AN ANALYSIS OF CATCH-22

NAMING THE UNNAMEABLE:
AN ANALYSIS OF CATCH-22

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses Catch-22 as a modern descent into the underworld. The novel is placed in its historical context to show that Heller uses surrealist techniques to evoke a nightmare world where suffering and death are without meaning and without end. The ambiguous blend of comedy and horror in the novel's first two sections is seen as preparing the way for the grim revelations of the final section. It is argued that Catch-22 is structured around the motif of the labyrinth. At the centre of the labyrinth is death, the real subject of the novel.

Many thanks to Dr. Joseph Sigman, who suggested the topic, and later took the author to Paddy Green's for inspiration.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

We know this much

Death is an evil;
we have the gods'
word for it; they too
would die if death
were a good thing

Sappho

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Six centuries ago, Dante asked the question which has always preoccupied writers attempting to express the horrific aspects of existence:

> Who, though with words unshackled from the rhymes,
> Could yet tell full the tale of wounds and blood
> Now shown me, let him try ten thousand times?
>
> Truly all tongues would fail, for neither could
> The mind avail, nor any speech be found
> For things not to be named nor understood.[1]

Dante responded to his own challenge with a vision of Hell as a series of concentric circles, carefully arranged about the centre of the earth. His three classes of sin are subdivided and distributed among seven circles: four for incontinence, one for violence, and two for fraud. There is a further subdivision of the seven main circles, resulting in a Hell of twenty-four well-ordered divisions where sinners are placed according to the nature of their sins. (For example, hypocrites are guilty of "Fraud Simple", and are sent to Circle Eight.) There is never any question of God's infinite mercy and wisdom in matching the appropriate punishment with the sin. As Dante explains, "the vast effect . . . need surprise no thoughtful intellect".[2]

Dante would probably have disapproved of Joseph Heller's Catch-22, which takes the reader on a tour of a Hell that is without meaning and without end:

> There was no up or down in a finite but expanding universe in which even the vast burning majestic sun was in a state of progressive decay that would eventually destroy the earth too. There were no miracles; prayers went unanswered, and misfortune tramped with equal brutality on the virtuous and corrupt.*

Traditional descents to the underworld conclude with a return to the living and a spiritual strengthening, but in Heller's Inferno there is no Virgil to guide the hero, no expectation of Purgatory or Heaven, and no blessed intercession of Beatrice. Instead, there is a world of "immoral logic" and "climbing, cracking, staggered, banging, phantasmagorical, cosmological wickedness" (pp. 397, 50). Heller's is the spent universe of William Burrough's Naked Lunch, ruled by entropy and heading towards destruction: "The Planet drifts to random insect doom . . .".[3]

Authors such as Heller and Burroughs are lacking the conceptual framework by which Dante could justify suffering and evil and make them comprehensible. In the

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*Joseph Heller, Catch-22 (New York: Dell Paperbacks, 1976), p. 293. All subsequent page references will be noted parenthetically in the text.

minds of many, the Void has replaced the benevolent God, and it is difficult to imagine many modern writers sharing Wordsworth's views that Carnage was "God's daughter" -- "Thy most dreaded instrument / In working out a pure intent".[4] In Night, Elie Wiesel symbolizes the contemporary predicament by portraying the death of God in the soul of a child who discovers absolute evil in the form of Auschwitz. On the family's way to the death camp, Wiesel's uncle explains the meaning of their suffering: "God is testing us. He wants to find out whether we can dominate our base instincts and kill the Satan within us. We have no right to despair. And if he punishes us relentlessly, it's a sign that he loves us all the more".[5] Unaware of what lies ahead, the boy accepts this explanation. But one day in camp he is forced to witness, with thousands of other inmates, the hanging of three "saboteurs". One is a young boy his own age:

> For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look at him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet glazed.
>
> Behind me I heard [a] man asking:
>
> "Where is God now?"
>
> And I heard a voice within me answer him:
>
> "Where is He? Here He is. He is hanging here on this gallows. . . ."[6]

George Steiner has gone so far as to declare, "The world of Auschwitz lies outside speech as it lies outside reason",[7] but while creative powers may be subdued by such a horror, they are not defeated. The vast number of novels based on the wartime experience of the authors suggest that experience demands urgently to be told. As Celine writes in Journey to the End of the Night,

> There is nothing frightful in us and on earth and perhaps in heaven above except what has not been said. We shall never be at peace until everything has been said, once and for all time; then there will be silence and one will no longer be afraid of being silent.8

The writer's main problem seems not the temptation to remain silent, but the need for a literary language capable of making horror imaginatively accessible to the reader.

In L'Inferno the worst "thing not to be named" occurs in the innermost circle of Hell, where Judas, Brutus, and Cassius are perpetually devoured by Satan. In Dante's universe, this punishment "makes sense". Judas is a traitor, treachery is cruel, and cruelty calls forth cruelty. But today, such events as the Somme, or Buchenwald, or Hiroshima, are not seen as part of any such reasonable pattern. "Nobody knows," Robert Stone comments in Dog Soldiers, "That's the principle we were defending over there. That's why we fought the war [in Vietnam]."[9] Thus, Kurt Vonnegut wonders what he could possibly write about the

destruction of Dresden:

> Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds.
>
> And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like "Poo-tee-weet?"10

Heller's response to Vonnegut's question is Catch-22, a novel teeming with grotesque characters and bizarre incidents, lurching from mild insanity to total horror as it wrenches the reader through a tour of a "world boiling in chaos in which everything was in proper order" (p. 148). Masquerading as a "war novel" depicting the efforts of Air Force Captain Yossarian to survive an endless series of bombing missions in World War II, Catch-22 is really an attempt to reflect the current mental atmosphere in a literary form equal to what Antonin Artaud called "the rude and epileptic rhythm of our time".[11]

As the novel proceeds, one horrifying event gradually emerges as Heller's savage metaphor for the human condition. The scene of Snowden's evisceration is developed throughout Catch-22, beginning with Yossarian's question, "Where are the Snowdens of yesteryear?" (p. 35), and concluding with the full details of his death in the penultimate chapter. Paul Fussell has commented, "This 'primal scene' works because it is undeniably horrible, but its irony, its dynamics of hope abridged, is what makes it haunt the

memory".[12] In the scene, Yossarian has crawled to the tail of his plane to help his wounded gunner, Snowden. He masters his initial panic and competently bandages Snowden's ghastly leg wound, only to slowly realize that something is even more terribly wrong:

> Snowden just kept shaking his head and pointed at last, with just the barest movement of his chin, down towards his armpit. . . . Yossarian ripped open the snaps of Snowden's flack suit and heard himself scream wildly as Snowden's insides slithered down to the floor in a soggy pile and just kept dripping out.
> "I'm cold," Snowden whimpered. "I'm cold."
> "There, there," Yossarian mumbled mechanically in a voice too low to be heard. "There, there."
> (pp. 449-50)

This thesis will analyze Catch-22 in order to show how Heller uses a mosaic of inter-related fragments to evoke a world where "it made sense to cry out in pain every night" (p. 56), and where a scene like Snowden's death seems neither exaggerated nor out of place. Because it is often considered as the culmination of the traditional war novel,[13] or else as "a new fictional genre",[14] it will be useful in the first chapter to precede the discussion of Catch-22 with a brief survey of some previous attempts to construct an idiom capable of representing the contemporary nightmare. In Chapter Two, the first two sections of the novel will be examined, to demonstrate how they prepare the reader for the grim revelations of the final section, analyzed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will conclude the thesis by

showing how all Heller's energies are directed in metaphysical rebellion against the outrage of death, as he circles around its mysteries in repeated scenes of death and violence. It will be argued that Heller has succeeded in the creation of the kind of art form Artaud called for in The Theatre and its Double, where he asked for a theatre commensurate with the convulsions of the Twentieth Century: "In the anguished, catastrophic period we live in, we feel an urgent need for a theatre which events do not exceed, whose resonance is deep within us, dominating the instability of our times".[15]

CHAPTER ONE

"A TERRIBLE BEAUTY"

The Red Badge of Courage, published in 1895, contains both the heroic ideals and the inflated rhetoric which inhibited the first writers attempting to describe the horrors of World War I. For example, the novel includes this account of Henry Fleming's courage in saving his regiment's flag in the midst of battle:

> Within him, as he hurled himself forward, was born a love, a despairing fondness for this flag which was near him. It was a creation of beauty and invulnerability. It was a goddess, radiant, that bended its form with an imperious gesture to him. It was a woman, red and white, hating and loving, that called him with the voice of his hope.1

The word choice -- "despairing fondness", "creation of beauty", "goddess" -- makes the violence of battle dim and remote, and the unfortunate last sentence lends an awkward note of bathos to the whole passage. This is a description of war by a sensibility which finds it ennobling. Henry enters the battle as a boy, and leaves it as a "man". At the conclusion of his novel, Crane sums up the meaning of Henry's experience in terms which attempt to justify not only the Civil War, but suffering and death in general:

> He was emerged from his struggles, with a large sympathy for the machinery of the universe. With his new eyes, he could see that the secret and open blows which were being dealt about the world with such heavenly lavishness were in truth blessings. It was a deity laying about him with the bludgeon of correction.2

Crane's attitudes are reflected in the initial reaction to the First World War. On October 21, 1914 Rupert Brooke wrote home from the front, "Rain, rain, rain. But it's all great fun",[3] and in his sonnet "The Dead", blood is described as "the sad / Sweet wine of youth".[4] It is clear that very few were aware of the dimensions of the horror which awaited them, and if death was thought of at all, it was in terms of heroic sacrifice. The paradigm of innocence must be Captain W. P. Nevill, a company commander in the 8th East Surreys on the first day of the Somme attack. Fearing that his "lads" might be lacking in motivation, Neville purchased four footballs, one for each of his platoons, and offered a prize to the first platoon to kick its football up to the German trench. If anyone thought Neville a fool, there is no record of him saying so, and in fact, one platoon painted the following inscription on its ball:

> The Great European Cup
> The Final
> East Surrey v Bavarians
> Kick Off at Zero[5]

When the attack began, Captain Neville was killed instantly.

Two of the footballs survived, and are in British museums.[6]

To a generation who knew what heroism, decency, and honour were, the shock of the trenches was acute, and even the most cherished abstractions began to be questioned. In a famous passage in A Farewell to Arms, Frederic Henry explains that "Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments, and the dates",[7] and the novel concludes with a grim summary of not only the war, but of the Twentieth Century: "That was what you did, you died".[8] Along with heroism as a tangible ideal, the Great War was thought to have claimed traditional literary resources. The style of Stephen Crane simply would not do to describe experiences which appeared utterly incredible, and hence incommunicable. As Bernard Bergonzi observes in Hero's Twilight, "The literary records of the Great War can be seen as a series of attempts to evolve a response that would have some degree of adequacy to the unparalled situation in which the writers were involved".[9] Thus, Robert Graves remembers his first meeting with Siegfried Sassoon as an encounter with a naive and obsolete rhetoric:

> I had one or two drafts [of poems] in my pocket-book and showed them to Siegfried. He frowned and said that war should not be written about in such a realistic way. In return, he showed me

> some of his own poems. One of them began:
>
> Return to greet me, colours that were my joy,
> Not in the woeful crimson of men slain. . . .
>
> Siegfried had not yet been in the trenches. I told him, in my old-soldier manner, that he would soon change his style.10

One of the most effective of the new styles was that of Ernest Hemingway, who recalls his early days as a writer in A Moveable Feast: "Since I had started to break down all my writing and get rid of all facility and try to make instead of describe, writing had been wonderful to do".[11] While Crane too often merely describes emotions, Hemingway tries to give the actual events which made the emotion possible. In the first vignette of In Our Time, he evokes feelings of fear and horror without using the words themselves. His first work begins with a scream:

> The strange thing was he said how they screamed every night at midnight. I do not know why they screamed at that time. We were in the harbor and they were all out on the pier and at midnight they started screaming.12

There is a terrible tension between the silence which should exist at midnight, and the screaming, which has the ring of a bell heard over the frozen air. Here Hemingway realizes his intention to "strip language clear, to lay it bare to the bone".[13]

But in A Farewell to Arms, the reader finally feels remote from the pain of Frederic and Catherine. The problem is not only that described by Alfred Kazin as "so many

exquisite pages of suffering in perfect style".[14] There is a curious detachment in the novel, making it appear the work of a spectator, rather than of one wholly immersed in the war. The parade of troops and the change of seasons in the first chapter set the tone in stressing war as an exterior event to be described, something observed rather than experienced. This feeling of detachment is in part explained by Malcolm Cowley in Exile's Return, where the American volunteers in World War I are described as "spectators collecting souvenirs of death". The service provided "uniforms that admitted us to the best hotels":

> It permitted us to enjoy the once-in-a-lifetime spectacle of the Western Front. . . . It confronted us with hardships, but not more than it was exhilarating for young men to endure, and with danger, but not too much of it: seldom were there more than two or three serious casualties in a section during the year -- and that was really the burden of our complaint.15

Cowley describes a world far removed from that of Catch-22, where Yossarian is a lead bombardier no longer interested in bombing: "He had decided to live forever or die in the attempt, and his only mission each time he went up was to come down alive" (p. 30).

In The Naked and the Dead Norman Mailer borrows the image of the ants from A Farewell to Arms to describe the invasion of a Japanese-held island by an American task force: "They were like a nest of ants wrestling and tugging

at a handful of bread crumbs in a field of grass".[16] Mailer's intention is to portray war as the ultimate futility, and his Sergeant Croft's ironic patrol is the emblem of that vision. While Croft's platoon groans its way to terror and death, the campaign is easily won elsewhere by an incompetent major. The sinister General Cummings manipulates his men to fit his "fear ladder", and he informs Lieutenant Hearn, "You know, if there is a God, Robert, he's just like me".[17]

But if Mailer's aim is to do justice to war's victims, his grudging admiration for the American war machine and his secret fascination with violence betray his purpose, and he ends by affirming what he seeks to deny. The American army is presented as the logical extension of American society, superior to individual inadequacies, and irresistibly destroying the enemy: "The ants in the final sense all go in one direction".[18] Moreover, the novel is flawed by preposterous descriptions of death and violence. When Croft's squad is assigned to a labour detail, he is furious: "He hungered for the fast taut pulse he would feel in his throat after he killed a man".[19] Even the liberal Hearn learns to enjoy combat, and experiences "an emotion in it somewhere, as sweet as anything he had ever known".[20] The boundaries of credulity are finally crossed when General Cummings reflects that the language for artillery commands

"satisfies an unconscious satisfaction in us serving the Death-Mother".[21] Mailer is supposed to have insisted on being sent to the Pacific because Europe was such old literary territory,[22] and his concept of war as tourism is reflected in The Naked and the Dead. A later observation of his seems an appropriate comment on his own first novel: "There is the ineradicable suspicion that liberal rhetoric was conceived by Satan to kiss the behind of something unspeakable".[23]

The Naked and the Dead was published in 1948. World War II became a very different war during the thirty years in which we have lived under the threat of nuclear destruction, and had time to reflect upon Hiroshima and the Final Solution. Defining a war as "organized fighting over a significant part of a country in which one side of the fighting was done by regular government forces", the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has calculated that there have been one hundred and forty undeclared wars since 1945.[24] War is now something which never ends, the continued experience of twentieth-century man, and Wilfred Owen's bleak perception of 1918 has become a common experience in many countries: "Sunlight seems a blood-smear; night comes blood-black; / Dawn breaks open like a wound that bleeds afresh".[25]

Many authors have rejected realism as a means of

responding to our present situation, for imposing the pattern of the traditional novel on a savage farce suggests that the latter has some meaning after all, that the horror can be broken down into a beginning, middle, and end. In The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, Lawrence Langer explains the writer's predicament in the years following World War II:

> As never before, the pressures of the hideous penetrated the consciousness of the literary imagination, forcing it to reconstitute reality in shapes and images that reflect a fundamental distortion in human nature, while compelling us to revise our conception of what is normal in human character and to see aberration and the grotesque as standards from which the rest of reality deviates.26

This sense of "a fundamental distortion" forms the basis of Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove, where courage, duty, and honour are seen as absurd left-overs from a distant past. In the novel written from the screenplay, the warrior-leader Major King Kong is studying Playboy while his B-52, "The Leper Colony", cruises on automatic pilot. Suddenly General Jack D. Ripper orders the aircraft beyond its fail-safe point on a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union:

> When King spoke, it was with great dignity.
> "Well, boys, I reckon this is it."
> "What?" Ace Owens said.
> "Com-bat."
> "But we're carrying hydrogen bombs," Lothat Zogg muttered.
> King nodded gravely in assent. "That's right, nuclear com-bat! Toe-to-toe with the Ruskies."27

Dr. Strangelove invites comparison with such novels as An American Dream, Naked Lunch, Slaughterhouse-Five, and Catch-22, in that all these works attempt in similar ways to offer an alternative to realism. For while some writers were struggling to describe "the way it was", others found in the techniques of surrealism a new language that had seemingly forced itself up from the unconscious and offered itself for use. Surrealism may be characterized as both a method of perception and a method of expression. It seeks to use art to break down the barriers between dream and reality, madness and sanity. "The only difference between myself and a madman," Salvador Dali declared, "is that I am not mad."[28] The first surrealists, inspired by Lautréamont and Rimbaud, and fascinated by Freud's theory of the unconscious, were provoked into the search for new forms of expression after witnessing the nightmare of World War I. Their methods were often based on the dynamics of dreams, as analyzed by Freud, and later, Jung. If dreams were the expression of the unconscious, man's deepest self, then it was concluded that a technique which sought to express the whole man should, like dreams, be alogical, disjointed, and fragmented. The juxtaposition of fragments seemed particularly appropriate for evoking a chaotic world, because it gave the impression that the artist was not aloof from his material, and that he too was suffering with his characters.

(In his essay on Picasso, Jung observes that while artists usually take pains to communicate their meaning to the beholder, Picasso "hardly ever shows any such inclination; rather it seems as though he were the victim of this meaning".[29]) Artaud summed up the surrealist position when he demanded an art capable of turning both artist and audience alike into "victims burnt at the stake, signaling through the flames".[30]

In Catch-22 Heller uses surrealist techniques to create a picture of a sensitive mind oppressed and bewildered by the burden of living. One of Yossarian's central insights is "Every victim was a culprit, every culprit a victim, and someone had to stand up sometime to try to break the lousy chain of inherited habit that was imperiling them all" (p. 414). As he attempts to "break the chain of victims" his experiences appear like a protracted, implacable nightmare in which reality is entangled with illusion, and his humane sentiments become deviations from the norm. This confusion between dream and reality is symbolized in the novel by Captain Flume, who forces himself to stay awake each night because he fears that Chief White Halfoat will kill him. "Actually," however, "Captain Flume slept like a log most nights and merely dreamed he was awake. So convincing were these dreams of lying awake that he awoke from them each morning in complete exhaustion and fell

right back to sleep" (p. 58).

In The Third Reich of Dreams, Charlotte Beradt examines recurrent dreams of selected Germans between 1933 and 1945. It is significant that her dream analysis could be used as a virtual summary of the method of Catch-22:

> The line between the comic and the tragic often becomes blurred as their authors struggle to express the inexpressible. They describe phenomena typical of the period in the form of parables, parodies and paradoxes. And situation is heaped on situation in a succession of snap-shot images from which the echo of daily life reverberates with frightening loudness, or with equally frightning softness, emerging radically simplified, but also radically exaggerated.31

There are funny dreams and there are nightmares. In the next chapter it will be seen that Heller, at first concerned with the thin boundary between the two, gradually succeeds in dislocating the reader, seducing him into accepting the grim universe of Catch-22.

CHAPTER TWO

"I SEE EVERYTHING TWICE!"

During his final moments, the dying hero of Dog Soldiers comes to reject a transcendental view of reality: "It broke down between what hurt and what didn't and the difference seemed very important".[1] Similarly, Yossarian in Catch-22 is concerned with the very elementary problem of simply staying alive. Henry Fleming's heroic ideals would be absurd in Yossarian's war, where "strangers he didn't know shot at him with cannons every time he flew up into the air to drop bombs on them" (p. 17). There are no Germans in Catch-22. "The enemy," Yossarian tells Clevinger, "is anybody who's going to get you killed" (p. 127). High on the list of enemies are the commanding officers, General Dreedle and General P. P. Peckem. Dreedle's motto is straightforward: "he believed the young men who took orders from him should be willing to give up their lives for the ideals, aspirations and idiosyncrasies of the old men he took orders from" (p. 222). In Catch-22 there is none of Mailer's attempt to portray combat as a "sweet" experience. Heller presents World War II as the kind of war described in Theodore Ropp's War in the Modern World as "more bang for a buck".[2] Yossarian's duties are to drop four thousand

pounds of bombs on an unseen enemy and then keep himself alive in order that he can do it again. As James Jones asks in The Thin Red Line, "This was war? There was no superior test of strength here, no superb swordsmanship, no bellowing Viking heroism, no expert marksmanship. This was only numbers. [This] was being killed for numbers".[3]

The imaginative universe of Catch-22 is one where death is meaningless and evil forces are in control. Unlike A Farewell to Arms, where the story is narrated by a detached observer who has survived the events being described and developed a dignified stoicism, Catch-22 is told from the multiple perspectives of characters being killed in "mute and secluded agony" (p. 141). The juxtaposition of recurring scenes describing similar events and characters creates the feeling of an eternal present, a cruel world which preserves Yossarian in an isolated cocoon of horror from which there is no escape. Heller eases his reader into his vision of a malignant world with an ambiguous, shifting tone of comedy and terror. The reader is continually made to laugh, and then to recoil in alarm from the object of his laughter.

This chapter will discuss the first two sections of Catch-22. It will be seen how Heller uses a pattern of images and scenes arranged in a non-sequential manner which at first appears to be incongruous and haphazard. As the novel proceeds, however, it becomes evident that its frag-

ments actually form a complicated design of related themes and images in a mutually interdependent structure. Snowden's death gradually emerges as the dominant event, while the characters all illustrate in various ways the themes of helplessness and indifference. By the beginning of his third section Heller has established the vivid portrait of a chaotic world dominated by Catch-22, the sinister principle which uses perverted logic to justify suffering and promulgate terror.

The opening of the novel offers an outrageous situation as the supposedly reasonable premise of the narrative: "It was love at first sight. The first time Yossarian saw the chaplain he fell madly in love with him" (p. 7). This preamble is followed by the scene of a wartime hospital where no one is wounded. Everything is a little peculiar, as symbolized by Yossarian's temperature always being two degrees above normal, and Doc Daneeka's always being two degrees below. Things are not, at first, uncomfortably strange. Heller stretches the realm of the possible to divert the imagination, "thwarting its objections by detouring tragedy through the distractions of comedy".[4] He deprives his novel of the same element of tragedy which history has eliminated from life, in recognition that tragedy is not appropriate when there is

no moral order to be challenged. Friedrich Dürrenmatt comments that "in the Punch-and-Judy show of our century . . . there are no more guilty, and also no responsible men". Instead,

> It is always, "We could not help it," and "We didn't really want that to happen." And indeed things happen without anyone in particular being responsible for them. Everything is dragged along and everyone gets caught somewhere in the sweep of events. . . . That is our misfortune but not our guilt. . . . Comedy alone is suitable for us.5

It was in this spirit that Alfred Jarry's final deathbed wish was for a toothpick, and Heller's Captain Black approved of Adolf Hitler, "who had done such a great job of combating unAmerican activities in Germany" (p. 35). This kind of grim humour seems an appropriate response to modern warfare, which often evades a more moderate approach. For example, it is difficult to imagine how data like the leaflets which the U.S. Air Force dropped over North Vietnam could be assimilated into a completely serious work of history:

> BEWARE! THE VIRGIN MARY HAS FLED SOUTH.
> FOLLOW HER OR BE SLAUGHTERED BY THE
> BARBARIAN COMMUNISTS.6

Ionesco has noted that any tragedy becomes comic simply if it is speeded up.[7] Catch-22 overwhelms the reader with a barrage of seemingly unrelated fragments, creating a "subtle, recurring confusion between illusion

and reality" (p. 209), as it darts from present narrative to past action. It is only gradually through comulative repetition and clarification that the distinction between actual chronological time and Yossarian's psychological time becomes evident. To date, the exact chronological sequence of events in the novel has not been completely deciphered, although at least three elaborate attempts have been made.[8] Problems arise such as Doug Gaukroger's conclusion that "There is a definite conflict in time [regarding] this whole business of Yossarian's releases from the hospital, the first food poisoning, Milo's promotion to mess officer, and the first Ferrara missions".[9] Moreover, the duration of a central event like the Great Big Siege of Bologna is never mentioned.

The earliest event described in the novel is Yossarian's cadet training at Lowrey Field (p. 181). He spends Thanksgiving of that year in the hospital. The next year he enjoys Thanksgiving with Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife (p. 183) when he is an officer stationed in Puerto Rico (p. 109). Seven months after ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen strikes open a water main in Puerto Rico, Milo bombs his squadron in Pianosa (p. 109), in April (p. 257). Yossarian punches Nately in the nose on the third Thanksgiving Day mentioned in the novel (p. 369), and deserts the squadron shortly after. Thus, Catch-22 covers the two year time span

between the three Thanksgivings. Many events can be placed in sequence within that time period because of the frequent references to the number of bombing missions being required. Using the bombing missions as a guide, the novel can be divided into three sections. Chapters One through Eighteen cover the time period between fifty and sixty missions, but are mainly concerned with events that have already occurred prior to the actual present time of the novel. Chapters Nineteen through Twenty-Five, with an actual time span of just one day, elaborate the events presented in the first section. Chapter Twenty-Six begins the third section of the novel with the number of missions still at sixty. After a few pages, the narrative continues entirely in the present, except for the four flashbacks to Snowden. At the end of the novel, eighty missions are required, of which Yossarian has flown seventy-one. The first and third sections both begin and end with Yossarian in the hospital, creating a net effect of stasis, like a nightmare in which one dreams he is in terrible danger, but is unable to move his legs and escape.

As the novel proceeds, even dissimilar situations become entangled with earlier ones, and like the chaplain, the reader experiences the queasy feeling that he has seen everything before:

> Déjà vu. The subtle, recurring confusion between illusion and reality that was characteristic of paramnesia fascinated the chaplain . . . and he was interested as well in such corollary optical phenomena as jamais vu, never seen, and presque vu, almost seen. (p. 209)

Scenes and images in the novel can be divided into the chaplain's categories. There are those which are simply repeated (déjà vu): Snowden, the dead man in Yossarian's tent, the soldier in white. There are also situations which have the same meaning, yet involve different characters and places (presque vu): the trials of Clevinger and the chaplain, and the bombing raids to Ferrara, Avignon and Bologna. Finally, there are those images which only give the illusion of being different from previous ones (jamais vu): Doc Daneeka after his "death", the soldier in white, and Yossarian's impersonation of the dead soldier. "This sordid, vulturous, diabolical old man reminded Nately of his father," it is reported, "because the two were nothing at all alike" (p. 250). Howard Stark has summarized these three types of repetitions as "static recurring images, shifting recurring images, and illusory recurring images".[10] They are symbolized in the novel by the soldier in Yossarian's hospital ward who sits up and screams, "I see everything twice!" (p. 182).

Although the humour of these related fragments often has a disturbing edge to it, the emphasis in the first two

sections of the novel is towards comedy. When major characters are killed, their deaths are referred to only in passing. Chapter ten begins, "Clevinger was dead. That was the basic flaw in his philosophy" (p. 107), and then immediately shifts back to the much earlier incident of "the Grand Conspiracy of Lowery Field". However, the fact of Snowden's death during the Avignon mission is never treated so flippantly, and it gradually emerges as the central image dominating both the novel and Yossarian's consciousness. What happened over Avignon is slowly revealed in interrupted episodes throughout the entire novel. By the end of the first two sections it is evident that Snowden died horribly, without the exact details being given.

It develops that Snowden's death is related to two other important events, the mission to Ferrara, and "the naked man after Avignon" (p. 217). At Ferrara, "Yossarian came in carefully on his second bomb run because he was brave then" (p. 141). As a result of his courage he is promoted and given a medal, while Kraft and his entire crew (in another plane) are killed. Much later, in the first detailed description of the Avignon mission, it is explained why Yossarian is now a "coward": "Yossarian lost his nerve on the mission to Avignon because Snowden lost his guts . . . " (p. 230). Earlier it is reported that Yossarian

took off all his clothes after Avignon, and even received his medal for the previous Ferrara mission "standing in formation stark naked" (p. 104). Later this episode is repeated, and Captain Wren explains, "A man was killed in his plane over Avignon last week and bled all over him. . . . He swears he's never going to wear a uniform again" (p. 223). The last mention of Snowden's death in the first two sections occurs when the chaplain recalls the scene at the cemetary, when "a naked man in a tree" (p. 279) observed the funeral from a distance. This comes just after the description of Yossarian on his return from Avignon: "Yossarian climbed down the few steps of his plane naked, in a state of utter shock, with Snowden smeared abundantly all over his bare heels and toes, knees, arms and fingers . . ." (p. 267).

Freud notes that "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristics of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright".[11] Thus the repeated image of Snowden's death creates a mood of delirium, as Yossarian's imagination seems condemned to return forever to the same moment. (When he impersonates the dead soldier, his "brother" comments, "He must be getting delirious. He keeps saying the same thing over and over again" (p. 190).) An observation of Jung's is also

relevant here. Speaking of the First World War, he writes,

> Soldiers in the field dreamt far less of the war than of their homes. Military psychiatrists considered it a basic principle that a man should be pulled out of the front lines when he started dreaming too much of war scenes, for that meant he no longer possessed any psychic defenses against the impressions from outside.12

Except for the very brief references to Yossarian's military training, there is no mention made of his past. It is as if the instant of Snowden's death has annihilated time.

Most of the characters who make their tentative way through Catch-22's complex maze of past and present are the obsessed and mechanical actors of a farce. Paul Fussell has observed, "If 'real life' is 'real', then military life must be pretence".[13] Thus by using the title Between the Acts in the late 1930's, Virginia Woolf indicated the historical time of her novel as occurring between two gigantic pieces of theatre.[14] Heller's characters are the distorted caricatures produced by war, and are often presented in "theatrical" skits the way an audience would see them:

> "Let's operate," said the other doctor. . . . He keeps complaining about his liver. His liver looks pretty small on this x-ray."
> "That's his pancreas, you dope. This is his liver."
> "No it isn't. That's his heart. I'll bet you a nickel this is his liver. . . ." (p. 441)

One of the more neurotic specimens is Major Major Major Major, whose father, Mr. Major, named him Major Major for a joke, and who was later promoted to the rank of major by an I.B.M. machine with a keen sense of humour. Major Major never recovers from the misfortune of his birth: "Some men are born mediocre, some men achieve mediocrity, and some men have mediocrity thrust upon them. With Major Major it had been all three" (p. 85).

Artaud has written that "the nightmares of Flemish paintings strike us by the juxtaposition with the real world of what is only a caricature of that world; they offer the spectres we encounter in our dreams".[15] Like the creatures found in the paintings of Hieronymous Bosch, Heller's strange characters are presented as the norm in the world of Catch-22, where the fantastic and the bizarre are used to reveal the delirium which often lies beneath our placid surfaces. Before Major Major is dismissed from the gallery of human types, perhaps its extravagant dimensions should be admitted, for his anxiety and helplessness are hardly outside the realm of "normal" humanity. In fact, all the characters are either helpless to alleviate suffering or else completely indifferent to it, two qualities which the reader uncomfortably recognizes as common in his own experience.

Colonel Cathcart is typical of Yossarian's superiors.

Hoping to get his picture in The Saturday Evening Post, he keeps raising the number of bombing missions required before the men's tour of duty is considered over. Another of his devices is the form letter he sends to relatives of casualties:

> Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs.: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father, or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action. (p. 289)

In assuming that both the living and the dead are interchangeable parts, the Colonel's letter is a distortion of the kind of automated communication which has become essential to the conduct of business today. Its rhetoric is ironically appropriate for describing wars fought by huge faceless armies, where suffering often becomes impersonal and remote. (Clevinger's plane is simply "disappeared" returning from a mission, and when the planes of Dobbs and Nately collide, "there was no fire, no smoke, not the slightest untoward noise" (p. 385).) As the doctor explains to Yossarian, "To a scientist, all dying boys are equal" (p. 187), and all men are dying.

Heller's point is elaborated in "Lederer's Legacy", a story in Free Fire Zone, an anthology of writing by Viet Nam veterans. Lederer is a clerk in Viet Nam whose job is to write the citations accompanying soldier's medals. To help himself, he has accumulated fifty stock phrases:

> continued to resist by all means available
> denied himself medical attention until
> inspired leadership
> unremitting dedication
> by displaying the utmost of personal bravery/
> courage/intrepidity16

Lederer justifies his efforts by explaining, "The varieties of death that we invent for each other are almost endless. The reasons why are almost always vague, false, or non-existent".[17] As Colonel Cathcart writes, "Words cannot express . . .".

While Cathcart's indifference to suffering can be explained by his remoteness from it, most of the men actually involved in combat are also unmoved: "The only thing going on was a war, and, no one seemed to notice but Yossarian and Dunbar. And when Yossarian tried to remind people, they drew away from him and thought he was crazy" (p. 17). Clevinger, McWatt, Havermeyer, Nately, Appleby and Aarfy all enjoy the war, or are indifferent to it. Of these, the character who is most at home with horror is Aarfy. Unaware of pain and devoid of human responses, he frustrates and terrifies Yossarian in two of the most uncomfortable scenes in the novel. The first of these foreshadows Yossarian's being wounded in the thigh in the final section. When their plane is trapped in heavy flack over Bologna, Aarfy (with Yossarian in the bombardier's bubble) placidly lights his pipe and marvels, "Well, will you look at that" (p. 151). Yossarian is frantic, screaming

evasive directions to the pilot, and shouting at Aarfy to leave him. Aarfy merely shrugs amicably and wonders, "What's eating him?" (p. 153). Meanwhile,

> Behind him men were dying. Strung out for miles in a stricken, torturous, squirming line, the other flights of planes were making the same hazardous journey over the target. . . . One was on fire, and flapped lamely by itself, billowing gigantically like a monstrous, blood-red star. (p. 155)

Aarfy recalls Kafka's Metamorphosis, where Gregor Samsa awakens one day to find he has turned into a giant insect. Insisting that nothing is unusual, he is upset to learn he can no longer remain a travelling salesman. Kafka's irony is that even the worst horror may fail to alter human consciousness if sufficient defensive mechanisms are present.

Yossarian and the chaplain are the two characters most aware of the suffering around them, and are helpless before it. "Sincerely a very helpful person who was never able to help anyone" (p. 280), the chaplain is the average good man who is impotent in the face of a superior evil. When he meets the bedraggled, starving, paranoid Captain Flume, who is hiding in the forest, all he can think of to say is "Who does your laundry?" (p. 286). He cannot refrain from entertaining morbid death fantasies about his wife and children, and realizes dismally, "there was so much unhappiness in the world . . . and nothing he could

do about anybody's, least of all his own" (p. 213). He doubts his faith, and even his perceptions; he wonders if he is blessed, or losing his mind. The chaplain is the one character in the novel capable of normal human emotions, but he has no friends. He constantly fusses over metaphysical dilemmas, but like the speaker in "The Wasteland", "can connect / Nothing with nothing".[18] The most pathetic of Heller's character's, he is a sad illustration of Celine's sentiments, "It's no good straining your eyes to see in the dark. . . . The horror of being lost is all there is".[19]

In the first section of the novel Clevinger is court-martialled, foreshadowing the chaplain's later "trial" for impersonating Washington Irving. Clevinger is brought up before the Action Board on an "open and shut case" -- "The only thing missing was something to charge him with" (p. 73). Clevinger is judged, prosecuted, and defended by Lieutenant Scheisskopf, who proceeds on the assumption that Clevinger is guilty or he would not have been accused. The defendant is quickly reduced to a bewildered wretch, but is not bright enough to plead guilty and shorten his misery. Right up until the inevitable verdict, he continues to protest, like the condemned man in The Trial:

> "But I am not guilty," said K.; "it is a misunderstanding. And if it comes to that, how can any man be called guilty? We are all simply men here, one as much as the other."
>
> "That is true," said the priest, "but that's how all guilty men talk."20

Like everyone, Clevinger is guilty of not being innocent, and is finally punished for "breaking ranks while in formation, felonious assault, indiscriminate behavior, mopery, high-treason, provoking, being a smart guy, listening to classical music, and so on" (p. 77).

Clevinger is never completely aware of his situation but Yossarian realizes, "It doesn't make a damned bit of difference who wins the war to someone who's dead" (p. 127) and tries desperately to find someone, anyone, to help him stay out of combat. Because he needs help desperately, he does not find it: "Doc Daneeka was Yossarian's friend and would do just about nothing to help him" (p. 29). As the squadron doctor, Daneeka could easily ground Yossarian for medical reasons. He is also well aware of the dangers of flying: "He felt imprisoned in an airplane. In an airplane there was absolutely no place in the world to go except to another part of the airplane" (p. 34). Yossarian is gradually isolated as his friends are killed one by one, until it appears inevitable that he will also die.

The emblems of helplessness in the novel are the B-25 bombers, described as "sightless, stupid, crippled

things" (p. 49). When Yossarian leads his flight of bombers over a target, "the six planes were soon flung out all over the sky like prayers" (p. 31); the engines are "howling as though in pain" (p. 153). As the bombardier, Yossarian must fly in the glass bubble in the nose of his plane, and gape in numb terror as the tiers of flak come bursting up to kill him: "Oh, God! Oh, God, oh God, Yossarian had been pleading wordlessly as he dangled from the ceiling of the nose of the ship by the top of his head, unable to move" (p. 52). Heller makes it obvious that there is nothing romantic about combat, and that Yossarian's" morbid aversion to dying" (p. 312) is well-founded.

Even when Yossarian is not actually on a mission, his life is constantly in danger, for in the world of Catch-22 there are no sanctuaries. One of his worst moments occurs when Milo Minderbinder carries out a contract with the Germans to bomb and strafe his own men. The mess halls are spared in order that Milo's crews can enjoy a hot snack before retiring, but the officers' club is hit with fragmentation bombs. Many officers are killed instantly. The rest "fled toward the two exits in panic and jammed up the doorways like a dense, howling dam of human flesh as they shrank from going farther" (p. 264). This image of man as helpless trembling flesh is central to Heller's vision, but would be hard to imagine in a novel like For Whom the Bell Tolls,

where the hero is allowed to die with honour and dignity. However, it is commonly found in the recent literature involving the Viet Nam war, as in Dog Soldiers, when Converse is caught in the open during a bombing raid:

> One bright afternoon near a place called Krek, Converse had watched with astonishment as the world of things transformed itself into a single overwhelming act of murder. In a manner of speaking, he had discovered himself. Himself was a soft shell-less quivering thing encased in a hundred and sixty pounds of pink sweating meat. It was real enough. It tried to burrow into the earth. It wept.21

Converse's discovery would be appreciated by Yossarian, who is reduced "to a whimpering hulk" (p. 370) on several occaisions. It even comes to make sense to him that this should be so, because his world is ruled by the principle of Catch-22. Catch-22 is "the best catch there is"; under it anything is possible. The phrase first appears in the novel under innocuous enough circumstances: "Catch-22 required that each censored letter bear the censoring officer's name" (p. 8). Doc Daneeka reveals another clause of Catch-22 when he explains why Orr cannot be grounded for reasons of insanity:

> There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. . . . Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle. (p. 47)

Yossarian can respect Catch-22 because he is being asked to die for "the hot dog, the Brooklyn Dodgers" (p. 9), and the grotesque and the irrational have become perfectly reasonable in his world where "men went mad and were rewarded with medals" (p. 16).

The concept of Catch-22 is developed throughout the novel, appearing in a different form in Chapter Twenty-Six, when Yossarian changes beds in the hospital with a Lieutenant Anthony F. Fortiori. Because Yossarian is in Fortiori's bed, in the eyes of the authorities he <u>is</u> Fortiori. When Yossarian is judged insane, naturally it is Fortiori who is sent home. <u>Black's Law Dictionary</u> defines "a fortiori" as a term used in logic "to denote an argument to the effect that because one ascertained fact exists, therefore another, which is included in it, or analogous to it, and which is less improbable, unusual or surprising, must also exist".[22] The chaplain is guilty or he would not be on trial. Lieutenant Mudd is killed before officially reporting for duty; therefore, he is not dead. General

Peckem is in charge of Special Services and is scheming to have all combat units placed under his command: "if dropping bombs on the enemy was not a special service . . . then he could not help wondering what in the world was" (p. 124).

"A fortiori" enables Heller as a novelist to construct his own system of probability out of a wild mixture of farce and horror. The fragments of narrative, flashback, and caricature in the first two sections of the novel collide in an apparent disorder, obeying "only the demented logic of catch number 22, the gratuitous defeat of man" (Ihab Hassan).[23] Heller has acknowledged his debt to William Faulkner for the method of using fragments to relate a large narrative, enabling the structure to reflect and complement the content.[24] In Absalom, Absalom!, Faulkner employs a variety of narrative perspectives to recreate the events of the past which have formed the reality of Quentin's present. It is Quentin's complex task to unravel the secrets gradually revealed to him and then to interpret their implications in relation to himself. His adversaries are time and memory:

> We see dimly people, the people in whose living blood and seed we ourselves lay dormant and waiting, in this shadowy attenuation of time, possessing now heroic proportions, performing their acts of simple passion and simple violence, impervious to time and inexplicable. . . .25

But in Catch-22, Yossarian's problem is that his memory is not unreliable. It is all too trustworthy, and his agony is not his inability to interpret, but his inability to forget.

In The Sound and the Fury Quentin commits suicide to escape time, but the confrontation with the past in Faulkner's novels does not necessarily exclude the possibility of a future which still offers hope. Olga Vickery observes that his characters are free to either prolong or expiate the burden of their heritage:

> Bayard Sartoris' rejection of his familial pattern of violence, Isaac McCaslin's repudiation of his heritage of guilt, Chick Malison's efforts to save Lucas Beauchmap, Nancy's self-sacrifice, and even Gail Hightower's futile attempt to save Joe Christmas, all provide conclusive and irrefutable evidence of man's capacity for assuming responsibility for all events, all people, and all time.26

Dilsey understands that when the clock in the Compson kitchen strikes ten times, it is actually one o'clock,[27] and the emphasis on her tranquility, her ability to master time, to an extent placates the chaos which destroys Quentin. However, in Catch-22, no character is given Dilsey's unity of vision, and when the past and present intersect, it is only to

create a vacuum of despair. Time for Yossarian is reduced to the certainty of death: "One walks step by step into the darkness. The motion itself is the only truth".[28]

CHAPTER THREE

SNOWDEN'S SECRET

Early in Catch-22 Yossarian explains that although everyone was trying to kill him, 'they couldn't touch him because he was Tarzan, Mandrake, Flash Gordon. He was Bill Shakespeare. . . . Ulysses, the Flying Dutchman. . . . He was the miracle ingredient Z-247" (p. 20). In the first two sections of the novel, Heller creates a deliberate conflict between tone and content, imposing farce and comedy onto the bleak horrors of experience. The tone of the final section changes as Yossarian the modern hero is reduced to the helpless victim of his circumstances, and the romance and illusion of the past are submitted to the test of contemporary life. The emphasis shifts from comedy to what Northrop Frye has called the "demonic": "the world that desire totally rejects: the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and pain and confusion . . . the world also of perverted or wasted work, ruins and catacombs, instruments of torture and monuments of folly".[1]

A characteristic of the demonic world is the labyrinth or maze, "the image of lost direction",[2] often with a monster at its centre. The imagery of Yossarian's night journey through Rome is that of a lost soul wandering

in a maze, and the novel itself is a labyrinth of juxtaposed fragments. At the centre is the dying Snowden, whose entrails (another labyrinth), teach Yossarian the secret of his own mortality. This chapter will focus on the labyrinth motif in the final section of Catch-22, and relate it to the rest of the novel, in order to show that the entire work can be read as a symbolic descent into the modern underworld. The discussion will conclude by examining Yossarian's retreat to Sweden, a rebellion that is usually misinterpreted as either an arrogant denial of social responsibility, or at the other extreme, a joyful act of individual affirmation. It will be argued that Heller indicates there is really no escape from the demonic world, and therefore the conclusion of his novel is much less optimistic than most readers believe.

The word "labyrinth" (laburinthos) was the name given to the maze in ancient Crete, said to have been devised by Daedulus on the orders of Minos. At its centre the Minotaur was kept. The origin of the word is uncertain, but Sir Paul Harvey suggests it is derived from the Lydian word "meaning double-headed axe, a symbol of religious signification".[3] This would be an appropriate source, for the labyrinth itself has come to have a dual symbolic meaning in art and mythology. In The Mystic Spiral, Jill Purse explains:

> The expanding spiral that creates and protects the centre, and the contracting spiral which dissolves it, are both concepts implicit in the labyrinth. By the existence of the labyrinth, the centre is created and protected. When the labryinth is penetrated, the centre is dissolved. Entry and dissolution occur only under the right conditions: only with the knowledge of the way.
>
> As the labyrinth creates and dissolves, expands and contracts, so it reveals and conceals. It is a cosmos to those who know the way and a chaos to those who lose it.4

In the myth of the Cretan labyrinth the hero Theseus is given a thread by which he is able to find his way to its centre, kill the monster, and come out again. The symbolism is of an initiatory hero test, the overcoming of death at the centre, and subsequent rebirth into life with a regeneration on a higher spiritual level.

But in the demonic world man cannot find his way through the windings of the maze, as in the Indian epic Mahabharata, where a magical labyrinth is built around the king to protect him. It has the power to keep out all but the chosen victim, the youngest and purest of the enemy. Because the victim is able to enter, but not escape from the labyrinth, he is sacrificed at its centre,[5] just as youths and maidens were devoured by the Minotaur in the Cretan maze. In Catch-22 the image of the labyrinth suggests Yossarian's circuitous windings through space and time as he struggles to survive. His wanderings bring him no renewal, however, for in the fellow victims he encounters he sees

only the reflection of his own vulnerability. Here the symbolism is of man lost in the void of contemporary life, recalling the cry of Nietzsche's madman in La Gaia Scienza: "Are we not wandering as through an unending void? Does vacant space not breath at us? Has it not grown colder? Is there not perpetual nightfall and more night?"[6]

In the previous chapter it was seen how the fragmented structure and repeated scenes created an enormous sense of stasis and ensnarement. The feeling of claustrophobia created by these devices is increased by the labyrinth imagery, so that the entire novel becomes a huge maze, forcing the reader to work his way through its delusive, disjunctive expression of reality. The reader's task is similar to the chaplain's, who makes "a prodigious effort to rip away at last the voluminous black folds shrouding the eternal mysteries of existence" (p. 275).

The two most explicit labyrinths in the novel are the ruined city of Rome and Snowden's entrails, but there are also less obvious examples of this image. There is the "vast and endless brothel with its multitudinous bedrooms" and "mystic hallways" (pp. 25, 249). The B-25's have "a tight crawlway": "The crawlway was a narrow, square, cold tunnel hollowed out beneath the flight controls, and a large man like Yossarian could squeeze through only with difficulty" (p. 50). Aarfy repeatedly loses his plane over

mazes of flak. On one mission the bombers are described as "threading their swift way through the swollen masses of new and old bursts of flak like rats racing in a pack through their own droppings" (pp. 154-5). There are also Milo Minderbinder's labyrinthian business operations, and the military bureaucracy whose records "were pullulating like insect eggs" (p. 353). The soldier in white is also an image of a labyrinth, for he is wrapped in so many circular layers of bandages that it is impossible to know if anyone is actually inside them. Finally, language itself is presented as a labyrinth, or one more structure in which man can become ensnared. There are numerous scenes of characters in constricted spaces dueling with words, as when Clevinger is manipulated into incriminating himself: "I always didn't say you couldn't punish me, sir" (p. 79).

From the examples of the Cretan and Indian myths it can be seen that there are two extremes of humanity associated with the labyrinth. As Frye writes, "one individual pole is the tyrant-leader, inscrutable, ruthless, melancholy and with an insatiable will. . . . The other pole is represented by the pharmakos or sacrificed victim".[7] In Catch-22 the tyrant-leader is the mad Scheisskopf, who first appears as the lieutenant in charge of parades. His obsession is to win the weekly competition, at any cost. He conceives and then rejects the plan of

nailing the twelve men in each rank to a long two-by-four beam to keep them in line, and then a shortage of copper wire forces him reluctantly to abandon a scheme to sink pegs of nickel alloy into each man's thighbones and link them to the wrists by strands of wire. He ignores his wife, who cannot appreciate his heroic struggles:

> "Why don't you ever whip me?" she pouted one night.
> "Because I haven't the time," he snapped at her impatiently. "I haven't the time. Don't you know there's a parade going on?" (p. 74)

By the end of the novel, General Scheisskopf is in charge of Yossarian's entire combat sector, and his first order is for everybody to march. His grotesque intrigues and his lust for absolute control are characteristic of the ruler who becomes addicted to controlling large social groups. In this he resembles the insane bureaucrats in A Naked Lunch who are always dreaming of improving not only human society, but the human body itself: "The human body is scandalously inefficient. Instead of a mouth and an anus to get out of order why not have one all-purpose hole to eat and eliminate? We could seal up the nose and mouth. . . ."[8]

While the "tyrant-leader" is represented by Scheisskopf and his subordinates, nearly everyone else in the novel is a "sacrificed victim". After Snowden, the most pathetic of these is Kid Sampson, who dies in a spectacular scene of graphic horror. The episode is

prepared for with the description of McWatt, who enjoyed flying as low as possible to frighten people, "and loved to go buzzing with a wild, close roar over the wooden raft floating on empty oil drums and past the sand bar at the immaculate white beach where the men went swimming naked" (p. 18). Much later, in one of the novel's few idyllic moments, Yossarian is lying on the beach with Nurse Duckett, while other men are lazily swimming or sun-bathing. "Blond, pale Kid Sampson, his naked sides scrawny even from so far away" (p. 347), is standing on the raft when McWatt's B-25 comes roaring in low over it. McWatt miscalculates:

> Even people who were not there remembered vividly exactly what happened next. There was the briefest, softest tsst! filtering audibly through the shattering, overwhelming howl of the plane's engines, and then there were just Kid Sampson's two pale, skinny legs, still joined by strings somehow at the bloody truncated hips. . . .
>
> Kid Sampson had rained all over. Those who spied drops of him on their limbs or torsos dew back with terror and revulsion, as though trying to shrink away from their odious skins.
> (pp. 347-8)

The episode of Sampson's death is within the tradition of the "naked men bathing scene", which is almost a set-piece in memoirs of war. Brigadier F. P. Crozier recalls in A Brass Hat in No Man's Land how he once observed four young "warriors" standing naked around a pool: "How wonderful they look, hard, muscular, fit,

strong and supple, yet devoid of all coarseness. . . . What a pity they are not married in order that they might plant their seed".[9] Heller's bathing-scene has no silly quasi-erotic undertones. Kid Sampson is pale and thin and an object of concern simply because he dies horribly. As Paul Fussell concludes, "Heller seems to be remembering something from a long time ago".[10]

When Yossarian enters "the dark tomblike street" (p. 420) of Rome, he becomes a prisoner in the labyrinth of the ruined city, which resembles "la citta dolente" of Dante's Inferno, the city of desolation at the centre of Hell. Pelted by an icy rain, he walks through the raw night numbly observing the misery around him, until suffering and degradation appear quite normal: "Nothing warped seemed bizarre any more in his strange, distorted surroundings" (p. 421). "Snarling, inhuman voices" pierce the eerie light as women and children are tormented, accompanied by the cries of the victims, "Please don't. Please don't" (p. 423). Similarly, when Dante walks through Hell,

> Tongues mixed and mingled, horrible execration,
> Shrill shrieks, hoarse groans, fierce yells and hideous blether
> And clapping of hands there to, without cessation
>
> Made tumult through the timeless night. . . .
> (Canto III)

There is an essential difference, however, between Dante's

Inferno and Yossarian's modern Hell. When Dante weeps at the suffering he sees, his guide angrily warns him,

> Here pity, or here piety, must die
> If the other lives; who's wickeder than one
> That's agonized by God's high equity?
> (Canto XX)

In Catch-22 it is the helpless and the innocent who are made to suffer, and their misery is seen as being without purpose and without meaning. The whimpering dog being savagely beaten reminds Yossarian of "Raskolnikov's dream" (p. 424), and also recalls the horse in The Brothers Karamazov which is whipped across its "weeping gentle eyes". In that novel, Ivan Karamazov wonders what kind of world would permit a little girl to be tortured to death: "And if the sufferings of children go to make up the sum of sufferings which is necessary for the purchase of truth, then I say beforehand that the entire truth is not worth such a price".[11] Heller also uses suffering children as symbols of senseless agony, beginning with the sickly boy in bare feet, and culminating with the young servant girl who Aarfy rapes and then throws out the window. It is inevitable that Aarfy escapes unpunished. The M.P.'s apologize to him for intruding and then arrest Yossarian for being in Rome without a pass.

The sense of a descent into the underworld is increased by the description of the inhabitants of Rome. While all the characters in Catch-22 represent the distor-

tions produced by suffering, in the first two sections of the novel they are humourous grotesques like Major Major. In the final section they are the wretched victims of "shivering, stupefying misery" (p. 421), reduced to impotence by the final clause of Catch-22 -- "Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can't stop them from doing" (p. 416). The people Yossarian meets in Rome are the spectres from a nightmare: "On squishing straw sandals, a young woman materialized with her whole face disfigured . . ." (p. 426). Similarly, the shades of the underworld in The Odyssey are "impalpable as shadows are, and wavering like a dream".[12] These shades seem to hover between life and death, as do such characters in Catch-22 as the soldier in white, or Lieutenant Mudd. Speaking of Germany near the end of the last war, Jakov Lind wrote, "Death too can be a way of life",[13] and when this reversal occurs, the mutilated bodies and warped souls of Yossarian's Rome are the result. Catch-22 implies that Hell can be located above ground, and it is not surprising that a survivor of the inferno of Hiroshima recalls the aftermath in the same terms as Heller describes his ghostly characters. After explaining that the scarred people he met looked the same "from in front or in back", he continues:

> Wherever I walked I met these people. . . . Many of them died along the road -- I can still picture them in my mind -- like walking ghosts. . . . They didn't look like people of this world. . . . They had a special way of walking -- very slowly. . . . I myself was one of them.[14]

And in describing the survivors of an earlier war, Wilfred Owen wondered, "Surely we have perished / Sleeping, and walk hell; but who are these hellish?"[15]

In many myths of the labyrinth there is a monster at the centre, or "in a further concentration of metaphor, the maze would become the winding entrails inside the sinister monster himself" (Frye).[16] At the narrative centre of Catch-22 there is only poor Snowden freezing to death in a patch of sunlight, whimpering, "I'm cold, I'm cold," while Yossarian wonders "how in the world to begin to save him" (p. 449). The novel circles around this appalling scene for forty chapters until Yossarian finally relives it in full:

> Snowden's insides slithered down to the floor in a soggy pile and just kept dripping out. . . . Here was God's plenty, all right, he thought bitterly as he stared. . . . It was easy to read the message in his entrails. Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret. . . . The spirit gone, man is garbage. . . . Ripeness is all. (pp. 449-50)

In the demonic world the mutilation of Snowden represents what Frye states is "technically known as sparagmos or the

tearing apart of the sacrificial body".[17] Snowden symbolizes all the suffering victims in the novel, while Yossarian's inability to save him sums up the motif of helplessness. (Describing badly wounded men in The Thin Red Line, Jones writes, "They had been initiated into a strange, insane twilight fraternity . . . tenderness was all that could be given, and like most of the self-labeled human emotions, it meant nothing when put alongside the intensity of their experience".[18])

The mid-section is the largest portion of the body not protected by the skeleton, leaving its soft inner organs exposed to injury, and the horror over Avignon is foreshadowed by numerous descriptions of soft stomachs scattered throughout the novel. The most obvious is the reference to the little boys who are disemboweled and eaten in Africa (p. 414), but there are many more subtle examples. Yossarian caresses "his bare, tingling belly adoringly from time to time as though to reassure himself that it was all still there" (p. 147). Later Nately's whore kicks him in the groin, and he clutches "his throbbing, tender, burning bowels in both hands" (p. 402). Whenever the same young lady meets Orr she jeers coarsely and bulges "her firm round belly at him" (p. 206). Yossarian begins moaning at the sight of General Dreedle's nurse, particularly at "the rolling, ripened, triangular confluences of her belly and

thighs" (p. 225). His moans change to screams when Snowden loses his insides, and human flesh takes on a new meaning: "The spirit gone, man is garbage".

Heller is hardly the first to use disemboweling as an image of horror. In Hindu mythology the goddess Kali (whose name means "time"), is visualized as a gruesome hag of obsessive voraciousness. As Heinrich Zimmer describes her, she is the natural hunger for life in its most loathsome transformation: "The Goddess feeds upon the entrails of her victim. And who among beings born is not her victim? She cleaves the belly and draws out and gobbles the intestines -- that is what she is fond of -- steaming with the last breath of expiring life".[19] Melville uses the episode of the shark massacre in Moby Dick to present a similar image. As the sharks devour themselves, they form the circular shape of a labyrinth: "They viciously snapped not only at each others' disembowelments, but like flexible bows, bent round , and bit their own; till those entrails seemed swallowed over and over again by the same mouth, to be oppositely voided by the gaping wound".[20]

Snowden's death scene adds an ironic dimension to this ancient symbol, as can be seen if the episode is compared to a similar incident in The Thin Red Line. In Jones' novel, Private Tella is hit in the stomach by heavy machine-gun fire, and tries to crawl back to his squad with his

insides dripping from his wound. Sergeant Walsh rushes to him:

> "How goes it, kid?" he yelled inanely.
> In mid-scream Tella rolled his eyes like a maddened horse until he could see who it was. He did not stop the scream. . . .
> "Does it hurt much?" Welsh yelled.
> "Sure it hurts, you dumb son of a bitch!" Tella screamed. . . . "Leave me alone! Leave me alone!"21

Eventually Welsh gives Tella a package of morphine syrettes and then races back to safety. While this scene is obviously disturbing, it lacks the haunting irony of Snowden's death. Welsh knows Tella will die; his problem is how to ease the man's agony. But Yossarian at first does not even notice Snowden's stomach wound, which is hidden by the flak suit. His only thought is to bandage the gash in Snowden's leg. After accomplishing this efficiently and proudly, he thinks to check for other wounds, and then finds the horror which will always haunt him. Snowden's death in itself would be too commonplace for special notice in The Thin Red Line, but when Heller uses it to create a cruel irony, it becomes memorable.

In ancient times destiny was predicted by examining the intestines of slaughtered animals, and Snowden's insides also reveal an "eternal, immutable secret" (p. 355): "It was easy to read the message in his entrails. Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret" (p. 450). Although

Yossarian learns the mystery at the centre of the labyrinth, he does not gain the type of knowledge he can put to much use. Unlike Ulysses, who learns the way home from the shades in the underworld, Yossarian receives only a grim reminder of his frail humanity. He finds himself with no alternative but to accept the warning which the great Ulysses is able to reject:

> Old contender,
> will you not yield to the immortal gods?
> That nightmare cannot die, being eternal
> evil itself -- horror, and pain, and chaos;
> there is no fighting her, no power can fight her,
> all that avails is flight.22

Few fictional rebellions have aroused such indignation as Yossarian's flight to Sweden. His critics often forget that in keeping with the spirit of Catch-22, there is no unequivocally right decision for him. If he continues to fly more missions he will be killed; refusal to fly will bring court-martial. If he accepts Korn's offer he will betray his dead friends; if he deserts he is a "coward". Yossarian decides not to join the side of the Scheisskopf's and the Cathcarts, but to use his life to stay alive: "I've been fighting all along to save my country. Now I'm going to fight a little to save myself. The country's not in danger any more, but I am" (p. 455). Moreover he is not only concerned with physically saving his life. When Danby urges him to take Korn's offer, saying, "It's a way to save yourself," he replies "It's a way to lose myself, Danby.

You ought to know that" (p. 456). From his perspective, his options are reduced to those stated by Camus in The Plague: "All I maintain is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences".[23]

What Yossarian escapes to is not clear. The conclusion of the novel is usually optimistically read as an affirmation of the good man's triumph over evil. Speaking of "the God of Catch-22", Victor J. Milne gushes, "He does not help men out with stage-tricks, but to the man who is willing to act for the sake of righteousness He promises that evil will not ultimately prevail against good".[24] (Milne also compares Yossarian to Martin Luther.) Alfred Kazin more shrewdly observes, "Nobody in novels about World War II makes a separate peace",[25] and a close reading of Catch-22 indicates that Heller does not feel it is possible to escape from a demonic world simply by turning one's back on it. Significantly, Yossarian's symbolic journey into the underworld brings him no spiritual renewal. When he returns from Rome his first act is to numbly acquiesce to Colonel Korn's "thoroughly despicable deal" (p. 432). The shock of reliving Snowden's death snaps him out of his trance, but he still does nothing. Just before

he receives the news that Orr has reached Sweden he concedes to Danby, "Then there's no hope for us, is there?" (p. 458). His whole inspiration to flee to Sweden comes from Orr's miraculous example, which should be carefully scrutinized.

The praise of the fatuous Major Danby undercuts the notion of Sweden as paradise: "'It must be nice to be in Sweden now,' he observed yearningly. The girls are so sweet. And the people are so advanced" (p. 463). Sweden is also a cold northern country, and cold is associated in the novel with Snowden's death -- "I'm cold, I'm cold". ("Snowden" may even be a pun on "Sweden".) The announcement of Orr's arrival there comes as a kind of deus ex machina from the chaplain, who exlaims unconvincingly, "It's a miracle, I tell you! A miracle! I believe in God again!" (p. 458). Milne agrees: "Orr is the personification of the qualities of intelligence and endurance which make possible the survival of humanity under the worst conditions of oppression and exploitation".[26] However, Orr is always described in rather odd terms. He is "a grinning pygmy", "a freak", "a gnome", "a freakish likable dwarf" (pp. 18, 234, 321), and is further distanced from the reader by his annoying habit of tinkering with minute pieces of machinery, endlessly taking apart and re-assembling tiny little devices

over and over again. Orr seems more elf than human, and his escape to Sweden is not a humanly possible alternative, but the dream of total freedom which cannot be achieved in the demonic world of Catch-22.

Even Danby realizes that while Orr might have reached Sweden by rowing there, Yossarian is planning to go to Rome first to look for Nately's whore's kid sister. He tells Yossarian, "You'll never make it. It's impossible. It's almost a geographical impossibility to get there from here". The reply is, "Hell, Danby, I know that. But at least I'll be trying" (p. 462). Yossarian's final action is to leap away from the slashing knife which is the incarnation of everything awaiting him:

> "How do you feel, Yossarian?"
> "Fine. No I'm very frightened."
> "That's good," said Major Danby. "It proves you're still alive. . . ." (p. 463)

Thus, the novel concludes by emphasizing fear, which has always been Yossarian's main motivation. During the Bologna missions "the fear flowed everywhere" (p. 112), and Heller indicates that it will continue to be the dominant force in Yossarian's future.

In Dog Soldiers Converse reasons, "I am afraid, therefore I am".[27] Yossarian is less philosophical: "Are you yellow?" / "Yes" (p. 410). The final image of Yossarian is not that of a triumphant hero, but of an ordinary man who has learned to accept death as an immediate danger, and

who will always be leaping and evading to preserve his life. Sweden is a state of mind, and Yossarian's desertion is an existential act of defiance.

CONCLUSION

"DEATH'S DREAM KINGDOM"

> Can you go up to heaven and say
> God, is it meant to be this way?[1]

Athough World War II casts an apocalyptic shadow over Catch-22, Heller recognizes, as does Vonnegut in Slaughterhouse-Five, that "even if wars didn't keep coming like glaciers, there would still be plain old death",[2] and death is the real subject of his novel. His characters may die spectacularly by being sliced apart by propellors, or ludicrously by suffocating under a cat, but the presence of death is always a constant. The novel is filled with disease imagery that has nothing to do with the violent, sudden death associated with warfare. Yossarian is haunted by all forms of death and broods over "the surgeon's knife that was almost certain to be waiting for him and everyone else who lived long enough to die" (p. 178). Man is presented as being terribly vulnerable not only to external accidents, but to decay from within. As the Emperor concludes in the Memoirs of Hadrian, the human body "may be after all only a sly beast who will end by devouring his master".[3]

In spite of the overwhelming superiority of death, Yossarian clings obstinately to life, for as Dunbar asks,

"What else is there?" (p. 40). When Scheisskopf's wife advises Yossarian, "Be glad you're even alive", he replies, "Be furious that you're going to die" (p. 184), and from this perspective his rebellion is really an expression of the will to endure by protesting against death. It is the ultimate "No!" Melville spoke of in a letter to Hawthorne: "There is the grand truth about Nathaniel Hawthorne. He says No! in thunder; but the Devil himself cannot make him say yes. For all men who say yes, lie . . .".[4] This concluding chapter will discuss the "No!" in Catch-22 by focusing on the presentation of death in the novel. It will be seen that death is treated without sentiment or glorification as an inevitable natural fact, rather than as a sacrifice which somehow gives "meaning" to life. As Heller's conception of death involves theological problems, the role of Milo Minderbinder as a demonic deity will be examined. Finally, it will be argued that although Heller explores the symptoms of a diseased world without offering an antidote, his "No!" to death implies an affirmation of the wonder and terror of life, for the conclusion of the novel indicates that man cannot escape the void, but must try to live at its intolerable heart: "I'm not running away from my responsibilities. I'm running to them" (p. 461).

Yossarian loves being in the hospital, where "people gave up the ghost with delicacy and taste" (p. 170). He

particularly appreciates the absence of violent death.

> People didn't . . . come plummeting like dead weights out of hotel windows with a whoosh!, accelerating at the rate of thirty-two feet per second to land with a hideous plop! on the sidewalk, and die disgustingly there in public like an alpaca sack full of hairy strawberry ice cream, bleeding, pink toes awry. (p. 171)

The key word in this description is "disgustingly". Death is consistently presented in Catch-22 as a sick joke in bad taste, an outrage entirely without redeeming features. It is simply the end of man, and thus Heller's affirmation of life is final and unconditional: life cannot be redeemed by anything other than life.

This is in stark contrast to the portrayal of death in a story like "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber", where death is a means of transcending life, even though the transcendence is not of a religious nature. The story's irony is that man achieves his greatest success through death. Here the presumed transcendence is purely personal, but death can also be exalted as a sacrifice paid to the future for the benefit of humanity. In this way Robert Jordan dies so that his ideal of what society should be may be realized, and his death is conceived as the purpose of his life. Herbert Marcuse described such a conception of death as "ontological as well as empirical":

> Man's empirical existence, his material and contingent life, is then defined in terms of and redeemed by something other than itself; he is said to live in two fundamentally different and even conflicting dimensions, and his "true" existence involves a series of sacrifices in his empirical existence which culminate in the supreme sacrifice -- death.5

This notion of death as a necessary sacrifice is completely foreign to Catch-22. As the old man observes, "There are now fifty or sixty countries fighting in this war. Surely so many countries can't all be worth dying for. . . . And anything worth dying for is certainly worth living for" (p. 253).

If death does not bring secular transcendence, there remains the possibility that it is the gateway into an afterlife. (The very word "perish" is derived from the Latin "to pass through", implying that death is not the end, but the beginning). Thus in the deathbed scene in Willa Cather's Death Comes for the Archbishop, Father Lucero is at the edge of eternity: "Among the watchers there was always hope that the dying man might reveal something of what he alone could see; that his countenance, if not his lips, would speak, and on his features would fall some light or shadow from beyond".[6] Catch-22 denies this possibility. One of the most striking symbols of death in the novel is the soldier in white, a badly wounded man entirely wrapped in white bandages. In a memorable scene, Dunbar decides

that no one is inside:

> Dunbar broke through and leaped up furiously on the soldier in white's bed to see for himself, pressing his gleaming eye down hungrily against the tattered black hole in the shell of white bandages. He was still bent over staring with one eye into the lightless, unstirring void of the soldier in white's mouth when the doctors and the M.P.'s came running to help Yossarian pull him away. (p. 375)

Dunbar looks into the face of death, and sees -- nothing. Similarly, in "The Seventh Seal", the Knight asks Death to divulge his secrets:

> Death: I have no secrets.
> Knight: So you know nothing.
> Death: I have nothing to tell.[7]

A purely biological conception of death involves a denial of a benevolent deity, and although Heller has the assurance of Robert S. McNamara that "God -- the Communist commentators to the contrary -- is clearly democratic",[8] he presents a much less comforting image of God in Catch-22, In an argument with Scheisskopf's wife, Yossarian describes God as "a country bumpkin, a clumsy, bungling, brainless, conceited, uncouth hayseed" (p. 184). When she defends pain as "a warning to us of bodily dangers", he replies, "Why couldn't He have used a doorbell to notify us, or one of his celestial choirs?" (p. 184). Early in the novel it is bitterly reported that Kraft was killed "while God was resting" (p. 56), and the implication throughout the novel is that even if God does exist, he is simply

an indifferent clown who has long ceased to care about his creatures. Julian Mitchell has remarked that Catch-22 is "a surrealist Iliad, with a lunatic high command instead of Gods",[9] and Yossarian's superiors do often behave like mad parodies of Zeus. In his headquarters General P. P. Peckem looks down upon a gigantic map of Italy, and explains to Scheisskopf, "They'll be bombing a tiny undefended village, reducing the whole community to rubble. I have it from Wintergreen . . . that the mission is entirely unnecessary. . . . But that's the way things go when you elevate mediocre people to positions of authority" (p. 334).

Milo Minderbinder is another parody of the deity. While Yossarian makes his tentative way through the complex maze of past and present, Milo moves inexorably forward until his business empire extends all over the world, and he is worshipped as a demonic figurehead:

> Milo was the corn god, the rain god and the rice god in backward regions where such crude gods were still worshipped by ignorant and superstitious people, and deep inside the jungles of Africa, he intimated with becoming modesty, large graven images of his mustached face could be found overlooking primitive stone altars red with human blood. (p. 244)

It is the innocuous Milo who presides over the kingdom of death in Catch-22. Just as death has no secrets, neither does he: Milo has "a simple, sincere face that was incapable of subtlety or guile" (p. 65). When asked how he manages to buy eggs at seven cents each and make a profit

by selling them for five, he replies simply, "My name is Minderbinder. I am twenty-seven years old" (p. 259). Milo is the perfect god for a world dominated by madness and death, and the wasteland is his element: "April had been the best month of all for Milo" (p. 257).

By the end of the novel Yossarian is completely isolated from possible outside assistance. Milo is his symbolic deity, Scheisskopf is his ruler, and all his friends are dead. But although the ambiguous conclusion hints at a perilous future, it avoids both sentimentality and melancholy. Yossarian's declaration that "Someone had to do something sometime" may not be the most eloquent of positive statements. However, it is at least a determined refusal to accept the conditions of an unjust world. When Siegfried Sassoon denounced the slaughter of his generation in World War I, he realized the futility of his solitary cry and quoted Georges Duhamel: "It was ordained that you should suffer without purpose and without hope, but I will not let all your sufferings be lost in the abyss".[10] The abyss is very real to Heller, and in Catch-22 he has not only done justice to the suffering of its victims, but has affirmed their power to ultimately say "No!".

APPENDIX[1]

"FUGUE OF DEATH" BY PAUL CELAN

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at nightfall
we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it at night
drink it and drink it
we are digging a grave in the sky it is ample to lie there
A man in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when the night falls to Germany your golden hair
Margarete
he writes it and walks from the house the stars glitter he
whistles his dogs up
he whistles his Jews out and orders a grave to be dug in
the earth
he commands us now with the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink in the mornings at noon we drink you at nightfall
drink you and drink you
A man in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when the night falls to Germany your golden hair
Margarete
Your ashen hair Shulamith we are digging a grave in the
sky it is ample to lie there

He shouts stab deeper in earth you there you others you
sing and you play
he grabs at the iron in his belt and swings it and blue
are his eyes
stab deeper your spades you there and you others play on
for the dancing

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon in the mornings we drink you at
nightfall
drink you and drink you
a man in the house your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith he plays with the serpents

He shouts play sweeter death's music death comes as a
master from Germany
he shouts stroke darker the strings and as smoke you shall
climb to the sky
then you'll have a grave in the clouds it is ample to lie
there

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon death comes as a master from Germany
we drink you at nightfall and morning we drink you and drink you
a master from Germany death comes with eyes that are blue
with a bullet of lead he will hit in the mark he will hit you
a man in the house your golden hair Margarete
he hunts us down with his dogs in the sky he gives us a grave
he plays with the serpents and dreams death comes as a master from Germany.

your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1]Dante, The Divine Comedy, I, Canto xxviii, p. 246.

[2]Ibid., Canto ii, p. 78.

[3]Burroughs, Naked Lunch, p. 224.

[4]Wordsworth, "Ode 1815", Poetical Works, II, 153.

[5]Wiesel, Night, p. 56.

[6]Ibid., p. 76.

[7]Steiner, "K", Language and Silence, 123.

[8]Celine, Journey to the End of the Night, p. 325.

[9]Stone, Dog Soliders, p. 305.

[10]Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse-Five, p. 17.

[11]Artaud, The Theatre and its Double, p. 75.

[12]Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory, p. 35.

[13]Miller, "'Catch-22': Satire Sums Up a Tradition", An Armed America, 205.

[14]Ritter, "Fearful Comedy: 'Catch-22' as Avatar of the Social Surrealist Novel", A 'Catch-22' Casebook, 73.

[15]Artaud, p. 84.

CHAPTER ONE

[1]Crane, The Red Badge of Courage, p. 110.

[2]Ibid., p. 134.

[3]Brooke, Letters, p. 625.

[4]Brooke, "The Dead", Poetical Works, 21.

[5]Middlebrook, The First Day on the Somme, p. 68.

[6]Fussell, p. 27.

[7]Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, p. 185.

[8]Ibid., p. 327.

[9]Bergonzi, Hero's Twilight, p. 41.

[10]Graves, Goodbye to All That, p. 146.

[11]Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, p. 154.

[12]Hemingway, "On the Quai at Smyrna", In Our Time, 11.

[13]Hemingway to Samuel Putnam, quoted by Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 71.

[14]Kazin, Bright Book of Life, p. 74.

[15]Cowley, Exile's Return, pp. 40-1.

[16]Mailer, The Naked and the Dead, p. 36.

[17]Ibid., p. 145.

[18]Ibid., p. 325.

[19]Ibid., p. 114.

[20]Ibid., p. 399.

[21]Ibid., p. 442.

[22]Kazin, p. 71.

[23]Mailer, "A Happy Solution to Vietnam", Cannibals and Christians, p. 86.

[24]"140 Wars Since 1945", Globe and Mail, May 4, 1977.

[25]Owen, "Mental Cases", Collected Poems, 69.

[26]Langer, The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, p. 21.

[27]Kubrik, Dr. Strangelove, quoted by Miller, p. 258.

[28]Dali, quoted by Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, p. 236.

[29]Jung, "Picasso", The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature, 137.

[30]Artaud, p. 13.

[31]Beradt, The Third Reich of Dreams, quoted by Langer, p. 146.

CHAPTER TWO

[1]Stone, p. 318.

[2]Ropp, War in the Modern World, p. 400.

[3]Jones, The Thin Red Line, p. 234.

[4]Langer, p. 206.

[5]Durrenmatt, Problems of the Theatre, quoted by Fussell, p. 204.

[6]Pilger, The Last Day, p. 53.

[7]Ionesco, quoted by Sontag, Against Interpretation, p. 117.

[8]Gaukroger, "Time Structure in 'Catch-22'", Critique, 70-85. Solomon, "The Structure of Joseph Heller's 'Catch-22'", Critique, 46-57. Stark, "The Anatomy of 'Catch-22'", A 'Catch-22' Casebook, 145-158.

[9]Gaukroger, p. 79.

[10]Stark, p. 147.

[11]Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, p. 7.

[12]Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 273.

[13]Fussell, p. 191.

[14]Ibid., p. 230.

[15]Artaud, p. 71.

[16]Aitken, "Lederer's Legacy", Free Fire Zone, 86.

[17]Ibid., p. 86.

[18]Eliot, "The Wasteland", Collected Poems, 74.

[19]Celine, p. 339.

[20]Kafka, The Trial, p. 231.

[21]Stone, pp. 24-5.

[22]Henry Campbell Black, Black's Law Dictionary, quoted by Stark, p. 154.

[23]Hassan, Contemporary American Literature, p. 83.

[24]Heller, "On Translating 'Catch-22' into a Movie", A 'Catch-22' Casebook, 359.

[25]Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!, p. 101.

[26]Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 265.

[27]Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, p. 375.

[28]Bergman, "The Magician", Four Screenplays, 345.

CHAPTER THREE

[1]Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 147.

[2]Ibid., p. 150.

[3]Harvey, Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, p. 234.

[4]Purse, The Mystic Spiral, pp. 28-9.

[5]Ibid., p. 113.

[6]Nietzsche, quoted by Steiner, In Bluebeard's Castle, p. 111.

[7]Frye, p. 148.

[8]Burroughs, p. 131.

[9]F. P. Crozier, quoted by Fussell, p. 300.

[10]Fussell, p. 309.

[11]Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, I, 287.

[12]Homer, The Odyssey, p. 191.

[13]Lind, quoted by Langer, p. 74.

[14]Lifton, History and Human Survival, p. 163.

[15]Owen, "Mental Cases", Collected Poems, 69.

[16]Frye, p. 150.

[17]Ibid., p. 148.

[18]Jones, pp. 50-1.

[19]Zimmer, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, p. 213.

[20]Melville, Moby Dick, p. 295.

[21]Jones, pp. 225-6.

[22]Homer, p. 213.

[23]Camus, The Plague, p. 207.

[24]Milne, "A Theological Perspective on Catch-22", Critique, 68.

[25]Kazin, p. 75.

[26]Milne, p. 67.

[27]Stone, p. 42.

CONCLUSION

[1]Yiddish Folk Song, quoted by Celan, Speech-Grille, p. 197.

[2]Vonnegut, p. 3.

[3]Marguerite Yourcenar, quoted by Aronson, "Treatment of the Dying Person", The Meaning of Death, 251.

[4]Melville, quoted by Fielder, No! in Thunder, p. 6.

[5]Marcuse, "The Ideology of Death", The Meaning of Death, p. 65.

[6]Cather, quoted by Hoffman, "Mortality and Modern Literature", The Meaning of Death, 154.

[7]Bergman, "The Seventh Seal", Four Screenplays, 197.

[8]McNamara, The Essence of Security, p. 109.

[9]Mitchell, "Under Mad Gods", The Spectator, 801.

[10]Sassoon, quoted by Graves, p. 226.

APPENDIX

[1]Quoted by Langer, pp. 10-11.

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