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Second World War Satire in Joseph Heller's Catch-22

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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the use of satire in Joseph Heller's war novel *Catch-22*. The bachelor thesis depicts the way satire is used to criticize the military complex and the capitalist society. In addition, the connection between *Catch-22* and the questioned sanity of soldiers, which the concept is based on, is examined. Finally, the possibility of escaping the situation caused by *Catch-22* and the potential change a system is analysed.

KEY WORDS

Yossarian, Heller, Joseph, war, soldiers, *Catch-22*, satire, missions

NÁZEV

Hlava 22

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá užitím satiry ve válečném románu Josepha Hellera *Hlava XXII*. Bakalářská práce popisuje způsob užití satiry na kritizování armády a kapitalistické společnosti. Navíc jsou přezkoumány souvislosti mezi Hlavou XXII a zpochybněným duševním zdravím vojáků, na kterém se zákon *Hlava XXII* zakládá. Na posledním místě je analyzována možnost útěku ze situace způsobené Hlavou XXII a též potenciální změna systému.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Yossarian, Heller, Joseph, válka, vojáci, *Hlava XXII*, satira, mise

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INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the analysis of Joseph Heller's anti-war novel *Catch-22* and the use of satire in this novel. Heller is an acclaimed author of the post-war period and his debut novel is regarded as one of the best novels on the topic of war.¹ Heller served in the military during the Second World War and *Catch-22* is, to some extent, based on his personal experience. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to examine the satirical point of view the author has chosen to communicate his message which subsequently poses a question whether a situation such as the one described in the novel is escapable or not, and whether an individual can make a change by standing up to abusive power.

The content of this bachelor thesis consists of a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part consists of two chapters which provide background information to the post-war era and the definition and examination of the literary term satire. The practical section comprises two chapters which offer the analysis of the novel and examine specific examples from the novel. The first chapter focuses on the historical background of the Second World War which is the setting of the novel. This chapter also provides a subchapter regarding the post-war era in which *Catch-22* was written and the influence that the Second World War had on the development of the United States, the threat of the Cold War and the way both these conflicts affected life in the United States of America.

The second chapter offers the definition and classification of the literary term satire. The subchapters provide possible functions of satire, the reasons why authors choose to write a satirical piece and the literary devices used in a satire.

The third chapter is divided into six subchapters. First two subchapters offer information about Joseph Heller and the title of the novel. The remaining four subchapters focus on the analysis of *Catch-22* and special attention is paid to concrete examples of the use of satire and absurdity in the novel. The final part of this chapter discusses the target of Heller's criticism.

The fourth chapter analyses the concept of the law *Catch-22* and its effect on the soldiers and their well-being. First, it is explained how *Catch-22* operates. The second subchapter examines the question of sanity and insanity in the novel. Lastly, this chapter also provides the answer to the central question about the possibility of escaping from the controlling system, which is damaging to everybody affected, and the possibility of changing such system for the better. Finally, the main themes of this bachelor thesis are summarized in the conclusion.

¹ Nelson Algren, "The Catch," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 11.

1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is to provide information about the Second World War which serves as a setting of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. Further, the years following immediately after the war and what effect both the Second World War and the Cold War had on American society will be described.

1.1 The Second World War

The invasion of Poland which started on 1st September 1939 transformed the local fighting in Europe into a world-wide conflict and marked the beginning of the Second World War.² Britain and France demanded that German troops withdraw from Poland, but Hitler ignored the ultimatum and on 3rd September they declared war on Germany. The first battles of the Second World War were fought in Eastern Europe but in the spring of 1940, Nazi troops conquered France, Denmark and Norway. In June 1940 Mussolini joined forces with Hitler and shortly after, they signed an Anti-Comintern Pact with the Japanese. Further, German troops attacked Soviet Russia on 22nd June 1941. However, after initial success, this invasion, known under the codename Operation Barbarossa, failed.³

It was during the First World War that the United States started to be involved in international affairs and no longer only spectate them. The U.S. followed the same pattern when the Second World War started and remained in the position of active participation in the war conflict.⁴ The Japanese attacked the United States military base Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941. This attack against the United States is what prompted the country to join the Allied side and actively participate in the Second World War. The war created many employment opportunities and ended the Depression in America,⁵ and it brought about political and economic changes while “altering America’s international position and fundamentally transforming American life and sensibility.”⁶ Only days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Germany declared war on the United States and Japan attacked countries in the Pacific.⁷

² Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 998.

³ Michael Gibson, *Spotlight on the Inter-War Years* (Hove: Wayland (Publishers) Ltd, 1986), 59–61.

⁴ Arnold Aronson, “American Theatre in Context: 1945–Present,” in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre Volume Three: Post-World War II to the 1990s*, ed. Don B. Wilmet and Christopher Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 87.

⁵ Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 373.

⁶ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 87.

⁷ “World War Two: Summary Outline of Key Events,” BBC, last modified March 30, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/ww2_summary_01.shtml#two.

Further, February of the year 1943 saw the first major defeat of the German armies at Stalingrad and in May, Germans and Italians in North Africa surrendered to the Allies. The Japanese forces were also overcome in the Pacific at Guadalcanal by the Americans. On 6th June 1944, Allied forces landed on the Normandy beaches and the Operation Overlord, better known as D-Day landings, started. Germany was not expecting this move and the Allied forces progressed to liberate parts of France including Paris. The concentration camp Auschwitz was liberated by the Soviet Union at the beginning of the year 1945 and in spite of being close to losing the war, the German air force still continued to bomb London. As a counterattack, the infamous Dresden bombing occurred in February 1945. On 21st April Russians reached Berlin, as a result Hitler committed suicide on 30th April. Germany surrendered on 7th May 1945 and 8th May is known as the Victory Day. In Europe, the war was over. The war in the Pacific continued and the Japanese surrendered only after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁸

1.2 The Post-war Period

At the end of the war, the United States was indeed the wealthiest, most powerful, most technologically advanced nation on earth. It imprinted itself upon the twentieth century, essentially shaping the world for years to come.⁹

The United States came out of the Second World War as a leading superpower. In the post-war era, America was ahead of the world and especially ahead of Europe which was left ruined and in the centre of the conflict that was the Cold War. Ruland and Bradbury state how these changes in the 20th century affected literature and that “the great shift from the Depression of the 1930s to wartime economy changed the basis of all the literary art.”¹⁰

What followed the war was an age of materialism, military expansion, ideological anxiety and sense of the rapid transformation of consciousness. This was an age of the media, the instant record, the new message system, the multiplication of styles, the accelerating confusion of levels of reality. As writers increasingly began to observe, it was an era in which reality came increasingly to resemble unreality, when actuality frequently outpaced the writer’s ability to image it and fiction needed to become superfiction to cope with an ever more fictional age of history.¹¹

⁸ BBC, “World War Two: Summary Outline of Key Events.”

⁹ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 90.

¹⁰ Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 370–371.

¹¹ Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 371.

The authors described the post-war period atmosphere, and the newness that was tangible in society and changed the way people live and the way they view real life. The horrors many witnessed in the war “brought a terrible sobriety to all artistic and intellectual life.”¹²

Europe was left in ruins not only politically and economically but also their “dominance of the art world”¹³ ended at the same time the war did. Thus, the United States acquired the position of the most significant influence in the world of arts. As a consequence, American artists no longer followed the example of European artists and found their own voice. Original artwork started to emerge in all art forms in the United States.¹⁴

Moreover, Bradbury and Ruland state that economy was boosted as a result of the war, and that the world of literature also underwent a change in and after the period of the Second World War. The literary period was changing, and this shift was also marked by deaths of some of the most prominent authors of the time such as Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Nathanael West, Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson. The modernist movement begun to disappear, and the experimentalism and liberalism were both gravely affected by the war and the gore associated with it and the Soviet expansion during the Cold War. Furthermore, as a result of the United States gaining more power, writers started to become anxious and also create characters that were experiencing anxiety. Literature of the war and post-war years as opposed to the 1920s lacked the experimentalism and “the sense of personal crisis.”¹⁵ The authors state that in many literary works of the post-war period “the enemy seemed less the Germans, Italians or the Japanese than the American military machine itself” and this is very tangible in Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*.¹⁶

1.3 The Cold War

The Cold War was mostly a violence-free conflict and it followed immediately after the Second World War. It lasted for most of the second half of the 20th century. The Cold War started in 1946 and came to an end in 1991. It was a war between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. During the time of the Cold War the Iron Curtain divided Europe into two parts, the Communist and the non-Communist one. One part of the conflict was the question about the future of Eastern European countries. The United States supported democracy, however, the Soviet Union wanted an area to help protect themselves in case the Western

¹² Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 371.

¹³ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 91.

¹⁴ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 91.

¹⁵ Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 373–374.

¹⁶ Ruland and Bradbury, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*, 373–374.

countries were to attack in the future. Another aspect of the conflict was the issue of nuclear weapons. The United States proposed that nuclear energy production and research should be controlled on an international scale, but the Soviet Union refused to participate under the impression that America was trying to keep its nuclear superpower position. Further reason for the dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union was the fact that the United States denied the Soviet Union reconstruction loans, as a result, Soviets asked for considerable reparations from Germany.¹⁷

Early in the conflict, in the year 1947, it was proposed that the United States were to offer help to countries which were threatened by a Communist takeover or movements that wanted to establish totalitarian regimes. The Truman Doctrine promised that the United States would help the countries fighting against the Communist aggression and it was the first step that led to the Containment Policy.¹⁸

Furthermore, in 1947 George Kennan called on the United States to accept a policy of containment to try to prevent the Soviet Union from expanding, the Containment Policy adopted military and economic approaches. In June 1947, the U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall introduced the idea to provide financial help to European countries. Europe and the Soviet Union were to discuss and decide what kind of aid they needed. The United States helped to rebuild Western Europe with the approved sum of \$12.5 billion and this financial assistance was also meant to help stop the spreading of Communism.¹⁹

Consequently, the attitude about Communists being hurtful to American society became widespread and fear of Communist infiltration permeated the fifties. The hunt for Communists was led by Senator Joseph McCarthy and it was intimidation rather than direct action that was the primary means used while interrogating the accused, who were allegedly Communists. However, Joseph McCarthy did not create the anti-Communist phenomenon. It has been a concern in the United States “since the Russian revolution of 1917 and had led to the creation of the House Un-American Activities Committee.”²⁰ The belief that Communists managed to infiltrate American society and government reached its peak in the post-war period. The anti-

¹⁷ “The Cold War,” Postwar America: 1945-1960, Digital History, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3401.

¹⁸ “The Truman Doctrine,” Postwar America: 1945-1960, Digital History, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3402.

¹⁹ “The Containment Policy,” Postwar America: 1945-1960, Digital History, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3403.

²⁰ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 104–105.

Communist movement in the early fifties also suppressed the freedom of expression to a great extent, this suppression affected the arts as well.²¹

Similarly, a case fuelled by this paranoia occurred in August 1948. Alger Hiss, a former State Department official and president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, was accused of giving classified U.S. documents to the Soviets. Whittaker Chambers, a former Communist, who made this accusation based it on a microfilm which contained photographs of the documents that Hiss had allegedly given to him. Chambers kept this microfilm hidden in a pumpkin.²² In *A Special Message to Subscribers, Catch-22*, Heller reveals that “the microfilm concealed in the Chaplain’s tomato” is an allusion to the Alger Hiss case.²³

Accordingly, the Cold War years were affected by infiltration and mind control and this made people paranoid, and it made them view their environment conspiratorially. This may have contributed to the way in which the literary arts were directed in the post-war era.²⁴ The paranoid view of the world was also captured in the media and “the messages were plain and simple: Communists will steal your soul as soon as you let down your guard; and whenever science tries to play God it leads to tragic results.”²⁵

Furthermore, in April 1949 before the Berlin Blockade was lifted, the United States, Canada, Iceland and nine European countries formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization also known as NATO. Members of the organization signed a pledge that in case of an armed attack the nations would help to protect each other and assist with planning and training. The United States stationed troops in Western Europe to assure its allies that they would help to protect them against an attack. In 1955, West Germany became a member of NATO and as a result the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact with its Eastern European satellites.²⁶ In consequence of The Second World War and the existing threat of nuclear weapons, the issue of national security was prioritized by the American government in the post-war period. For this reason, national security was incorporated into all post-war initiatives in order to prepare for the conflict with the Soviets:

The interstate highway system, for instance, was initially the National Defense Highway system, designed to move military equipment and personnel efficiently around the

²¹ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 104–105.

²² “Alger Hiss,” Postwar America: 1945-1960, Digital History, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3414.

²³ Joseph Heller, “A Special Message to Subscribers, Catch-22,” in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller’s Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 123.

²⁴ “Paranoid Style,” Postwar America: 1945-1960, Digital History, accessed February 11, 2018, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3420.

²⁵ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 104.

²⁶ Digital History, “The Containment Policy.”

country; the National Science Foundation was a response to the perceived advantage the Soviets had in military technology; support for schools came under the heading of the National Defense Education Act.²⁷

As a result, the artists in this period communicated through their art the “fear of nuclear annihilation and distrust of the establishment.”²⁸ However, it was difficult to find a reason to support the arts in relation to national security. Nevertheless, the press as well as critics started to notice the new artists and to acknowledge the appropriacy of their work for the post-war situation. Moreover, “culture was a significant tool in international diplomacy” during the Cold War.²⁹

²⁷ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 92–93.

²⁸ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 92–93.

²⁹ Aronson, “American Theatre in Context,” 92–93.

2 SATIRE

The following chapter will focus on the literary term satire and its definition and classification. Moreover, this chapter will examine the literary devices that satire uses, the function of satire and the possible reasons why authors choose to create satirical pieces.

2.1 Definition and Origin of the Name

“Satire” can be defined as “a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution” and it uses “humour to show their faults or weaknesses.”³⁰ “Satire” can also be defined as “a piece of writing that uses this type of criticism.”³¹ The primary function of satire as a piece of art is to entertain and it can occur in many forms such as “satirical novels, poems, and essays, as well as satirical films, shows, and cartoons.”³²

The word ‘satire’ comes from the Latin word “satura” which primarily means “full” and then also “a mixture full of different things.”³³ It was originally found in texts referring to food. There was a recipe of some sort of a salad which was called “satura” and a meal consisting of a variety of fruits offered to the god was called “lanx satura.” Juvenal called his satires farrago which too is a kind of a mixed food. There were also other types of literature with food-related names such as macaronic poetry which was a combination of Italian and Latin. Thus, the original meaning can be understood and translated as “variety.”³⁴

2.2 Classification of Satire

Satire can be divided into three categories named after Roman satirists Horatio and Juvenal, and a Greek satirist called Menippus. These categories provide a sort of framework “rather than a strict set of guidelines that all modern satires must follow.”³⁵ Horatian satire generally has a comic form and focuses mainly on common flaws that people tend to have, and its primary aim is to entertain and offer insight. Juvenalian satire is considered dark in opposition to Horatian and the main difference between the two is the hostility towards the characters in Juvenalian satire. Menippean is the least common type of a satire. It combines

³⁰ “Satire,” Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, accessed May 31, 2018, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/satire?q=satire>.

³¹ Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries, “Satire.”

³² “Satire,” Literary Devices and Terms, LitCharts, accessed May 31, 2018, <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/satire>.

³³ Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 231.

³⁴ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 231.

³⁵ LitCharts, “Satire.”

features of both Horatian satire as it aims at behavioural flaws in characters, and it exposes these flaws in a harsh manner as in Juvenalian satire.³⁶

2.3 Literary Devices Used in Satires

The term satire describes both, the literary genre, and the literary device. As a device, satire is an essential part of satirical writing and can also be found in a variety of other literary genres. Apart from the satirical ones, satire also uses other devices such as irony, juxtaposition, anachronisms. Irony is dependent on a disconnection between what is said and what the real meaning behind the utterance is. Satirists tend to use irony to suggest that a character is too foolish to understand a situation or is a liar. Anachronism is something such as an event that an author deliberately places in the wrong period of history. Anachronisms might be used to demonstrate to what extent something is out of touch with the author's present reality and society. Juxtaposition serves to highlight the contrast between two things that are placed next to each other.³⁷

2.4 The Function of Satire

According to Gilbert Highet, views on the function of satire vary and one clear definition does not exist. Highet differentiates between two types of a satirist, misanthropic and optimistic, and two primary conceptions of the function of satire. The pessimistic satirist despises people and believes that evil is rooted in the nature of an individual and society, and that it is ineradicable. "The misanthropic satirist looks at life and finds it, not tragic, nor comic, but ridiculously contemptible and nauseatingly hateful."³⁸ Therefore, his purpose to write is to punish and destroy, and not to cure. On the other hand, the optimistic satirist likes people and finds them merely foolish. The optimist believes that the foolishness and evil are not inherent, but rather "they are diseases which can be cured" and "mistakes which can be corrected."³⁹ Thus, he writes to help fix this error and to cure people of their ignorance.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Ruben Quintero states that a satirist does not only try to make readers laugh or to make them hate something he describes. Rather than that, the satirist attempts to bring either joy or sadness, and either concern or revulsion for a certain character depending on their behaviour. The main goal is to provoke laughter or scorn at the issue analysed. Moreover,

³⁶ LitCharts, "Satire."

³⁷ LitCharts, "Satire."

³⁸ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 233–236.

³⁹ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 235–237.

⁴⁰ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 235.

Quintero states that for a satire to function, the reader must share similar or the same beliefs, or have a similar societal standard as the author. The reader needs to have a certain idea of what the world should look like to know that what is satirized is somehow wrong, and it can or should be improved.⁴¹

2.5 Motives for Writing a Satire

In addition to function, the motivation to write a satire is also important when considering the final form of a satirical writing. Satirist's motives for writing reflect what emotions he tries to evoke. Highet lists the main motives and states that the first motive is personal hatred and feelings of superiority, and that these feelings fuel the satirist's need to write. The satirist claims to have left his personal feelings aside and that he writes for the public's sake rather than his own. However, concerns of the author are tangible in his writing even though he tries to hide them behind the humour. A satirist "contrives to generalize and justify his hostility, and usually to make his readers share it."⁴² Many satirists were influenced by the fact that they were excluded from a privileged group or by the "sense of personal inferiority, of social injustice."⁴³

Pope was tiny and painfully deformed; Boileau was nervous and sickly; Cervantes had a maimed hand; Byron had a crippled foot. Juvenal, Cervantes, Gogol, and Parini were all men of talent forced into careers which they felt to be useless or degrading.⁴⁴

After listing examples which may have influenced certain satirists to write, Highet identifies two main types of satirists in relation to their background and inspiration. There are those that "were bitterly disappointed early in life, and see the world as a permanent structure of injustice" and the ones that are "happy men of overflowing energy and vitality, who see the rest of mankind as poor ridiculous puppets only half-alive."⁴⁵ Furthermore, satirists are motivated to belittle or eliminate all that is wrong within society, thus they mock stupidity and stigmatize crime. Aesthetic is another motive for a satirist. It is the way an author can enjoy the process of creating complex patterns and working with and shaping the materials of their own choice to reflect their ideas. There is a paradox related to the chosen material, and the paradox is that what a satirist finds interesting in the world and writes about is often different from tastes of

⁴¹ Ruben Quintero, introduction to *A Companion to Satire: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Ruben Quintero (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2007), 3.

⁴² Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 238–240.

⁴³ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 240.

⁴⁴ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 240–241.

⁴⁵ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 240–241.

other artists.⁴⁶ Satirists most frequently write about all that is wrong within society or an institution, and that is why their interests tend to lean toward the seemingly ugly rather than the beautiful. Satire is a form of criticism and conventional beauty is something that is rarely criticized. It is the wrong, the ugly, the unjust that is generally the object of criticism.

According to Highet, the final motive is to influence. Satires criticize and warn, they present examples of what the world is like and the ideals what it should be like. They try to show what to do or what not to do in order to reach the satisfactory end. “They are protreptic. Not only do they denounce in such a way as to warn and to deter. They give positive advice. They set up an exemplar to copy. They state an ideal.”⁴⁷ Highet concludes this saying that some authors may be embittered, and some may be preoccupied with the humorous bits to bring the positive into focus but “all satirists are at heart idealists.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 241–242.

⁴⁷ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 243.

⁴⁸ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 243.

3 CATCH-22 – THE NOVEL

The aim of the next chapter is to provide relevant information about Joseph Heller. Further, the origin of the novel's title will be examined. The major part of this chapter will analyse concrete examples of satire from the novel. Lastly, the target of Heller's criticism in *Catch-22* will be examined.

3.1 About the Author

Joseph Heller was born on 1st May 1923 in Brooklyn, New York. He joined the army in 1942 and in 1944 he was sent to Europe to fight in the Second World War. Located on a military base in Corsica, Heller flew sixty missions during the time of his active duty.⁴⁹

Heller started writing *Catch-22* in 1953, and at the time it was titled *Catch-18*. The novel was first published almost a decade later, in 1961. Initially, the novel received mixed reviews but because of the promotional campaign “the first printing sold out in 10 days.”⁵⁰ Further, it managed to earn critical acclaim and is considered an American anti-war classic.⁵¹ In 1994 the sequel to *Catch-22*, titled *Closing Time*, was published and Yossarian is still alive in the follow-up, “more than forty years older but still there.”⁵²

3.2 Origin of the Title

A “catch” is “a concealed difficulty or complication.”⁵³ Even though it may be obvious in certain situations that some hidden complication exists, it can often be difficult to know exactly what it is or how to handle such a complication.

Originally, the title of the novel was *Catch-18* with eighteen being also a significant number for the Jewish culture. The early drafts of the novel “have a somewhat more ‘Jewish’ emphasis than does the published novel.”⁵⁴ For instance, “the eighteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, ‘chai’ means ‘living’ or ‘life’.”⁵⁵ Nagel states that “the title ‘Catch-18’ would thus contain a subtle reference to the injunction in the *Torah* to choose life,” which was exactly what

⁴⁹ “Joseph Heller Biography,” Notable Biographies, accessed June 6, 2018, <http://www.notablebiographies.com/He-Ho/Heller-Joseph.html>.

⁵⁰ Tracy Daugherty, “The War for Catch-22,” *Vanity Fair*, August 2011, <https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2011/08/heller-201108>.

⁵¹ Daugherty, “The War for *Catch-22*.”

⁵² Joseph Heller, preface to *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller (London: Vintage, 1994), 12.

⁵³ “Catch,” Merriam Webster, accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catch>.

⁵⁴ James Nagel, “The Early Composition History of *Catch-22*,” in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 198.

⁵⁵ Nagel, “The Early Composition History of *Catch-22*,” 198.

Yossarian did at the end of the novel.⁵⁶ However, Heller's publisher suggested that the title should be changed on account of the existence of a novel called *Mila 18*, written by the already well-known author Leon Uris, which was released earlier that same year. One of the alternatives suggested was 'Catch-11'. But the idea was rejected for the same reason as the choice of number eighteen, there was a concern about using the same number which had already been used in the title of a film called *Ocean's Eleven*. The suggestion to name the novel 'Catch-14' was rejected by Heller's editor, Robert Gottlieb, who did not consider fourteen a funny number. After considering a variety of numbers they decided that twenty-two is the best alternative, and in 1961 the novel was published titled *Catch-22*. The number twenty-two also captures the repetitive nature which is characteristic of one of the novel's central motifs.⁵⁷

Moreover, the term "catch-22" has since become a part of the vocabulary of everyday language as an idiomatic expression. It is used when referring to an inescapable situation in which "you need to do one thing before doing a second, but you need to do the second thing before you can do the first."⁵⁸

3.3 Setting

The novel follows the life of an American soldier, Captain John Yossarian who is stationed on a military base on the Italian island of Pianosa during the Second World War. Yossarian is a bombardier who struggles the most with the ever-rising number of missions, and he is the one who refuses to fly more missions, and by doing that he causes problems for his superior officers.

3.4 Chronology and Structure

The structure of *Catch-22* is one of the features which make the novel so difficult to read. The novel is not written in chronological order which is confusing for the reader. In addition to the confusing structure, the excessive number of characters and events that occur also make it difficult to follow the storyline. However, it is possible to navigate through the plot as there are a few pivotal and recurring events such as the Ferrara mission, the Bologna mission or Snowden's last moments before he died which had a great impact on the protagonist, John Yossarian. It might be suggested that the lack of chronological order is a feature that Heller

⁵⁶ Nagel, "The Early Composition History of *Catch-22*," 198.

⁵⁷ Nagel, "The Early Composition History of *Catch-22*," 198–199.

⁵⁸ "Catch," Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, accessed June 5, 2018, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/catch_1?q=catch.

incorporated into the novel deliberately in order to confuse the reader and by doing that also to add to the absurdity of the fictitious world he describes.⁵⁹

Concerning structure, Clinton S. Burhans, Jr. describes the novel's narration as chaotic and episodic. Burhans discusses the structural patterns and unifying devices used throughout the novel and how these manage to connect the chaotic episodic sequences so that they make sense and create one whole unit. Such unifying devices are, for instance, chronology, various motifs, and recurring characters such as ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen or the soldier in white. Regarding its structure, *Catch-22* was also often criticized for its seemingly repetitious character.⁶⁰ Jan Solomon and James L. McDonald both discuss the apparent repetitiousness which, according to both of them, cannot be condemned so easily as a mistake but rather they explain how the repetitive character of the novel has been strategically incorporated and the way it forms an important aspect of the structure of the novel.

While Solomon concentrates on the chronology in the major part of *The Structure of Joseph Heller's Catch-22*, he does state that repeating or adding more information little by little in different parts of the text, rather than telling a whole story all at once helps to build tension.⁶¹ However, McDonald discusses the overall structure of the novel in more detail in *I See Everything Twice! The Structure of Joseph Heller's Catch-22*. He also talks about the importance of the phenomenon of the déjà vu effect that is tangible throughout the novel. McDonald explains that it is not mere repetitiveness in *Catch-22* but it is the déjà vu effect that builds the story.⁶² The phenomenon of déjà vu is also mentioned in the novel by chaplain Tappman who tends to experience this odd feeling and discusses it with Yossarian:

‘Have you ever,’ he inquired hesitantly of Yossarian that day in his tent as Yossarian sat holding in both hands the warm bottle of Coca-Cola with which the chaplain had been able to solace him, ‘been in a situation which you felt you had been in before, even though you knew you were experiencing it for the first time?’⁶³

Heller might have chosen to mention déjà vu so explicitly because he wished to make the reader aware of its existence within the novel and to highlight what a significant role it plays in the

⁵⁹ Doug Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 79.

⁶⁰ Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., “Spindrift and the Sea: Structural Patterns and Unifying Elements in *Catch-22*,” in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 114.

⁶¹ Jan Solomon, “The Structure of *Joseph Heller's Catch-22*,” in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 57.

⁶² James L. McDonald, “I See Everything Twice! The Structure of *Joseph Heller's Catch-22*,” in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 92–94.

⁶³ Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (London: Vintage, 1994), 341.

structure of the novel, and the importance of its effect on the story and the characters, especially in case of the chaplain.

Furthermore, the method of repeating something, or even introducing a new scene that is somehow related to a previously mentioned one, evokes in the reader the feeling of being in the exact same situation they have already experienced before.⁶⁴ Therefore, there are many events in the story that are mentioned numerous times, only each time further in the novel the reader gains more information or details that they were not exposed to earlier in the novel. For instance, the scene of Snowden's death inside the airplane.⁶⁵ Although mentioned a number of times throughout the book, it is only in the second to last chapter that all the gory details of Snowden's last moments are revealed when Yossarian recalls this very situation while yet again lying in a hospital bed, spending a sleepless night contemplating life and his chances of survival.⁶⁶ This was during Yossarian's last hospital visit during which he also made the final decision to become a deserter like Orr.

The fact that *Catch-22* is written in a nonsequential order means that the connections between events and characters, and possible chronological order were often the object of discussion. To illustrate, Solomon is convinced that the chronology in the novel is impossible and that Milo's and Yossarian's timeline are intertwined in a manner that is unrealistic.⁶⁷ However, Doug Gaukroger strongly disagrees with Solomon at this point and progresses to list some of the most important events in chronological order in which he believes they happened. He lists the pivotal scenes in order to prove that the timeline of the novel is, in fact, predominantly realistic.⁶⁸ Even though some inconsistencies can be found in the novel, Gaukroger manages to provide the reader with a complete timeline in sequential order and he disproves Solomon's opinion which is based solely on the conclusion that the connections between Milo's and Yossarian's timelines are impossible. Since, Gaukroger manages to provide the reader with more evidence to support his opinion, the contents of this bachelor thesis adhere to the suggested chronological order and its logic.

Furthermore, Gaukroger states that there are two reasons explaining why time is treated the way it is in *Catch-22*, and he mentions these at the end of his study *Time Structure in Catch-22*. Firstly, he states that it is because the world in the novel is so absurd and confusing that Heller does not explicitly say what happened in the past and what is in the present. Hence, it is

⁶⁴ McDonald, "I See Everything Twice!," 94.

⁶⁵ McDonald, "I See Everything Twice!," 93.

⁶⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 549–554.

⁶⁷ Solomon, "The Structure of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*," 56.

⁶⁸ Gaukroger, "Time Structure in *Catch-22*," 67–79.

left up to the reader to figure out the chronology and the connections between the events, and to track the time which is only measured by the number of missions which had been flown. Second reason, according to Gaukroger, is that Heller does not have the need to give the exact dates or to tell the reader how many hours or days have passed between individual events. This way he can have as many different moments and events in one large sequence without worrying about any time limitations, such is the case of the pivotal Siege of Bologna. By the means of omitting explicit time references in the novel he does not encounter problems with too many events happening over too little time and essentially adds to the absurd and confusing character of the novel.⁶⁹

However, there are inconsistencies to be found such as the time conflict during the Ferrara missions that Gaukroger discusses.⁷⁰ It was during this time that Corporal Snark poisoned the squadron for the first time when he put laundry soap into mashed potatoes to prove a point:

‘Yes,’ said Yossarian. ‘He poisoned the squadron.’

Milo went pale again. ‘He did what?’

‘He mashed hundreds of cakes of GI soap into the sweet potatoes just to show that people have the taste of Philistines and don’t know the difference between good and bad. Every man in the squadron was sick. Missions were canceled.’⁷¹

Despite the fact that missions had been cancelled, the men still managed to fly ten missions in a span of seven days which seems unlikely with all the men being affected by the poisoning. Gaukroger explains this saying that this part of the novel may have been written in such a fashion on purpose or it was supposed to be left out or rewritten. It took Heller seven years to write the novel therefore he might have not noticed that there seems to be a time-related conflict in this aspect of the Ferrara sequence.⁷²

Another example of time inconsistency in the novel is a sequence when Yossarian first came to Pianosa along with Appleby.⁷³ Upon arrival Appleby went straight to Major Major to report that Yossarian refuses to take his Atabrine tablets. Appleby finds out from Sergeant Towser that Major Major will not see him while he is in the office and that he can go in the office only after Major Major has left it.⁷⁴ However, it is clear that Major Major went into hiding

⁶⁹ Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” 79.

⁷⁰ Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” 75.

⁷¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 85.

⁷² Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” 75.

⁷³ Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” 75–76.

⁷⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 138–140.

only after he was promoted by Colonel Cathcart to squadron commander.⁷⁵ And Colonel Cathcart took over the squadron after Colonel Nevers died.

Yossarian did his best to catch up with Hungry Joe and almost did, flying six missions in six days, but his twenty-third mission was to Arezzo, where Colonel Nevers was killed, and that was as close as he had ever been able to come to going home.⁷⁶

Colonel Nevers being succeeded by Colonel Cathcart meant that the ever-growing number of missions to fly would ensure that no one gets to go home because there are always going to be more missions. Colonel Cathcart could not have appointed Major Major as the squadron commander before this incident. Therefore, Major Major could not have already been in hiding when Yossarian first arrived on Pianosa because he was not the squadron commander at the time, and the series of events which pushed him to go into hiding, peaking with the basketball game he joined in disguise desperate to be involved again,⁷⁷ were yet to happen. In addition, Gaukroger states that in this case Heller may not have noticed the impossibility of these events happening at or around the same time or, as Gaukroger is more inclined to believe, Heller simply wanted to incorporate the scene with Sergeant Towser humiliating Appleby.⁷⁸

Likewise, Joseph Heller reveals in *A Special Message to Subscribers, Catch-22* that much of the novel is inspired by the situation in the United States in the post-war ye

ars and states that the “anachronisms were deliberate.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, he says that some of the inconsistencies in the novel were not intentionally incorporated and can be simply considered to be errors.⁸⁰

3.5 Absurdity

Sequences that comprise of absurd situations with absurd character behaviour and conversations are very common in *Catch-22*. These absurd scenes are the main source of humour in this novel. Richard Lehan and Jerry Patch describe the absurdity of the world affected by the law *Catch-22* in their paper *Catch-22: The Making of a Novel*. According to the authors, the source of the absurdity in Heller’s novel is “the overstructured and bureaucratic world of Kafka,” where the lack of formal and official identification equals a person’s non-

⁷⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 118.

⁷⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 71–72.

⁷⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 128.

⁷⁸ Gaukroger, “Time Structure in *Catch-22*,” 76.

⁷⁹ Heller, “A Special Message to Subscribers,” 123.

⁸⁰ Heller, “A Special Message to Subscribers,” 123.

existence.⁸¹ In the world of *Catch-22* this is the case of Doc Daneeka being formally declared dead. The problem was that once an official document stated that Daneeka died in a plane crash caused by McWatt, not even him being present to say that he is alive could possibly make a difference.⁸²

‘What the hell are you both talking about?’ Doc Daneeka cried shrilly with a surging, petrifying sensation of some onrushing unavoidable disaster.

‘It’s true, sir,’ said one of the enlisted men. ‘The records show that you went up in McWatt’s plane to collect some flight time. You didn’t come down in a parachute, so you must have been killed in the crash.’⁸³

Doc Daneeka discussed the situation that he found himself in with Sergeant Towser as soon as he learned of his own death. He wanted to prove to Towser that he in fact was alive. However, Towser did not want anything to do with the dead man and “advised Doc Daneeka to remain out of sight as much as possible until some decision could be reached relating to the disposition of his remains.”⁸⁴ Similarly, Mudd became a victim of the bureaucratic system when he was sent into combat before he could officially report for duty. He died in battle on his very first mission and since there was no report of his arrival, it was impossible to report that he had died.⁸⁵ Mudd, often referred to as the dead man in Yossarian’s tent was simply erased from existence in a just matter of hours only because the system had failed him.

Furthermore, Major Major too, is a victim of the unfair and flawed bureaucratic system even though he was promoted to major by a machine,⁸⁶ later it is revealed that he is not to be promoted any further because the United States Army cannot lose its one and only Major Major Major Major, as ex-PFC Wintergreen put it.⁸⁷ Consequently, for Major Major this means that for the duration of his army service he will be stuck at one position only, without a chance for further rise in rank. Yossarian is victimized by this rigged system, among other instances, when he is arrested for going AWOL in Rome meanwhile Aarfy gets away with rape and murder.⁸⁸

‘I only raped her once,’ he explained.

Yossarian was aghast. ‘But you killed her, Aarfy! You killed her!’

⁸¹ Richard Lehan and Jerry Patch, “*Catch-22: The Making of a Novel*,” in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller’s Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 81.

⁸² Heller, *Catch-22*, 432–433.

⁸³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 432.

⁸⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 433.

⁸⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 140–141.

⁸⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 113.

⁸⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 176.

⁸⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 527–529.

‘Oh, I had to do that after I raped her, Aarfy replied in his most condescending manner. ‘I couldn’t very well let her go around saying bad things about us, could I?’⁸⁹

Yossarian confronts Aarfy about what he has done to the servant girl and the reason Aarfy uses to justify the murder demonstrates just how corrupt the society is. The corruption is even further highlighted when the M.P.s walked in and Yossarian was sure that they must have come for Aarfy but instead, “they arrested Yossarian for being in Rome without a pass.”⁹⁰ They did not mind the apparent murder of the girl whose dead body was still lying in the street.⁹¹ The fact that it is considered to be a worse crime for a soldier to go AWOL than to rape and murder an innocent woman shows that there is no sense of morality left in the unjust system.

Moreover, Clevinger became a victim even before he came to Pianosa. When still in America, he was put on trial, and he did not even know what he was tried for.⁹² It seemed as if the Action Board was only looking to convict someone for committing a non-existent wrongdoing while asking absurd questions that cannot be answered or even understood.

‘I’m sorry, sir. But I don’t know how to answer it. I never said you couldn’t punish me.’
‘Now you’re telling us when you did say it. I’m asking you to tell us when you didn’t say it.’

Clevinger took a deep breath. ‘I always didn’t say you couldn’t punish me, sir.’⁹³

There was no way for Clevinger to escape this situation, and there were no right answers to those kinds of questions, questions which barely made any sense, that he could possibly think of and present so that the Action Board would be satisfied. Clevinger finds himself caught up in an inescapable situation even before he reaches the actual war zone and gets caught up in the infamous and ingenious Catch-22. A scene such as this one may also be considered an allusion to the post-war period ridden with the infamous McCarthy hearings. Similarly, Heller’s use of an anachronism in the case of chaplain’s tomato shows that he wanted to highlight the atmosphere of the hunt for Communists and the McCarthy hearings in the post-war period by placing this allusion in the setting of the Second World War.

Furthermore, the system does not differentiate, thus all the combat men are victims of it, to be exact they are victims of Catch-22. Colonel Cathcart is the embodiment of what is hurtful to the soldiers and he takes pleasure in ensuring that the law Catch-22 is obliged. Moreover, Colonel Cathcart takes advantage of the men in the squadron by constantly raising

⁸⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 527.

⁹⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 529.

⁹¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 527.

⁹² Heller, *Catch-22*, 99–107.

⁹³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 102.

the number of missions to be flown before one can be grounded and by always assigning the squadron to fly the most dangerous missions.⁹⁴ He does this only to gain popularity for himself, and to have an article written about him and published in the *Saturday Evening Post*.⁹⁵ He does not seem to show much interest in the war that is being fought and which needs to be won.

Moreover, Daniel Green discusses the absurdity and the comic aspect of the novel and, further, he says that many people consider *Catch-22* to be a serious work but according to him its primary purpose is to make people enjoy it and laugh at the funny bits. In addition, there is no situation shielded from the novel's ridicule and not even Yossarian is able to avoid the mockery and humiliation.⁹⁶ The novel contains a greater number of humorous moments than serious ones, but the grim scenes are filled with images of the horrible and gory reality of war and the dangers that soldiers face, and the fact that every mission they go on might be their last. The novel provokes laughter, but it also prompts the awareness of what fighting in a war really entails.

However, Green states that critics often did not analyse the comical in the novel because they thought it was inappropriate to joke about such a serious topic as war. Additionally, Green points out that even the description of Snowden's death is interrupted with a joke.⁹⁷

Yossarian screamed a second time and squeezed both hands over his eyes. His teeth were chattering in horror. He forced himself to look again. Here was God's plenty, all right, he thought bitterly as he stared – liver, lungs, kidneys, ribs, stomach and bits of the stewed tomatoes Snowden had eaten that day for lunch. Yossarian hated stewed tomatoes and turned away dizzily and began to vomit, clutching his burning throat.⁹⁸

In this moment, Yossarian, to whom death and destruction is not a new concept, seems to be more disgusted at the sight of the stewed tomatoes than Snowden's intestines. Green presents various reactions people may have to a scene like this. He says that some may find it tasteless, some may see in it the reinforcement of the anti-war message, and for some the disruptiveness is a way to take their attention away from the gross reality that is Snowden's entrails.⁹⁹ Whether Heller only wished to communicate humour and ease the seriousness of the incident or whether he attempted to strengthen the anti-war message, it is subjective how a reader views this particular situation which is the pivotal scene that the novel gradually builds up to. It is also

⁹⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 74.

⁹⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 242–244.

⁹⁶ Daniel Green, "A World Worth Laughing At: *Catch-22* and the Humor of Black Humor," in *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Joseph Heller's Catch-22—New Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 184–185.

⁹⁷ Green, "A World Worth Laughing At," 190.

⁹⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 554.

⁹⁹ Green, "A World Worth Laughing At," 190.

questionable whether Yossarian was only sickened at the sight of the stewed tomatoes or whether they were simply listed among the rest, without having an actual impact on him and his pharyngeal reflex.

3.6 The Dehumanization of Characters

The characters in this novel are mistreated directly by the system but also indirectly and unintentionally by each other. Ian Gregson discusses what makes *Catch-22* a satirical work, the dehumanization of the characters, and the criticism of capitalism in his book *Character and Satire in Postwar Fiction*. The dehumanization of characters in the novel, which applies to soldiers mostly, is often expressed via comparison of said characters to machines or other inanimate objects, such examples are Snowden, Mudd or the soldier in white.¹⁰⁰

Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret. Drop him out a window and he'll fall. Set fire to him and he'll burn. Bury him and he'll rot, like other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage.¹⁰¹

This passage, in which Yossarian realises this dreadful truth while watching the dying Snowden, compares dead soldiers to literal garbage. This comparison serves to communicate the criticism of the military complex and the way how it fails to treat soldiers as individuals. As if it did not matter if they live or die because they are viewed as items. Yossarian realises that a human body can easily be broken and destroyed, and that a life can be lost in just minutes.

Moreover, a reference to slavery shows that soldiers and prostitutes are viewed as being expendable and disposable, and they are nothing more but commodities. The most obvious example of the dehumanization in the novel is the soldier in white, Gregson states.¹⁰² His existence is questioned when Yossarian asks whether there actually is someone under all the bandages and states it might as well be Mudd for all they know, and Dunbar adds that there is no one inside the plaster and gauze.¹⁰³ Nothing more is visible of the soldier in white but the plaster and gauze, and only belongings are left behind after Mudd, as if their existence was denied.¹⁰⁴

When the soldier in white returns later in another hospital scene, his existence is reduced even further when Dunbar comments that the soldier, who is clearly a different one, is the same

¹⁰⁰ Ian Gregson, *Character and Satire in Postwar Fiction* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2006), 33.

¹⁰¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 554.

¹⁰² Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 33–34.

¹⁰³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 217–218.

¹⁰⁴ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 34.

one from before, and everybody, including Yossarian and even nurse Cramer, is quick to agree with that statement. In addition to the existing chaos, Dunbar goes on to state that there is no soldier at all and that he's "hollow inside, like a chocolate soldier."¹⁰⁵ This kind of description absolutely erases the individuality of a person. Moreover, the issue with the soldier in white is that he is of no use to the army in his state. He might not be dead yet, but he is already treated like garbage. He is lying motionless in a hospital bed and there is fluid coming from one jar through a tube into his body, and then there is a second tube and a second jar for what comes out of his body. Whenever the former jar is empty and the latter full, the nurses just exchange the two and the process starts over.¹⁰⁶ The absurdity lies in the fact that a man cannot live and thrive when the only nourishment he is given is his own waste matter. However, it must be convenient for the army not to spend any money feeding a man in such poor health. He cannot fight and serve his country anymore and therefore he is deemed useless and unnecessary, and taken care of in such a distasteful way.

Furthermore, the dead soldiers are viewed as waste which in the case of Mudd is apparent from his name. Snowden too, is reduced only to snow that melts as his internal organs are spilled all over the floor when he is dying and keeps repeating that he is cold.¹⁰⁷ These are, as Gregson puts it, examples of "the 'unknown soldier' motif" where the soldier's individuality is replaced with anonymity.¹⁰⁸ The notion that all the soldiers are equal, which is reflected in the fact that they are simply replaced with another man when they die, is most apparent and tangible in the part where Yossarian pretends to be a soldier who has already died and when Colonel Cathcart sends a letter to Doc Daneeka's wife about the passing of her husband.¹⁰⁹ It is comical when Yossarian is pretending to be a dying soldier Giuseppe because it is a scene in which even the family accepts him to be their son and brother, and they do not seem to be bothered that he really is someone else.¹¹⁰ Gregson states that in this case the satire is focused on the fact that people are literally interchangeable.¹¹¹ Moreover, it seems that the army expect many of their soldiers to die, whether in combat or wounded in the hospital. Thus, they are prepared and content to replace the dead without considering the fact that these soldiers were actual living human beings and not just things that do not function anymore because they have been broken.

¹⁰⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 461–462.

¹⁰⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 218.

¹⁰⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 549–554.

¹⁰⁸ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 35–36.

¹¹⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 235–238.

¹¹¹ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 36.

Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss or Mr. and Mrs. Daneeka: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action.¹¹²

Even though, this letter of condolence which was sent to Daneeka's wife speaks of grief, it only strengthens the unimportance of an individual and satirizes "superficiality, impersonality and indifference."¹¹³ Colonel Cathcart wanted sincere letters that were "filled up with lots of personal details," he wanted letters that demonstrated how sorry he was for the addressee's loss.¹¹⁴ However, it is ironic that Cathcart is satisfied with this form of a condolence letter and it further proves what a corrupt and a selfish man he is and that he is incapable of showing any compassion.

Further, Gregson states that another aspect that "contributes to the depersonalizing" is the number of characters in the novel.¹¹⁵ There are so many characters that it is close to impossible to keep track of all of their names and their relationships with one another.¹¹⁶ The repetitive nature combined with the excessive number of characters also adds to the déjà vu effect because even if a reader forgets a certain character, seeing the name again later in the novel makes the reader feel as if it was not the first mention of said character.

3.6.1 Characters' Names

Names of certain characters in the novel are often indicators of what to expect from said characters, and Gregson states that some of them such as Scheisskopf, Mudd or Snowden "are personifications rather than characters."¹¹⁷

Lieutenant Scheisskopf, later General Scheisskopf, is an authoritative character. His name serves to show how he is viewed by inferiors, superiors and equals alike. In this case Heller satirically portrayed an individual, an authority, where the criticism is tangible through the character's name. The reader is informed right from the beginning what kind of a person Lieutenant Scheisskopf is and how popular he is amongst the people he is surrounded with. This is further demonstrated in the novel when a fellow officer, Lieutenant Engle, refers to Lieutenant Scheisskopf saying: "I wonder what that Shithead is up to,"¹¹⁸ using the English

¹¹² Heller, *Catch-22*, 436.

¹¹³ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 36.

¹¹⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 356–357.

¹¹⁵ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 37.

¹¹⁶ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 37.

¹¹⁷ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 42.

¹¹⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 98.

equivalent of the originally German word Scheisskopf. The use of a capital letter shows that Engle does not mean this merely as an insult but actually as the character's name and that he is not particularly fond of Scheisskopf.

Furthermore, Chapter 9 which is titled 'Major Major Major Major' presents another character with a very distinctive name that stands out and is given a backstory that helps understand why his life at the army base on the Italian island of Pianosa is so miserable, and how he came to carry such a strange name. Naming his son Major Major Major, his father played the ultimate practical joke on him from which stems most of Major Major's misery. Major Major was generally disliked by everyone, and not much changed for him in the army except for being promoted to Major by an I.B.M. machine four days after he was enlisted.¹¹⁹ For a short while he relatively enjoyed himself on Pianosa because "rank meant little to the men on combat duty," but that changed the moment he was promoted to squadron commander by Colonel Cathcart.¹²⁰ After that his life became miserable once again, but Major Major became rather pleased with himself once he came up with a plan how to never speak to anyone again.¹²¹ Major Major's plan to let people enter his office and speak to him only when he is not present is another example of absurdity in the novel and one of the many ideas that are thoroughly planned and executed in such a manner that they would only benefit the one who came up with it. Similarly, the soldiers are not the ones that benefit from Catch-22 but their superior officers do, or they believe that they could benefit from it.

3.7 The Target and Function of Satire

Satire is used to criticize various different situations and characters in the novel, and these situations are connected, or they have a similar motive. Hence, the primary aim of the criticism can be determined based on these connections. According to Gregson, "*Catch-22* satirizes the military-industrial complex."¹²² He states that the main theme is the impact that an institution has on an individual. In *Catch-22*, both the army and Milo's syndicate serve to portray the institution. Moreover, Gregson adds that Milo's activity is a satire on "what capitalism does to individuals."¹²³

Furthermore, Milo is one of the most corrupt characters in the story and the only thing that could attract his interest is the market, and the business opportunities he can find. To

¹¹⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 113.

¹²⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 116.

¹²¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 129.

¹²² Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 31.

¹²³ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 31–33.

illustrate, Milo replaced morphine syrettes in the first aid kit with aspirins,¹²⁴ he refused to help Yossarian to look for Nately's girlfriend's little sister in the streets of Rome and to help him to protect her because he found out about illegal tobacco being smuggled, which was a situation he could profit from.¹²⁵ Milo even went as far as bombing his own base on account of making a deal with the Germans who, too, were members of the syndicate.¹²⁶ The concept of capitalism is embodied not only in Milo and the syndicate but also in the way it is operated and how the business is handled. Milo Minderbinder is a rapacious capitalist who does not stop at anything when there is an opportunity that he could profit from. In addition, Gregson explains that the character of Milo Minderbinder is a personification of capitalism. Milo's appearance also fits his personality and is described as the epitome of "the contradictions and incoherencies" of the system that he and his syndicate represent.¹²⁷ Gregson bases this statement on Milo's description, specifically his "disunited eyes" and his uneven moustache of which "the separated halves never matched."¹²⁸ Furthermore, Gregson says that this kind of allegorical examples in the novel serves as preparation for the dreadful part where Yossarian is wandering through Rome in Chapter 39. It is a passage which, to critics, resembled Dante's Inferno and Gregson points out that for Heller this hell "arises from capitalism."¹²⁹

Moreover, Gregson says that "the army in *Catch-22* is satirized as a bureaucracy blithely ignorant of the horrors it is involved in"¹³⁰ and that "the soldiers of *Catch-22* are the puppets of an institutional structure."¹³¹ The army takes advantage of the soldiers by making up rules which treat them unfairly and make it nearly impossible for the combat men to survive the war. This satirical novel criticizes the institution that fails to recognize the individuality of people and views them as something that is valueless and replaceable. It criticizes an institution that looks at people and only sees them as masses, it is typical of such an institution to generalize society's needs and prioritize its own gains and interests rather than those of the people. Both Heller's personal experience and the period in which he lived and created certainly played a role in his decision to target the military in particular. Although the villain in this story is the military, the viewpoint is applicable to nearly any large powerful organization that abuses its power and gains at the expense of the people it should serve.

¹²⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 550.

¹²⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 519.

¹²⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 325–327.

¹²⁷ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 42.

¹²⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 86.

¹²⁹ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 43.

¹³⁰ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 48.

¹³¹ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 49.

Even though it is rather clear that *Catch-22* satirizes capitalism and the military complex, it might also be suggested that the criticism is aimed at the broad concept of a war as well. The Second World War was the specific example this criticism was based on because it was the conflict that was still imprinted in the minds of all people in the 1950s. *Catch-22* is considered to be an anti-war novel. Despite the fact that the majority of the examples provided in this bachelor thesis proves that it criticizes an institution rather than directly criticizing the war, it was the war that created the situation in which it was possible for the criticized institution to cause such misery. The criticism of the war itself might be implicit in the major part of this novel but it is also quite tangible in many events or moments described. Specifically, the memorable scene of Snowden's death because it reveals the gruesome truth about the war and it makes the reader think of the extreme conditions that the soldiers lived in and the dangers they had to face. In addition, it highlights the absurdity of war and the fact that it does not bring any good to the world because a war leads only to destruction.

Based on Gilbert Highet's suggestion that there are two different types of a satirist and hence, there are two types of its function as well,¹³² it might be suggested that *Catch-22* was written in order to help the readers realise what is wrong in the society. And thus, help them become wary of the capitalist system and the faceless institution hungry for power.

¹³² Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 235.

4 CATCH-22 – THE CONCEPT

The following chapter will provide the explanation of Catch-22 and the concept of this law will be analysed with reference to the recurring motif of insanity. Finally, the possibility of escaping the inescapable situation and the possibility of improving the situation will be remarked on.

4.1 Explanation

The title of the novel, *Catch-22*, is the major issue that everything in the lives of the combat men on Pianosa revolves around. Catch-22 is the unwritten law which is the root of everything that made Yossarian's life so miserable and unhappy. Moreover, the fact that it does not have a written form and that nobody can read it means that it possesses unlimited power. There is no point in trying to resist Catch-22 because even though it is impossible to prove that what the person who wants to use it to gain something says, in fact is a part of the law, it is also not possible for the victim to prove that it is not. It also means that nobody can be certain about its existence and this premise follows the same logic. Without evidence one cannot prove that it does exist just as one cannot disprove its existence.

Yossarian first learns of the infamous Catch-22 from Doc Daneeka when the required number of missions to be flown is 50 and he has already flown 45. Doc Daneeka explains to Yossarian that he can only ground a man who is crazy, but he must be asked to do so by the crazy man. However, as soon as one would ask to get off combat duty on grounds that he indeed is crazy, Daneeka cannot ground him. For when a man asks to be grounded it is a sign of sanity and therefore, he is deemed mentally healthy and he has to keep flying missions.¹³³

Even though the main idea behind the unwritten law known as Catch-22 seems to be making the soldiers keep flying missions and thus making it impossible for them to be grounded, there are more examples where the power of this unjust law is exercised and abused. In the chapter titled 'The Eternal City', Yossarian witnesses many horrors walking through the streets of Rome. The first place he visits after he arrives is the flat where he and the other soldiers used to spend time with women, but he only finds the old woman there. She tells him that officers have chased all the young women out of there and Yossarian questions what right they have had to do that.¹³⁴

'Catch-22.'

¹³³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 61–63.

¹³⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 513–514.

‘What?’ Yossarian froze in his tracks with fear and alarm and felt his whole body begin to tingle. ‘What did you say?’
‘Catch-22’ the old woman repeated, rocking her head up and down. ‘Catch-22. Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can’t stop them from doing.’¹³⁵

Yossarian is horrified to see how anyone can easily abuse power and do as they please, hiding behind the vile concept of Catch-22. Furthermore, the old woman reveals to Yossarian that those exercising Catch-22 don’t have to disclose the law and justify their actions because “the law says they don’t have to,” and that law is Catch-22.¹³⁶ This conversation between Yossarian and the old woman demonstrates the full potential of Catch-22 and exposes its omnipresence. Likewise, if the system is not particularly fond of a thing someone allegedly said or did, they are quick to declare a wrongdoing and punish the, often innocent, victim.

Catch-22 did not exist, he was positive of that, but it made no difference. What did matter was that everyone thought it existed, and that was much worse, for there was no object or text to ridicule or refute, to accuse, criticize, attack, amend, hate, revile, spit at, rip to shreds, trample upon or burn up.¹³⁷

Yossarian’s frustration mirrors the same frustration the reader also feels while reading the passage of his final trip to Rome. Catch-22 is revealed to have the means to reach further than just the army environment and the feeling of hopelessness takes over as both Yossarian and the reader realise that this law is truly omnipresent and inescapable.

4.2 The Question of Sanity and Insanity

The question of sanity and insanity is one of the central issues in the novel and the two mental states are often not clearly separated from one another. Each character seems to have traits of both a sane and an unstable person. Such is the case with McWatt who is not necessarily insane or unstable but is fearless and, to some extent, enjoys flying the deadly missions. “McWatt was the craziest combat man of them all probably, because he was perfectly sane and still did not mind the war.”¹³⁸

Each of the men is crazy in their own personal way, Orr was practice-crashing the plane as often as he could, planning his desertion all along and risking his life each time the plane went down with him.¹³⁹ Nately, who is in love with a prostitute who lives in Rome, wants to

¹³⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 514.

¹³⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 514.

¹³⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 516.

¹³⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 80.

¹³⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 564–566.

fly more missions so that he does not have to go home to the United States and leave the woman that he loves behind.¹⁴⁰ Hungry Joe keeps everyone awake at night screaming in his sleep because of his continuous nightmares.¹⁴¹ But that changed when Huple's cat, which tended to sleep on Hungry Joe's face, finally suffocated him while he was sleeping.¹⁴² Dunbar came up with a theory to elongate his life by having boring and annoying conversations with people.¹⁴³ Clevinger would always get into a fight with Yossarian that he could never win because Yossarian stated his arguments strongly and confidently which made it difficult if not impossible for Clevinger to outsmart his logic.¹⁴⁴

'Who's they?' he wanted to know. 'Who, specifically, do you think is trying to murder you?'

'Every one of them,' Yossarian told him.

'Every one of whom?'

'Every one of whom do you think?'

'I haven't any idea.'

'Then how do you know they aren't?'

'Because...' Clevinger sputtered, and turned speechless with frustration.¹⁴⁵

Clevinger simply cannot find another argument which would prove that Yossarian is mistaken or being illogical because, essentially, he is not wrong. Even though the enemy soldiers are not targeting him as an individual, it does not matter as long as there is a chance that he might die.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the novel the characters show certain signs of what one might consider crazy in one way or another.

Moreover, Gregson mentions "a satirical theme of the 'world upside down' which echoes throughout *Catch-22*"¹⁴⁷ and means that instead of life and productiveness, death is being promoted. This is connected to how negativity is used and presented in the novel.¹⁴⁸

Furthermore, *Catch-22* represents a kind of circle with its logic stating that if a soldier is crazy and acknowledges it, and does not want to fly missions, he shows common sense and is deemed sane. Gregson says that this kind of circularity is what perpetuates the institution. Being crazy is the standard in the world on the island of Pianosa, where differentiating between sanity

¹⁴⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 465.

¹⁴¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 72.

¹⁴² Heller, *Catch-22*, 549.

¹⁴³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 29.

¹⁴⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 26–29.

¹⁴⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 26.

¹⁴⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 26.

¹⁴⁷ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 39.

¹⁴⁸ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 39–40.

and madness became difficult.¹⁴⁹ Whether a soldier is sane or insane and whether he is or is not willing to fly missions are two equal concepts in the world of combat men on Pianosa, and the logic of *Catch-22* is based primarily on this principle. The army needs sane men to fly missions, but the novel makes it obvious that to be willing to fly the missions, the men must be at least slightly insane.

4.3 A Way to Escape

The perception of what the catch means for the combat men and how it affects them, and its seemingly illogical logic then poses a question whether there is a way to escape the predicament that is *Catch-22*. However, as mad as the catch may seem, it is truly an ingenious strategy and the only ones who benefit from it are Colonel Cathcart and his fellow officers who supervise the squadron. The logic behind *Catch-22* makes it impossible to outsmart this law which means there is no loophole that one could use to fight against the system. Colonel Cathcart makes it impossible for anyone to fly the required number of missions which could be a possible way to be relieved of the combat duty. There is no logical or legal way to be grounded from flying any more missions, or to escape any other situation created by *Catch-22*. The only remaining option is not an exemplary one and even though it can save a man's life, it also generates a number of problems. Desertion seems to be the only alternative. However, desertion is not an ideal choice because it is not viewed as the right thing to do and if the soldier was caught, he would be court martialled. But in the fictional world of *Catch-22* it might just be the only way to survive the war unless a soldier is offered the same deal as Yossarian in chapter 40. "There was of course, a catch."¹⁵⁰ The omnipresent *Catch-22* was again in place, ready to spoil anything that seemed too easy and too good for the reality of an ordinary combat man like Yossarian. Colonels Korn and Cathcart inform Yossarian that he is to be sent back home to the United States. Even though he is intrigued by such an offer, Yossarian is also very sceptical of it because he knows very well from his own experience that Korn and Cathcart would not do anything for him or any other soldier unless they benefit from it as well. Thus, Yossarian inquires what the catch is, what it is that they want him to do to earn the privilege to be sent home.¹⁵¹

'Like us.'
'Like you?'

¹⁴⁹ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 531.

¹⁵¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 538.

‘That’s right,’ said Colonel Korn, nodding, gratified immeasurably by Yossarian’s guileless surprise and bewilderment. ‘Like us. Join us. Be our pal. Say nice things about us here and back in the States. Become one of the boys. Now, that isn’t asking too much, is it?’¹⁵²

Yossarian is initially shocked by this and cannot fathom that Korn has made this announcement in all seriousness. Korn is sure that he will get a positive answer because he has threatened Yossarian that if he says no to the deal, he will be court martialled and accused of crimes he has not committed. Yossarian initially agrees to the deal,¹⁵³ but shortly after he changes his mind.¹⁵⁴ This scene highlights just how corrupt Cathcart and Korn are and that they only pretend to care about winning the war. They only want good words to be spread about them and to achieve higher rank.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, their willingness to send Yossarian home is fuelled purely by their need to get rid of him because he is stirring up trouble for them by refusing to fly more missions.

After the chaplain tells Yossarian the official, untrue, story of what has happened to him when Nately’s grief-stricken girlfriend has stabbed him, he starts to rethink the deal because he does not want people to think he is responsible for saving Cathcart from a Nazi assassin.¹⁵⁶ Danby informs Yossarian that another official report exists, and that one incriminates him of crimes against the country. Danby further states that “they can prepare as many official reports as they want and choose whichever ones they need on any given occasion.”¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates how those in power can create and shape their own truths to their advantage and how unjust, often even hurtful, the system can be. These were the final pieces of information, along with news of Orr reappearing in Sweden,¹⁵⁸ which reassured Yossarian that he ought to flee the hospital and run away in order to survive, and he did just that. “Yossarian jumped.” Nately’s girlfriend who was waiting for him outside tried to stab him with a knife again but missed, “and he took off.”¹⁵⁹

Moreover, Gregson states that when Yossarian deserts in the end, following the example of Orr, and starts his journey to Sweden, it contradicts what seems to be the central message of *Catch-22*, the message that the social institution is inescapable. He says that the ending proves that Heller believes that such power can be escaped. Further, Gregson dispels the misconception

¹⁵² Heller, *Catch-22*, 538.

¹⁵³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 540.

¹⁵⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 555.

¹⁵⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 536–538.

¹⁵⁶ Heller, *Catch-22*, 548.

¹⁵⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 557.

¹⁵⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 564–565.

¹⁵⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 570.

that Yossarian does something that changes the system by refusing to serve it anymore stating that Yossarian is exchangeable just as any other soldier in the story. Thus, no notable change happens in the institution because after he leaves, he will also be replaced by another soldier.¹⁶⁰ The only change which does take place is that Yossarian's life is no longer being threatened by the endless cycle of missions. Yossarian manages to survive the combat duty which was his primary goal throughout the entire story.

It was a vile and muddy war, and Yossarian could have lived without it – lived forever, perhaps. Only a fraction of his countrymen would give up their lives to win it, and it was not his ambition to be among them.¹⁶¹

In other words, if it were in Yossarian's nature and if he had had the needed support of other soldiers, he might have been able to make a difference. However, it is not characteristic of him to risk his own life and to sacrifice his well-being to stay on Pianosa and keep fighting the system and the perpetrators of the evil regulation, Catch-22. A change might have been possible if the soldiers had formed a sort of alliance with one another. They could have even attempted to overthrow Colonel Cathcart who was the embodiment of all the misery that befell every man in the squadron. However, Cathcart was not the only enemy within the United States Army they would have to face, and it was the superiors that formed an alliance which, essentially, made them invincible. Yossarian's desertion proves that no change can be brought about by simply abandoning the system and leaving behind those who still suffer because of it.

¹⁶⁰ Gregson, *Character and Satire*, 47.

¹⁶¹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 90.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to analyse the use of satire in Joseph Heller's war novel *Catch-22* which offers an insight not only into what it is that Heller criticizes in his novel but also the reasons why the military complex is targeted in particular. Written during the major part of the 1950s, deliberate anachronisms referring to the period can also be found in the novel. In *Catch-22*, Heller perhaps used some of his experiences from his active duty in the Second World War to communicate his thoughts on the conflict and to highlight the way the military operates. At the same time, he commented on the post-war era by placing certain allusions in the setting of the Second World War. This bachelor thesis also examined the possibility of escaping the inescapable situation and the possibility of changing how the system operates.

The novel is set in the time of the Second World War but the knowledge of the period after the war ended is equally important. Therefore, information about the historical event and about the period which followed it was provided prior to the analysis of the novel. Likewise, the literary term satire was defined and its function, classification, the devices it uses, and the reasons that compel authors to write it were examined in the theoretical section before the analysis.

There are many features which make *Catch-22* difficult to read. One of the main features which make the novel so confusing and add to its absurdity is its structure which absolutely lacks chronology. Additionally, the number of characters is so high that it is difficult to remember them and the connections between them. However, there are unifying devices that help navigate through the chaotic structure of the novel. These devices are recurring characters, the déjà vu effect, the pivotal missions, and the number of missions that Yossarian had flown.

Satire aims to criticize and the target of this criticism in *Catch-22* is the army, especially its mistreatment of individuals, capitalism, and the war itself. The criticism of the army can also be perceived as criticism of any large organization be it the Government or a financial institution. In addition to the absence of any respect towards the soldiers, the army fails to treat the soldiers as individuals and the resultant dehumanization of the characters is the motif which is most tangible throughout the novel. Capitalism is embodied in the character of Milo Minderbinder. Therefore, when Milo's activity is satirized, it is really the capitalist system that is being criticized. Even though the war is not denounced explicitly, all the horrors and gory details which Heller described can be perceived as criticism of such a violent conflict as the Second World War.

The superior officers in the army are dependent on the law Catch-22 which allows them to have unlimited power over the enlisted men. The primary concept of Catch-22 is that it is, or it causes a situation from which a person cannot be freed by any logical means. This law is based on the premise that soldiers who do not mind flying the missions are crazy. The fact that Catch-22 was devised in such a manner that it would deny them the possibility of being relieved of the duty to fly missions, the combat men are all deemed crazy in the eyes of their superior officers. There is more than one example of a possible situation in which Catch-22 can be exercised and it seems as if any event that happens or a sentence that is uttered can cause a situation that is likely to circle straight back to Catch-22 causing problems to the allegedly guilty.

Finally, the question about the possible escape from a situation that was designed to be inescapable was remarked on. Catch-22 was planned and executed well which made it invincible and resistant to any logical or illogical schemes devised to outsmart the law. Since Catch-22 does not concern only the issue of combat missions which are unavoidable but also any situation any superior officer wishes to alter for personal gain. Every situation or an offer has a catch which causes it to have undesirable consequences for an ordinary soldier because it is not supposed to benefit him. This catch is always revealed to be the notorious Catch-22 and only the corrupt officers gain from it. Thus, even when Yossarian is offered a deal that would send him back to the United States, he refuses to make this deal with Korn and Cathcart on account of the catch. Instead, Yossarian decides to desert the army to save his life and to escape the unfair treatment. Regarding the issue of a possible change in the workings of an institution, it might be suggested that it would be impossible to make the needed alteration. It would have to be a considerable modification of the existing system and it is unlikely that one man would be capable of bringing about the needed change. One man of little rank and without any support is powerless against such a giant powerful organization which seemingly has an infinite number of ways to get rid of any problems, or anyone that is causing a problem.

In conclusion, this bachelor thesis examined in great detail the use of satire in Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22* and analysed the central questions that arise from the novel. It was determined that satire was used to criticize the military-industrial complex, capitalism, and also war in general. Additionally, it was discovered that even though a logical means to be freed from a Catch-22 situation without causing further complications does not exist, it is possible yet dangerous to flee the problematic situation. Finally, it was remarked on the fact that although escaping might be a possibility, it is not probable that a change of the system could be brought about by one man whether he does or does not escape.

6 RESUMÉ

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat užití literárního prostředku satiry ve válečném románu amerického spisovatele Josepha Hellera *Hlava XXII* z prostředí druhé světové války. Autor popisuje život vojáků a jejich problémy během války, avšak v románu se nachází i narážky na období 50. let, kdy bylo dílo napsané. V této práci bude také zodpovězena otázka, zda existuje způsob, jakým by bylo možné osvobodit se ze situace způsobené nepsaným zákonem *Hlava XXII*, ve které se ocitnul hrdina románu John Yossarian. Z toho pak vyplývá další otázka, zda je možné takhle postavený a fungující systém nějakým způsobem změnit k lepšímu.

Za začátek druhé světové války se označuje vpád německých vojsk do Polska, tato invaze byla zahájena 1. září 1939. Dva dny po jejím začátku Británie a Francie vyhlásily válku Německu. Spojené státy americké se do války aktivně zapojily po útoku Japonska na základnu Pearl Harbor v roce 1941. Válka v Evropě byla ukončena kapitulací Německa 7. května 1945. Válka v Tichomoří byla ukončena kapitulací Japonska v srpnu 1945 poté, co Amerika shodila atomové bomby na Hirošimu a Nagasaki.

Poválečná léta byla ve Spojených státech amerických definována dalším konfliktem, který začal hned po skončení druhé světové války. Studená válka měla velký vliv na vývoj společnosti v Americe a také na mezinárodní záležitosti. Spojené státy americké byly v nenásilné válce se Sovětským svazem, ve které se jednalo primárně o přerozdělení Evropy po druhé světové válce, přičemž Amerika se snažila prosadit demokracii, ale Sovětský svaz si chtěl z východoevropských zemí vybudovat satelity v případě možného útoku v budoucnosti. Válka s komunistickým Sovětským svazem se na společnosti odrazila ve formě paranoie, která také podnítila hon na komunisty v Americe, který byl veden senátorem Josephem McCarthym.

Satira je způsob kritizování člověka nebo společnosti, nebo je to satirické dílo kritizující nějaký společenský jev nebo osobnost. Původ satiry se datuje do doby Římské říše a její název pochází z latinského slova *satura*, co se dá přeložit jak rozmanitost. Mimo humorné funkce může satira také sloužit k tomu, aby poukázala na to, co je ve společnosti třeba vylepšit. Další možností je, že autor nechce pomocí kritiky lidem pomoci, ale naopak potrestat je. Autoři v satire používají různé literární prostředky pro vyjádření své kritiky daného jevu. Takové prostředky jsou například ironie, juxtapozice a anachronismus.

Joseph Heller byl vojákem v druhé světové válce a působil na ostrově Korsika. Heller ve svém románu popisuje život amerických vojáků na základně na italském ostrově Pianosa během druhé světové války. Příběh sleduje hlavního hrdinu Yossariana, který těžko snáší úděl

války a neustále se strachuje o vlastní život, ale současně také způsobuje problémy svým nadřízeným důstojníkům, protože odmítá účastnit se nebezpečných misí, jejichž počet je neustále zvyšován plukovníkem Cathcartem.

Román *Hlava XXII* je pro čtenáře matoucí a jedním z důvodů je jeho struktura. Události popsané v románu nejsou napsány v chronologickém pořadí. Dalším důvodem je nadměrný počet postav, při kterém je těžké si zapamatovat všechna jména kromě těch, co se opakují nejčastěji, a vztahy mezi postavami. V textu je možno se řídit podle hlavních a nejvíce opakovaných událostí, jako je například mise na Ferraru, Bolognu nebo na Avignon, během které zemřel Snowden. Vracející se postavy, jako je například bývalý svobodník Wintergreen, a počet odlétaných misí také napoví, kdy a kde se daná scéna odehrává.

Existují názory, které tvrdí, že chronologie v Hellerově románu je nemožná. Když se ale vezmou v úvahu nejdůležitější události a uspořádají se do pořadí, v jakém se zřejmě staly, je možno vidět, že souvislosti mezi událostmi dávají smysl. Pro román tak dlouhý a s tolika postavami je pravděpodobné, že bude také obsahovat jisté nesrovnalosti. Jednou z takových nesrovnalostí je situace týkající se mise na Ferraru, kdy byla celá jednotka otrávená, protože desátník Snark nastrouhal do jídla vojenské mýdlo. V důsledku toho byly zrušeny mise, ale i tak se vojákům podařilo letět na mise desetkrát za jeden týden.

Román *Hlava XXII* je plný absurdních situací a konverzací, které dotvářejí jeho humornou stránku. Hodně takových situací je způsobeno právě zákonem *Hlava XXII*, který symbolizuje nespravedlivé chování armády vůči vojákům. Plukovník Cathcart je ta postava v románu, která má jistou moc nad svými podřízenými a která zneužívá tuto moc pro svůj vlastní zisk na úkor vojáků.

Satira v *Hlavě XXII* je zaměřena na armádu, na kapitalismus, ale rovněž na samotnou válku. Dehumanizace postav souvisí se zmíněnou kritikou systému společnosti. Nejvýraznějším příkladem dehumanizace je voják v bílém, který se v knize objeví dvakrát. Když se ale voják v bílém objeví podruhé, je to očividně jiný člověk, který je ale absolutně zbaven individuální identity tím, že je vnímán všemi v oddělení jako ten samý člověk, se kterým se už setkali. Také mrtví vojáci jsou vnímáni jako věci nebo odpad, což je v případě některých postav vyjádřeno prostřednictvím jejich jména. Například, Snowden, který se při umírání roztál na podlaze letadla jako sníh, a Mudd, po kterém nezůstalo nic jen jeho věci v Yossarianově stanu. Způsob, jakým jsou vojáci vnímáni, napovídá tomu, že armáda je vidí pouze jako zaměnitelné komodity, a ne jako lidské bytosti.

Kapitalismus je v románu reprezentován postavou Mila Minderbindera a jeho M&M syndikátu. Heller kritizuje jeho jednání a poukazuje na to, jaký vliv mají Milovy obchody na

vojáky jako jednotlivce. Milo je ztělesnění chamtivého kapitalisty, který se nezastaví před ničím, když se mu naskytne výhodná obchodní příležitost. Milova zkaženost se zcela projeví, když po dohodě s Němci, kteří jsou také členy jeho syndikátu, pošle svá letadla zbombardovat vlastní základnu.

Hlava XXII je nepsaný zákon, který je příčinou všech problémů vojáků na ostrově Pianosa. Základní koncept Hlavy XXII se týká létání misí, ale především neexistující možnosti, jak být vyřazen z letové služby. Hrdina románu se informace ohledně tohoto problému dozvěděl od doktora Daneeky, který mu vysvětlil, že může z letové služby vyřadit jenom blázna. Avšak daný blázen musí za doktorem přijít sám a o vyřazení požádat. Když ale přijde a vyjádří svůj požadavek, doktor ho ze služby vyřadit nemůže, protože taková žádost je důkazem zdravého rozumu. Hlava XXII se zakládá na tom, že blázen ani nepomyslí na to, že by přestal létat, a i když na to pomyslí, pak už se nedá považovat za blázna a musí nadále létat mise. Hlava XXII tedy vytváří situaci, ze které se logickým způsobem nedá vysvobodit.

Důležitým aspektem románu je také problematika rozlišení vojáků podle jejich mentálního stavu. Postavy jsou často popsány protikladně, což způsobuje, že koncepty zdravého rozumu nebo šílenství jsou natolik propletené, že místy nejde poznat, o který jev u postav jde.

Během celého románu je naznačováno, že ze situace vycházející z Hlavy XXII není úniku. Tento předpoklad dosáhl nejvyššího stupně absurdity v kapitole Věčné město, kdy je Yossarian zatčen, protože byl v Římě bez propustky a Aarfy, který znásilnil a následně zabil služku Michaelu, zůstane bez trestu. Tato situace dokazuje, až do jaké míry je systém ve světě Hellerova románu zkažen, co je těžké pochopit stejně pro postavu, tak i pro čtenáře.

Hrdina románu nakonec dostane nabídku z války odejít. Tato nabídka ale podléhá Hlavě XXII. Yossarian se nejdříve s podplukovníkem Kornem a plukovníkem Cathcartem dohodne a přijme jejich nabídku, která by mu zaručila, že ho pošlou zpátky do Ameriky. Podmínky této dohody jsou jednoduché, Yossarian je má mít rád a říkat o nich hezké věci. Tento požadavek značí, co je pro Korna a Cathcarta nejdůležitější. Není to snaha vyhrát válku, je to sobecký záměr a snaha o zlepšení vlastního života. Yossarian tedy nakonec odmítne tuto nabídku a poté, co se dozví o tom, že Orr utekl do Švédska se rovněž rozhodne dezertovat. Podaří se mu utéct z vojny, což znamená, že nespravedlivá pravidla Hlavy XXII na něj už nedosáhnou.

Yossarianova dezerce na konci románu je důkaz toho, že i z takové situace, jako je tato, ve které se hrdina ocitnul, se dá nějakým způsobem osvobodit. Tím, že Yossarian uteče, se však nevyřeší problémy, které armáda nebo jiná mocná organizace způsobuje nebo reprezentuje. Vyřeší se tak jenom Yossarianův okamžitý problém jeho ohroženého přežití. Systém, na kterém

je založena organizace popsaná v románu takovým způsobem, však není možné změnit. Yossarian bude nahrazený novým vojákem, počet potřebných odlétaných misí se bude nadále zvyšovat a všechno v Cathcartově jednotce zůstane stejné.

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