

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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J.D. SALINGER, individually, and as	:
TRUSTEE OF THE J.D. SALINGER	:
LITERARY TRUST,	: 09 Civ. 05095 (DAB)
	:
Plaintiff,	:
	: DECLARATION OF
-against-	: <u>MARTHA WOODMANSEE</u>
	:
JOHN DOE, writing under the name JOHN	:
DAVID CALIFORNIA; WINDUPBIRD	:
PUBLISHING LTD.; NICOTEXT A.B.; and	:
ABP, INC/ d/b/a SCB DISTRIBUTORS, INC.,	:
	:
Defendants.	:
-----X	:

I, Martha Woodmansee, declare under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the following is true and correct:

1. I am a professor in the department of English at Case Western Reserve University specializing in English and American literature, critical theory, law and literature. I regularly teach critical theory courses examining the essentially “intertextual,” or collaborative nature of creative production, including the way in which creative producers of all kinds must build upon the work of their predecessors in the creation of new works. I have also published extensively on this topic. A copy of my biographical information describing my education, teaching experience, professional activities, academic honors, and publications is attached to this declaration as Exhibit “A”.

2. I have read both *The Catcher in the Rye* and *60 Years Later Coming through the Rye*.

3. *60 Years Later Coming through the Rye* (“SYL”) is a masterful novel about the struggle of an aged J.D. Salinger to re-animate the protagonist from his classic *Catcher in the*

Rye (“*CR*”). It shows the struggle to be futile because of a grave character flaw. This flaw is massive self-absorption, and having bequeathed this quality to his novel’s protagonist, Holden Caulfield, Salinger is unable to reintegrate Holden into the stream of life.

4. His futile effort to do so, rendered from a first-person point-of-view in the italicized passages interspersed through the text of *SYL*, constitutes one of the strands of this novel’s narrative structure. The other strand consists of the first-person ruminations of his creation, the now 76-year old Holden Caulfield, whom the novel identifies as Mr. C.

5. *SYL* is thus a complex work, more complex than *CR*. It depicts the development of *two* distinct characters, that of C and that of his creator, who is definitively identified only toward the end of the novel, first as “JD” (215) and then finally as “Mr. Salinger” (223) in the climactic scene where the two characters confront one another for the first time at Salinger’s home outside Cornish, New Hampshire.

6. The classic model for this complex narrative structure of distinct but interwoven stories is Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and indeed *SYL* invites readers to make the comparison when it depicts “Salinger” as regretting that instead of attempting to bring Holden Caulfield back, he did not kill him off: “I should have done with him just what Shelley did to her monster,” he says (48).

7. Readers familiar with *Frankenstein* will recall that its “monster” was killed not by the work’s author but by one of her protagonists, Victor Frankenstein, and that one of Shelley’s key aims in this work was to expose the reckless and arrogant self absorption that caused this scientist to create so freakish a being that he would feel compelled to spend the rest of his life seeking to destroy it.

8. By depicting “Salinger” as having failed to understand so central a message of Shelley’s novel, *SYL* invites readers to ponder thematic (as well as structural) similarities

between the two works. It invites them to read “Salinger” through the lens of the obtuse Victor Frankenstein, to ask whether “Salinger” suffers from similar character flaws. The answer is yes. *SYL* seeks to demonstrate that in writing *CR* J.D. Salinger was acting out of impulses similar to those of Victor Frankenstein and thus that in creating Holden Caulfield he created a freak. The strand of *SYL* that is narrated by the 76 year old C, which constitutes the bulk of the novel, is designed to drive this point home. It is a scathing parodic critique of the protagonist of *CR*.

9. I would thus describe *SYL* as a work of meta-commentary. That is, it pursues critical reflection on J.D. Salinger and his masterpiece *CR* just as do the articles that literary scholars conventionally write and publish in scholarly journals, but it casts its commentary in an innovative “post-modern” form, specifically, that of a novel. As such, it aims to reach a wider reading audience than more traditional scholarly commentary.

10. Reaching the wider reading audience is important to the novel’s aim, for *SYL* seeks to change opinions about *CR*, not just scholarly opinions, which have always been mixed, but the sentimental fetishizing of this novel by three generations of fans.

11. For this large body of fans *CR* figures as a vindication of its own social disengagement, or alienation. This is because *CR* casts such alienation as heroic rebellion. *SYL* exposes this sham by *re-figuring* such rebellion as a luxury of spoiled “preppies” at a specific, affluent moment in American history. In this regard *SYL* resembles *The Wind Done Gone* and other such revisionary projects like Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which critiques Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*.

12. The prototype of this kind of critical redaction was Henry Fielding’s *Shamela*, which in 1741 subjected Samuel Richardson’s wildly popular *Pamela* (1740) to similarly scathing parodic critique. In *Shamela* Fielding exposed as merely calculating the “virtuous” Pamela’s refusal to engage in premarital sex with her upper class suitor. This loss of control of

the meaning of his heroine (understandably) enraged the pious Richardson, but fortunately for us he was unable to contain her. Fielding's parody ignited public debate across England, and indeed all of Europe, about the meaning of morality – about the question of whether morality may be reduced to such superficial and changing social mores as premarital chastity.

13. How does *SYL* accomplish its critique of *CR*? Although seemingly the slimmest, “Salinger’s” story, traced in italics, is the most important to understanding the new novel. This is because once readers grasp that the figure rendered in italics is attempting to “develop” the protagonist of *CR*, we realize that we must interpret everything C tells us as stemming from “Salinger,” *i.e.*, as being the observations and reflections that “Salinger” himself has assigned to C. This is important because, as illustrated below, these observations and reflections are profoundly disappointing. Readers familiar with *CR* will anticipate the same laconic observations and reflections they associate with Holden Caulfield. What do they get from the 76 year old C? They get much the same kinds of observations and reflections, but coming from a 76 year old and applied to a world much changed in the 60 intervening years, such observations and reflections fall flat. They reveal a character whose development was arrested at 16, who instead of growing up could only grow old. This is a devastating critique of Holden Caulfield in particular, of *CR* more generally, and of its author J.D. Salinger, whose apparent inability to “develop” his hero reveals him to be “burned out.”

“Salinger’s Story in *SYL*”

14. When we first encounter “Salinger” at the beginning of *SYL* he is full of confidence: “*I’m bringing [Holden Caulfield] back,*” he declares. “*After all these years I’ve finally decided to bring him back*” (9). But we soon learn that it is not going to be so easy. The first glimpse he gives us of C is of an infirm and quite disoriented resident of a retirement home. In the subsequent set of italicized remarks we learn of “Salinger’s” disappointment with his

results. The C he has exhibited so far is but the same “young boy in an old man’s cloak” (35). “Salinger” grasps that he “need[s] to give [Holden] a life” (36). The body of the novel consists of his efforts to do so, and as noted above, these efforts are futile. Having cast his protagonist as a 76 year old, “Salinger” can only send C on “a stroll along memory lane” (83) where C responds to the world not more wisely but as immaturely as he did as an adolescent. The consequence for readers is disappointment, and sensing this, the frustrated “Salinger” determines to kill him. Much of the novel is devoted to his struggle to do so – episodes in which he depicts C as nearly dying of natural causes or by attempting suicide. “Salinger” is slow to let go, however. Unable to “develop” C, he is also unable to kill him off. His only accomplishment in the novel is to face up to the implications of this writerly dilemma. This occurs at the novel’s climax where, encountering old C for the first time, “Salinger” acknowledges that he has loved his creation as if he were a son, and determines to “make things right” and “show him the way home” (232-35). What does this entail? Typing frantically, “Salinger” sends his son back to Central Park to experience at 76 the carousel ride he experienced with his sister Phoebe at the conclusion of *CR*. The repetition of this scene from *CR* is important because it demonstrates to readers that the aged “Salinger” is unable to develop his creation and that only by thus accepting the loss of his creative powers and letting go of his hero is he able to achieve peace.

C’s Story

15. When we first meet him at the beginning of the novel the 76 year old C is infirm, disoriented, and restless. While it does not seem to bother *him*, we are shown that he is also indifferent to others and cannot connect with them (as is illustrated in his breakfast with Harry). At the end of the novel C is at peace, and while just as infirm and disoriented, he is caring and connected, albeit with his even more senile sister Phoebe, who imagines that the two are still children when he watched her ride the carousel in Central Park. Before returning his characters

to this simulacrum of their childhood bliss near the end of the novel “Salinger” attempts to reintegrate C into the stream of contemporary life in New York City, and as previously noted, these efforts all fail. “Salinger” is unable to breathe new life into C.

16. These failures give the author of *SYL* an opportunity to expose not only the bankruptcy of C’s creator “Salinger” but the extreme limitations of his protagonist Holden Caulfield. C exhibits many of the character traits of the young Holden – his candor and independence of spirit, for example. But we are shown that these do not serve him well in old age and, indeed, it is suggested that they did not serve him well in adulthood either. Observations that seemed trenchant coming from the teenage Holden strike the reader as banal coming from the old C; the independence that seemed so refreshingly spirited in the teenager seems self-absorbed and selfish in the old man. Thus, for example, when re-exploring his old neighborhood in New York City, C exclaims:

If you catch me at the right time and day, when I’m really up for it, walking is all I really want to do. Other times I’d rather not move an inch. Let me tell you, I’ve done a helluva lot of walking in my life. Sometimes it seems that walking has been the only thing I’ve really been good at. I know it sounds phony as hell, but sometimes I really wish it would have been something else. You know, something useful. But I guess certain things are not for choosing. (75)

17. In style and content such observations evoke vintage Holden Caulfield, and coming from a 16 year old, they seemed honest and endearing. Coming from the 76 year old C, however, they seem pathetic. Suggesting a life of isolated drifting, they evoke Aristotelian fear and pity – that is, they force readers to ask whether such anomie is all we fans of Holden may expect in old age. If this is where his rebellious independence leads, is it as attractive as we adoring fans of *CR* imagined? Such illustrative, parodic passages, such “repetitions with a difference,” that appear in *SYL*, force readers to critically reevaluate Holden in particular, and *CR* more generally. In this way, like its 18th century prototype *Shamela*, the parodic novel *SYL* seeks

to foster reconsideration of *CR*, to renew public debate of the panoply of important issues surrounding adolescent rebellion and old age that *CR* put into discussion in 1951.

Dated: Cleveland Heights, Ohio
June 15, 2009



MARTHA WOODMANSEE