

# The Predicament of Youth in J. D. Salinger's Franny and Zooey

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## Abstract

The present study of Franny and Zooey (1961) deals with Salinger's concerns about predicaments of youths that agonized the latter's life. Franny's main focus is on an undergraduate college student who finds herself amid college milieu stigmatized by materialism. She resorts to her brother Zooey in Zooey tale, who is troubled by the same predicaments of his sister, to assist her sort out their predicaments that are related to identity, family, religion, beliefs, life and death, education, source of power, and society. Zooey enables her, by the end of the novel, to mature and cope with society's shortcomings through wisdom. The paper illustrates unique adults struggle to adapt themselves to live a normal social American life. Yet, this struggle and suffering prove necessary to reach a moderate coexistence in which dwells mental and spiritual peace, tranquility and stability.

*Keywords: J. D. Salinger, religious experience, American youth fiction, predicaments, Glass young members, spiritual values*

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## Introduction

To the knowledge of the researcher this study is conducted and achieved with rare sources and references and is done with no peculiar literary reviews specialized for this novel. Yet, the available references cited were enough to fulfill the aim of this study.

Glass family is known for their interest in spirituality and indignation to materialism and conformist society seeking through protest a sound sociable exterior. They are unique for their distinct intellectualism. Franny and Zooey (1961) is concerned with the conflict between two generations: the world of innocent children and the perverted, futile world of adulthood. Through this conflict, the Glasses are obviously in a perfunctory relationship with the spirit of the twentieth century American society.

The youngest Franny of the Glass family and her older brother Zooey both are the cases under study. Salinger is skeptical, as Franny and Zooey, about the kind of intelligence and educational ideals set up as a standard in American life. He conveys in his Glass family saga a psychological insight into predicaments that plighted adolescents and adults who as idealists confront a corrupt world. The novel is a yearning for spiritual catalyzing and an attack on hypocrisy and triviality of American post-WWII culture through Franny's character portrayal in a college environment. As talented individuals, in spiritual terms, turned to be a blessing and a burden on Franny and Zooey. They suffer from feeling different, especially Franny who has a conflict with her role as an adult.

The short story Franny was published in the New Yorker magazine in 1955 first as a separate story, then made into a novel with Zooey 1957 in 1961, hence, it has two separate sections. One is concerned with Franny Glass the other is with Franny and Zooey Glass. It is a story of two young siblings of ex-vaudevillian parents and child celebrities of a talk show called "It's a Wise Child". They are much affected by the teachings of their older deceased brother Seymour. The latter's suicide left them a vacant spiritual guide and voice of authority in the family. Franny in Franny section undergoes a nervous breakdown after lunch in a restaurant with her boyfriend Lane Coutell, who is an undergraduate English major student at an unidentified Ivy League College. Determined to keep alive the love affair with Lane at the Yale game, Franny finds out that her hope is wearing off. She resorts to a religious book called *The Way of a Pilgrim* as a reaction to revive religious and spiritual values neglected by her college community personified in the character of Lane.

Franny's predicaments in Franny and their remedies in Zooey are the core of Franny and Zooey. Franny's predicaments have two sides. The first is that she is dissatisfied with the milieu around her, much of which has to do with educational, familial, spiritual, and social issues. The second has to do with herself which will be demonstrated by her brother in Zooey section. Her first appearance in the novel is in a letter written for Lane. She confesses in the letter that she has "to strain to write it" (Salinger, 1964, p.15). The letter manifests her emotional frailty and inferiority status to Lane's intellect. It shows that she is concerned with his opinion and feels insecure about her intellectual abilities. According to her, he is superior to her (Bezci, 2008, p.7). She writes:

Dearest Lane

I have no idea if you will be able to  
decipher this as the noise in the dorm  
is absolutely incredible tonight and I  
can hardly hear myself think. So if I  
spell anything wrong kindly have the  
kindness to overlook it. Incidentally  
I've taken your advice and resorted to  
the dictionary a lot lately, so if it  
cramps my style you're to blame.  
...P.P.S. I sound so unintelligent and  
dimwitted when I write to you. Why? I  
give you my permission to analyze it.

(Salinger, 1964, pp. 4– 5)

Franny's conversation with Lane is a series of miscommunication and misunderstanding. She cannot touch her own meal while Lane eats his food with pleasure: snails, frogs' legs, and salad, whereas Franny's forehead sweats, her face pales and her hands shiver. He finishes everything on the plate as Franny sits in torment. Franny and Lane's behaviour is similar more in degree than in kind. Lane's single obsession is with his paper on Flaubert which it got an 'A' while Franny's obsession is to rouse Lane's interest in her little book *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Both of them display the same obsession in a sole idea which upset them when they find it in others. Lane's predicament is not only obsession in work, his other predicament lurks in loving people, such as Franny, to inflate his ego (French, 1963, p.141). Although not all is unknown about Lane's childhood, his problem lies in his incapability to go through steps of identity formation sanely. Throughout identity

development he remains in the identification stage. Identity formation is a social process that is based on abandonment of childhood identification through "selection and commitment". Instead of developing his identity through obtaining socially acceptable and personally desirable values from his environment, he identifies with the intellectual circle of his college, the intellectual group. The invasion of the group norm to his personality is so complete that his real identity ceases to exist literally by which his identity formation is damaged (Bezci, 2008, p.7). This invasion turns him into a fanatic character. He is introduced as "one of the six or seven boys out on the open platform. Or, he was and he wasn't one of them" (Salinger, 1964, p. 9) because he stood deliberately aloof from the "conversation range of the other boys" (Salinger, 1964, p. 9). He is not interested in Ray Sorenson, one of the boys who asked him about Mr. Rilke's assignment, because he "had a vague, categorical aversion to his face and manner" (Salinger, 1964, p.6) as he thought that he belongs to the intellectual label of his college. Also, his selection of the restaurant goes along his group's norms "Sickler's, a highly favoured place among, chiefly, the intellectual fringe of students at the college" (Salinger, 1964, p.10). He seeks approval of his clique in the restaurant when he was accompanied by Franny. They are tools of his struggle to belong and look like an 'intellectual':

Lane sampled his drink, then sat back and briefly looked around the room with an almost palpable sense of well-being at finding himself (he must have been sure no one could dispute) in the right place with an unimpeachably right-looking girl. (Salinger, 1964, p.11)

He passes through a futile quarrel with Franny due to his fanaticism in displaying refusal of the validity of other points of view other than his or his clique. As a socially restrict-minded person he debates with people until he is the winner obliterating their perspectives. That reason makes Franny accuse him that he is "analyzing everything to death" (Salinger, 1964, p.6) and that he "couldn't let a controversy drop until it had been resolved in his favour" (Salinger, 1964, p.18). He is inattentive to Franny's state of mind or her not feeling well for being engrossed with the idea of being right in his argument. Lane's shallowness continues when he considers

Franny's department having the best professors in the country because their poems are anthologized, blowing the deep fact that inspite of being anthologized , one could be a bad poet. According to Harry T. Moore (1969) Lane "argues patiently and reasonably and all his opinions are the tolerant, broad- minded, intelligent ones which are accepted in... the contemporary enlightened circles (p.100).

Lane is an ego-centered, selfish and offensive-mannered boyfriend "thoroughly relaxed, stomach full" who dismissed all of what Franny had to say which leads her to excuse herself only to faint at the end of Franny. His selfishness is obvious in urging Franny twice to have a look at his paper, busy making the Yale-game on time and not bothering about Franny's untouched meal. Lane is the intellectual symbol that Franny Glass abhors. He is living a typical American culture in the fifties, which condensed knowledge for the sake of knowledge as if it is fame or wealth, a culture that bears affinity with microcosmic college culture characterized as being: flaunted, bombastic, conformist and materialistic, a matter that annoyed the young Glass members. On the other side of this culture a journey of spiritual and self-exploration typically took place in the character of the youngest Franny Glass, during her twenties, with the aid of her older brother Zooey Glass. She agonizes over academic phoney, her boyfriend Lane Coutell, her concerned parents and her hard-loved brother Zooey. Franny is found in Franny a distressed college girl coupled with Lane to a weekend revelry in which she did not find any spiritual feedback. She leaves a chicken sandwich uneaten. She experiences unpleasant feelings in 'Sickler's' and a sense of guilt that is noticed by Lane "in the last couple of weeks" (Salinger, 1964, p.27). She develops a critical sense of society's values. She exhibits signs of identity "breakdown" or identity "confusion". The interaction of the youth with their society suggests a development of identity that is approved by the latter, which is not found in Franny. Bezci (2008) adds:

the idea of leaving previous identification and formation of new identity is what makes this period problematic.... the danger of this stage is role confusion ... synonymous with identity confusion. ... It is one of the elements of the psychological crisis. The adolescent [those who are over 18 years old] has to find a balance between identity confusion and identity to reach... fidelity to society. ... It is an acceptance inspite of the

imperfections his society has. ... "young people can be clannish, and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are 'different'."... lives in a society for which he feels contempt and all his identity is based on his individual values. Consequently adolescents who cannot provide a proper balance between identity confusion and identity, either face the malignancy of repudiation which is the case of Franny or the maladaptive tendency of fanaticism which is the case of Lane. [ *Italics mine*] ( pp. 4–5 )

Accordingly, Franny does not complete identity formation properly. She is embarrassed for leading a life or sharing values with no one around her. She feels infamy at college and the Department of Theatre which are based on inflated egos. Her severe and lengthy conversation with Lane is an embodiment of her repudiation of membership to this segment of society which she rejects. She defies her community by wishing to be "an absolute nobody " (Salinger, 1964, p.29) that is fulfilled through quitting her work in theater. She is lost trying to look for the absolutes desperately. For her 'absolutes' match ordinary people "But our whole conception of progress is based on the idea of turning everyone into an important somebody" (Moore, 1969, p.103). Her antisocial and dissatisfaction predicaments extends to criticize Theatre Department students because they all want to "get somewhere, do something distinguished and all, be somebody interesting" (Salinger, 1964, p.28) accusing them of being conformists. She believes that "they look like everybody else, and talk and dress and act like everybody else"(Salinger, 1964, p.25). She dissents highly conformist people who simultaneously pretend to be distinct from others. She is sick of "everybody else that wants to make some kind of a splash" (Salinger, 1964, p.29).

For the critic Barry Grant (2002), students have neither a love of learning nor a desire for wisdom, nor a sense of what is beyond prestige and money, no one of them understands what is important in life ( p.8). Knowledge for Franny must lead to wisdom. This renders the whole educational system fruitless for the Glass family members. As long as the academic world sabotages the real artistic world, she suffers a predicament of what she is and what she expects life to be (Gomes, 2017, pp.134–135). Ihab Hassan (1962) announces that youths are seeking an idea of truth ( p.263) and Franny tests the beautiful through the test of what is true to which she

objects Lane's approving of two professors as "poets" because "they're just people that write poems that get published and anthologized" (Salinger, 1964, p.18). Franny believes that poets are supposed to "leave something beautiful" (Salinger, 1964, p.19) to reach the heart not only the mind. She describes the professors' poems as being "syntax droppings" (Salinger, 1964, p.20). She manifests her discomfort of Lane's speech by comparing him to a "section men" who "ruined" authors and tearing down them in the presence of other students to construct their egos. She is "just so sick of pedants and conceited little tearer-downers I could scream" (Salinger, 1964, p.17). She belittles Lane's erudition displacing him from his ivory tower of intellectual excellence to an anonymous novice degrading his academic attainments, as hollow and sham, and pretentiousness ("Franny & Zooey" Chapter IV, n.d., p.171).

Franny's character is a satire on "fake" intellectual circles that leads the Glasses to suffer an educational predicament which is divided into two factions: home teachings and college teachings. Lives of Glasses are not revolved around college success or socialization but around figuring out who they are and how they should live. Through those previous notions, siblings have to confront a religious predicament. They are the product of a mixed marriage, their mother, Bessie Glass, is an Irish Catholic and their father, Les Glass, is Jewish. The family is never identified as being practicing Jews or Catholics. This amplifies the religious turmoil of the Glass family members. Being born to two religions muddle the path in finding God. Salinger sheds light on religions by mentioning Zen Buddhism, Toaism, Hinduism, Judaism or Christianity since they are all paths to the same spirituality and God-seeking (Katz, 2009, p.58). For the Glasses spirituality is what matters the most: "Religious and mystical beliefs become an important part of their [Glasses] lives as a way to escape reality or to make this reality more meaningful. ... religious Knowledge in search of a religious experience is a very relevant part of the Glasses Childhood, as well as of their adulthood (Gomes, 2017, p. 120).

Religion is depicted as a human experience in the Glass family. This experience is vandalized by Lane Coutell, hence, she resorts to *The Way of a Pilgrim* which she borrows from her elder brother's room Seymour. This book is an attempt to re-connect with the milieu around her and by which she starts looking for help. It describes the effort of a 19<sup>th</sup> c. anonymous Russian peasant to learn how to obey the injunction in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, to "praying without ceasing" (Salinger, 1964, p.37). Then he met a Starets from whom he learns the "Jesus prayer" which is "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me" until "the prayer becomes

self-active. ... and the words get synchronized with the person's heartbeats... which have a ...mystical effect on your whole outlook" (Salinger, 1964, p. 37). She continues to Lane "I mean you do it to purify your whole outlook and get an absolutely new conception of what everything's about" (Salinger, 1964, p. 37 ).

For Franny this book represents a peculiar significance. For her the principal goal of incessantly saying the Prayer is to transform the quantity into quality. It constitutes her new life devoid of trivial people and shallow values in a world full of pedants excited to brag about their erudition instead of being pilgrims enthusiast for learning (French, 1963, p. 142). She yearns to be an anonymous pilgrim after she abandons the stage and thinks currently of abandoning her major in English. She is frustratingly tired of ego and the world fails to support her with a respectable man. The book highlights her anguished search for God that is obvious in her attempts to be united with the Jesus Prayer aligning herself with spiritually powerful other seeking God's blessing and applaud. She projects her existential predicament on the protagonist of *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Unfortunately, she pursues in the prayer a solution to her insufficiencies and an escape from her responsibilities to others by offering her love to God without bothering about people.

The core of her quest for God, at first, is that it is so self-directed that it is bound and destined to fail (Katz, 2009, p.64). She proceeds vainly trying to convert Lane "you might like this book,"... "It's so simple, I mean" (Salinger, 1964, p.35). "Simple" expresses the message of the book that appeals to Franny "the love of spiritual beauty" (Bode, 1962, p.67). But she does not touch the religious experience she longs for since she expects a change to happen after the prayer. Further, this prayer leads her deeper into a hypercritical retreat from reality which affects her identity formation, conception of the world, and dealing with non-Glass members. Her fidelity to the religious book forms the final step of repudiation which will not bring her sanity (Bezci, 2008, p.11). These monastic teachings cannot save Franny as the depiction of the final scene suggests. She faints because she undergoes "a physical and nervous collapse due to conflict between her involvement with a crude insensitive boyfriend and her desire for a pure, spiritual love experience" ("J. D. Salinger" Encyclopedia of World Biography, 2004, n.p.). She cannot bear her identity confusion anymore. Whispering the Jesus Prayer renders her more faint and hindered until it becomes meaningless, and an idle amulet. By repeating it she seeks a spiritual connection to God to relieve her emotional pain. But it proves an uncomfortable solution and a futile attempt.



While Franny proves difficult to interact with by anyone outside the Glass family members like Lane, the conversation with Zooey Glass in Zooey tale is close to pure and perfect communication. Zooey events constitute the answer to Franny's quest. Zooey is near in spirit and age to Franny. Salinger uses the family as a source of safety and tension. Franny's family is the cause of her predicament and they are the source of its resolution. Unlike their peers, the Glass members have shown powers and impress others with their broad knowledge; "wise, talented ...as they all seem – their common background is defined... by the radio program... to lose themselves into an imaginative or altruistic ideal" (Hassan, 1962, pp. 278–279). Their appearance on this program as children was a sacrifice of their private lives when they impart to the audience an imitation of authenticity they so desire. They are made partially aloof from the adult world of normal American life.

For over sixteen years they established their superiority over ordinary children which would not stigmatize their characters as adults necessarily but mutilate their ability to live purely. They are alienated as geniuses and adults and unable to cope with life, worse, they attempt to escape it. Their consciousness of their disposition as being gifted individuals, sensitive, readers, thinkers, having supreme moral thought and being aware of the awfulness of the world made them perceptive of the world's imperfections and shortcomings. Still, they did not surrender their quest for God or life. This quest integrates Franny with its sequel Zooey. The members of the Glass family are haunted with the quest for genuine meaning of life through "master signifiers" ("Franny & Zooey" Chapter IV, n.d. , p.179) for they confer power, security, protection, and meaning. Although the Glasses are not an ideal family, they are close-knit one. Glasses young siblings find consolation through lessons and teachings of Seymour, their older deceased brother who committed suicide nearly seven years ago, and Buddy Glass, a kept writer at an unnamed college. They are more intelligent and gifted than their parents, hence, they become religious and spiritual mentors to Franny and Zooey, without the parent's interference, reminding each other that parents ought to be respected and loved for everything. Seymour is considered a seer, wisdom provider, spiritual teacher, calm, serene, and a God-like figure in the Glass family. As Katz (2009) declares : "the presence of the analyst in Salinger's stories embodies ... the need... to embrace a voice of authority" ( p.43).

Seymour and Buddy studied various and numerous religions including those from Eastern cultures. The issue of religion is made a tool to debate belief issues "the power of language, is not only a form of religious practice, but also the articulation of belief. Religious

experience cannot happen without belief" (Gomes, 2017, p.125).

Each Glass member tends to emphasize on an ideology that alters them in the course of life. Seymour established Franny's and Zooey's belief system which is destabilized by Seymour's suicide. His is an immense loss because young siblings lost a spiritual guide more than losing a brother. Even after his death he remains a strong influence on the family as a guru. He taught them to dismiss life and focus on spirituality in life. By his death, Franny and Zooey's faith and their will to live is shattered.

For that reason, Franny quits acting in college when she told Lane at lunch: "I'm not afraid to compete. It's just the opposite ...I'm afraid I will compete... that's what scares me" (Salinger, 1964, p.30). She mixes her obsession of the Jesus Prayer with obtaining a higher profound spiritual connection with Seymour to become closer to him. She shows trait of "post-traumatic stress disorder" because Seymour's absence was too overwhelming for her to endure. Franny has not progressed or matured enough in her life. Instead, she remains in the same emotional state (Madore, 2009, p.37).

Franny's short career on "It's a Wise Child" turns to be both a burden, leading her to confront her identity issues and getting entangled with the belief system of her own, and a blessing through Seymour's created influence with his "quest, as Zen would put it, for no-knowledge" (Salinger, 1964, p.65) patterned for Franny and Zooey. Seymour's choice to commit suicide defines the other siblings' choices in life. Ironically, he transferred to his siblings what he could not practice. Buddy, Franny, and Zooey continue their adulthood as artists/ entertainers to obtain a lifework while living and searching for God. They are created by Salinger to prove that they possessed the spiritual wisdom which society lacks. In the opening lines of Zooey Buddy Glass is found informing in his letter to Zooey four years ago that Zooey has been "fighting a private war against narcissism he had been fighting since he was seven or eight years old" (Salinger, 1964, p.92).

This long war prevents him from looking directly at the mirror when shaving in the bathroom. He is aware that he is the antonym of the social norm due to his intelligence and inherent abilities to the extent he feels that most people are worthless to know. He is careful to invalidate the type of egotism he used to detest in those surrounding him. Zooey is much like Seymour but seeks not to be so. He "is ... placed second in order of preference, or appeal" (Salinger, 1964, p. 54) in which Seymour is the first. He has a premature nature, most charismatic and best looking, magnetic among the Glass children. He is a celebrated "actor, a leading man, in television" (Salinger, 1964,

p.52). His rebellious and judgmental side stems from his home teachings. This informal, untraditional, heavily, and spiritually based home education wounds Zooey's psyche since it highlights crucial disparities between himself and other youths his age. It was not completely successful which rendered him and Franny more isolated (Katz, 2009, p.39). Their fears of confronting the real world are a kind of faithfulness to their mentor Seymour who projects how he and Buddy wished their selves to take shape onto Franny and Zooey. Psychologically speaking, Zooey's shunning and alienation is an indication of his traumatic issues that make him suffer and see little reason to continue lessening the necessity of maturity and adulthood as Warn French (1963) states:

The real horror of growing up is that we are forced either to accept or develop moral codes that sometimes oblige us to make uncomfortable decisions or else to drift about aimlessly and apathetically with a frustrating sense that our lives lack any substantial center. ( p.168)

Zooey is forced to occupy the place of mentor and protector in the family after Seymour's death. The negative side of Seymour's home teachings appears in a conversation in the bathroom between Zooey and Bessie Glass when he blames his eldest brothers for his antisocial nature and his emotional scars "We're freaks, the two of us, Franny and I ... and both those bastards are responsible" (Salinger, 1964, p. 103). Learning too much too young as a child, and being committed to finer standards of knowledge and wisdom made Zooey sacrifice his living a normal life which, in turn, affects his adult personality "We've got 'Wise Child' complexes. We've never really got off the goddam air. Not one of us. We don't talk, we hold forth. We don't converse, we expound. At least I do" (Salinger, 1964, p.140). Another predicament of Zooey is his negativity, over sensitivity, and passing judgments on his fellowmen that lead to internalization of anger as he declares "I'm tired as hell of getting up furious in the morning and going to bed furious at night. I go because I sit in judgment on every poor, ulcerous bastard I know" (Salinger, 1964, p. 137). His predicament lies in being maladjusted with non-Glass members so arduous that he develops an ulcer "when I'm not thinking properly, I let my feelings about television and everything else get personal" (Salinger, 1964, p.163). His ulcer, Franny's breakdown at the end of Franny, and Seymour's

suicide are signs of their predicaments. Salinger intended Zooey to focus on Franny's predicament. Zooey tackles hers several days later after the restaurant events when her unresolved predicaments continue. Currently he is the most qualified member to understand her through the gift of true vision. His real role is to mediate between the old generation ( Seymour and Buddy) and the young ones (himself and Franny) to establish a familial connection among siblings. He initiates a series of quizzes to Franny about her breakdown, prayer and, religious feelings inspecting as far as he can into her mind to distill answers.

To Zooey, her wish to win a selfless highly spiritual level is connected with expanding her ego "there's no difference at all,... ,between the man who is greedy for material treasure or even intellectual treasure and the man who is greedy for spiritual treasure" (Salinger, 1964, p.148). Her breakdown is caused by her defeated ego in a collision with Lane's. Zooey points out to her that she is emphasizing her own will and ego and is not subordinating herself to God's will, "This is God's universe, ..., not yours, and he has the final say about what's ego and what isn't" (Salinger, 1964, p.167). He affirms to her that she has to choose who to believe in to achieve the religious experience, "how you can pray to a Jesus you don't even understand" (Salinger, 1964, p.169), "you don't face any facts... is what got you into this messy state of mind" (Salinger, 1964, pp. 169 – 170) " If you don't understand Jesus , you can't understand his prayer" (Salinger, 1964, p.171).

Zooey's rude rebuke comforts her, the comfort that she needs since it is neither false nor egocentric. He admonishes her for her over repetition of the Jesus Prayer urging her to recognize the sacred people and religious acts and comprehend the religious actions around her. She misses daily life religious actions as well as the religious experience she might have, because she seeks the holy moment straightly where she sees God, like when she misses Bessie's chicken soup "if it's the religious life you want ... you're missing out on every single ... religious action that's going on around this house", Zooey further adds "How in hell are you going to recognize a legitimate holy man when you see one if you don't even know a cup of consecrated chicken soup when it's right in front of your nose?" (Salinger, 1964, p.196). Zooey concludes that religious knowledge is possible only with religious experience which must happen from the interior to the exterior promoted by mutual love among humans. As Dara Katz (2009) reveals about Franny: "Her ideal ego seeks strength and power from her association with ego ideals. Not through religious discourse only but it may be found in daily rituals of life" (p.179). Symbolically she is offered chicken sandwich in the restaurant that she left

untouched. Again she refuses her mother's chicken soup, an evidence of her rejection of the mother's Eucharist of love (Bryan, 1961, pp.228–229) and its basic significance in her course of life: " You don't even have sense enough to drink when somebody brings you a cup of consecrated chicken soup – which is the only kind of chicken soup Bessie ever brings to anybody around this mad house (Salinger, 1964, p. 196).

Franny remains absorbed in her distress in the living room until she realizes that her need and curiosity for spirituality is involved with her incessant need to "talk to Seymour" upon which Zooey channels appropriate attention and support suitably to heal his muddled and depressed sister. He moves to the sacred bedroom of Seymour and Buddy with a handkerchief on his head to signal his respect of the holy place of their learning and education. The phone line, which is in Seymour's name, is kept to eternalize his name and symbolize his extended influence. He decides to roam and read the religious quotations pinned on the columns of the bedroom's walls which render Zooey to undergo a spiritual shift by one of the notes tacked at the backside of the abandoned room, the Catholic mystic De Caussade line which indicates that suffering is a prerequisite for growth as well, it is a source of wisdom, "when he moved again, it was as though marionette strings had been attached to him and given him an overzealous yank" (Salinger, 1964, p.182). He maneuvers her predicament by presuming Buddy's voice on the phone. His reading dozens or so quotations from great writers and fascination for oriental and eastern discourses of the past illuminates him and makes the same point he is trying to put across to his sister. He advises her "the only religious thing you can do, is act.

Act for God" (Salinger, 1964, p.198). It is by art that actors reflect truth and authenticity successfully back to audience as well as their own "to shoot for some kind of perfection" (Salinger, 1964, p.199). By which Franny accommodates the meaning of being "God's actress". Next, he mentions to her the antidote of the "Fat Lady". He recalls to her childhood memories when they were stars of the radio show "It's a Wise Child" and when he rejected shining his shoe before the show on which he and late Seymour appeared:

" I remember ... I ever went on 'Wise Child' .... I ... wasn't going to shine my shoes for them , I told Seymour. I said they couldn't see them anyway, where we sat. he said to shine them for the Fat Lady" (Salinger, 1964, p. 200).

Without expecting something from the Fat Lady or the audience who may be all morons. Seymour's "Fat Lady" represents a reminiscent of Buddha, a modernized concept of a religious belief, (Madore, 2009, pp.14–15) or metaphorically represents any higher

deity ( Madore, 2009, p.41). Zooey identifies the Fat Lady as being everyone including professor Tupper whom Franny hates "I'll tell you a terrible secret ... There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady. That includes your professor Tupper," (Salinger, 1964, p.201). Suddenly Zooey realizes that Seymour's Fat Lady which is a metaphor for the ugly and vulgar person in the audience is Jesus Christ "don't you know who that Fat Lady really is? ...It's Christ Himself" (Salinger, 1964, p.202). As Ihab Hassan (1962) states "Salinger's intentions are more in keeping with self-created innocence, with those of primitive Christianity and Zen" ( p.260).

Franny responds to Zooey for the first time and feels capable to connect surfaces of life with its spiritual matrix and have her predicaments resolved ("Franny & Zooey" Chapter IV, n.d., p.195). She "finds it ... beautiful to listen to ... as if all of what little or much wisdom there is in the world were suddenly hers" (Salinger, 1964, p. 202). Franny's recognition of the Fat Lady notion makes her realize the substance of the Jesus Prayer as well as the religious experience (Gomes, 2017, p.147). Zooey's insight of the Fat Lady as Christ brings about revelation, and spiritual peace, "the vulgarian and the outsider are reconciled" (Hassan, 1962, p.283) , and Franny's "tenth – rate religious breakdown" ends. Her recovery lies in attempting to perfect herself rather than condemning those around her, and that their phoniness and stupidity are none of her concern.

The novel weaves many predicaments that affect the lives and choices of its protagonists. These predicaments are interrelated. The major one which has a magnificent role Salinger tackles is the family. It is the source of many complications and it is also the cure. Franny and Zooey are akin to each other, therefore, Franny's irritable friction with non-Glass members renders her appeal to her brother to get the relief she needs. The antisocial nature of the Glasses and its members dissatisfaction make them suffer alienation and dissociation from the world. They find the society small, pedantic, materialistic, and snobbish.

The siblings judgmental tone stem from their education and upbringing. Education is another predicament for the Glasses. Franny goes through a mental collapse because of the egotistical nature of the college system. She has complaints about students and professors who condense knowledge for the sake of knowledge in a narcissistic manner. According to her, knowledge should lead to wisdom. She has "a compelling desire to commune and communicate, a desire constantly thwarted by the phoniness, indifference, and vulgarity surrounding her" (Hassan, 1962, p.273). She strives to touch humanity to "leave something beautiful". In Zooey she realizes that home

teachings supersede world teachings, because Zooey is "a kind of anthology of the wisdom of the past" (French, 1963, pp.144 – 145).

Zooey considers knowledge and self-knowledge ways to defining the truth about one's self that make the individual accomplish perfectibility, improve the self, and reform society. This wisdom makes Franny distrust the adult world with Lane while she does trust it with Zooey. She identifies herself with one of Seymour's possessions: an idea, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, that causes her intellect to evolve and change. This religious predicament grants her the motive to proceed in life away from what she has been feeling. Franny simply becomes a prelude to the magnitude of the search for individual salvation through religion. Franny longs to give meaning to her life, to transform her position of weakness to that of power. Salinger draws inspiration and values from Eastern philosophies and Russian folk tales employing the Buddhist principle of transcending ego to undermine society's mode of thinking and expose its spiritual emptiness.

Consequently, spiritual predicament lays its shades on the Glass siblings, particularly after Seymour's death. His teachings harbor Franny and Zooey safely and save them from spiritual deterioration and Seymour's path which led the latter to the point of no return. Although Seymour's impact is indefinite, Franny and Zooey can compensate and coexist with this loss: "Zooey appears to have been written to make people see that what matters is not the negative burlesque of the inflated ego, but the positive conquest of it" (French, 1963, pp. 142–143). Franny reaches a phase of self-revelation in distinguishing the "real poets" from the fake ones, although she fails at the beginning to understand what is meant by "beautiful" and how to find it. But in Zooey "There are nice things in the world" (Salinger, 1964, p.152). This nice world is a virtual refuge from the egotistical people and phonies that threaten to devour them. Paul A. Doyle (1964) states that:

The principal figure has reached a state of spiritual illumination which enables him to overlook the selfishness, the inconsiderateness, and even the brutality of his fellow humans. Attitudes of understanding, love, kindness, and forgiveness are the ideals towards which mankind should work. Giving and receiving love and understanding renders one a happier, more complete person and brings one closer to a relationship with the Godhead. ( p.80)

The gap between the end of Franny and the end of Zooey is considerable and demonstrates a love predicament. Franny ends with a tone of quiet hate, while turned in Zooey into a message of universal love. The hatred is gone and love prevails. It is in Zooey that Franny finds compassion and love that she misses with Lane "If love is to survive in a world where personal communication has signally failed; then it can at least survive in universal compassion" (Hassan, 1962, p.276).

Franny and Zooey explore their shared concerns of bitter aversion and protest which proves non – binding in the end of the novel . Franny's predicaments are dismantled through the course of the novel and converted her, by the aid of Zooey, from a state of ignorance to profound wisdom and enlightenment through conceding partially to the world to have an existence neither entirely incorporated into the earthly-bound world they dwell in nor thoroughly apart from it. Franny is Salinger's exposition of predicaments of religion, which is offered to bind individuals and suggest a sense of belonging, beliefs , knowledge, values, family, society, education, source of power, life and death, and continuity which some engendered in their society but ceased in their family. Zooey , on the other hand, is Salinger's advice for a spiritual tenant to be followed by adults that transcend the limits of time and space: to have mercy and love for all humans regardless of who they are. It adopts a mode of living neither too materialized nor too spiritualized and to embark on a coexistence its main aim is to live in harmony blissfully coping with the shortcomings of life and people cleverly to accomplish self-perfection, tranquility, and stability.

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## محنة الشباب في رواية جيروم دايفد سالنجر فراني وزووي

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### المستخلص:

تتمحور الدراسة الحالية لرواية فراني و زووي (1961) حول اهتمامات الكاتب جيروم دايفد سالنجر بمحن الشباب التي أرقت مسيرتهم في الحياة ,حيث يسلط القسم الاول من الرواية فراني الضوء على طالبة جامعية تجد نفسها محاطة بمجتمع موسوم بالمادية فتلجأ في القسم الاخر من الرواية زووي لأخيها و الذي بدوره يعاني من ذات المحن التي تمر بها شقيقته ليساعدها في تخطي هذه المحن المتعلقة بالهوية و العائلة و الدين و المعتقدات و الحياة والموت و التعليم و التربية و مصدر القوة و المجتمع. و في نهاية الرواية تمكنت فراني من التحول الى شابة ناضجة قادرة على التأقلم مع هفوات المجتمع بحكمة. ان هذه الدراسة توجز معاناة و صراع شباب يافعين و محتتهم للتكيف مع حياة المجتمع الامريكي السائدة آنذاك . مع ذلك أثبت هذا الصراع و المعاناة ضرورته للوصول الى مستوى تعايش معتدل ينتعش به السلام و الهدوء و الاستقرار النفسي و الروحي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : جيروم دايفد سالنجر، التجربة الدينية، الادب الامريكي الشاب، أصغر افراد عائلة كلاس، القيم المعنوية