

The Post-War Novel as Catch-22: The Chronology and Ex-P.F.C Winter Green

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Abstract: *At the moment, 'postmodern' understood as distinguishing from the modern. It had been used first in 1917, the German philosopher Rudolf Pannwitz defined the 'nihilism' of 20th century's western subculture a subject matter he referred from Friedrich Nietzsche and resurfaced in the work of the Spanish literary critic Federico de Onis in 1934 to consult the backlash against literary modernism'. And also this paper indicates an exploration of Catch-22 (1961), this early document of American postmodern literature, particularly attempts to present the critical discussion surrounding this novel as connatural to the broader theoretical discussions surrounding the concept of postmodernism. My contention is that of this dialogue, due in part to the natural chronology and linear inclinations of literary criticism, and despite the professed outspokenness of postmodern ideas to an enigma, diligent efforts have to be made periodically reassert collapsed opportunities in literature. With this in mind, I desire Catch-22 in an effort of; first, demonstrate how critics have diminished the potential meaning of Catch-22 in imposing their own notions of a literary-historical orientation. Second, how readings of peripheral characters of this novel can reveal an untapped potential for exploration of the broadest definitions of the project of postmodernism.*

Key Words: *Postmodernism, Chronology, Post-war, cultural narrative, crucial political.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Postmodernism has emerged as a crucial political current within the modern philosophical situation and offered a deep and sweeping criticism of modernism. It's challenged all the further as electronic equipment classes of thoughts among that social theory are mentioned and evaluated. Genre offers refined criticism of rationalism; essentialism and religious doctrine. In fact, Genre may be a perspective through that a brand new trend or a brand new side of society emerges from the parcel of philosophy. Genre, because the 'post' prefaces implies, are some things that follow modernism. However, those who admit such things as Genre don't agree whether or not Genre may be a break in modernism or a continuation of modernism or each. Before discussing regarding the abstract analysis, it's essential to throw some lights on the sources of the origin of the philosophy.

With its narrative made from Willy-Nilly ordered episodes, Joseph Heller's Catch-22 stands in stark distinction between the straightforward, linear narratives that typically prove best in justifying wars the manner within which wars square measure typically delineated in high school history textbooks, for instance. Indeed, the novel is often delineated in terms of the subsequent quotation from the rear of the Scribner paperback edition: 'Catch-22 is like no different novel. It's its own rationale. because the years pass, that distinctive explanation attributed to the novel becomes more and a lot of conflated with the actions of Heller's protagonist, Lt. John Yossarian. And permanently reason: most of the novel's episodes feature Yossarian in his near-constant state of frustration created by information that he, the sole sane person left within the Army it looks is successively thought of crazy by nearly all those that surround him. Part of the conflation between novel and protagonist involves Catch-22's status, a product of each it's timely entrees to the American feels and a few ingenious marketing. In a very 1994 preface to Catch-22, Heller recollects being two-handed stickers that read: YOSSARIAN LIVES (Heller, 11). The phrase became common to school bathroom stalls across the country, symbolic of a cultural resistance to hawkishness that may so live and thrive in the era to follow Catch-22's publication in 1961.

My reading of Catch-22 will arrange to move Yossarian off center stage, at least partly. My feeling is that, in one sense, it's unnatural to look at Catch-22 as a character-driven novel. All of Heller's characters, even his main one, act unpredictably from page to page. Heller's experimentalism includes his ability to force readers to question the consistency of his character and to govern their expectations of a continuous performance from Yossarian at all. I propose, somewhat tongue in- cheek, a second reason for de-emphasizing Yossarian. My reasoning is that postmodernism is regarding, among varied different things, ill peripheral voices that go un- or under-represented in grand cultural narratives. I supply this reason lightheartedly as a result of, quite something, it self-servingly fits my reading. However, there's one thing valid thereto.

The cultural narrative, the mythos, close Catch-22 revolves around Yossarian. To the school student that contumaciously places his 'YOSSARIAN LIVES' sticker on the lavatory stall, Yossarian is that the character to resist and subvert the bumbling forms within the novel. As I hope to demonstrate against the pages to follow, this reliance on Yossarian as a singular model for Genre is meagre. Postmodernism needs, because the Johns Hopkins Guide suggests, 'a multiplication of voices' to wage war on the apparent totality of grand narratives. Yossarian the cultural development, who in his time served as a superbly model of a character who persists in the face of contradiction, has become rather one-dimensional in popular culture now-a-days.

To his aid, I might prefer to weaken the forefront two of Catch-22's underrepresented voices, ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen and Bobby Orr. As I chart a course of the critics that have, with smart intentions and completely plausible readings, contributed to linear, simplex interpretations on the novel, I hope to use the two characters to affirm the language of contingency to the novel: to permit it to act its several exquisite paradoxes. Following a recapitulation of a long important discussion of the timeline of Catch-22, I shall use ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen's management over the radial asymmetry of the flow of knowledge within the novel to indicate however literary criticism struggles to account for such changeability. Next, I'll catalog another cluster of critics that are unable or unwilling to permit the perceived contradiction posed by Catch-22's final chapters. To their binary discussion, I supply the instance of Bobby Orr as a personality that defies the standard interpretation of the novel as a binary struggle with Yossarian and also the remainder of his universe.

The Chronology of Catch-22 and ex P.F.C Wintergreen, Close reading reveals that Catch-22 is constructed quite methodically. Each episode takes several abrupt turns, however, in every case, episode links to the episode by the method of a specific associative memory. The narrative associations verge many times toward describing the ugly death by anti-aircraft flak of Yossarian's friend Snowden over Avignon. Taken along, the episodes type a sketch of the lives of the fictional 256th Squadron of the U.S. Army Air Forces throughout the closing stages of World War II. Abundant of the action takes place on the Italian island Pianosa, with many forays into Rome throughout varied leaves from duty, and a few exotic Mediterranean business stops due to Milo Maize Minderbinder's international period of time food syndicate.

Piecing along the temporally disjointed chronology of the novel may be a task suitable a literary detective. Fascinatingly, the conclusions created regarding Heller's chronology shift looking on the important sensibility of the time, and so, predictably, reveal however Genre critics own preconceptions colour their insights.

Jan Solomon revealed a piece that originally appeared in Critique in 1967 that argues Catch-22 employs 'two distinct and reciprocally contradictory chronologies'. Solomon tries to clarify this apparent contradiction as proof of Heller's mastery of wedding absurd content of absurd kind. 'Yossarian,' the critic explains, 'like several alternative anti-heroes of contemporary fiction from Leopold Bloom to Moses Herzog, lives during the world dominated not by the written record however by the psychological'. Solomon monarch reads Yossarian as a theme alternating with his own expertise and therefore the reality of him during a manner appropriates a personality of classic modernist literature.

Solomon's analysing is, but, challenged via Doug Gaukroger in a 1970 article in the same magazine, which exhibits that Solomon inferred an excessive amount of from one in every of Heller's indistinct chronological signs. In line with Gaukroger, Solomon erroneously assumes that after Corporal Snark introduces Yossarian to Milo Minderbinder and says that Milo 'became mess officer whilst you had been in the clinic this final time, Snark is relating to the specific sanatorium visit described in the novel's first chapter. Not anything in this declaration, or in any declaration before or after, could advocate that 'this final time' refers to the opening health centre scene, Gaukroger argues. Solomon's assumption leads him to declare that Snowden's dying over Avignon and his subsequent funeral is impossible chronologically because both should arise after Milo's syndicate starts to flourish. This suggests to me either that Heller made a large blunder in his plotting or that Solomon is responsible for overlooking or misreading some of the events in catch-22, Gaukroger writes.

Despite or maybe as a result of its datedness, this exchange is instructive compared to Brian McHale's handling of an equivalent question on chronology. I exploit McHale throughout my paper to represent a critic agency profitably tries to explain critically the inexplicable nature of Genre, however inevitably creates a brand new taxonomy, that ultimately prevents the persistence of contradiction in terms. There's one mentions of Catch-22 in Genre Fiction, and it revisits an equivalent discussion about Heller's chronology stag twenty years previous by Solomon and Gaukroger:

The presence of the same event at two different points in the sequence leaves the reader hesitating between two alternative reconstructions of the 'true' sequence, in one of which event A precedes event B, while in the other event A follows event B.

A familiar example occurs in Joseph Heller's Catch-22, (1961).

Though it is hard to be certain, given this text's disturbing temporal

indeterminacy, it appears that Snowden's death over Avignon, the crucial event in Yossarian's 'pilgrim's progress,' happens both before and after the Great Big Siege of Bologna (McHale, 108-9).

Juxtaposed to the terms of the discussion on the two earlier critics, McHale's clarification demonstrates, however literary criticism seeks a transparent transmutation to differentiate modernism from Genre. within the cultural and literary context of the late Nineteen Sixties, King claims *Catch-22* for modernism by explaining away its contradictory chronology as mostly 'psychological,' a replacement withstands Flaubert's project of matching type and content, and orientating it with Odysseus and also the throwback Bellow's *Herzog*. Some years later, Gaukroger solidifies his claim concerning the reconcilability of Heller's timeline by invoking Associate in nursing not possible alternative: that Heller created 'a large error in his plots.' For him, what's at stake is whether or not the novel could be a classic modernist text, or rather a modernist text with clumsy errors in plotting.

Nevertheless for McHale, writing within the late 1980s, Heller's doubtless incomprehensible timeline pushes *Catch-22* into postmodern standing. I mean this specifically as written: all that's needed for McHale is that the potential that Snowden's death takes place each before and once the massive beleaguering of Bologna for him to incorporate it as a 'familiar example' of his postmodern poetic devices. For him, Heller could be a postmodern author, and thus unable of constructing a slip of this nature. And this makes his commitment to classify sure techniques as objectively postmodern look over-determined. So as to relinquish my critique some valuable context, I'd first wish to discuss his overall taxonomy for postmodern literature in some detail.

Postmodernist, Fiction for the most part, consists of McHale fastidiously egg laying out his schema of moves from the Genre playbook, and despite the same discuss Snowden's death over Avignon; it'd seem that *Catch-22* fails to obviously demonstrate any such moves. In fact, initially look, it's going to seem that it's Heller United Nations agency falls in need of McHale's plan of sustaining paradoxes. Properly Genre writers, in line with McHale, area unit writers like playwright, Robbe-Grillet, Fuentes, Nabokov, Coover and writer. These writers, not like Heller, produce 'zones' in their fiction, as an example. Zones area unit areas within which, typically through associate degree author's use of juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition, and misattribution, the fictionalized world of the novel contradictorily coexists with an equivalent space's world version outside of the text (McHale, 45). Guy Davenport creates a zone of the sort McHale has in mind in 'The Invention of Photography,' a brief story that describes a town referred to as Toledo, however, alternates with describing Toledo, Ohio, and Toledo, European country (McHale, 46-47). 'In the Zone,' the second major a part of *Gravity's Rainbow* that describes the demilitarized and ontologically complicated territory in the Federal Republic of Germany at the top of the war, is an attributable part of uplifting McHale's device. Zones may bring intertextual worlds into contact: for instance, Gilbert Sorrentino's *Imaginative Quality of Things*, within which he re-appropriates Nabokov's *Lolita* as the character in his own narrative (McHale, 58).

The Cognitive Questions (asked by most artists of the 20th century, Platonic or Aristotelian, till around 1958): 'How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?' The Postcognitive Questions (asked by most artists since then): 'Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?' (McHale 1).

According to McHale's descriptions, *Catch-22* has Associate in nursing epistemic dominant, an attribute that aligns it with modernist fiction for McHale. The queries raised by *Catch-22*, as I even have in brief listed, stay for the most part psychological feature, epistemic queries. Rather appropriately, as Heller was writing it around the year Higgins chooses as a watershed, *Catch-22* places Yossarian at the bounds of the psychological feature queries; frustratingly unable to flee his geographical area or converse with a personality World Health Organization may facilitate, he forced entry post-cognitive queries. He is aware of exactly a way to interpret the globe of that he's a section, and will, therefore, base mostly totally on his own survival. To Higgins' formulation, McHale adds many typical epistemic queries, that he calls 'typical modernist questions': 'What is there to be known? World Health Organization is aware of it? However, do they realize it, and with what degree of certainty? However is information transmitted from one individual to a different and with what degree of reliability?...And so on'.

Again, *Catch-22* aligns itself with the considerations of modernism, in step with McHale's taxonomy. As critical the metaphysics crises precipitated by contact with 'other' worlds, Yossarian's frustration develop as a result of the handfuls of characters of *Catch-22* exists uncomfortably on one immanent world. Nadel expresses this relationship adroitly:

The rhetoric of *Catch22*
does not allow for the breakdown, location,
or relocation of the subject, because normative language does not
correlate to an objective reality but rather shows that objective reality
is created by the sharing of language. Under such circumstances,

insanity is not a personal failure to conform to objective norms but to the demands of an interpretive community (168).

Yossarian is aware of specifically what world he's a locality of, and information this data or this information let alone knowledge of the mental object of these dictating 'the demands of the instructive community' forms the premise of his frustration which the remainder of his instructive community views as psychopathy. The reader shares this data onto Yossarian, then each reader and Yossarian area unit displeased throughout the novel's 1st exchange between him and Clevinger, once Clevinger accuses Yossarian of being crazy for 'calmly' stating that men on either side of the battle lines are attempting to kill him (Heller, 25). I posit that, in adopting McHale's taxonomy, the case that Catch-22's dominant are epistemic is clear; but, should such an assertion disqualify it as postmodern?

Here we discover the philosophical theory tendency inherent to literary criticism; McHale, via Higgins, needs to graph the shift between modernist and Genre inquiries on a linear and progressive mechanical phenomenon. Nonetheless by declarative that metaphysics queries overtake philosophy ones in Genre, McHale, volitionally or otherwise, implies that metaphysics considerations surpass their brethren in relative profundity. And in doing this, he could also be unknowingly mercantilism philosophy considerations short. Catch-22 could also be a completely unique to associate degree philosophy dominant, yet, as I hope to demonstrate, lots of area remains of it for the project of Genre.

To elaborate on this, I address the responses Catch-22 provides with McHale's philosophy considerations. In what ways that will Heller's novel accomplish Genre tasks whereas remaining within the philosophy realm? To answer this question, one naturally searches for the sources of information and data in Catch-22: United Nations agency circulates it, and what info is reliable. One supply turned up by such a probe is ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen. Whether or not it's the sprawling C.I.D. investigation into 'Washington Irving' or the cryptic 'T.S. Eliot' message, info within the world of Catch-22 is subject to the whims of ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen. Yossarian totally understands his power. 'Wintergreen is perhaps the foremost powerful man within the whole theatre of operations,' Yossarian tells the clergyman, matter-of-factly (Heller, 312). As implausible because it could seem, Yossarian's statement has to support; from his 'mail-sorting cubicle at Twenty-seventh Air Force Headquarters,' Wintergreen has the power to feature the last word to no matter communications come upon his desk: he will throw things away, produce nonsensical messages, or reverse the order for transmissions. This ability provides him tremendous power, all of that is on the show once he, a lowly ex-private first-class, uproariously critiques the prose of commissioned military officer Cargill's memoranda as 'too prolix' (Heller 46-7).

However within the method of trailing down the data blocked and disseminated by Wintergreen, what's noteworthy is that ultimately nothing substantial to sight or deduce existed within the initial place. The mysterious 'T.S. Eliot' telephony was merely Wintergreen's retort to a challenge levied by Cargill in one in every of his memos to 'name one writer United Nations agency makes money'; the 'Washington Irving' scandal began with a bored Yossarian attempting to feature selection of the monotony of censoring letters in a military hospital (Heller 45- 16). Most of all, what I'm making an attempt to ascertain here is that the ample area for subversion and play Heller explores while not exhausting any limitations inherent to the philosophy realm of inquiry. In stark distinction between the military efficiency, one may expect supported grand narratives of yank power, the communications between Catch-22 are reversible, disposable, and trivial.

Harkening back to McHale's introduction to the perform of the metaphysics dominant of Genre fiction; I see wherever he may be imposing false limitations on the capabilities of the philosophy dominant. once explaining that although he actually understands that philosophy and metaphysics queries area unit inextricably guaranteed to each other, McHale makes an attempt to form the case that, as a result of discourse is linear, either one or the opposite set of queries should be raised 1st, which set is that the dominant:

Inevitably, since discourse, even a philosopher's discourse, is linear and temporal, ...one cannot say two things at the same time. Literary discourse, in effect, only specifies which set of questions ought to be asked first of a particular text, and delays the asking of the second set of questions, slowing down the process by which epistemological questions entail ontological questions and vice versa (11).

This statement is crucial to my understanding of however McHale's taxonomy makes an attempt the imposition of a dimension upon Catch-22 that the novel, and specifically Wintergreen's role within the novel, resists. Will one extremely not says two things at once? The project of Genre, to use a multiplication of voices in disrupting conclusive, monolithic grand narratives, begs to disagree. When ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen picks up the phone to report to Cargill's slight towards poets, his easy invocation of T.S. Eliot says several factors at once: it responds to a matter, it hints at Cargill's cognitive content of his own role of the dialogue, and since of this cognitive content, it's additionally a threatening non sequitur within the minds of Cargill and General Peckem.

McHale admits that the connection between metaphysics and epistemic queries are not linear and unofficial, however bi-directional and reversible, however maintains that, because of the character of literary discourse, and as developed by the author, text dictates the order of issues for the reader. Against this, the distinction between however Gaukroger interprets Snowden's death within the chronology of *Catch-22* in 1970 and the way McHale interprets it in 1987 shows that a minimum of in some cases, ultimately the reader determines the order of issues that spring in and guide interpretation. This can be a lesson that McHale might have learned from ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen and very the complete novel, as a result of the restraints McHale places on literary discourse, although actually rational, are associated with the unofficial relationship of cause to result that *Catch-22* mocks unrelentingly. Alan Nadel writes:

The absence of a predetermined direction to that flow makes any concept of causality—and hence culpability—impossible.... The vital flow in the novel... is language. Thus ex-Pfc. Wintergreen runs the army because, having access to a switchboard and a mimeograph machine, he not only controls but generates, redirects, and critiques language (177).

Wintergreen's influence over Army communications shows that the advanced network of text, critic, and reader mix to dictate what's necessary that text, and this relationship is fluid and volatile.

Putting Nadel's reading into opposition to the restrictive premise of McHale's schema provides a chance to attach back to previous reflections on the character of the definition of postmodern literature. McHale focuses totally on what Genre will that's new and neglects, however, it extends previous to come, limiting the inclusiveness of his definition. My insistence on postmodernism's debt to past eras isn't original or undeveloped by others. In their study of the role of memory in post-war literature, Peter Thomas Middleton and Tim Woods provide a short interpretation of French thinker Paul Ricoeur's important *Time and Narrative*. 'One implication of Ricoeur's argument,' they write, 'is that postmodern fiction may be a continuation of modernism and realism by different means' (69). Within the case of *Catch-22*, it's apparent that the opposite suggest that doesn't seem to be essentially, as we'd most likely assume reading Thomas Middleton and Woods' comment, the work of the author, however, can also embrace the work of the critic.

2. CONCLUSION:

The task of affirming a novel's categorization as postmodernist is clearly rife with pitfalls; any set of criteria guiding such a task will ultimately be established to incorporating to interpret in position binaries selected consistent with the critic's own expectations. McHale's approach is affordable and productive, however, should be browsing through the understanding that no approach is often thought-about definitive; to be definitive would be to run counter to the larger spirit of the genre. Therefore, allow us to still open areas within the discourse on the genre that square measure inevitably closed owing to the character of criticism. Here, the quality of Lyotard's most general proclamation of genre becomes apparent. At the conclusion of his essay 'Answering the Question: what's Postmodernism?' Lyotard writes, 'Let the United States of America wages a war on totality' (46).

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