



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

**SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
BA THESIS**

**Faith and the Search for Identity in the Works of J.D. Salinger
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“Faith and the Search for Identity in the Works of J.D. Salinger” focuses on selected characters from Salinger's fiction, namely Holden Caulfield, Franny Glass, Seymour Glass and Teddy McArdle. It is argued that these characters find themselves at a critical point in their lives and rather than assimilating into what they consider a “world of the phonies,” they give meaning to their lives with the help of religion (specifically Zen Buddhism) and faith in their siblings. These characters' ambitions and failures are introduced in the context of the pressures of post-war American culture of conformity but also in the context of Salinger's “distancing from his Jewishness” (4).

The strength of the thesis is in its close reading of these selected characters. They are analyzed in considerable depth. The turn to the cultural context helps to explain Salinger's one-time popularity. Several formulations are inaccurate; for example it is asserted that “Salinger's writing could, therefore, also be seen as a way of spreading the teachings of Zen and Salinger's spiritual quest” (3)—I don't think Salinger's writing “spreads the teachings of Zen” and the thesis does not demonstrate this either. In addition, the conclusion could have reflected on Salinger's writing with more critical distance, by considering his relevance for the present day or discussing his place in the literary canon (given that Twain and Fitzgerald are mentioned elsewhere in the thesis as Salinger's possible models). Notwithstanding, despite its generally descriptive character, the thesis illustrates very well what it aims to illustrate.

Depending on the defense, the thesis may be graded as “výborně” (1) or “very good” (2).

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