Response to Shockley’s piece on Christian Symbolism

While Shockley points out some obvious similarities between Casy and Christ, his argument is majorly flawed. While Casy and Christ both return from the wilderness enlightened, Casy ends up rejecting some Christian ideas. Casy claims people share a “collective soul” and that “all that lives is holy,” two beliefs of Buddhism (Steinbeck 256). Shockley acknowledges this later saying, “The principle of reverence for life…has been…practiced for centuries by Buddhists,” but Shockley claims this is “incidental.” While Shockley disregards evidence that disproves his theory, many of his “proofs” stretch the imagination, such as the waitress who “cast her bread” and “Noah’s wandering into the stream” as biblical references. The greatest flaw in Shockley’s argument, however, is the final scene being compared to communion. Shockley states “Rosasharn says, in effect: ‘Not my will, but Thine be done’” which, if he believes Casy represents Christ, should have been said about Casy, as Jesus was the one who said it in the Bible. It was Jesus who gave his “body” to be eaten, not one of his disciples, yet Shockley writes “This is my body says Rosasharn” and that “In her…and through her…life triumphs over death,” both are said by and about Jesus, not his disciples and therefore take away from his theory of Casy as Christ, despite communion being a Christian symbol. Throughout his essay, Shockley points out similarities between Casy and Christ, but his disregard for evidence that disproves his theory along with evidence that does not fit with his claim, takes away from his paper.