

Appropriating the Pen: J.D. Salinger's "Franny"

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### Abstract

Franny and Zooey is part of the Glass family saga created by J.D. Salinger. Originally published separately ("Franny" in 1955, "Zooey" in 1957), the two novellas are now published as one text. In "Franny," Franny attempts to appropriate the power of the metaphorical pen so that she can write her own story in order to break the silence enforced upon women. Critics have overlooked the precise nature of Franny's crisis; furthermore, Salinger's "Zooey" undermines a critical perspective of Franny's autonomy.

Key words: J.D. Salinger, Feminist Theory, Feminist Monster

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*Franny and Zooey* is part of J.D. Salinger's Glass family saga. Originally published separately ("Franny"<sup>1</sup> in 1955, "Zooey" in 1957), the two novellas are now published as one text. Franny attempts to appropriate the power of the metaphorical pen so that she can write her own story in order to break the silence enforced upon women. She tries to create for herself a measure of power through her interest in Sappho, the taking of a testicular olive, and reciting the "Jesus Prayer." Her pilgrimage to find herself, however, is in exclusion of the men around her, which contributes to her struggle. This struggle is largely overlooked in the existing literature. Nevertheless, to reclaim Franny as a feminist character is to give voice to her in particular and to silenced women in general.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper "Franny" refers to the novella "Franny" in *Franny and Zooey*. Franny without quotations refers to the character Franny. This also extends to Zooey and "Zooey."

Critical interpretations rarely discuss Franny as an independent individual<sup>2</sup>. Many critics discuss Franny in terms of her biology as woman or in relation to her existence in the larger Glass family tree (David D. Galloway, Warren French, Arthur Mizener, Alfred Kazin, John Updike, Paul Levine<sup>3</sup>). What has been written about *Franny and Zooey* has been relatively narrow in scope; most of the criticism discusses the way the two youngest members of the Glass family handle phoniness and love towards others. However, Franny Glass can be seen as an early feminist character, and the crisis that she

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<sup>2</sup> No further historical contextualization will be given about these critics because it would only detract from the larger argument that this essay explores.

<sup>3</sup> Several of the critics talked about *Franny and Zooey* in terms of the phoniness the characters experience from the world around them, the coming of age story of Zooey Glass, or the way that Salinger dearly loved his Glass family creation.

experiences is not exclusively linked to her perception of a phony world, but is also linked to her lost feminine identity. This lost identity is due in part to Franny being one of two female siblings in the Glass family, neither of whom are given very extensive character development in comparison to their brothers. Franny is largely overlooked by her own family and critics alike.

Critical interpretations of “Franny” do exist, sparse as they may be. Updike, Mizener and French, in “Search for the Seer” and “The House of Glass,” bring attention to the fact that much of the initial reading of “Franny” focuses on her possible pregnancy. Mizener states that many readers are confused as to what Franny’s crisis actually revolved around: “Some of them... seem to have thought...the heroine of ‘Franny’ (1955) was so badly upset during her football weekend with Lane Coutell not because she was in a spiritual crisis but because she was pregnant” (209). French also states in “The House of Glass” that readers were shocked that Salinger wrote about “a distraught college girl who was experiencing a bout of morning sickness while visiting during a football weekend” (90). French then asserts that it took about two and a half years before “[i]t was also made clear that this Franny Glass was not pregnant,” which coincidentally coincides with the publication of “Zooney” (90).

While a few critics eventually admit to the impossibility of Franny being pregnant, this belief posited by the critics is only grounded in one of two lines of reasoning: one, that Salinger would never have let a member of his beloved Glass family be pregnant out of wedlock; and two, that “Zooney” proves that Franny was not pregnant in “Franny.” Within the scope of this research, there is not a single critic who argues that Franny’s crisis is based on anything other than her possible pregnancy or any argument that suggests her crisis can be of a more intellectual nature while also looking only at Franny. Critics believe her incapable of a different kind of crisis. Rather than further evaluating “Franny,” critics lost interest in her crisis once they came to the conclusion that she was not pregnant. Relating to Franny through her biology is problematic in that it fails to tackle the character herself. It is not unreasonable to believe that Franny could be pregnant, but to believe that the only possible cause for Franny’s distress is a pregnancy oversimplifies Franny specifically, and women in general, in that it links them directly to their biological systems, not their other capacities as functioning individuals.

Even those critics who do not reference Franny in connection to her ability to procreate or have pre-marital sex only talk about Franny in relation to males—namely, Seymour, Zooney, and Lane. French even goes so far as to advocate, “‘Franny’ is incomplete without ‘Zooney’” (“Search for the Seer” 142). This statement insinuates that Franny is merely a springboard for Zooney’s success, and furthermore, that neither Franny the character, nor “Franny” the novella, could stand alone without “Zooney.” However, since “Franny” was published originally on its own in 1955, it can clearly be read and interpreted as its own story. It is completely reasonable to look at “Franny” in isolation and treat the character of Franny Glass as a character who is going through a crisis that is not necessarily related to any biological performance of her sex, such as being pregnant.

Sadly, the patriarchal culture finds it more plausible to see Franny as pregnant than to see her as a character having an intellectual breakdown. To diminish the importance of Franny’s crisis by basing it on other characters (Zooney, Seymour, and Lane) and readers’ perception of her possible pregnancy suggests that Franny is a paper-thin character incapable of having a true, possibly intellectual, crisis that requires her to venture forth to overcome an obstacle, and is simply a step in other characters’ journeys toward overcoming their own obstacles.

Problematically, the academic world widely holds that Salinger published “Zooney” to clarify his intentions with “Franny.” Critics believe that Salinger would not have wanted the brilliant Franny Glass to be seen as pregnant, but rather wanted Franny to be seen as having an existential breakdown. This assumption creates some underlying issues in the critique of this novella, insinuating the incompleteness of “Franny” both as a novella and as a character. Because many Salinger critics and casual readers believe that “Zooney” was written only as an extension or a clarification of “Franny,” the reader is given a reason to disengage from interpreting “Franny” on its own. Such an approach implies that there is no way to understand “Franny” without also reading “Zooney.”

Alternatively, if it is widely assumed that Salinger wrote “Zooney” as a way to clarify “Franny” and that assumption is seen as fact, then there is another possibility as to why Salinger wrote the former. “Zooney” could be a response to the feminist monster that Salinger unwittingly created and then tries to silence. “Zooney” could clarify Franny as not being pregnant, while simultane-

ously taking the focus off of the supposed feminist monster. This places Franny back into a role of submission, taking away her autonomy and snatching back the pen.

Following the American ideals of the mid-twentieth-century scholars, Franny had to be pregnant, because if she was not, she was breaking away from the expectations of life for women. Simone de Beauvoir, a strong voice in Feminist theory, states in *The Second Sex* (translated into English in 1953), "[t]he system is considered normal or 'natural' which, abandoning her as prey to some male, restores her sovereignty by putting a child in her arms" (Beauvoir 406). By assuming Franny is pregnant, the critics place Franny back into the "natural" system. Beauvoir goes on to say, "this supposed 'normality' is enjoined by a more or less clearly comprehended social interest" (406). The social interest of the American public is one in which women are subjugated to specific roles in order to keep a certain social balance. To reiterate, treating Franny's crisis as potentially being caused by pregnancy would indeed seem to indicate a societal need for Franny to be pregnant. It suggests that women in general, and Franny in particular, cannot feasibly have crises that are not related to their specific gender roles or have crises that are unique to themselves. Franny, however, does try to break these societal bonds and negotiate a space for herself. One way she attempts to rebel against these social practices is through her reverence for the Greek poet Sappho. In Franny's letter to Lane she states, "I think I'm beginning to look down on all poets except Sappho. I've been reading her like mad" (5). Franny's statement suggests that she looks up to and admires Sappho. According to Guy Davenport in *Sappho: Poems and Fragments*, Sappho was a "lyric poet of the seventh century before Christ," and she was also said to be interested in females as partners in love (ix, xii). In fact, Franny's interest in Sappho could reveal something about Franny herself.

Her interest in Sappho makes Franny a feminist monster in her pursuit of autonomy. Franny then reveals, "I may even do my term thing on her if I decide to go out for honors and if I can get the moron they assigned me as an advisor to let me" (5). Here Franny is worried about her advisor letting her do a paper about another woman. Being unable to write what she wants, on the subject matter she wants to write about, questions any amount of autonomy that Franny could have, assuming there ever is any autonomy. If she is being hampered, or believes that she will be hampered from working on

Sappho, it would signify that Franny has no control over her role as a student, and in turn her role as an author relating her story to us, the readers. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* discuss the common position of female literary characters and authors:

because woman is denied the autonomy—the subjectivity—that the pen represents, she is not only excluded from culture (whose emblem might well be the pen) but also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship, or fear, love or loathing. (598)

Franny first has the pen taken away from her by the advisors at her school who restrict her ability to write, and then by the critics who fail to discuss her character. With "Zooey," Salinger blots Franny out due to her monstrosity as a feminine power.

Gilbert and Gubar also suggest that a woman is not only denied power through the absence of the pen, but that she becomes an Other, a thing that is essentially on object, idol, or monster (598). This is where Sappho enters the conversation more fully. Franny writes a Sappho quote in her letter to Lane: "Delicate Adonis is dying, Cytherea, what shall we do? Beat your breasts, maidens, and rend your tunics" (Salinger 5). Adonis, a God of beauty and desire, is dying, and Cytherea—more commonly known as Aphrodite—is being questioned on what the next step is. Franny likes this quote, and it was chosen for a specific reason; she even tells Lane that it is "marvelous" (5). While Franny likes this quote in particular, Franny admires Sappho in general for being a woman and being autonomous, which Franny is having difficulty accomplishing. Having this pen allows Sappho to appropriate the power of authorship, a phallic power, and take control of her own situation—something that Franny is interested in accomplishing in the olive scene. Not only this, but a lesbian woman such as Sappho could be considered a monster due to her denying her perceived biological purpose—something Franny herself may be doing by denying the same. Franny may be aware of this because she is worried that her advisor will not let her write about Sappho, and if this is the case, then it is plausible that Franny is also aware of the societal structures that are surrounding women and women who deny their perceived heteronormative destinies.

So what is it that attracts Franny to that quote? In the quote, women are unable to live and function without their beautiful Adonis; however, when Adonis, the god of beauty and desire, dies, it also allows a woman to take a position of power. Since Adonis—the very idea of a desirable, beautiful man—is dying, Aphrodite asks the women what they should do. The tearing of their tunics and the beating of chests, while being an emotional display, denotes a sense of power in the creation of such grief. It certainly takes some level of power to be able to display such emotions. Also, in the tradition of many epics, men and women alike have such displays of emotion. These displays are common and seem to portray grief as a powerful moment of possible transformation for heroes and supporting characters alike. Simultaneously, when Adonis dies leaving only women behind, they push forward in a movement that is based off of their own purposes, rather than sitting around perplexed about man's disappearance. If Aphrodite and Sappho being in a position of power is part of what attracts Franny, then one could even go so far as to say that Franny is questioning her own heteronormativity. Heteronormativity requires that Franny be the submissive female to Lane's dominant male. However, she denies this gender binary through the olive scene, her interest in Sappho, her recognition of the women in her book "The way of a Pilgrim," through her little death she experiences, her interest in becoming an author and wanting to write about Sappho, and the fact that the couple never made it to the cocktail party that Lane wanted to go to in order to solidify their heteronormativity.

Since Franny questions her own heteronormativity, she is also a female monster, just like Sappho. This is achieved through Franny's interest in taking up the pen (a masculine endeavor), but also in her admiration of Sappho as a poet. Gilbert and Gubar discuss the idea of the female monster in further detail:

the female freak is and has been a powerfully coercive and monitory image for women secretly desiring to attempt the pen... If becoming *author* meant mistaking one's 'sex and way,' if it meant becoming an 'unsexed' or perversely sexed female, it meant becoming a monster or freak. (608)

Franny is both 'sexed' and 'unsexed,' similar to Sappho. They both wanted to take up the pen, which makes them monstrous in their attempt to be something they should not be, an author, which in this case is synonymous with being masculine. The patriarchal society has an interest

in keeping Franny, and women as a mass, away from not only having autonomy, but also from disrupting the male-female gender binary so that there is no other option to turn to. This is why Salinger wrote "Zooey," as a way to hide Franny's monstrousness. Luce Irigaray in "Commodities amongst Themselves" states, "[t]he only thing that is really required of [woman] is that she keep intact the circulation of pretense by enveloping herself in femininity" (575). Thus, by denying Franny the pen, the advisor (along with those critics who have paid her little heed, and Salinger who may have hidden "Franny" behind "Zooey") navigates her into a safe zone that does not threaten the long-standing gender binary in place.

The reader sees Franny in the beginning of the narrative enveloping herself in femininity. According to Galloway, "[h]er efforts at presenting a typical girl-on-a-football-weekend appearance are part of a last stand in which she tries to face the public world" (41). Franny tries to create this other college girl identity to keep with the cultural signifying practices, including pleasing the "hopelessly super-male" Lane (Salinger 5). When Lane sees Franny on the platform of the train, he also notices her "sheared-raccoon coat" and thinks to himself, "he was the only one on the platform who really *knew* Franny's coat" (Salinger 7). Lane is gazing at Franny and not seeing Franny as the subject, but rather as the object over which the coat is draped. The coat, therefore, is the subject in this scene, and the reader sees first-hand Franny's objectification. At this point, there is no indication that Franny is aware of Lane's gaze, or his objectification of her through her coat. Franny is the object of the male gaze, looked at and taken apart in terms of her utility.

One can see this in action when Franny is at "Sickler's," the restaurant where the two decided to have lunch. Lane finds himself thinking that he is "in the right place with an unimpeachably right looking girl" (Salinger 10-11). Lane, a man who has the power of the gaze, looks at Franny and sees her not as a woman per se, but as a figure who is "an unimpeachably right-looking girl—a girl who was not only extraordinarily pretty but, so much the better, not too categorically cashmere sweater and flannel skirt" (11). Franny, however, this time takes note of Lane's gaze and suddenly feels guilt. More importantly, though, she feels guilty not for being looked at, but for *noticing* she is being looked at:

Franny had seen this momentary little exposure...  
But by some old, standing agreement with her

psyche, she elected to feel guilty for having seen it, caught it, and sentenced herself to listen to Lane's ensuing conversation with a special semblance of absorption. (11)

Being aware of the male gaze gives Franny a sort of power because the gaze is intrinsically male in nature. This power makes Franny feel a certain amount of guilt or discomfort because she is aware that it is not her right to obtain that power of knowledge as female. Franny tries to make amends by being aware of Lane's wants and desires and by submitting to them, listening to him as he speaks incessantly. Franny sees in Lane a certain amount of phoniness and a "super-male" complex (Salinger 5).

Franny struggles with her identity and seeks to find herself as a woman but is hampered by the social expectation of her role as a woman. Judith Fetterly, in "On the Politics of Literature," discusses the literature that neither includes women nor exists without them:

In such fictions the female reader is co-opted into participation in an experience from which she is explicitly excluded; she is asked to identify with a selfhood that defines itself in opposition to her; she is required to identify against herself. (561-562)

This can be seen rather well in "Franny" where most critics and some readers exclude Franny from the conversation of her own experiences. This is the basis for Franny's crisis; those within the text deny her autonomy, just as the critics and readers who exist outside of the text do. Thus, Franny is unable to truly identify with herself unless she can claim authority. Additionally, Gallo-way states,

In the beginning of the story Lane's own "phoniness" only encourages Franny to try more earnestly to fulfill the role he has outlined for her, but it gradually becomes clear that Franny suffers from an acute and oversensitive weariness with all that is phony in the world. (42)

Franny defines this phoniness as: "ego, ego, ego" (Salinger 29). However, her crisis focuses on more than phoniness. This phoniness she is experiencing is a revelation of the patriarchal society that she has found herself immersed in; Franny sees "super-male" Lane as synonymous with "phony" Lane. This is because Lane attempts to be overly masculine in order to fulfill his prescribed gender role, which makes him phony in his insincere activity with Franny. The synonymous relationship be-

tween "super-male" and "phony" is why she hates the "hopelessly super-male" society that she is forced to live in and follow the rules of (Salinger 5). This meeting with Lane is Franny's final attempt to do what she believes she has to in her role as woman. However, it becomes clear that the phoniness of Lane is the final straw that convinces her she is unable to submit to the societal rules that she is feeling pressure from. This is what causes the physical reaction from Franny, literally making her sick. Franny is grappling with the difficulty of asserting her autonomy over the "super-male" Lane and subsequently, every male who has hampered her (Salinger 5).

Franny begins to assert her autonomy mostly through her conversations with Lane. She first asks him a question about the paper he has written when he is discussing the "testicularity" or lack thereof, in a certain author. Franny then asks, "Lacks what?" (Salinger 11). Lane answers, "[m]asculinity," only further accentuating his "super-male" status (Salinger 5, 11). Franny responds, "I heard you the first time" (Salinger 11). Franny is questioning him not because she did not understand, or misheard him, but because she was questioning his assertion of the "testicularity" of the author he had been writing about. Franny tells him that she understood; her response questions his reasoning, or even the very language that Lane uses. When Lane interchanges the term "testicularity" with "masculinity," it signifies very much what he believes about the male and the masculine. Franny questions Lane's belief in the relationship between bodies and the perspectives of those bodies.

Franny interrupts him again, using her own voice to assert her autonomy, to ask for the olive from his martini (Salinger 13). When Franny asks for the olive, she is not only trying to stop the barrage of Lane's words with her own, she is taking hold of Lane's symbolic power. In that moment, the very testicular—and by association, phallic—olive is brought to the forefront. Taking hold of that testicular power is one of the possible ways for Franny to create for herself a space in which she can obtain autonomy.

Franny internalizes the symbolic power that the olive, and by extension Lane, presents. While some may posit that Franny was performing a sexual act to please or submit to Lane, it is more likely that Franny is taking that power as her own. Assuming that Franny was submitting to Lane and taking his olive in order to seduce him would only imply that Franny is taking ownership

over her own sexuality. However, there is no textual evidence that supports Franny being submissive in the olive scene.

Nevertheless, Franny is unaware as to why she asks for the olive: “She knew from Lane’s expression that she had asked the wrong question. What was worse, she suddenly didn’t want the olive at all and wondered why she has even *asked* for it” (Salinger 13). By feeling guilt once more, Franny is starting to become even more painfully aware of her entrapment. She feels she has to be passive; however, when she takes control and attempts to appropriate Lane’s power, she struggles with recognizing that power as her own.

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* discusses one of the possible gender roles that Franny has issues negotiating. Beauvoir states that a woman “does not dare to be enterprising, to revolt, to intend; doomed to docility, to resignation, she can take in society only a place already made for her. She regards the existing state of affairs as something fixed” (331). And in fact, Franny displays her disgust at her own defiance in relation to the olive from Lane’s martini. Franny states, “I’m not afraid to compete. It’s just the opposite.... I’m afraid I *will* compete—that’s what scares me” (Salinger 30). Franny goes on to say, “That’s why I quit the Theatre Department. Just because I’m so horribly conditioned to accept everybody else’s values, and just because I like applause and people to rave about me, doesn’t make it right. I’m ashamed of it” (30). To clarify, Franny is essentially afraid of taking on the role of being the center of attention, of being an active force in the world; in fact, she is ashamed of liking the applause and also simultaneously ashamed for being ashamed. Franny knows that she is subjected to a world where she has limited options and to compete is to try to leave the world of the feminine and enter the world of the masculine: “[females] are forbidden to explore, to venture, to extend the limits of the possible.... the *competitive* attitude, most important to young men, is almost unknown to them,” Beauvoir argues, thus demonstrating additional layers of conflict in Franny’s crisis (330).

Due to her conflicted situation, Franny becomes increasingly distressed. Franny gets further drawn into her crisis by Lane’s unending and absolute phoniness and pretention: “with equal parts of self-disapproval and malice, she felt like speaking her mind” (Salinger 14). With this, the reader sees Franny’s guilt in speaking out paired with her desire to speak her mind and extend be-

yond her perceived womanly right. One critic, Daniel Seitzman, author of “Salinger’s ‘Franny’: Homoerotic Imagery,” states that Franny’s crisis is something else entirely. He suggests, “Franny is unable to respect men. She likes them only when she can feel sorry for them or look down on them, when they are not completely male. By castrating all men, she denies her own ‘deficiency’” (64). Seitzman goes on to note that:

the indirect insult to Lane, the discomfiting recognition of her compulsive need to hurt him again and again, and the danger that some knowledge relating to her need to depreciate all men will break into her consciousness combine to make her ill. (64)

Seitzman, like many other critics, is under the impression that Franny is unable to have a crisis that has little to do with the men surrounding her, and that her self-knowledge is not directly related to their relevancy to her story. The very idea that Franny is unable to respect men is an overgeneralization—especially given the interest Franny has in Adonis—once more minimalizing her, making her a one-dimensional unrealistic character. It is extremely telling that one of the few academic articles written semi-exclusively about the novella “Franny” is one as patriarchal as Seitzman’s.

Soon after Franny shares her thoughts about the phoniness of the world with Lane, her crisis culminates, and Franny excuses herself from the table and goes to the restroom to take a moment. It is during this trip that the reader gets to see Franny’s initial moment of breakdown. Salinger uses words such as, “void like black,” “nosier manifestations of grief and confusion,” “painful, knifelike,” “violent,” “expressionless,” and “vacuous,” to describe the dark and morbid initial breakdown (Salinger 22). Upon returning to the table Franny states, “[d]id you think I’d died?” once more giving the impression of death (Salinger 23). This is when the reader also sees the book that Franny has been carrying with her in more detail (Salinger 23). Franny reveals the book is called *The Way of the Pilgrim* (Salinger 32). The book tells about a pilgrim who travels all over trying to learn how to pray ceaselessly. Soon after she finishes her summary of the book, she once again excuses herself from the table to use the restroom, only this time she does not quite make it. She faints before even reaching the bathroom. This fainting episode, however, is seen as the death of the woman Franny was before she made the decision to appropriate power, before she steps into an

active role and becomes what a woman should not be. This final fainting is the culmination of the death-like feelings Franny herself mentioned upon her first trip to the bathroom.

However, one must ask why Franny is having this breakdown now; why should she kill off the woman that is controlled by the patriarchy? Being a Glass, Franny should have been beyond this kind of breakdown. As Updike states, "[o]ne wonders how a girl raised in a home where Buddhism and crisis theology were table talk could have postponed her own crisis for so long and, when it came, be so disarmed by it" (229). The breakdown is beyond the disdain for the "section men" and the "Wally Campbells," whose sole interest is to prove their self-worth and purpose as those of an elite class. It extends past the boundaries of a disdain for a self-satisfying society and moves into the realm of a crisis revolving around her role as a driven, impassioned woman in a patriarchal society that hampers her in ways she has only recently noticed (Salinger 15, 24). While it is completely possible that Franny is having a crisis about religion, it is more likely that the crisis is her inability to find and appropriate power. This, then, leads Franny to clutch at religion in the hopes of finding a place where she can appropriate a kind of power that she is unable to grasp otherwise.

Some critics may find issue with Franny seeking religion due to some patriarchal ideologies that are often found in various religions; however, Franny is searching for something that is not based in any particular gender. In her attempt to make the "Jesus Prayer" become self-activated, she is trying to assimilate the power that comes through praying without ceasing. Franny explains one particular part of the pilgrim's story to Lane:

"while they're at dinner, the pilgrim wants to know who all the ladies are that are sitting around the table, and the husband tells him that they're all servants but that they always sit down to eat with him and his wife because they're sisters in Christ." (34-35)

Franny then goes on to adjust herself in her seat "self-consciously" as if she is embarrassed to relate this specific bit of information to Lane (Salinger 35). Franny also attempts to cover up that moment of embarrassment by stating, "I mean I loved the pilgrim wanting to know who all the ladies were" (35). Franny is actually more interested in the recognition of women as equals demonstrated by the scene, recognition she had not had the chance to experience.

At the very end of "Franny," the reader sees Franny lying on her back in the manager's office after having woken up. Then follows a moment of clarity in which it is revealed that Lane is more interested in sex with Franny than with Franny herself. After Lane leaves, Franny soundlessly words what the reader is led to believe is the "Jesus Prayer" due to her previous mention of the prayer:

the starets tells him about the Jesus Prayer first of all. 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.' I mean, that's what it is. And he explains to him that those are the best words to use when you pray... the starets tells the pilgrim that if you keep saying the prayer over and over again—you only have to do it with your *lips* at first—then eventually what happens, the prayer becomes self-active. (36-37)

While Franny is lying in the manager's office after her fainting episode, "[h]er lips began to move, forming soundless words, and they continued to move" (44). This final moment in "Franny" may seem rather inconclusive. However, if looked at as a representation of the choice Franny has made, it is not inconclusive because Franny has concluded her own story by making a decision. She decides to take action against the patriarch and begins the first stages towards reaching for some power greater than herself through the prayer. Franny is appropriating power and begins to initiate her movement towards her own self-knowledge, the completion of her own story. As Hélène Cixous states in "Laugh of the Medusa," "[w]e must kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing" (880). In this particular situation, the Franny who exists prior to her crisis and prior to her decision to take control through the "Jesus Prayer" is the false woman, the woman who essentially has to be killed. The killing of this false woman occurs when Franny decides to appropriate power, specifically at the moment of her fainting episode.

Franny makes this move toward autonomy through the pilgrim's story; she attempts to create in herself a self-activated prayer in the search for mercy and connection to God the way that the pilgrim in her beloved cloth-bound book does. Through a spiritual pilgrimage, she wants to appropriate the power that being connected to God could bring her, but also add to the tools that she needs in order to cope with and overcome the world she lives in. In addition, she wants to create a spiritual connection that will lead to her being treated as an equal for once, as "sisters in Christ" (Salinger 35). Franny is going on this pilgrimage of sorts alone and is possibly one of the first women to do so in this way. By bringing

attention to this fact, one essentially sees Franny as the creator of a paved road that other women can follow. Carl Thompson, in *Travel Writing*, states, “women often availed themselves of the travel opportunities provided by traditions of religious pilgrimage, a form of travel which frequently enabled women to travel independently of men” (169). When Franny chooses to go on her own private pilgrimage to find herself, she is becoming independent of man; she is, in fact, claiming her own kind of authority. Additionally, Franny clutching at religion reveals a few different things about her crisis: one, she is desperate enough to turn to religion rather than to other means of power; two, she is making assumptions about the nature of religion itself, in that it is not patriarchal, but gender neutral; and three, she is reaching for something that is beyond herself while also simultaneously, irrevocably, a part of herself. Essentially, Franny is negotiating her own place in the spiritual world because she cannot do so in the physical world.

In conclusion, Franny is attempting to appropriate the power of the pen and become the author of her own life through Sappho, the olive, and the “Jesus Prayer.” Salinger attempted to write over “Franny” with his installation of “Zooey” in order to hide the feminist monster he unwittingly created. Not to look at Franny again, and not to look at her in terms of herself and in this way, minimalizes the complexity of the concerns of Franny specifically and of women generally; it takes back the voice of the oppressed and continues to oppress them. To read “Franny” through a feminist lens and to revive Franny as a feminist icon gives a voice back to women and the power of the pen back to Franny.

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