

# Social satire: catch 22

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Catch 22 is a social satire that is used for humour and it is mostly used to harm the reputation of or mock important aspects of the society (Wikipedia, 2019). Satire also referred to as black humour is a very different and creative way of telling a story from a scene. It may be novel, movie, drama etc. In the novel Catch 22 written by Joseph Heller has also made a lot of hints regarding black humour to raise reader's interests.

It is seen as very important when the reader is distracted by the ugly truth of World War II through the use of black humour. According to Norwood (2016) humour is found in such serious matters such as death, diseases and sickness. In this essay we will be discussing how Satire is used in the novel with the overall aim to prove that it goes hand in hand with black humour. This is to help to distract readers from the horror of the novel.

Satire in the novel mainly focuses on three general things namely the senior military officers, professional and business interests, and society's remarkable reliance on forms, papers, rules and regulations (Norwood, 2016). The senior officers are generally trying to intimidate the soldiers by using their authority. Professionals and businesses are attacked all through the book. One of the humorous examples of this is the actions of Gus and Wes, Doc Daneeka's assistants (Heller, 37: 1962).

They are very incompetent, the only thing that they do is to bring people to the hospital who have temperatures of 102 and above and also painting their gums and toes with a gentian violet solution (Heller, 37; 1962). Again the competency of the nurses towards their patients can also be questioned, and their treatment of a man in white covered completely in bandages. The only

thing the nurses do for him is to switch the bottles of liquid going in and out of his body (Heller, 9; 1962).

The doctors are also confused about Yossarian because he never seems to get better either. He stays in hospital for some weeks complaining about his liver (Heller, 7; 1962). The doctors tell him it's not jaundice but they don't know what it is. Finally they tell him that nothing is wrong with him at all and let him go. Yossarian, together with the other patients in the hospital couldn't stand this very generous person who has so much sympathy and spoke all day long to the soldier in white.

Yossarian is caught in a situation when one of his fellow soldier dies right in front of him. Snowden's death is described as very gruesome and traumatising. When Yossarian was holding him, Snowden continuously stated that he is cold (Heller, 503; 1962) and telling Yossarian where he was hit. Immediately after opening Snowden's flat Jacket, his inside poured out and Yossarian kept on screaming. The funny part about that is he got disgusted and stated poking after seeing tomato stew from Snowden's insides, he hated tomato stew thus he was vomiting. He only found the tomato stew disgusting in the whole ordeal.

It is not every day that you see a naked man on top of a tree especially at a funeral. Yossarian refuses to wear his uniform because he is still traumatised about Snowden's ordeal. We are taken back to Snowden's funeral in Heller ( 300; 1962). After landing, the naked Yossarian is taken care for by Doc Daneeka. He continues to go about his business naked and even watches Snowden's funeral in the nude, seated up in a tree.

Milo finds Yossarian during the funeral and asks him to taste something. Because Yossarian refuses to come down, Milo climbs up the tree. He gives Yossarian chocolate-covered cotton to try. Yossarian spits it back in his face. Milo is desperate to serve this chocolate-covered cotton to the men and get it off his hands. During the funeral, the chaplain who is performing the ceremony looks up and sees Yossarian naked in the tree. He is incredulous. Yossarian mistakes his gestures of surprise as the culmination of a very emotional funeral (Shmoop, 2016).

One can clearly say that black humour brings life, laughter and enjoyment in a difficult situation. Thus Heller has opted to bring up humour to distract people from their horror.

#### Bibliography

- Heller, J. 1962. Catch-22. Great Britain. Jonathan Cape