



WAR HEROES IN FALLEN ANGELS AND CATCH 22

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Abstract: War has been a part of human civilization since its birth. From the first war which took place in Mesopotamia in 2,700 BC to two World Wars and the shadow of nuclear, biological, and chemical holocaust that occurred in the world has seen many nasty wars. This has led to many unfathomable destructions and has made us aware of the evil that is in human souls. People who are admired for bravery in war and often risk or sacrifice their own life in war are called 'War Heroes'. This paper attempts to analyze the concept of war hero in the novel *Catch-22* written by Joseph Heller and in *Fallen Angels* written by Walter Dean Myers. Along with the traumas of war, the paper focuses on the lives of two soldiers, Yossarian and Richie Perry, and how the war changed their lives. *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels* execute a radical criticism of heroism in the context of war and emphasizing the theme of youth and innocence respectively.

Index Terms - Trauma, Vietnam War, World War II, War Hero, Humanity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the war hero has been a central theme in literature, particularly in war fiction. War heroes are often portrayed as individuals who embody courage, honor, and sacrifice in the face of danger, and who are willing to put themselves at risk for the greater good. The idea is often romanticized, and has been used to create myths and legends around famous figures in history. From ancient Greek heroes like Achilles and Hector, to modern-day figures like Audie Murphy and Chris Kyle, war heroes have been celebrated and commemorated for their bravery and sacrifice. The concept of the war hero continues to capture the imagination of many, and remains an important theme in literature and media. Novels like *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels* offer nuanced and critical perspectives on the idea of the war hero, challenging the romanticized view of heroism and exploring the contradictions and complexities that underlie the archetype. Applying conflict theory to the portrayal of war heroes in the novels offers a critical perspective on the unequal distribution of power and resources that can lead to conflict. In *Catch-22*, the protagonist Yossarian is a cynical and disillusioned bombardier who is struggling to survive in the absurd and chaotic world of the military. The novel satirizes the traditional image of the war hero, showing how it is often a myth perpetuated by those in power. Yossarian's attempts to escape the war and protect himself are in direct conflict with the image of the brave and selfless soldier. The novel challenges the idea that heroic acts are always virtuous or moral. In *Fallen Angels*, the young soldiers are initially eager and idealistic, believing in the nobility and honor of their mission. The novel portrays the war hero as a tragic figure, who is forced to confront the moral ambiguities and contradictions of their actions. The soldiers are often torn between their duty to their country and their sense of humanity and morality, highlighting the complex and conflicting demands placed on the war hero. Overall, the concept of the war hero is a complex and multifaceted one, and both novels offer nuanced and critical perspectives on this ideal. These novels challenge the simplistic and romanticized view of the war hero, and instead offer a more nuanced and critical examination of the complexities of war and its impact on individuals.

Methods of Qualitative research can be used to analyze the primary texts. The method is found useful to study the concept of war hero, specifically by collecting and analyzing non-numerical data related to the experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with war heroism. Finding patterns and themes in the data and creating a deep, nuanced knowledge of the experiences and meanings connected to combat heroes can be done using thematic analysis or narrative analysis techniques. Conflict theory can be applied to both *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels*, as both novels depict the impact of war on individuals and the unequal distribution of power and resources that can lead to conflict. Conflict theory provides a lens through which to view these issues and understand the larger social and political forces at work.

The objective of this paper is to generate a greater understanding, empathy, and appreciation for the experiences and sacrifices of individuals who have served in war, while also engaging in critical analysis and reflection on the broader social and political context of war heroism. The results of this study may help us better comprehend the intricate and varied nature of war heroism. The paper examines how do individuals who are recognized as war heroes construct their identities and experiences of heroism. Additionally, the paper describes challenges and difficulties that war heroes face in their lives and how they cope with these challenges.

There have been numerous research papers done on war fiction, exploring various aspects of the genre-

According to James Nagel's "*Catch-22* and Angry Humor": A Study of the Normative Values of Satire, the humour in Heller's debut book is in the tradition of Juvenalian satire, which attacks the underlying ideas and fundamental order of society. *Catch-22* and all of Heller's following works, where the projected images of patriotic surrender, professional and household success, political achievement, and devout submission become the targets of those works, which are particularly important to the idea of assault.

By Franziska Massner, "Unifying Elements and Structural Patterns in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*" - This analysis demonstrates that *Catch-22* has both structural patterns and unifying components, demonstrating that Heller's debut novel deservedly received favourable reviews. It begins to identify some of the book's most important topics before discussing some of *Catch-22* structural patterns.

"The Theme of WWII in Joseph Heller's novel *Catch-22*" by Maftuna Do'sqobilovna Suyunova. This essay examines the central idea and chronological arrangement of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. Additionally, the author used dark humour in his book to emphasise how, via comedy, he illustrates the absurdity, tension, and bureaucracy of the conflict. In this work, the chronology and structure are also debatable elements.

'Walter Dean Myers' *Fallen Angels* and the Vietnam War: A Study of the Effects of War on Soldiers' Mental Health' by Aniket Raj. This paper examines the psychological impact of the Vietnam War on soldiers, and how this is portrayed in the novel.

"African American Soldiers in Vietnam: An Analysis of *Fallen Angels* by Walter Dean Myers" by Kaitlyn Dykes. This paper examines the representation of African American soldiers in the novel, and how their experiences in Vietnam differ from those of their white counterparts.

"The Role of Satire in *Catch-22*" - This paper examines the use of satire in *Catch-22* and its effectiveness in critiquing the military bureaucracy and the absurdities of war. The author argues that the novel's satirical tone allows Heller to convey his critique of the military system in a way that is both humorous and incisive.

"The Absurdity of War in *Catch-22*" - This paper explores the theme of absurdity in *Catch-22*, and how it reflects the chaotic and irrational nature of war. The author argues that Heller uses absurdity to undermine traditional notions of heroism and patriotism, and to expose the inhumanity and senselessness of war.

"Finding Humanity Amidst Chaos: The Role of Friendship in *Fallen Angels*" - This paper explores the importance of friendship and camaraderie in *Fallen Angels*. The author argues that the relationships between the soldiers in the novel provide a source of emotional support and help them to maintain their humanity in the midst of the chaos and violence of war.

"Race and Class in *Fallen Angels*" - This paper examines the representation of race and class in *Fallen Angels*, and how they intersect with the experiences of the soldiers. The author argues that Myers uses the diversity of the soldiers' backgrounds to critique the inequalities and injustices of American society.

"Moral Ambiguity and the Vietnam War in *Fallen Angels*" - This paper analyzes the moral ambiguity of the Vietnam War, and how it is reflected in the actions and decisions of the characters in *Fallen Angels*. The author argues that the novel raises complex ethical questions about war and its impact on individuals and society.

"The Impact of War on Mental Health in *Fallen Angels*" - This paper explores the psychological effects of war on the characters in *Fallen Angels*, and how they cope with trauma, PTSD, and other mental health issues. The author argues that the novel provides a realistic and poignant portrayal of the toll that war can take on soldiers' mental health.

Since little research have been done on the concept of war hero using conflict theory in the chosen texts, this paper explores the portrayal of war heroes in two classic war novels, *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels*.

Catch -22 is a satirical novel that takes a critical look at the military bureaucracy and the absurdities of war. The protagonist, Captain John Yossarian, is a bombardier in the US Army Air Forces during World War II. Throughout the novel, Yossarian struggles to maintain his sanity and escape the dangers of combat, while also dealing with the absurdities of the military bureaucracy. His attempt to protect himself are in direct conflict with the image of the selfless and heroic soldier. Throughout the novel, he confronts the absurdity and hypocrisy of war, and is faced with the contradiction of being expected to sacrifice his life for a cause he does not believe in. As a low-ranking soldier, he is powerless and subject to the whims of those in power. He constantly tries to find ways to escape the dangerous missions he is ordered to undertake, but is unable to do so because of the bureaucratic and hierarchical structures of the military. The novel also highlights the economic inequalities and class divisions within the military, as officers live in luxury while soldiers are forced to endure squalid conditions. The portrayal of war in *Catch-22* is darkly comedic, and the characters experiences highlight the senselessness and brutality of the conflict. The novel challenges the idea that heroic acts are always virtuous or moral, and exposes the ways in which the concept of the war hero can be manipulated and exploited by those in power. The character of Milo Minderbinder, for example, uses the myth of the war hero to justify his own selfish and corrupt actions. One of the central themes of this novel is the idea that the military system often rewards conformity and blind obedience over individual initiative and critical thinking. This is exemplified by the character of Major Major Major Major, who is promoted to the rank of major solely because of his name, and who is unable to make any decisions without first consulting his superiors. In contrast to Major Major, Yossarian is portrayed as a hero precisely because he refuses to conform to the expectations of the military system. He repeatedly tries to get out of combat duty by faking illnesses, and he ultimately decides to desert rather than continue putting himself and his fellow soldiers in danger. However, Yossarian's status as a war hero is complicated by the satirical nature of the novel. While he is certainly brave and resourceful, his actions are often driven by a desire to protect himself rather than any sense of duty or honor. In this sense, Yossarian represents a subversion of the traditional war hero archetype, as he is not motivated by a desire to serve his country, but rather by a desire to survive.

Fallen Angels is a young adult novel that follows a group of soldiers during the Vietnam War. The protagonist, Richie Perry, is an African American soldier from Harlem who has enlisted in the army in order to escape poverty and discrimination at home. Here the conflict between the Vietnamese and the American soldiers can be seen as a result of power imbalances and social injustice. The novel depicts the experiences of African American soldiers, who face discrimination and racism within the military as well as in American society. The war is presented as a means for the powerful to assert their dominance and control over others, as they are willing to sacrifice the lives of young soldiers to further their own interests.

Throughout the novel, Perry and his fellow soldiers face numerous challenges and dangers, including racism, PTSD, and the threat of enemy fire. Despite these obstacles, they continue to fight and uphold their duty to their country. The character of Perry is portrayed as a more traditional war hero than Yossarian. He is brave, selfless, and committed to his fellow soldiers, and he is willing to put himself in harm's way in order to protect them. However, his heroism is tempered by the harsh realities of war, and he is forced to confront the brutal consequences of violence and death. One of the key themes of *Fallen Angels* is the idea that war heroes are not simply born, but are made through the experiences of war. He begins the novel as a naive and idealistic young man, but he is gradually forced to confront the harsh realities of war and to make difficult moral choices. In this sense, Perry's heroism is not simply a result of his innate character traits, but a product of his experiences and his ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Both novels depict the structural factors that can lead to war and the exploitation of individuals by those in power. They illustrate the impact of war on the powerless and marginalized, and the cyclical nature of violence and conflict that can be perpetuated by these power imbalances. In *Catch-22*, the character of Yossarian embodies a cynical and anti-heroic attitude towards war, rejecting the idea that heroism can be found in the context of senseless violence and destruction. He sees the glorification of war heroes as a means of manipulating and exploiting soldiers for political gain, rather than a genuine recognition of their bravery or sacrifice. The novel ultimately suggests that heroism is an elusive and often illusory concept in the context of war, and that those who are hailed as heroes may in fact be the victims of an unjust and irrational system.

Similarly, in *Fallen Angels*, the main character Richie Perry is initially drawn to the idea of heroism as a means of proving his worth and gaining recognition in the military. However, as he experiences the horrors and injustices of war firsthand, he becomes disillusioned with the idea of heroism as a noble and admirable quality. The novel portrays heroism as a complex and contested concept, shaped by social and cultural forces as well as individual experiences and perceptions.

The writers of *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels* both offer a critical examination of the concept of heroism in war, and the impact of war on individuals and society. Both novels use satire and dark humor to critique the institutions and systems that perpetuate war, and challenge the romanticized view of heroism that is often associated with war. Both novels also highlight the hypocrisy and absurdity of the institutions that perpetuate war. Milo Minderbinder, the protagonist of *Catch-22*, uses the myth of the war hero to justify his own selfish and corrupt actions, while in *Fallen Angels*, the military bureaucracy is depicted as callous and indifferent to the soldiers' well-being. Eventhough both novels are set in different wars and time periods, they offer a critical examination of the concept of heroism and the impact of war on individuals and society. They use satire and dark humor to expose the complexities and contradictions of war and challenge the simplistic view of heroism. One of the main differences between the two novels is their setting. *Catch-22* is set during World War II, while *Fallen Angels* is set during the Vietnam War. As a result, the two novels portray different wars with distinct historical and political contexts. The two novels also have different thematic focuses. While both explore the concept of heroism in war, *Catch-22* is more concerned with the nature of bureaucracy and power structures, and the ways in which these can be used to perpetuate war and exploit individuals. *Fallen Angels*, on the other hand, focuses more on the personal experiences of soldiers and the impact of war on their mental and emotional well-being. Overall, while *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels* share some similarities, they are different in their settings, tone and style, thematic focus, and portrayal of violence and combat.

The concept of war hero is a central theme in the novels *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels*. Both novels present a overcritical and refined depiction of war heroism, pressing the complications and contradictions essential in this conception. In both novels, the conception of war heroism is shown off to be deeply implicated with effects of authority, politics, and identity. The novels challenge simplistic or famed descriptions of war icons, and rather extend a further refined and overcritical standpoint on the complications and contradictions of this conception. Overall, the portrayal of war heroism in *Catch-22* and *Fallen Angels* suggests that heroism is a complicated and multifaceted idea that is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and personal circumstances. The novels offer a powerful critique of simplistic or one-dimensional portrayals of war heroes, and encourage readers to engage in critical reflection on the meaning and value of heroism in the context of war and conflict.

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