



Analysis of Human and Wild Idealizations through the Novels- *Call of the Wild and Catch 22*

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Abstract: In this literature survey, a comparison between the two richest novels, *The Call of the Wild* and *Catch 22*, will be established by comparing the human and animal efforts to stay alive. In *Call of the Wild*, Buck (the main protagonist) learns a lesson to forbid falls and develop survival strategies for his existence. On the other hand, Yossarian (the main protagonist) of *Catch 22* makes efforts to live a peaceful life amidst the end of the Second World War. The research focuses on analyzing the experiences of the protagonists and establishing a concise between the survival efforts made by them. The study discusses the philosophy of both authors in presenting the struggles that are experienced by humans and animals in the continuum of existence. A qualitative analysis will be included in this research in the form of a thematic analysis, in which there will be the development of several themes and sub-themes based on the content collected from different literature surveys.

Keywords: *Call of the Wild, Catch 22, novel, wilderness, lived experiences*

Introduction

The novels "Call of the Wild" and "Catch 22", written by Jack London and Joseph Heller, are perfect examples of contemporary literature that efficiently depicts emotions and struggles for survival. On one hand, where *Call of the Wild* represents animal sufferings and undergoing to stay alive, *Catch 22*, on the other hand, describes human endeavors to stay alive in the most trying and conflicting situations. In *The Call of the Wild*, the story revolves around the main protagonist, Buck, who is a powerful dog, half St. Bernard and half sheepdog hybrid that lives in California's Santa Clara Valley. Buck used to live a comfortable life until he was stolen and sold to dog traders, where he was beaten with a club to teach him to learn to obey orders. Eventually, the life of Buck takes twists and turns, followed by a true master in the form of Thornton. While being in the company of Thornton, Buck recognizes his calling for the wilderness and ventures into the forest wilderness to eventually become the leader of a pack of wolves. During his entire journey, Buck learns several lessons in the form of forbidding falls and developing survival strategies to survive in the cruel conditions (Williams, 1996). In *Catch 22*, the novel, the main protagonist, Yossarian, is a soldier stationed at the Air Force squadron on the island of Pianosa during the second half of WWII. Yossarian faces bitter experiences in life because of an absurd existence defined by bureaucracy and violence. Holding the position of the squadron, Yossarian is thrown into the most brutal conditions, in which it becomes difficult for him to ensure his survivability. Yossarian is fearful of the war conditions and brutal events taking place around him, so he gets furious in life because of the constant danger that comes without any of his faults. To avoid being sent back to the war front, Yossarian fakes his illness and stays for a longer duration in the hospital. Yossarian develops connectedness with Snowden, a fellow soldier. But eventually, he dies in the arms of Yossarian, integrating feelings of loss, dread, and trepidation into him. Once released from the hospital, Yossarian is put in ridiculous, absurd, desperate, and tragic circumstances by the mess officer, colonels, and generals to enhance their reputations. While Yossarian struggles to stay alive, Milo earns lavishly by transporting food between various points in



Europe. Yossarian is devastated by Natel's death and refuses to fly in the mission again, living as a wanderer in Rome and witnessing all manner of heinous crimes. Finally, Yossarian is given a choice by his seniors, Colonel Cathcart and Colonel Korn, to either approve of the policy introduced by them and lead an honorable discharged life or face a court-martial. Yossarian chooses the other way round and destroys his honorable discharge to save the lives of the other innocent men. Later on, he flees to Sweden and returns with the dehumanizing machinery of the military, authorizing him to reject the Catch-22 rule and lead a life on his terms (Solomon, 1967). The present research establishes a comparison between two rich novels, *The Call of the Wild* and *Catch 22*, by comparing the human and animal efforts to stay alive. The research also analyses the lived experiences of the protagonists and establishes a concise between the survival efforts made by them. The study discusses the philosophy of both authors in presenting the struggles that are experienced by humans and animals in the continuum of existence. It includes analyzing the similarities and differences in the approaches of the main protagonists to ensure their survivability and relevancy in the present context, so that the characterization of the novel represents the present-era conduit.

Literature Review

The novel *Call of the wild* written by Jack London highlight the positive psychology that is related to the conception of wilderness. The Physical Wilderness Experience suggests that it is difficult to provide any specific definition of wilderness because each experiences different emotion and relates it to different experiences.

Nelson and Callicott (2008) analyzed that wilderness can be defined as the immersed human culture. For instance, to an intercity child, wilderness is going to a park while someone with familiarity with the place; wilderness is associated with locating a different new place.

McDonald et. al., (2009) examined that wilderness in the form of a shifting perspective that describes wilderness as the optimal venues for personal growth and learning. For instance, in the pre-medieval times, during the era of early man, wilderness seemed to be a never-ending era. The happiness and progress of the individuals were highly dependent on their capabilities to subdue an environment that were often looked over with suspicion and fear.

Andrews (1999) ascertained that wilderness is associated with the three dimensions such as sense of community, sense of self, and sense of place. The sense of community is associated with venturing into unfamiliar territory to identify new ways. The sense of self is associated with defining the responsibility roles so that there is the determination of self-efficacy and overcoming of challenges related to the wilderness. The sense of place is associated with a deep and abiding connection so that there is a greater expectation of the figurative wilderness.

Gibbs, (2020) examined that the tragicomedy of tragicomedy in the literary presentation of *Catch 22*. The author initializes the story tag line with the ironic statement "It's the best there is," which is frequently used by a doctor to instruct the warriors to keep safe against bombing, killing, and maiming. Heller highlights

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr (another pilot) was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to, but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle. "That's some catch, that Catch-22," he observed. "It's the best there is," Doc Daneeka agreed (p. 46)

The suffering and regimented lifestyle of Yossarian with the doctor Daneeka who too lives a regimented life to provide services to the injured soldiers. Yossarian lives a life in struggles and



extremities to cover the mission goals by following the commands given by the colonel and generals. It highlights the conspiracy, agency panic, and resistance attitude that is experienced by soldiers on the war front.

Bloom, (2009) examined that though *Catch 22* has acquired positive reviews among the readers and critics such as Harold Bloom, it questions the morality of soldiers at the war ground. Bloom takes a strong point through

Yossarian's war ends with his departure for Sweden, desertion that Heller presents as a triumph, which it has to be if the war as aptly characterized by Heller's parodistic cast of con-men, schemers, profiteers, and mad commanders. War is obscene, necessarily, but the war against Hitler, the SS, and the death camps was neither World War I nor the Vietnam debacle. Heller isolates the reader from the historical reality of Hitler's evil, yet nevertheless the war against the Nazis was also Yossarian's war. (Bloom, 2009, p. 2)

Bloom comforts Yossarian's military desertion at the time of war and laminates him to be an irresponsible soldier that adopts an escapist move to save his life without thinking of the country's pride. *Catch-22* is based on the backdrop of American society after the World War II duration that depicts the lack of autonomy of soldiers in decision making. For instance, the Yossarian's military desertion could not be considered ethical, but when from the perspective of Yossarian as an individual it seems to be ethical.

Research Methodology

The current research includes positivism research philosophy as it helps in the qualitative assessment of facts with the help of subjective analysis and literature survey. It helps in facilitating the process of researching and authenticating the facts. Descriptive research design and qualitative research approach methods are included in the research as it helps in the collection and examination of facts related to the lived experiences of the protagonists in the novels *the Call of the Wild* and *Catch 22* and establish a concise between the survival efforts made by them. To focus on the data collection method, secondary data collection methods will be included to collect relevant facts related to the philosophy of both authors in presenting the struggles that are experienced by humans and animals in the continuum of existence. Secondary facts will be collected with the help of books, articles, journals, and online search engines. It includes using relevant keywords such as *Call of the Wild*, *Catch 22*, novel, wilderness, lived experiences, and other related words so that reliable information is acquired about human and animal efforts to stay alive by comparing two rich novels *the Call of the Wild* and *Catch 22*. The collected data will be analyzed with the help of qualitative data tools such as thematic analysis so that facts related to the research topic are authenticated. The thematic analysis will be conducted by developing several themes and sub-themes based on the content collected from different literature surveys. It helps in acquiring valid and reliable outcomes that make the whole study précised.

Result

The Call of the Wild and *Catch 22* novels highlight the feelings of insufficiency among living beings be it animals or human beings. For the individuals that are suffering from the frustrating and demeaning conditions of life, *Catch 22* gives temporary relief to the readers, while, on the other hand, *the Call of the Wild* gives strength and determination to the individuals to fight against the wilderness within and come out of fears. Both the novels constitute themes of agential crisis and anxiety and highlight the common grounds of bewilderment, however, both are set in different societies and times that create a sense of assertion. For example, Heller describes military authoritarian regime as “*created a dread of death among men . . . with a sense of doubt, despair and fear*” while London asserts Buck suffering as “*He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that*



it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars.”Therefore, it can be said that the presentation of emotions of both the authors creates a contrast in the approach of the main protagonists towards winning over fear. On one hand, where *Catch 22* can be regarded as a nonconformist novel, that depicts the restrictive normatively of the military, the *Call of the Wild* can be considered an adventure fiction that resorts to anthropomorphism. A major similarity between Heller and London works could be witnessed because of their background being similar because both the authors are eminent American novelists. Both the authors outlawed the bureaucratic mechanisms of the government and provided dissenting ideas to the readers in a palatable form.

Discussion

London was a well-known author, novelist, journalist, and social activist. The novels *The Call of the Wild* along with *White Fang* earned him huge recognition in the literary circle and established him in the different subgenres such as wilderness, dramatic, and eventful incidents. Through his work, London criticizes the human civilization and corrupted governmental bureaucracy that does not lay any mercy on the animals and human societies (London, 2021). On the other hand, Heller in *Catch 22* uses humor, witty remarks, absurdism, and vivid imagery to retain the captivity of the readers. Humor by Heller is considered a rhetorical device that magnetizes the readers to the confronting reality. Heller through his work highlights the corporate structure in post-war American society that highlights the discontent and yearning for freedom and possibility (Cacicedo, 2005).

London uses symbolism and imagery themes to describe labor variations in different phases of the story. In the first phase of the novel journey, London takes the readers on the journey of self-discovery depicting the images of pain and blood. The second phase highlights the fatigue and suffering through images of death. In the third phase, revival and rebirth are highlighted in the form of spring. The fourth phase highlights the reverting attitude of Buck in the weird atmosphere and place of emptiness (Allen, H. K., Donato, J., Wang, H. H., Cloud-Hansen, K. A., Davies, J., & Handelsman, 2010). On the other hand, in *Catch*, Heller focuses on different themes of paradox, tragedy, theodicy, and anti-capitalism. The paradox theme highlights the fearing experiences of Yossarian that are experienced when the Yossarian is commanded by Colonel Cathcart. The second theme describes the tragedy and farce construct that is related to highlighting premeditated and involuntary miscommunication resulting in tragic outcomes. For instance, the desire of Cathcart to become a general is thwarted by ex-P.F.C Wintergreen resulting in sabotaging the Yossarian correspondence with Major. The third theme is associated with theodicy in which major focus is given on Yossarian with context to spirituality and Godhood. The novel states that Yossarian believes in the authority of God but does not believe in the version of God that has been created by Hitler. It includes focusing on the failures and struggles of life so that contributions could be made to human life and society. The fourth theme is related to anti-capitalism in which the military enemies are ideologies as Germans so that there is combating of the enemies by creating the iconic situation of German personnel. It highlights the impending condition that is faced by Yossarian after his close assignee Milo gets killed in the bomb attack that was put on the American encampment on Pianosa. It led to the creation of tension between the ideological constraints between the military and industries resulting in profit-seeking portray of Milo even without any evil intent. Based on the above facts, it can be said that both the novels depict the sufferings and emotional turbulence that are faced by the main protagonists in the form of subjections, violence, and aggression

A comparison could be established between the characters of both selected novels the *Call of the wild* and *Catch-22* in the form of different characters. The main characters of the *Call of the Wild* are Buck, Spitz, Dave, Curly, Billee, Dolly, Joe, Judge Miller, Manuel, John Thornton, Hal. On the other hand, the main characters of *Catch 22* are Yossarian, Captain Tappman, Colonel Cathcart, Doctor Daneeka, Milo Minderbinder, Lieutenant Natelly, and Orr. A similarity could be established



between the characters such as Curly and Milo who were subjected in the story plot at the hand, of huskies and war conflicts respectively (**Benoit, 1968**). The killing of both the characters enlightened the thinking and observation of the main protagonists and encouraged them to search for the self. Based on the above discussion, it can be said that there are similarities and contrast that could be drawn from the novels of the Call of the Wild and Catch 22 that creates provides ample opportunities to understand the difference and similarities between human and animal efforts to stay alive. In the Call of the Wild, Buck learns a lesson to forbid fall and develop survival strategies for existence. On the other hand, Yossarian of Catch 22 makes efforts to live a peaceful life amidst the end of the Second World War. The findings in the study highlight the journeys of the main protagonists in terms of new opportunities, learning, and peculiar features that make them heroes in comparison to the other beings in the herd.

Conclusion

Based on the above-discussed facts, it can be said that the novels, Call of the Wild and Catch 22, capture the interest of the readers throughout the chapters by providing enough space to carry out the comparison and related emotions with the main characters. The present research focused on establishing a comparison between the two rich novels, The Call of the Wild and Catch 22, and found that both novels have a certain set of similarities and differences. The similarities could be seen in the fact that both writers are from an American background and highlight the difficulties that Buck and Yossarian face. The portrayal of the characters such as Curly and Milo is also similar enough to act as a major milestone to create awareness among the main protagonists. However, the difference could be observed in the approach of Buck and Yossarian to dealing with the troubling situations put before them. Buck adopts an aggressive approach to increase his survivability, while Yossarian adopts a fearful attitude and makes fake medical conditions remain for a longer duration in the hospital. Though real awakening comes to both the characters, it comes in later phases where Buck searches for wilderness and Yossarian searches for self-control over life.

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