A comparative analysis of the astounding war novel, Catch-22 and the living, legend-like world novel - The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn - is attempted here, in this chapter. Both the novels are highly hilarious, and reeling with anger with the world around. Both satirize the world in a comic stance. It is nothing new to say that Huckleberry Finn, or rather Mark Twain shadow the later novels of identity crisis and black humor.

The novel explores the clash between morality or social conscience and sense making or the individual’s conscience. Huck resents the kind widow who tried to civilize him. He finds no sense in the Christianity that is practised, much commended and appreciated. He sees no meaning, no sense in the family feuds of the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons though all the members of those families live for and die for the causes of their feuds - prestige, honour, valour, much
esteemed virtues in the society. He feels that all
those cherished poems of the young girl of the Granger-
fords are beautiful but meaningless. He, in spite of
his veneration for Tom, cannot stand him or anyone like
Tom for long. He, being a misfit in the society "lights
out for territory" \(^1\) (Huckleberry Finn, p.445). This
clash within his conscience to do what he feels as
human and to do what is acceptable to society, as
earlier said, this clash between individual conscience
and social conscience is heightened when he decides to
save the run away nigger Jim. Here the novel gets
loaded with, charged with burning issues, getting a new
depth, a new colour altogether. The immature, not so
educated young lad sheds himself from being picaresque,
and mythological into a symbolic hero, becoming more
than an existential "Sisyphus" \(^2\). Huck emerges out as a
hero, but only temporarily as he has to get back to the
society.

Heller's hero John Yossarian is also at cudgels
with the society. He finds no sense in war in
sacrificing for the mother country, in all the apparently normal notions like love, honesty, justice, reward, glory and in innocence being praised or hypocrisy, selfishness being punished. His contention is why should an individual be deprived of his birth right to live as he likes? Why is he forced to live as per society’s dictat?. Why should only some die in the name of country, honour, when others live undisturbed?. Failing to find any sensible answer, he rebels. He protests. He tries to preserve his sanity by not succumbing to the insane world where everything meaningless is meaningful, where wrong is right. Pretending to be sick, tampering with letters he censors with a signature of a pseudo name - Washington. Irving or Irving Washington, winning the enemy city by wiping it off from the map, pretending to see everything twice, going naked for parade, sitting naked on the trees - are all his ingenious ways of protesting against the callous, self-promoting bureaucracy. He succeeds in not going to war again. He comes back to the civic life, like Huck, as a failure, as he was sent
home only after complying to the wishes of his superiors ie. to support them.

At some stage in the novel both the heroes become Christ figures, saviours. Huck is the saviour of Jim on the raft, Yossarian is a saviour of other equally dismayed soldiers who are ready to follow him if he succeeds. Both got supporters though ineffective. Both come back to society, Huck after adventurous journey, Yossarian after his symbolic journey - hospital flights, the trip to eternal city. They come back with awareness that society cannot be shunned or shed off for long. Huck accepts to be a second fiddle to Tom - the typical society gentleman, Yossarian accepts helplessly to be a ploy of his officers, to be one with them whom he fought against so far.

Thus far they resemble. But no further. Catch-22 being a black humor novel shows Yossarian helpless, sure to lose the battle before beginning it. His future is as bleak (or even more) as the present.
Society is an army itself and wherever he goes he is tyrannized by it. No protest is of any use. For him the future is sealed. But Huck comes with his rougish hope that he can run away from this stupid society when he feels like. There is the kind river to welcome him and the comforting raft to ferry him away from the engulfing society. Civilization comes and goes without hindering too much his sail on the ruddy waters.

Both are highly humorous but have different modes of humour. Mark Twain's forte is exaggeration and understatements whereas Heller's is throwing the readers off balance by unexpected statements like oxymoron, misjoinder of thought and tone, choiceless choices. Twain's humour retains the vigour, the freshness and life giving hope in spite of all the rage and contempt; but Heller's baffles and horrifies us. No doubt both laugh away the misery. To conceal the rage, both satirize, but Twain with great optimism, Heller with cynicism. They never attempt to reform the society. The difference is in their acceptance. Twain
accepts with faith, with love, whereas Heller accepts with resignation. Twain believes that the damned human race is still to be loved, still to be given a change but Heller believes that it is doomed.

The issues raised in the novels are more than what they could manage but Heller failed more miserably, may be because of the sickening despair. The last chapters in both the novels are disappointing. Neither Huck, nor Yossarian can be kept away from the society all the time as the novels are not escapist novels. But Tom’s elaborate arrangements along with Huck to free the already freed nigger are stretching too far, whereas the last few pages of *Catch-22* give the feeling of a hurried ending.

The surfacial levity, seemingly simple, apparent carelessness of both novels beguile the readers. Both are conscientious writers, taking great care and pain regarding structure, plot and thematic treatment. The purpose is to expose, bare open the gaping wound - the
naked truth of our existence. Heller baffles, shocks the readers. He shatters our cocoon comfort. He is part of the society he tries to attack. He too is a contributor to the menace around. But Mark Twain is the sly observer, a commentator and not a participant. He is far from or above the common lot and he totally identified himself with his hero Huck. He makes us feel more human than what we are and gives us love as a potent solution to these tormenting evils of society. He made his novel a novel of possibility.

A probing analytical reading of the novel 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' may help us to understand why it is an all reaching world classic against which 'Catch-22', another major novel of this era can be judged. Tom Quirk feels that in 'Huckleberry Finn' 'lifeline and the line of personal endeavour met and Twain hit the 'home pasture' and 'something' within him guided him whenever he lost his way.'³ Fact and experience are made memorable in this masterpiece. No other novel shows us so beautifully how Twain could
come out of his dilemma and solve his problems so passionately. Artistic development, and maturity are at their zenith; and his genius 'flowed into it' and "he grasped the distinction between fact and fiction". His adherence to the reality of his characters and reality of his milieu and at the same time resistance to that reality make the novel charming. This clash saves the novel from being too personal or provincial. Twain's personal experience is given a fictitious form, and his experience helped him to invent new methods, new techniques, as it resisted the old and the used. He was discovering new meanings as he went along with his narration. The greatness is in matching beautifully fiction with reality than in preferring reality to narration. The greater this ability the more is the pleasure. The reversed relation between reality and narration, the technique which makes the narration to forewarn events in the novel generate the aesthetic of the novel. This coincidence helps to symbolize Huck's adventures away from the society. Huck's pre-occupation with death foretells the death of
the doctor in the graveyard, Jim's prophecy of Huck being sick and getting hurt ushers in real problems to Huck. Huck's talk about French kings predicts the advent of Duke and Daphne. Huck's efforts to free Jim foretells Jim's freedom from slavery - are such coincidences of narration of fiction and reality. The resistance to reality is done through humor. The novel throws a light as said in the beginning of this chapter, on the clash between morality and conscience, a clash with the world which is too much, too tyrannical and the individual who wants to be free of any correction. Huck's resentment manifests an individual's trials to be free of interfering society whether good or bad. Twain could most successfully vent his rejection of constraint, his frustration and anger by identifying himself with Huck. Through him he is hurtfully ironic about sentimentality, unwanted violence, meaningless values, sham, gullibility in this world, and has shown contempt for common man and woman. As the novel develops, Jim, Colonel Sherburn, the country squire become the agents of irony.
This novel of creative vision, beautiful affirmation, stops being merely satiric or ironic or even humorous as it transcends these narrow human origins. It is a passionate drama of emotional clashes endorsing nobility of human race and also condemning the meanness of it. The story gets a newer meaning with every re-reading of it. It ceases to be mere realistic novel and becomes an epic poem, an allegory and a folklore. The hero is a traditional hero whose heroism is embedded in mythology, folklore, and legend. He is not bound by time or by social barriers like colour, sex, race, authority or death. The conflict is between Huck the timeless picaresque hero and the time bound world at large. His heroism is genuine. Yet he is no supernatural hero. He has a direct relation with divinity as he is the child of nature. He looks at every thing with interest, wonder, and for him there is no difference between a rascal and a noble man, prince and pauper, a cheat or an honest man. He too is equally cunning, deceitful, only to pay them in the same
coin. He is apt and unbiased in his assessment of others. This worldly realistic approach gives the realistic, local touch to him. Huck's world is different from the real world, and his truth is different from that of the world. His truth shows the lie of appearance and the gaping gap between appearance and reality. His heroism is in realizing this.

The novel can be called an epic. The epic qualities are a giant hero, vast scope, upholding heroic virtues, shaping the destiny of nation. Life itself is the scope of the novel as it studies various angles of life. Twain raises such multiple issues of life which however American they may be, they are still universal. Huck's adventures are all confrontations of evil and good, nobility and baseness. The clash is on physical, moral and spiritual levels, Huck does not fight with a sword like the epic hero but his fight is none the less real. He overcomes evil from within as well as from without. His tormenting struggle with his conscience and yielding to his right conscience though
losing to the world, gives that epic quality to the novel. Yet it is not religious as Twain’s religion or any conscientious individual’s religion rightly differs from the practical one.

The geographical scope of the novel is copious. It covers life on the great banks of the river that runs through half the nation. And it engulfs the various sections of the society, gathering rich and the poor, mighty and low, innocent and cunning. Its a study of tranquil life on the waters as well as riotous mob on the shores. It also ranges from great humour to cheap farce, highly emotional drama to ridiculous sentiments.

True to its epic quality the novel describes the country in print. Various typical American characteristics are touched here. Huck is a typical American who is fond of travelling. Tourism was, and is a prominent feature of America. Like all the Americans Huck has a yearning to be away from the civilized evil
society, to be rapped in the mother nature. He, like
millions, could not stand the savage civility of his
country. The novel raises the essential American issue
- issue of colour, the Negro. It discusses the Negro as
seen by the world - naive, ignorant, lying, dull
headed, and the negro with his real self clever,
loving, sagacious and the opposite of all that a negro
is supposed to be, Jim in the beginning is sketched as
a typical negro - superstitious, exaggerating,
subservient. As the novel proceeds Jim develops into a
grown up individual as human as his white counterpart,
some times even better. He is loving, caring
sensitive, and perceptive. He is a guiding figure, a
rock of support to Huck. Their relationship may not
represent the real America but it voices the hidden
desire in the conscience of troubled America. Twain
himself was battling with this paradoxical awareness of
humanness in the negro, a willingness to accept him yet
not ready to treat him on equal footing.
Like all the epic heroes Huck is full of virtues. Being a true American he is practical - able to look right into the face of lies, deception, selfishness, cruelty and able to come out of them victoriously, unaffected. Huck, like his creator Twain, like all Americans, is "a shrewd, ready, practical, irreverent, humorous, uncultivated man, who is apt to jeer at art and civilization of Europe, but for whom you have nevertheless, a large affection and high respect partly because he has to a striking degree such excellent qualities as essential seriousness of character, self-reliance, courage, kindness, honesty, simplicity of heart, the domestic virtues." He knows how to go about with fellow human beings as well as with mother nature. Huck has the gift of the gab. He is never at loss for words and he comes out of every tight situation only through smooth lies. He mollifies his father with lies and cunningly escapes from him. He fools the lady in the village pretending to be a son of wretched farmer. He successfully drives away the oncoming boats inventing dire sickness and he fools
thoroughly Tom’s aunt at Philips farm. Huck has heroic courage, and faith. His mate Jim and some others do not lag behind. Jim stands for loyalty, love and strength. Other characters like warring families Grangerfords and Shepherdsons, Colonel Sherburn, show heroic courage and nobility. The nieces of deceased uncle Peter, his doctor friend, Tom’s aunt and uncle stand for kindness, nobility.

He gets the stature of an epic hero when he is torn between his conscience and his duty. He is afraid that by saving Jim much against the norms of society he may be enraging God too along with the society. He may land in hell. But his conscience tells him that Jim is worth saving in spite of the rage of God. After all he cannot be so heartless so as to betray poor Jim. He decides to save him whatever may be the consequence. The wrong decision lightens his heart. Huck rises to the occasion many a time risking his own self just to save others whom he knows to be innocent and underserving of such a misery. He helps the young girl
of Grangerfords by bringing the message from her lover fully aware of the dire consequences. He does not mind the feud as long as he can be of service to the young lady who is to be happily united with her lover from the rival family. He steals the gold from the Duke and Daphne to save the innocent nieces of deceased Peter. He takes the trouble of sending help to the captive in the deserted boat. He feels for the man left dead on Walter Scot knowing that he was a murderer. 'Now was the first time that I begun to worry about the men - I reckon I hadn't had the time to before. I began to think how dreadful it was even for murderers to be in such fix. I says to myself there ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself, yet and then how would I like it?' This humanity endears him and his creator to us. He is heroic not because he fights, he hardly fights, but he is always guided by true conscience. He does what he believes in. He is not deterred by any danger. All this he achieves through cunning and lies; by always doing wrong. This never troubles his conscience as he is sure of ultimate good
and right. The battle is against deception, selfishness, cunningness to save the innocent, simple sincere people. And he succeeds. How he succeeds does not matter as long as he succeeds. This is where he becomes a hero - an epic hero; but an "American version of Homeric figure and in that wild youthful impossible Odyssey the record of his voyage on a frail raft down the strong Mississippi - assumes in a manner epic proportions".

Not only Huck but even Jim reaches this state of nobility and dignity. Jim on the raft is totally different from Jim as Miss Watson's servant. The ignorant, silly servant, superstitious sub-human negro assumes a different role, attains a different stature on the raft. He is very much at ease on the raft, and in the lap of nature becomes a child of nature. He observes and could perceive nature and often can foretell her moods. He becomes not mere companion but a protector, caretaker and even a counsellor to Huck. He does not reveal that Huck's pap is dead as his heart
melts for poor Huck and from then onwards he becomes a father figure to the hero. When Huck fools him into believing that the separation due to storm was only his dream, his response "what do dey stan for? I's sgwyne to tell you ... I could a got down on my knees en kiss yo foot I's so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin 'bout wuz how you could make fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash, en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed" puts Huck to shame. From then onwards Huck changes his stance vis-a-vis the nigger Jim who is no more a stupid nigger. Jim is revealed as a normal human being when he cries about the deceased deaf daughter and longs to meet his family. Twain reaches the heights of nobility when he paints a negro as human as anyone in spite of the social stigma on him.

It is a novel of "education" in which life is dramatised. The picaresque hero, the romantic outcast runs away from the life of artificialities to the real life of unrestrained, unchartered freedom. Huck learns
more about the world outside when he is happily away on
the raft. He pays cunningness, deception, selfishness,
meanness, nobility, friendship, love, in the same coin.
Either on Jackson Island or on the raft with Jim, he is
rapped in love and real belongingness. Though a
runaway nigger, Jim stands there as a father figure
exuberant with real warmth of love. The reunion with
Jim after the storm makes him realize that nobility or
meanness do not lie in colour or riches or race. He
enjoys warmth of hospitality and love even from
strangers. He realizes that the world is more than
half full of rascals and scoundrels, and yet there is
still place for the kind friendly generous lot who make
the earth worth living in. He is moved by nobility,
innocence just as he is appalled by baseness and
deception. The adventurous journey is a journey into
life and learning of life. Eventually he traverses
forth from boyhood to youth, the crucial phase in any
one's life. With this learning he is so matured that
he never hopes to reform the society but only to bear
it. His journey takes him back to society and he is
also aware of possibilities of escape that lessens the brunt of life.

He also learns and realizes the real nature. Nature, for him is not simply romantic but more than that. No doubt, mother nature is beautiful but underneath it is monstrous too. There is a hidden danger and the surfacial felicity is mortally dubious. The Mississippi on which he drifts, is turbulent and every ripple has its snag. He is quite aware of the rottenness of the great river. It is a "treacherous home for community of saints on a raft"^{10}. He learns that nature rather universe decides the fate of man. The struggle for freedom does not succeed and the escape is only temporary. His adventures, his confrontation with various people and social milieu make him aware of a society of complex social strata, slave holding, cultured but shiftless society of south. A wide variety of southern life is met with and thus he is socially initiated. This is where he matures into an adult, which is a profound, permanent change in him.
He becomes acutely aware of society and his imaginative perception of society is both deep and wide. This, later matures into moral imagination which guides him in his stand with Jim. Huck understands the world around with peculiar easiness and he is good at adapting to it, though at heart he never likes it. He understands that he is controlled by aristocracy - Judge Thatcher, the widow, Grangerfords, all well born, noble but also full of pride, greed and inhumanity. Slavery is another dominating, dictating element. Huck fails to understand much of its ideology but understands nobility. He learns about Christianity in reality as opposed to that in practice. He understands the cruel inhumanity that is romanticised and ostentatious show of sentimentality that happily allows slavery. Huck realizes that in society as on the raft "it would have been a miserable business to have any unfriendliness on the raft, for what you want, above all things, on a raft is for everybody to be satisfied and feel right and kind towards the others". And such a thing not being possible he always plans a
retreat from it. Through his father he learns to cope with this world, tolerating and appeasing; and the shrewd way of living is by allowing others to have their way as long as it doesn't affect one's own life. With this motto he lived with his father till it becomes too dangerous for him and then he outwits his pap. He deserts him at the first opportunity. His rich experiences educate him, initiate him giving him a deeper insight into nature as well as human nature. He realizes the invading tyrannical society and also the limitations of his private world. He can be a victor, a hero only for a while. Society is always there looming large before him, to which he has to bow down. That's why in the last pages, which is a sore point for critics he happily becomes subservient to Tom once again. He loses his hard earned initiation the moment he enters uncle Philip's farm as Tom Sawyer. What he innocently observes is beyond his comprehension and so he lamely yields to Tom and society.
The novel celebrates the triumph of courage, courage to stand for what one believes, courage to fight against and shape one's own destiny, courage to fight for one's freedom. Huck tries to thwart his pap's trials to seize money by giving up all his money to Judge Thatcher may be foolish for adults, but a bold practical attempt for a boy of thirteen. He does not like to be victimized by his father and he wants to live a life of his own - hence his ingenious plan of escape from his father, keeping him and the whole village in belief of his death. On the raft, quite free from the society he still is unsafe. He, with Jim is highly vulnerable. They are more helpless as outcasts and they have precarious freedom. Moreover he is too young to fight against and Jim is too meek due to his race. Society always intrudes endangering their lives, at least shattering their hopes, and nature is none the less cruel. The river beguiles, storms arise, and the fragile raft is either broken or lost. They are left to the mercy of nature and the society. Huck is forced to be subservient even on the raft to rogues
and thieves. His courage is in not losing hope ever, not leaving any without at least trying for it. He goes out of his way, jeopardizes his life to help the needy. The innocent are always helped by him. This mettle to confront any situation, this natural love and courage to fight for right make him a great boy hero, affirming the life, however unworthy the living ones are.

The "divine amateur" enriched the world literature with this one novel, which is a novel of truth, the truth being that the individual cannot be isolated from the society for long. True freedom is not to be found in nature. Huck realizes what is true friendship on the raft which cannot be found in the society where selfishness dominates, where humanity can be protected only by hiding from it, and the hiding results in isolation. But true isolation is nightmarish and Huck (one) needs people. Huck, rather any sensitive individual cannot be against society but can be only against brutal civilization. Even on the
raft true friendship is not possible to full extent. The context makes it impossible. Jim being a slave cannot be totally open to Huck, cannot trust Huck. Huck can never treat Jim as an equal though he too is a run away from the society. Slavery thus endangers even the new community. The truth is that one cannot be totally free of self-interest. A sensitive human being can only experience the clash between his interest and the others' interest. This experience of clash, the trial, however futile it may be, to support the right in the clash makes one heroic. Such awareness, such heroic efforts would definitely pave way to a new community, a better community. The final truth of the novel is that Huck and Jim can never be again as they were on the raft; Jim, though a freed nigger is still a nigger only. Neither Huck is anything better than his earlier self. He is once again only a companion to Tom but not on the same footing.

The truth is that society sanctions every evil in the name of sentimentality, violence and war in the
name of honour, robbing, begging in the name of religion, dying in the name of chivalry. Truth is oppression sanctioned by the right, and due to all this man meets another only as an enemy. Thus life is totally disordered, oppressive and only interest in self sanctifies every deed. Life can never be blessed with true love, concern or kindness. Even the river and raft do not guarantee such a life. Society is full of fraud and fraud is to be condemned more than brutal murder, gruesome violence as it shatters the very faith in humanity. It stands in the way of a real community (like that of Huck and Jim) and it never recognizes the victim's humanity.

Real feeling enables one to see corruption due to self interest and a person who has this real feeling is isolated inevitably. True understanding is possible through real feeling, and man may become a real human being. Jim attains this humanity when he grieves for his daughter who is dead because of his callous
brutality. Huck is real as he decides to save Jim freely out of his will not because of any other motive. Thus the novel is a search for a real human community. The novel ends with a truth ringing in our minds forever that real community is not a certainty. Huck's journey will not be successful but the fight must go on, the struggle should be kept up, in spite of all oddities, in spite of all the failures. Humanity is not possible but it is worth trying for it. Limitations are more than possibilities.

The novel is allegorical. It transforms from physical into metaphysical and to spiritual. Reality is visualized while describing the world at large. The spiritual realization is achieved through a journey. The novel becomes an allegory as Huck or Twain realizes, learns new meanings. The old allegorical form is given a fresh breath as he realized the spiritual value of the physical objects and conflicts. Huck's journey, a simple adventure of an innocent boy acquires symbolic status and becomes a journey of the
soul. His journey suggests a freedom, may be temporary, of spirit and soul. Huck and Jim are free, for a while from binding society as well as from the body. They experience the bliss of liberation. The journey is allegorical as the truth dawns on both of them. No matter however hard we may try, we cannot be totally away from the physical world and at one stage or the other it encroaches into the spiritual world. Life is an endless tussel between physical and spiritual. And the real happiness lies in discovering, realizing who you are. Various roles Huck plays on the raft and the shore can be symbols of different selves in a person.

He realizes that man's fate is decided by mother nature and one cannot escape the society how ever evil it may be. It becomes a symbol of failure. It represents a universe which decides the fate of the inmates, making quest for freedom impossible. This 'strong brown god' is a symbol of escape from civilization as well as preordained and predetermined
lives of human beings. It shows that their fate is sealed. It stands for freedom that is all elusive. Jim is deterred from reaching Cairo, his land of freedom because of fogs and storms on the river. Though away from the civilization, the raft is always invaded by its representatives and thus raft becomes the society. Huck's ethics to live on raft can as well be applied for the society.

This world classic falls short in a few aspects. The boy is of no age and his emotions transcend the limits pertaining to his age, thus showing him sometimes quite as a child, sometimes quite as old. Boyhood is more a fantasy and Mark Twain is partial only to certain aspects of the boyhood. He carefully omits any reference to sex. Never does he try to describe the boy's curiosity or anxiety regarding it. The village is idyllic, an utopian and Mark Twain wrote about it through his nostalgia. The structure is loosely knit, and there is anchronism. The last chapters tend to be ridiculously farcical and
disappointing yes, there are all these deviations in the novel. But as T.S. Eliot said the novel can end in no other way, and reasons for such an end are already discussed. It is a novel and not a historical or chronological record. Twain need not touch those which he purposely ignored. He wanted to write only about a boy and not a man, and not all the various angles of life or various issues of his age. It being a fiction it has got to be romantic, it has got to be idyllic. The clever omissions make the book charming, an all time world novel. He, like Shakespeare (a much criticised, much admired dramatist) is a humorist who "plunged deep into the deep sad things of life; and so in a different way (but in a way that has more than once brought tears to my eyes) has Mark Twain. But after all it is not because of any resemblance to anything that was ever before written, that Mark Twain's books strike so deep, it's rather because they have brought something really new into our literature. New, yet old as Adam and Eve and apple. And this achievement, the achievement of putting something into
literature that was not there before, is I should think the most that any writer ever hope to do."14.

Catch-22, Heller's major novel of war can stand in comparison with Huckleberry Finn, at least in certain aspects. It may not reach the great heights of its forerunner, but still it is of its own class. This major black humor fiction recalls many earlier writers. "Frederic R. Karl commenting on Catch-22, says, "trailing recollections of Joyce, Nathaniel West, and early "funny" Celine, speaks solidly to those who are disaffected, discontented and disaffiliated and yet who want to react to life positively."15. Like any great novel it appeals to readers of all levels and strata in the society as they face the tyrannical, absurd, ridiculous world exactly like that of Catch-22, and the novel shows a way out, may be a temporary one, but definitely a positive way out of this chaos. It's success lies in speaking of these neurotic individuals who are baffled by the intricate complications. They are laughed at by the very society they want to embrace
with love and belief. It lays bare open the shallowness of such ideals as patriotism, honesty, honour, sacrifice. It preaches a moral - the individual has every right to preserve his life as his life is supreme. The real democracy, the true Christianity lie in accepting this individual's birth right to exist, to live happily after discharging his duty as a man in the society. Nothing is worth his sacrifice.

The success of this founding text of 60's is in its originality. No other writer before him engages the reader with a journey into hell. It is a passionate rendering of a nightmare. It portrays the frustrations, the suffering of an individual in war time. But the individual becomes universal, and the war becomes a permanent war. It talks not about military world but about the frustration that results when the individual contemplates about himself. "It is the other death - with out war - where one dies by a failure of nerve, which opens the bloodiest vents of
Hell. And that is a novel none of us yet come back alive to write", says Mailer. And this is what Heller's Catch-22 tries to do if not totally at least to a great extent. It talks about the constant war that the individual is engaged in and which ends when he is not there to fight. It talks about the death that hangs around.

Its originality lies in the story that doesn't move. It does not give the hero a (and all the other characters too) a chance to escape. He is trapped. He is a soldier to fight not as one in the army but to fight all alone, individually, being fully aware that his will be a failure ultimately. This is the constant war that today's man is fighting; escape being always elusive for the first time war is symbolized, and fear of war is given a literary expression. Baffling Catch-22 is now an established symbol of war, a symbol of willing surrender of individuals. "Catch-22 is read in this way as a new kind of satire, one whose elaborate fabrications communicate a profound national angst".17
The angst lies in mal-administration, in soldiers being dominated by selfish, senseless, cowardly officers. The angst is in ruthless but systematic machanization of men. The angst is in those officers who are always guided by their self-advancement and this angst, for the first time is presented in an all concealing laughter. Its originality is in its ridiculing of all accepted conventions. It parodies previous modes of war novels. It has great flexibility, and it never observes any rules laid previously. Thus the reader is baffled and he is always for surprises as nothing in the novel "proceeds in the accepted, familiar fashion. It is hysterically hiarious and it is a novel ' of education or "Buildungs roman". Its originality is due to its uniqueness which emerges from the various minor incidents that support the main theme, giving the novel a form and semblance of absurd creation.

This ambitious novel of Heller raises many fundamental questions. Apparently a war novel, it doesn’t talk about war either Vietnam or World War II. Heller himself said that he never intended to oppose
the war. He depicts the war of an individual with the milieu, the military becomes the society itself - an all pervading, autocratic society. And the war goes on between the individual and the society, as Heller and other novelists believe that "Life resists any impositions of order because its realities are multiple."¹⁹ Most often this war is due to alienation and due to a struggle for identity. Alienation that transcends all the other accustomed alienation like religious, social or sexual. The alienation is from emotions, and from reasons. Along with this Heller tries to focus his attention on the writer or artist himself and tries to redefine literature as he does not believe in accepted role of literature. In such strange war novel he raises those ever present questions, "Catch-22 raises pithy questions of philosophical import: in war time why do some live and others die? What system is it that dispenses, rewards and punishments in the World? If God is good, Omnipotent, why is there pain in His universe?"²⁰ Yossarian, the hero fails to understand why only some
of the men are made to sacrifice while others enjoy. What right does the army or nation have on the lives of the soldiers? How sensible is it to make only one section of the country to die in the name of honour, reputation, liberation? Why can’t they be discharged from the army as they have completed their mission and enlist other citizens who were away from the battle so far? Isn’t an individual more important than society? And he protests. He protests and tries to assert himself in a number of ways like pretending to be sick, like seeing every thing twice, going nude, climbing the tree tops and refusing to come down etc. Heller with such questions makes it existential as he leads to the question of very existence of the individual.

Yossarian repudiates religion. His discussion with the lieutenant’s wife sums up his ideas. Yossarian negates the idea that God is kind. Man should be thankful for all His blessings. Yossarian says that God was never serious when he was creating man. He was playful and he was experimenting. He is cruel and
eccentric. If not He would not have made man to suffer from so many ailments, and poverty. His justice is queer. He doesn’t have any love for the world he created. He echoes Mark Twain in The Mysterious Stranger.

Heller does not stop at this. He goes further, beyond these elementary questions. Like other novelists of the absurd he questions the assumptions like reality, realistic characterization, and the very literature itself and also the definition of the individual. Heller’s contention is that reality cannot be defined, forget about being accepted, as there is not one single reality. Realities are many. Neither realistic characterization nor life like characterization is possible. Man is always elusive and his nature is beyond any definition or label. He is a complicated creature that does not stand for any logic or reasoning. He is disoriented and disjointed. He lost that harmony with universe and universe itself is in disharmony. The tragedy is not that man and
universe are out of joint but man is too insignificant, too helpless and too weak. Yossarian is not the only one who is trapped helplessly. Doc Daneeka is another one, who was enlisted as a dead man though he is very much alive. Even his wife does not accept that he is living. Major Major Major Major Major is another such miserable character who is hated and shunned by others for no fault of him. Clevenger and Chaplain are convicted for no lapse on their side. The novel shows that almost all characters, and likewise all the humanbeings are pitted against mighty forces helplessly. Their’s is 'promethean' existence.

This "modern war classic"\textsuperscript{21} defies any classification. It is a novel of absurd as Heller uses all those devices and views of other novelists of absurd - John Barth, Phyncheon, He is intensely experimental. There is a free, easy interchange of styles, conventions in his novel \textit{Catch-22}, he satirises but his mode and position of satire go on changing. He combines the traditional satire with neo
satire. The neo-satire modes are nightmares, "dejavu" visions, mystical projections, and flashbacks. The hospital with all those efficient doctors and nurses of no use, Milo the Minder Binder with schemes of profit for syndicate, Nately's whore chasing Yossarian, the scene where Yossarian acts as the dying son of those Italian parents are deja vu visions. Orr’s description of his apple cheeks, Major Major Major Major’s part are hilarious flashbacks, soldier in white, Yossarian sitting on the tree, black cat of Hungry Joe are some of the mystical projections. The traditional satire being Yossarian getting promoted for his mistake by his selfish, immoral higher ups. Satire lies in the very set up where abnormal, occult-like life, foolishness and selfishness, and all the negative qualities are rewarded. The very rule Catch-22 is another traditional satire that can be called Swiftian but lacks traditional faith.

Irony, farce, parody, and burlesque help Heller to use all traditional devices in a new fashion. These
new modes while giving a fresh breath to language, characterization, identity, ridicule all the previous ideas, works. This turns Heller into an absurd writer as he shares the belief of other novelists of the absurd i.e. man has become a joke. Life cannot be defined or reformed. Hence the only way out is to laugh, though the laughter is more tragic than tragedy. The comedy that results out of these new modes is grotesque matching the grotesque world around. It helps Heller to convey the picture of the break down, the disorganization of society to the readers. Hierarchy, bureaucracy, social norm and trade are ridiculed through parody and burlesque. Major Major's instructions to his subordinate (p.129), the whole scene of Clevenger being court-martialled (99 to 106), General Peckmen's instruction to Scheisskopf to pass the work given to him to others which is 'delegation of responsibility' (p.406) burlesque the hierarchical army where rules are followed verbatim stupidly caring least for success or achievement. Bureaucracy is ridiculed in those scenes where the officers promote
Yossarian for his failure as the officers are well versed with rules without getting the sense of them. Two of the officers General Peckham, Preedle, are only worried about publicity through press, and enjoy their fine flare for giving speeches. Social norms are made fun off when Peckham asks the subordinate to write letters of condolence to all those bereaved families not bothering about whom they address or whom they condole about, and Dock Daneeka’s wife’s acceptance of her husband’s death though he is alive; Yossarian pretending to be on his death bed posing as somebody’s son (pp.234 to 238). The very idea of business, profits is made fun of when Milo explains his schemes (pp.323-337).

Irony can be seen in the very fact that the bombardiers are under the officers who follow rules only to lead them to death and destruction and not for safe guarding or protecting either the soldiers lives or the nation. They are all for rules however insensible they may be. Major Major’s dispensing off
the correspondence just by putting his signature (sometimes not even his) and receiving it again after a period of time with every officer's signature becoming bulky meanwhile only to be sent again with one more of his signature, ridicules the red tapism through irony. Irony lies in the fact that Major's father is rewarded for producing nothing, and in Yossarian at last being sent home but with one condition that he has to be a supporter of his higher-ups. Irony is in argument between Nately and the old man about America's propriety in promoting the war. Irony lies in Major Major's acceptance that how can he say that Yossarian is the only sane man around inspite of knowing him to be so. It is in Milo being always successful who is mad like the rest of the world and it is in Yossarian's miserable failure in spite of being sane and sensible. Irony is in the very essence of Catch-22 which is summed up by the old woman, "Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we cannot stop them from doing" (Catch-22, p.514). And Irony is in Yossarian getting arrested for being in Rome without a passport instead
of Arfy for raping. The novel is ironical upto the hilt resulting in laughter.

Even the plot and time are given a new treatment. Critics complained that it isn't a well constructed novel. But critics like Jan Solomon, Burhaas took the pains to prove that the book is well-structured and carefully planned, but it is made to appear chaotic. Even the writer himself asserted in many interviews that it is meticulously constructed book. The time scheme of the book is also peculiar. "The unorthodox treatment of time in Catch-22 is both parallel to, and prepares the reader for the unorthodox treatment of the subject matter. It is only fitting that a novel which deals with an apparently absurd and confused world should be written in an apparently absurd and confused style". The novel gives us the feeling that it does not progress like a traditional novel. Incidents are never complete at one time or section in the novel. They recur. Soldier in white, Yossarian's request to get grounded, hospital, Snowden's death, Nately's whore
are some such examples of this peculiar scheme. This repetition or this 'Dejavu' creates the much desired confusion by the writer. But a closer look reveals that these repetitions give more and more information and give the novel a more serious tone as they recur. Thus the novel gets a well-thought of structure. Again Heller tries to give two types of progress as per time: one is circular (Yossarian's experiences) another is linear. (Milo's trade schemes). All this helps Heller to develop these characters and change the tone of the novel. This freestyle, this free mingling helps him to confuse and disorient the readers and to shock them and baffle, only to impress the shocking realities of this absurd world. Humor surfaces underneath which there is gradual development and the artistic appraisal of the world around "... what was stylistic has become structural; what was comic in the early parts of the novel has taken on a darker hue. The dialectic on God, death and cosmic injustice that fills the chapters raises the level of the discourse from the merely satirical to the philosophical."25. There is
fictionality relating structure of the novel and also regarding the names and experiences of the characters which is also fantasy as Heller, like other modern writers believed that fantasy is the right weapon to question reality. It questions views of reality and tries to create a world of consciousness. A new reality is produced. The reality may be "open-ended", provisional, characterized by mistrust of solutions, denouncements and competitions, by self-consciousness issuing in tremendous earnestness but also in-far reaching mockery"26. The novel ends contrary to the expectations of the readers who find Yossarian no more cynical, no more insane but showing a faith in humanity in freedom, responsibility, going back to the society as a sane man. Chaplin ends up with faith in God. It looks as if Heller is decreating instead of recreating. It takes us to new provinces of hope, challenging the past realism and naturalism.

The stylistic devices that are earlier used for humor merge into the structure of the book giving the
book a darker hue and a deeper meaning. Language repeated indicate structure repeated, and it creates an atmosphere of madness preparing us to realize the intensity of *Catch-22*: "Repetition for instance shows up not only in the echolalic dialogue but also in the recycling of certain scenes such as Yossarian arguments with Clevenger, his pleading with Doc Daneeka - followed a chapter or so later in each case by expanded mentions. Other references to repetition - often by twos - and recurrent cycles, in the chapter ten, these, in turn, point ahead to repetitions and cycles in chapters to come giving us the motif of deja vu, already acknowledged to be an important, element of the novel's structure."27 Style becomes theme and humor becomes a weapon. Moreover the stylistic devices help in sketching the characters in great detail adding colour, but keeping them flat, to suit the neo satire. Apt descriptions are given but stretching nature too far to make it fantastically satirical and absurd, presenting deep disjoints of life.
The novel being above any labeling, chaotic but organized, humourous but enraging makes the answering of the question why is it a great novel, difficult. One can agree when Stephen Potts says that comment on West, pivotal figure of black humour: one must either laugh or go mad because of insane reality that lies behind it. Mr. West ... His ... satire is wry, piercing, painful humour is a way of getting revenge for the indignities which one suffers.\textsuperscript{28} can be applied to Heller too. It is one novel which can be a touchstone for other black humour novels. Being a black humorist, Heller, successfully presents the world which is totally crazy where every one willingly accepts madness. The war in the novel is not that war (Second World War or Vietnam) but the next war or even eternal war that is all consuming and all pervading. It goes on madly and it ends only when there is no one left to fight. It describes the individual's war, a war forced on him much against his wish, a war that inevitably leads him only to death. The individual is trapped in the mad
agonizing world that is ruled by one rule - Catch-22; that enables the mighty to decide the destiny of the meek - who can never fight back, and even when they fight they fight to lose. Yossarian, the hero is one such individual who fights to be sane in the mad world. He fights not to fight in the war and at the end of the novel he is allowed not to fight in the war but fight for his officers. He succeeds in getting out of the war, but fails as he is made an ally, a friend to those self seeking crazy officers. This brings in, the existential philosophy as the hero is victimized. He does not have the right to be himself nor his self can be preferred to the country. Nurse Crammer says to Yossarian:

"It certainly is not your leg! That leg belongs to U.S. government. It is no different than a gear or a bed pan. The army had invested a lot of money to make you an airplane pilot, and you have no right to disobey the doctor's orders"29 (p.211).
Scheisskopf, the lieutenant crazy of parades in his frenzy for perfect parades thinks of 'even nailing the twelve men in each rank to a long two-by four bean of seasoned oak to keep them in line'\(^3\) (p.83). Such incidents in the novel imply that man is dehumanized. He can no more be a hero, no more can he hope to come out of this unwanted, unwarranted predicament. He is caught in this whirlpool and for him living is dying. He faces death everywhere. Death not only from out but also from within. Death haunts; - a living death, thanks to Catch-22, the natural mortal death. He is death obsessed. Death reminds that there is only void beyond the death.

Terrified of this void Yossarian fights to live. Thats why he rejects to fly further missions. But living is made equivalent of a death by Catch-22. Such existential questions in the novel make it more a novel of horror than humour. Heller relieves this strain by a fine blending of form and content and provoking laughter through his ingenious rhetorical devices which
are already mentioned in the previous chapter. He does not stop at asking questions but he tries to give answers too. His hero goes back to society, away from war, with faith, with affirmation. Heller suggests that love, sympathy, giving and sharing can be substituted to those former dead beliefs like God, morals, religion, patriotism. His laughter relieves the tension and mitigates edges of crushing misery. Isn't this what Twain and others did in their frontier days? Laughter and horror are alternatively presented. The juxtaposition of fiction and reality, possible and impossible, terror and laughter facilitates the black humour of the novel and its great achievement lies in this. Heller successfully poised humour and blackness therefore giving the novel its aesthetics.

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The novel is America/miniature. Heller attacks every accepted notion to expose every sham, every double bend of his country, or world at large. His attack is bold, in an unmistakable voice coupled with dazzling experiment. While parodying war he has come
closer to truth - a heavily organized meaningless life in a democratic America; striking a right note. Pinsker says in his 'Understanding Joseph Heller' that "Heller's fiction has a nervous, anxious edge, as if the world, and especially its language, is shifting so rapidly so absurdly that any discoveries a protagonist might make are not likely to come in time".31 Heller is convinced that life is not so simple and nothing can be put so simply. This is what Yossarian discovers through all his experiences. He realises that disorder is the order of the day - truth and reasoning have a very narrow chance of gaining acceptance. Progress is a lie and its all the magic of the language.

*Catch-22* is a social satire and Heller is at his best as a satirist. No doubt he tried to handle a topic too big and too difficult for any one but for Swift. But he tried to comment, of course ironically, on a world which is accepted easily and quickly by most of us. He makes us uncomfortable by his piercing vision of the truth and shatters our complaisant
attitude: "He is, among contemporary American literature's most accomplished most dazzling stylists, and a writer who has put his undeniable stamp on the landscape of his generation's best fiction." The novel is rich, and disarmingly simple. It's hilarious and astounding. It is a novel of comic energy. It is deeply symbolic, allegorical and full of deep images. It goes beyond absurdity, beyond humour as it suggests a possibility of individual's success. It assures a hope in trying. It suggests a way to deal with and if possible to come out of this chaos. Catch-22 changes not only the vision but also all already tried methods of fiction, and hence it is acclaimed by most reviewers as "a wild, moving, shocking, hilarious, raging, exhilarating, giant roller coaster of a book".
NOTES

1. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn p.445


4. Ibid p.80.


8. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn p.274.


10. The Innocent Eye : Childhood in Mark Twain's Imagination p.143.


13. The Innocent Eye : Childhood in Mark Twain p.135.


20. War Novel as Bildungs Roman, p.50.


24. Stephen W. Potts, 'Method in Madness from Anti Heroic, Anti Novel' p.27.


27. Stephen W. Potts, Method in Madness Part-II p.42.


30. Ibid p.83.


32. Ibid p.17.


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