserving. The respective value of the artistic and religious visions of life is a question close to the centre of much of his work, and in the former story Jean de Daumier-Smith is brought from his artistic vision to a religious vision by means of a transcendent experience. "Teddy" is Salinger's first work to embody a directly stated religious dimension; this story of a little boy aboard a transatlantic liner shows Salinger developing a favourite theme of a child with insensitive parents, and then offering a comparison of the Western (dualistic) with the Eastern (monistic) mode of thought. If the dates had permitted such speculation, critics would doubtless have suggested that Theodore McArdle was Seymour Glass on his

final reincarnation. In "J. D. Salinger: The Fat Lady and the Chicken Sandwich"[16] James Bryan points to religious elements in some of the other Nine Stories, but they are highly speculative, and cannot be given a sufficiently definitive interpretation to warrant inclusion in this survey.

Jack Skow claims that Salinger offered "Franny" to Claire Douglas as a wedding-present when he married her in 1955.[17] He also claims that Claire pacified her family by the assurance that her prospective husband lived with "his mother, sister, fifteen Buddhist monks, and a yogi who stood on his head".[18] Claire was introduced to mysticism, and her brother Gawain recalls "She was hung on the Jesus Prayer".[19] From this point on Salinger's private life remains a complete enigma; the only certain detail is that he fathered two children. It was also at this time that Salinger began to express his ideas solely through the medium of the Glass family; he constructed an elaborate mythology around the poet-seer figure of Seymour who committed suicide in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" in 1948. "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters", the story of how Seymour was absent from his own wedding, followed in November, 1955; the saga then developed with the publication of "Zooey" in 1957, "Seymour: An Introduction" in 1959, and "Hapworth 16, 1924" in 1965.

The last stories, or novelettes, are complex experiments in form and point of view; by showing his characters communicating by monologue, letter, diary, messages scrawled on mirrors and pieces of paper, and by telephone, Salinger seems to be straining at the limit mere words impose upon his characters, and so upon himself. Meanwhile Buddy, with whom Salinger closely but never wholly identifies, writhes uncomfortably in the role of narrator, and in order to break down the barriers between fiction and reality, assaults the reader with asides, parentheses and direct address. The reader with his "enviable, goddam silence"[20] remains out here, unable to ask Salinger when his next story will appear.

II

The bulk of Salinger criticism appeared in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, and the majority of this was focused on The Catcher in the Rye. The very early stories and "Hapworth 16, 1924" have received scarcely any attention. H. A. Grunwald's anthology Salinger: A Critical and Personal Portrait neatly shows the division of critical camps; totally different viewpoints are taken and vehemently defended, and critics seek a suitable framework in which to view Salinger's work.

In "J. D. Salinger: The Development of the Misfit Hero",[21] Paul Levine isolates Salinger's primary concern as the plight of the individual who is out of step with society; the spiritual non-conformist is forced to compromise his integrity by participating in a pragmatic society. Levine perceives that the problem is more intricate than the simple dichotomy which French draws between "phony and nice worlds"[22] when he states, "Salinger's choice for his hero is essentially a religious problem, that is, of finding moral integrity, love and redemption in an immoral world".[23] Kazin accuses Salinger of bearing excessive love towards his characters, and accuses the Glasses themselves of narcissism;[24] he feels that the only epithet which suitably describes them is "cute". In a sadly misinformed article, Seymour Krim calls Salinger a sentimental purveyor of nostalgia.[25] However, Krim is among the first of a long stream of critics who bring this charge of sentimentality to bear against Salinger's looking towards the innocence of children in the face of the world's corruption. Most of the critics represented in Grunwald's anthology cluster in the centre of what he suggests is an ideological and philosophical spectrum: David Stephenson sits on the extreme left with "A Mirror of Crisis"[26] in seeing Salinger as a sociological writer whose theme is the individual

versus conformity; Josephine Jacobsen represents the far right in claiming that Salinger's key objective "is the pursuit of wisdom, and its core is religious".[27] Other critics have discussed his use of the child; there is general agreement that the overtones of Wordsworth's image of the child "trailing clouds of glory" are unmistakable, and that the child functions as a symbol which may supply the adult intellect with the inspiration for which it vainly seeks within itself.

Several of Salinger's more perceptive critics deserve closer attention. In "Seventy Eight Bananas",[28] William Wiegand argues that Salinger presents the drama of the individual consciousness in its struggle to maintain the correct discrimination and critical perspective. He sees the Salinger hero as striving for invulnerability; having rejected impulsive suicide as a cure in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish", and having illustrated the futility of trying to forget in "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut", Wiegand suggests that Salinger postulated the following as possible "remedies":

> . . . sublimation in art ("The Laughing Man"), the bare-faced denial of pain ("Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes"), the love and understanding of children ("For Esmé" and The Catcher in the Rye), a mystic vision ("De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period"), a mystic faith ("Teddy") and a mystic slogan ("Franny"). It is interesting to note that each of the remedies seems to furnish at least a temporary restoration of balance for the protagonist.29

Wiegand is quite right to show the dimensions of Salinger's search for a means whereby the sensitive intellect may rationalise its position in an apparently absurd world, where characters such as Walt and Allie meet untimely deaths. However, Wiegand implicitly criticises Salinger for not having offered a permanent "remedy", and his conclusions are as unsatisfactory as those of J. T. Livingston, who feels that this apparent rejection of alternatives furnishes grounds for the belief that "Salinger shows that reconciliation with both society and God is possible only through the courageous practice of Christian love".[30] Rather than adhere to one school of religious thought, Salinger turns to many different religions and philosophies in an attempt to answer the problems which trouble him.

Most critics who have seriously faced the problems posed by Salinger's fiction have attempted an analysis of its religious dimension, but this has too frequently been undertaken in a cryptic and perfunctory manner. However, Gwynn and Blotner feel that Salinger is "probably the only American writer of fiction ever to express a devotional attitude toward religious experience by means of a consistently satiric style",[31] and a growing number of critics have felt that Salinger's most serious meaning, and deepest personal interest, lies in the area of religion. In "The Rare Quixotic Gesture", Ihab Hassan discusses the

encounter of the "assertive vulgarian" by the "responsive outsider";[32] he notes that the risks Salinger has taken with his art are presupposed by his religious perspective. The following passage forms the basis of Hassan's argument:

> The gesture, one feels sure, is the bright metaphor of Salinger's sensibility, the centre from which meaning derives, and ultimately the reach of his commitment to past innocence and current guilt. It is at once of pure expression and of expectation, of protest and prayer, of aesthetic form and spiritual content. . . . There is often something prodigal and spontaneous about it, something humorous or whimsical, something that disrupts our habits of gray acquiescence and revives our faith in the willingness of the human spirit. But above all, it gives of itself as only a religious gesture can. . . . When the gesture aspires to pure religious expression -- this is one pole -- language reaches into silence.33

However, when language aspires to silence, a holy dead end is reached as an aesthetic limit is imposed upon language. Hassan develops these ideas further in "Almost the Voice of Silence: The Later Novelettes of J. D. Salinger",[34] where he argues that Salinger is a religious writer whose idea of love -- the paramount concern -- is entirely spiritual, and whose celebrations of love are almost sacramental. He believes Salinger aims to convey an unmediated vision of reality by refracting language into its components in the search for a means to "reconcile the wordless impulse of love to the discursive irony of squalor".[35] Related to this is his idea that the later stories not only have silence as a theme, but as a principle of their form.

Hassan leaves the specific religious dimensions vague, preferring to conclude of Salinger: "His major concern is the movement of love or holiness in everyday life".[36] There is considerable agreement between Hassan and Dan Wakefield in "The Search For Love",[37] who believes that Salinger writes on the grandest theme -- the relationship of God to man -- but feels that religion only provides a path to complete love.

The climate of opinion has slowly changed, and the reviews of recent years have been, for the most part, partisan articles showing how Salinger presents the ideas of one school of thought. Three religions in particular have influenced his writing: Christianity, Buddhism and Vedanta. Kenneth Hamilton and James T. Livingston concentrate on the first of these, but a distortion of the truth inevitably occurs when they suggest, however gently, that Salinger is either consciously or subconsciously propounding Christian ideology. Tom Davis notes that ". . . Salinger's interest in Zen goes back more than ten years and is almost scholarly in its orientation: Zen is, in fact, the dominating force in most of his later fiction".[38] Bernice and Sandford Goldstein have produced two articles to date on Salinger's debt to Zen Buddhism;[39] they believe the central aim is for his characters to attain enlightenment, to which the greatest obstacle is

their over-critical tendency. In her thesis "The Influence of Eastern Thought on 'Teddy' and the Seymour Glass Stories of J. D. Salinger", Sumitra Paniker suggests a conceptual framework for an understanding of Salinger's work based on Eastern philosophy, especially Vedanta, but her methodology causes her to lose sight of the humour and vitality of the author's vision. She argues that Eastern thought is present in language and quotation in the early works, then "it begins to structure the thought content of his works, becomes the basis of characterization and ultimately passes into a linguistic and aesthetic concern that permeates his last works".[40] Both Paniker and Hassan intimate their belief that Salinger is attempting to convey truths for which language alone is an insufficient vehicle.

However, these writings remain unable to demonstrate the full complexity of Salinger's religious vision, the different elements of which this thesis will attempt to correlate. In particular, they cannot show the importance attached to the region where different religions coincide -- an area which constitutes an important meaning in the totality of Salinger's work. The chapters which follow will not aim to devalue the painstaking work of earlier critics -- the richness of art supports and benefits from varied critical approaches -- but to gain an insight into the

nature of Salinger's art, by a close analysis of the dimensions of his religious vision.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

I

Despite his having described himself as "a dash man and not a miler",[1] Salinger expanded "I'm Crazy" and "Slight Rebellion off Madison" into The Catcher in the Rye, his only novel, which reached printed form in 1951. My analysis will proceed in three major areas: firstly, by viewing Holden Caulfield, the novel's sixteen-year-old hero, as a discontented schoolboy figure; secondly, by commenting upon those critics who have interpreted him as embodying the qualities of a Christian saint; and finally, by suggesting that certain elements in the work indicate that Salinger had begun to incorporate ideas from his readings in Eastern religion into his fiction.

The Catcher in the Rye opens with Holden's expulsion from his third Prep school, Pencey, for failing his examinations. His academic inadequacies are attributable not to stupidity, since his intelligence and perceptivity clearly transcend the norm, but to an inability to work in an environment characterised by "phoniness". This quality is his habitual condemnation for anything cliché-ridden, pretentious, or otherwise false. Unfortunately, his itinerant existence merely leads him from the frying-pan

into the fire; one of his final visits is to the Seton Hotel, where "the phonies are coming in the window"[2] (p. 141). The omnipresence of perversion and falseness drives Holden onwards in the search for the wholesome and meaningful, yet he remains virtually alone in his disgust and outrage. We learn in a later work that Salinger's characters are often haunted by the ideal of perfection, or "pursued by an Entity that I'd much prefer to identify, very roughly, as the Old Man of the Mountain",[3] as Buddy Glass puts it.

Holden's isolation is expressed in many ways. His estrangement from his parents is touched upon in the opening paragraph; his residence at boarding school implies their willingness to lavish money rather than affection upon him, and mention of their touchiness suggests a strained, unsatisfactory relationship. Apart from Holden's explanation that his father is a corporation lawyer who travels frequently, the principal reference to him is by Phoebe, who repeatedly states "Daddy's going to kill you" (p. 173). Although we are never told, Holden's father may have committed him to the institution where he is being subjected to psychoanalysis, unless he committed himself in hopes of finding understanding there. Isolation is again emphasised by the tendency of Salinger's characters to soliloquise;

they remain locked within their own worlds, and fail to communicate on all levels. The scene in the Lavender Room provides a microcosm of society in this sense; it is characterized by everything meaningless and insubstantial. Holden's witticisms fall flat on the laconic Bernice, whose conversation consists of comments such as "what?" or "Wudga say?"; she is too preoccupied scanning the room for a glimpse of a film-star. While Spencer is more anxious to rationalise his own position than to help Holden, Antolini, who engaged his affection by picking up James Castle, is not only a probable homosexual, but can only demonstrate his pseudo-intellectualism by supplying quotations of other mens' thoughts. Driven by the basic, human need to establish contact with others, Holden only finds genuine, reciprocal communication with Phoebe: "I could tell by the back of her neck that she was listening. She always listens when you tell her something. And the funny part is she knows, half the time, what the hell you're talking about" (pp. 167-8). The irony of the turned head is amusing, but Holden is at last listened to, rather than talked at. Children such as Phoebe play a symbolic role in many of Salinger's stories; their innocence precludes phoniness, while their response is intuitive and spontaneous.

Much of the richness of Holden's character lies in the complexity of his response. Salinger is fascinated more

by falseness than by the Christian concept of sin, and his writings are organised less around the archetypal conflict between good and evil, than around the manifold ambivalences latent within the human personality. Holden is tormented by the ambivalence of his own response; he is spiritually and physically nauseated by the grossness of society, yet he needs people as a basic, human requirement. Similarly, his adolescent sexuality encourages him to be a "sexy bastard" like Stradlater, yet an intransigent idealism precludes him from compromising the value of the ultimate act of human communication. He cannot reconcile his notion of purity with the inclination of his body; Sally immediately awakens his sexual response: "the funny part is, I felt like marrying her the minute I saw her. I'm crazy. I didn't even *like* her much . . ." (p. 124). However, a demonstration of Sally's prowess in phony conversation and dissimulation produces an abrupt reversal of opinion, "I sort of hated old Sally by the time we got in the cab" (p. 128). But Holden keeps remembering a passage from a book, which described a woman's body as being like a violin; he feels he should obtain some practice in case he ever marries. Holden's contradictory response further weakens his understanding of himself. An interesting paradox in Salinger's fiction, bearing in mind his own reclusiveness, is his continued insistence that no individual can exist in

isolation. The dilemma becomes crucial: the Salinger hero cannot bear society, nor can he exist without it.

The exposé of Holden's psyche unfolds a complex mesh of tensions. Firstly, in rejecting phoniness in others, Holden struggles with the awareness that he can be an arch-phony himself. Paradoxically, it is his heightened sensitivity towards Spencer's need to flunk Holden which prompts him to shoot "the bull for a while" (p. 12). In conversation with Mrs. Morrow he "*really* started chucking the old crap around" (p. 56), and later explains "when I'm with somebody that's corny, I always act corny too" (p. 60). The line between tact and honesty is at best a narrow one to tread; Holden is confused by his own instinctive tendency to compromise: "I'm always saying 'Glad to've met you' to somebody I'm not at all glad I met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though" (p. 89). Carl Strauch notes that Holden's casual phrases "transcend their merely conversational usage and become psychologically portentous",[4] and the previous comment reminds us of the irresistible force of society in demanding conformity.

Holden's identity crisis needs little further elaboration. He claims to be both a pacifist and a coward, yet stands up physically to Stradlater and Maurice, as well as to the decadence which they symbolise spiritually. He

insists that he is crazy, yet ultimately does not doubt the validity of his own response. Holden's schools, Spencer, and Antolini all judge him, but these judgements clash with his own strongly felt, if unformulated opinion of himself. He desperately needs an understanding of himself and of his position in society, yet in all but the closing scenes, we see his problems becoming intensified. His precarious psychological balance is further upset by the failure to meet his own ideals. If encounters with other people involve a continued sacrifice of his own values, and no compensation is returned for his concern for others, the breaking-point will surely come.

As Ihab Hassan notes, the responsive outsider in Salinger's fiction battles for truth, integrity and sanity,[5] but the ultimate choice may be even more acute: between life and death. The perceptive mind swings in precarious balance between unity and collapse when confronted with such pressing psychological problems. Holden's remarks that he would rather be dead are not mere colloquialisms; they are far too frequent and far too earnest. Salinger is anxious that his reader should not confuse a casual comment with a serious one:

> "Do you happen to have any cigarettes, by any chance? -- Say 'no' or I'll drop dead."
> "No, I don't, as a matter of fact. Listen, what the hell was the fight about?"
> "I didn't answer him . . . I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead." (p. 48)

The first reference to death is flippant: the second has the ring of seriousness. Holden manifests a highly morbid streak. Influenced by a magazine article he worries about having cancer, and after nearly falling in the pond, about contracting pneumonia. Anticipating his own burial he hopes somebody has the sense to dump him in the river, where he won't suffer the futility of people putting bunches of flowers on his stomach on Sundays. He also becomes convinced that if he ever dies, somebody will scrawl "fuck you" (p. 204) on his tombstone. The theme of death is subtly integrated in other places: Phoebe has seen a film concerning euthanasia; Holden is haunted by the deaths of Allie and James Castle; and even the museum which Holden likes exhibits mummies. A tension is set up between these overtones of death and the novel's comic surface; the gravity of Holden's plight is continually suggested.

Thousands of readers have identified with Holden in his crusade against the corruption of society, and read The Catcher in the Rye as a satirical comment on modern city life and the educational system. Critics have discerned the archetypal theme of the individual in conflict with society. But Holden is more than an index against which to gauge the decadence of society -- he is presented as ardently pursuing an intensely personal search, urged onward by some mysteriously powerful inner motivation.

II

The Catcher in the Rye contains many references to Jesus and the Bible, while Holden particularly likes Jesus and the lunatic who cut himself with stones. In The Landscape of Nightmare Jonathan Baumbach notes that although Holden is on occasion silly, irritating, thoughtless and irresponsible, his excess of innocence renders him "as nearly as possible, without sin".[6] Under the veneer of schoolboy swearing and ostensible urge toward sexual encounter, Holden displays a sustained idealism and desire for purity. These facts have led several critics to interpret the novel as being predominantly Christian, an idea which merits closer consideration. However, as I have already demonstrated, Salinger was reported to be reading Eastern and not Christian literature during the period of the novel's composition.

It will first be important to understand the nature of Holden's idealism. His ambivalence prevents his moral code from being judged as starchily puritanical, but being a romantic before he is a realist, Holden rejects the corruption he is surrounded with. Jane Gallagher has come to represent his ideal of sexual purity in a world of decayed values -- hence the violent reaction when he worries that Stradlater might have seduced her. Claiming to be a

pacifist, Holden hesitates only slightly before fighting his room-mate. His defeat is inevitable. But Jane's purity is already questionable: symbolically, she never answers the telephone. Carl Strauch suggests that an ambiguity surrounds the relationship with her step-father, while her only defence against sexual attack is enacted in game -- by keeping her kings in the back row.[7] Holden's physical and spiritual isolation increase as he wages a solitary crusade against phoniness and graffiti, which he wishes to erase from walls where children might see them. He becomes acutely depressed when confronted with the pathos of people being untrue to themselves, and so reducing the value of their lives. Sunny the prostitute, who has literally sold her pride, brings out Holden's compassion when she shows concern for her clean dress, "It made me feel sort of sad when I hung it up. I thought of her going into a store and buying it . . . it made me feel sad as hell -- " (pp. 95-6). Holden's misfortune is to maintain a high idealism in a world where solid, moral values have become un-fashionable.

Holden cannot find reassurance in his environment, so he consequently finds sustenance by drawing upon memory. On his final day at Pencey he comments ". . . you felt like you were disappearing every time you crossed a road" (p. 5), while much later, having seen the scruffy Santa Clauses and

insensitive Christmas-tree vendors, this feeling becomes radically intensified:

> "I had this feeling that I'd never get to the other side of the street. I thought I'd just go down, down, down, and nobody'd ever see me again. Boy did it scare me. You can't imagine. I started sweating like a bastard. . . . Every time I'd get to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, 'Allie, don't let me disappear' . . . when I'd reach the other side of the street without disappearing, I'd thank him." (pp. 197-8)

At the sight of society worshipping Mammon, and when he needs spiritual sustenance, Holden draws upon the memory of his dead brother, whose untimely death shocked him into recognition of the inexplicable tragedies of life. That Holden should choose Allie as his spiritual mentor shows the religious quality which Salinger accords the family unit. The dead may be transformed into images of perfection since they live only in the memory, purged of faults, and isolated from society's corruption. In becoming a kind of saint-ideal for Holden, Allie may be compared with Seymour Glass of Salinger's later work. Baumbach interprets Holden's reverence for Allie as part of a wider search for a God principle, or a wise and benevolent authority: "Trapped in an interior hell, Holden seeks redemption, not by formal appeal to God or Jesus, who in the Christmas season have been falsified and commercialized, but by praying to his saint-brother, who in his goodness had God in him".[8] The

feeling of sinking or falling comes when Holden feels utterly weighed down by the corruption and phoniness around him; prayer to Allie helps relieve this.

Many critics believe that Holden may be numbered among the saintly. Gwynn and Blotner call him "a saintly Christian person",[9] but see no need to term him a Christ-figure; Donald Barr states "Holden is not a finished saint, but the Beatitudes apply to him better than Professor Riesman's valuable book does".[10] Kenneth Hamilton argues that Holden's ideology derives from basically Christian prescripts: "although Holden confesses to being 'a sort of atheist', the teaching of Jesus is never far away in this book".[11] Paul Levine's comment is less evidently partisan than Hamilton's: "Salinger's choice for his hero is essentially a religious problem, that is, the problem of finding moral integrity, love, and redemption in an immoral world".[12] There is general agreement that Holden's halo shines out clearly from his ostensible rebelliousness and penchant for lying. Critics such as Baumbach and Levine seem to be on safer ground in interpreting Holden's religious quest as the search for a less specific God principle -- the criteria of truth, purity, love and self-awareness are expounded by many religions, not exclusively Christianity. His odyssey is in part a search for the

strength to survive, yet he does not meet God at the end, he simply attains a certain degree of understanding through a moment of enlightenment.

Although purity and truth are Christian ideals, not all Salinger's symbolism and ideas conform to a Christian frame of reference. Kenneth Hamilton's explanation of the novel becomes unconvincing when he tries to force meaning upon specific scenes. Here he suggests a parallel between Phoebe and the Madonna:

> Holden is actually appealing to God before whose face the angels of the little ones on earth are always present. That is not all. For blue is the traditional colour of the Madonna's cloak, so that in this picture the image of the child who belongs to the Kingdom of Heaven coalesces with the image of the Pure Virgin, the Handmaid of the Lord. Of course Phoebe (i.e. Diana, the chaste goddess) looked "damn nice" -- an oblique way of saying in our modern, non-religious idiom, "blessed".13

This type of exegesis soon leads to deep waters, and Hamilton is led to dismiss Holden's enlightenment at the novel's conclusion as "a passing vision of delight"[14] which must be "infinitely expanded before he becomes a true citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven".[15] But the only possible conclusion to an argument which sees Holden's redemption coming through the purifying power of a vision of perpetual innocence, is that Salinger is guilty of sentimentality. As I will explain later, the author does not deserve this criticism. Hamilton also misses the important point that

Holden's enlightenment or understanding is a highly individual solution to a highly individual crisis. To imply that his problems will continue until he learns to love a specifically Christian God shows a basic misinterpretation of the text.

Many passages in The Catcher in the Rye satirise the hypocrisy and misguided objectives of ostensible Christians, who manipulate church teaching in order to satisfy their own pecuniary interests. A prime example is Ossenburger the cut-price undertaker, whose "Holy Joe" voice is characterised by egoism rather than humility:

> "Then he started telling us how he was never ashamed . . . to get right down on his knees and pray to God. . . . He told us we ought to think of Jesus as our Buddy and all . . . I can just see the big phony bastard shifting into first gear and asking for Jesus to send him a few more stiffs." (pp. 16-17)

J. T. Livingston provides a useful insight when he states that the novel is "especially rich in profane images which are transformed into sacred presences by Holden Caulfield's deeply moral, though neurotic, sensibility".[16] The following quotation shows one such "image":

> "I passed these two guys that were unloading this big Christmas tree off a truck. One guy kept saying to the other guy, 'Hold the sonovabitch *up*! Hold it *up*, for Chrissake! It certainly was a gorgeous way to talk about a Christmas tree. It was sort of funny, though, in an awful way, and I started to sort of laugh . . . the minute I started to laugh I thought I was going to vomit." (p. 196)

Holden is nauseated by seeing the exploitation of the spiritual for materialist purposes, although he does not have a belief in Christianity as such.

Holden's religious inclinations stand in contrast to those of Ackley and other characters in the novel. Ackley, who normally needs to be told anything repeatedly, displays a marked sensitivity on the subject of his religion. He is evidently a Catholic, and reacts strongly when Holden flippantly inquires about the formalities for joining a monastery, "I don't care what you say about *me* or anything, but if you start making cracks about my goddam *religion* . . ." (p. 50). Ackley's unspoken threat suggests that he has been educated to respect the sanctity of his religion above its substance, and assures Holden that faith in Catholicism is a prerequisite for joining a monastery. Later in the novel, Holden recalls an almost thwarted conversation he had with Louis Gorman. They had begun talking about tennis, but Gorman tried to find out if he shared a common religion with Holden:

> "He was enjoying the conversation about tennis and all, but you could tell he would've enjoyed it *more* if I was a Catholic and all. That kind of stuff drives me crazy . . . I'm not saying I blame Catholics. I don't. I'd be just the same way, probably, if I was a Catholic." (pp. 112-13)

Salinger is clearly extending a subtle criticism of unflinching denominationalism here, since the difference of

religious belief remains a potential barrier to communication. In accepting a received religious creed and adhering to its explanation of the Scriptures, an individual is placed at an unfortunate distance from another individual who is still searching for answers.

Holden likes Jesus because of his infinite compassion and tolerance; he dislikes the disciples because of their treachery. His liberal interpretation of the Bible contrasts with that of Arthur Childs, who "read the Bible all the time" (p. 99), and who does not agree that Jesus would have forgiven Judas. Holden relates Child's criticism of him: "Old Childs said the trouble with me was that I didn't go to Church or anything. . . . If you want to know the truth, I can't even stand ministers . . . they all have these Holy Joe voices when they start giving their sermons" (p. 100). During his depression after Sunny's visit, Holden feels like praying yet he cannot always pray when he feels like it, being unable to force his response through prescribed channels. While Ackley and Childs have never learned to discriminate or forge their own methods of thought, Holden's background has exerted a strong influence: "My parents are different religions, and all the children in our family are atheists" (p. 100). As a sacrilegious atheist (the arch-phony Sally's term for him), the key to Holden's problem is a highly individual solution which allows him spontaneity.

Although doctrinal tenets are never contested, twentieth-century Christianity is at least critically presented. Holden enjoys three kindred spirits: Allie, Phoebe and James Castle. The last of these was hounded by bullies at Elkton Hills for refusing to retract a statement he considered true and justified; he took his own life by jumping out of a window. The obvious conclusion is that Castle, another responsive outsider, was driven to suicide; yet his initials are not arbitrarily chosen -- J. C. suggests Jesus Christ. However, if Christ's crucifixion brought salvation for mankind, Castle's self-sacrifice does little more than terminate his immediate sufferings. There are at least three specific connections between him and Holden: Caulfield was immediately preceded by Castle on the register; Castle was wearing his turtleneck sweater when he died; and when Holden contemplates the possibility of Stradlater's having corrupted Jane Gallagher's innocence he states: "Every time I thought about it, I felt like jumping out of the window" (p. 40). But this is misdirected self-sacrifice; the answer is not to abnegate responsibility by rejecting the world, but to learn to love or accept society by passing through it. The parallel between Castle and Christ seems very tentative -- but Salinger might be suggesting, by implication, that to believe in Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient for the modern age.

What is certain, however, is that Castle's death strikes Holden as being a senseless waste of life.

To draw together the strands of this present argument, it would seem that The Catcher in the Rye points to the hypocrisy and shortcomings in twentieth-century Christianity; there is no evidence to suggest it is founded upon specifically Christian ideology. In his desperate search for communication and understanding, it is only natural that Holden's thoughts should turn to God, before whom he has been instructed to bring his problems. However, unable to pray meaningfully and distrustful of the church (i.e. institutionalized Christianity), Holden needs to extend his quest beyond the channels of Western received religion.

III

As I stated in the introduction to this study, Salinger's interest in Eastern religion came to the surface in 1947; most of the work on The Catcher in the Rye took place over the following three years. I believe that the novel's final scenes are based on a substructure of Eastern thought, and that an awareness of this thought is necessary for a complete understanding of the novel.

It is not immediately apparent to the reader of The Catcher in the Rye that its author could ever be a religious, symbolist writer; however, Salinger's interests

are reflected in the conversations he presents in a seemingly casual manner. Carl Luce divulges to Holden: "I simply happen to find Eastern philosophy more satisfactory than Western. . . . They simply happen to regard sex as both a physical and a spiritual experience" (p. 146). However, Luce is little more than an intellectual sham, whose final advice to Holden is that he should consult a psychoanalyst.

Luce's aloof comments seem only to intensify Holden's problems. If Holden's quest is primarily a search for truth and the true self, how can he ever reconcile the manifold, conflicting views of self? Salinger is keenly aware of the individual's dialectical relationship with society; to view society as totally evil and unacceptable is as absurd[17] as risking mental breakdown by forever pondering unanswerable problems, such as that of premature death (Allie and James Castle). The answer lies in love and acceptance, which the individual must strive for with all his strength. But a purely rational response for the sensitive intellect is bound to be riddled with caveats; the ideal solution must be all-inclusive. To compromise over ideals of truth and purity is unacceptable, for any answer, to be acceptable to the true self, must be spontaneous, unforced and intuitive. It is significant that Holden eventually attains his enlightenment on familiar ground; in "Zooey", Salinger again demonstrates his philosophy that the home environment is the

ultimate religious shrine. Holden's impractical romantic desire to enact his personal chapter of frontier idealism by going West and living in a cabin, where visitors would be bound by Caulfield rules, is both egocentric and an evasion of the central problems: "I'd have this rule that nobody could do anything phony when they visited me. If they tried to do anything phony, they couldn't stay" (p. 205). This imaginative solution is quite as unsatisfactory as Wemmick's "castle" in Great Expectations; the violence performed to the unity of the self is too great. Dickens, an author whom Salinger admires,[18] showed in Pip, and in Lizzie in Our Mutual Friend, both the dangers of leaving one's native environment, and the need to pass through society in order to attain wisdom.

To allow natural growth of the human spirit, Holden's love needs a more fulfilling object; his return home to Phoebe, whose innocence and understanding of him comes as a refreshing change, begins this process. However, Phoebe does not alter Holden's views, she only serves as a catalyst to his mental process. Carl Strauch provides an excellent explanation of Phoebe's symbolic role when Holden finds her sitting cross-legged, in Yogi manner, on the bed:

> Phoebe represents the still, contemplative centre of life; at the same time she is listening to dance music, and with the impulsiveness of the child she offers to dance with Holden. In this manner Salinger indicates the viable relationship between the contemplative and the active participation in the dance of life -- a spiritual perception that is as ancient as the Bhagavad-Gita. Although the humanitarian role of saviour that Holden assigns himself stands in the foreground, we must nevertheless not fail to see that Phoebe is the essential source; and if Holden, on the path up out of spiritual dilemma and crisis, must find the verbal and conceptual means of expressing his innermost needs, Phoebe, so easily as she wakes up, expresses an ever more fundamental insight through symbolic gesture. The charm of the scene, when fully comprehended from this point of view, lies in the mingling of the naive and childlike with the spiritually occult. . . .19

Holden's quest has been leading him outwards and away; Phoebe intimates to him that the search should be internal and tranquil, not external and frenzied.

It is to Phoebe that Holden has disclosed his coveted ambition:

> "I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around -- nobody big, I mean -- except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff . . . I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all." (p. 173)

The children who tumble over the edge presumably fall into the adult world of experience, reminiscent of Blake's children in Songs of Experience. Salinger subtly hints that

Phoebe herself is going to fall over -- she likes to sleep in D.B.'s room, and he's out in Hollywood "being a prostitute" (p. 2). The cliff image has drawn diverse criticism. Some have suggested that Holden falls over the metaphorical cliff himself and so fulfills Antolini's ominous prediction, "you're riding for some kind of terrible, terrible fall" (p. 186), while others have felt the fall symbolises initiation into sexuality. Neither explanation is totally satisfactory, since we have no indication that Holden ever does fall. However, the cliff is an image frequently used by exponents of Eastern religion; the falling over the cliff is used to symbolise the complete detachment, or letting go, which the disciple needs before he may attain enlightenment. Dr. Suzuki, whom Salinger had read at least before writing Franny and Zooey, expresses the postion of the disciple in this way: "He comes to the edge of a precipice unfathomably deep, the rugged rock covered with moss is extremely slippery, giving him no sure foothold; he can neither advance nor retreat, death is looking at him in the face".[20] Tom Davis is one of several critics to have suggested that Salinger presents Holden and Seymour as possible bodhisattva figures; he quotes from the Vajradhvaja Sutra:

> A Bodhisattva resolves: I take upon myself the burden of all suffering . . . I have made the vow to save all beings. All beings I must set free. The whole world of living beings I must rescue from the terrors of birth . . . all kinds of moral offence, of all states of woe . . . of the jungle of false views . . . I must rescue all these beings from the stream of Samsara . . . *I must pull them back from the great precipice*.21

However, when Holden sees Phoebe riding round and round on the carousel, he realises the pointlessness of being the catcher in the rye; the desire to merely preserve innocence would show sentimentality on his part. The answer lies in the double significance of the cliff image: to fall over the cliff is to enter the experienced world of society with its power to corrupt, but that is also the way enlightenment lies. Salinger is clearly showing that to desire the existence of a deaf-mute is insufficient; the only complete solution is to be obtained by passing through society.

Critics have generally agreed that the carousel functions as a symbol, but diverse interpretations have been offered. In The Landscape of Nightmare Baumbach suggests: "In watching Phoebe go round and round on the carousel, in effect going nowhere, he sees her in the timeless continuum of art, on the verge of changing, yet unchanging, forever safe, forever loving, forever innocent".[22] Hamilton believes "The carousel's circular movement represents eternity, living time that cannot die".[23] However, those explanations are too

abstract; the image of the Fat Lady at the end of Fanny and Zooey suggests that Salinger gives his symbols a concrete significance. Carl Strauch feels that "Salinger has found his rationale in Buddhistic thought"[24] in the novel's concluding chapter, but no critic has yet suggested another possibility: that the carousel is a symbolic representation of the Buddhist Wheel of Life upon which all people are bound. Holden significantly says of Phoebe, "You couldn't get her off the goddam thing" (p. 210). The Wheel is described by Christmas Humphries when he explains the Buddhist teaching of causation:

> This vast conception is presented in the symbol of an ever-turning Wheel, the Wheel of Life (Samsara), which has twelve spokes, the twelve Nidanas or component factors in its ceaseless turning. . . . To stop the turning of the Wheel, we must therefore remove its cause, desire or cleaving to illusion.25

Holden sees Phoebe along with the other children riding on the carousel, and attains his enlightenment in the realisation that "The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them" (p. 211). If the paths to experience and the hope of enlightenment lie in the same direction, the gold ring may symbolise the materialism of society to which the child is attracted. The Catcher in the Rye shows Holden's quest to work out his own salvation; the final

scene depicts his realisation that children too must be left to work out theirs. Ultimately it is only by becoming free of the Wheel, or the "cleaving to illusion", that the individual may ever attain enlightenment.

Tom Davis' suggestion that Holden may be viewed as a bodhisattva figure helps to clarify several aspects of his character, for example, his seemingly infinite compassion. Humphries explains "The essential nature of all Bodhisattvas is a great, loving heart . . . and all sentient beings constitute the object of his love".[26] Indeed, Holden's sympathy extends to the ducks in Central Park, while he presses ten dollars upon the nuns and then wishes he had given more. Har Dayal states that "A bodhisattva is emphatically and primarily one who criticises and condemns . . . spiritual egoism",[27] and we may recall Holden's disgust at Ossenburger the hypocritical undertaker. However, the novel furnishes no precise, internal evidence that Holden is fashioned as a bodhisattva figure, and the additional, tenuous evidence which supports this idea will not be discussed here.

I will draw this analysis to a close by discussing the moment of understanding, or flash of intuition, which Holden attains at the end of the novel. The vision of Phoebe going round and round brings him to explain: "I was damn near bawling, I was so damn happy" (p. 213). The happiness is the external expression of his understanding, for which

Salinger may have found his rationale in the Zen Buddhist experience of *satori*, which Dr. Suzuki defines as "an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contra-distinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it".[28] It is a moment of insight which alters an individual's entire perspective, rather than the *nirvana* of the Mahayana school which is a more sustained condition. I am not suggesting that Salinger is presenting a bona-fide example of *satori* in Holden -- this condition is only reached after many years of struggling, usually with the *koan* exercise. The fact remains that Holden is presented as having some form of genuine experience, which involves his making a mental leap to some degree of understanding. Yet the supreme irony of *The Catcher in the Rye* must not be forgotten: Holden relates his tale from within what could be, although we are never specifically told, a mental institution. His admission that he "got sick and all" (p. 213) indicates that he may have suffered a mental breakdown after his enlightenment. On the other hand, like Seymour, he might conceivably have remained in a condition of sustained happiness which society diagnosed as sickness. Strauch sees Holden in the role of a Zen Master in the closing chapters:

> When the psychoanalyst (in the role of disciple) asks Holden (the master) whether he intends to apply himself at school, and Holden replies that he doesn't know because you don't know "what you're going to do until you do it", the surface impression is that of a typically unsatisfactory answer from a teen-ager. . . . Finally, Holden proposes a riddle . . . such Zen ridding is easily translatable into existentialist understanding.29

However, it seems highly questionable to me that Salinger is presenting Holden's final condition in such a positive way -- Strauch glosses over the many ambiguities.

Zen aims to move from discrimination to non-discrimination. If Holden had attained the genuine release of satori, his problem of distancing himself from his surroundings by continually criticising and questioning meaning would have been resolved. This problem caused Phoebe to exclaim: "You don't like a million things. You *don't*" (p. 169). Yet Holden, who is narrating the novel, continually makes devastating critical remarks; the reader cannot tell whether he is seeing Holden's present, or a reconstruction of his earlier state of mind. Even when Holden remarks, "About all I know is, I sort of *miss* everybody I told about. Even old Stradlater and Ackley, for instance. I think I even miss that goddam Maurice" (p. 214), it is ambiguous as to whether he has attained a new perspective on society, or if his old problem of loneliness is once more raising its head.

IV

Many generations to come will most probably read The Catcher in the Rye and identify with the problems of Holden Caulfield; they may well appreciate his critique of aspects of the educational system, and acknowledge his rejection of the corruption which surrounds him. However, the novel also contains some of Salinger's responses to religious thought -- a comprehension of these is vital for a full understanding of the work.

The task of interpreting the novel's religious dimensions is complicated by the fact that no single, specific religious viewpoint is maintained by the author. The critics who suggest that his writing follows a predominantly Christian direction disregard the indication that Salinger possibly views such received religious creeds as a potential barrier to communication. However, the numerous references to the Bible at least suggest that Salinger was interested in Christianity. His rationale in the concluding scenes lies in Buddhistic thought; this suggests that he was already engaged in bringing religious ideas together, and so anticipates the highly syncretic thought to be found in his later stories.

There are several signs that Salinger was not satisfied with the solution which Holden found: the fact

that his hero undergoes psychoanalysis arouses a string of ambiguities, and his enlightenment may have afforded little more than temporary relief. However, from this point in his career, Salinger's writing becomes much more explicitly involved with religious ideas, and the problems of Holden Caulfield may also be discerned in Franny, Zooey and Seymour Glass.

CHAPTER TWO

FRANNY AND ZOOEY

I

> Fill the mind with Vedantic thoughts until you fall asleep, or until this body of yours drops off.
>
> Swami Yatiswarananda

Forever fascinated by the plight of the sensitive intellect in a materialist society, Salinger concentrated, after 1955, on developing his ideas through the saga of the Glass family, whose name implies both clear thinking and brittleness. Published by The New Yorker in 1955 and 1957 respectively, "Franny" and "Zooey" belong together and reveal a significant interrelationship. The former, an ostensible love story, in fact depicts the increasing isolation of Franny; the latter, "a compound or multiple love story, pure and complicated",[1] shows at least a temporary resolution to her spiritual and religious crisis. Her sibling bond with Zooey, who leads her to this enlightenment, is placed under severe strain.

Salinger first developed religious ideas through his fiction openly in "Teddy", which set the tone for all his subsequent work. Brahmadrari Buddha Chaitanya of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centrein London wrote in a letter

dated July 18, 1969:

> He [Salinger] presented the Swami with a copy of Franny and Zooey when it was first published, and I saw the inscription by the author, but the exact wording escapes me now. Something about Salinger's being able to circulate the ideas of Vedanta only through the medium of such stories as these, and expressing appreciation for his contacts with the Swami.2

The abovementioned Swami Nikhilananda explained that Salinger was a close friend of his, and attended his lectures on Hindu philosophy.[3] Yet Franny and Zooey provides substantially more than a compendium of Vedantic thought; the work also serves as a vehicle for ideas on Christianity and Zen Buddhism as well as Indian philosophy, while developing several themes such as love and alienation which were present in The Catcher in the Rye. In her thesis "The Influence of Eastern Thought on 'Teddy' and the Seymour Glass Stories of J. D. Salinger", Sumitra Paniker provides a much-needed study at the expense of presenting Salinger as a systematic, Eastern theologian who veils religious ideas under a skin of fiction. One of the author's major objectives in Franny and Zooey is a synthesis of religious thought -- in a society which clings tenaciously to a philosophy of utilitarianism, the individual needs to draw upon the entire corpus of religious philosophy in order to derive a solution which is meaningful to him. In assuming that Salinger is a great artist, and maintaining

that his religious thought is highly syncretic, I hope to demonstrate that his concept of religion lies in the norm of everyday, human experience -- the quest is successful when you return where you began.

One of the central themes of the Glass stories is the influence of the teaching and character of Seymour. It was his and Buddy's idea to steer Franny and Zooey on a quest for "no knowledge"; to let them experience pure consciousness before they learned how to parse a sentence -- consequently, they were introduced to the saints, bodhisattvas, jivamuktas, Lao-Tsu and Sri Ramakrishna before graduating to Shakespeare or Whitman. Seymour once divulged his belief to Buddy (the narrator and ostensible author of the stories), in a crosstown bus, that ". . . all legitimate religious study *must* lead to unlearning the differences, the illusory differences, between boys and girls, animals and stones, day and night, heat and cold" (p. 67). Buddy quotes Dr. Suzuki's saying that to be in a state of "pure consciousness -- satori -- is to be with God before he said, 'Let there be light'" (p. 65). Critics have shown some hostility towards Salinger's references to Zen: George Steiner charges him with "shoddy use of Zen",[4] while Finkelstein feels the question hinges upon whether he is concerned with Zen as a coherent ideology, or a twentieth century religious cult.[5] These approaches fail

because of their narrow focus; Salinger's religious vision extends beyond Zen alone -- he brings this vision to bear against the dominant problems of communication, alienation, and lack of self-awareness.

Zen Buddhism and Vedanta[6] would both agree that the phenomenal world is merely an illusion; true learning aspires to the realization of the underlying reality. Vedanta is fundamentally monistic in teaching that there is one reality and nothing else. The name for the essential, immutable reality beneath the constantly altering flux of appearance is Brahman; the reality within the individual is termed Atman. However, Vedanta teaches that the creature is Atman, that Atman is Brahman, and Brahman is Atman; all dichotomies between the self and object are spurious, and this central truth is expressed in the phrase Tat Tvam Asi, or That Thou Art. The experience which brings the disciple to an awareness of the Atman as his own nature is called samadhi (this is best compared to the satori and Nirvana of Buddhist schools), when all the barriers between the self and the phenomenal world are dissolved. It is a central Vedantic ideal to realize this truth. According to the law of karma, even the slightest clinging to personality causes the individual to be reborn; the goal is to become a mukta, or realized man, through meditation, and so attain peace and perfection in coming into touch

with the Divine Reality, which is at once the true self. Significant to this study is the agreement between Zen and Vedanta that self-surrender to the Divine, or the passing into self-realization and enlightenment, can only follow great perseverance and doggedness. Seymour, whom Buddy claims is a mukta, will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, while the influence of his teaching remains a basic concern of Franny and Zooey.

"Franny" relates an incident in the life of Frances, the youngest member of the Glass family, during a weekend visit to the college of her boy-friend, Lane Coutell. The story's central tension arises from the couple's need to love each other and their contrived protestations of affection, and their underlying preoccupations: Lane with his Flaubert paper, and Franny with her Jesus Prayer. Lane's paper, which he clearly believes to be the only incisive Flaubert study of recent years, intimates that his progress towards becoming one of the "section men" whom Franny hates, is well under way. Salinger's criticism of the educational system is damning; academics write second-rate papers on first-rate works of art solely to bolster their own self-esteem. The parallel between Seymour's concept of education and professional academics is drawn. Lane's mitigating quality is that he is totally normal, in the sense that he is simply a reasonably intelligent

undergraduate student. His concern for Franny is genuine enough as far as his own terms permit, but Salinger subtly depicts him as being antithetical at this point to Franny's religious quest: "Quite probably, he resented and feared any signs of detachment in a girl he was seriously dating" (p. 16). Although the word is used apparently casually here, detachment is a key factor in religious development, as Zooey later tells her: ". . . if you don't realise that the only thing that counts in the religious life is detachment, I don't see how you'll ever move an inch. Detachment, buddy, and only detachment. Desirelessness. 'Cessation from all hankerings'" (p. 196). By an intense awareness of her own shortcomings in reaching detachment, Franny intensifies rather than alleviates her problems.

The question of detachment is part of the problem of the ego -- one of the concepts around which the story is structured Franny comments:

> "I'm just sick of ego, ego, ego. My own and everybody else's. I'm sick of everybody that wants to *get* somewhere, do something distinguished and all, be somebody interesting. It's disgusting . . . I'm sick of not having the courage to be an absolute nobody." (p. 29)

She is sickened by the Professor Tuppers of this world, who ruffle up their hair before delivering a lecture. Yet like Holden Caulfield, Franny is obsessed by her own critical tendency -- this is a point stressed by Bernice and Sandford Goldstein in "Zen in Salinger".[7] She remains

bound by her own cleverness in logic and discrimination, and distanced from people by her innate need to analyse. In Eastern terminology, she is intensifying the dichotomy between self and object which she desperately wishes to remove. She and Lane never communicate satisfactorily, since both remain preoccupied with their own immediate concerns. However, the problems of the ego must be understood in a broader sense than mere selfishness. Dr. Suzuki notes that the awakening of sexual love is the time when the ego really comes to recognise the "other"; love induces the ego to want to lose itself in the object it loves:

> When the ego-shell is broken and the "other" is taken into its own body, we can say that the ego has denied itself or that the ego has taken the first steps towards the infinite. Religiously, here ensues an intense struggle between the finite and the infinite, between the intellect and a higher power, or, more plainly, between the flesh and the spirit. . . . If you want to get at the unadulterated truth of egolessness, you must once and for all let go your hold and fall over the precipice, when you will rise again newly awakened and in full possession of the four virtues of eternity, bliss, freedom and purity, which belong to the real ego.8

The sexual bond between Lane and Franny intensifies her problems, and in this sense promotes the outcome. We later learn that Zooey's problem with the ego took the form of narcissism; he has learned to use a mirror in such a way as to avoid admiring his handsome features. However,

for the time being, Franny's affair seems to be functioning in a manner contrary to that which Suzuki explains.

The couple retire to Sicklers, where once again we see Salinger's technique of juxtaposing the religious and serious with the mundane to brilliant effect. Hassan has noted that Salinger's concern is the movement of love or holiness in everyday life, and that the Glasses "make religion a part of their daily actions, showing that the sacred and the profane are always interfused".[9] Franny begins to divulge the contents of The Way of a Pilgrim, the pea-green book about which she has previously been so coy, while the thoughts of her audience are elsewhere: "'Hold still', Lane said to a pair of frog's legs" (p. 33). Both soliloquise rather than communicate. Franny's concept of detachment has led her to admire the Russian peasant who has renounced worldly matters, and who assumes a nomadic, ascetic existence in his search for somebody to teach him how to pray incessantly. His goal is to attain the egoless condition of Christ-consciousness. He meets a starets who informs him of the Philokalia, which advocates a highly developed method of prayer; he then continues his itinerant life converting other people to this "incredible method".

The Jesus Prayer is simplicity itself: "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me"; the initiate is not required to have faith, for after a while the prayer becomes "self-

active"; the duality between the words and the disciple is dissolved, or as Franny explains, ". . . the words get synchronised with the person's heartbeats, and then you're actually praying without ceasing" (p. 36). She emphasises that this process culminates in something really happening, which alters that person's life; as in all Salinger's writing, the focus is upon personal experience rather than belief. However, Franny's education renders her aware that Christ-consciousness may be attained by many channels: in the Nembutsu sects of Buddhism the phrase Namu Amida Butsu is constantly repeated to produce the same effect; in The Cloud of Unknowing simply the word God is used. Franny also mentions the Hindu method, where repetition of the word "Om" permits ultimate reality to be experienced in one's own soul. In "Towards Meditation", Swami Yatiswarananda notes:

> One may dwell on the form (the Divine Personality) along with the repetition of some holy sound-symbol. And when one is not in a meditative mood, one may go on with Japam, repeating the Holy Name or Symbol a thousand or two thousand times, without any break. . . . Meditation thus attains its goal, the highest state of consciousness, in which the soul comes into direct touch with the Divine Reality, as its true Self, and attains its natural peace and perfection, peace and blessedness.10

Apparently uninterested in dogma, Salinger directs his fiction towards illustrating that something really happens. Franny exclaims "And don't ask me who or what God is. I

mean I don't even know if he exists" (p. 39), and reminds us once again that the Salinger religious sense does not include clinging to a belief or received religious creed.

Lane further broadens the gulf between Franny and himself when he claims that religious experience has a basis in elementary psychology. Salinger's attitude to such pseudo-psychological theorising is highly satiric -- that society should attempt to restructure the mind according to its own highly questionable values, as it does with both Holden and Seymour, is contemptible, since it cuts across the individual's search for self-realisation by telling him who he should be. Religious experience and psychotherapy are established as polarities. Franny's awareness extends far beyond Lane's, since she is wholly aware of different religious and psychological methods; during "It's a Wise Child", "the children had been fair game for . . . child psychologists" (p. 54). Sumitra Paniker suggests that Franny is aware of Jnana Yoga, which has more than one answer for her predicament:

> Bhakti Yoga recommends love or devotion as the path to salvation. A good example would be the Pilgrim. Jnana Yoga recommends knowledge as the means of liberation. Knowledge that is completely honest, fearless and unflinching can pare away the unreal from the real and thus dissolve the bonds of the ego. Franny's predicament is caused by imperfect love and imperfect knowledge.11

However, the pathetic effort behind Lane's "Just in case I forgot to mention it. I love you" (p. 40) precipitates Franny's fainting, and his gross comment about it being too long between drinks urges her to seek isolation and spiritual satisfaction. The story concludes with her mouthing the Jesus Prayer, but attaining no spiritual advancement whatsoever.

"Zooey", a kind of "prose home movie" (p. 47), opens with a conflict of opinion concerning what the story is. Zooey claims that the plot hinges on a transcendental element of mysticism or religious mystification; Buddy maintains that he is able to distinguish a mystical story from a love story: "My current offering isn't a mystical story, or a religiously mystifying story, at all. *I* say it's a compound or multiple, love story, pure and complicated" (p. 49). The ties of love between members of the Glass family, including its deceased members, are "multiple" and "complicated". Salinger wishes to permit his reader imaginative leeway, yet he never clearly tells us whether Franny's recovery is wrought by the power of love, or the benefit of religious experience. Sumitra Paniker feels that this is an instance of his fiction attempting to reach beyond words: "Such love, by its very nature, cannot be communicated in discursive language and the story itself is

the author's attempt to communicate the ineffable".[12] However, far from solving Franny's problems, "Zooey" shows the crisis being redefined and intensified before any resolution comes.

Buddy's letter expresses doubts concerning the success of the education of Franny and Zooey. He feels they might have been better adjusted if the Diamond Sutra and the Upanishads, along with "other old loves", had not constituted their reading material at an early age, rendering them "freaks", and placing them in the paradoxical position of needing to escape their education in order to become normal citizens. Although Franny's problems are spotlighted, Zooey has his problems too: he is sick of the film world, disgusted at being the "heavy" in peoples' lives, and also suffering from being partway only along the educational stepladder. Driven to the polarities of preaching and silence, Zooey complains that he cannot even begin a meal without first saying "The Four Great Vows" of Buddhism:

> My God, I've been mumbling that under my breath three meals a day every day of my life since I was ten. I can't *eat* unless I say it. I tried skipping it once when I was having a lunch with Lesage. I gagged on a goddam cherry stone clam, doing it. (p. 104)

Both Franny and Zooey carry the burden of imperfect knowledge, and incomplete religious fulfilment. It may seem as if they would have been much better off without their learning. However, despite all the problems encountered in attaining it, Salinger suggests that when enlightenment finally comes it outweighs all previous tribulations.

Buddy's prompting to write the letter had come from memories of the dead Seymour, who had committed suicide three years ago to the day in 1948. However, the primary motivating force was the memory of flashes of enlightenment, which are described as being akin to the Zen experience of satori. When flying down to collect Seymour's body, the weeping Buddy overhears a woman with "all of Boston and most of Harvard Square in her voice" (p. 62) relate how a young lady had had a pint of pus removed from her body. Struck by the incongruity of weeping when somebody is having "a hilarious pint of pus" (p. 62) extracted from her body -- "I can't be running back and forth forever between grief and high delight" (p. 62) -- the dichotomies dissolve, and Buddy subsides into a mood of happy acceptance: pleasure and pain blend, as do life and death. The second instance concerns a visit to Buddy's local supermarket, where he encounters a pretty little girl, who, upon being asked the names of her two boyfriends replies "Bobby and Dorothy"[13] in a piercing voice.

Seymour's advice about unlearning the difference between boys and girls is recalled. The third was a haiku-style poem found in the room where Seymour shot himself, which ran: "The little girl on the plane / Who turned her doll's head around / To look at me" (p. 64). The point here is quite simply that dolls cannot see; the poem successfully dissolves the dichotomy between the animate and the inanimate.[14] Inspired by these memories, Buddy writes the letter as a rationalisation of his and Seymour's decision to educate Franny and Zooey as they did; despite the problem, he still wishes to believe that the correct educational pattern was followed. To him, these moments of enlightenment say more than any amount of reasoned prose; the vision of the little girl and the doll fade and he is threatened by the "stench of words" -- the plague of any professional writer.

With the direct help of Buddy's letter, and the indirect help of Seymour, Zooey attempts to cure Franny's problems. It is typical Salinger irony that Zooey should at first be so swept up with the sound of his own voice that he neglects Franny's condition, and that the final revelation should be communicated through the indirect means of a telephone. However, the vision of the little girl being reunited with her dachshund in turn encourages Zooey to believe that there really are nice things in this world;

we become oblivious to them because of our own egos: "To notice and enjoy the nice things of this world is really an egoless experience".[15] The barrage of words continues; Zooey exposes Franny's mistake of trying frantically to condition her own spiritual reflexes, and tries to argue her out of her present intense dejection by words. But logic is not the key, and Seymour's Fat Lady image finally brings Franny to a form of enlightenment. Before falling into a deep sleep she listens to the dialing-tone, and:

> . . . appeared to find it extraordinarily beautiful to listen to, rather as if it were the best possible substitute for the primordial silence itself. But she seemed to know too, when to stop listening to it, as if all of what little or much wisdom there is in the world were suddenly hers. (p. 200)

She is able to be at one with both wisdom and knowledge rather than struggle against them. The Goldsteins argue that the dichotomies between the religious life and the actress's life are successfully dissolved;[16] Paniker feels that when Franny moves from "primordial silence" to "primordial consciousness" (identified with a deep level of sleep in Vedantic thought), her problem "which has been verbally answered by Zooey, is truly resolved".[17]

However, there is no indication that Franny has become a mukta, or that her enlightenment will have a

lasting effect. She has only been brought to a generalised love of mankind, and with characteristic Salinger ambiguity, we are left to presume that Franny's new understanding will leave her no fewer problems against which to battle than Zooey has.

II

Several critics have chosen to interpret Salinger's perspective as predominantly Christian: Kenneth Hamilton argues that "Salinger's positive gospel clearly has its basis in the New Testament",[18] that his focus is on "spiritual vision",[19] but feels obliged to conclude that the whole range of human consciousness is artificially restricted when religion is entirely conceived in terms of knowing or spiritual illumination. James Livingston sees Salinger struggling to remain on Holy Ground in his fiction, and feels that he explicitly rejects Eastern alternatives in "Zooey", where "Salinger shows that reconciliation with both society and God is possible only through the courageous practice of Christian love".[20] Both critics disregard the plentiful evidence which suggests that Salinger believes the sensitive intellect has outgrown the need for a received religious creed. However, Salinger's debt to the Bible is evident, and deserves closer attention.

Franny suffers from two major impediments in her

search for religious fulfilment: her sentimentality, and her desire to force the process of her enlightenment. This latter point causes the Goldsteins to feel that "In a highly verbal way and in a highly speeded up version of the Zen experience, Salinger seems to be trying to produce a similar form of experience in some of his characters".[21] However, it is by now clear that the goal of religious experience is not attained through one specific, religious channel. At Sicklers, Franny avoids soaking in sweat a handkerchief she particularly likes, and clings to a gold-plated swizzle-stick "a very corny boy" gave her when she was a sophomore. "I'll go to my grave with it" (p. 30), she promises. Zooey realises that this problem of sentimentality extends to religion and her conception of Jesus, and clouds her understanding of him. She objected as a child to Jesus's rudeness in overthrowing the tables in the synagogue; she also disliked his discriminating between the human world and the animal kingdom. Her response was to turn to the undiscriminating Buddha. Zooey rather brutally urges that she is contorting her vision of the truth by wanting to alter Jesus to suit her liking, and states:

> ". . . at least I've never tried, consciously or otherwise, to turn Jesus into St Francis of Assisi to make him more "lovable" -- which is exactly what ninety-eight per cent of the Christian world has always insisted upon doing." (pp. 164-5)

In wanting to roll "Jesus and St Francis and Seymour and Heidi's grandfather" (p. 165) into one, Franny's sentimentality has produced sloppy, tenth-rate religion. Zooey isolates her problem as trying to force a relationship with a Jesus she doesn't understand, and what is more, is not even trying to understand. He urges, "Keep *him* in mind if you say it, and him only, and him as he was and not him as you'd like him to have been" (p. 168). A true religious search cannot be conducted by searching for a projection of what one wishes to find.

A point which I would like to stress is that Salinger is interested in those points at which different religious creeds coincide; Zooey admires Jesus, but for those truths which place him in relation to Eastern thought, rather than to the rest of Christian dogma. Neither Zooey nor Franny, nor even Salinger himself, seems concerned with the full complexity of Jesus, his specifically Jewish elements, or the details of his role in the Scriptures. His significance for them lies in his being an avatar figure, who can point the way toward religious fulfilment. Firstly,

Zooey explains his belief that Jesus is the most intelligent man in the New Testament, and stands head and shoulders above the prophets, disciples and favorite sons because he realised "there *is* no separation from God" (p. 169). Secondly, he admires Jesus's silence before Pilate; he feels even Solomon would have managed a few pithy words to suit the occasion. The typical silence of a Zen Master before an enquiring student is recalled here. Jesus, being a fully "realised man", knows that the ultimate truth may be given no expression in words -- he can only point the way. Thirdly, Zooey emphasises vehemently that "Jesus knew -- *knew* -- that we're all carrying the Kingdom of Heaven around with us, *inside*, where we're all too goddam sentimental and unimaginative to look. You have to *be* a son of God to know that kind of stuff" (p. 169). Buddhism, Vedanta and Christianity would all agree on their own terms that the individual bears the Kingdom of Heaven within him, and it is interesting at this point to bear in mind the Three Propositions of Vedantic Philosophy: that man's real nature is divine; that the aim of all human life is to realise this divine nature; and that all religions are essentially in agreement. Franny has been missing the point of the Jesus Prayer which is:

> "To endow the person who says it with Christ-consciousness. *Not* to set up some cozy, holier-than-thou trysting place with some sticky, adorable divine *per*sonage who'll take you in his arms and relieve you of all your duties. . . ." (p. 170)

Essentially, Franny could be seeking Christ or Buddha-consciousness; what matters is that she eliminate her own selfish motivation in what amounts to escapism. What matters to Salinger is the movement towards integration with, and participation in society. Kenneth Hamilton makes an excellent point here, yet feels bound to disagree with his own findings since they contravene the teaching of the Bible: "Such a point of view follows from the presupposition that religion has to do with spiritual vision and there is only one religious reality, a reality to be glimpsed through a multitude of forms and limited to no one faith".[22]

Neither Hamilton nor Livingston discusses Bessie, whose love and essentially religious actions Franny must learn to recognise. Even the chicken soup is consecrated. Bessie's idea of calling Waker (an exponent of received religion) or a good psychiatrist shows her failure to comprehend the complexity of Franny's predicament; but there is something undeniably sound about her questioning, "I don't know what good it is to be as smart as whips and all if it doesn't make you happy" (p. 118). If she misses the point, she makes another good one. However, Salinger

once more intimates the essentially restricted nature of received religious creeds when Bessie says "If it was something strictly Catholic, or like that, I might be able to help her myself" (p. 94). Catholics are best at helping Catholics; Bessie remains powerless.

The Glass apartment functions as a microcosm of the typical Salinger world, with the sacred characteristically juxtaposed with the profane. The religious objective is to recognise their interrelation, or more precisely, that there was never any difference to begin with. Dracula stands next to Elimentary Pali on the bookshelf, and in Seymour's room we find the engaging metaphor of Baudelaire's and Thomas a Kempis's "toothbrushes" hanging side by side. Like Holden, Franny returns home at the moment of spiritual crisis, where the language or "semantic geometry" she understands is spoken. Zooey, who in forgiving Seymour his suicide appears as the most balanced of the Glass offspring, has refused to travel to France to shoot a film. He prefers New York where he has been run over twice. The interesting point about Zooey is that he is an integrated personality rather than a religiously enlightened one; "Zooey" develops the tension as to whether Bessie, with her simple, humanitarian code, can be of more help than Zooey himself. Salinger illustrates his belief that the self may be most clearly identified in home surroundings. The bathroom becomes "our

little chapel" (p. 92) and Seymour's room is the ultimate religious shrine. In his letter, Buddy states a key point in the Salinger philosophy: "*Act* . . . when and where you want to, since you feel you must, but do it *with all your might*" (p. 68). Zooey passes this on to Franny: "An artist's only concern is to shoot for some kind of perfection, and *on his own terms*, not anyone else's" (p. 198). Just as a person must be at ease with what he does, and immerse himself in his creation, it is essential to be in harmony with one's surroundings:

> "But if it's the religious life you want, you ought to know right now that you're missing out on every single goddam religious action that's going on around this house. You don't even have sense enough to *drink* when somebody brings you a cup of consecrated chicken soup." (p. 194)

Franny is fruitlessly searching for something outside herself and her home environment; Salinger seems to be producing an overwhelming argument in favour of the basic unity of all things, and of the conviction that the most religious experiences are to be had on your own doorstep.

Livingston sees the urging to action as being only half the solution, and states that "Reconciliation can only come through the practice of Christian love".[23] Bessy's fussing over Franny and Zooey's forceful arguing may be interpreted as tokens of love, which help Franny attain her final vision. Zooey reminds his sister of the Fat Lady,

for whom Seymour had asked them to clean their shoes when they appeared on "It's a Wise Child". He then divulges the great secret:

> "But I'll tell you a terrible secret -- Are you listening to me? *There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady*. That includes your Professor Tupper, buddy . . . *don't you know who that Fat Lady really is*? . . . It's Christ himself. (p. 200)

Livingston feels that "If Seymour is a kind of Christ-event for Franny and Zooey, then the Fat Lady represents Seymour's or Christ's resurrection",[24] but Seymour and the Fat Lady have only guided Franny to her own personal realisation and understanding. Through the love of her family, the "pure and complicated" love story reaches its conclusion; Franny realises that genuine love means love for all mankind. The reader never learns whether Franny's enlightenment has an enduring effect, but is left to judge the value of a resolution which Salinger presents as a very real experience. To return to the theme of education, Franny has learned something by religious experience that she could not attain through intellectual process.

III

In Franny and Zooey, three primary religious influences on Salinger may be isolated: Vedanta, Zen Buddhism and the New Testament. The different strands of Eastern philosophy are deliberately merged in this work; it is futile to attempt to interpret one event as Buddhist, and another as specifically Vedantic.

When Livingston concludes his essay, "in the Word made flesh . . . they [Franny and Zooey] have come to behold the primary fact of human life",[25] he wilfully suppresses the importance of the wider, syncretic body of religious thought behind the image of Christ as the Fat Lady. It is by reference to Vedantic philosophy that the framework for ideas such as the ego and detachment can be elucidated most clearly; but Franny and Zooey is essentially an artistic creation which bears any number of possible areas of meaning. Enlightenment in Eastern religion may never be attained by a noetic process; intellectualism must be discarded and meditation substituted in order to destroy the dualities on which everyday thinking is based. Salinger is not propounding Vedanta or Zen for the West. He does, however, attempt to bring together the core of Eastern and Western philosophy. Zen satori, for example,

is attained usually by the koan exercise; the verbal overflow which we find in "Zooey" indicates that what Salinger is seeking is enlightenment in terms of twentieth-century America, and New York in particular.

The developed mind has outgrown the need for a strict religious dogma and creed; Salinger clearly maintains that the common-ground of these religions, the belief that God is all around us and that we carry the Kingdom of Heaven within us, is an entry point to the understanding of our lives. As Seymour said, "All we do our whole lives is go from one little piece of Holy Ground to the next".[26] The individual must strive for both self-awareness and society-awareness.

Finally, that Salinger should at times seem to suggest that Buddhism bears greater validity than Christianity, yet warn of the danger of sentimentality towards the undiscriminating Buddha, does not necessarily indicate a division within himself. He is aware that different people must find that which is acceptable to them in the corpus of religious philosophy. The religious disciple may choose any channel. However, the danger arises when he tries to force the process by seeking a projection of what he would like to find. Syncretism is not sentimentality, but a declaration that the twentieth century intellect has the fibre to work towards its own solution.

The struggle is arduous, but the end product, which Salinger presents as an intense personal experience, merits the effort.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SEYMOUR GLASS STORIES

When "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" first appeared in 1948, it is improbable that Salinger had conceived the idea of constructing an entire mythology around Seymour Glass and his family in order to express his religious ideas. Yet Warren French's speculation may be correct when he wonders how much of the story's "unprecedented effectiveness" may be attributed to rigorous editorial work on the part of The New Yorker, in which it first appeared. French maintains that the later stories should not be used to interpret this work, which he argues is best understood as an extended metaphor in which every detail contributes to the complete structure.[2] Some critics think otherwise. Hamilton and Paniker acknowledge Salinger's changing interests, but argue from the assumption that the more recent Glass stories illuminate and expand upon details in the earlier ones. However, Salinger has dropped broad hints that he would like to rework this first story concerning Seymour. Firstly, he claims that its author is Buddy, who in turn explains: ". . . my . . . family . . . have gently pointed out to me . . . that the young man, the 'Seymour' who did the walking

and talking in the early story, not to mention the shooting, was not Seymour at all but, oddly, someone with a striking resemblance to -- alley oop, I'm afraid -- myself".[3] Buddy blames this error on post-war euphoria and an "unbalanced, German typewriter" (p. 132). The fact remains that Salinger continued to structure the Glass mythology around the suicide for the next seventeen years. This chapter will focus on the character of Seymour himself, and argue that all the stories concerning him reflect the same predicament: his inability to reconcile and integrate his religious progress with the demands made upon him by the public life in which he must participate.

"A Perfect Day for Bananafish" may be quickly summarised: Mrs. Fedder expresses doubts during a telephone call about her daughter Muriel's husband Seymour. The latter meets a young girl, Sybil, on a Florida beach, then shoots himself upon returning to his hotel room. The story's mutliple ambiguities are part of its intended effect; we are never told specifically why Seymour commits suicide. Whether the sensitive, revered poet-seer of the later novelettes could have summoned up sufficient cruelty to label his recent wife "Miss Spiritual Tramp of 1948"[4] is questionable; Mrs. Fedder is perfectly justified, for once, when she criticises this insult as being both horrible and sad.

But once he has killed his major character, Salinger creates an aura of extra-human qualities around Seymour, whose influence and teaching have an immeasurable effect upon his siblings. Yet Seymour ends as he began: with a major achievement in terms of self-realisation, and a major problem in accepting, and being accepted by his own society. An unnerving paradox remains: the most spiritually advanced member of the Glass family is the only one to take his own life. Salinger never wishes us to view Seymour as a fully accomplished Zen Master, or a "literal bodhisattva figure" as Tom Davis suggests,[5] but simply as an avid seeker after truth, whose spiritual progress never enables him to bridge the gap between his own intellect and personality, and the world around him.

The story establishes Muriel as wilfully oblivious to the beauty of poetry, but attentive to the details of appearance, expensive clothing and womens' magazines. Her conversation with Mrs. Fedder provides several pointers to Seymour's mental condition: the implications are that the war has engendered a degree of imbalance in him; his fascination with trees apparently caused an automobile accident; while on other occasions his behaviour has been insulting and erratic. His refusal later to remove his bathrobe on the beach in case people stare at his non-existent tattoo, and the signs of paranoia behind his accusation

that the lady in the lift is sneakily examining his feet, supply the reader with an opportunity to evaluate his conduct. While Mrs. Fedder's implication that Seymour is a "*raving maniac*"[6] contrasts with Muriel's complete acceptance of him, the reader is left wondering.

Muriel cannot comprehend the complexities of Rilke, has not "learned the language",[7] and does not intend to. Sybil Carpenter does not read poetry, but intuitively speaks the same esoteric "language" as Seymour. The latter does not communicate with his wife, and a generally accepted reading of the story is that the overwhelming contrast between the insensitive, materialistic Muriel and the responsive, innocent Sybil convinces Seymour that his life is futile. But why does Seymour have an Ortgies calibre 7.65 automatic handy; this is an unusual item of luggage to bring on one's honeymoon. The suicide may be pre-meditated. However, the sexually undeveloped Sybil shares the common ground of isolation with Seymour, since her mother leaves her to play while she samples a martini at the hotel. Colour symbolism is used to draw a parallel between Sybil and Muriel. Seymour admires the "blue" of Sybil's "canary-yellow two-piece bathing suit",[8] yet we have already learned that Muriel has had the padding removed from the shoulders of her blue coat. In his extremely mannerly conversation with Sybil, Seymour is able to express ideas important to him without receiving the censure

and judgement which adult society would return.

Having discovered that Sybil responds spontaneously to his idiosyncratic mode of speech and thought, Seymour divulges the tragic explanation of bananafish: "an allegory of a hypersensitive man in a materialistic and meretricious world".[9] The bananafish meet a terrible fate:

> ". . . they swim into a hole where there's a lot of bananas. They're very ordinary-looking fish when they swim *in*. But once they get in they behave like pigs. Why, I've known some bananafish eat as many as seventy-eight bananas. . . . Naturally, after that they're so fat they can't get out of the hole again. Can't fit through the door."90

The bloated bananafish die. The reader is left to speculate why Muriel has had the padding removed from her coat, and why Salinger stresses that Seymour's shoulders are narrow. The fact that the bananafish are "ordinary-looking" suggests that the allegory may apply to the typical materialist (Muriel) who becomes glutted with her own desires, as well as to the spiritually sensitive person who becomes overburdened by the world's grossness. Kenneth Hamilton suggests that Seymour's suicide "is a way of allowing the true Muriel to escape from the banana-hole where she has become trapped through her attitude to money. In other words, he dies physically in order that she may live again spiritually".[11] However, this ingenious explana-

tion discounts the fact that we are given no indication that Muriel bears the potential for spiritual development. The story's multiple ambiguities preclude any one reading being claimed as conclusive.

I would like to consider one other interpretation of "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" offered by Sumitra Paniker:

> In the light of one's awareness of the later Buddhist and Hindu influences on Salinger, one is tempted to see the hole into which the ordinary looking fish swims as the world into which the newly re-incarnated soul is born. The bananas that start the fish on its way to obesity and death are the multitudinous objects that constitute the fiction that we term reality. This differentiated worldly reality is in contrast to the undifferentiated true reality of which it is ultimately a part. The soul that takes this fiction for reality and gorges on its fictitiousness is finally trapped. It loses its ability to relate to reality from which it comes and becomes so enmeshed in its own fictitiousness that it is easy prey to death -- death being a dualistic term relevant only to the duality of fiction.12

The bananafish gorges itself on bananas, but before it realises that the hole is now too small to escape through, it is already too late. The arrival of Sybil's father, whom Seymour has been expecting "hourly",[13] may parallel the end to his own unsatisfactory existence, which he has also been anticipating.[14] Read this way, the story shows Seymour accelerating the entry into his subsequent reincarnation, and at the same time indicates that his spiritual

progress during this last spell on earth was far from being completed. Such a reading would also imply that Seymour's attempt to enter ordinary society by marrying Muriel ended as a total failure. However, Paniker's interpretation based on Hindu thought remains hypothetical.

The story concludes with Sybil running off to be reunited with her mother, while Seymour returns to his hotel room which smells of "calfskin luggage and nail-lacquer remover".[15] Hamilton argues that these odours symbolise the renewal of Muriel's soul and the removal of artificiality, but considering what we already know of her, they would seem to symbolically remind Seymour of his wife's addiction to material trappings, and her place among the bourgeoisie. When Seymour directs a bullet through his right temple, the web of ambiguity is complete. Was the suicide spontaneous or premeditated? Did Seymour end his life through an overburden of joy or sadness? Certainly, the signs of instability and paranoia encourage the reader to believe that the suicide was not the action of a balanced mind -- it looks ominously like an escape. However, as a structurally compact story with a wealth of possible meaning "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" is quite tantalising; this is doubtless the way it was originally planned.

II

In "The Splendid/Squalid World of J. D. Salinger" Sam Basket states his belief that Salinger dealt too quickly with Seymour in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish", but has altered course in more recent works "in his attempt to portray the highest form of human life which he now clearly intends Seymour to represent".[17] He continues by offering a solution: "All references to Seymour become clearer if we consider him as having achieved the perpetual illumination of the highest condition of Zen, a comparison which Salinger invites by the numerous references to Zen in these stories. Seymour, like the Zen Master, is intensely aware of life as good and to him the world seems almost unbearably beautiful".[18] However, Basket's explanation misses the central point concerning Seymour: his incomplete spiritual development, and his incomplete integration into society. His irrationality leaves the reader with severe doubts about his sanity, while the Glass children are spurred to vehement defence whenever criticism threatens him. I will first examine the spiritual and religious progress which Salinger shows Seymour to have made.

From his roots in Eastern philosophy which were

"planted in the New and Old Testaments, Advaita Vedanta, and classical Taoism" (p. 242), Seymour is claimed by Buddy to have advanced to the level of "a mukta, a ringding enlightened man, a God-knower" (p. 124). Although Seymour's reputation usually seems to exceed the qualities which he exhibits, there are several instances where he puts his powers to work. "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters" opens with a Taoist tale which Seymour recounted to Franny some twenty years previously. The tale concerns a way to select a superlative horse. Po Lo explains to Duke Mu, "A good horse can be picked out by its general build and appearance. But the superlative horse -- one that raises no dust and leaves no tracks -- is something evanescent and fleeting, elusive as thin air" (p. 4). Chiu-fang Kao is selected to choose a horse and despatched on his quest; the Duke hears that a dun-coloured mare has been found. However, the animal turns out to be a coal-black stallion, and the Duke is outraged at Kao's inability to distinguish an animal's sex and colour. Po Lo heaves a sigh of satisfaction:

> "Has he really got as far as that?" he said. "Ah, then he is worth ten thousand of me put together. There is no comparison between us. What Kao keeps in sight is the spiritual mechanism. In making sure of the essential, he forgets the homely details; intent on the inward qualities, he loses sight of the

> external. . . . He looks at the things he ought to look at, and neglects those that need not be looked at." (p. 5)

Buddy notes cryptically: "Since the bridegroom's permanent retirement from the scene, I haven't been able to think of anybody whom I'd care to send out to look for horses in his stead" (p. 6). A parallel between Kao and Seymour is intended: the latter accepts Muriel by perceiving her "spiritual mechanism" and ignoring the fine clothes and nail-lacquer. His diary provides other information concerning his love for her. He notes, "How I love and need her undiscriminating heart" (p. 77), and "How I worship her simplicity, her terrible honesty. How I rely on it" (p. 85). But a tragic confusion has taken place, and a similar "spiritual mechanism" does not go hand in hand with a complementary personality. Seymour has attained his undiscriminating nature by a lifetime's devotion to religious activity -- he has passed through discrimination to non-discrimination. On the other hand Muriel is concerned with taste but has never even learned to discriminate, as Salinger pointedly shows us in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish". She has never discovered poetry (in this case Rilke) let alone needed to dispossess it. Consequently, non-discrimination bears an entirely different significance for each. Seymour scarcely expects spiritual guidance from Muriel, but wishes to attain the harmony with society

which she represents. The tragic conclusion is the recognition of unbridgeable difference between the two.

Seymour hopes that a dermatologist will be present at the consultation if ever he visits a psychoanalyst, since he bears scars on his hands from touching certain people. Specific examples come from Franny and Zooey, and a lemon-yellow mark on his right palm originated from grasping a dress of Charlotte Mayhew's, which he loved because it was too long. These events increase the mystery surrounding Seymour, and far from supplementing the Matron of Honor's complaints concerning his inability to communicate with others, indicate the complete involvement brought about by his love for others. Another entry in the diary suggests his potential suitability as a father:

> "I've been reading a miscellany of Vedanta all day. Marriage partners are to serve each other. Elevate, help, teach, strengthen each other, but above all, *serve*. Raise their children honorably, lovingly, and with detachment. A child is a guest in the house, to be loved and respected, -- never possessed, since he belongs to God. How wonderful, how sane, how beautifully difficult and therefore true. The joy of responsibility for the first time in my life." (p. 106)

Salinger intends passages such as this to speak for themselves and counter the charges of irresponsibility and an anti-social nature which Mrs. Fedder and the Matron of Honor level at Seymour.

The most unequivocal statement of Seymour's ability to practice Zen comes at the end of "Seymour: An Introduction", in a passage which suggests that Salinger had read Eugen Herrigel's Zen in the Art of Archery.[19] At this point, Salinger interjects a remark to signify his awareness that Zen has become "a rather smutty, cultish word to the discriminating ear" (p. 242), using Buddy as his medium. Buddy, who supplies the reader with plentiful information concerning his own religious development in these later stories, explains that his apprehension of Zen has been derived through pursuing a course of extreme Zenlessness. That Seymour "literally begged" (p. 243) him to approach Zen on a purely Western, intellectual level indicates that he was acutely aware of its dangers -- perhaps even of the incompatibility of true Zen with Western culture. The trainee in the art of archery must practice detachment by learning to stop aiming, and to wait until his hand spontaneously springs open to release the arrow. Similarly, Seymour's uncanny mastery in street-marbles derives from his not caring where the marble goes. He advises Buddy to quit aiming his marble at Ira Yankauer's: "Could you try not aiming so much? . . . If you hit him when you aim, it'll just be luck" (p. 236). With Buddy as pupil, Seymour assumes the teaching role of a Zen Master in a way which parallels that of the true

account detailed in Herrigel's book. Buddy, who has already experienced the four flashes of enlightenment described in Franny and Zooey, is brought to the fifth when recalling this occasion. Seymour's method of aiming without aiming defies imitation and excludes any sense of competition; consequently somebody needs to hand him the marble which he wins. Paniker suggests that the incident may be more satisfactorily explained by Vedanta, or Karma Yoga, by which Buddy is influenced:

> Karma Yoga, especially, advocates Nishkama Karma or action that is uncoloured by desire for its result. Such action truly liberates the man who performs it. He has no passions, hopes or aspirations. Success and failure are equally meaningless to him. . . . Hence, Seymour's success and also his obliviousness of its implications.20

The reader is left to wonder why Seymour's ability at street-marbles is not matched by his ability to choose a wife.

Another aspect of Seymour's religious progress has received little attention from critics: his clairvoyance. Clairvoyance is the ability to know things beyond the power of the five senses and the reasoning intellect, and is a power often developed by those who pursue a course of meditation. Salinger informs us of Teddy's progress in meditation, but leaves such details a blank in Seymour's career. We learn in "Seymour: An Introduction" that he brought the hats and coats to the visitors at his parent's

party when he was eight. He asked no questions, so this incident suggests his ability to perceive spiritual mechanisms at a very early age. Buddy feels that this boded well for Seymour's future as a poet, for "if a Chinese or Japanese verse composer doesn't know whose coat is whose, on sight, his poetry stands a remarkably slim chance of ever ripening" (p. 140). I will return to this point later. In the same story we also hear of Seymour's perception of two summers ago, that he, Buddy, and Zooey have been brothers for four incarnations. Waker even feels that Seymour drew upon earlier incarnations as source material for his poetry.

In "Hapworth 16, 1924" Seymour, as first person narrator, explains that he is already losing some of his clairvoyant powers. At the age of seven he predicts that he will live "as long as a well-preserved telephone pole, a generous matter of some thirty (30) years or more . . . Buddy has even longer to go".[21] He also mentions issues which Les Glass has failed to face up to during his past two existences, informs his mother that her cyst is not malignant, and advises his parents of a favourable period during which to consider terminating their vaudeville career. In addition to this, he foresees the meeting which will lead to the children's appearance on "It's a Wise

Child", and forms a mental picture of a grey-haired Buddy poring over his typewriter. So, Seymour is presented as having the power to see into both past and future: a quality which makes his eventual suicide appear rather like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Other references in this story serve as an index to Seymour's religious advancement. The books for which he asks during the summer camp include the Bible and The Pilgrim's Progress, as well as works describing the Gayatri Prayer, Raja-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga. He especially admires Lao-tse, Chuang-tse and Vivekananda of India, and asks for books on Sir Rowan Hamilton, who was a dear friend during a previous existence. He already holds closely formulated views on God -- a subject in which he admits an immense interest. His views on the notion of a personal God are worth quoting at some length:

> Vulgarly speaking, the whole possibility of getting charming, personal commands from God, quite shapeless or adorned with an impressive, charming beard, stinks to high heaven of sheer favoritism! Let God raise one human being up over another, lavishing handsome favors upon him, and the hour has struck to leave His charming service forever, and quite good riddance . . . let God favor us all with charming, personal commands or none of us! If You have the stomach to read this letter, dear God, be assured that I am meaning what I say! Do not favor me with charming personal commands and magnificent short cuts! Do not ask me to join any élite organisation of mortals that is not widely open to all and sundry! Recall quite fervently that I have felt

> equipped to love Your astonishing, noble Son, Jesus Christ, on the acceptable basis that you did not play favorites with Him or give Him carte blanche throughout his appearance.22

For Seymour, everybody must be able to share the same God in the same way -- the implicit criticism of denominationalism in The Catcher in the Rye may be recalled here. With his developed ideas, Seymour has already assumed the role of instructor for both his siblings and his parents. He suggests a new prayer for Boo Boo since she is experiencing difficulties with the word God, and outlines breathing exercises which will help Bessie in her work.[23] However, when Seymour exclaims "My God, you are a hard one to figure out, thank God! I love you more than ever",[24] we receive the strong impression that he treats God, at least in part, as an intellectual challenge rather than as purely a way to religious fulfilment.

Seymour certainly possesses powers of extra-sensory-perception: he is clairvoyant, and in "Hapworth 16, 1924" claims that both he and Buddy have experienced the pain which others have shrugged off. In another incident, he performs what I can only term as spiritual acupuncture in stopping the pain from his injured leg after a motor-cycle accident. Yet Salinger never tells us that Seymour is a fully realized, undiscriminating man. He *knows* that "all we ever do our whole lives is go from one little piece of Holy Ground to the next" (p. 248). How-

ever, when Buddy quotes Vivekananda's remark "See Christ, then you are a Christian; all else is talk" (p. 127), we wonder whether Seymour does ever *see* Christ when he investigates loaded ashtrays with his index finger.

III

William Wiegand maintains that there is "no demonstrated connection between society's insensitivity and Seymour's zaniness",[25] while Warren French believes that those readers who consider Seymour a victim of society are as sick as Seymour himself.[26] But although Seymour's freqently strange behaviour is the outward manifestation of an internal condition, his struggle to become reconciled with society and those people who represent it continues all his life. Seymour consistently falls short of the claims made for him by his family; his problems mainly outweigh his spiritual progress. These problems require closer analysis.

Although "Hapworth 16, 1924" informs us that Seymour could foresee his own untimely death at the approximate age of thirty, it is impossible to interpret the suicide as the culmination of his enlightenment. There is nothing placid or detached about Seymour's accusation of the lady in the lift in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish": "If you want to

look at my feet, say so . . . I have two perfectly normal feet and I can't see the slightest God-damned reason why anybody should stare at them".[27] The arrogance and self-justification in these words remain largely unexplained until "Hapworth 16, 1924", when we are directly shown that emotional instability is a basic factor of Seymour's character.

"Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters" provides an account of Seymour's wedding, from which, to the chagrin of the bride's party, he absents himself because of a surfeit of happiness. On the face of it, his conduct appears inexcusable -- he has already kept Muriel up all night "blabbing to her all about how he's too *happy* to get married and that she'll have to post*pone* the wedding till he feels *steadier* or he won't be able to come to it" (p. 45). While Buddy and the other Glass children instinctively understand and defend Seymour's behaviour, Mrs. Fedder (who enjoys the dubious benefit of having been psycho-analysed for years) and the Matron of Honour see little complexity in him. They suggest that he is a prime candidate for the "booby hatch" (p. 45). The story moves between these conflicting points of view.

In his diary, Seymour enumerates his crimes in Mrs. Fedder's eyes. Firstly, she claims that he withdraws and fails to relate to people; secondly, that his not

having attempted to seduce Muriel is symptomatic of something being wrong with him; and thirdly, that she has been haunted by his statement that he would like to be a dead cat.[28] Influenced by Mrs. Fedder, the Matron of Honor continues the accusations against Seymour. She describes him as a callous and inconsiderate man who has upset Muriel, a latent homosexual, a schizoid personality, and an insane man (he threw a stone at Charlotte Mayhew's face) whose adult life has been warped by childhood experiences. She claims "I'd die, in fact, before I'd let any child of mine turn themself into a little exhibitionist before the public. It warps their whole entire lives . . . ask any psychiatrist. I mean how can you have any kind of a normal childhood or anything (pp. 67-8)? Both she and Mrs. Fedder disapprove of him in proportion to his failure to conform to social convention, and their notion -- supplied by psychoanalysts such as Dr. Sims -- of what a normal man is. Their criticisms, especially the term "schizoid personality" (p. 43) which denotes a divided personality, stand in contrast to Buddy's introduction of him as a person able to see through fictitious dualities to the spiritual mechanism.

While much of the conversation allows Salinger to pursue a "gentle satire of pretentious social conventions",[29] the incident which describes the injury of

Charlotte Mayhew remains impossible to explain away. Seymour had thrown the stone at her while she sat on the driveway with Boo Boo's cat; the scar left her with a permanently crooked smile. If the incident is interpreted as Seymour's spontaneous response to a beautiful sight, Charlotte is permanently left to pay the price for his enlightenment. Although the Glass children understand this action they cannot explain it verbally; the incident remains one of the strongest suggestions that Seymour's religious life is incompatible with the society in which he lives. Rather than pay homage to Seymour as a mukta, the reader is drawn to regard him as a "rather notorious 'mystic' and 'unbalanced type'" (p. 124) -- the other side to his personality which Buddy mentions in "Seymour: An Introduction". In the same story, while noting that suicide must be at the top of the list of compelling infirmities for creative men, who often have "something garishly Wrong with them as persons" (p. 164), Buddy's admission that he has frequently lost sleep over the vexed question of his brother's suicide, implies that even the Glass children are not always happy with Seymour's deeds.

In "Hapworth 16, 1924" Seymour's lengthy letter to his family indicates that the Sick Man and seer in him have been in conflict once before he was seven. Both Buddy and he have been struggling to "reduce general

snottiness, surface conceits, and too damn much emotion coupled with several other qualities quite rotten to the core",[30] in an attempt to inspire less antagonism and murder in the hearts of fellow human beings. Apart from this precociousness in the seven year old's preoccupation with form and language, two major problems plague Seymour: his tendency toward malice and his early-blooming sexual response. If Seymour is trying to reach God, with a strong emphasis on Eastern religion, it should be remembered that both Zen and Vedanta maintain that even the slightest clinging to sexuality or the ego will prevent the disciple from attaining his ultimate goal. He will remain bound on the wheel of karma. Quite evidently, Seymour faces potentially insurmountable problems.

His violent urges surface before the story has progressed many pages. Robert Pitman, aged five, makes a spiteful remark; Seymour responds by informing the hapless youngster that he might well kill him or commit suicide -- possibly before nightfall. Seymour comments in retrospect:

> "I believe I could have curbed this criminal urge at the crucial moment, but one must painfully remember that a vein of instability runs through me quite like some turbulent river; this cannot be overlooked; I have left this troublesome instability uncorrected in my previous two appearances, to my folly and

> disgust; it will not be corrected by friendly, cheerful prayer. It can only be corrected by dogged effort on my part, thank God."[31]

A store of hidden malice is similarly unleashed upon Mr. Happy, when this unfortunate (and innocent) gentleman rushes the injured Seymour to hospital on the pillion of his motorcycle. The latter enjoys distracting the driver's attention by threatening to sue him in the event of losing his leg through gangrene or loss of blood. Mr. Happy's driving is suitably affected. It is also mentioned that Seymour bears a "very infectious love for trees".[32] However, although young children are often characterised by extreme emotions, Seymour's remarks are presented as being malicious, with the desire to hurt and upset. These contrast with the somewhat overbearing love which he bears towards his family, and his formidable intellectual resourcefulness in analysing his own words and motivation.

Seymour's overactive sexual response evidently poses him a major problem; the war between flesh and spirit has already begun. There is a strong element of the ridiculous, if not grotesque, in his being enthralled by Mrs. Happy, a married woman aged twenty-two. The comparison which he draws between this young lady and his mother leaves the reader feeling even more uncomfortable:

> "She unwittingly shares with you, Bessie, a touching heritage of quite perfect legs, ankles, saucy bosoms, very fresh, cute, hind quarters, and remarkably little feet with quite handsome, small toes . . . I have looked forward with mounting pleasure to the possibility, all too slight for words, of her opening the door, quite unwittingly, in the raw."[33]

Seymour goes on to discuss the virginity of the girl who bandages his injured leg, and asks his father to relate, in all possible detail, the sexual activities of his younger years. He believes that as sensualists from the word go, he and Buddy need to read copiously in this subject in order to prepare themselves. He confidently states: "neither your son Buddy nor I have the slightest intention of dying by the phallus as surely as the sword; we fully intend to come to grips with the subject of sensuality".[34] However, the events in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" make us wonder whether Seymour's budding carnality ever was suppressed. His attraction to Muriel, which is doubtless sexual in part, and the sensual overtones in his touching of Sybil, indicate that he is firmly bound to the wheel of karma.

IV

Apart from personal problems, Seymour always experiences difficulty in reconciling the two major interests of his life: religion and poetry. The reader is never permitted to peruse the collection of haiku-style poems which Buddy claims, if published, would win his brother the acclaim of being a major American poet. It will be useful to analyse this tension between religion and poetry more clearly.

Problems are already developing in "Hapworth 16, 1924", where Seymour states the fears of his local librarians: "They are quite fearful, one and all, that my consuming admiration for God, straightforward and shapeless, will upset the delightful apple cart of my poetry".[35] The central issue is that the artistic vision which Seymour expresses through his poetry is not simply his response to seeing the spiritual mechanism of life -- it involves an intellectual and critical process. He later states in his diary:

> "I'll champion indiscrimination till doomsday, on the ground that it leads to health and a kind of very real, enviable happiness. *Followed purely* it's the way of the Tao, and undoubtedly the highest way. But for a discriminating man to achieve this, it would mean that he would have to dispossess himself of poetry, go *beyond* poetry." (p. 86)

Seymour associates poetry with discrimination, and continues by relating his admission to Dr. Sims, Mrs. Fedder's psychoanalyst, that he is a perfectionist. He will never be able to like bad poetry even in the abstract, certainly never be able to equate it with good poetry, and will therefore have to leave poetry altogether in order to pursue non-discrimination.

There is an area of confusion here; the difficulty comes in deciding whether it lies simply with Seymour, with the author himself, or with both. Seymour is introduced in "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters" as one who can perceive the spiritual mechanism, or flow of life, in people such as Muriel and Mrs. Fedder. He sees the latter as "A person deprived, for life, of any understanding or taste for the main current of poetry that flows through things, all things" (p. 84). While the confusion in his perception of Muriel has already been noted, his finding great bravery in Mrs. Fedder's living a vacuous existence is based on a discriminating and patronising sympathy. At the cinema, Seymour witnesses Muriel's complete, undiscriminating involvement with the film she is seeing. Yet it is a critical, and therefore distancing process which enables him to appreciate both this fact, and the quality of the film. To return to poetry, Alan Watts

explains the function of Zen in the Arts -- in this instance gardening:

> The Zen gardener [artist] has no mind to impose his own intention upon natural forms, but is careful rather to follow the "intentionless intention" of the forms themselves, even though this involves the utmost care and skill.36

Paniker also notes this region of confusion when she explains: "A poet may use grammar, but poetry itself is beyond grammatical correctness. Non-discrimination does not equate good with bad poetry, and the good poet who stands in the Tao can use logical and linguistic devices to further his craftsmanship without endangering his position".[37] We can clearly see that the genuine, non-discriminating poet should never be placed in the dilemma which confronts Seymour. The poet who has transcended the dualities of the world does not stand distanced from his work -- poet and poetry are the same.

While Buddy vehemently defends Seymour as "A poet, for God's sake. And I mean a *poet*" (p. 69), and believes he merits the title of mukta, it would appear that Seymour suffers from a number of problems of which his siblings either do not know, or do not care to admit. Buddy would like to believe that the artistic vision which cuts through to the essence of things is also the religious vision: "Isn't the true poet or painter a seer? Isn't he, actually,

the only seer we have on earth?" (p. 122). I have already argued that Salinger's concept of religion lies in the norm of everyday experience, and in his role as writer, it is interesting to speculate whether he considers the last question applicable to himself. Buddy feels that the eyes of the poet-seer take the most abuse, and suggests how Seymour dies:

> "I say that the true artist-seer, the heavenly fool who can and does produce beauty, is mainly dazzled to death by his own scruples, the blinding shapes and colours of his own sacred human conscience." (p. 123)

But the truly enlightened, fully realised man becomes one with his own vision and surroundings. These never need to be a choice between the religious or artistic vision.

To conclude the present disussion, I will bring my analysis back full circle to "A Perfect Day for Bananafish". Seymour's entire life is spent with an unhappy tension between that part of him which aspires to non-discrimination, and that which aspires to poetry -- he is never capable of reconciling the two. He could not relinquish his search for God by concentrating solely on poetry, nor go beyond poetry by following the pure way of non-discrimination. The sexuality and malicious urges enumerated in "Hapworth 16, 1924" show that Seymour was haunted by personal problems and the ambivalence of his own desires. He must

have realised that the complete liberation of enlightenment would be denied him in this existence; his powerful desires and overactive intellect would keep him bound to the wheel of karma. He may have believed that suicide would simply accelerate his progress toward the next incarnation, and the death is most satisfactorily understood in the light of a god-lover's intense desire to reach his goal. In this sense the suicide would neither be sinful nor the ultimate expression of failure, but merely signify the ending of one appearance to begin another. However, Seymour himself noted that weaknesses may only be corrected by "dogged effort"; he knew that God permits nobody to take a short cut. Despite his confusion Seymour has made significant religious progress in several areas; perhaps the complete detachment of Teddy will soon be his.

CONCLUSION

I

The collection Nine Stories opens with "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" and concludes with "Teddy", the story in which Salinger expresses religious ideas most overtly. As I will demonstrate, this placing is far from being accidental. In many ways this latter work offers a summation of Salinger's thought, and intimates the goal towards which his later fiction is directed -- namely the synthesis of art and religious thought in a specifically American context. Sumitra Paniker states that "Teddy" shows Salinger "under the influence of massive readings in Advaita Vedanta",[1] while Donald Barr makes the criticism that it reads "methodically, as if the impulse had been to write something that was not a story".[2] Although Salinger quite clearly intended to produce both an exposition of religious and philosophical ideas, and a work of the coherent artistic imagination, his success remains an equivocal one. The reader may justifiably complain that the substructure of philosophical thought protrudes through and consequently mars the story's artistic surface. However, my present intention is to show how every sentence, symbol and event contributes to the story's meaning by further developing and demonstrating the author's ideas.

The events in "Teddy" are quickly summarised: a ten-year-old boy is seen with his irascible father and overaffectionate mother aboard a transatlantic liner. He explains to Bob Nicholson, an intellectual educationalist, that meditation has brought him to the final stage of spiritual development; his death, which he meets by being pushed into an empty swimming pool by his irritable younger sister, concludes the story. Several parallels indicate that Salinger intended the character of Theodore McArdle to begin where that of Seymour Glass left off. Firstly, both are deeply involved in a religious quest and enjoy the power of clairvoyance; both maintain an unqualified love for God. Secondly, Seymour's fascination with the opposite sex is a factor centrally opposed to his religious development in "Hapworth 16, 1924". In "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" his association with Muriel suggests that he never succeeds in conquering his sensuality, and realises that to throw away the shackles of physicality in order to attain pure consciousness in his present existence is impossible. Teddy was making substantial spiritual advancement during his previous incarnation, but he explains: "I met a lady, and I sort of stopped meditating".[3] A third telling parallel is that the Glass children all understand the description of Teddy's slightly crossed eyes to refer to Seymour. Also, both are involved

with swimming activities, and Seymour informs us in "Hapworth 16, 1924": "I have also mislaid my handsome new wrist watch during an Aquatics Period".[4] Seymour died in 1948, and Teddy is ten years old in a story published in 1953; Salinger is not suggesting that the former is reborn as the latter, but after the multiple ambiguities of "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" he wishes to depict somebody in the final stage of religious development. Teddy's detachment, serenity and unruffled temperament are far removed from the activities of the less stable Seymour. Salinger wrote the Seymour Glass stories to explore the immensely complex problems which confront the seeker of religious fulfilment, and consequently focuses upon human ambivalence, the clashing of desires, and the choice (which is essentially a misconception) between God and poetry. These problems are absent from "Teddy", which I believe yields its richest significance when viewed against the background of the Seymour Glass stories.

If Seymour's precocious sexuality promoted a clinging to desire and sensuality from which he could never break free, Teddy's self-control is complete and unassailable. While Mrs. McArdle lies in bed with a sheet "drawn tight over her very probably nude body" (p. 168) and her back turned to her husband, the attentions which she directs towards her son are, if not sexual, at least physically

excessive. She stares fixedly at the back of Teddy's legs, and pleads for a kiss when he approaches the bed. Her son remains quite unaffected by these attentions: ". . . Teddy perfunctorily gave his mother a kiss on the cheek. She in turn brought her left arm out from under the sheet, as if bent on encircling Teddy's waist with it, but by the time she had got it out from under, Teddy had moved on" (p. 172). Not satisfied with just one, Mrs. McArdle demands another kiss as he leaves; Teddy sidesteps this request by claiming, rather unconvincingly, that he is too tired. While Seymour longs to see Mrs. Happy open the door naked, the innocent attentions of the attractive girl at the Purser's desk and the blond woman who brushes her hand over his head, leave Teddy's passivity quite unruffled. He has not suppressed sensuality since this would imply tension and disrupted inner harmony -- the problems of the flesh simply do not arise.

Teddy has attained the high level of detachment which Seymour failed to reach consistently; the story's opening section contrasts his tranquillity with the senseless bickering of his parents. Oblivious to the irate tone of Mr. McArdle -- the owner of the expensive Gladstone suitcase on which he is standing -- Teddy gazes out of the porthole. While Mr. McArdle derives narcissistic pleasure from utilising his "third class leading man's speaking voice" (p. 167) to order his son off it, his wife soothingly

urges him to stay put. Teddy remains unmoved; his reaction extends no further than returning his father "a look of enquiry whole and pure" (p. 167). The sight of somebody dumping a garbage can of orange peel overboard causes Teddy to indulge in metaphysical speculation; the articulation of his thoughts is a spontaneous response -- not the desire to silence his father:

> "I don't mean it's interesting that they float", Teddy said. "It's interesting that I know about them being there. If I hadn't seen them, then I wouldn't know they were there, and if I didn't know they were there, I wouldn't be able to say that they even exist." (p. 171)

When Teddy muses that the only place the peels started floating in the first place was within his own mind, he is expounding the belief of many Eastern philosophies that pure consciousness is the only reality. Advaita Vedanta is emphatic about the distinction between individual consciousness and the ego. The ego perceives external objects, mistakes them for reality, and erroneously believes it understands them. However, Vedanta maintains that nothing exists outside pure consciousness which is to be found within each individual; that which appears to constitute reality is in fact fictitious, James Bryan's ideas in "A Reading of Salinger's 'Teddy'"[5] are worth mentioning: he notes the resemblance of Teddy's framework of ideas

to the Platonic doctrine of forms, but attempts to identify Salinger's sources more closely: "the old Hindu concept of māyā is more appropriate. All manifest things of both mind and body, this teaching holds, are created out of ignorance".[6] To return to Teddy's parents, they not only use him as a pawn in their game of mutual abuse, but perceive not their son's reality but māyā -- peelings which have masked the essence.[7] But the sinking orange peel also serves as a dramatic metaphor of Teddy's oncoming fate; Salinger seems anxious that the reader should not miss this connection when Teddy states: "After I go out this door, I may only exist in the minds of all my acquaintances . . . I may be an orange peel" (pp. 173-4). The significance of this remark, of course, totally escapes Teddy's parents.

Mr. McArdle's materialist reverence for property and outward forms sees Teddy being despatched to retrieve his Leica -- inattentive to such concerns, Teddy had given the expensive camera to his sister Booper as a toy. This done, Teddy settles down to write his diary. Bob Nicholson enters the story at this point, and Teddy is given the opportunity to voice his central religious tenets. The former, whose conversation is "intelligent, literate, even amusing or stimulating" (pp. 183-4), is presented as an academically educated man whose poise and confidence depend

to a large extent on self-assertion. An important part of the story's meaning derives from the parallel between the respective modes of thought of Teddy and Nicholson: Teddy's exemplifies the Eastern, monistic method, while Nicholson's is bound by the confines of Western, dualistic logic. The demeanour of the two is also contrasted. Nicholson's bearing, Salinger suggests, relies at least in part on an affected mannerism: "The young man had a kind of poise about him, though, that looked as though it might hold up indefinitely, with the very small proviso that he keep at least one hand in one pocket" (p. 182). While his mood varies in constant flux throughout the conversation, Teddy, on the other hand, "looked perfectly relaxed, even serene" (p. 186) since his facial expression and outward bearing are manifestations of his inner harmony.

Nicholson is presented as being totally bound by a form of logical empiricism; his entire system of thought is founded upon dualistic perception. In his opening address to Teddy he inquires "How are you and the weather?" (p. 184). Teddy, who does not acknowledge such distinctions between subject and object, replies that he does not take such things too personally. When the discussion turns to poetry, opinions clash when Nicholson maintains that emotions are a poet's stock in trade, while Teddy feels

that poetry should not be the vehicle for the poet's emotions. The latter has found no use for emotions anyway. At this point Teddy is seen "looking abstractedly toward, or over, the twin smokestacks up on the Sports Deck" (p. 185) -- his looking "over" the smokestacks symbolises his transcendence of the dualities on which Nicholson is basing his argument. It is significant that Nicholson should later be seen exhaling smoke from a cigarette himself. A believer in the Vedantic theory of reincarnation, Teddy's monistic mode of thought enabled him to transcend the dualities of Western thought; at the age of four he was able to get out of the finite dimension quite frequently. The first mystical experience came at the age of six: "I was six when I saw that everything was God . . . My sister was only a very tiny child then, and she was drinking her milk, and all of a sudden I saw that *she* was God and the *milk* was God. I mean, all she was doing was pouring God into God, if you know what I mean" (p. 189). This experience is in accordance with the central Vedantic truth of Tat Twam Asi or That Thou Art. Nicholson of course is quite incapable of comprehending the full significance of Teddy's explanations. If Salinger has not already established Teddy and Nicholson as conforming to antithetical ways of thinking, he later describes how "Nicholson, looking detached, was using his right hand to

give himself a slow, sensuous massage at the back of the neck" (p. 194). Nicholson can only give the air of detachment while being bound by physicality; Teddy has attained true religious detachment. The division between them is complete.

Teddy remains untroubled by the problems which plagued Franny and Seymour. He cannot remember ever having used his emotions, pursues a successful course of meditation, and loves God in an unsentimental way. He accepts that his love for his parents is best described as a strong affinity, and is aware of his parents' inability to accept him as he is. As the discussion with Nicholson proceeds, Teddy's complete tranquillity and assurance become clear. The educationalist wishes to know how one escapes the finite dimension; he cites a block of wood as an inanimate object which cannot exist outside of empirical measurements in time and space. Teddy asks him how he knows an arm is an arm. Nicholson accuses this question of sophistry, since he can only conceptualise within the framework of dualistic logic; but Teddy explains how logic must be left behind in order to transcend the finite dimension:

> "You know that apple Adam ate in the Garden of Eden, referred to in the Bible?" he asked. "You know what was in that apple? Logic. Logic and intellectual stuff. That was all that was in it. So -- this is my point -- what you have to do is vomit it up if you want to see things as they really are. I mean if you vomit it up, then you won't have any more trouble with blocks of wood and stuff. You won't see everything stopping *off* all the time. And you'll know what your arm really is if you're interested. . . . The trouble is . . . most people don't want to see things the way they are. They don't even want to stop getting born and dying all the time. They just want new bodies all the time, instead of stopping and staying with God, where it's really nice . . . I never saw such a bunch of apple-eaters. . . ." (p. 191)

Teddy sees words, discrimination, desire and logical reasoning as an impediment to man's seeing the world around him as a unified, harmonious totality of which he is an integral part. While Nicholson's mind cannot extend to comprehending a block of wood outside of its empirical measurements, Teddy does not conceive of such objects as constituting independent realities. This approach is later applied to the problem of education; he would first teach children to meditate, and not supply them with words and names which come between themselves and external objects.

Critics have argued that the ending of the story poses an ambiguity.[8] Yet the death is anticipated at several points. I have already discussed the orange peel metaphor; the casual, concluding entry in Teddy's diary is the second warning: "It will either happen today or

February 14, 1958 when I am sixteen. It is ridiculous to mention even" (p. 182). He is quite confident that he has already died many thousand times, and understands that this next death will free him from his body in order to attain pure consciousness with God. In conversation with Nicholson, he cites the ostensibly hypothetical example of his sister pushing him into the empty swimming pool; he could fracture his skull and die instantly. But there would be no tragedy. Nicholson urges him to consider the inevitable grief of his parents; Teddy counters this by stating that sorrow would result simply because they have "names and emotions for everything that happens" (p. 194). We already know that Teddy's powers of clairvoyance are highly developed -- he could have informed the Professors of when they would die, but refrained because he also sensed that they did not really want to know. Although Teddy cannot predict on which of the two dates he will die, the precision of his extra-sensory-perception is surrounded by little doubt. The reader is given slim ground to find ambiguity in the scream at the end -- "clearly coming from a small, female child" (p. 198). Nicholson too has been convinced of Teddy's authenticity, since he abruptly steps on his cigarette and heads "rather quickly" (p. 197) for the pool when he connects the entry which he saw in Teddy's

diary with the significance of his later remarks. Although initially skeptical, he has been sufficiently convinced to act quickly. To read the story's conclusion as ambiguous would be to ignore its entire structure and purpose. Teddy well knows that this will be his last death, which is well described by Sumitra Paniker: "As he is in pure consciousness there can be for him no more incomplete experience, no more incarnation . . . we can say that Teddy was a mere appearance, a fiction that realised its fictitiousness".[9]

James Bryan has tackled the difficult task of defining Salinger's religious sources:

> Teddy's "last incarnation" was in India where all-embracing Hinduism has virtually absorbed Buddhism in the land of its origin. Teddy's belief in "the Vedantic theory of reincarnation" and use of the word "Brahma", instead of the Buddhist "Nirvana", as the soul's ultimate goal, seems to rule out an exclusive insistence upon Buddhism. Since Zen de-emphasises Karma and the striving to rise above the circle of birth and death in favor of savoring the world of here and now, Zen Buddhism is clearly not the chief source of the story, although Zen allusions abound. Salinger has apparently drawn on classical Hinduism, Buddhism and Zen to portray a child with a soul perfected through thousands of incarnations and ready for release from the cycle of becoming.10

Although Bryan neglects to mention the author's debt to Christianity and Advaita (i.e. non-dualistic) Vedanta, an attempt to ascertain the extent to which different individual religions have influenced Salinger is needless

-- the point is that his thought is highly syncretic. Like Zooey, Teddy is interested in Christianity where its teaching coincides with that of Eastern religions. A specific example is Teddy's symbolic reading of the need to reject the apples on the tree of knowledge; Oriental religions likewise maintain that logic and intellectualism must be abandoned before the search for pure consciousness may be successfully pursued.

Finally, one passage in "Teddy" suggests the entire direction of Salinger's later fiction when its ten-year-old hero refers to his failure to combat sensuality in his last appearance: "But I wouldn't have had to get incarnated in an *American* body if I hadn't met that lady. I mean it's very hard to meditate and live a spiritual life in America. People think you're a freak if you try to" (p. 188). Teddy certainly looks like a "freak" to the average reader, and critics have placed him high among the ranks of obnoxious children in literature. We may wonder whether Salinger wished his story to be read seriously, or if he deliberately played upon the comic aspect of Teddy's extreme precociousness. However, Holden Caulfield, the Glass family and Teddy are all natives of New York. Salinger himself left New York many times only to return again. Feeling that New York was where he should remain, yet maintaining

his consuming interest in religion over a sustained period, Salinger set about directing his fiction towards showing the difficulties of aiming for religious fulfilment without rejecting the society into which one is born. Consequently, most of his characters attain their enlightenment in a specifically American way. But why did Salinger write the Seymour Glass stories after "Teddy"? Perhaps Donald Barr provides a useful insight when he calls the story too "meticulous"[11] -- too clean cut. Dan Wakefield feels similarly and suggests: "Teddy is the only real mystic, and his particular answer does not provide an answer to Salinger's search".[12] Most importantly I feel that "Teddy" fails to illustrate the complexity of Salinger's search; Teddy attains the goal denied to Seymour, but his passing into pure consciousness gives no sense of the intense struggle which preceded it. The final stories are best understood as Salinger's attempt to depict the almost overwhelming problems encountered in trying to "live a spiritual life in America".

II

The preceeding chapters have been an attempt to examine the development and full complexity of the religious dimensions in the fiction of J. D. Salinger. The stories of the early 'forties show the author's concern

with language and speech-patterns, but his reading in Eastern religion and studies at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York inspired him to change the direction of his fiction. The Catcher in the Rye indicates his distrust of strict denominationalism and his critical attitude toward the practice of twentieth century Christianity. The novel's final scenes, which are underlain by a substructure of Eastern thought, anticipate the syncretism to be found in his later work. While Holden's enlightenment is surrounded by ambiguity, Salinger's insistence that one's home environment should not be renounced is evident.

Franny and Zooey indicates that Salinger had become centrally concerned with the areas where different modes of religious thought and philosophy coincide. The notion that an individual should not renounce his native society is again strongly suggested; the goal of the true religious life is to be reached by an inward, not an outward search. These two stories make no attempt to evaluate the respective worth of different religions -- Buddhism is not praised above Christianity -- and suggest that the individual seeker should, if he wishes, use a syncretic system of thought to work towards an individual solution. Yet Lane and Bessie's miscomprehension of Franny's predicament shows how the religious seeker can be distanced from, and

considered a "freak" by the rest of society.

Seymour Glass's problems are even more extensive and acute than Franny's. Salinger channelled his creative energy into creating the Glass mythology in order to depict the full complexity of following a religious quest in modern society. Seymour, troubled by sensual desires and a malicious streak, attains partial enlightenment, yet cannot break free from the wheel of karma. His powers of clairvoyance suggest that he is close to attaining pure consciousness, and his subsequent incarnation may have placed him in a similar state of development to the hero of "Teddy". This short story allows Salinger to contrast monistic and dualistic modes of thought, and suggests that Teddy meets his death for the final time. Although a highly structured story which may be criticised for reading in too "methodical" a way, in many ways "Teddy" provides a summation of Salinger's thought, and offers a convenient point at which to conclude a study of his fiction.

I do not hesitate to state that by 1953 Salinger had become primarily a religious writer; this thesis has both aimed to correlate the mainly partisan articles which have appeared on specific aspects of the author's religious vision, and to suggest new ideas in an attempt to clarify his methods and objectives. Perhaps the long-awaited

second novel will one day appear to show where the mature Salinger's feelings ultimately lie.

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1]J. D. Salinger, Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction (Boston, 1963), p. 123. Referred to hereafter as Carpenters.

[2]Warren French, J. D. Salinger (New York, 1963).

[3]H. A. Grunwald, ed., Salinger: A Critical and Personal Portrait (New York, 1962).

[4]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories (New York, 1964), p. 86.

[5]French, p. 22.

[6]Grunwald, p. 13.

[7]John O. Lyons, "The Romantic Style of Salinger's 'Seymour: An Introduction'" in Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature, IV:1 (Winter, 1963), 62-70.

[8]Carl Strauch, "Salinger: The Romantic Background" in Wisconsin Studies, 31-41.

[9]Grunwald, p. 14.

[10]Ibid., p. 14.

[11]Ibid., p. 14.

[12]Sumitra Paniker, "The Influence of Eastern Thought on 'Teddy' and the Seymour Glass Stories of J. D. Salinger" (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 1971).

[13]Grunwald, p. 14.

[14]Ihab Hassan, "The Rare Quixotic Gesture" in Grunwald, p. 138.

[15]French, p. 29.

[16]James Bryan, "J. D. Salinger: The Fat Lady and the Chicken Sandwich" in College English, XXIII (December, 1961), 226-9.

[17]Grunwald, p. 15.

[18]Ibid., p. .5.

[19]Ibid., p. 15.

[20]J. D. Salinger, Carpenters, p. 158.

[21]Paul Levine, "J. D. Salinger: The Development of the Misfit Hero" in W. F. Belcher and J. W. Lee, eds., J. D. Salinger (California, 1962), pp. 107-15.

[22]French, p. 36.

[23]Levine in Belcher and Lee, p. 112.

[24]Alfred Kazin, "Everybody's Favorite" in Grunwald, pp. 43-52.

[25]Seymour Krim, "Surface and Substance in a Major Talent" in Grunwald, pp. 64-9.

[26]David Stephenson, "The Mirror of Crisis" in Grunwald, pp. 36-41.

[27]Josephine Jacobsen, "Beatific Signals" in Grunwald, p. 167.

[28]William Wiegand, "Seventy-Eight Bananas" in Grunwald, pp. 123-36.

[29]Ibid., pp. 128-9.

[30]James T. Livingston, "J. D. Salinger: The Artist's Struggle to Stand on Holy Ground" in N. A. Scott, Jr., ed., Adversity and Grace, vol. IV of J. C. Brauer, ed., Essays in Divinity (Chicago, 1968), p. 123.

[31]Gwynn and Blotner, The Fiction of J. D. Salinger (London, 1960), p. 2.

[32]Hassan in Grunwald, pp. 138-63.

[33]Ibid., pp. 140-1.

[34]Ihab Hassan, "Almost the Voice of Silence: The Later Novelettes of J. D. Salinger" in Wisconsin Studies, 5-21.

[35]Hassan in Grunwald, p. 142.

[36]Hassan in Wisconsin Studies, p. 19.

[37]Dan Wakefield, "The Search for Love" in Grunwald, pp. 176-91.

[38]Tom Davis, "J. D. Salinger: The Sound of One Hand Clapping" in Wisconsin Studies, 41.

[39]Bernice and Sandford Goldstein, "Zen in Salinger" in Modern Fiction Studies, XII (Autumn, 1966), 313-24. Bernice and Sandford Goldstein, "Bunnies and Cobras: Zen Enlightenment in Salinger" in Discourse (Concordia College) XIII (1970), 98-105.

[40]Paniker, p. 2.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1]French, p. 25.

[2]J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye (New York, 1964), p. 141. All subsequent references in this chapter are to this text.

[3]J. D. Salinger, Carpenters, p. 130.

[4]Carl Strauch, "Kings in the Back Row: Meaning Through Structure, A Reading of Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye" in Marvin Laser and Norman Fruman, eds., Studies in J. D. Salinger (New York, 1963), p. 148.

[5]Hassan in Grunwald, pp. 138-63.

[6]Jonathan Baumbach, The Landscape of Nightmare (New York, 1965), p. 60.

[7]Strauch in Grunwald, pp. 143-72.

[8]Baumbach, p. 65.

[9]Gwynn and Blotner, p. 29.

[10]Donald Barr, "Saints, Pilgrims and Artists" in Grunwald, p. 172.

[11]Kenneth Hamilton, J. D. Salinger: A Critical Essay (Grand Rapids, 1967), p. 37.

[12]Levine in Belcher and Lee, p. 112.

[13]Hamilton, p. 25.

[14]Ibid., p. 39.

[15]Ibid., p. 39.

[16]Livingston, p. 121.

[17]David Galloway, The Absurd Hero in American Fiction (Texas, 1966). Galloway argues that Salinger, like Camus, writes directly of the absurd.

[18]Salinger is well known to express his literary tastes in his fiction. Zooey claims to have seen Christ while reading a volume of Dickens. In "Hapworth 16, 1924" Dickens is singled out as one of the authors whom Seymour heartily admires.

[19]Strauch in Laser and Fruman, p. 167.

[20]D. T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism (New York, 1965), p. 147. Suzuki is mentioned by name in Franny and Zooey, p. 65.

[21]Tom Davis, "J. D. Salinger" 'Some Crazy Cliff' Indeed" in Western Humanities Review, XIV:1 (Winter, 1960), 98.

[22]Baumbach, p. 66.

[23]Hamilton, p. 25.

[24]Strauch in Laser and Fruman, p. 169.

[25]Christmas Humphries, Buddhism (London, 1962), p. 99.

[26]Ibid., p. 159.

[27]Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature (London, 1970), p. 3.

[28]Suzuki, p. 84.

[29]Strauch in Laser and Fruman, pp. 169-70.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1]J. D. Salinger, Franny and Zooey (Boston, 1961), p. 49. All subsequent references in this chapter are to this text.

[2]Paniker, p. 2.

[3]Ibid., p. 2.

[4]George Steiner, "The Salinger Industry" in Laser and Fruman, p. 116.

[5]Sidney Finkelstein, Existentialism and Alienation in American Literature (New York, 1965), p. 231.

[6]There are many different schools of Vedantic thought. Salinger seems primarily influenced by the school of Sankara or Advaita (i.e. non-dualistic) Vedanta.

[7]Bernice and Sandford Goldstein in Modern Fiction Studies, pp. 313-24.

[8]Suzuki, p. 7 and p. 47.

[9]Hassan in Wisconsin Studies.

[10]Swami Yatiswarananda, "Towards Meditation" in C. Isherwood, ed., Vedanta for the Western World (New York, 1960), p. 74.

[11]Paniker, p. 139.

[12]Ibid., p. 143.

[13]Swami Yatiswarananda, "Realise the Truth" in Vedanta for the Western World, p. 146. The following

quotation further illustrates the need to dissolve the dichotomy between male and female: "The Divine is in me, in all, in everything. I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am the Self".

[14]In "Zen and Salinger" the Goldsteins argue that the haiku dissolves the dichotomy between fantasy and reality. This explanation is also quite plausible.

[15]Paniker, p. 146.

[16]Bernice and Sandford Goldstein in Discourse, p. 105.

[17]Paniker, p. 152.

[18]Kenneth Hamilton, "One Way to Use the Bible: The Example of J. D. Salinger" in Christian Scholar, XLVII (Fall, 1964), 247.

[19]Ibid., p. 247.

[20]Livingston, p. 123.

[21]Bernice and Sandford Goldstein in Discourse, p. 99.

[22]Hamilton in Christian Scholar, p. 250.

[23]Livingston, p. 129.

[24]Ibid., p. 130.

[25]Ibid., p. 125.

[26]J. D. Salinger, Carpenters, p. 248.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1]French, p. 78.

[2]Ibid., pp. 83-4.

[3]J. D. Salinger, Carpenters, p. 131. All subsequent references in this chapter are to this text.

[4]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, p. 5.

[5]Davis in Western Humanities Review, p. 98.

[6]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, p. 9.

[7]Ibid., p. 6.

[8]Ibid., p. 10.

[9]French, p. 80.

[10]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, pp. 15-16.

[11]Hamilton, J. D. Salinger: A Critical Essay, p. 30.

[12]Paniker, p. 87.

[13]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, p. 12.

[14]We learn in "Hapworth 16, 1924" that Seymour, when he was only seven years old, foresaw his death at or around the age of thirty.

[15]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, p. 18.

[16]Hamilton, J. D. Salinger: A Critical Essay, p. 31.

[17]Sam Baskett, "The Splendid/Squalid World of J. D. Salinger" in Wisconsin Studies, 52.

[18]Ibid., pp. 54-5.

[19]Eugen Herrigel, Zen in the Art of Archery (New York, 1953). Herrigel's explanation of his progress towards becoming a Zen archer was published in New York at a time when Salinger was avidly reading Zen literature.

[20]Paniker, p. 114.

[21]J. D. Salinger, "Hapworth 16, 1924" in The New Yorker, XLI (19 June, 1965), 60.

[22]Ibid., pp. 105-6.

[23]Herrigel, in Zen in the Art of Archery, explains that correct breathing is the foundation for all further progress in Zen archery.

[24]J. D. Salinger, "Hapworth", p. 106.

[25]Wiegand in Grunwald, p. 127.

[26]French, p. 84.

[27]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories, pp. 17-18.

[28]Seymour is here recalling the words of a Zen Master, who stated that a dead cat was one thing on which nobody could put a price.

[29]French, p. 151.

[30]J. D. Salinger, "Hapworth", p. 56.

[31]Ibid., p. 44.

[32]Ibid., p. 42.

[33]Ibid., p. 35.

[34]Ibid., p. 96.

[35]Ibid., p. 105.

[36]Alan Watts, The Way of Zen (New York, 1957), p. 194.

[37]Paniker, p. 101.

FOOTNOTES TO CONCLUSION

[1]Paniker, p. 3.

[2]Barr in Grunwald, p. 175.

[3]J. D. Salinger, Nine Stories (New York, 1964), p. 188. All subsequent references are to this text.

[4]J. D. Salinger, "Hapworth", p. 38.

[5]James E. Bryan, "A Reading of Salinger's 'Teddy'" in American Literature, XL:3 (November, 1968), 354.

[6]Ibid., p. 354.

[7]Ibid., p. 354.

[8]French, p. 132. French can make little sense of this story since he fails to recognize the religious ideas which Salinger is developing. He states: "Presumably a ten-year-old boy named Teddy has been pushed into an empty swimming pool by his six-year-old sister; but it is also possible that he has pushed her, or that either of them has jumped or fallen into the pool, or even that the thoroughly nasty little girl is just having a tantrum". These alternatives make little sense in terms of the story's structure.

[9]Paniker, p. 79.

[10]Bryan, p. 362.

[11]Barr, p. 175.

[12]Wakefield in Grunwald, p. 185.

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