

## Usage Of Militant Control, Sense Of Authority And Unbalanced Power With Mistaken Legalistic Validation In Joseph Heller's Catch-22



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### Abstract

*Catch 22 (1961) is the darker, slower-paced and apocalyptic novel which investigates the pre-war and post-war lives of the major characters. It highlights a satire on war and bureaucracy and skillfully depicts the ludicrousness of warfare and the dishonest nature of establishments. It also delineates the experiences of an illusory World War II bombardier, Captain John Yossarian, and the populace around him. The novel focuses on the institutional officialdom and the armed forces chain of command which causes a great hurdle for the liberty of warriors.*

*The main objective of this research is to analyze the usage of militant control, sense of authority and unbalanced power with erroneous legalistic validation with respect to Joseph Heller's Catch 22. Here the researcher explores the facets of system of government and the hierarchy of armed forces. The novel represents power as a source of ridiculousness, dishonesty, and subjugation that restrict the individual autonomy and self-sufficiency of defense force. The research also delineates the negative aspects of institutional administration and the armed forces hierarchy on the soldiers, including mind-set of hopelessness, despondency, and sufferings. The researcher justifies the experiences of Captain John Yossarian, protagonist of the novel, to demonstrate the impact of these associations on soldiers. The major attention of the research is to consider the well being of the soldiers and to make reformatory changes in power institutions. The research narrates the amalgamation of power should be done with right legalistic validations and not with erroneous one.*

**Keywords:** Power, legalistic substantiation, satire, war, amalgamation, brutality, absurdity, bureaucracy

- **About the Author:**

Joseph Heller (1923-1999), born in Convey Island in Brooklyn, was a Jewish American author, novelist, short story writer, playwright, autobiographer and screen play writer. He was graduated from New York University and post graduation from Columbia University. He also worked as a filing clerk, a messenger boy, copywriter and a blacksmith's apprentice. In 1942, he joined the U. S. Army Air Corps and in 1944, he worked as B-25 Bombardier in Italian Front where he flew 60 combat missions. He died due to heart attack at East Hampton in December 1999. His works are: **Novels:** *Catch 22* (1961), *Something Happened* (1974), *Good as Gold* (1979), *God Knows* (1984), *Picture This* (1988), *Closing Time* (1994), *Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man* (2000) **Short Stories:** *Love, Dad* (1969), *Yossarian Survives* (1987), *The Day Bush Left* (1990), *Almost Like Christmas* (2013) **Plays:** *We Bomber in New Heaven* (1967), *Catch-22* (1973), *Clevinger's Trial* (1973) **Screen Plays:** *Sex and the Single Girl* (1964), *Casino Royale* (1967), *Dirty Dingus Magee* (1970) **Teleplay:** *McHale's Navy, Episode Four, Part-73, Where Are You?* (1962) **Autobiographies:** *No Laughing Matter* (1986), *Now and Then* (1998)

- **Catch 22 as a Black Novel with Black Humour:**

The narrative style of *Catch-22* is portrayed in third person omniscient manner. The novel is set during World War-II, i.e. from 1942 to 1944. It is heralded as a black novel with black humour. Black humour posits illogical world devoid of fundamental values with a consequential nervousness between individual and cosmos. It firmly claims that man is not capable to decide and smiles at the human inclination for conceptualizing chimeras into continuation and then mistaking them for controvertible unconditional circumstances. Black humour is realized in the modus operandi of surrealism, expressionism and stream of consciousness. It finds its commonsensical dwelling in peripheral confusion, worthless communal disarray codified as irrationality in existential creative writings. It enacts no individual discharge or collective understanding. It often fails to appear at the end. Well known black humorists like John Hawkers, Thomas Pynchon, James Purdy and Robert Coover exhibit their dark amusement.

- **Materials and Research Methodology:**

The main objective of this research is to study and analyze the usage of military control, sense of authority and unbalanced power with mistaken legalistic validation in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. For this, the researcher has employed qualitative analysis of the text. It is conducted using a close reading of the novel, with a prominence on the portrayal of the institutional administration and the military chain of command. The analysis was conducted by examining the dominating nature of institutions and their negative effect on soldiers, particularly the protagonist, Captain John Yossarian. The researcher has employed secondary sources to provide context and additional insights about the text.

- **Literature Review:**

Literature review is the significant characteristic which analyses the former researcher's perceptions on the supposed topic. Here the researcher has portrayed several aspects of the combination of authority with mistaken and counterfeit legalistic justification. He has proved the facts wherever necessary. This literary review is reflected in bibliography as well.

- **Introduction:**

*Catch-22*, (1961) is one of the most significant novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a debut and satirical war novel which is penned by American author Joseph Heller. It is written in late forties and early fifties in non-chronological form.

The term *Catch-22* refers to a convoluted dilemma or inappropriate conditions. It is that complicatedness for which resolution is dispossessed of by a rule. The idea for *Catch-22* was based on Joseph Heller's individual experience in World War II. The mind-set that Yossarian and the other bomber crew felt was used directly from troubles he faced while on duty. Heller flew 60 terror campaigns in the year 1944 during the period of May to October. He was able to make it out of the war, but it took until 1953 before he could begin writing about it. For this reason, the book contains references to post World War II phenomena like IBM computers and faithfulness promises. The war experience made Heller panic, funny and deeply strange human being. An eminent Czech writer Arnost Lustig opines that *The Good Soldier Svejk* by Jaroslav Hasek inspired Heller to pen down this novel.

The title refers to an illusory ceremonial precondition that embodies irrational and debauched elucidation. The first chapter was published in 1955 with a title New World Writing as *Catch 18*. Later Joseph's daughter Erica suggests him to choose a number 22 rather than 18. Heller has employed anachronisms like computers and fidelity expletives to place the novel of 1950s. Here Heller reminds the readers the maxim of Milo Minderbinder which pronounces that what's superior for M & M ventures is excellent for the nation. The novel describes the life of Captain John Yossarian, anti hero and United States Army Air Force B-25 bombardiers. It examines the ridiculousness of warfare and armed forces life through the experiences of Yossarian and his fellow friends, who endeavor to sustain their good intelligence while fulfilling their service requirements so that they may come back home.

Yossarian is seen in the military hospital where he has introverted under the masquerade of an unremitting liver condition to keep away from flying further combat missions since he has full-grown disappointed with the war efforts and disbelieving of his authoritative officers. These officials exhibit excessive ignorance for the lives of their multitudes. They are very passionate to surrender their men to further their own ends. Here Colonel Cathcart volunteers his division to take off harmful missions and compels his men to fly more struggle missions. He persistently

raises the number of missions indispensable to complete a responsibility so that the men can never return home, because he wishes to be seen as intrepid by his superiors even though he has only ever flown a single fight mission. After flying forty-four fighting missions, Yossarian has become shocked by aerial struggle and witnessing the grief of his friends. He is petrified of being massacred in action during each battle mission, but still succeeds in flying seventy one missions till the end of the novel. Heller portrays Yossarian's principled temperament and gallantry in contrast to his ostensible egocentricity and imperfection when first introduced. He is shown to be a frank, worthy and knowledgeable flyer that has been pushed to uneasiness by the selfishness and anxiety of the authorities accountable for him, especially doctor's office and military leaders. The progression of the novel is as under:

- Chapters 1-11 narrate the story incoherent between characters during 1944.
- Chapters 12-20 focus on the Great Big Siege of Bologna.
- Chapters 21-25 depicts the sequential present of 1944
- Chapters 26-28 flashes back to the origins
- Chapters 28-32 maintains the tone of earlier four chapters
- Chapter 32 delineates the obscurity, nastiness, inherent disturbance and revulsion of combat and general life.

The novel ends on a buoyant note with Yossarian erudition of Orr's phenomenal run away to Sweden and Yossarian's undertaking to tag along him.

The novel comprises with embarrassing elements of *desolation and disapproval* which are ignited by deliberate and inadvertent miscommunication, infrequently leads to catastrophic penalties. For instance, Cathcart's yearning to suit a General is disappointed by ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen interrupts his communication. Yossarian and Major blames to the Chaplain who is scarce with incarceration finally.

Joseph Heller has shown the elements of *viciousness and hedonism* in the novel. The military's opponents are Germans as enemy fighters. Squadron's mess officer, Milo Minderbinder engages German workforce. He instructs them to explode the American military camp on Pianosa. This dilemma specifies an anxiety between unadventurous objectives for cruelty and the contemporary fiscal machine, which seems to generate sadistic performance simply as another means to profit, restrictions which construct a martial built-up complex. Heller emphasizes the hazard of profit-seeking by representing Milo without malevolence intention. Milo's transactions are delineated as the result of decadence.

The readers witness *the glimpses of ridiculousness* in the novel. Yossarian fears that German people will endeavor to shoot him down and he feels that they are out to get him. Colonel Cathcart retroactively increases the maximum number of combat missions before a

fighter may return home. He became depressed when he came to home. Later, he is got relief when he is sent to the hospital on a condition that is almost unenthusiastic. Here Yossarian comments,

*'The adversary is anybody who's going to get you massacre, doesn't matter which side he is on and that includes Colonel Cathcart. Longer you memorize it, the longer you might breathe.'*

Heller skillfully delineated *instinctive spirituality*. In chapter 18, Yossarian believes that God is incompetent and thinks that God is unstoppable, all-good, and all powerful. Yossarian continues,

*'God doesn't work in an inexplicable way. There is no mystifying thing about God. He has forgotten all about us.'*

Yossarin believes that *God has incredulity for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to encompass a phenomenon as phlegm and tooth crumble in His heavenly system of construction*. He questions himself why did God generate soreness in this world. It is his manner of assistance to us when he gave us throbbing and cautions us of peril. Later the readers observe in chapter 39, Yossarian's wandering through a war suffered Italian city,

*'Yossarian quickened his pace to get away. The night was filled with revulsion, and he thought about Christ's walking through wilderness. At the next corner a man was beating a small boy ferociously in the midst of an immobile crowd of grown-up spectators who made no enterprise to hamper.'*

In *Catch-22* a military rule works as *a ceremonial maneuver*. The regulation is the main instance which suits the title. The chronicler comments,

*'There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that uneasiness for one's security.....of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a courteous scream.'* (*Catch 22, p.56, Ch.5*)

*Catch-22* justifies several *ritual proceedings*. At one stage, victims of annoyance by armed police force quote the MPs' illumination of one of *Catch-22's* requirements, *Catch-22* states that mediators imposing *Catch-22* need not display that *Catch-22* in veracity contains whatever precondition the indicted violator is accused of infringing.

Another character explains that they have a right to do everything. Yossarian realizes that *Catch-22* does not essentially subsist and however has undeniable effects. Irrefutably, because it does not survive, there is no method it can be invalidated or condemned.

- **Use of Militant Control and Sense of Authority:**

The power and authority is displayed as a powerful foundation of ridiculousness and disorientation in the novel '*Catch-22*'. The traditional agreement of the militant forces is shown as uncreative and deceitful. It converts into preposterous strategies and conclusions. Heller showcases *Catch-22 rule* in the novel which states that a fighter can only be marooned if he is

predictable insane, but if he appeals to be aground, it shows that he is cogent and must carry on flying. This catch-22 rule symbolizes the absurdity and inconsistent nature of administrative system. Likewise, the verbal communication by military forces is also a source of improbability and emptiness. The military term is used to camouflage the insensitive legitimacy of warfare and to produce a facade of power and authority. The language is used to contrive the soldiers and to safeguard a sense of manipulation over them. Moreover, the administrators are shown to be corrupt, expedient and consider their own benefit. They do not consider the wellbeing of the soldiers. They engage themselves in maintaining their status quo and take utmost care that their militant forces to carry out their essential tasks. Here we see that Colonel Cathcart is obsessed with his yearning for endorsement and is willing to put his soldiers at danger to accomplish it. In the same way, the military's procurement system is also shown to be fraudulent. The officers commit deceitful activities to earn money in a wrong way. Here Milo Minderbinder employs his position as a mess officer to set up a black market that serves the contentment of the officers.

- **A Sense of Unbalanced Power:**

In this novel, the readers examine that due to a sense of lopsided power, there is a complete control over the armed forces by their higher authorities. This military hierarchy, subjective and iniquitous, oppresses and subjugates their soldiers (low rank officials) and makes them to follow the order of their superiors. Here Colonel Cathcart uses his supremacy to influence over the soldiers under his command. In military system, officials give the promotions to the soldiers based on favoritism rather than the merit. Therefore it is a cause of emotional interruption for the soldiers who are forced to unite in acts of unfriendliness and destruction, which often results in mind-set of responsibility and anguish. It affects on the soldiers' emotional fitness, where soldiers who demonstrate signs of balanced uncertainty are labeled as hesitant and are chastised. For instance, Colonel Major is endorsed to a high rank absolutely because of his name, but he becomes an abstemious due to the solidity of his position.

The soldiers are enforced to comply with the regulations to the traditional system, which hampers their emancipation and independence. They are stripped of their eccentricity and are abridged to mere mechanism in the armed forces. They are also subjected to a dehumanizing expertise, where they are constantly exposed to hostility and sadness. They are expected to carry out atrocious acts without any distressing support. It causes a sense of incapability and loneliness among the soldiers, as they have no control over their lives. This sense of powerlessness and hopelessness often results in feelings of apprehension, dreariness, anxiety and bafflement among soldiers. Captain John Yossarian is shown as a soldier who is embittered with the armed forces and its establishment. Yossarian's experiences in the military have left him anxious and considerably offended. He is recurrently beleaguered by judgments of casualty and eradication and has lost self-confidence in the military's assignment. Yossarian's experience is a



demonstration of the blow that institutional enterprise and the military pecking order have on protection force.

- **Conclusion:**

Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* is the evidence of the uncomic and dreadful authenticity of the humankind in which we subsist and expect staying alive. It is a derisive work of art that highlights the foolishness and deceptive nature of associations which are the strong source of tyranny, which limit the personage autonomy and independence of armed forces. The ritual design of the armed forces is shown to be uncreative, untruthful, illogical and unjust. The impact of institutional organization is philosophical, which results in the feelings of misery, unhappiness, and annoyance. Yossarian's experiences in the armed services are a materialization of the conflict that institutional system of government have on military force. Thus '*Catch-22*' is a knick-knack of the demand for institutional revolution and wellbeing of militia.

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