

Jaroslav Hašek's The Good Soldier Švejk and His Fortunes in the World War and Joseph Heller's Catch-22: A Comparison

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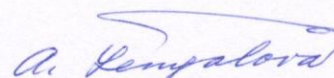
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ABSTRAKT

Práce se zabývá srovnáním románu Jaroslava Haška *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války* a románu *Hlava 22* od Josepha Hellera. V první části je stručně nastíněno historické pozadí, události, které předcházely vzniku děl a jejich význam v české, respektive americké kultuře. Následuje srovnání po stránce kompoziční, tj. narativní situace, časová struktura a prostředí děl, dále po stránce jazykové a po stránce tematické, tj. prvky kritiky a reakce vojáků na válku. Práce dochází k závěru, že ačkoliv se díla v určitých aspektech liší, svým tématem jsou totožné, stejně jako svým kritickým postojem vůči válce a byrokracii.

Klíčová slova:

Jaroslav Hašek, Joseph Heller, Švejk, *Hlava 22*, Yossarian, válka, idiotství, fronta, antihrdina, byrokracie, církev.

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the comparison of the Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and the novel *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller. The first part of the thesis briefly outlines the historical background, events that precede the creation of the works and their importance in the Czech and the American cultures. The following section discusses the comparison in terms of the composition of the novels, i.e. narrative situation, time structure and setting of the pieces, in terms of the language used, and in terms of their thematic level, i.e. the elements of criticism, and the soldier's reaction to war. The conclusion of the thesis is that even though the novels differ in some aspects, their theme and critical attitude towards war and bureaucracy are identical.

Keywords:

Jaroslav Hašek, Joseph Heller, Švejk, *Catch-22*, Yossarian, war, idiocy, anti-hero, bureaucracy, church.

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INTRODUCTION

The 20th century was only just in its beginning and the war was shaking the world. Young men were joining up with high ideals and desire to fight for their country and better tomorrow. But disillusion came soon. They found out that nothing was as they were told. They saw their friends dying and witnessed a lot of suffering. They were killing people because they were expected to do so; they were killing in order not to be killed. But the awareness of their enemies on the other side of trenches being the same people as they were, who had their families waiting for them and who fought for the same reasons as they did, was dreadful.

Not much time passed – only two decades – and the world was caught up in another army conflict. Many things had changed, technical progress was obvious and it was manifested in the way of fighting. But it was people who had not changed at all: army commanders, who were longing for their own self-profit, on one side and common soldiers, who were fighting, killing and dying, on the other side.

The death toll was alarming: more than 72 million people lost their lives in these wars and millions of them remained disabled; it is no wonder that these two major conflicts of the century were distinctively reflected in literature. The effort to give the evidence about the war experience was obvious and the approaches varied; for this purpose relatively unusual approach was chosen by Jaroslav Hašek and Joseph Heller.

The Czech author experienced the First World War whereas the American fought in the Second World War. After the end of the World War I in the case of Hašek and the World War II in the case of Heller, they utilized their war experiences while writing their masterpieces, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and *Catch-22*.

Working with satire, irony and other varieties of humor the writers tried to point out to the brutality and the absurdity of the war, the struggling of the individual caught in the war machinery and the stupidity of the official institutions and bureaucracy as such.

Both the novels are considered one of the best novels about the First and the Second World War in the Czech and American literature and gained a great importance in the cultures of their nations; they got such a vast publicity that the terms *Švejk* and *Catch-22* entered the common language and started to be generally used.

As the novels are said to resemble each other, the aim of this thesis is to compare the two pieces from the point of view of their position in the Czech and in the American cultures, focus on their composition and structure, the language used and the thematic

level, which are strongly interconnected and serve to the purpose of ridiculing classical values, and to prove that even though they may differ in some aspects their themes, anti-war tone and criticism of bureaucracy are identical.

1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When the First World War began in 1914 it aroused a wave of patriotic enthusiasm; crowds of men enlisted to fight for their countries. This initial enthusiasm was soon replaced by disenchantment. European rationalism found itself in crisis; people stopped believing reason because it brought them to the war, to the war which is waged for possession and political power and therefore is pointless.

As Malcolm Bradbury stated, after the World War had ended its consequences were overwhelming; millions of people were killed, millions of them were deformed either physically or mentally, millions of them were reported missing, the destroyed European towns reminded moonscape, the balance of powers in the world was disrupted as Europe was no longer considered the center of western civilization but it became shattered battlefield and the responsibility for making new history was assumed by the United States. Europe found itself in a period which could bear the symbolic names of the novels written by the English authors Charles Edward Montague and William Gerhardie, *Diesenchantment* and *Futility*.

If there had been romanticism and sentimentality before, then none of them survived the war, no dreams of heroism remained. The war events had strong impact on the nature of the western literature and the war novel became the dominant literary form. The intention of the most of the author was to provide readers with the realistic description of the life of the soldiers at the front and in the trenches. But the list of the novels of the First World War counts Jaroslav Hašek's piece *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* as well although the author utilizes sharp satire and parody to criticize not only war but also army or church.¹

A mere two decades elapsed and the rationalism got another alarming blow. In September 1939 the Second World War burst out and soon it became the global armed conflict. With the technical progress going forward, the fights took place not only on the mainland or in the air, but also on the sea and even under its level, and no front remained stable for a longer period of time.

¹ See Malcolm Bradbury, ed., *Atlas literatury: Literární toulky světem*, trans. Vladimír Křivánek (Praha: Ottovo nakladatelství, 2003), 172-173.

The conflict can be titled the total war since it affected all the spheres of life and the entire manpower, financial power, industrial and scientific potential was conformed to the warfare. The horrors of the war influenced practically everybody because for the first time in history, the civilian population was afflicted by the conflict and took heavy casualties. Genocide and war crimes were responsible for millions of human lives and lead to barbarization of the society; people started to get used to violence and in an effort to elude thoughts of war began to lead a consumer way of life.

The impact on ordinary people, including writers, was much greater than ever before. The crowds of men enlisted in the army or were called up for military service. Hardly anybody of the soldiers enjoyed the military duty; on the contrary the majority of them got sober quickly and considered the army life tough and found the war absurd and cruel.

Therefore it is no wonder that the literature of the Second World War is extremely rich and diverse as the conflict became the trauma of the world's, and especially the European, history. The most of the important works dealing with the Second World War reflect combat experience, glorify bravery and solidarity, or analyze the morality in the war; some of them are bitter or humorous reflections of the caprice of commanders and disorganization of the army. These efforts culminate in *Catch-22*, a classic war novel written by Joseph Heller describing the air war over Italy.²

1.1 Jaroslav Hašek and the Road to the Creation of the Good Soldier Švejk

Jaroslav Hašek is undoubtedly ranked among the authors whose works blend with their lives. After being dropped out of grammar school for the participation in a demonstration, Hašek was offered a job in chemist's shop and consequently he finished studies in commercial academy in Prague. Nevertheless he never applied himself to the field he had studied since he was attracted by Bohemian life and strongly affected by anarchism and accompanied by rebelliousness and wanderlust.

Hašek as an author was primarily a master of mystification. He contributed to a number of magazines; *The Animal World*, into which he wrote articles about fictional animals, was among them.

² See Bradbury, *Atlas literatury: Literární toulky světem*, 216-219.

In 1911 he was one of the founders of a political party called *Strana mírného pokroku v mezích zákona* (The Party of Moderate and Peaceful Progress within the Limits of Law) and stood as its candidate in the elections to the Austro-Hungarian Parliament. The main aim of the party was to ridicule the Czech politics and public life as well as in revealing its misery. In his speeches, Hašek tried to teach the readers to look on the political life with a healthy skepticism. All the speeches were recorded in *The Political and Social History of the Party of Moderate and Peaceful Progress within the Limits of the Law*; in that time the piece was not understood therefore it was published more than half a century after its origin and gained great, even European response.³

In 1915, Hašek was mobilized to the Austro-Hungarian Army and drafted to the 91st Infantry Regiment in České Budějovice. From here the regiment soon moved to Bruck an der Leithaand, later to the Galician front. In a short time he got into captivity, subsequently took part in newly formed Czech Legion and left for Moscow where he joined the Bolshevik Party. In 1918 he was appointed Deputy Commandant of the town of Bulguma.⁴

Hašek was considered traitor by the Legion which also issued an order for his arrest twice. In Prague newspapers the announcement of Hašek's presumable death appeared several times; the poet Kolman-Cassius even wrote obituary for him called *Traitor* depicting Hašek as a worthless clown who had willingly betrayed all he had had – his wife, art and even his country.⁵

When returning to Prague in 1920, Hašek was experiencing deep disappointment after he had found out there is no use for him hence he reverted to the role of liberal artist and after a year moved to Lipnice nad Sázavou where he started to write his masterpiece and where he lived until his death in 1923.⁶

³ See Hana Voisine-Jechova, *Dějiny české literatury*, trans. Aleš Haman (Jinočany: H+H, 2005), 377; Radko Pytlík, "Strana mírného pokroku jde do voleb," Radko Pytlík a EMPORIUS, http://radkopytlík.sweb.cz/hasek_ke_q.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

⁴ See Voisine-Jechova, *Dějiny české literatury*, 377.

⁵ See Radko Pytlík, *Kniha o Švejkovi* (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1983), 26.

⁶ See Jiří Hájek, *Odkazy pokrokových osobností naší minulosti: Jaroslav Hašek* (Praha: Melantrich, 1983), 8-9.

1.1.1 The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War and its Importance in Czech Literature

The importance of Hašek's novel in Czech literature and culture as such is indisputable. The novel has been translated to more than fifty languages and is regarded as one of the most famous Czech books ever. The novel has been filmized and dramatized several times; the best known film adaptation is probably the movie of 1956 starring Rudolf Hrušínský.

Terms as *Švejk*, *švejkovina*, *švejkovství* or *švejkovat* started to be used in a common language. As Radko Pytlík says, these terms may be interpreted differently; it can be depravity of the youth or a stain on the nation's honour, sometimes the term Švejk is understood as the expression of littleness and cowardice; others think of Švejk as a low-born scamp who can outfox and sidetrack life pitfalls or as protest against totality.⁷

According to the definition of the *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (Dictionary of Literary Czech Language) Švejk is a person who formally and with pretended eagerness complies with official authorities, often with an intention to ridicule them. In the strict sense of the word it can be used with the meaning joker.⁸

Even though Švejk has gained his fame just thanks to this war novel, the protagonist of the fundamental Hašek's novel had come into existence much earlier, in 1911. *The Good Soldier Švejk*, the series of tales published in satiric sheet *Karikatury*, is an anti-military satire in which the soldier seems like a simpleton that, with idiotic smile, causes mess and disorganizes the military machinery because he understands the orders and fulfills them literally. His grotesque simplicity and pretended or real idiocy make him immune from militarism and subordination principle. This work may be the reason why is the term Švejk sometimes misinterpreted as an idiot.

The second, war elaboration *The Good Soldier Švejk in Captivity*, published in 1917, stresses the ironic meaning of the character. The work should have ridiculed the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and supported the recruitment of members to the Czech Legion in Russia and its publicistic and tendentious focus conforms to its purpose. The elements of parody are given by Švejk's willingness to serve His Imperial Majesty to "his last drop of blood" and adverts to the stupidity of the "corporal mysticism."⁹

⁷ See Radko Pytlík, *Osudy a cesty Josefa Švejka* (Praha: Emporius, 2003), 121.

⁸ See Bohuslav Havránek et al., *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (Praha: Academia, 1966), 3:747-748

⁹ See Přemysl Blažíček et al., *Dějiny české literatury* (Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1995), 4:282

In the preliminary versions the initial traits of Švejk, as we know him and of whom most of the Czechs are aware, were being born. Both the versions are only sketches of the final shape of the character – soldier that condemns of idiocy whole military machinery just by identifying perfectly with it and fulfilling all the orders to the letter.

The Jaroslav Hašek's masterpiece started to be written in 1921 and after his death remained unfinished. The novel is characterized by the complex portrayal of the crisis of human and civilization, damnation of the absurd dehumanization of institutions which culminates in the world war and by penetrating look on all the false ideological myths of the ruling class. It is based not only on its two "predecessors" but on whole Hašek's story production; it is a summary of everything Hašek knew about his age, the society and human, and his lifelong fight against absurdity culminates in the novel.¹⁰

1.2 Joseph Heller and the Road to the Creation of *Catch-22*

Joseph Heller was a son of Russian immigrants of Jewish origin and passed his youth in Coney Island, Brooklyn. His father died soon a mother worked hard to support three children of her. After he graduated on High School, Heller started working in administration. He did the work until 1942 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

There is a parallel between the protagonist of *Catch-22*, Yossarian, and the author. Both of them enrolled in cadet school with the aim of becoming a bombardier; Heller gained the rank of first lieutenant. During the Second World War his military base was in the Mediterranean island of Corsica; from there he set out on combat missions over northern Italy and southern France. But in contrary to Yossarian, Heller managed to fulfill the prescribed number of flights and returned to the United States where he was awarded an Air Medal and a Presidential Unit Citation.

After the war he gained and M.A. in English from Columbia and worked as a university professor for a short period of time. Later he was engaged in advertising and promotion, worked in *Times*, *Look* and *McCall's Magazine*. It was during this time that he was writing *Catch-22* most of the evenings. After several years he left the world of advertising and returned to teaching and writing.

¹⁰ Hájek, *Odkazy pokrokových osobností naší minulosti: Jaroslav Hašek*, 113-120.

Before he died of heart-attack in 1999, Heller had written six novels, three plays, two memoirs and a number of stories but he gained his reputation in academic and literary circles primarily thanks to his first novel, *Catch-22*.¹¹

1.2.1 *Catch-22* and its Importance in American Literature

When first published in 1961, the book did not get a vast publicity. When the following day the *New York Times* published a negative review, Heller confessed that he thought, he and his family would never smile again; but the subsequent reviews were more positive despite very diverse as if they were not of the same book. The popularity of the book grew during the 60s and chimed in with the antiwar and antiestablishment ethos of the period. Milton R. Bass, entertainment editor, and theater and movie critic, exulted over retrieval of genius of Joseph Heller but at the same time he pointed out that the book was not for everyone: “This is one of the funnies tragedies I have read. Most of the time you can’t cry for the laughing and you can’t laugh for the crying. I don’t know how many people will embrace the book the way I did, but of you think there is the slightest chance it may be for you, don’t let this opportunity get away from you. There are so few of us and we have to stick together.”¹²

Richard Gray points out that these days the novel is considered one of the most important novels about the Second World War which utilizes absurdity to display rough and bitter senselessness of the conflict. Yossarian is depicted as a victim of military and political complex caught in war machinery. Even though he is longing for escaping it is impossible because this desire shows his mental health and therefore ability to serve. He is trying to find sense in senselessness and he fails; the clash, that tortures him, despises both reason and morality.¹³

The paradox of *Catch-22* is omnipresent in the book. It means that a person finds himself/herself in a situation in which does not matter what decision he/she makes because it is always wrong. Since the time of its first publication, the term *Catch-22* has entered common language; according to the *Cambridge Dictionary* definition the term means “an

¹¹ See Harold Bloom, ed., *Bloom’s Guides: Catch-22* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 9-12.

¹² Bloom, *Bloom’s Guides: Catch-22*, 10-13.

¹³ See Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 602.

impossible situation where you are prevented from doing one thing until you have done another thing, but you cannot do the other thing until you have done the first thing.”¹⁴

The book got a sequel, *Closing Time: The Sequel to Catch-22* (1994), in which we meet Yossarian thirty years after the war, being older and facing everything that accompanies old age; like in *Catch-22* also in *Closing Time* the death is everywhere. In addition we meet a character of a soldier Schweik (*Sic.*) which can be considered as a reference to the Czech antecedent of the First World War.

1.3 The Importance of the Works in the 20th century

Zenny K. Sadlon adverts to the importance of the novels with the fact that both Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and Heller's *Catch-22* can be found on the New York Public Library's list of one hundred most important literary works of the 20th century even though each in a different category. Although the books are similar in the theme and genre, *Catch-22* is the number 14 in the section called *Popular Culture & Mass Entertainment* while *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* occupies the 4th spot in the section titled *War, Holocaust, and Totalitarianism*.¹⁵

¹⁴ Cambridge Dictionaries Online, "Catch-22," Cambridge University Press, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/catch-22> (accessed March 15, 2011).

¹⁵ See Zenny K. Sadlon, "Challenges of translating Švejk into English," Švejk Central, <http://www.svejkcentral.com/The%20Report.html> (accessed March 15, 2011).

2 COMPOSITION OF THE NOVELS

This chapter deals with the form and structure of the novels and their comparison from the point of view of narrative situation and time structure of the works, as well as their chapter divisions, setting of the novels and the means of satire, parody and humor.

2.1 Narrative Situation

In each narrative two layers can be recognized: the level of the world the story represents and the level at which it takes place, in the novel it is the level of narrative mediation. The narrator can be involved in the plot (first-person narrative situation), can describe the fictional world from the outside (authorial narrative situation) or the situation can be described through the consciousness of one of the characters of the story (figural narrative situation).¹⁶

According to Franz Karl Stanzel's theory of narrative three basic elements of mediacy can be distinguished: person (1st person v. 3rd person), mode (narrator v. reflector) and perspective (internal v. external). These three terms create axes around which the typological circle is drawn. By means of the circle the narrative situation can be assigned.¹⁷ The narrative situation in both *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes during the World War* and *Catch-22* is the authorial one. It means that in the story there is an omniscient narrator who is outside the world of characters and provide readers with the insight into the mind of all the characters of the novels.

2.2 Time Structure

Time structure is one of the most important features in the novels. As Ian Johnston says, Jaroslav Hašek used the picaresque technique in the novel, telling the story of the adventures of a roguish hero. The events in the storyline follow each other chronologically in a linear structure.¹⁸ Though there is no coherent plot in the novel as the narrative is frequently interrupted by the number of stories told mostly by Švejk himself but also by other characters, such as lieutenant Dub or the volunteer Marek; the novel consists of

¹⁶ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London: Routledge, 2009), 21.

¹⁷ Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, 89-94.

¹⁸ See Ian Johnston, "On Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*," Vancouver Island University, <http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/praguepage/hasek.htm> (accessed April 5, 2011).

almost independent episodes which follow each other in the chronological order and are connected into a whole.¹⁹

Doug Gaukroger stresses, that the time structure of *Catch-22* might be rather confusing because the shifts in time are frequent and fast. Even though events may appear casual, a system of time-sequences lies behind it and involves two sequences of events which are diverse and mutually antagonistic.

The major chronology, which focuses on Yossarian, moves back and forth from the present to the past and any period is treated as equally current and equally momentary. Yossarian's world is regulated not by chronological but by psychological time. His time is divided by the relentless increases of the number of combat flights and by the repeated returns to the hospital.

The opposite chronology, the history of Milo Mindebinder, controls the time. Throughout the oscillatory template of events in the dominant part of the novel, Milo moves straight forward from one success to another.

By treating all events as equally present, Heller confuses the reader's sense of order and disrupts his presumptions concerning proper form and structure. The unusual time structure prepares reader for the unusual treatment of the subject matter.²⁰

2.3 Chapter Divisions

In the matter of the divisions of the novels, which help readers in the easier orientation within the storyline of the work, Hašek's novel consists of four parts, *Behind the Lines*, *At the Front*, *The Glorious Licking* and *The Glorious Licking Continued*, the last of them remained unfinished after the author's death in 1923. These parts are composed of chapters names of which provide reader with the information of their subject matters; few of them are further divided into subheads.

The American novel is visually divided only into the chapters that bear mostly the names of the characters involved in the story, the only exceptions are the chapters called after the Italian cities *Bologna* and *Rome* (*The Eternal City*) and these titled *Thanksgiving*, *The Cellar* and *Catch-22*.

¹⁹ See Bohumil Doležal, "Kdo je Švejek," Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, v. v. i., <http://www.ucl.cas.cz/edicee/data/antologie/zdejin/3/dolezal.pdf> (accessed March 30, 2011).

²⁰ See Harold Bloom, ed. *Joseph Heller's Catch 22* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008), 67-80.

Nevertheless, as Robert Merrill suggests, it is in fact possible to split the book into three parts with reference to the tone of the novel. In the first part, chapters 1-16, the events are depicted as humorous or insane and also the death of Snowden is mentioned just briefly. The second third, up to the chapter 33, mainly repeats the most important incidents; the comic mood persists however it gradually shifts into a more serious one; the episode of Snowden's death is provided with more detail. The tone of the final section is rather serious. This part predominantly renders the new pivotal events by means of which the repeated episodes culminate; the Snowden's decease is portrayed in full details.²¹

2.4 Setting of the Novels

As already has been said, both *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and *Catch-22* are the war novels whereas the first novel takes place during the First World War and the latter during the Second World War. Reader enters the storyline of *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* right after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo in 1914. When Mrs Müller tells Švejk the news he does not even realize who she is talking about.

‘And so they’ve killed our Ferdinand,’ said the charwoman to Mr Švejk, who had left military service years before, after having been finally certified by an army medical board as an imbecile, and now lived by selling dogs – ugly, mongrel monstrosities whose pedigrees he forged.

Apart from this occupation he suffered from rheumatism and was at this very moment rubbing his knees with Elliman’s embrocation.

‘Which Ferdinand, Mrs Müller?’ he asked, going on with the massaging. ‘I know two Ferdinands. One is messenger at Průša’s, the chemist’s, and once by mistake he drank a bottle of hair oil there. And the other is Ferdinand Kokoška who collects dog manure. Neither of them is any loss.’

‘Oh no, sir, it’s His Imperial Highness, the Archduke Ferdinand, from Konopiště, the fat churchy one.’²²

This event and the beginning of the First World War catches Švejk in the safety of his Prague flat and also the rest of the first part of the novel called *Behind the Lines* takes place in Prague. As the story goes ahead, Švejk leaves Prague for the south Bohemia and out of here he moves through the Austrian Lands and the Lands of the Hungarian Crown to Galicia.

²¹ See Robert Merrill, “The Structure and Meaning of *Catch-22*,” *Studies in American Fiction* 14, no. 2 (Autumn 1986) : 139-152.

²² Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 3-4.

Although the names of the three following parts of the novel *At the Front*, *The Glorious Licking* and *The Glorious Licking Continued* may conduce to the presumption of fight being depicted in them, the description of war as such is in fact rare in the novel. Similarly even though we know the exact names of the places the novel takes place in, it also lacks any detailed description of the places and the environment thus the space is given to the reader for his imagination.

The story of Heller's novel is situated to the Italian island of Pianosa which is indeed real but as the author stated in the introduction of the novel "the island of Pianosa lies in the Mediterranean Sea eight miles south of Elba. It is very small and obviously could not accommodate all of the actions described. Like the setting of this novel, the characters, too, are fictitious."²³ As the novel's characters are the bombardiers of the U.S. Army, the considerable part of the book takes place in the air during the combat flights. The events also take the reader to the capital of Italy, Rome. Similarly to *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, detailed description of the environment can be rarely found in the novel and it is up to each reader to create his own idea.

²³ Heller, *Catch-22*, preface.

3 LANGUAGE AND STYLISTIC STRUCTURE

The element that to a great extent determines the nature of a novel is its language. The language of *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* is not compact. There is an extensive difference between the narrative passages and direct speeches in the novel.

In the narrative parts Hašek uses the method of collage and mosaic structure. These parts are of less diversity and expressiveness; language in these parts is clear, simple and understandable. Similarly the sentence structure is of less complexity and preciousness; even though Hašek uses long sentences he tries to keep them simple and ordinary. His aim probably is not to stress the form but the content. He describes the important and typical events which comply with the given situation and ideological intention:²⁴ “On the way to Medzilaborce the whole valley was furrowed and the earth piled up as though armies of giant moles had been working there. The road behind the river was dug up and destroyed, and alongside it could be seen the vast trampled expanses left by the armies which had rolled over them.”²⁵

The most frequent stylistic devices used in the novel are simile and contrast which often chime in. These devices are usually used with the ironic aim. Hašek uses very positive words and clichés, which together with the situation they are employed in, indicates clearly the author’s aim. In the following extract the comic effect is achieved by comparing the illustrations on the chaplain’s altar, the honorable subject, to the expressions used in everyday language and sports:²⁶ “The Son of God on the other hand was a gay young man with a handsome stomach draped in something that looked like bathing drawers. Altogether he looked a sporting type. The cross which he had in his hand he held as elegantly as if it had been a tennis racquet.”²⁷

The greater part of the novel is formed by the direct speeches. Hašek managed to express the spoken language precisely. By the selection of vocabulary and phrases, sentence structure and style as such, Hašek describes the characters; the speech of each one

²⁴ See Daneš, “Příspěvek k poznání jazyka a slohu Haškových *Osudů dobrého vojáka Švejka*.”

²⁵ Jaroslav Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, trans. Cecil Parrot (London: Penguin, 2000), 592.

²⁶ See Daneš, “Příspěvek k poznání jazyka a slohu Haškových *Osudů dobrého vojáka Švejka*.”

²⁷ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 131.

character is individualized and corresponds with the level of education of the speaker and also with social class he comes from; these differences are implied by the grammar of the speaker, his vocabulary and syntax. The speech of the characters does not change throughout the whole work. In order to provide the truthful image of the period Hašek does not hesitate to use vulgarisms, which are fairly frequent in the novel but always have their purpose, fit the situation and in addition intensify the contrast between the narrative parts and the characters' speeches.²⁸

When reading *Catch-22*, reader can notice similarities to *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* as for the language used in the narrative passages, which are written with literary language, and direct speeches, which tend to be colloquial. Unlike in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, the narrative sections occupy greater part of the novel. These parts differ from the Hašek's ones not only in length but also in the sentence structure, which is more complicated in *Catch-22* as Heller often uses long sentences. By contrast with *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, in *Catch-22* a higher number synonyms can be found; the author also frequently utilizes enumeration.

Yossarian left money in the old woman's lap – it was odd how many wrongs leaving money seemed to right – and strode out of the apartment, cursing Catch-22 as he descended the stairs, even though he knew there was no such thing. Catch-22 did not exist, he was positive of that, but it made no difference. What did matter was that everyone thought it existed, and that was much worse, for there was no object or text to ridicule or refute, to accuse, criticize, attack, amend, hate, revile, spit at, rip to shreds, trample upon or burn up.²⁹

The important element of the Heller's novel is repetition. He repeats concepts, themes or events. There are motifs, such as death or insanity, which re-appear over and over throughout the novel. Remarkable feature of the repetition of events is that in each consequent repetition some extra information is added up to the point at which its relevance is disclosed.³⁰ Snowden's death and Catch-22 itself are probably the most important repetitions in the novel. There is variety of definitions of Catch-22 throughout

²⁸ Daneš, "Příspěvek k poznání jazyka a slohu Haškových *Osudů dobrého vojáka Švejka*."

²⁹ Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*(London: Vintage,1994), 468-469.

³⁰ Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., "Spindrift and the Sea: Structural Patterns and Unifying Elements in *Catch 22*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 19, no. 4 (October 1973): 239-250.

the novel but the most dreadful one is that of the old woman in Rome, which declares the commanders are privileged to do whatever they want and nobody can stop them.³¹

“Catch-22” the old woman repeated, rocking her head up and down. “Catch-22. Catch-22 says they have a right to do anything we can’t stop them from doing.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Yossarian shouted at her in bewildered, furious protest. “How did you know it was Catch-22? Who the hell told you it was Catch-22?”

“The soldiers with the hard white hats and clubs. The girls were crying. ‘Did we do anything wrong?’ they said. The men said no and pushed them away out the door with the ends of their clubs. ‘Then why are you chasing us out?’ the girls said. ‘Catch-22,’ the men said. ‘What right do you have?’ the girls said. ‘Catch-22,’ the men said. All they kept saying was ‘Catch-22, Catch-22.’ What does it mean, Catch-22? What is Catch-22?”

“Didn’t they show it to you?” Yossarian demanded, stamping about in anger and distress. “Didn’t you even make them read it?”

“They don’t have to show us Catch-22,” the old woman answered. “The law says they don’t have to.”

“What law says they don’t have to?”

“Catch-22.”³²

3.1 Irony, Satire, Humour

Both the novels are characteristic by the substantial usage of irony, satire and humour. The stories are built upon the realistic background; the satirical effect is achieved by exaggeration, hyperbole and absurd situations.³³

In *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, the use of irony is strongly visible throughout the whole novel as practically every single Švejk’s word, convincing others of his loyalty to his Emperor and country, is meant as pure irony and sometimes it is exaggerated to the point of absurdity:³⁴ “I think it’s splendid to get oneself run through with a bayonet, and also that it’s not bad to get a bullet in the stomach. It’s even grander when you’re torn to pieces by a shell and you see that your legs and belly are somehow remote from you. It’s very funny and you die before anyone can explain it to you.”³⁵

The irony often melts into sarcasm. Its purpose is to show human’s suffering and emphasize the absurdity, inhumanity and brutality of the war; the desirable effect is

³¹ See Merrill, “The Structure and Meaning of *Catch-22*,” 139-152.

³² Heller, *Catch-22*, 466-467.

³³ See Joseph P. Stern, “War and the Comic Muse: *The Good Soldier Švejk* and *Catch-22*,” *Comparative Literature* 20, no. 3 (summer 1968): 203.

³⁴ See František Daneš, “Příspěvek k poznání jazyka a slohu Haškových *Osudů dobrého vojáka Švejka*,” *Naše řeč* 37, no. 3-6 (1954), <http://nase-rec.ujc.cas.cz/archiv.php?art=4356> (accessed April 3, 2011).

³⁵ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 153.

achieved by realistic and factual style, representing the concrete situation without any moralization. In these parts the author's humanism appeal is visible.³⁶

Before the arrival of the passenger train the third-class restaurant filled up with soldiers and civilians. They were predominantly soldiers of various regiments and formations and the most diverse nationalities whom the whirlwinds of war had swept into the Tábora hospitals. They were now going back to the front to get new wounds, mutilations and pains and to earn the reward of a simple wooden cross over their graves. Years after on the mournful plains of East Galicia a faded Austrian soldier's cap with a rusty Imperial badge would flutter over it in wind and rain. From time to time a miserable old carrion crow would perch on it, recalling fat feasts of bygone days when there used to be spread for him an unending table of human corpses and horse carcasses, when just under the cap on which he perched there lay the daintiest morsels of all – human eyes.³⁷

Švejk is crowded with the grotesque, the main feature of which is mystification. He seems to be an adaptable person however his inner self remains unchanged and confirmed, devoted to his principles; there is a contradiction between what he thinks and what he says and does. The mystification becomes the instrument of the protection and of the resistance against the time which reverses the logic upside down.³⁸ The other characters in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* are characterized roughly and represent cartoonish personalities; most of them could be considered “idiots” in a certain way.³⁹

The presence of anecdotal tales is considered a characteristic feature of *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*. As Hašek was brilliant in recording spoken language, also these anecdotes are left the way they are told irrespective of possible repetitions or violated syntax. The stories are very factual as the reader is provided the names of the characters and the place.⁴⁰

Similarly *Catch-22* is saturated by incisive and offensive satire. As James Nagel writes, this satire is aimed at society, army, aggressive capitalism, bureaucracy, church or some absurd and destructive elements of modern civilization. Also the characters are the simplified renderings of human personality types as caricature is employed as the method of characterization.

³⁶ See Daneš, “Příspěvek k poznání jazyka a slohu Haškových *Osudů dobrého vojáka Švejka*.”

³⁷ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 230.

³⁸ See Pytlík, *Osudy a cesty Josefa Švejka*, 11.

³⁹ See Erica Weitzman, “Imperium Stupidum: Švejk, Satire, Sabotage,” *Law & Literature* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006):129.

⁴⁰ See Cecil Parrott, *Jaroslav Hašek: A Study of Švejk and the Short Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 156-157.

The black humor, which Heller uses, employs the cruel scenes of violence in a large measure. These brutal images, such as the image of the soldier in white or the image of dying Snowden, keep recurring throughout the novel.

Along with the black humour Heller works with irony, situational comic, verbal humour and absurd: the paradox of the Catch-22 regulation and its logic and inexorability lapses into absurdity; the verbal humour often ends in a play with words and letters, and in sequences of adjectives:⁴¹

Yossarian—the very sight of the name made him shudder. There were so many esses in it. It just had to be subversive. It was like the word subversive itself. It was like seditious and insidious too, and like socialist, suspicious, fascist and Communist. It was an odious, alien, distasteful name, that just did not inspire confidence. It was not at all like such clean, crisp, honest, American names as Cathcart, Peckem and Dreedle.⁴²

Situations can be found in the novel, that may seem very humorous at the first glance but after further consideration they may appear fearfully and alarmingly real: “His specialty was alfalfa, and he made a good thing out of not growing any. The government paid him well for every bushel of alfalfa he did not grow. The more alfalfa he did not grow, the more money the government gave him, and he spent every penny he didn’t earn on new land to increase the amount of alfalfa he did not produce.”⁴³

⁴¹ See James Nagel, “Catch-22 and Angry Humor: A Study of the Normative Values of Satire,” *Compedit*, <http://www.compedit.com/nagel.htm> (accessed April 8, 2011).

⁴² Heller, *Catch-22*, 241-2.

⁴³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 96.

4 THEMATIC LEVEL

4.1 Criticism

Criticism plays an important role in the novels and aims at various targets. The war criticism is obvious as well as the criticism of official organizations, foremost the army, the church but also medicine.

There is a point that cannot be found in the Heller's novel; it is the criticism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is significant in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*: "A monarchy as idiotic as this ought not to exist at all."⁴⁴ The intention of the novel was patriotic and it should have helped to support the emerging Czech nation. Švejk's behavior invokes situations mercilessly ridiculing the values of the Hapsburg Monarchy; the novel criticizes the way the monarchy maintained its legal and political sovereignty and shows its inner disruption and internal contradictions. A comment on the Sarajevo assassination, on His Imperial Majesty or on the Hapsburg Empire as such was punished much harder than murder:⁴⁵

The Sarajevo assassination had filled police headquarters with numerous victims. . . .

From the five sitting at the table he received almost exactly the same answer:

'Because of Sarajevo.' 'Because of Ferdinand.' 'Because of the murder of His Imperial Highness.' 'For Ferdinand.' 'Because they did away with His Imperial Highness at Sarajevo.'

The sixth, who was avoiding the company of the other five, said he did not want to have anything to do with them, in case any suspicion should fall on him. He was only detained here for attempted robbery with murder on a farmer Giles from Holice.⁴⁶

4.1.1 War Criticism

It is obvious that the war is a fundamental element in the novels the main effort of which was to show its absurdity. Hašek assumed a damnatory attitude towards the war right from its beginning and his perspective is explicitly critical.

Although *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* definitely is a war novel, the combat scenes cannot be found in the book and readers are not given the detailed images of soldiers killing and dying. Hašek describes the devastating consequences of the war while soldiers are marching to the front; these portrayals are,

⁴⁴ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 208.

⁴⁵ See Johnson, "On Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*," Weitzman, "Imperium Stupidum: Švejk, Satire, Sabotage."

⁴⁶ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 15-16.

along with antimilitary protest and the condemnation of the warfare, the reflections of the war machinery:⁴⁷

The train went slowly over the freshly-built embankments so that the whole battalion could take in and thoroughly savour the delights of war. At the sight of the army cemeteries with their white crosses gleaming on the plains and on the slopes of the devastated hills all could prepare themselves slowly but surely for the field of glory which ended with a mud-bespattered Austrian cap fluttering on a white cross.⁴⁸

Hašek also criticizes army as an organization, ruled by stupid authorities who give absurd commands which nobody understands; the stupidity of the orders is illustrated by Švejk's strict compliance with them. The inevitability of the war is shown by the Švejk's returns to his battalion after being lost several times.⁴⁹

On the other hand *Catch-22* brings the number of combat scenes from the missions; Heller also uses very naturalistic images of dying men, such as the final, most detailed scene of Snowden's death:

Yossarian ripped open the snaps of Snowden's flak suit and heard himself scream wildly as Snowden's insides slithered down to the floor in a soggy pile and just kept dripping out. A chunk of flak more than three inches big had shot into his other side just underneath the arm and blasted all the way through, drawing whole mottled quarts of Snowden along with it through the gigantic hole in his ribs it made as it blasted out. Yossarian screamed a second time and squeezed both hands over his eyes. His teeth were chattering in horror.⁵⁰

Similarly to *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, also the colonels and generals in Heller's novel behave in a way that make them look like idiots who do not care about anyone but them and whose orders do not make sense to anyone but them. The increasing number of combat flights seems to represent the inconclusiveness of the men caught in the war machinery.

4.1.2 Criticism of Bureaucracy

The bureaucracy is omnipresent in the novels; although its supposed purpose was to make society more equal, fair and efficient the reality was diametrically opposite and it derogated people from their rights.

⁴⁷ See Pytlík, *Osudy a cesty Josefa Švejka*, 84; Johnston, "On Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*."

⁴⁸ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 592.

⁴⁹ See Stern, "War and the Comic Muse: *The Good Soldier Schweik* and *Catch-22*," 193.

⁵⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 504.

In *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* bureaucracy is greatly powerful with agents, who are ready to send people to jail only on the grounds of suspicion, present everywhere. The bureaucracy interferes into all aspects of life and there is no chance for the individual to change it.⁵¹ Legal institutions are depicted messy and in total chaos; the officers are solving this issue with making up new documents with fabricated offences and judgements; even Švejk was, according to these documents, considered dead.

He was the most important element in the whole apparatus of military justice, and because he had such a tremendous pile of unfinished cases and muddled documents he was held in respect by the whole military court on Hradčany. He kept losing the documents for the indictment and was compelled to invent new ones. He mixed up names, lost the threads of the indictments and spun new ones just as they happened to come into his head. He tried deserters for theft and thieves for desertion. He brought in political cases which he had fabricated himself.⁵²

The institutions of both the novels are full of corrupt hypocrites; the commanders are pictured as stupid and incompetent persons who are interested only in themselves, their welfare and glory and who are only trying to impress their superiors in order to gain better position. They are concerned more in having staggering statistics or precious aerial photographs than in the situation at the front.

The element of absurdity in the Heller's novel is the regulation Catch-22. Nobody has ever seen it but everyone is always referencing to it and it provides the justification of every action and decision made by the officials.

Another absurd situation arises when McWatt kills himself; Doc Daneeka did not want to participate in flights as he was afraid in plane and Yossarian and McWatt helped him with this issue by inscribing him to flight log. After McWatt's death also Doc Daneeka is declared dead although everyone could have seen him alive; but the fact he was supposed to be in the plane is the only thing that counts.

4.1.3 Criticism of Church

Jaroslav Hašek satirized the importance and position of the Church; he criticized the Church as an organization which wanted to be honorable and to have a great power and significance but when one looked under the surface, he found out it is full of corruption and depravity: "The altar was made up of three parts, liberally provided with sham gilt like the

⁵¹ Johnston, "On Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*."

⁵² Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 91.

whole glory of the Holy Church.”⁵³ He disapproved the behaviour of Church representatives who preached religious faith and virtuous life but behaved in an opposite way and were ready to incline to the side which would be more profitable: “The great shambles of the world war did not take place without the blessing of priests. Chaplains of all armies prayed and elaborated drumhead masses for victory for the side whose bread they ate.”⁵⁴

The Church is in the novel represented by Chaplain Otto Katz. Chaplain is described in a way that corresponds with the depravity of the Church. Otto Katz was a Jew who loved alcohol and women, he always preached drunk and liked visiting parties and gambling; he even gambled Švejk away. This character will not let the readers doubt that there is something wrong with the Church and that this organization apparently is not as honourable and almighty as it seems at the first sight.

Atheism is visible throughout the novel as it is shown that men in garrison gaol like going to the church not because it gets closer to God or to gain absolution but because it diversifies their life in garrison gaol and men find the Chaplain’s sermons funny: “As in all prisons and penitentiaries the local chapel was very popular in the garrison gaol too. Not that enforced attendance at it brought the congregation nearer to God or that the prisoners learned more about morality. There could be no question of any nonsense of that kind.”⁵⁵ But also allusions to the Bible can be found: “And so, mounting the staircase to the 3rd Department for questioning, Švejk carried his cross up on to the hill of Golgotha, sublimely unconscious of this martyrdom.”⁵⁶

Just like Hašek also Joseph Heller criticizes the institution of the Church and purposes for which it was utilized in the army and war. Colonel Cathcart greatest effort is to become a general and he would be capable of using all the possible measures to achieve it, even religion: “Colonel Cathcart wanted to be a general so desperately he was willing to try anything, even religion.”⁵⁷ Another of his efforts to which he wanted to utilize religion was to get his picture in *The Saturday Evening Post*; his idea was to preach sermons before the missions, the only thing he did not want was too much of God in chaplain’s sermons:

⁵³ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 130.

⁵⁴ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 125-126.

⁵⁵ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 82.

⁵⁶ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 19.

⁵⁷ Heller, *Catch-22*, 216.

“Haven’t you got anything humorous that stays away from waters and valleys and God? I’d like to keep away from the subject of religion altogether if we can.”⁵⁸

The theme of atheism appears in *Catch-22*: Yossarian created his idea of what God is like but he did not believe he existed. The atheism is also highlighted by chaplain’s uncertainty about his faith:

So many things were testing his faith. There was the Bible, of course, but the Bible was a book, and so were Bleak House, Treasure Island, Ethan Frome and The Last of the Mohicans. Did it then seem probable, as he had once overheard Dunbar ask, that the answers to riddles of creation would be supplied by people too ignorant to understand the mechanics of rainfall? Had Almighty God, in all His infinite wisdom, really been afraid that men six thousand years ago would succeed in building a tower to heaven?⁵⁹

Allusions to the Bible can be found in the novel as well:

Was there a single true faith, or a life after death? How many angels could dance on the head of a pin, and with what matters did God occupy himself in all the infinite aeons before the Creation? Why was it necessary to put a protective seal on the brow of Cain if there were no other people to protect him from? Did Adam and Eve produce daughters? These were the great, complex questions of ontology that tormented him.⁶⁰

4.1.4 Criticism of Medicine

Medicine and hospitals play significant role in the novels, Švejk spends some time in asylum and also in sanatorium hut, and Yossarian considers hospital his shelter and the only safe place in the war.

Medicine is seen in the novels as science that is not exact; soldiers used hospital in order to avoid their combat duties in *Catch-22* and the novel itself begins with Yossarian healing a pain in his liver. Also the treatment of patients is found inappropriate; in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* the doctors consider all the patients malingerers: “In these great times the army doctors took unusual pains to drive the devil of sabotage out of the malingerers and restore them to the bosom of the army. Various degrees of torture had been introduced for malingerers and suspected malingerers, such as consumptives, rheumatics, people with hernia, kidney disease, typhus, diabetes, pneumonia and other illnesses.”⁶¹ Švejk ridicules the healing methods of the doctor in the sanatorium with his easefulness and exaggerating: “Even if it was your father or your own brother who

⁵⁸ Heller, *Catch-22*, 221.

⁵⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 328.

⁶⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 308.

⁶¹ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 62.

was lying here, give him an enema without batting an eyelid. Try hard to think that Austria rests on these enemas and victory is ours.”⁶² In *Catch-22* the doctors are busy doing other “important” things while people are dying without their medical help:

“Beat it,” said the doctor on duty there, who was doing a crossword puzzle.

“We can’t tell him to beat it,” said a corporal. “There’s a new directive out about abdominal complaints. We have to keep them under observation five days because so many of them have been dying after we make them beat it.”

“All right,” grumbled the doctor. “Keep him under observation five days and then make him beat it.”⁶³

In the novels, it is also described how some of the soldiers provide the others with “advice” how to avoid their combat duties or even get out of the army; this shows the low level of medicine and its inexactness. In *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* the help means injection of paraffin into their legs or arms, which lead to the blood poisoning. In *Catch-22*, Gus and Wes, the aides of Doc Daneeka, paint soldiers’ gums and toes with gentian violet solution and gave them laxative to get to the hospital.

4.2 Soldier’s Reaction to War

In the novels stand the protagonists against the commanders at the first place. It is obvious that both Švejk and Yossarian are anti-heroes as they do not correspond with the classic idea of the strong and brave hero. These characters can be considered the celebration of common sense which the most of their commanders obviously lack.

4.2.1 Švejk and Yossarian and their Resistance

The protagonists of the novels, Josef Švejk and John Yossarian, are both caught up by war; Švejk was called up whereas Yossarian enlisted as a volunteer. When we meet them, their only concern is how to protect themselves in the war and how to survive. They neither care about the results of the war nor consider the death in war honorable or heroic:⁶⁴ “It doesn’t make a damned bit of difference who wins the war to someone who’s dead.”⁶⁵

Captain Yossarian is a 28 years-old American bombardier whose name indicates his Assyrian background. Švejk is a decent man, an ordinary citizen who earns his living by

⁶² Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 69.

⁶³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 203.

⁶⁴ Stern, “War and the Comic Muse: *The Good Soldier Švejk* and *Catch-22*,” 207.

⁶⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 142.

selling mongrels.⁶⁶ He is a smaller, stout man with innocent eyes and idiotic smile. There is a lack of detailed outward description, but the Švejk's appearance is strongly connected with the illustrations by Josef Lada, which Jaroslav Hašek himself saw and approved.

4.2.1.1 *Idiocy, Madness, Stupidity*

As Švejk stated himself, he is considered idiot: "I was discharged from the army for idiocy and officially certified by a special commission as an idiot. I'm an official idiot."⁶⁷ For commissarial doctors and his superiors, Švejk is inscrutable. They do not know what to think about him. Is he a real idiot or is he just simulating it?

The character of Švejk incorporates sharp satire and ironic sarcasm with naive and cheering wit. As Radko Pytlík says, Švejk is an idiot on one side and a "wise fool" who represents fundamental human's values, which are the only guarantee of survival in a critical situation, on the other side; in any case he enrages every authority he meets.⁶⁸

For Yossarian life means much more than patriotism, he is worried about himself all the time and his only aim and effort is not to be killed because the death is omnipresent and he is convinced everyone is trying to do so:

"They're trying to kill me," Yossarian told him calmly.
 "No one's trying to kill you," Clevinger cried.
 "Then why are they shooting at me?" Yossarian asked.
 "They're shooting at everyone," Clevinger answered. "They're trying to kill everyone."
 "And what difference does that make?" . . .
 "Who's they?" he wanted to know. "Who, specifically, do you think is trying to murder you?"
 "Every one of them," Yossarian told him.
 "Every one of whom?"
 "Every one of whom do you think?"
 "I haven't any idea."
 "Then how do you know they aren't?"⁶⁹

He insists on him being crazy in order to avoid his combat duty and to be sent back home, but there is a Catch – Catch-22, which states that he cannot be crazy if he wants to be sent home for being insane:

⁶⁶ See Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 3.

⁶⁷ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 20.

⁶⁸ See Pytlík, *Osudy a cesty Josefa Švejka*, 122-124, Peter Scheckner, "Renegades in the Literature of War: From Homer to Heller," *War, Literature & the Arts: An International Journal of the Humanities* 21, no. 1/2 (2009): 201-202.

⁶⁹ Heller, *Catch-22*, 19.

“Sure there’s a catch,” Doc Daneeka replied. “Catch-22. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn’t really crazy.”

There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr 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.⁷⁰

4.2.1.2 Sabotage

The Czech soldier says what he is thinking; it is also the form of provocation. He treats everyone, even his superiors, the same way, and is eager to serve His Imperial Majesty to “his last drop of blood” and with such eagerness he fulfills all the orders he is given. The fact that he carries the orders out to the letter shows their stupidity; Švejk creates chaos but he himself remains calm. Sometimes he also causes troubles to his superiors as when he sells a dog stolen to a colonel to his superior, lieutenant Lukáš:

“Švejk, you bastard, you, Himmellaudon, hold your tongue! Either you’re a cunning blackguard or else you’re a camel and a fat-headed idiot. You’re a real object lesson, but I tell you you’d better not try anything on me! Where did you get that dog from? How did you get hold of it? Do you know that it belongs to our colonel, who took it off with him when we happened to meet? Do you realize that this is a colossal world scandal? So speak the truth now! Did you steal it or not?”

“Humbly report, sir, I didn’t steal it.”

“Did you know that it was a stolen dog?”

“Humbly report, sir, I knew it was stolen.”

“Švejk, Jesus Mary, Himmelherrgott, I’ll have you shot, you bastard, you cattle, you oaf, you pig. Are you really such a half-wit?”

“Humbly report, sir, I am.”

“Why did you bring me a stolen dog? Why did you put that beast into my apartment?”

“To give you a little pleasure, sir.”⁷¹

Another source of trouble is Švejk’s curiosity. While going by train to České Budějovice he is interested in how the alarm signal works and pulls it, causes delay and is obliged to go to České Budějovice on foot as he spent the money he had on beer; during his anabasis policemen in Putim considered him a Russian spy. He also gets in trouble during a Russian advance, when he is even captured by his own side as he is dressed in a Russian uniform because he was curious how it would suit him.

⁷⁰ Heller, *Catch-22*, 52.

⁷¹ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 208.

It is possible to see the development of the character of Yossarian throughout the novel. He first enlists as a volunteer but soon he gets sober and finds out that human's life is more valuable than patriotism or victory in the war and so Yossarian tries every possible method how to avoid combat duty. He tries to spend as much time as possible in a hospital with a pain in liver or to postpone dangerous missions by any manner, such as poisoning the squadron and later moving the bomb line on a map during the Siege of Bologna. After the Bologna mission he should have been given a medal in order to conceal the failure of the American army:

“Why don't we give him a medal?” Colonel Korn proposed.

“For going around twice? What can we give him a medal for?”

“For going around twice,” Colonel Korn answered with a reflective, self-satisfied smile.

“After all, I suppose it did take a lot of courage to go over that target a second time with no other planes around to divert the antiaircraft fire. And he did hit the bridge. You know, that might be the answer—to act boastfully about something we ought to be ashamed of. That's a trick that never seems to fail.”

“Do you think it will work?”

“I'm sure it will. And let's promote him to captain, too, just to make certain.”⁷²

When Yossarian's superiors are at their wits' end with him, they decide to send him back home under the condition that he will praise the American army wherever possible. First he accepts but later he realizes how repulsive the offer is and cannot betray his ideals and sees the only resort in escape to Sweden; this decision also shows the development of Yossarian's character as he would do anything to get out of the war first but subsequently he changes his priorities: “Goddammit, Danby! I've got friends who were killed in this war. I can't make a deal now.”⁷³

4.2.2 Commanders and their Stupidity

The colonels and generals of both Hašek's and Heller's novels are described as stupid hypocrites whose only interest is their advancement and comfort. They only tried not to get in trouble and not to have to work too much and so they pass their obligation and tasks to their subordinates. When the result of subordinates is excellent they gain recognition but if the opposite happens they hold back and put the blame on the subordinates:

Just pass the work I assign you along to somebody else and trust to luck. We call that delegation of responsibility. Somewhere down near the lowest level of this co-ordinated organization I run are people who do get the work done when it reaches them, and everything manages to run along

⁷² Heller, *Catch-22*, 160.

⁷³ Heller, *Catch-22*, 515.

smoothly without too much effort on my part. I suppose that's because I am a good executive. Nothing we do in this large department of ours is really very important, and there's never any rush. On the other hand, it is important that we let people know we do a great deal of it. Let me know if you find yourself shorthanded. I've already put in a requisition for two majors, four captains and sixteen lieutenants to give you a hand. While none of the work we do is very important, it is important that we do a great deal of it.⁷⁴

As can be seen the relationship of Lieutenant Colonel Korn and Colonel Cathart, subordinates were often more capable and intelligent and their superiors were dependent on them to a great extent: "Colonel Cathart was jealous of Colonel Korn's intelligence and had to remind himself often that Colonel Korn was still only a lieutenant colonel, even though he was almost ten years older than Colonel Cathart, and that Colonel Korn had obtained his education at a state university."⁷⁵

Yossarian finds out and disapprove that the most of his superiors are ready to shoot anyone who could endanger the prosperity of M&M Enterprises, Milo Mindebinder's joint venture, which do not hesitate to use warplanes to distribute goods all around the world. Milo is longing for having as high profit as possible and so he signs contracts with both Americans and Germans. He realizes that his superiors' careerism is posing a greater risk for him than the enemy.⁷⁶

Hašek criticizes the Austrian commanders for their opportunism and false patriotism: "Let's be Czechs, but no one need know about it."⁷⁷ The most of them are imbeciles full of their own importance, who love to indoctrinate everyone and to be listened to even though they only show their stupidity as their speeches are full of nonsense:

He was so colossally stupid that the officers avoided him from afar so as not to have to hear from him that the pavement divided the street from carriage-way and that it was a raised paved strip along the façade of the house. And the façade of the house was part of it which we see from the street or from the pavement. We cannot see the rear part of the house from the pavement, a fact we can immediately prove to ourselves by stepping into the carriage-way.⁷⁸

The only exception in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* is lieutenant Lukáš, who is intelligent and has quite a nice relationship with Švejk. As Cecil Parrot writes, he is strict but at the same time fair and has feelings for his subordinates, even though he often swears at them or punishes them, for which he later feels sorry.

⁷⁴ Heller, *Catch-22*, 367-8.

⁷⁵ Heller, *Catch-22*, 217.

⁷⁶ See Scheckner, "Renegades in the Literature of War: From Homer to Heller," 204.

⁷⁷ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 166.

⁷⁸ Hašek, *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*, 201.

Serving in the Austrian Army is probably inconvenient for him because he likes good order, which could be hardly found in the Austrian army, and hates inefficiency and that might be a reason for numerous love affairs as he is looking for escape.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See Parrot, *Jaroslav Hašek: A Study of Švejk and the Short Stories*, 131.

CONCLUSION

The First World War and the Second World War became the most important conflicts of the 20th century and they understandably had a great impact on literature. Among the pieces about the war are mostly the works describing realistically the life during the war, but also novels can be found that use humour and satire to criticize the war conflicts. These novels include *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* written by the Czech author Jaroslav Hašek and the novel *Catch-22* written by the American writer Joseph Heller.

Even though *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* takes place during the First World War and *Catch-22* deals with the Second World War, the theme of the novels is the same as well as their critical attitude towards the classical values. As Peter Scheckner says, Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and its protagonist Josef Švejk mean to the literature of the First World War the same as the novel *Catch-22* and its protagonist, John Yossarian, mean to the literature of the Second World War.⁸⁰

The novels gained a great reputation and importance in the Czech literature and culture in the case of *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* and in the American literature and culture in the case of *Catch-22*. They gained such an incredible popularity that the terms *Švejk* and *Catch-22* entered a common language. Both the novels are also involved in the New York Public Library's list of one hundred most important literary works of the 20th century.

The difference between the novels can be found in their composition as Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* is more complicated, especially its time structure is really complex, and Jaroslav Hašek uses picaresque technique in *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* with events following each other in chronological order. On the other hand the narrative situation of both the novels is identical, i.e. authorial narrative situation. Even though both the works are without doubt war novels, in Hašek's novel it is all about the war but the reader is not provided with the combat scenes but only with the consequences of the war; on the contrary a number of scenes from the missions can be found in *Catch-22*, in order to show the cruelty of war Heller uses very naturalistic images of dying men. Both

⁸⁰ See Scheckner, "Renegades in the Literature of War: From Homer to Heller," 201.

the novels are characteristic by the usage of irony, satire and humour. Jaroslav Hašek works mostly with irony, which often melts into sarcasm, grotesque and parody, and also anecdotes are present in the novel. Joseph Heller uses mostly satire and irony, black humour, situational comic, verbal humour and absurd.

Both the novels are based on the criticism, the most important of which is the war criticism with the effort to show its absurdity; the pieces also criticize bureaucracy and Church as all the institution are full of corruption and hypocrisy and their representatives seem to be idiots. In medicine the authors see a science which is not exact and is used by soldiers in order to avoid their combat duties. In *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War* an important role plays the criticism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the intention of which is strongly patriotic.

Regarding the protagonists of the novels, Švejk and Yossarian, they are different on one hand but on the other hand there are elements which make them close. The main one is sanity and insanity. Švejk is considered idiot and Yossarian insist on him being crazy but most of the time they are the only ones who seem to have common sense. Their behaviour often cause problems to their superiors and lead to the sabotage of actions.

Although the novels may seem different in some aspects, they coincide in their themes and criticism of war, bureaucracy and Church, which this thesis tries to prove.

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