"For Esmé--with Love and Compassion":  
J. D. Salinger's "Positive" Art

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ABSTRACT

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The basic conflict dominating Salinger's fiction, particularly his earlier work, is the conflict between the "innocence" of the protagonist and the "squalor" of the world around him. The protagonist must adapt or die. In this thesis I propose to explore Salinger's use of an underlying growth pattern as a structural basis for much of his "positive" art. In Salinger's "positive" work the protagonist is able to come to some sort of resolution of this conflict and thus attain at least a partial integration into society; the "negative" alternatives are spiritual death or suicide.

"Growth" for the protagonist involves a movement from an immature "love," which is uncompromising in its insistence upon the purity of the objects of its love, to a mature "compassion," a love combined with an understanding of the "fallen" human condition, which can accept imperfection rather than being forced to reject an "imperfect" object or person. In "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor," this change occurs in both the narrator
and Esme, though with the narrator the focus is upon the emotional crisis of the conflict, while with Esme the focus is upon the transition from "love" to "compassion" as part of the overall growth to adulthood.

This pattern serves also as the structural basis for The Catcher in the Rye and "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period," as well as, to a certain extent, Franny and Zooey.

In my final chapter I attempt to indicate how this "love-compassion" pattern is reflected in Salinger's later works either in form or in his attempts to explore philosophical solutions to the conflict of innocence and squalor.
TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION ................................. 1

CHAPTER I:
FOR ESME—WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION . 6

CHAPTER II:
CATCHER AND CARROUSEL .............. 31

CHAPTER III:
DE DAUMIER-SMITH AND BEYOND:
A NEW DIRECTION ... 66

FOOTNOTES ...................................... 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................... viii
INTRODUCTION:
In this thesis I propose to explore J. D. Salinger's use of an underlying growth pattern as a structural basis for much of his "positive" art. The basic problem dominating Salinger's fiction, particularly his earlier work, is the conflict, implicit or otherwise, between the "innocence" of the protagonist and the "squalor" of the world around him. The protagonist must adapt or die. In Salinger's "positive" work the protagonist is able to achieve some kind of resolution of this conflict and thus attain at least a partial integration into society; the "negative" alternatives are spiritual death—Eloise's despair in "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," or actual death—Seymour's suicide in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish."

Salinger's view of man is essentially Calvinistic. The (adult) human condition is that of fallen man. But children (and the dead) retain a prelapsarian innocence. (In "Teddy," the doomed ten-year old prodigy tries to explain how he would educate children: "...I don't know. I'd just make them vomit up every bit of the apple their parents and everybody made them take a bite out of." ¹) The primary "theological" problem in Salinger's work is "squalor": the evil, or phoniness, or simply imperfection, which corrupts the potential purity of life. Salvation for his characters depends on an emotional development from an immature "love" to a mature "compassion." "Love," in this context, refers to
the uncompromising, unqualified love of the "innocent" for "pure" objects or people. Any corruption of this "purity" by "squalor" constitutes a cataclysmic betrayal for the innocent (or immature) character unfit or unready for compromise; intense love turns to an equally intense hate and rejection. Absolutist love is ultimately untenable in a "squalid" world. "Hell is the suffering of being unable to love": in order to love in that world the character must develop "compassion," love combined with acceptance of the "fallen" human condition. Compassion can admit imperfection without forcing the rejection of the imperfect object or person.

In "For Esme--with Love and Squalor," both Esme and the narrator move from "childhood" (in the case of the narrator, a psychological rather than a chronological state) to maturity, a process accompanied by a change from an immature "love" to a mature "compassion." The two elements, physical growth and emotional growth, are never completely separable, though with Esme the emphasis is on this transition as an element of the overall development to adulthood (the "growth" pattern), while with the narrator the focus is upon the emotional impact of the conflict which forces this transition (the "crisis" pattern). In the dual focus of this story, Salinger appears to be exploring the implications of this pattern, a pattern which later serves to structure *The Catcher in the Rye* and "De Daumier-Smith's
Blue Period"--as well as, to a certain degree, Franny and Zooey.

In The Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield follows a similar growth to maturity, but it is combined with a more marked element of satire against the "phoniness" of society. Even while Holden is slowly moving towards compassion, society is being criticized in the discrepancy between its "game-oriented" values and Holden's intense concern for people as individuals who must be judged in human terms.

The influence of this "love-compassion" pattern extends to Salinger's later works, though his approach shifts away from meaning through human experience to a more abstract philosophical and "religious" approach, in which he increasingly attempts to explore and to impose meaning through the quasi-religious pontifications of Teddy, Zooey, and Seymour. In "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period," the human understanding of the narrator's two visions is reinforced through the use of semi-mystical overtones. In Franny and Zooey, Franny turns to an obscure religious book and later to Zooey's gloss of the Fat Lady parable for enlightenment and salvation.

My treatment of the later works is relatively sketchy, since the major problems which they raise lie outside the scope of this thesis. My intention in discussing them is solely to indicate, where possible,
how they reflect Salinger's earlier "love-compassion" theme either structurally or philosophically.

The "love-compassion" theme by no means exhausts the possible interpretations of Salinger's writings, but hopefully it may lead the reader to new insights into the possibilities of his art.
CHAPTER I:

FOR ESME—WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION
In discussing Salinger's short story, "For Esme--with Love and Squalor," criticism has tended to see it, along with much of Salinger's other work, as being organized around what Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner have described as "the basic human conflict between love and what Salinger's Esme calls squalor--that is evil, trouble, inhumanity, and sin" (p.3). Gwynn and Blotner, in accord with this "basic conflict," break the story into a scheme in which four "squalid" (p.6) forces are neatly counterbalanced by four demonstrations of "love" (p.7). The schema ultimately, however, is unconvincing, and the basic conflict" they postulate is too simple to account for the complexity and power of the work.

Instead of this simple conflict, whose "good-bad" implications would be too soon exhausted to sustain a complex story or body of work, a careful examination of this story will reveal embodied in the three primary characters and their development different aspects of a complex love theme with underlying patterns of great significance for an understanding of Salinger's art which go far beyond a simple polarity of love and squalor.

The central character of the story is its narrator, "cunningly disguised" in the latter half as Sergeant X. Our initial view of him chronologically, not structurally (chronology, rather than structure, seems the best avenue of approach for an exploration of growth patterns),
comes while he is in pre-Invasion army training in Devon, England, awaiting D Day.

The nature of the environment in this section of the story, both in the army company and in the town, is striking and significant. In sharp contrast to the horrors of the war, the atmosphere here is manifestly non-destructive. The group is composed essentially of loners, each going his own non-military way, with the narrator's taking him in "scenic circles around the countryside," and on rainy days to dry places where he can read a book. There are no gung-ho, bayonet-wielding G.I.'s screaming "Kill!"; the narrator's "trigger finger" itches "imperceptibly, if at all" (p.88), and it is flashes of lightning, rather than bullets, that "either had your number on them or...didn't" (p.89). The tranquility and serenity of this section, particularly when considered in contrast to the war-atmosphere of the next section, suggests a prelapsarian Salingeresque Eden (though there may be hints of the fall), an environment protected from the intrusion of brutality by such devices as Esmé's spelling out "s-l-a-i-n" (p.97) to protect five-year-old Charles from knowledge of their father's death. A drunken soldier throws an empty whiskey bottle through the window of Esmé's house, but the implicit destructiveness of the act is averted by the fact that "Fortunately the window was open" (p.94). The only other destructive image occurs when the narrator describes himself just an "axe length" (p.88) away from a ping-pong table.
Along with this insulation from "adult" brutality, we find in this section an absence of adult order and social restraint. Army regulations, which parallel in a more rigid way the rules of adult society, are here notably lax and tolerant of the narrator's child-like idiosyncrasies: The narrator wears his cap at a non-military angle all his own, for instance, "slightly down over both ears" (p.89). Far from making demands upon him (in contrast to the normal rigidity of the system, which is epitomized in the section which follows, when he and his jeep-mate will have to get up at five in order to get back in time to fill out some new forms which the officer in charge already has but doesn't want "to open...yet" [p.109]), the army section in this section does little more than provide the narrator with toys. He happily jettisons his gas-mask (in this atmosphere he has no need of protecting himself), and subverts its canvas container to his personal use as a repository for his extra books. And when he synchronizes his watch "with the clock in the latrine" (p.89), it seems less a parody of the rigidity of army regulation or a protest against it than the happy child-like act of a Salinger misfit hero in a permissively benign atmosphere. (We may hear echoes of this in Buddy as his narration takes on "precisely the informality of underwear."\footnote{3})

A third factor contributing to the child-like innocence of the atmosphere in this section is the absence of a well-defined adult community in which the narrator will be
forced to participate. Of the 60 men in the training course, the narrator reveals, "there wasn't one good mixer in the bunch. We were all essentially letter-writing types" (p.88). In the time left over from lectures and their presumably prolific letter-writing, "each of us went pretty much his own way" (p.88). What conversation there is "out of the line of duty...was usually to ask somebody if he had any ink he wasn't using" (p.88). In fact, they all sound like so many "cunningly disguised" Sergeant X's. Gwynn and Blotner, in their analysis of the story, interpret this atmosphere, "the dullness of pre-Invasion training and the incommunicativeness of his sixty male mates" (p.7) as one of the "squalid" forces against which the protagonist is set off. What they fail to consider is the narrator's own obvious lack of discontent with his situation. It is rather the reminders from the "Other Side" which seem to represent the squalid: his wife's complaints (in her letters) about the service at Schrafft's, and his mother-in-law's request for "some cashmere yarn first chance I got away from 'camp'" (p.137).

It is unlikely that the presence of "good mixers," whose marked absence is presumably deplored by Gwynn and Blotner, would further communication. Rather, it would necessitate a larger volume of small talk—a hardly acceptable alternative considering the bookish introversion displayed by the narrator or our early view of Esmé as a "small talk detester" (p.93). The narrator, far from seeking
"adult" stimulation of "good mixers," rejects the crowded Red Cross recreation room, with soldiers "standing two and three deep at the coffee counter" (p.91), in favor of an empty civilian tearoom. The environment in which the narrator finds himself in this part of the story is, in fact, not "squalid" but "purified," purified of squalid "incommunicativeness" of small talk, the type of small talk which Holden Caulfield later decries: "The Navy guy and I told each other we were glad to've met each other. Which always kills me. 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." It is only small talk, not communication, that has suffered. When the narrator orders afternoon tea he notes, "It was the first time all day I'd spoken to anyone" (p.91). Yet it is only in this "incommunicative" environment that the way is most emphatically open for communication, a communication that the narrator finds, significantly, with two children.

On the afternoon preceding the evening departure which is to be the first step on the way to his participation in D Day, the narrator's "own way" leads him into town, where he drops in on a children's choir rehearsal. He has first carefully read all the names posted outside "of the children expected to attend practice" (p.89)—almost as if by learning their names he will join their company—before entering the church. One child in particular catches his attention. She is about thirteen, with "blasé eyes that...might very possibly have counted the house. Her voice was distinctly separate from the other children's voices..." (p.90). He leaves after listening to their singing "without any inter-
ference" (p.90) of instrumental ("adult") accompaniment
"before the coach's dissonant speaking voice could entirely
break the spell the children's singing had cast" (pp.90-91).
It is at the empty tearoom, which he chooses over the Red
Cross recreation center, that he meets Esmé and her five-
year-old brother, Charles. They are having tea with their
governess and she is curious about that phenomenon, a tea-
drinking American. The ensuing conversation serves pri-
marily to give us a picture of the narrator's two new
friends, but there is self-revelation too in his account.

In commenting somewhat defensively upon the soldier
who threw an empty whiskey bottle through the "fortunately
open" window of her aunt's house, Esmé asks, "'...does that
sound very intelligent to you?' (p.94) In the narrator's
response ("It didn't especially, but I didn't say so. I
said that many soldiers, all over the world, were a long
way from home, and that few of them had had many real advan-
tages in life"[p.94]), we can sense two roles. In his
verbal response to Esmé, he is taking on an adult role in
attempting to teach her to be more compassionate, something
she must learn in order to integrate herself into an adult
community. In his own personal response ("It didn't
especially"), however, we can see that he himself also lacks
the compassion that he is trying to teach her. His most
emphatic "love" response, in fact, is to the direct (albeit
forced) love act of Charles' kissing him goodbye (which is,
in turn, part of Esmé's attempt to teach Charles compassion),
to which he responds by re-asking Charles' riddle so that
Charles may have the pleasure of delivering the punch-line. Like Charles, he responds in terms of love rather than compassion.

The scene now changes as we move to the "squalid" (p.103) part of the story. It is now several weeks after V-E Day and the narrator (in his disguise of Sergeant X) is stationed in Germany. Although we are not told anything specific about his recent activities, it is clear that the war has brought him to the edge of a complete nervous breakdown. As he sits smoking, "abruptly, familiarly, and as usual, with no warning, he thought he felt his mind dislodge itself and teeter, like insecure luggage on an overhead rack. He quickly did what he had been doing for weeks to set things right: he pressed his hands hard against his temples" (p. 104). The "squalor" which brought him to this point has not ended with the war. Although he had washed his hair several times during a stay in the hospital, it is dirty again, because Corporal Z had insisted on driving him back with the jeep windshield down, combat-style, armistice or no armistice. Like the dirt in his hair, the squalor of the human condition cannot be washed away permanently.

Reaching for a book at random, he opens a copy of a book by the psychotic Nazi, Goebbels, and encounters the inscription, written "in small, hopelessly sincere handwriting" by the 38-year-old Nazi spinster whom he had himself arrested, "'Dear God, life is hell'" (p.105). This inscription, the final product of an ultimately squalid system, "appeared to have the stature of an uncontestable, even
classic indictment" (p.105). X, whose own encounter with the squalor of what he has recently seen has been leading him towards the same conclusion, stares at the book, "trying, against heavy odds, not to be taken in" (p.105). In an attempt to combat it, he writes down Father Zossima's statement, ""Fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain it is the suffering of being unable to love,"" but is frightened to find "that what he had written was almost entirely illegible" (p.105).

He looks around desperately for something else and discovers a letter on the table from his older brother, and stops at the words "how about sending the kids a couple of bayonets or swastikas"(p.106) now that the g.d. war is over. He tears up the letter, then finds he has also torn up a snapshot he had overlooked; in destroying the squalor, he is also destroying the humanity that accompanies it.

Most revealing, however, is X's attitude towards Corporal Clay, his jeep partner and constant companion through the war. X now responds only to the squalor he finds in Clay, remaining unresponsive to Clay's sincere, if inept, attempts to be friendly and helpful. He asks Clay to get his "stinking feet" (p.109) off his bed. (The problem of Clay's "squalid" personal habits is similar to the problem Holden later faces with Ackley.) In contrast to his earlier "compassion" for the drunken soldier with his empty whiskey bottle, X now refuses to listen to Clay's excuse that he was "temporarily insane (p.110) from the shelling when he shot a cat on the hood of the jeep (a conclusion verified by his girl friend's psychology class),
and instead sarcastically condemns Clay's action as brutal, cruel and dirty. Overcome by this exchange, and perhaps too by recognition of what is happening to him when Clay asks if he can't ever be "sincere," X gives way to the squalor within himself and vomits into a wastebasket. To Clay's further tentative attempts to be helpful, he can only respond, "Leave me alone now" (p.111).

X has reached a point of total despair. With shaking hands he clears his desk, then buries his throbbing head on the typewriter. Looking up a few minutes later, he stares at a small package he had somehow not noticed before. Without curiosity, he opens it, more interested in watching the string with which it is tied burn (his method of opening the package), than in the prospects of the "communication" of its contents.

The package is from Esmé, and in the letter which is enclosed she apologizes for her delay in writing but her aunt has nearly "perished" (p.113) of streptococcus of the throat and she has therefore been "justifiably saddled" (p.113) with numerous responsibilities. Charles adds a P.S. of pure communication and love: "HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO LOVE AND KISSES [sic] CHARLES" (p.113). In this letter, we can see that Esmé has achieved the mature compassion that X still lacks. X has remained at the immature "love-hate" stage in which love and squalor are antithetical and irreconcilable. The untenability of this position in the adult world lies in the inseparability of the two; in X's absolutist rejection
of squalor, he discards also the humanity which is enmeshed within it. In rejecting Clay's "stinking feet" he refuses also Clay's genuine concern for him—"C'mon down and listen to Hope on the radio, hey...It'll do ya good. I mean it" (p.111). Esmé, on the other hand, when faced with the squalor of the adult world—for which she may have been preparing in her romantic "interest" in "squalor" in the tearoom meeting—responds by assuming a mature role and accepting responsibilities. The maturity of her outlook, as well as her reconciliation of love and squalor (her love for her aunt and the squalor of her aunt's illness) is indicated by her designation of these responsibilities as "justifiable." Instead of being sickened by the human condition, she achieves a real compassion for humanity caught within it, a compassion that manifests itself primarily in her "concern" (p.113) for Sergeant X, a man she has met only once. (The "X" in this context takes on an almost algebraic function, converting the force of Esmé's concern for one man into a universal concern for all men.) She has achieved understanding and mature love.

When X finally puts down the letter, he lifts the watch (originally her father's, who had given it to her as a "momento") which Esmé has sent him as a "lucky talisman" (p.113) and discovers that the crystal has been broken "in transit" (p.114). The process which has characterized X's immature outlook and has brought him to the point of nervous collapse is here reversed. Up to this point he has seen things in terms of "squalor" (Clay's stinking feet) first,
and rejected both the squalor and the humanity associated with it. But now he has seen the love first, and he realizes that in accepting this love he must also accept the squalor—the broken watch crystal—which accompanies it. The broken watch crystal cannot be taken as some sort of irrelevant squalid blemish detracting from Esmé's act of love and somehow separable from it. True, Esmé did not send a broken watch; it was broken "in transit"; yet it has become part of her act of love. For only by be willing to accept this risk was Esmé able to communicate with X and provide an expression of her love. The condition of the watch may humorously or ironically undercut Esme's claims about its being "extremely water-proof and shock-proof" (p.113), but it cannot undercut the validity of her final humane motivation of sending it as a "lucky talisman," a symbol of her compassion.

Released by this insight from the unbroken wall of squalor he had built up around himself, the narrator, his "f-a-c-u-l-t-i-e-s" restored, falls into peaceful sleep.

In our final view of the narrator (which is our first structurally), we see him as a fully integrated member of an adult community. When he received the invitation to Esmé's wedding, he first thinks "it might just be possible to make the trip abroad, by plane, expenses be hanged" (p.87). But in line with his maturity and acceptance of adult responsibility he discusses the matter "rather extensively" (p.87) with his "breathtakingly levelheaded" (p.87) wife, and, he says, "we've decided against it" (p.87). The tone here certainly reflects an irony, but it is lightly borne, and the change in the narrator's outlook
from that in the war section is profound. The narrator may not be deadpan about his situation, but he is willing to accept it. The "we've decided" is partially a humorous rationalization of his own lack of dominance over his wife, but it also reflects his acceptance of his responsibilities. And though there is a faint mockery in his reference to Mother Grencher's age, still, there is a measure of compassion too in his pointing out that his mother-in-law "is looking forward" to her annual visit to them, an interest in how she feels rather than simply in the fact of her stay. He is more ready to accept and understand than he was back in England, when he dismissed letters from both women as "stale" (p. 91).

Ultimately, the narrator recognizes the significance of what has happened; he states his purpose in writing about it as being "to edify, to instruct" (p. 87). Most of all, however, his understanding is reflected in his choice of title: "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor"--the unity, rather than the antithesis, of the two is what Esmé has revealed to him.

Though we can sense the underlying growth pattern in Sergeant X's development from immature love to mature compassion, the focus is upon the emotional impact of the crisis. The major interest centers around the conflict itself, as X's immature love struggles against and is almost destroyed by squalor. In the case of Esmé, on the other hand, the focus of interest lies not with the crisis...
itself, but rather with its archetypal significance as part of the growth and transition from the "innocent" world of childhood to the "squalid" world of adulthood.

When we first see Esmé, she is clearly at the stage when this transition must begin. When the narrator first notices her, she is singing in a children's church choir, a world dominated by parents "bearing pairs of small-sized rubbers, soles up, in their laps" (p.89), and a singing coach who exhorts her young pupils to ever greater efforts by confronting them with the example of the little "dickeybird" who opens "his little beak wide, wide, wide" (p.89). Esmé is "about thirteen" (p.90), entering puberty (the first step on the way to adulthood), and is already distinguished from the children by the narrator's reference to her as a "young lady" (p.90). Esmé's own desire to indicate her non-child status reveals itself in her emphatic "Really, I wasn't quite born yesterday, you know" (p.94).

It is obvious, too, that Esmé is no longer content in the children's world of the church choir: "The young lady, however, seemed slightly bored with her own singing ability, or perhaps just with the time and place; twice, between verses, I saw her yawn" (p.90). Her boredom with "the time and place" reflects her own restless discontent, her unconscious awareness that she has been in the children's world too long. Boredom with her own singing ability can be understood if considered in light of her conversation with X when she announces that she wants to become a "professional singer," not of "Opera" (as the "immature" X first suggests), but of "jazz," and she wants to "make heaps of money" (p.93).
"Opera," in its refined "intellectual" rather than commercial appeal, would be merely an extension of the unsqualid and non-adult world she is now in in the church choir. Esmé, unlike X, is eager to move into the adult commercial world "and make heaps of money." Far from being afraid of "prostituting" her talent, she is eager to put it to use in the adult world.

While X remains happy in this non-destructive children's world, and seeks out children rather than adults to be with, one of Esmé's most marked traits is her eager curiosity about the adult world she is waiting to enter. When she asks the narrator whether he is "very deeply in love with...his wife" (p.95), she is not being impertinent but rather is displaying a deep interest in the realities of the adult world. (The situation is ironic, of course; the narrator is trying to play the role of child and never really answers her question but merely reassures her that her question is not over-personal—which indeed it is not, since it is directed towards the adult world rather than at the narrator alone.) Esmé's zest for the prospect of life in the adult world also reveals itself in her choice of subject matter for the story she has asked X to write for her. After stipulating that it not be "childish and silly" (p.100), she indicates that she would prefer it to be about "Squalor. I'm extremely interested in squalor!" (p.100). Esmé has not yet had a chance to face this interesting stuff directly (her father was killed in North Africa and the circumstances of her mother's death are
never mentioned), and she, unlike X, who is quite content in the absence of it, seems to regard squalor as a sort of exciting challenge of the adult world.

Esmé's tendency to be calculating and analytical (traits presumably in conflict with spontaneous love), which has bothered many critics, can also be understood as a manifestation of an intense adolescent curiosity about the nature of the world, especially about the nature of the adult world. From "counting the house" (p.90) at church choir rehearsal to analyzing the personalities of her parents, Esmé is both a "statistics-" and a "truth-lover" (p.92). In her intense desire to understand the world, Esmé becomes aware of and records every detail of it, and takes things apart to see what holds them together. She analyzes her parents' personalities ("Mother was an extremely intelligent person. Quite sensuous, in many ways!" [p.95]) in order to understand their marriage ("'My mother was quite a passionate woman. She was an extrovert. Father was an introvert. They were quite well mated, though, in a superficial way. To be quite candid, Father really needed more of an intellectual companion than Mother was...") [p.97]), and to understand herself ("'...I look exactly like my father'" [p.97]) as she enters the adult world. Even her desire for a story about squalor is part of her attempt to observe and analyze the nature of the adult world.

Instead of using the non-destructive environment of this section as a playground as X does, Esmé uses it as a practice field. Though X may correct her ideas ("I told
her that was a pretty snobbish thing to say, if you thought about it at all" [p.94]), he does not attack her ("I hoped it was unworthy of her" [p.94]). Relatively free from the danger of sarcastic or condescending reprisal, Esmé makes use of the opportunity to practice her extensive (and often inaccurately used) "adult" vocabulary, both in English and French. (We might note that she does not employ her first "big" word until a point where she feels assured of the narrator's non-condescending attitude towards her. At which point, in fact, she even pauses to make sure the narrator's vocabulary is up to her own: "'Usually, I'm not terribly gregarious,' she said, and looked at me to see if I knew the meaning of the word" [p.95].) Her desire to practice being an adult even causes her to refuse to acknowledge the incompleteness of her knowledge (her childishness)—in response to the narrator's hesitant admission that he isn't very prolific, Esmé eagerly replies that the story "doesn't have to be terribly prolific! Just so that it isn't childish and silly" (p.100).

Ultimately, of course, all of Esmé's analysis and vocabulary will be inadequate to make her a satisfying adult. The most serious charge against her, in terms of Salinger-esque values, is recognized in her "My aunt says I'm a terribly cold person" (p.95). There is nothing in her analytical tendency and "clinical look" (p.98) to distinguish her from Clay's girl friend, Loretta, who is characterized chiefly by her habit of filtering information through her college psychology class in order to arrive at
definitive opinions or conclusions. This is the most serious obstacle Esmé must overcome in facing adulthood. Her entire conversation is, in fact, part of her effort to overcome that obstacle: "'I'm training myself to be more compassionate'" (p.95). Fighting her "not terribly gregarious nature, Esmé forces herself to respond to the narrator's "extremely sensitive face" (p.95). Her compassion in this section, like her ambitious vocabulary, is a practice effort. In the absence of a squalid environment, Esmé's compassion for the narrator's "loneliness" is pleasant but hardly a response to the distress of the human condition. At the conclusion of her interview with the narrator, Esmé takes the opportunity for further practice by volunteering to write to him—neither he nor she is yet aware of the "squalor" to come (Esmé is presumably unaware of the plans for D Day) which will render Esmé's compassion a necessity rather than just a pleasant gesture.

The next stage of Esmé's development is displayed in her letter. Esmé has encountered squalor (the near-death of her aunt). Her response has been a rapid assumption of responsibility. In thirty-eight days she has achieved maturity; she accepts her responsibilities as "justifiable." Most important, however, she has responded to her encounter with squalor with a confirmation of her compassion. In the face of her own troubles, she can feel "very concerned" (p.113) about the plight of X. Perhaps recognizing the
definitive opinions or conclusions. This is the most serious obstacle Esmé must overcome in facing adulthood. Her entire conversation is, in fact, part of her effort to overcome that obstacle: "'I'm training myself to be more compassionate'" (p.95). Fighting her "not terribly gregarious nature, Esmé forces herself to respond to the narrator's "extremely sensitive face" (p.95). Her compassion in this section, like her ambitious vocabulary, is a practice effort. In the absence of a squalid environment, Esmé's compassion for the narrator's "loneliness" is pleasant but hardly a response to the distress of the human condition. At the conclusion of her interview with the narrator, Esmé takes the opportunity for further practice by volunteering to write to him—neither he nor she is yet aware of the "squalor" to come (Esmé is presumably unaware of the plans for D Day) which will render Esmé's compassion a necessity rather than just a pleasant gesture.

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significance of her father's act in leaving her his watch ("Purely as a momento, of course'" [p.100]), Esmé now assumes the role of compassionate adult in rendering the same token to the "immature" X as a "lucky talisman." Broken in transit, the watch will be of no more mechanical use to him than it was to Esmé; but its important function remains whole for both.

In her ability to achieve compassion, Esmé succeeds where the German woman has failed. In her compassion, her ability to understand and love in the face of squalor, Esmé escapes the "hell" of being "unable to love" that has defeated the German woman and has almost defeated the narrator. For Esmé, squalor serves to make love more, not less, valid and important.

The closing of the letter, "Sincerely yours, Esmé" (p.113), may at first sound antithetical to the idea of her having learned compassion, but in reality, it is just this that distinguishes and confirms Esmé's motive in writing as being compassion, rather than a more self-interested love. On the one hand, "sincerely" tends to remove the possible suggestion of sexual attraction (as might be expected of an adolescent, sexually developing, girl) as motive. On the other hand, "sincerely" also distinguishes the "mature" compassion of Esmé from the "immature" "LOVE AND KISSES" (p.113) of Charles. There is also in Esmé a literal-mindedness, part of her devotion to statistics and the truth, which may make her seem cold when she is merely being precise.
The final stage of Esmé's development is found in the introduction, when the narrator receives an invitation to her wedding. Marriage, especially for a female, is the final stage of integration into the adult community. The marriage tells us nothing new about Esmé—we do not even learn the young man's name. It serves only to define the archtypal significance of this point in Esmé's development as a necessary stage in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Her compassion has made her an adult emotionally; in her marriage this adulthood is confirmed socially. And put away with her childhood is her old relationship with the narrator; he can now sort out his impressions in a "few revealing notes" since, the transition completed, there will be no further revelations.

Although Charles may appear to play a minor role in this story, he nevertheless possesses a considerable importance for its theme. In both the narrator and Esmé we watch the growth to maturity and compassion. In Charles we are presented with the nature of immature love in a definitive way, rather than in relation to the growth process. And it is also through Charles, through their behavior with him, that we can see the different levels of love and compassion in both Esmé and narrator.

Charles embodies the characteristics of Salingeresque childhood. Like the "immature" narrator, he demonstrates a blatant disregard for society's laws (Miss Megley's orders) and conventions: "He immediately picked up his
napkin and put it on his head" (p.92). His communication with others is almost entirely physical. In juxtaposition to Esmé's "coldness," the narrator becomes aware of Charles through feeling his "warm breath on the back of my neck" (p.96). To attract the narrator's attention, he employs an "importunate tap, almost a punch" (p.98) on his arm. His second telling of the riddle is accompanied by "stepping up on one of [the narrator's] feet" (p.100), and when his punch line is stolen he "stepped down off" his foot. His later (albeit forced) reconciliation is accomplished with "a loud wet smacker just below the right ear" (p.102), in contrast to Esmé's handshake. The "immature" narrator responds with physical communication, too, holding Charles by "the half belt at the back of his reefer" (p.102) while he re-asks the riddle for him. The Salingeresque aspect of Charles' childhood is further amplified by the presence of Esmé, who plays a "catcher-like" role in taking care of him and protecting him from the abyss of "adult" squalor. She spells out "s-l-a-i-n" in his presence to keep from him the knowledge which would destroy the carefree innocence of his childhood.

The nature of Charles' love is portrayed in his relationship with the narrator, a relationship which revolves around reactions to Charles' oft-asked riddle. This riddle is Charles' proudest possession; any disparagement of it or threat to his title to sole knowledge of the answer is a blow aimed directly at him. Having punched the narrator's
arm to get his attention, Charles poses his testing question: "What did one wall say to the other wall?"
The narrator concedes defeat and Charles triumphantly shouts out the answer: "Meet you at the corner!" As might be expected, "It went over biggest with Charles himself" (p.99). The narrator compliments (an act of love) Charles on his riddle (i.e., Charles himself). In response to this act of love, Charles sinks almost entirely under the table and looks at the narrator with "exposed eyes" (p.99), his own act of love. A few moments later, feeling more "familiar," Charles again interrupts the conversation and, stepping up on one of the narrator's feet (a more intimate physical gesture than his earlier punch), repeats his riddle. The narrator, "looking him straight in the eye" (p.100), gives him the punch-line. Charles' reaction is immediate. He steps down off the narrator's foot "without looking back" (p.100) and stalks away.

Charles' violent temper" (p.100) reflects the "immaturity" of his love, a love whose absolutism, in contrast to compassion, can broach no impediment or "squalor." In refusing to look back, Charles completely rejects the narrator: what children cannot see, does not exist. It is this absolutism and inability to love or understand that which does not fall within the proper bounds that Buddy later comments on: "neither are most young children notably large-hearted [i.e., compassionate]" (Seymour-- An Introduction, p.179).
The untenability of Charles' position is obvious; the same riddle cannot be asked twice within the space of five minutes with impunity. The "mature" Esme insists upon a recognition of reality—"'You asked him that... Now, stop it'" (p.100). But Charles rejects unpleasant unreality. A similar immaturity of outlook can be seen in Holden Caulfield. When it starts to rain in the cemetery where Allie, whom he had idealized, is buried and people start running "like hell" to their cars, he is driven nearly "crazy": they can all "get in their cars and turn on their radios and all...—everybody except Allie" (The Catcher in the Rye, p.156). He lacks the mature compassion necessary to reconcile the squalor of reality with his love.

It is the "mature" Esme who leads to a reconciliation. She drags Charles back to kiss the narrator goodbye. The narrator then, compassionately, re-asks the riddle. Charles exuberantly shrieks out the punch-line that has been restored to him. Charles' final response to this act of love by the narrator is found in his uninhibited postscript to Esme's letter: "HELLO HELLO HELLO...LOVE AND KISSES CHALES." This is the epitome of pure love and communication of the "immature" character. Esme's growing compassion is signaled by her concern with the details of X's situation, while the spontaneity of her love has "matured" into "sincerity" ("sincerely yours"). Charles is subject to no such constraints—-or understanding. His innocence breeds a purity of love, but a love that is in-
adequate to cope with "squalor"; although he loves the narrator, he is blissfully unconcerned about his situation.

Charles does not appear in the "adult" world of the introductory section. Removed from the non-destructive, unsqualid environment in which we have seen him, Charles, as he is, could no longer survive. Esmé has said in her letter, however, that she has been teaching him how to write. Six years later, he too may be ready to undertake the same process of transition that we have watched in Esmé.

"For Esmé--with Love and Squalor" embodies, in perhaps their clearest form, the major aspects of the "love-passion" theme which underlies Salinger's "positive" work. The equation of compassion with the attainment of maturity can be seen in earlier work, but in a cruder form. In "The Long Debut of Lois Taggett," a self-centered young debutante is brought, through a series of "maturing" encounters with squalor (an unsuccessful marriage with one man, marriage to another she doesn't love, maternity, the death of her child), to compassion for her husband. Unfortunately, Lois' act of compassion (she urges him to put on his white socks--colored socks, though more stylish, make his feet itch) comes only after a paragraph has been devoted to heralding its significance--"She finally made it..." (p.162).

It is the separation of aspects of Salinger's theme that makes "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor" especially interesting for discussion; the same patterns, less clearly separated and defined, recur constantly in other works.
The nature of Charles' innocence and love is, of course, basic to the development theme. The development of Esmé and the narrator present us with two different, though never totally separable, approaches to the growth theme. In the development of the narrator, the focus is upon the crisis—the emotional impact of the confrontation with squalor. In the development of Esmé, the focus is upon the pattern of growth as a whole. This story is unusual in dividing the process between two characters. In most of Salinger's other major work, the whole process is embodied in a central character, though either the "crisis" or the "growth" element may be dominant. Certain works, such as *The Catcher in the Rye* and "Franny," are essentially "crisis" works focusing upon the emotional impact of the confrontation with the squalor of the adult world, though the "growth" aspect is still (implicitly or explicitly) present, orienting the character's development. "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period," on the other hand, shows a dominant "growth" pattern, with the "crisis" being resolved in a rather blinding burst of insight.

The patterns in "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor" constitute an almost definitive exploration of the archetypal elements of Salinger's early love and compassion theme, and they provide an excellent basis for an understanding of the structure and development of his later work.
CHAPTER II:

CATCHER AND CARROUSEL
The "innocence" of Salinger's "children" is primarily a social innocence. The possible incestuous implications in Holden Caulfield's relationship with Phoebe may be of interest to Freudian critics, but they are not Salinger's subject, nor are other questions of that type. Childhood "innocence"—ignorance of "adult" squalor—is accompanied by ignorance of or the ignoring of "adult" social conventions: five-year-old Charles deposits his napkin on his head and makes rude noises; the "little kid" in the museum buttons his pants up "right where he was standing... he didn't even bother to go behind a post or anything" (The Catcher in the Rye, p. 202).

If innocence, then, is linked to ignorance of the ways of society, there is an inherent implication that society is corrupt. In "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor," the emphasis is upon the general nature of the human condition as it figures in the development from childhood to maturity. The "squalor" Esmé encounters in the war is symbolic of the general squalor of human nature and the adult world. This squalor is treated as the problem of the human condition; there is little directed criticism of specific targets. Esmé, in fact, is eager to grow up and face the challenge of squalor and the adult world.

In The Catcher in the Rye, on the other hand, the "corruption" of adult society, in addition to being treated as a problem of the human condition, also becomes the target of satiric attack. Holden Caulfield is an
adolescent facing the "crisis" of the transition from childhood to maturity, but he brings to it a more fully (though not always consciously) realized set of values than we have seen before. The adult society which Holden is to enter demands that one act in accord with its system of values--material success, defined in terms of wealth and status--and evaluates people according to this system. Holden, on the other hand, insists upon evaluating people on the basis of their sincerity, and condemns them not for poverty but for "phoniness." The book's satire results from the discrepancy we see between the innocent Holden's human-oriented values and the corrupt system-oriented values of society, which are irrelevant to and thus lead man away from human-oriented values.

In commenting on one inadequacy of The Catcher in the Rye--its failure to provide a means of making people "useful" to society--Warren French comments, "Being simply a saint requires no education" (p.118). Further consideration, however, will reveal this to be a distinct oversimplification, growing primarily out of too narrow an understanding of the term "education." The Catcher in the Rye is distinctly a novel of education--of the acquisition of knowledge. The point is that formal education, as it is conceived in the world of both Salinger and his appreciative audience, provides no preparation for sainthood at all. It is an education which concerns itself with learning, not wisdom; with material, not spiritual success. Holden can't become interested in his classes and is flunking out of school, but he exhibits a continual fascination with the
proper study of man, people themselves. His interest in
people leads him to an almost morbid concern with their
faults ("squalor") as he tries to come to an understanding
of them. The inadequacy of the formal educational system
lies in its own failure to demonstrate any similar interest
in the humanity of the people it controls.

Holden's Pencey Prep becomes a microcosm of the real
world, socially and spiritually. Socially, this is Hol¬
den's world; the people here are the same people he will
have to face throughout his life. Even in New York, trying
to get away for a few days, he still finds himself in a
world dominated by "prep school jerks" (p.83) and teachers
(even the nuns are teachers). He thinks only in terms of
the type of entertainment which falls into a prep school
pattern--night clubs and the Lunts. Spiritually, Pencey
Prep teaches the values of his society ("'Since 1888 we
have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young
men'" [p.2]). Any person must come to terms with life
within his own given social situation; barring the type of
total break which he himself recognizes as being untenable
in reality--going off with Sally, or playing at being a
deaf-mute for the rest of his days--this is the world with
which Holden must come to terms.

The dominant metaphor for the values of society is the
game. The headmaster, Dr. Thurmer, tells Holden at his
final interview, "'...about Life being a game and all. And
how you should play it according to the rules!'" (p.8). This
is the metaphor of a society dominated by competition. This
society expresses itself in the symbolic competition of games:
"The [football] game with Saxon Hall was supposed to be a very big deal around Pencey. It was the last game of the year, and you were supposed to commit suicide or something if old Pencey didn't win" (p.2).

Holden undercuts the complacency of this standard with his concern for the loser: "Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game; all right—I'll admit that. But if you get on the other side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game" (p.8). Holden's failure to play the system's game results in his failure at Pencey; but it is a failure due to his refusal to play, not his inability. As Holden puts it, "They kicked me out" (p.4); he is not a "loser" but a rebel, who, for not following the rules, is being kicked out of the game. His incompatibility with society's system is further reflected in his own attitude towards games. The "school sport" is football, a highly competitive game. Yet Holden has only a detached view of it as he watches from "way the hell up on top of Thomsen Hill" (p.2). His description of the game emphasizes its meaningless: "You could see the whole field from there, and you could see the two teams bashing each other all over the place. You couldn't see the grandstand too hot, but you could hear them all yelling..." (p.2) There is no indication of which side is which, or that it matters. Holden is also the manager--"Very big deal" (p.3)--of the fencing team (symbolic killing), but he leaves all the weapons on the subway in New York. This too results in his alienation from the
group—"The whole team ostracized me the whole way back on the train. It was pretty funny, in a way" (p.3). Holden is constantly aware of his opponent, and cannot bring himself to win at the expense of another person: "I hate fist fights. I don't mind getting hit so much—although I'm not crazy about it naturally—but what scares me most in a fist fight is the guy's face. I can't stand looking at the other guy's face, is my trouble" (p.90).

The values important to society are symbolized for Holden in the school's responses to Ossenburger and James Castle. Ossenburger "made a pot of dough in the undertaking business after he got out of Pencey....you could get members of your family buried for about five bucks apiece...We probably just shoves them in a sack and dumps them in the river" (p.16). The profiteer of death is the God of this society. Ossenburger is the exemplar of material success, donor of dormitory wings, and as such has become Pencey's social (he shows up at the first football game in his Cadillac and is given a locomotive cheer) and spiritual (he speaks to the boys in chapel) leader.

James Castle (as with Jean de Daumier-Smith, the initials may be significant), the individual who refuses to yield his integrity, becomes the victim of this society:

There was this one boy...James Castle, that wouldn't take back something he said about this very conceited boy, Phil Stabile. James Castle called him a very conceited guy, and one of Stabile's lousy friends went and squealed on him to Stabile. So Stabile, with about six other dirty bastards, went down to James Castle's room and went in and locked the goddam door
and tried to make him take back what he said, but he wouldn't do it. So they started in on him. I won't even tell you what they did to him--it's too repulsive--but he still wouldn't take it back, old James Castle. And you should've seen him. He was a skinny little weak-looking guy, with wrists about as big as pencils. Finally, what he did, instead of taking back what he said, he jumped out the window. I was in the shower and all, and even I could hear him land outside. But I just thought something fell out the window, a radio or a desk or something, not a boy or anything. Then I heard everybody running through the corridor and down the stairs, so I put on my bathrobe and I ran downstairs too, and there was old James Castle laying right on the stone steps and all. He was dead, and his teeth, and blood, were all over the place, and nobody would even go near him. He had on this turtleneck sweater I'd lent him. All they did with the guys that were in the room with him was expel them. They didn't even go to jail. (p.170)

James Castle dies for his insistence upon personal integrity; his murderers go unpunished by society's law. Personal integrity is not one of the values of this society; no one is even willing to go near the dead body. (J.C.'s body should be an object of worship.)

(Holden's own integrity at one point leads him into a parallel situation. Refusing to pay the pimp Maurice an extra five dollars which he is trying to extort from him--"If you'd said ten, it'd be different!" [p.102]--Holden undergoes a similarly repulsive treatment--"I won't tell you where he snapped it, but it hurt like hell" [p.103]--and then thinks of jumping out the window.)

Holden's conflict with adult society has two aspects: the conflict of his own interests with those of society, and the discrepancy between his evaluation of people and society's. The scene of Holden's interview with his history teacher, Mr. Spencer, revolves around both these
elements of conflict. Spencer can see and understand Holden only in terms of the system. After acknowledging him as "Caulfield" (p.7), a roll-book designation, Spencer proceeds to address Holden as "boy," even when theoretically displaying a human interest in him: "How do you feel about all this, boy? I'd be very interested to know" (p.13). What Holden is looking for, of course, is some recognition of his own individuality and humanity: "I wished to hell he'd stop calling me 'boy' all the time" (p.12). After asking Holden, "'What's the matter with you, boy?'" (p.10), Spencer immediately begins to analyze the problem in conventional terms of the academic system—"'How many subjects did you carry...?'" (p.10)—ignoring completely the human problems which are disturbing Holden. (Holden later decides not to bring the subject up; he realizes, "He wouldn't have understood it anyway" [p.13].) Even when Holden is explaining about his course work, Spencer "wasn't...listening. He hardly ever listened to you when you said something" (p.10).

A more serious charge against Spencer than his mere failure at communication, however, is his perversion of values: using Holden's academic failures against him in a personal way. He resurrects Holden's previous academic difficulties: "'If I'm not mistaken, I believe you also had some difficulty at the Whooton School and at Elkton Hills.' He didn't say it just sarcastic, but sort of nasty, too" (p.13). He handles Holden's exam paper "like it was a
turd or something" (p.11). Despite Holden's discomfort he insists upon reading an exam back to him and is very sarcastic about it at Holden's expense. Holden continually tries to spare Spencer's feelings, only to have his misunderstood efforts used against him. He tells Spencer that he "glanced through" the history book "a couple of times": "I didn't want to hurt his feelings. He was mad about history" (p.11). Spencer's reply reveals no awareness of Holden's feelings: "'You glanced through it, eh?' he said—very sarcastic" (p.11). Spencer then proceeds to put the crowning touch on his efforts by sarcastically reading out the note Holden has written vindicating Spencer for flunking him ("I'd only written that damn note so that he wouldn't feel too bad about flunking me" [p.12]). Spencer eagerly seconds Thurmer's statement of society's values—"'Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules" (p.8)—only to have these values reduced to a pathetic absurdity as we see what the game is—"He put my goddam paper down then and looked at me like he'd just beaten hell out of me in ping-pong or something" (p.12).

Holden's concentration during this scene, in contrast to Spencer's, is upon Spencer as a human being. Holden is depressed by the squalor of Spencer's physical debility ("...if you thought about him too much, you wondered what the heck he was still living for. I mean he was all stooped over, and he had very terrible posture, and in class, whenever he dropped a piece of chalk at the blackboard, some
guy in the first row had to get up and pick it up and hand it to him" [pp. 6-7]), but he also recognizes the human pleasure Spencer can enjoy in buying a Navajo blanket ("You could tell old Spencer'd got a big bang out of buying it" [p. 7]). Holden is disappointed by Spencer's failure to see him as an individual (calling him "boy" and not really listening to what he says), but he becomes disillusioned by Spencer's malice. After Spencer tauntingly refutes Holden's claims to having "glanced" through the history book, Holden comments, "you can't imagine how sorry I was getting that I'd stopped by to say good-by to him" (p. 11), and after Spencer has read out Holden's note, Holden's disillusionment is complete: "I don't think I'll ever forgive him for reading me that crap out loud" (p. 12).

Holden tries to approach Spencer as a human being, but he cannot fight Spencer's wholehearted commitment to the system. He later tells Phoebe:

Even the couple of nice teachers on the faculty, they were phonies, too....There was this one old guy, Mr. Spencer. His wife was always giving you hot chocolate and all that stuff, and they were really pretty nice. But you should've seen him when the headmaster, old Thurmer, came in the history class and sat down in the back of the room. He was always coming in and sitting down in the back of the room for about a half an hour. He was supposed to be incognito or something. After a while, he'd be sitting back there and then he'd start interrupting what old Spencer was saying to crack a lot of corny jokes. Old Spencer'd practically kill himself chuckling and smiling and all, like as if Thurmer was a goddamn prince or something. (p. 186)

Spencer is unable to understand Holden; instead of looking at Holden's present condition, all he can do is ask Holden whether he doesn't feel a concern about his future.
Holden recognizes the sincerity of Spencer's attempts, but he finally realizes that there is an almost unbridgable gap between them, a gap he can recognize but not yet close—"it was just that we were too much on opposite sides of the pole" (pp.14-15).

The conflict between Holden's outlook and that of society manifests itself both in the conflict between Holden's enjoyment of spontaneity and the regulation of the system, and in discrepancy between Holden's evaluation of people and that of society's. Although Holden rarely indulge in competitive games, he can enjoy the expression of physical activity in non-competitive sports. Spontaneous activity for its own sake, rather than for the sake of winning is a manifestation of human energy and humanity. Holden runs on the way to Spencer's house—"I don't even know what I was running for—I guess I just felt like it" (p.5). Though spurning the competition of organized football, Holden enjoys the more personalized (he carefully lists the names of his two companions—Robert Tichener and Paul Campbell) and "unruled" activity of "chucking a football around" (p.4). Holden recalls, "It kept getting darker and darker, and we could hardly see the ball any more, but we didn't want to stop doing what we were doing. Finally we had to. This teacher that taught biology, Mr. Zambesi, stuck his head out of this window and told us to go back to the dorm and get ready for dinner" (pp.4-5). It is a teacher, mentor of the system, who interrupts their spontaneity.
The conflict between Holden's spontaneous expression and the requirements of society occurs on another level when Holden agrees to write Stradlater's composition for him for English class. Asked about the subject matter, Stradlater tells Holden, "'Anything. Anything descriptive. A room. Or a house. Or something you once lived in or something--you know. Just as long as it's descriptive as hell'" (p.28). Holden, with minor alterations to disguise authorship, proceeds to describe his brother Allie's baseball glove (Allie had written poems all over it in green ink "so that he'd have something to read when he was in the field and nobody was up at bat" [p.38]), and remarks, "I sort of liked writing about it" (p.39). The system-conscious Stradlater, however, appreciates it far less: "'I told ya it had to be about a goddam room or a house or something... No wonder you're flunking the hell out of here....You don't do one damn thing the way you're supposed to'" (p.41). Rather than submit his spontaneous essay to further criticism, Holden tears it up.

The conflict between the system and human spontaneity is formalized in Pencey's required Oral Expression class. Each boy is required to give a speech ("spontaneous and all" [p.183]) before the class. Far from encouraging real spontaneity, however, the course emphasizes control of expression--the rigid development of a single idea. Digressions, the mark of genuine spontaneity, are punished--"'if the boy digresses at all, you're supposed to yell "Digression!" at him as fast as you can'" (p.183). Holden
sympathizes particularly with the plight of one boy, Richard Kinsella, who continually digresses in his speech about his uncle's farm; instead of discussing the type of vegetables grown there, he tells how his uncle got polio and didn't want people to see him with a brace on. Holden comments, "'I liked his speeches better than anybody else's'" (p.183). He concedes that the "'boys that got the best marks in Oral Expression were the ones that stuck to the point all the time'" (p.183), but he recognizes that not all human expression can be systematized. "'Some things you just can't do that to. I mean you can't hardly ever simplify and unify something just because somebody wants you to'" (p.185). Mr. Antolini, defending the system, suggests the value of "a time and place for everything" (p.184) (the essence of systematization), but Holden is not to be deterred from seeing values in human terms: "'What I think is, you're supposed to leave somebody alone if he's at least being interesting and he's getting all excited about something. I like it when somebody gets excited about something. It's nice!'" (p.185).

Holden's "humanistic" evaluation of things leads him to apply criteria quite different from those of the system. In watching Hamlet, Holden is attracted to one scene by virtue of the human spontaneity it opposes to the teachings of the system: "The best part in the whole picture was when old Ophelia's brother... was going away and his father was giving him a lot of advice. While the father kept giving him a lot of advice, old Ophelia was sort of horsing
around with her brother, taking his dagger out of the holster, and teasing him and all while he was trying to look interested in the bull his father was shooting" (p.117). Holden's literary judgments follow a similar bent: "What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it" (p.18). Holden's recollections of elementary school movies survive not because of their educational value—"Nobody gave too much of a damn about old Columbus"—but because "you always had a lot of candy and gum and stuff with you, and the inside of that auditorium had such a nice smell. It always smelled like it was raining outside, even if it wasn't, and you were in the only nice, dry, cozy place in the world." (p.120). The formal educational content of his sister Phoebe's school notebook is similarly overbalanced by a massive volume of personal material: "Shirley you said you were sagitaurus but your only taurus bring your skates when you come over to my house" (p.161). Holden reads her notebook straight through: "I can read that kind of stuff, some kid's notebook, Phoebe's or anybody's, all day and all night long" (p.161).

Holden's sensitivity to the phoniness or hypocrisy of people's actions and of social institutions makes acceptance of formalized religion impossible for him. He attacks the shallowness of the sermons of ministers with their "Holy Joe" voices. Holden likes "Jesus and all" (p.99), but his interpretation of the Christian spirit is at variance with the conclusions of society: "I asked old Childs
[another boy at Pencey] if he thought Judas...went to Hell after he committed suicide. Childs said certainly.... I said I'd bet a thousand bucks that Jesus never sent old Judas to Hell....I think any of the Disciples would've sent him to Hell and all--and fast too--but I'll bet anything Jesus didn't do it. Old Childs said the trouble with me was that I didn't go to church or anything" (p.100. On another occasion, Holden attacks the insincerity of the system which recognizes only material success while pretending a human interest: "The bartender was a louse, too. He was a big snob. He didn't talk to you at all hardly unless you were a big shot or a celebrity or something. If you were a big shot or a celebrity or something, then he was even more nauseating. He'd go up to you and say, with this big charming smile, like he was a helluva swell guy if you knew him, 'Well! How's Connecticut?' or 'How's Florida?" (p.142). Even society's tears are misplaced; Holden watches a lady crying at the commercialized sentiment of a Hollywood movie, but ignoring the child she has with her who needs to go to the bathroom; "She kept telling him to sit still and behave himself" (p.139).

Within Holden's world we find characters who present a cross-section of social possibilities. Some, like Ossenburger, James Castle, and Jane Gallagher, serve fairly simple functions. Others, however, particularly his peers in school, become the means through which Holden attempts to come to an understanding of life. These are people trapped in the same situation that he is. There is a discrepancy between Holden's evaluation and that of the system, but
Holden must strive to come to terms with this without submitting if he is not to give up and "at the age of thirty ...sit in some bar hating everybody who comes in looking as if he might have played football in college" (p.186).

In Stradlater and Ackley we find two system-sanctioned types. Holden's roommate, Stradlater, is "most likely to succeed." His whole orientation is towards the values of the system. He is handsome, Holden concedes, but strictly in accord with the system "he was mostly a Year Book kind of handsome guy" (p.27). External appearances are Stradlater's primary concern. Society values the façade; Holden is more concerned with the person behind it: "Stradlater was more of a secret slob. He always looked all right, Stradlater, but for instance, you should've seen the razor he shaved himself with. It was always rusty as hell and full of lather and hairs and crap. He never cleaned it or anything" (p.27). Stradlater is callous about Holden's concern for Jane Gallagher, but he gets highly upset over Holden's minor infraction of the no-smoking rule--"It drove him crazy when you broke any rules" (p.41). He can only think of doing things in accordance with conventional standards. When Holden uses Allie's baseball glove as a subject for the essay he writes for Stradlater we have seen how upset he got: "I told ya it had to be about a goddam room...or something...You always do everything backasswards" (p.41).

Stradlater, following the values of the system and its commitment to winning, even turns sex into a game. Holden recalls a double-date with Stradlater; "What a technique that guy had" (p.49). Stradlater never displays real sincerity towards his dates; he cynically "scares" them in this
"Abraham Lincoln, sincere voice" (p.49). Upon Stradlater's return from his date with Jane Gallagher, the imagery still reflects the "game." He scornfully brushes aside Holden's concern—"What the hell ya think we did all night--play checkers, for Chrissake?" (p.42)—and he guards the results of the evening's match as a "professional secret" (p.43). (Later, Holden, obsessed with the thought of Stradlater's date with Jane, attempts to sublimate his anxiety by offering to play Canasta with Ackley.)

Yet Holden tries to appraise Stradlater objectively. He acknowledges his friendliness (even though it is partly phoney), and sees his generosity as a real virtue in spite of his faults: "He's conceited, but he's very generous in some things... Look. Suppose, for instance, Stradlater was wearing a tie or something that you liked. Say he had a tie on that you liked a helluva lot--I'm just giving you an example now. You know what he'd do? He'd probably take it off and give it to you. He really would. Or--you know what he'd do? He'd leave it on your bed or something." (pp.24-25).

Ackley, the boy who occupied the room next to Holden, is society's "born loser." In his situation, we see society's basic inhumanity to man. In his personal appearance he is Stradlater's antithesis—in short, repulsive: "He was one of these very, very tall, round-shouldered guys—he was about six four—with lousy teeth. The whole time he roomed next to me, I never even once saw him brush his teeth. They always looked mossy and awful, and he damn near made you sick if you saw him in the dining room with his mouth full
of mashed potatoes and peas or something. Besides that, he had a lot of pimples. Not just on his forehead or his chin, like most guys, but all over his whole face" (p.19). He is no more fortunate in other respects: "he had a terrible personality. He was also sort of a nasty guy" (p.19).

Holden "wasn't too crazy about him, to tell you the truth" (p.19), but he nonetheless sees him as a suffering person: "You could also hear old Ackley snoring....He had sinus trouble and couldn't breathe too hot when he was asleep. That guy had just about everything. Sinus trouble, pimples, lousy teeth, halitosis, crumby fingernails. You had to feel a little sorry for the crazy sonuvabitch" (p.39). Holden may feel sorry for Ackley, but society doesn't. The tragedy of Ackley is that he completely accepts society's values and wants desperately to be accepted. He is constantly cleaning his fingernails with a matchstick ("I guess he thought that made him a very neat guy" [p.22]), and bragging about having had sexual intercourse with one girl ("It was all a lot of crap. He was a virgin if ever I saw one" [p.37]). He is no more virtuous than Stradlater: he just isn't as good at the game. Holden puts his "people shooting hat" (p.22) backwards and attempts to reject society; society rejects Ackley in spite of his enthusiasm for it: they had "this goddam secret fraternity that I [Holden] was too yellow not to join. There was this pimply, boring guy, Robert Ackley, that wanted to get in. He kept trying to join, and they wouldn't let him just because he
was boring and pimply" (p.167).

The intellectualism of one of Holden's former schoolmates, Carl Luce, offers no solution. Luce's credentials, like Stradlater's, are defined in terms of the prevailing values: "he had the highest I.Q. of any boy at Whooton" (p.136); "he certainly had a good vocabulary. He had the largest vocabulary of any boy at Whooton...They gave us a test" (p.149). The game and winning scores again. Now at Columbia, the sophisticated Luce has a Chinese mistress and an intellectualized philosophy of love: "They simply happen to regard sex as both a physical and a spiritual experience" (p.146). The value of Luce's intellectualized appreciation of love, however, is undercut by our view of his basic cynicism and lack of concern for other human beings; asked by Holden about one of his former "loves," Luce replies, "I haven't the faintest idea. For all I know, since you ask, she's probably the Whore of New Hampshire by this time" (p.145). He responds to Holden's plight with the same impersonality" "I couldn't care less, frankly"(p.148). Luce's latest philosophy of love is no more than a variation upon his earlier fascination with perversion (for him, an intellectual alternative of love). His father, a psychoanalyst, has helped Luce to "adjust...[himself] to a certain extent" (p.148), but in society's view "an extensive analysis hasn't been necessary" (p.149). Holden is looking for human love, but can find only its surface appearance in this intellectualism.
Satire, or criticism of society, of course, will not make *The Catcher in the Rye* a novel. David Leitch, in his essay "The Salinger Myth," says, "His technique is no different from that in the short stories—in fact two long sections of *The Catcher* were originally published in short story form. There is no plot to speak of and the reader's interest is held entirely by the narrator's internal monologue....The reader learns about Holden not from what he does, nor even what he thinks, but from the way that he expresses his thoughts." Leitch and others, however, as well as many of Salinger's most enthusiastic readers, fail to see the underlying pattern of Holden's development which structured the work. Leitch is correct in telling us that two parts of *The Catcher in the Rye* were originally published as short stories. These two stories, however, "I'm Crazy" and "Slight Rebellion off Madison," published (respectively) in 1945 and 1946 are earlier versions of incidents incorporated in the later book, and Salinger's art had undergone considerable development in the five-year period between their publication and the publication of *The Catcher in the Rye* itself (1951).

*The Catcher in the Rye* is a novel, not an extended short story. A working distinction between the two may be drawn from Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman's *A Handbook to Literature*: "[The short story] may be distinguished from the novel in that it tends to reveal character through a series of actions or under stress, the purpose of the story being accomplished when the reader comes to know what the true nature of a character (or sometimes a situation) is...
whereas, the novel tends to show character developing as a result of actions and under the impact of events." The earlier "Slight Rebellion off Madison," which deals with the Holden-Sally Hayes episode, depicts the nature of Holden's situation: "I hate living in New York. I hate Fifth Avenue buses and Madison Avenue buses and getting out at the center doors. I hate the Seventy-second Street movie, with those fake clouds on the ceiling, and being introduced to guys like George Harrison, and going down in elevators when you wanna go out, and guys fitting your pants all the time at Brooks" (New Yorker, Dec. 21, 1946, p. 77). This is a short story; a mood, depression, is depicted, but no development is traced. It is not here that we must look, then, in attempting to understand the structure of The Catcher in the Rye. It is for "Esmé--with Love and Squalor," not the Holden stories, that reveals the patterns of growth that underlies Holden's development. More nearly contemporary (1950) with the publication of The Catcher in the Rye, "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor," in its focus upon patterns of growth and development seems more an embryonic novel than a typical short story. The elements of "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor" have already been extensively analyzed. It is in terms of these elements that we may approach the underlying development of The Catcher in the Rye.

The Catcher in the Rye is primarily a "crisis" novel; Holden announces at the beginning that he is not going to give us his "whole goddam autobiography or anything" (p.1).
The crisis of the novel, in fact, is compressed into a period of three days. Holden, like Esme, is at a crucial age, hovering between childhood and maturity: "I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen. It's really ironical, because I'm six foot two and a half and I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head--the right side--is full of millions of gray hairs" (p.9). The physical side of Holden is already mature; his emotional growth now has to catch up with his physical growth ("I grew six and a half inches last year" [p.5]). This crisis aspect, however, is related to the larger growth pattern by Holden's own recognition of what is happening: "I'm just going through a phase right now. Everybody goes through phases and all, don't they?" (p.15).

Development in The Catcher in the Rye is not linear; both "child" and "adult" elements of the conflict are continually present. Even while he is learning about the "adult" world, Holden's "innocence" reaches its final statement only near the end, in his "Catcher" vision. There are no divisions in The Catcher in the Rye of "innocent" and "squalid" Nevertheless, the distinctions can be seen between an "innocent" childhood world ("God, I love it when a kid's nice and polite when you tighten their skate for them or something. Most kids are" [p.119]) and a "squalid" adult world (the Edmont Hotel) filled with "vomity-looking" (p.76) chairs and peopled by "perverts and morons" (p.61). In his development and crisis, both the "child" aspects of Holden and the "innocence" of a childhood past are presented. Holden himself is still linked to the innocence of the
childhood world by his enjoyment of playing—"we all started throwing snowballs and horsing around all over the place. It was very childish, but everybody was really enjoying themselves" (p.35). At the same time, in the conflict between childhood innocence and adult squalor, Holden presents us with a purified past (childhood). His dead brother Allie embodies the innocence and spontaneity of childhood, while Holden's earlier relationship with Jane Gallagher embodies the purity of a non-sexual (he never kisses her on the mouth, only on the face) childhood love. (These two are also linked together by the fact that Jane is the only one outside the family to whom Holden shows Allie's baseball glove with the poems on it.)

Both "development" and "crisis" elements influence Holden's growth. Holden displays some of the same eagerness for maturity that Esme does. He, too, strains at both adult vocabulary and grammar ("No, sir, I haven't communicated with them..." [p.9], "She'd give Allie or I a push" [p.68]), and asks questions about the mysteries of life in a quest for adult understanding ("'By any chance, do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over?'" [p.60]).

Holden's approaching adulthood involves in part a growing awareness of social patterns. He has to recognize that certain conventions are an integral part of adult life: "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.87). He also discovers the
unavoidable fact that social differences influence human relationships in the adult world. Holden gets along fine with one former roommate, Dick Slagle, on a human level ("he had a helluva good sense of humor and we had a lot of fun sometimes" [p.109]), but their social class differences (symbolized by the quality of their suitcases) keep intruding. Slagle jokes about it, calling all Holden's things "bourgeois," but "after a while, you could tell he wasn't kidding any more" (p.109). Holden tries to remove this difference by hiding his suitcases, but Slagle drags them out again: "The reason he did it, it took me a while to find out, was because he wanted people to think my bags were his" (p.108). Even Holden is not immune to this type of class consciousness: "It isn't important, I know, but I hate it when somebody has cheap suitcases. It sounds terrible to say it, but I can even get to hate somebody, just looking at them, if they have cheap suitcases with them" (p.108). He realizes, finally, that the standards of adult society do influence one: "The thing is, it's really hard to be roommates with people if your suitcases are much better than theirs—if yours are really good ones and theirs aren't. You think if they're intelligent and all, the other person, and have a good sense of humor, that they don't give a damn whose suitcases are better, but they do. They really do" (p.109). Holden's choice of Stradlater as a roommate, in fact, is an "adult" choice: "It's one of the reasons why I roomed with a stupid bastard like Stradlater. At least his suitcases were as good as mine" (p.109).
Holden is forced to a crisis not merely by the presence of adult squalor, but by its intrusion into the purity of his innocent world. As the inviolability of his childhood world is shattered, Holden is forced to a crisis, rather than simply urged to maturity. The first major intrusion into Holden's "pure" world is Stradlater's date with Jane Gallagher. Holden nearly drops "dead" when he hears about it. He recalls her own insecurity (she always kept her kings in the back row when playing checkers), and is obsessed by the threat that Stradlater poses to her innocence: "It just drove me stark staring mad when I thought about her and Stradlater parked somewhere in that fat-assed Ed Bank's car" (p.48). Holden can rely on Jane's personal virtue on a personal level ("I knew she wouldn't let him get to first base with her," "I know old Jane like a book" [p.80, p.76]), but in the adult world, her inexperience at gamesmanship may not equip her to handle Stradlater's technique.

Holden is overwhelmed by his confrontation with this "squalor": "Every time I thought about it, I felt like jumping out the window" (p.48). He tries to "kill" Stradlater, the agent of squalor ("I tried to sock him, with all my might, right smack in the toothbrush, so it would split his goddam throat open" [p.43]), but his attempt is ineffective—he can't make a good fist with that hand since he broke all the garage windows with it the night Allie, the other symbol of purity, died). Holden's distress is incomprehensible to the "adult" Stradlater ("'What the hell's the matter with you?'" [p.43]), and the symbolic squalor
of Stradlater's date with Jane is converted to physical squalor and suffering as Stradlater beats the "innocent" Holden up: "You never saw such gore in your life. I had blood all over my mouth and chin and even on my pajamas and bathrobe" (p.45). Even at this point, however, Holden retains a certain "development" interest in squalor and maturity: "It partly scared me and it partly fascinated me. All that blood and all sort of made me look tough" (p.45).

A second intrusion of squalor into Holden's innocent world is his discovery that his former teacher, Mr. Antolini, is a homosexual. Mr. Antolini has represented adult ideals to Holden: "He was about the best teacher I ever had" (p.174). He is implicitly linked to Holden's older brother, D.B., by similarity of age and wit. He also is the only one who cared enough to pick up James Castle's dead body: "he didn't even give a damn if his coat got all bloody" (p.174). He gives Holden a great deal of advice (though he fails to respond to Holden's "human" fatigue) about maturity. Holden wakes up in the night (he is sleeping on the Antolinis' couch) to find Mr. Antolini patting him on the head and promptly flees. In thinking about it later, he is unable to find a mature resolution to the conflict: "I started thinking that even if he was a flit he certainly'd been very nice to me...And the more I thought about it, the more depressed I got" (p.195).

The final "squalid" intrusion into Holden's innocent world is the desecration of the elementary school and the mummy section of the museum by "Fuck you" signs. It drives Holden "damn near crazy" (p.201). He worries about its corruption of innocent children: "I thought how Phoebe and
all the other little kids would see it, and how they'd wonder what the hell it meant, and then finally some dirty kid would tell them—all cockeyed, naturally—what it meant, and how they'd all think about it and maybe even worry about it for a couple of days" (p.201). As with the Stradlater incident, Holden's reaction is one of wanting to destroy the agent of squalor: "I kept wanting to kill whoever'd written it....I kept picturing myself catching him at it, and how I'd smash his head on the stone steps till he was good and goddam dead and bloody" (p.201).

Holden realizes, however, that he cannot prevent all this, squalor. He lacks the courage to become a shining knight: "I knew...I wouldn't have the guts to do it" (p.201). Besides, he realizes that this squalor is an inseparable part of the nature of the world: "If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn't rub out even half the 'Fuck you' signs in the world. It's impossible" (p.202).

Holden's reactions to the intrusions of squalor reflect primarily an immature "love-hate" outlook. He recognizes Stradlater's generosity and friendliness, but after Stradlater has taken Jane Gallagher out, Holden remarks, "God, how I hated him" (p.42). The immaturity of this extreme reaction is partially seen by Holden; after his fight with Stradlater he says, "I told him to go wash his own moron face—which was a pretty childish thing to say, but I was mad as hell" (p.45). Holden's rapid juxtaposition of love and hate reflects itself also in his date with Sally Hayes. In the taxi on the way to the theater, Holden "makes out" with her; "I told her I loved her and all. It was a lie, of course, but
the thing is, I meant it when I said it" (p.125). When Holden suggests that they "escape" together, however, Sally reveals herself to be solidly allied, not with Holden's visions of an innocent world, but with the adult forces: "We both hated each other's guts by that time...C'mon, let's get outa here," I said,'You give me a royal pain in the ass if you want to know the truth'" (p.133).

In his immature, non-compassionate reaction to those whom he sees as "agents" of squalor, Holden tends to lose sight of their underlying humanity (as X does with Clay, as five-year-old Charles not unexpectedly does with X briefly) in his zeal to punish their squalor. After his encounter with Maurice, Holden fantasizes his revenge:
"As soon as old Maurice opened the doors, he'd see me with the automatic in my hand and he'd start screaming at me, in this very high-pitched, yellow-belly voice, to leave him alone. But I'd plug him anyway. Six shots right through his fat hairy belly" (p.104). Having thus defeated squalor, Holden would then "call up Jane" (p.104) (whose world would now be presumably safe for virtue) to come over and care for his wounds.

The immature Holden is incapable of reconciling this squalor with his love, and is driven almost to the breaking point. By the time of his date with Sally Hayes, he hates "everything" (p.130) and is reduced to "shouting" (p.130) out his frustration. He vainly tries to re-establish contact with his innocent world, a world that no longer really exists. He wants to give "old Jane a buzz" (p.150), but
he is either "not in the mood" (presumably he fears finding her innocence lost) or there is no answer. Holden also seeks help from the dead Allie: "I started talking, sort of out loud, to Allie. I do that sometimes when I get very depressed" (p.98). At one point, in fact, he prays to Allie not to let him disappear. (His prayer to Allie is quite similar in spirit and function to Franny's Jesus prayer, with which she tries to save herself from squalor.)

In a similar spirit, Holden continually contemplates escape to an innocent world, but he is forced to recognize that he cannot. He asks Ackley, "'What's the routine on joining a monastery?'" (p.50), but his awareness of the nature of reality undercuts the idea: "'I'd probably join one with all the wrong kind of monks in it. All stupid bastards. Or just bastards'" (p.50). In the adult world, even a "spiritual haven" cannot be free from squalor entirely. During his date with Sally Hayes, when Holden is approaching a crisis ("'You ought to go to a boy's school sometime.... It's full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac some day, and you have to keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses, and all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day, and everybody sticks together in these dirty little goddam c' cliques'" [p.131]), he suggests to her that they escape together: "We could drive up to Massachusetts and Vermont, and all around there, see. It's beautiful as hell up there.... we could live somewhere with a brook and all and, later on, we could get married or something. I could chop all our own
wood in the wintertime and all" (p.132). Both Sally's reaction and Holden's own realization, however, make him recognize the untenability of this escape from reality.

Holden finally does decide to go away to escape the adult world that is pressing in on him—"I decided I'd go away....I'd never go home again and I'd never go away to another school again" (p.198)—though he still adds romantic embellishments: "I'd pretend I was one of those deaf-mutes. That way I wouldn't have to have any goddam stupid useless conversations with anybody....I'd be through having conversations for the rest of my life" (p.198). He wants to escape people, he cannot reconcile himself to their squalor: "I didn't care what kind of a job it was, though. Just so people didn't know me and I didn't know anybody" (p.198). Holden senses that even this cannot be a real escape, but his depression is such that he decides to leave anyway: "I knew the part about pretending I was a deaf-mute was crazy, but I liked thinking about it anyway. But I really decided to go out West and all" (p.199). It is not his own awareness, but Phoebe's desire to join him in his immature flight, that forces him to face adult responsibility for her.

Holden, like Esmé, and like X, needs to develop a mature compassion to be able to reconcile love and squalor and become a mature adult. From the beginning, Holden shows great powers of love, but it is a love directed primarily at specific individuals. Love and squalor are still in conflict; he cannot yet resolve them when he finds squalor even in those he loves. Unable to accept the human condition of which squalor is a part, he condemns mankind as a whole.
His generalizations are usually negative: "People never notice anything" (p.9). Holden "feels sorry" for people; he can respond to the humanity he sees trapped within its own squalor. He feels sorry for Ackley, for Marty (one of the three girls he picks up in the Lavender Room)--"I'd just about broken her heart--I really had. I was sorry as hell I'd kidded her. Some people you shouldn't kid, even if they deserve it" (p.74)--and he is still a virgin because, instead of playing the game, he starts feeling sorry for the girls. Holden displays a human love, but he cannot yet understand adult squalor. He still longs for the "innocent" world of childhood, and longs to preserve it. At the museum, Holden comments: "The best thing, though...was that everything always stayed right where it was" (p.121). He worries about the fact that even his sister Phoebe will not remain a child forever: "I thought how she'd see the same stuff I used to see, and how she'd be different every time she saw it. It didn't exactly depress me to think about it, but it didn't make me feel gay as hell, either. Certain things they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone. I know that's impossible, but it's too bad anyway" (p.122).

Even while he is depressed by the squalor he encounters, Holden does come to a certain realization about people. He recalls an extremely boring boy with whom he once roomed simply because the boy was a terrific whistler:
"So I don't know about bores. Maybe you shouldn't feel too sorry if you see some swell girl getting married to them. ...maybe they're secretly all terrific whistlers or something" (p.124). This observation, however, is not yet enough; Holden proceeds almost immediately to his tirade to Sally about how he hates everything.

One of the recurring themes in the book is Holden's obsession with death. The onslaught of squalor must lead to the death of innocence and thus to the death of the "innocent" Holden. Holden writes about mummies on Spencer's exam, he thinks about death from pneumonia at one point and from cancer at another, and he is both obsessed by and wants to deny Allie's death (the death of innocence). The "immature" Holden sees death, not life, in the face of squalor.

The final course of Holden's development may be seen through two major symbols. In Holden's visit to Phoebe at his house, we have a statement of Holden's immature values. Phoebe, unlike Spencer, listens, while Holden explains what was wrong about the school in human terms. It is at this point too, that he recalls the death of James Castle, symbol of integrity against the squalid world. When Phoebe asks Holden what he likes, he likes only the dead Allie and talking with the child Phoebe. He is depressed by the thought of entering the adult world since he is afraid that he too may become a phony: "Even if you did go around saving guys' lives and all, how would you know if you did it because you really wanted to save guys' lives, or because you did it because what you really wanted to do was be a terrific lawyer, with everybody slapping you on the back
and congratulating you in court when the goddam trial was over...? How would you know you weren't being a phony? The trouble is, you wouldn't" (p.172). The final symbol of innocence is Holden's desire to be the "catcher in the rye":

...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 mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. (p.173)

Holden wants to preserve the innocence of childhood and save the children from the squalor of adulthood.

Following this, Holden continues to be oppressed by squalor and reaches a final point of disillusionment: "You can't ever find a place that's nice and peaceful, because there isn't any. You may think there is, but once you get there, when you're not looking, somebody'll sneak up and write 'Fuck you' right under your nose" (p.204). He retreats to the bathroom; there he passes out, thus undergoing a symbolic death of his "innocence." It is only after this that he can move towards an acceptance of maturity. The conflict has overwhelmed his innocence, but he emerges with a new-found calm: "I felt better after I passed out....I didn't feel so damn dizzy any more" (p.204). The dizziness is over; he can see the adult world more clearly now and is ready to become part of it. He has planned to "escape" out West, but when the child Phoebe wants to escape with him, he is forced to accept an adult role to protect her: "'You have to go back to school!'" (p.208). His emotion...
His emotional response shows the last gasp of his "love-hate" stage as he moves to an acceptance of the necessity of the adult world: "All of a sudden I wanted her to cry till her eyes practically dropped out. I almost hated her. I think I hated her most because she wouldn't be in that play any more if she went away with me" (p.207). Holden now abandons his idea of leaving, but he now has to take on the adult responsibility of getting Phoebe back to school: "'In the first place, I'm not going away anywhere, I told you. I'm going home. I'm going home as soon as you go back to school'" (p.208).

The final symbol of Holden's maturity is his vision of the cycle of human life as Phoebe rides on the carousel: "All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddam horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. 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). Holden has abandoned his "catcher" role in favor of an acceptance of the risks inherent in the human condition: "I felt so happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going around and around. I was damn near bawling, I felt so damn happy, if you want to know the truth. I don't know why. It was just that she looked so damn nice, the way she kept going around and around..." (p.213).
CHAPTER III:

DE DAUMIER-SMITH AND BEYOND:

A NEW DIRECTION
Three works of Salinger's find their basic structure in the "Esmé" pattern: "For Esmé--with Love and Squalor," Catcher in the Rye, and finally, "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period." The purpose of this chapter, however, is not simply to analyze "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" in light of the "love-compassion" theme, but also to suggest the possible relationship of this pattern to Salinger's later work. In the later "Glass family" stories, Salinger is experimenting with new forms and approaches, the problems of which lie, for the most part, outside the scope of this thesis. This chapter, then, will not present any extensive analysis of the later works per se, but rather will indicate the general direction in which they are moving--a direction hinted at in the "mystical" reinforcement of the narrator's insight in "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period"--and will attempt to relate this direction to Salinger's concerns in the "Esmé" works.

In Salinger's "post-Catcher" work there is a general movement in the direction of philosophical and theological abstraction, and sur-realism, rather than realism. Love and squalor become reconciled in the Tao, a philosophical concept of "oneness" which tends to be taught rather than learned. This movement, however, is gradual. Although the change in Salinger's work from Holden to the later Seymour is distinct and significant, the nature of
Salinger's later statement can be at least partially understood in relation to, and sometimes as a response to, his earlier "positive" work.

"De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period" appeared soon after The Catcher in the Rye and follows basically the "Esmé" pattern—emotional growth from an infantile insistence upon purity and absolutes to a more mature outlook in which the narrator is able to reconcile himself with the "squalor" he initially abhors. Like Esmé, the narrator is at a crucial stage in his development. Nineteen and still in the throes of a lingering adolescence, with a "badly broken out inch of forehead" (p. 131), his days are divided chiefly by classes at art school (which, like Holden at Pencey, he "loathes") and sessions at the dentist's; evenings he reads, and nights he paints—mostly self-portraits, seventeen in one month. In applying for a position as instructor at Les Amis des Vieux Maitres, the Canadian correspondence art school, he wishfully projects himself into a fuller maturity, giving his age as twenty-nine and furnishing a host of spurious romantic details about his past, and selects a fitting pseudonym. We do not learn his real name.

Required to submit samples of "commercial" as well as academic art, the narrator quickly begins a series of drawings of suntanned, healthy people posing for deodorant
and whisky ads. The tone with which the narrator describes these pictures is both ironic and condescending, implicitly dismissing as irrelevant such "national evils as bleeding gums" (p.135). He dismisses his brother's concern over his scheme to join the staff of this art school as being motivated primarily, if not solely, by self interest: "I thought I could tell from his manner that he was already mentally exchanging his train reservations for Rhode Island from a compartment to a lower berth" (p.138).

The narrator's initial disillusionment with the school comes when he discovers the limitations of the school's correspondence technique: "[M. Yoshoto] was quite able to show a reasonably talented student how to draw a recognizable pig in a recognizable sty, or even a picturesque sty. But he couldn't for the life of him show anyone how to draw a beautiful pig in a beautiful sty (which, of course, was the one little technical bit his better students most greedily wanted sent to them through the mail)" (p.143). The narrator's reaction to most of his students is as uncompassionate and predictable as his attitude towards the subjects of his commercial art samples. The first two students whose work he examines possess a truly appalling vulgarity of spirit and mind. The first, a Miss Bambi Kramer ("her professional name"), attaches her drawings "rather subordinately" to a "glossy, eight by ten print of herself wearing an anklet, a strapless bathing suit, and a white-duck sailor's cap" (p.146). The second candidate is
"mostly interested in the satiric rather than the arty side of painting" (p.146) and submits a picture satirising "the familiar, everyday tragedy of a chaste young girl, with below shoulder-length blond hair and udder-size breasts, being criminally assaulted in church, in the very shadow of the altar, by her minister" (p.147). In examining Miss Kramer's "Forgive Them Their Trespasses," the narrator ignores the compassion called for by the title and notes: "The tallest boy, in the foreground of the picture, appeared to have rickets in one leg and elephantiasis in the other— an effect, it was clear, that Miss Kramer had deliberately used to show that the boy was standing with his feet slightly apart" (p.146). He then proceeds to put the satirist into the same boat with her: "Actually, I was much less struck by the satiric implications of the picture than I was by the quality of workmanship that had gone into it. If I hadn't known they were living hundreds of miles apart, I might have sworn Ridgefield had had some purely technical help from Bambi Kramer" (p.147).

The narrator in this story is not so much overcome by squalor as by his attempt to be condescending to it: "in any crisis, when I was nineteen, my funny bone invariably had the distinction of being the very first part of my body to assume partial or complete paralysis. Ridgefield and Miss Kramer did many things to me, but they didn't come at all close to amusing me" (p.147). As he contemplates protesting the idea that he "teach these two crazy people how
to draw" (p.147), however, his primary complaint--brought out in italics--is a response to the "squalor" of his environment: "'There aren't any chairs in your son's room'" (p.147) (just as it had seemed to him "that all the seats from all the buses in New York had been unscrewed" [p.13]).

It is at this point, reeking with indignation at the "squalor" of people and his environment, that the narrator opens the work submitted by Sister Irma. In contrast to the rampant egoism of his other two students (an egoism of which the immature narrator himself is frequently guilty), Sister Irma sends a snapshot, not of herself, but of her convent. Her art work, too, she leaves unsigned. "Her questionnaire," continues the narrator, "was filled out as perhaps no questionnaire in this world deserves to be filled out" (p.148). In her total effacement, as well as in her hobbies ("Loving her Lord...and 'collecting leaves but only when they are laying right on the ground'" (p.148), Sister Irma presents a total contrast to all the undesirable qualities the narrator has projected as belonging to this world.

Seemingly following the path of easy "salvation through love," the narrator returns to correcting the work of his first two protégés "with far more tolerance than I'd thought I had in me" (p.150), while saving Sister Irma's work for concentrated attention. His "tolerance" at this point,
however, does not indicate any fundamental change in the
narrator's point of view. He has not yet achieved an out-
look in which he can reconcile the "squalor" of this world
with his concept of love. He only "tolerates" this squalor;
he does not understand or accept it. His failure to accept
is further signalled by his refusal of Mme. Yoshoto's offer
to put a chair in his room; he is not yet ready to com-
promise.

Back in his room, the narrator returns to Sister Irma's
work, makes some ten or twelve sketches for her, and writes
a long, "almost endless," extraordinary letter to her in
which he attempts to establish contact. The continuing
dichotomy of his point of view can be seen in his putting
her in a separate category from his other students: "I
am delighted that you are already so well advanced, but I
have no idea what he expects me to do with my other students
who are very retarded and chiefly stupid, in my opinion"
(p.153).

"Literally overjoyed" (p.155), he sends his letter
off to Sister Irma. By the next morning, however, noting
significantly that "happiness is a solid and joy is a
liquid" (p.155), the narrator finds some of his elation
drained away to be replaced by his more familiar cynical
condescension as he faces "the freakish fact that there
were two people in the world who had less talent for drawing
than either Bambi or R. Howard Ridgefield [the satirist]"
(p.156). Further frustrated by the "school's policy" (p.156)
against smoking in the instructor's room, the narrator wonders only how he can get "sanely through the next thirteen days to the Monday when Sister Irma's next envelope was due" (p.156). He has not been saved by love—it remains only one half of an enduring polarity as he condescendingly designs for his "squalid" pupils "dozens of insulting, subnormal, but quite constructive, drawing exercises" (p.156).

It is at this point that the narrator has a vision which symbolically defines his present relation to the world:

I stopped on the sidewalk outside the school and looked into the lighted display window of the orthopedic appliances shop. Then something altogether hideous happened. The thought was forced on me that no matter how coolly or sensibly or gracefully I might one day learn to live my life, I would always be at best a visitor in a garden of enamel urinals and bedpans, with a sightless, wooden dummy-deity standing by in a marked-down rupture truss. (p.157).

Completely repelled ("The thought, certainly, couldn't have been endurable for more than a few seconds" [p.157]) by the "squalor" of his vision of this world, the narrator "flees" to his room and indulges in fantasies about his "pure," unsqualid love for Sister Irma, "a shy, beautiful girl of eighteen who had not yet taken her final vows and was still free to go out into the world with the Peter Abelard-type man of her choice" (p.158), a sex-free relationship whose most extreme physical manifestation comes when he "without sin" places his arm "around her waist" (p.158). His vision of love, of protecting innocence, like Holden's vision of
being a "catcher in the rye," is still immature, incapable of reconciling love and squalor. He can love Sister Irma only as she is pure and non-squalid.

Ironically juxtaposed to his vision of love "without sin," his activities the next morning consist of trying "to make recognizable trees out of a forest of phallic symbols the man from Bangor, Maine, had consciously drawn on expensive linen paper" (p.158), when a letter arrives. It is from the convent, "informing M. Yoshoto that Father Zimmermann, through circumstances outside his control, was forced to alter his decision to allow Sister Irma to study at Les Amis Des Vieux Maitres" (p.158). Like five-year-old Charles walking off in a tantrum when X steals his punch line, the narrator is furious and disillusioned. In a pattern paralleling that of John Gedusi'dski in "The Laughing Man," the narrator sublimates his frustration by redirecting it: "I...wrote letters to my four remaining students, advising them to give up the idea of becoming artists. I told them, individually, that they had absolutely no talent worth developing and that they were simply wasting their own valuable time as well as the school's" (p.159). His emphasis upon telling his students "individually" is the type of Salingeresque sin Zooey later objects to in Franny: "you don't just despise what they represent--you despise them."³

The narrator also writes another letter to Sister
Irma asking if he has done anything to offend her and asking if it will be possible to visit her at her convent (an attempt to put into reality the "pure" love of his fantasy). Deciding that this tragic occasion calls for getting drunk he dons his black tuxedo (for the spiritual funeral of Sister Irma), planning to dine at the Windsor Hotel and read his letter over "at dinner, preferably by candlelight" (p.162).

An awareness, however, of the incongruity between his actions and the reality of his world soon overtakes him: "The Verdun section of Montreal was in no sense a dressy neighborhood, and I was convinced that every passer-by was giving me a second, basically censorious look" (p.162). Instead of continuing to the Windsor, he stops in at the lunch bar where he had had "Coney Island Red Hots" before and hopes "that the other patrons would think I was a waiter on his way to work" (p.162). Instead of condescending to the people, he tries to look like one of them. Rereading his letter to Sister Irma in this context, he finds "the substance of it...a trifle thin" (p.162) and decides to rewrite it before sending it off. Like Holden when Phoebe wants to accompany him, the narrator here shows his first step towards maturity. For the first time we see an awareness of reality having an effect in his evaluation of something which he earlier evaluated only in terms of an absolute dichotomy.

On passing the orthopedics shop again, he has a second
vision which leads him to maturity; a vision of humanity trapped within this squalid world:

I was startled to see a live person in the shopcase, a hefty girl of about thirty, in a green, yellow, and lavender chiffon dress. "I stood watching her," fascinated, till suddenly she sensed, then saw, that she was being watched. I quickly smiled—to show her that this was a non-hostile figure in the tuxedo in the twilight on the other side of the glass—but it did no good. The girl's confusion was out of all normal proportion. She blushed, she dropped the removed truss, she stepped back on a stack of irrigation basins—and her feet went out from under her. I reached out to her instantly, hitting the tips of my fingers on the glass. She landed heavily on her bottom, like a skater. She immediately got to her feet without looking at me. Her face still flushed, she pushed her hair back with one hand, and resumed lacing the truss on the dummy. (pp.163-164)

In reaching out to the girl, the narrator attempts an act of compassion, but he cannot help humanity from his position of detachment from squalor. A change, however, from the "Esmé" and The Catcher... pattern is the "mystical" re-enforcement of this vision:

Suddenly... the sun came up and sped towards the bridge of my nose at the rate of ninety-three million miles a second. Blinded and very frightened—I had to put my hand on the glass to keep my balance... When I got my sight back, the girl had gone from the window, leaving behind her a shimmering field of exquisite, twice-blessed, enamel flowers. (p.164)

In the "exquisite... enamel flowers," we see the transformation to understanding, the reconciliation with squalor. But the lesson is more abstract, a subject for meditation as much as part of the action.

Following this revelation, the narrator once again follows a familiar course of action. In the spirit of
Holden's realization that he can no longer attempt to keep Phoebe from adult life, the narrator declares: "I am giving Sister Irma her freedom to follow her own destiny" (p.164). Armed with this new understanding and compassion, he writes to the four students he had just expelled, reinstating them—while sitting in a chair he has brought into the room.

His final integration into the adult community is signalled by his passing the remainder of the summer "investigating that most interesting of all summer-active animals, the American Girl in Shorts" (p.165). The only correspondence he continues is not with Sister Irma, but with Bambi Kramer: "The last I heard, she'd branched over into designing her own Christmas cards. They'll be something to see, if she hasn't lost her touch" (p.165). As with X's attitude towards his mother-in-law, the narrator's attitude is lightly ironic, but it is an irony modified by compassion. However appallingly bad Bambi's "touch" may be, it is still a human one.

The closest successor to the "Esmé" works artistically (though not chronologically) is the story of Franny. Her progress, as it is followed through both "Franny" and "Zooey," parallels Holden's development in many ways. Like Holden, Franny is facing a spiritual crisis brought on by the "squalor" of the people she knows in her school-dominated environment. "Franny" concludes with Franny's collapse
(like Holden's symbolic death when he passes out) and her
termination of the Jesus Prayer (like Holden's prayer to
Allie). In "Zooey," which actually focuses primarily
upon her brother, Franny's story is concluded as she
learns compassion from Zooey's lesson of the Fat Lady. In
a certain sense, in fact, considering the age difference
between Franny and her brother, Franny could almost be
viewed as a "crisis" Phoebe talking with a post-analysis
Holden.

The differences, of course, are numerous and significant.
Franny's crisis has something of the same flavor as Holden's:
"It's everybody, I mean. Everything everybody does is so--
I don't know--not wrong, or even mean, or even stupid
necdssarily. But just so tiny and sad-making" (p.26). Franny,
unlike Holden, has lost her faith in people themselves: 
"I'm sick of just liking people. I wish to
God I could meet somebody I could respect'" (p.20). While
each of the people with whom Holden has any significant
contact possesses at least one "redeeming" feature (even
Maurice is "pretty sharp, in his crumby way" [The Catcher
in the Rye, p.102]), Lane Coutell is devoid of any redeeming
qualities whatsoever. Zooey's judgment of him parallels
Holden's judgment of Ossenburger: "'If he's worried about
Franny at all, I'll lay odds it's for the crummiest reasons.
He's probably worried because he minded leaving the goddam
football game before it was over--worried because he
probably showed he minded it and he knows Franny's sharp
enough to have noticed. I can just picture the little bastard getting her into a cab and putting her on a train and wondering if he can make it back to the game before the half ended'" (p.97). Further, the satire here is aimed primarily at the institution of academia ("'I'm so sick of pedants and conceited little tearer-downers I could scream'" [p.17]) rather than used as an archetype for the more general problem of society versus the individual. Both these factors serve to produce a far more purely satirical work than *The Catcher in the Rye*.

The more significant difference from an artistic point of view, however, lies in the nature of Franny's learning process. Holden's development comes through human perception; he learns nothing from Mr. Antolini's abstractions. In his crisis, Holden prays to Allie (Allah?), the personal innocence of his own childhood. In the same situation, Franny turns not to her own life, but to mystical religion for salvation: 

'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'" (p.36).

It is not so much in "Franny" as it is in "Zooey," however, that the earlier patterns of Salinger's fiction break down. The realism that characterizes the earlier works is lost as we move to the sur-real world of the Glass family apartment. "Zooey" is no longer a novel but a drama, in which meaning is presented rather than discovered. The apartment is a series of claustrophobic sets--Buddy terms the story "a sort of prose home movie" (p.47). We are moving from a world of human actions to a Shandean world of
opinions. This new "world" reflects a new direction of approach by Salinger. He has abandoned his search for "human" compassion in favor of attempting a definition of it. An abstract philosophical concern comes to dominate his later work. The Tao is a philosophical, rather than an emotional, reconciliation of love and squalor. As the focus shifts away from the portrayal of the human development of compassion, we move from the portrayal of learning to the author's philosophical teaching. The pattern also shifts away from learning through human involvement (James Castle is wearing Holden's turtle-neck sweater—"I almost didn't lend him my sweater. Just because I didn't know him too well" [The Catcher in the Rye, p.171]—when he jumps from the window), to an intellectual detachment, with learning through parables. Unembarrassed, emotional love is depicted in "Zooey" in a scene between a girl and her dog—observed through the closed window by Zooey, who comments, "There are nice things in the world" (p.152). Holden must learn from the uncontrollable reality of Jane's date with Stradlater about the nature of the world. Parables permit a construct of "controllable reality" for teaching.

In "Zooey" we find many of these elements. The lesson of "Zooey" begins with Buddy's parable of his encounter with a little girl in the supermarket—upon being asked the names of her "boy friends," she responds "in a piercing voice, 'Bobby and Dorothy!" (p.64)—and with Seymour's complementary observation 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" (pp.67-68). In Zooey himself we find a symptomatic reversal of Holden. Holden loves individuals, but must learn a "reconciled" compassion for the human condition. Zooey feels little compassion for individuals—Bessie tells him, "'Neither you nor Buddy know how to talk to people you don't like....Don't love really'" (p.99)—but he teaches Franny an abstract compassion for the human condition:

This terribly clear, clear picture of the Fat Lady formed in my mind. I had her sitting on this porch all day, swatting flies, with her radio going full-blast from morning till night. I figured the heat was terrible, and she probably had cancer, and--I don't know. Anyway, it seemed goddam clear why Seymour wanted me to shine my shoes when I went on the air...There isn't anyone out there who isn't Seymour's Fat Lady. That includes your Professor Tupper, buddy. And all his goddam cousins by the dozens...don't you know who that Fat Lady really is? ...Ah, buddy. It's Christ Himself. It's Christ Himself, buddy." (pp.200-202)

This is Holden's lesson; the Fat Lady is adult humanity trapped within its own squalor. Holden forgives Maurice; Franny must forgive Professor Tupper. But Holden's lesson is a human one; Zooey's is a religious parable. The Fat Lady is a concept, its meaning made clear through philosophical interpretation rather than through human experience.

Through Holden's eyes we analyze the nature of the world and come to an understanding of man's limitations within it. Holden's development is a process of learning
mature compassion through his experiences. Seymour, on the other hand, arrives endowed with an understanding of the world and teaches what man's actions should be. In comparison with Holden, the Seymour of the later stories is a relatively static character whose life becomes a series of parables for the edification of the remainder of the Glass family and whose spiritual authority at any age goes unquestioned:  

"Seymour once said that all we do our whole lives is go from one little piece of Holy Ground to the next. Is he never wrong?" ("Seymour: An Introduction," p. 213).

Holden is Salinger's archetypal man; Seymour becomes his saint. The development of Seymour through his four stories ("A Perfect Day for Bananafish," "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters," "Seymour: An Introduction," and "Hapworth 16, 1924") reflects the progress of Salinger's art. The Seymour of "A Perfect Day for Bananasfish" is overcome by the world and commits suicide.  

By the time of "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters," he has reversed the depressive effect that squalor has had on people like Holden when he writes in his diary: "'Oh, God, if I'm anything by a clinical name, I'm a kind of paranoiac in reverse. I suspect people of plotting to make me happy'" (pp. 75-76). In the deaf-mute uncle of the story we also see Holden's contemplation of pretending to be a deaf-mute brought into reality in a sur-real story. Communication between Buddy and the uncle, in light of the problems created, does tend
towards a level of pure human communication rather than
some conversational quagmire. Seymour also demonstrates
compassion, though it is primarily from a position of de-
tachment rather than involvement:

'Aren't [Muriel's marriage motives] despicable? In
a way, they must be, but yet they seem to me so
human-size and beautiful that I can't think of them
even now as I write this without feeling deeply,
deeper moved. He would disapprove of Muriel's
mother, too. She's an irritating, opinionated
woman, a type Buddy can't stand. I don't think
he could see her for what she is. A person de-
prived, for life, of any understanding or taste
for the main current of poetry that flows through
things, all things. She might as well be dead, and
yet she goes on living, stopping off at delicatessens,
seeing her analyst, consuming a novel every night,
putting on her girdle, plotting for Muriel's health
and prosperity. I love her. I find her unima-
ginably brave.' (p.72)

In "Seymour: An Introduction," he is moving towards a
type of sainthood; he "had a distracting habit...of inves-
tigating loaded ashtrays with his index finger, clearing
all the cigarette ends to the sides--smiling from ear to
ear as he did it--as if he expected to see Christ himself
curled up cherubically in the middle, and he never looked
disappointed....The hallmark, then, of the advanced religious,
nonsectarian or any other...is that he very frequently
behaves like a fool, even an imbecile" (pp.108-109).
Further, of course, the "story" has broken down into an ela-
brorate description. It is the contemplation of Seymour,
like Franny's contemplation of the Fat Lady-Christ, that
leads Buddy to a compassion for his students. The final
story in the Seymour complex (thus far, at any rate) is
'Hapworth 16, 1924," which consists of an eighty-page letter
written one afternoon by seven-year-old Seymour from his summer camp. He displays a similar compassion for the human condition: "the human body is so touching, with its countless blemishes and cysts and despised, touching pimples" (p39). "My God, human beings are brave creatures" (p.72). His spiritual detachment from mankind, however, is now accompanied by a detachment from his own body; he is gashed in the leg on a trip and regards the whole experience as "fairly amusing" (p.62), and he refuses anesthetic as they put in stitches. Human "perfection," for Seymour, does not imply "flawlessness" (p.94); he can accept the ravages of humanity. The final point, however, about Seymour's development is that he undergoes a curiously inverted evolution. In each story he is younger; yet in each story he is more intelligent and knowledgeable. Seven-year-old Seymour writes his parents asking them to send him the works of Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Austen, John Bunyan, and more, along with a considerable variety of esoterica. The result of this inversion is a reversal of the Christian paradox that knowledge necessarily entails the loss of innocence. By virtue of his age, Seymour becomes more innocent; by virtue of his progressively revealed genius, he becomes more knowledgeable. This paradoxical resolution, like the Taoesque resolution of the problem of love and squalor, reflects Salinger's search for new answers.

Seymour is saint and guru. His philosophy--an admixture of mystical Christianity and Zen Buddhism--gradually emerges as the subject matter of the later works. Yet this is not
so radical a departure from the "Esmé" works as it may appear. The same concerns—the problems of love and squalor—underlie both approaches. Salinger has simply shifted his focus from man to philosophy; from examining human experience to find a philosophy to examining a philosophy and exploring its implications for human experience. Both roads lead to compassion—though Holden understands it emotionally while the Glass family males analyze it intellectually. The difference lies not in the conclusions drawn, but in the nature of the characters. Holden's insight derives from his emotional sensitivity; such a source is totally unavailable to the precocious Glasses, whose sensitivity is intellectual rather than emotional. Even while the Glasses intellectualize, however, compassion still serves its earlier function of leading the character to a reconciliation with a "squalid" world. The function of Seymour in this process, as well as his position in Salinger's new philosophical framework, becomes clear as Buddy (Salinger's closest approach to a personna) concludes:

...I can't finish writing a description of Seymour... without being conscious of the good, the real... I know—not always, but I know—there is no single thing I do that is more important than going into that awful Room 307. There isn't one girl in there, including the Terrible Miss Zabel, who is not as much my sister as Boo Boo or Franny. They may shine with the misinformation of the ages, but they shine. This thought manages to stun me: There's no place I'd really rather go right now than into Room 307... Just go to bed, now. Quickly. Quickly and slowly. ("Seymour: An Introduction," pp.212-213)
FOOTNOTES:
FOOTNOTES:

INTRODUCTION:

1 J. D. Salinger, "Teddy," Nine Stories (Boston, 1964), p. 196. Further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text.
CHAPTER I:

FOR ESME--WITH LOVE AND COMPASSION

1 J.D. Salinger, "For Esme--with Love and Squalor," *Nine Stories* (Boston, 1964), pp. 87-114. Further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text.


3 Gwynn and Blotner's interpretation of the story is the one which deals most closely with the problem of love and squalor, the major concern of my thesis. Warren French see the story as a "dramatic gloss on the Dostoevski quotation that the trembling Sergeant writes in Goebbels book" (*J.D. Salinger* [New York, 1963], p. 100), and also views it as a story of Charles' salvation. The most unusual interpretation of the story that I have found is John Antico's "The Parody of J.D. Salinger: Esme and the Fat Lady Exposed" (*Modern Fiction Studies*, XII, 3 [Autumn, 1966], 325-340): "A careful examination of the story will demonstrate that 'For Esme' is a parody of the typical sentimental war story in which the Love of The Girl Back Home boosts the Morale of the Intrepid War Hero and Saves Him from Battle Fatigue. Instead of Esme's love, it is Sergeant X's sense of humor that 'saves' him; instead of an innocent, graceful, and magnanimous Esme, we actually have a precocious snob and a cold, affected, and aristocratic brat--in a word, a phony. Instead of celebrating the power of love, Salinger is satirizing what so often passes as love in bad fiction (pp. 326-27).

4 Structurally, the story begins with the narrator's introduction in the present, and then shifts to the past.

5 J.D. Salinger, *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour--an Introduction* (Boston, 1965), p. 150. Further references to both these stories will be from this edition and will be cited in the text.

6 J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Boston, 1964), p. 87. Further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text.
This pattern of sleep following insight and symbolically reflecting reconciliation is found also in some of Salinger's other work. Franny falls asleep after being reconciled to an imperfect humanity through Zooey's Fat Lady parable. And Buddy, as narrator in "Seymour—an Introduction," after being brought, through his contemplation on Seymour, to a recognition of the basic humanity of the girls in Room 307 (where he teaches his undergraduate course), becomes the restlessness that has been plaguing him and falls asleep.

This tendency has led John Hermann, for example, to interpret Esme as the "distillation of squalor" ("J.D. Salinger: Hello Hello Hello," College English, XXII, 4 [Jan., 1961], 262-264).

We might note the similarity of this type of contact to Charlotte's tromping on Seymour's foot during the radio show to indicate pleasure: "It was like a hand squeeze, only she used her foot" ("Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters," p. 81.). For a rather extensive discussion of Salinger's foot imagery, see John Russell's article, "Salinger's Feat" (MFS, XII, 3 [Autumn, 1966], 299-312.).

CHAPTER II:

CATCHER AND CARROUSEL


2 We find reflections of this same attitude in Seymour: "he was definitely snaky-hipped and a natural ballcarrier. If, in midfield, when he was carrying the ball, he didn't suddenly elect to give his heart to an oncoming tackler, he was a distinct asset to his team... when my own [Buddy's] teammates grudgingly allowed me to take the ball around one of the ends, Seymour, playing for the opposite side, disconcerted me by looking overjoyed to see me as I charged in his direction, as though it were an unexpected, an enormously providential chance encounter"("Seymour--an Introduction," p.197). Seymour, like Holden, can take only a non-competitive interest in games. He suggests that Buddy improve his marble game by "not aiming so much"(p.202):"If you hit him when you aim, it'll be just luck... You'll be glad if you hit his marble--Ira's marble--won't you? Won't you be glad? And if you're glad when you hit somebody's marble, then you sort of secretly didn't expect too much to do it. So there'd have to be some luck in it, there'd have to be slightly quite a lot of accident in it" (pp.201-202). Shooting is to be done for its own sake, not for the sake of winning. Further, Seymour is unable to practice deception to win at poker; his face always reflects his real response.

3 The repetition of the full name emphasizes his initials; Holden never continues to use full names for anyone else.

4 Richard Kinsella's pattern of digression is quite similar to Holden's, especially when Holden uses Allie's baseball glove as a base from which to digress to his red hair, his sense of humor, and his death (pp.38-39).
Seymour, in "Hapworth 16, 1924" (The New Yorker, June 19, 1965, pp. 32-113), reflects a similar "human," rather than "literary," orientation in wishing to read books, regardless of literary quality, recommended to him by other people.

CHAPTER III:

DE DAUMIER-SMITH AND BEYOND:

A NEW DIRECTION

1 Various critics have dealt with these later works. One of the more interesting articles to appear on the subject is Ihab Hassan's "Almost the Voice of Silence: The Later Novelettes of J.D. Salinger" (WSCL, 4, 1 [Winter 1963], 5-20). Hassan sees Seymour as the theme of the later works as they present a sacramental view of life.

2 J.D. Salinger, "De Daumier-Smith's Blue Period," Nine Stories (Boston, 1964), pp. 130-165. Further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text. Gwynn and Blotner, in their interpretation of this story, move away, curiously enough, from the "love-squalor" problem and view the story instead as a "humorous treatment of the classical Oedipal situation" (p. 33).

3 J.D. Salinger, Franny and Zooey (Boston, 1964), p. 162. Further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text.

4 We might compare this with Holden's statement: "you don't have to be a bad guy to depress somebody—you can be a good guy and do it. All you have to do to depress somebody is give them a lot of phony advice while you're looking for your initials in some can door—that's all you have to do" (p. 169).

5 Cf: "I can just see the big phony shifting into first gear and asking Jesus to send him a few more stiffs" (The Catcher in the Rye, p. 17).

6 Zooey may have reservations about the freakishness of his Seymour-led education, but he never questions the truth of Seymour's teachings.

7 Whether it is the "squalor" of the world which oppresses Seymour is a matter of some critical debate. William Wiegand sees the bananafish as an emblem of Seymour glutted with a "surfeit of sensation" ("Seventy-eight Bananas," Salinger: A Critical and Personal Portrait, ed. Henry Anatole Grunwald [New York, 1962], p. 123 [originally appeared in the Chicago Review, Winter, 1958]). An alternative interpretation, however, might be to see the bananafish as
people who glut themselves on material things, catch "banana-fever" (materialism) and die (spiritually). In this interpretation, it is a vision of squalor that overcomes Seymour. The doomed bananafish with six bananas in its mouth that Sybil sees is not Seymour, as Wiegand suggests, but Sybil herself, for she has revealed no particular qualities that would raise her above the "squalid" level of her mother or anyone else.

Teddy, Salinger's first "hyper-intellectual" character, has his intellectualism set off against his lack of emotion:

"I wish I knew why people think it's so important to be emotional," Teddy said.

"My mother and father don't think a person's human unless he thinks a lot of things are very sad or very annoying or very--very unjust, sort of..."

"I take it you have no emotions?" [Nicholson] said.

Teddy reflected before answering. "If I do, I don't remember when I ever used them," he said. "I don't see what they're good for." ("Teddy," p.186)

Teddy's unemotional nature leads him to refuse to love God "sentimentally" and to describe his feelings for his parents not as "love," but as an "affinity" (p.187).
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COLLECTIONS OF CRITICISM:
