

Trauma and Literature
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Lecture – 34
Heller’s Catch–22 – Part 7

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CHAPTER 18 - THE SOLDIER WHO SAW EVERYTHING TWICE

Yossarian owed his good health to exercise, fresh air, teamwork and good sportsmanship; it was to get away from them all that he had first discovered the hospital. When the physical-education officer at Lowery Field ordered everyone to fall out for calisthenics one afternoon, Yossarian, the private, reported instead at the dispensary with what he said was a pain in his right side.

'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.'

They took Yossarian's clothes away and put him in a ward, where he was very happy when no one was snoring nearby. In the morning a helpful young English intern popped in to ask him about his liver.

'I think it's my appendix that's bothering me,' Yossarian told him.

'Your appendix is no good,' the Englishman declared with jaunty authority. 'If your

This is an NPTEL course entitled “Trauma and Literature” on Joseph Heller's novel “Catch-22”. This is chapter 18. The way we read in this novel is nonchronological in quality because we are making jump cuts across different chapters because in a way it does justice to the representational politics of that novel, which is quite postmodern in quality.

The novel is nonchronological, it has different jump cuts, different plays into player's space and time across different vectors. It does make sense and does have a lot of rationale and justification. In a way, it is also a tribute to the aesthetics of the novel if we study it nonchronologically. After chapter 27 which we did last session, we come back to chapter 18.

We see how the philosophical sequence of novels is different from the narrative sequence which makes the novel again a very postmodernist as well as cognitively unsettling. The title of this chapter is a soldier who saw everything twice. This is

chapter-18. The title suggests some degree of cognitive dissonance, some degree of cognitive confusion which is supposed to be shocking.

Cognitively shocking in quality of course is reflective of a very serious medical condition. By the way in which these issues get represented in a novel we find that it has a tragicomic quality which makes the tragedy or the trauma condition even more disturbing because there is no tragedy in trauma. It just becomes a flattened discourse, it just becomes a regular ritual in a normoactive condition.

If trauma becomes a normoactive condition, you almost begin to produce comicality out of it or generate laughter out of it, which makes it even colder and complex existentially as well as medically. It starts with a paradox again, the very first line; the very first opening sentence of this section it starts with another funny epigrammatic paradox; epigram or epigrammatic means something which is intended to shock.

It is epigrammatic and thus shocking; which put things together which are not supposed to be together and that is how produce paradoxes as well. "Yossarian owed his good health to exercise, fresh air, teamwork and good sportsmanship. It was a get away from them all that he had first discovered the hospital."

The first part of the sentence makes a lot of sense logically and commonsensically and the next part of sentence completely deconstruct, so undercuts it and that is how we have the production of paradox, undercutting one sentence, undercutting one half of the sentence, undercutting the other half with a counter logic, count cognitive quality.

We are told that he owed his good health to exercise, fresh air, teamwork and good sportsmanship. We are also told he wanted to get away from all that and that is the reason why he discovered the hospital. We can see throughout the novel, the hospital becomes very complex sight, it becomes a sight security because even a hospital will have to go and fight a battle in the front line.

But also becomes a side of subversion, where the entire military coalition, the medical military coalition is subverted and also parodied to a certain extent because we have people over here who are pretending or performing madness; performing trauma as a

trauma quite literally becomes a theatre of the absurd in this novel and there is a grotesque, absurdist quality which we see in absurd theatres as well.

That is very much there as part of the statics of representation. When the physical education officer Lowery Field ordered everyone to fall out for calisthenics one afternoon, Yossarian the private reported instead at the dispensary with what he said was a pain in his right side. The operative word over here or the operative phrase over here is what he said.

This almost seems to be some kind of agency given to Yossarian, he decides which side is hurting today and he reports that and that ensures that he goes away from the calisthenics or the gymnastics or the exercise whatever was decreed. He instead spends time in the dispensary. Beat it, said the officer on duty there who was doing a crossword puzzle.

We see an officer on duty there who was more interested in a crossword puzzle and this is the very unglamorous, boring, tedious representation of only which is characteristic of the war. It is instead of the heroic battleground of the war where we hear people dying and see people kill each other and dying glorious heroic deaths, we see the very boring bureaucratic underbelly of the war which is also grotesque in quality.

We have people who come in as mangled bodies, people who come in as completely decimated and shattered in the mind; and yet there seems to be some kind of a boredom which seems to be the old pervasive sentiments, everyone is just bored. We talked about how there seems to be a blurring of border lines at all levels. The difference between the patient and the doctor, the patient and the healer it begins to blur away.

Because the healer, the doctor seems or appears more needy for help on certain occasions. The first response of doctor on duty was ask him to go away, beat it. We cannot tell them to beat it said the corporal. There is 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.

This is very dark humour because we are told that people have been dying because officers on duty at medical sites or medical sections have just asked them to go away. We are told that many people have died in the last few days because they have been refused any treatments. There is a new directive which has come up which orders or decrees that people have to stay under observation for five days if they are complaining of abdominal pain.

It is a very serious medical issue represented in a way with just pseudo-comic in quality. The pseudo-comicality is interesting for us to observe. Alright, grumbled the doctor. Keep him under observation five days and then make him beat it. They took Yossarian's clothes away and put him in a ward where he was very happy when no one was snoring nearby. In the morning, a helpful young English intern popped in to ask him about the liver.

The liver becomes a metaphor. The very opening of the novel too there was a case about jaundice; whether he has jaundice, does not have jaundice so that becomes the point of dilemma in the novel the "Catch-22" situation in a way, which is almost biological in quality or biologically underpinned. This English intern popped up to discuss his liver.

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They took Yossarian's clothes away and put him in a ward, where he was very happy when no one was snoring nearby. In the morning a helpful young English intern popped in to ask him about his liver.

'I think it's my appendix that's bothering me,' Yossarian told him.

'Your appendix is no good,' the Englishman declared with jaunty authority. 'If your appendix goes wrong, we can take it out and have you back on active duty in almost no time at all. But come to us with a liver complaint and you can fool us for weeks. The liver, you see, is a large, ugly mystery to us. If you've ever eaten liver you know what I mean. We're pretty sure today that the liver exists and we have a fairly good idea of what it does whenever it's doing what it's supposed to be doing. Beyond that, we're really in the dark. After all, what is a liver? My father, for example, died of cancer of the liver and was never sick a day of his life right up till the moment it killed him. Never felt a twinge of pain. In a way, that was too bad, since I hated my father. Lust for my mother, you know.'

'What's an English medical officer doing on duty here?' Yossarian wanted to know.

The officer laughed. 'I'll tell you all about that when I see you tomorrow morning. And throw that silly ice bag away before you die of pneumonia.'

Yossarian never saw him again. That was one of the nice things about all the doctors at the hospital; he never saw any of them a second time. They came and went and simply disappeared.

"I think it is my appendix that is bothering me Yossarian told him. Your appendix is no good, the Englishman declared with jaunty authority." This section again becomes very pseudo-comic. He is almost advising him how to maligner, is advising him how to lie

about his condition, how to give up a confused situation before the doctors just so he can stay there forever.

He says the liver seems to be the most confused side, the most confusing organ because we cannot see what it is, we do not know how it functions. He is advising Yossarian to check the level in terms of describing his pain. "If your appendix goes wrong, we can take it out and have you back on active duty in almost no time at all. The appendix is not a good excuse, not a good rationale to not fight the war.

If it is an appendix problem, people could just take out the appendix, operate it and then send you back, amputated and send you back on the war. But come to us with a liver complaint and you can fool us for weeks, so this becomes operative word over here, fool us for weeks." The word fool over here seems to take many connotations, several complex connotations.

There is the quality of cheating, malingering, pretending but also there seems to be some kind of Shakespearean quality about that as well in the sense that this fool and Shakespeare becomes the performance of deceptive identities, becomes the performance of disguised identities, people pretend to be what they are not. That manufacturing of identities becomes almost metaphorical as well as performative in the especially the comedies of Shakespeare.

The word fool away seems to have some kind of a similar Shakespearean quality here as well because he is performing an identity that he is not and that makes him some kind of subversive person as well as a bit of an antihero. The word anti-hero is interesting here because it completely undercuts the notional heroic representation of the military man, instead the novel emerges as a parody of that kind of heroic masculinity.

In a way it is very subversive parody of that military masculinity because what we have here instead are people who just lie to the teeth and tell everything to get away from the war or to get away from being killed. "You have an Englishman, presumably a doctor or presumably a soldier advising Yossarian how to lie perfectly or to pick the right organ for lying. The liver you see is a large, ugly mystery to us. If you have ever eaten liver, you know what I mean."

We are pretty sure today that the liver exists and we have a fairly good idea of what it does whenever it is doing what it is supposed to be doing. Beyond that, we are really in the dark. Now again, this seems to be some pseudo comicality about it. Because the way the Englishman describes the liver, we do not seem to know anything, we do not seem to need to know anything outside this.

We know what it is, we know how and when it works. He says, beyond that we know nothing. This was some kind of an epigrammatic quality. Beyond that, we are really in the dark. After all, what is a liver? My father, for example, died of cancer of the liver and was never sick a day of his life right up till the moment it killed him.

Never felt a twinge of pain. In a way that was too bad, since I hated my father. Lust for my mother. This seems to be some kind of very degenerate wit at play and this is reflective of a certain kind of mental condition, where he says it is too bad my father never suffered because I hated them. He seems to suggest that he has some kind of a sexual affiliation or sexual longing for his mother.

“What is an English medical officer doing on duty here? Yossarian wanted to know. The officer laughed. I will tell you all about that when I see you tomorrow morning. And throw that silly ice bag away before you die of pneumonia. Yossarian presumably has an ice bag with him and the Englishman is almost scuffling about it. And he says throw that away before you die of pneumonia and I will tell you when I meet you tomorrow morning; I will do my backstory what am I doing here.”

The next sentence again undercuts it logically. Yossarian never saw him again. That was one of the nice things about all the doctors at the hospital, he never saw any of them a second time. They came and went and simply disappeared. This is a place where no real intimacy can be established. This is the place where no real friendship can be forged because people just come in and go out.

This is a mutable volatiles space and this is a place of death as well. People just come die or dead people are brought in here. This is the place where borderlines blur away all the

time, life and death, friendship and enemy. “We do not quite know what side you are in.”
It is just a volatile mutable space.

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In place of the English intern the next day, there arrived a group of doctors he had never seen before to ask him about his appendix.

'There's nothing wrong with my appendix,' Yossarian informed them.
'The doctor yesterday said it was my liver.'

'Maybe it is his liver,' replied the white-haired officer in charge.
'What does his blood count show?'

'He hasn't had a blood count.'

'Have one taken right away. We can't afford to take chances with a patient in his condition. We've got to keep ourselves covered in case he dies.' He made a notation on his clipboard and spoke to Yossarian. 'In the meantime, keep that ice bag on. It's very important.'

'I don't have an ice bag on.'

'Well, get one. There must be an ice bag around here somewhere.
And let someone know if the pain becomes unendurable.'

At the end of ten days, a new group of doctors came to Yossarian with bad news; he was in perfect health and had to get out. He was rescued in the nick of time by a patient across the aisle who began to see everything twice. Without warning, the patient sat up in bed and shouted.

“In place of the English intern the next day, there arrived a group of doctors he had never seen before to ask him about the appendix. There is nothing wrong with my appendix. Yossarian informed them. The doctor yesterday said it was my liver.” He seems to take the suggestion of the Englishman. “Maybe it is his liver replied the white-haired officer in charge. What does his blood count show? He has not had a blood count.”

“Have one taken right away. We cannot afford to take chances with a patient in his condition. We have got to keep ourselves covered in case he dies. He made a notation on his clipboard and spoke to Yossarian. In the meantime, keep that ice bag on. It is very important. I do not have an ice bag on. Well, get one. There must be an ice bag around here somewhere. And let someone know if the pain becomes unendurable.”

This used to be some complete consternation and confusion and pandemonium and kills them on the doctors because each one of them seems to give them different advices. Englishman asked him get rid of the ice bag. We have a different doctor coming in today this day and asking him to put an ice bag on and he says that he does not have an ice bag. He says to just have one because it seems to be the panacea to a certain extent.

Then he says if it gets too unbearable, let us know. These shows the performative quality of sickness or illness. Illness and trauma are performed in this novel throughout in a

pseudo-comic way. The pseudo comicality is part of the absurdity and reflective of the spectacular absurdity categorizing the war.

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'I see everything twice!'

A nurse screamed and an orderly fainted. Doctors came running up from every direction with needles, lights, tubes, rubber mallets and oscillating metal tines. They rolled up complicated instruments on wheels. There was not enough of the patient to go around, and specialists pushed forward in line with raw tempers and snapped at their colleagues in front to hurry up and give somebody else a chance. A colonel with a large forehead and horn-rimmed glasses soon arrived at a diagnosis.

'It's meningitis,' he called out emphatically, waving the others back.
'Although Lord knows there's not the slightest reason for thinking so.'

'Then why pick meningitis?' inquired a major with a suave chuckle.
'Why not, let's say, acute nephritis?'

“At the end of ten days, a new group of doctors came to Yossarian with bad news. He was in perfect health and had to get out.” This happens to be the bad news given the circumstances that he is in perfect health and has to go out, which means he has to be back on the waterfront. He was rescued in the nick of time by a patient across the aisle who began to see everything twice. Without warning, the patient sat up in the bed and shouted, I see everything twice.”

This is the character in the question over here out of which the chapter is titled “The soldier” who saw everything twice. Just when he was about to be dismissed from the hospital, the entire attention focus shifted to this other person, other soldier who seemed to see everything twice.

“A nurse screamed and an orderly fainted. Doctors came running up from every direction with needles, lights, tubes, rubber mallets, and oscillating metal tines. They rolled up complicated instruments on wheels. There was not enough for the patient to go around and specialist pushed forward in line with raw tempers and snapped at their colleagues in front to hurry up and give somebody else a chance.”

“A colonel with a large forehead and horn-rimmed glasses soon arrived at a diagnosis. It is meningitis, he called out emphatically, waving the others back. Although Lord knows

there is not the slightest reason for thinking so. Then why pick meningitis? Inquired a major with a suave chuckle. Why not, let us say acute nephritis.” We see that plain classification over here.

They do not have any idea of any classification or any real knowledge about what the condition really is. And just bantering with some terms, which again shows complete utter chaos of the medical theory, the medical knowledge in the face of a real war, which again deglamorizes military medicine and gives us perhaps a true gritty dark picture what really goes on in the bureaucratic underbelly during the war.

Where even the best of the infrastructure, the best of the forces seem to suffer from this chaos; from this cognitive disturbance where doctors do not have any knowledge what the real symptom is. They just invent names to classify patients with. Meningitis, someone says acute nephritis; both know they are completely in the dark about it.

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In the end, the doctors were all in accord. They agreed they had no idea what was wrong with the soldier who saw everything twice, and they rolled him away into a room in the corridor and quarantined everyone else in the ward for fourteen days.

Thanksgiving Day came and went without any fuss while Yossarian was still in the hospital. The only bad thing about it was the turkey for dinner, and even that was pretty good. It was the most rational Thanksgiving he had ever spent, and he took a sacred oath to spend every future Thanksgiving Day in the cloistered shelter of a hospital. He broke his sacred oath the very next year, when he spent the holiday in a hotel room instead in intellectual conversation with Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife, who had Dori Duz's dog tags on for the occasion and who henpecked Yossarian sententiously for being cynical and callous about Thanksgiving, even though she didn't believe in God just as much as he didn't.

'I'm probably just as good an atheist as you are,' she speculated boastfully. 'But even I feel that we all have a great deal to be thankful for and that we shouldn't be ashamed to show it.'

'Name one thing I've got to be thankful for,' Yossarian challenged her without interest.

'Well' Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife mused and paused a moment to ponder dubiously. 'Me.'

'Oh, come on,' he scoffed.

She arched her eyebrows in surprise. 'Aren't you thankful for me?' she asked. She

“Then the person who says, one who states it is meningitis says because I am a meningitis man, I am a specialist in that that is why I am choosing to classify him as a meningitis patient. And I am ascribing that the double vision that he has to meningitis. Because I am a meningitis man that is why, and not an acute nephritis man, retorted the colonel I am not going to give up to any of you kidney birds without a struggle. I was here first.”

This is very dark humorous because the doctors with different specializations have crowded around this patient and it almost becomes finders, keepers of first come, first come first serve. The first person who been here says he has to have a problem and he is just given a logical category or medical classification based on his own expertise because he was there first, so he will claim the person, and in a process get some feasibility in that military ward.

In the end, all the doctors were all in accord. They agreed but they had no idea what was wrong with the soldier who saw everything twice, and rolled him away into a room in the corridor and quarantined everyone else in the ward for 14 days. They all agreed that they have no idea this complete chaos about the condition of the patient and they rolled him away to a different ward and everyone else who have been in contact with this person was quarantined for 14 days.

“Thanksgiving Day came and went without any fuss while Yossarian was still in the hospital. The only bad thing about it was the turkey for dinner and even that was pretty good.” We are playing with adjectives, playing with appetites over here. The turkey was bad, the only bad thing was the turkey for dinner on Thanksgiving and even that was good. We are talking about the hospital and very festive terms.

It was the most rational Thanksgiving he had ever spent and it took a sacred oath to spend every future Thanksgiving in a cloistered shelter of a hospital. “The hospital seems to be the best place, the most luxurious place, the most indulging place for someone of his condition. He broke his sacred oath the very next year, when he spent the holiday in a hotel room instead intellectual conversation with Lieutenant Scheisskopf’s wife who had Dori Duz’s dog tags on for the occasion.”

And who henpecked Yossarian sententiously being cynical and callous about Thanksgiving, even though she did not believe in God just as much as he did not. He seems to have some kind of affair with someone's wife. He takes a sacred oath about spending Thanksgiving in hospitals and the very next year he spends in hotel with someone's wife, Lieutenant Scheisskopf’s wife and they seem to be having an affair together. This whole thing is desacralized.

This is the interesting bit in the novel that one spent a bit of time with and that is nothing in this novel is sacred. Nothing in this novel is immutable or set in stone or permanent and impermanent seems to be the only permanent condition in this novel. Human relationship is not permanent. Human space is not permanent. Human sentiment is not permanent. Human cognitive conditions are not permanent.

Mutability, almost volatility becomes the only constant condition in this novel which makes the traumatic condition extremely intense in quality. Because of volatility, we do not really have the time to dwell on a particular traumatic condition. Unlike Septimus Smith who dwells in his condition and he has his melancholia which is fixated in quality.

These people are so bombarded by trauma literally as well as metaphorically that have to keep moving on and every day is a new traumatic condition for them, which makes them do things which are utterly chaotic in quality. In the process, nothing is set in stone, nothing is immutable, nothing is permanent, and nothing is sacred in a universe like this in “Catch-22”.

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'And don't tell me God works in mysterious ways,' Yossarian continued, hurtling on over her objection. 'There's nothing so mysterious about it. He's not working at all. He's playing. Or else He's forgotten all about us. That's the kind of God you people talk about - a country bumpkin, a clumsy, bungling, brainless, conceited, uncouth hayseed. Good God, how much reverence can you have for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to include such phenomena as phlegm and tooth decay in His divine system of creation? What in the world was running through that warped, evil, scatological mind of His when He robbed old people of the power to control their bowel movements? Why in the world did He ever create pain?'

'Pain?' Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife pounced upon the word victoriously. 'Pain is a useful symptom. Pain is a warning to us of bodily dangers.'

'And who created the dangers?' Yossarian demanded. He laughed caustically. 'Oh, He was really being charitable to us when He gave us pain! Why couldn't He have used a doorbell instead to notify us, or one of His celestial choirs? Or a system of blue-and-red neon tubes right in the middle of each person's forehead. Any jukebox manufacturer worth his salt could have done that. Why couldn't He?'

'People would certainly look silly walking around with red neon tubes in the middle of their foreheads.'

'They certainly look beautiful now writhing in agony or stupefied with morphine, don't they? What a colossal, immortal blunderer!'

This condition about God comes up again and we talked about how this seems to be a godless quality on novel and by godless I mean centreless quality. That does not seem to be any faith system available, any faith system left or any centricity left. It is just a completely decentred novel. There is no belief system. There is no faith system. There is no ontological difference; between the friend and the enemy, between the healer and the patient, between the good person and the evil person.

This centrelessness which sometimes manifests itself in pseudo-comic ways or tragicomic ways informs the globulus quality in the novel. There is just absolutely no rationale of what is happening and in the beginning of the session there seems to be some very serious medical condition, it is very acute medical, psychological, cognitive conditions which are being mocked at, which are being laughed at, which are being completely misunderstood.

The only form of communication in the novel is miscommunication, only form of understanding can happen through misunderstanding. There is this conversation with this woman and Yossarian and again they are talking about God, this Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife with whom Yossarian is having some kind of amorous exchange which quickly translates or switches over into exchange about God.

Again which show that there is no divine or there is no holy or sacred order, everything is just debased, everything is profaned in this novel, which is entirely about the decimation of the human condition or the disintegration of human belief system, which is what is wrought by the war. The real trauma of war is a disintegration of values. Wisdom manifests itself in pseudo-comic structures.

“And do not tell me God works in mysterious ways, Yossarian continued, hurtling on over objection. There is nothing so mysterious about it. He is not working at all. The way they talk about God over here becomes quite profane and almost sacrilegious in quality in a way it is very anti-Christian novel. He is playing or else is forgotten all about us.”

“That is the kind of God you people talk about, a country bumpkin, a clumsy, bumbling, brainless, conceited, uncouth or hayseed. Good god, how much reverence can you have for a supreme being who finds it necessary to include such phenomena as phlegm and tooth decay and his divine system of creation? What in the world was running through that warped, evil, scatological mind of his when he robbed old people of the power to control their bowel movements? Why in the world did he ever create pain?”

This seems to be not just an atheist condition, but anti-atheist condition or anti-atheist position. He is talking about the pain the human suffering and he is asking; this is a profound question that Yossarian is trying to convey disguise through different kinds of pseudo-comics signifiers which also scatological in quality.

But the question he is asking is if there is a divine design that people believe in or subscribe to why is pain such a big part of that design. He says as someone who undergoes pain at a daily level, as a veteran of the war; so that becomes almost a carnivalesque question, subversive question. "Pain Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife pounced upon the word victoriously. Pain is a useful symptom. Pain is a warning to us of bodily dangers. And who created the dangerous? Yossarian demanded. He laughed caustically."

The caustic is a very important quality of this culture of comicality, it is a very caustic comicality. "He laughed caustically. Oh, he was really being charitable to us when he gave us pain. Why could not he have you used a doorbell instead to notify us or one of his celestial choirs? Or a system of blue and red neon tubes right in the middle of each person's forehead.

Any jukebox manufacturer worth his salt could have done that. Why could not he? People would certainly look silly walking around with red neon tubes in the middle of their foreheads. They certainly look beautiful now writhing in agony or stupefied with morphine, do not they? What a colossal, immortal blunderer." There is a very interesting play between matter and metaphor over here because Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife takes Yossarian's point literally.

Yossarian is saying instead of pain acting as a signal for imminent danger; why could not have something more ridiculous like jukebox or neon tube in the forehead, which is meant to be a joke. It is meant to be a metaphor. But Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife takes it literally and says people look silly, so that is why God designed differently.

Yossarian comes back to the fundamental question of pain and he says that they look beautiful now in agony or stupefied with morphine and again this is the fundamental irony which informs the narrative instrument in the novel, which is extremely profoundly

and ontologically ironical. This is an ironical universe. This is a carnivalesque universe where the differences between laughter and suffering, between crying and laughing are just blurred.

There is no distinction between happiness and sorrow, the laughter and crying, between acquirement and fulfilment and loss between presence and absence; all these borderlines are blurred away in this heavily bombarded world.

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When you consider the opportunity and power He had to really do a job, and then look at the stupid, ugly little mess He made of it instead, His sheer incompetence is almost staggering. It's obvious He never met a payroll. Why, no self-respecting businessman would hire a bungler like Him as even a shipping clerk!

Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife had turned ashen in disbelief and was ogling him with alarm. 'You'd better not talk that way about Him, honey,' she warned him reprovingly in a low and hostile voice. 'He might punish you.'

'Isn't He punishing me enough?' Yossarian snorted resentfully. 'You know, we mustn't let Him get away with it. Oh, no, we certainly mustn't let Him get away scot free for all the sorrow He's caused us. Someday I'm going to make Him pay. I know when. On the Judgment Day. Yes, That's the day I'll be close enough to reach out and grab that little yokel by His neck and -'

'Stop it! Stop it!' Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife screamed suddenly, and began beating him ineffectually about the head with both fists. 'Stop it!'

Yossarian ducked behind his arm for protection while she slammed away at him in feminine fury for a few seconds, and then he caught her determinedly by the wrists and forced her gently back down on the bed. 'What the hell are you getting so upset about?' he asked her bewilderedly in a tone of contrite amusement. 'I thought you didn't believe in God.'

'I don't,' she sobbed, bursting violently into tears. 'But the God I don't believe in is a good God, a just God, a merciful God. He's not the mean and stupid God you make

The anti-atheistic condition continues. There seems to be some kind of King Learish quality about it. In "King Lear" towards the end of the novel that too seems to have some very fundamental questions about the ontology of atheist and the rationale of atheistic universe where there has been constantly question in that drama as well.

It is also a very grotesque drama of human suffering and pain, which too has a fool. We have a similar sentiment play here as well. This reflects the fact that some very serious dark questions are disguised through comedy in this novel. We have very fundamental questions about the rationale of the war; the rationale of suffering, the rationale of human agony, asked in very flippant ways when two people who presumably have an amorphous exchange.

When we consider the opportunity and power he had to really do a job, and then look at the stupid, ugly mess he made of it instead, his sheer incompetence is almost staggering. It is obvious has never met a payroll. Why no self-respecting businessman would hire a

bungler like him as even a shipping clerk. The metaphysical divine design has been talked about in very profane sacrilegious terms and sacrilege seems to be the sentiment in this novel.

“Lieutenant Scheisskopf’s wife had turned ashen in disbelief and was ogling him with alarm. You would better not talk that way about him, honey, she warned him reprovingly in a low and hostile voice. He might punish you.” Yossarian’s response again is quasi-philosophical where he questions whether he is punished enough. “Yossarian snorted resentfully. You know, we must not let him get away with it.”

“Oh, no. we certainly must not let him get away scot free for all the sorrow he has caused us. Someday, I am going to make him pay. I know when. On the Judgement Day. That is the day I will be enough to reach out and grab that little yokel by his neck and. Stop it. Stop it. Lieutenant Scheisskopf’s wife screamed suddenly and began beating him ineffectually about the head with both fists. Stop it.”

This is sacrilege in Christian terms where he is turning the ontology and the functionality of judgment head upside down where instead of God judging the human. He is the supposed to judge the God that day he is going to grab him. He is going to attack him, physically attack him and that is a sacrilegious him to say and Lieutenant Scheisskopf’s wife retorts hysterically and asked him to stop it and started beating him ineffectually.

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beating him ineffectually about the head with both fists. 'Stop it!'

Yossarian ducked behind his arm for protection while she slammed away at him in feminine fury for a few seconds, and then he caught her determinedly by the wrists and forced her gently back down on the bed. 'What the hell are you getting so upset about?' he asked her bewilderedly in a tone of contrite amusement. 'I thought you didn't believe in God.'

'I don't,' she sobbed, bursting violently into tears. 'But the God I don't believe in is a good God, a just God, a merciful God. He's not the mean and stupid God you make Him out to be.'

Yossarian laughed and turned her arms loose. 'Let's have a little more religious freedom between us,' he proposed obligingly. 'You don't believe in the God you want to, and I won't believe in the God I want to. Is that a deal?'

That was the most illogical Thanksgiving he could ever remember spending, and his thoughts returned wishfully to his halcyon fourteen-day quarantine in the hospital the year before; but even that idyll had ended on a tragic note; he was still in good health when the quarantine period was over, and they told him again that he had to get out and go to war. Yossarian sat up in bed when he heard the bad news and shouted.

'I see everything twice!'

“Yossarian ducked behind his arm for protection while she slammed away at him in feminine fury for a few seconds and then he caught her determinedly by the wrists and forced her gently back down on the bed. What the hell are you getting so upset about? He asked her bewilderedly but wildly in a tone of contrite amusement. I thought you did not believe in God. I do not, she sobbed bursting violently into tears.

But the God I do not believe in is a good God, a just God, a merciful God. He is not the mean and stupid God you make him out to be.” This is a very postmodernist thing. She believes in some type of an absence. This completely blurs the borderline between absence and presence. She acknowledges the fact that she does not believe in a God. She goes on to say that God that I do not believe in is just God. The God I do not believe in, the God I disbelieve in is a rational God which makes the entire logical structure quite complex in quality.”

There is something of a partial presence that God has in her disbelief as well. Disbelief is not a rejection of belief. Disbelief becomes a continuation of belief system and this very postmodernist, post-structuralist as well. She does not believe in a God, but the God which she does not believe in is a rational God, is a just God. It generates a very complex ontological play between presence and absence, between faith and faithlessness. These borderlines blurry, they get entangled together. Yossarian laughed and this again is part of the production and consumption of paradoxes, which run across the novel.

“Yossarian laughed and turned her arms loose. Let us have a little more religious freedom between us he proposed obligingly. You do not believe in the God you want to and I would not believe in the god I want to. Is that a deal?” This is a half-chopped logic and again that half-chopped logical structure appropriates everything right; so nothing is sacred, nothing is a metaphysical in this novel.

Everything can be consumed by half logic, everything can be consumed by quasi logic because quasi logic is only logic left in this world. That was the most illogical Thanksgiving he could ever remember spending and his thoughts returned wishfully to his halcyon 14-day quarantine in the hospital the year before, but even that idyll had ended on a tragic note.

He sort of thought about what happened the next year and then he comes back to the present day where he is in the hospital and he is surrounded by a soldier who seems to see everything twice. He was still in good health when the quarantine period was over and they told him again he had to get out and go to the war. “Yossarian sat up in the bed when he heard the bad news and shouted. I see everything twice.”

This seems to be infectious and he is performing that madness, perform that illusions or delusion, disease, illness these become quite performative, rather performative categories. It is just like the earliest soldier had created a lot of chaos by claiming to see everything twice, Yossarian thought this is an easy way to trick people.

It becomes his trick stab, malingerer soldier and he says I see everything twice. He is a rogue anti-hero over here and he is just trying to do his best to perform in this novel which will make him fixated in that hospital, which is the safest place for him at that point of time.

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Pandemonium broke loose in the ward again. The specialists came running up from all directions and ringed him in a circle of scrutiny so confining that he could feel the humid breath from their various noses blowing uncomfortably upon the different sectors of his body. They went snooping into his eyes and ears with tiny beams of light, assaulted his legs and feet with rubber hammers and vibrating forks, drew blood from his veins, held anything handy up for him to see on the periphery of his vision.

The leader of this team of doctors was a dignified, solicitous gentleman who held one finger up directly in front of Yossarian and demanded, 'How many fingers do you see?'

'Two,' said Yossarian.

'How many fingers do you see now?' asked the doctor, holding up two.

'Two,' said Yossarian.

'And how many now?' asked the doctor, holding up none.

'Two,' said Yossarian.

The doctor's face wreathed with a smile. 'By Jove, he's right,' he declared jubilantly. 'He *does* see everything twice.'

They rolled Yossarian away on a stretcher into the room with the other soldier who

“Pandemonium broke loose in the ward again. The specialists came running from all directions and ringed him in a circle of scrutiny confining that he could feel the humid breath from their various noses blowing uncomfortably upon the different sectors of his body. They went snooping into his eyes and ears with tiny beams of light, assaulted his legs and feet with rubber hammers and vibrating forks, drew blood from his veins, and held anything handy up for him to see on the periphery of his vision.”

He is surrounded by people and doctors. “The leader of this team of doctors was a dignified, solicitous gentlemen who held one finger up directly in front of Yossarian and demanded. How many fingers do you see? Two said Yossarian. How many fingers do you see now? Asked doctor holding up two. Two said Yossarian. How many now? Asked the doctor holding up none. Two said Yossarian. The doctor's face wreathed with a smile. By Jove, he is right, he declared jubilantly. He does see everything twice.”

It is almost become some kind of a mathematical medical play to confirm his illness and has a pseudo-comic quality to it. The doctor seems to be congratulating himself having diagnosed a disease.

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'And how many now?' asked the doctor, holding up none.

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The doctor's face wreathed with a smile. 'By Jove, he's right,' he declared jubilantly. 'He *does* see everything twice.'

They rolled Yossarian away on a stretcher into the room with the other soldier who saw everything twice and quarantined everyone else in the ward for another fourteen days.

'I see everything twice!' the soldier who saw everything twice shouted when they rolled Yossarian in.

'I see everything twice!' Yossarian shouted back at him just as loudly, with a secret wink.

'The walls! The walls!' the other soldier cried. 'Move back the walls!'

'The walls! The walls!' Yossarian cried. 'Move back the walls!'

One of the doctors pretended to shove the wall back. 'Is that far enough?'

“They rolled Yossarian away on a stretcher into the room with the other soldier who saw everything twice and quarantined everyone else in the ward for another 14 days. I see everything twice the soldier who saw everything twice shouted when they rolled Yossarian in. I see everything twice. Yossarian shouted back at him just as loudly with a secret wink. The walls. The walls. The other soldier cried. Move back the walls.”

“The walls. The walls. Yossarian cried. Move back the walls. One of the doctors pretended to shove the wall back. Is that far enough?” We can see this is an entirely absurdist spectacle. We do not know if only two people over here is having an optical illusion, but we know for sure that Yossarian does not. The doctors are pretending to cater or respond to the optical illusion by making tangible things move pretending. The entire room becomes an absurd theatre of sorts.

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The soldier who saw everything twice nodded weakly and sank back on his bed. Yossarian nodded weakly too, eyeing his talented roommate with great humility and admiration. He knew he was in the presence of a master. His talented roommate was obviously a person to be studied and emulated. During the night, his talented roommate died, and Yossarian decided that he had followed him far enough.

'I see everything once!' he cried quickly.

A new group of specialists came pounding up to his bedside with their instruments to find out if it was true.

'How many fingers do you see?' asked the leader, holding up one.

'One.'

The doctor held up two fingers. 'How many fingers do you see now?'

'One.'

The doctor held up ten fingers. 'And how many now?'

'One.'

The doctor turned to the other doctors with amazement.

'He does see everything once!' he exclaimed. 'We made him all better.'

'And just in time too' announced the doctor with whom Yossarian next found

“The soldier who saw everything twice nodded weakly and sank back on his bed. Yossarian nodded weakly too, eyeing his talented roommate with great humility and admiration. He knew he was in the presence of a master. His talented roommate was a person to be studied and emulated. During the night, his talented roommate died and Yossarian decided that he had followed him far enough.”

“I see everything once he cried quickly. A new group of specialists came pounding up to his bedside with their instruments to find out if it was true.” This very close proximity to death is something which categorizes this pseudo-comic equality because other person who had been brought in had a very serious medical condition. We are told that he died already at night.

“Yossarian decided to emulate him, admire him, and pick up tricks from him and moment the other person died Yossarian decided that he is going to kill himself as well. He declared that I see everything once he cried quickly. A new group of specialists come in. How many fingers? asked the leader holding up one. One. The doctor held up two fingers. How many fingers do you see now? One.

Doctor held up ten fingers and how many now? One. The doctor are turned to the other doctors with amazement. He does see everything once he exclaimed. We made him all better. We can see this becomes a complete caricature of military medicine, but also is a reflection of the entire cluelessness of military medicine to the about the real mental

health of the soldiers. The doctors over here appear as parody caricatured representations.”

The most serious representation here, the most serious message that is there, the very dark, serious message over here is a complete helplessness of the doctors as well as the patients. The doctors have no idea and they just try; it is a mathematical formula to address the patients which does not work because the real sufferers die and the complete helplessness, complete lack of treatment, complete lack of aid or help, and that becomes the normative conditional over here.

Yossarian’s caricature, Yossarian’s parody becomes very grotesque mimicry of the real mental condition; the mimicry of the real horrendous human suffering that characterizes the war and the auto-inability of the military medicine or the medical science around the time to address those at any level, medically or level of empathy or human understanding is a complete failure or complete crisis of the medical practice around that time.

It becomes very serious and sinister and dark representation of human helplessness around that time, which is again reflective of the godless, centreless quality which you also see in some absurdist theatre and also sometimes in Shakespeare plays such as “King Lear”.