

War: The Combat between Power-Hungry Individuals in American War Literature

Brkić, Matea

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2018

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:981267>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-11-20**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek](#)



Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i
mađarskog jezika i književnosti

Matea Brkić

**Rat: bitka između pojedinaca željnih moći u američkoj ratnoj
književnosti**

Završni rad

Mentor: doc.dr.sc. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki

Osijek, 2018

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i
mađarskog jezika i književnosti

Matea Brkić

**Rat: bitka između pojedinaca željnih moći u američkoj ratnoj
književnosti**

Završni rad

Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno polje: filologija

Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: doc.dr.sc. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki

Osijek, 2018

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and
Hungarian Language and Literature

Matea Brkić

**War: The Combat between Power-Hungry Individuals in
American War Literature**

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2018

J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and
Hungarian Language and Literature

Matea Brkić

**War: The Combat between Power-Hungry Individuals in
American War Literature**

Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific area: humanities

Scientific field: philology

Scientific branch: English Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki, Assistant Professor

Osijek, 2018

Table of Contents:

Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	2
1. American World War II Literature.....	3-4
2. Northrop Frye's "Theory of Modes": <i>Alazon</i> and <i>Pharmakos</i>	5
2.1. <i>Alazon</i> in <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> and <i>Catch-22</i>	6-10
2.2. <i>Pharmakos</i> in <i>The Naked and the Dead</i> and <i>Catch-22</i>	11-14
3. <i>Trickster</i> in <i>Catch-22</i>	15-16
Conclusion.....	17
Works Cited.....	18

Abstract

To American nation, World War II was a noble and just war to end fascism around the world. In other words, Americans perceived it as a mythical quest that required the most heroic and ready soldiers. However, some of the most critically acclaimed American World War II novels, depict an entirely different portrayal of war and combatants. Instead of focusing on the combat between Americans and their adversary, the novels inspect American army as a battleground in which officers thrive at the expense of their own soldiers. Enlisted men with higher rank are portrayed as power-hungry people fighting only for ranks and rewards. Examples can be found in Heller's *Catch-22* and Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*. Northrop Frye's "Theory of Modes" will serve as a theoretical background for the interpretation and analysis of officers and soldiers in the novel suggesting two distinguished types of characters – commander as *alazon*, and soldier as *pharmakos*. Finally, the paper will analyze a special character of a *trickster*, who very well depicts the absurdist vision of the army and war therefore shattering the preconceived perception of the war as something noble and mythical.

Keywords: World War II, corruption, Northrop Frye, *alazon*, *pharmakos*, *trickster*, *Catch-22*, *The Naked and the Dead*

Introduction

This paper will analyze the position of high-ranking officers and ordinary soldiers in the American army in novels *The Naked and the Dead* and *Catch-22*. The first part of the paper brings an overview of American World War II literature in the context of American culture and global politics. The second part deals with Northrop Frye's "Theory of Modes" and serves as a theoretical framework for the analysis of characters. The main types of characters from Frye's work are *alazon* and *pharmakos*, portrayed as commanders and enlisted men respectively. The third type of characters that appears in *Catch 22* is the *trickster*, whose function in this satirical novel suggest the utter fragmentation of any noble cause and honor within the glorified American military and myth. The two opposing characters are *alazon* and *pharmakos*. *Alazon* shows his dominance by imposing his will and doing everything in favor of his prosperity, and his victim, *pharmakos*, is a type of character who obeys every order since his position does not allow him to disagree. Characters exhibiting *alazon* characteristics are officer with higher ranks as opposed to soldiers who embody *pharmakos* characteristics. In addition, both novels provide a clear picture about the hierarchy inside the American army and how the whole system functions. The third type called *trickster* can be found in the *Catch-22* and serves as an example for prudent and canny people who manage to accomplish their goals and even raise above some high-ranking individuals in the army. Throughout the paper their relationships will be analyzed and exemplified based on both novels.

1. American World War II Literature

Looking back at the American history it is clear that their nation has been involved in wars on many continents. Americans consider that it is their mission to bring peace, freedom, and democracy to other countries and that is a way of showing that wars have their purpose:

American wars are revolutions, the Civil War on a world scale. The end and the purpose of those wars is freedom, the destruction of slavery (whatever its form, and the construction of individual and national independence. Wars, in American Myth, are the expression of the belief that Americans can do anything they desire, can build nations and rebuild societies, can speed progress, bring freedom and democracy to the world, so long as they are united, organized, and willing to devote all their human and material resources to the end desired. (Robertson 349)

World War I served as an inspiration for many writers who participated in combats, but after the Second World War the American literature flourished. As a topic, war appeared in ancient Greece, in Homer's works whose poems glorified men and war as something mythical. Nowadays the theme has remained the same, but the content and perspective have changed. As Hoelbling states in his work, around two thousand World War II novels were published between 1945 and 1958 (qtd. in Poljak Rehlicki 87). Scholars tried to categorize literary production of that period and Miller in his work *An Armed America: A History of the American Military Novel* divides them into three categories. The first category includes novels written similarly to novels about the World War I, and some famous works are *The Wine of Astonishment* written by Marthe Gelhorn or *Kings Go Forth* by Joe David Brown. Miller describes the first category as novels about mental and physical horrors and about the loss of faith in the noble purpose of the war (qtd. in Poljak Rehlicki 87). The second category includes works in which the characters changed their opinion about wars and they consider war as a natural part of human lives. Among famous novels from this period is also *The Naked and the Dead*, *A Walk in the Sun* by Harry Brown, *Roll Back the Sky* by Ward Taylor, and many more. *Catch-22* is prime example for the third category which partially overlaps with the second one, as Poljak Rehlicki notices (90). Instead of describing battlefields and fighting, writers introduced a new perspective: organization and hierarchy inside the army. They show that combat is not used for a noble cause, but instead it is a tool for achieving personal interests. In addition, there are numerous movies regarding the same topic, such as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Dunkirk*, and *Enemy at the Gates*. Although years have passed, the

interest in war is still present and many books and films are being published even after seven decades which serves as a proof of this war's immense influence on countries and generations across time and space.

2. Northrop Frye's "Theory of Modes" - *Alazon* and *Pharmakos*

According to Northrop Frye and his "Theory of Modes", fiction may be classified not morally, but by the hero's power of action, which may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same (Frye 33). He classified characters into five modes. First mode is a myth, second one a romance, then high mimetic and low mimetic mode, and finally, the ironic mode. High and low mimetic modes will be analyzed in this paper since in high mimetic mode hero is a leader, whereas in the low mimetic mode the hero is "one of us" (Frye 33) and one can easily identify with him. Another term that is introduced in "Theory of Modes" is *pathos*, "the best word for low mimetic or domestic tragedy" (Frye 38). Frye explains that *pathos* represents a character in a conflict between inner and outer world and reality created by people and himself (Frye 39). As a result, the type of character that appears in tragedies is called *alazon*. As Frye explains, *alazon* means impostor, someone who pretends or tries to be something more than he is (39). Officers from the mentioned novels exhibit *alazon* characteristics in a way that they try to contradict everyone: nature, laws, and other people. They act as if they are above any laws and their main goal is to gain even more power by corrupting, humiliating, and creating rules that favor them. As opposed to that, there is the other type of character, *pharmakos*, who is typically a victim: "neither innocent nor guilty. He is innocent in the sense that what happens to him is far greater than anything he has done provokes, like the mountaineer whose shout brings down an avalanche. He is guilty in the sense that he is a member of a guilty society, or living in a world where such injustices are an inescapable part of existence" (Frye 41). The best examples are enlisted men from both novels whose job is to quietly obey orders even though they know that they are in fact not serving the country, but their officers. As the war progresses, men realize that army is an organization governed by absurd laws and rules and that the real enemy is their commander who treats them as if they are just numbers whose lives do not matter.

2.1. Alazon in *The Naked and the Dead* and *Catch-22*

Novels display various characters, from enlisted men to officers on a higher position who exhibit *alazon* characteristics. Their personalities are more or less the same and all of them are led by one thing and that is power. As one of the soldiers in *Catch 22* comments: “Some people are getting killed and a lot more are making money and having fun” (Heller 85). Rivalry and jealousy are spread among the officers who see everyone as a potential threat for their advancement in the Army. Protagonists show their feelings and attitudes toward each other and often lie and plot just to protect their position.

General Cummings, Lieutenant Hearn, and Sergeant Croft from *The Naked and the Dead* are the officers that will be described in this paper as a prime examples of *alazons*. All three of them are led by a desire for victory and power, without thinking about soldiers and how they treat them. Most of the enlisted men do not like them, and the ones that do usually have similar interests and they get along. Corporal Stanley wants to become a platoon sergeant and he feels that his friendship with Croft can help him achieve his wish. The two of them are really close because they “were sensing a similarity between them” (Mailer 295). In the *Catch-22* readers get a better picture of how the army functions. Instead of describing battles, Heller focuses on intricate relationships between soldiers and how the army functions as a whole: “Ideas and examples from the novel can be transferred to different areas of human life and social institutions; the army, the education system, legal system and media” (Maksimović 14). The best examples are Colonel Catchart, Lieutenant Colonel Korn, General Peckem and Major --- de Coverley that will also be portrayed in this paper. Their only interest is to stand out and do something that will assure their position even after the war ends. Frequent conflicts between them represent a threat for the safety of their troops but that is not their concern. They possess and control everything, including the lives of soldiers: “That leg belongs to the US government. It’s no different than a gear...” (Heller 300). According to Lieutenant Colonel Korn, the best is not to give their men hope of something better. Even though most of the time soldiers do not agree with certain decisions made by their superiors, they justify them by saying that a man should have confidence in the people above them because they know what they are doing (Heller 233).

In *The Naked and the Dead* officer with the highest rank is General Cummings. His opinion is that “corruption is the cement that keeps the Army from breaking apart” (Mailer 161). Major General Edward Cummings is a commander of the troops on Anopopei. He is a typical career soldier who dreamt about being a general ever since he was in a military school.

Cyrus Cummings, his father, sent him there when he was ten and he graduated as a cadet colonel nine years after. He sent him there because, in his opinion, he spent too much time with his mother who indulged him and brought out only the worst in him (Mailer 271). Military school changed him and made him feel distant from his family because he saw them for only six weeks a year: "Through the years there he gets the best marks in his class, becomes a minor athlete, No. 3 man on the tennis team. Like his father, he is respected if he is not loved" (Mailer 272). Even then he stood out. On one occasion, after asking a professor a question about generals and comparing them which was seen as rebellious and contradictory (Mailer 275), other students laughed at him asking how many times he would spend on taking Richmond or saying that he would be sent to France as an advisor (Mailer 275). They added "The Strategist" under his record in *The Howitzer*. That showed him that others dislike and disapprove his methodology early in his career.

General Cummings is in charge of everything and everybody on Anopopei. He has his own idea of treating people and fear is one of them because "the army functions best when you're afraid of the man above you" (Mailer 115). Another important thing for the commander is to break their spirits and make them feel like peasants. Evidently, he does not care for individual's personality and his way of acting does not bother him. Lieutenant Hearn warns him that it is bad if your men hate you, but Cummings does not think of that as something negative at all. He even compares the two of them with God, who, if exists, is apparently just like them. This clearly shows the "god-complex" Cummings possesses and his conviction that he is superior to all on the island. In this regard, he is a perfect portrayal of *alazon* regardless of the fact that his men know that he is just a human being and there is no reason for being afraid of him since he is not better than them (Mailer 202).

In *Catch-22*, The person everyone fears the most is Colonel Catchart. His main preoccupation is becoming a general and he considers everyone a threat for his success:

Colonel Cathcart was conceited because he was a full colonel with a combat command at the age of only thirty-six; and Colonel Cathcart was dejected because although he was already thirty-six he was still only a full colonel. Colonel Cathcart was impervious to absolutes. He could measure his own progress only in relationship to others, and his idea of excellence was to do something at least as well as all the men his own age who were doing the same thing even better. The fact that there were thousands of men his own age and older who had not even attained the rank of major enlivened him with foppish

delight in his own remarkable worth; on the other hand, the fact that there were men of his own age and younger who were already generals contaminated him with an agonizing sense of failure. (Heller 152)

Similarly to Sergeant Sam Croft in *The Naked and the Dead*, Catchart pushes his people to the limits and volunteers his group for the most difficult tasks. Every time his soldiers think that they can go home, he raises the number of missions. According to *Catch-22* they cannot do anything about it because they have to take orders from their commanding officers. He even raises the number of missions when some of the men were killed during the combat. By the end of the novel the required number is eighty. His efforts to become a general lead to numerous plans of how to achieve it. One of the possible solutions is volunteering for the most demanding battles, but also asking the chaplain to pray before every mission. His intentions are to get into the newspapers in order of self-promotion. Like Cummings, he is diplomatic when saying that "It isn't that I think the enlisted men are dirty, common and inferior" (Heller 157), however, Heller's satire is most evident here, and the reader knows that this is exactly what he thinks since his actions run counter to his words. For example, he writes personal letters to the families of dead soldiers and promotes only certain people in order to gain more publicity. Catchart is actually insecure, incompetent, poor leader infected with jealousy and contempt for others.

Lieutenant colonel Korn is another power-hungry officer who believes he belongs in the spotlight and wants to show that he is a good leader. He says that the war is crawling with group commanders who are merely doing their duty (Heller 172) and he belongs to that group. Just like Catchart, he too strives for a higher rank. Both of them are taught to aspire to higher things and that is exactly what they are doing, which according to the American Dream is desirable, however the means of achieving that goal are wrong, and run counter to the American work ethic of hard work and integrity. Korn and Catchart do everything it takes not to ruin their reputation. For instance, when Yossarian flew twice over Ferrara they did not know how to cover it in the reports, since it was forbidden to do that, but Yossarian proposed giving him a medal, at least for taking down the bridge. Giving medals without any particular reason is a common practice in the novel. General Peckem once received a medal for capturing Bologna although he did not have anything to do with it, but he was the only officer who asked for it. In addition, having a relative on an influential position is also important for these types of characters. General Dreedle agrees that war is hell, but that does not stop him

from making a good living out of it nor including his son-in-law, general Moodus, into the business with him (Heller 173).

General Peckem considers himself an intelligent man whose only fault is that he has no faults (Heller 257). In order to show his power and prestige, he wants more staff and people in his team. If he wants someone on a particular position, he does not care whether that person is capable of performing his job. If a person does not know how to solve a certain task, then he can just give it to someone else to do it for him. It is called delegation of responsibility, as Peckem explained (Heller 257). “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” (Heller 257). General Peckem rules from his office and stays away from battles and real war, just like Major ---de Coverley. No one knows his real name and no one dares to ask him anything. Not even Germans or regiment of C.I.D. men could get any information about him. “His duties as squadron executive officer did consist entirely, as both Doc Daneeka and Major Major had conjectured, of pitching horseshoes, kidnaping Italian laborers, and renting apartments for the enlisted men and officers to use on rest leaves, and he excelled at all three” (Heller 108).

Lieutenant Robert Hearn and General Cummings from the novel *The Naked and the Dead* both come from rich families and are well educated. Hearn is the only one to whom Cummings talks more often since he wanted to be around someone who is intelligent, “a brilliance to match his own, an aptitude for power” (Mailer 212). Hearn has always felt superior to others, but is not able to show what he is capable of in the U.S. He joins the army to show what he can do and also to get more power and become influential through the war. As already mentioned, Cummings and Hearn talk to each other and Cummings gives him advice and talks about war and enlisted men: “Hearn had known ever since he had been with the General that if he wanted to he could easily rise to a field officer's rank by the end of the war” (Mailer 110). Their relationship is based on fear. Hearn is afraid of him, but for Cummings “he had been the pet, the dog” (Mailer 208). After realizing that Hearn is ready to fight back, Cummings transfers him to another platoon. Eventually he ends up in the Croft’s platoon which is preparing for a dangerous mission to Botoi Bay. Even though Hearn is not familiar with the enlisted men, Cummings believes that he possesses the qualities of a good leader. When it comes to the way of behaving toward their men, Hearn is totally the opposite. He does not want to hurt or humiliate them and does not share General’s opinion that the platoon will perform any better if men are frightened. During their mission to Botoi Bay, he

talks to the members of his platoon and his performance is friendly. In Croft's opinion, that kind of behavior cannot bring anything good. Soldiers agree; they think that he is a good man, but "too friendly" (Mailer 305). They share the opinion that a platoon leader should be tough guy (Mailer 305).

One of the most intriguing characters is Sergeant Sam Croft. He is efficient, strong, cold, and feels superior to everyone. Battle is his highest pleasure, he feels powerful while being in charge, but hates weakness: "A man who was afraid to put his neck out on the line was no damn good" (Mailer 18). One time, after seeing a frightened enlisted man, he predicts that he will be killed the same day which makes him laugh. Death and killing make him happy. No one knows why he is like that. "He is that way because the devil has claimed him for one of his own. It is because he is a Texan; it is because he has renounced God" (Mailer 102). Jesse Croft, his father, mentions hunting and that the two of them went hunting when Sam was very little, he could not even hold a gun. That did not stop him from being "a mean shot from the beginning" (Mailer 102). Even when his father beat him he did not make a sound. Sam Croft does not stand a man better than himself. The first time he killed a man was when he was in a National Guard. Killing made him feel hollow excitement (Mailer 105). Having a superior makes Croft feel enraged. Hearn's excitement with his new position soon fades and turns into nervousness since Croft has more experience and knowledge than him. Since he considers Hearn as a threat to his advancement, Croft shows that he will not hesitate when it comes to deaths of his colleagues. Right after Hearn's death, he takes over the platoon.

To conclude, not one of the officers showed characteristics of a good leader. Their task was to protect their men and lead them the best they could, but they were only thinking about their own ambitions. Both General Cummings and Sergeant Croft thought that they could control not only men, but also nature and war. Their plan failed because they overestimated their abilities. As Frye explains, the great majority of tragic heroes do possess *hybris*, a proud, passionate, obsessed or soaring mind which brings about a morally intelligible downfall (210). Croft's plan was to climb the mountain, Cummings dreamt of a huge battle in which his men would defeat the Japanese soldiers and Hearn was too proud to let Cummings see that he could not continue the expedition. There was nothing mythical in the way they controlled and lead their men during the war and they are the perfect example of *alazon*

2.2. *Pharmakos* in *The Naked and the Dead* and *Catch-22*

In contrast to *alazon* who is full of *hybris*, *pharmakos* is a character often portrayed as a victim of an absurd laws that give power to people who do not care for their men. As Poljak Rehlicki explains in her paper, soldiers are victims of their commander's arbitrariness and cannot escape from the absurdity of war (108). Battlers are no longer fought on the battlefield, but within the army. The novel *The Naked and the Dead* offers detailed descriptions of soldiers and their lives before joining the army. There are plenty of reasons for enlisting, from poverty to not knowing what else to do. Their experience of war is different from what they have read and dreams about the mythical war are shattered. Soon they see true colors of their superiors, but still feel unable to do anything. One of the soldiers named Wyman is devastated by the situation he has to deal with:

He had had vague dreams about being a hero, assuming this would bring him some immense reward which would ease his life and remove the problems of supporting his mother and himself. He had a girl and he wanted to dazzle her with his ribbons. But he had always imagined combat as exciting, with no misery and no physical exertion. He dreamed of himself charging across a field in the face of many machine guns; but in the dream there was no stitch in his side from running too far while bearing too much weight. He had never thought he would be chained to an inanimate monster of metal with which he would have to grapple until his arms trembled helplessly and his body was ready to fall; certainly he had never imagined he would stumble down a path in the middle of the night with his shoes sucking and dragging in slime. (Mailer 87)

In the *Catch-22* reader does not have a background on recruits' past, but only information about their lives while they are still serving in the army. The novel does not offer details on battles, but the writer is more concerned about relationships inside the army. Enlisted men also realize what is going on, but only one of them decided to fight back and by any means avoid missions: “All over the world, boys on every side of the bomb line were laying down their lives for what they had been told was their country, and no one seemed to mind, least of all the boys who were laying down their young lives. There was no end in sight” (Heller 14).

On their arrival, enlisted men realize that they will not have the same advantages as majors, generals and other men with higher ranks: “Did you notice how they treated the officers? They slept in staterooms when we were jammed in the hold like pigs. It's to make

them feel superior, a chosen group. That's the same device Hitler uses when he makes the Germans think they're superior" (Heller 32-33). One of the soldiers complains that they live like pigs, sleeping on own dirty clothes and wearing it to sleep (Heller 37). "They slept with mud and insects and worms while the officers bitched because there were no paper napkins and the chow could stand improvement" (Heller 48). The situation even gets worse during missions when they march through jungle, carrying heavy bags and sometimes even their officer's belongings without resting.

The biggest problem in the army is that soldiers cannot confront their leaders due to the fear they feel because they realize that they could be killed anytime for showing disapproval. In one occasion, Red Valsen confronts Croft, but soon realizes that Croft is ready to kill him if he does not change his mind and agrees with his decision. That makes Red feel humiliated and disappointed because he realizes that he cannot fight back, but only obey. Red Valsen is a soldier who sees a chance to escape by joining the army. His father dies young and he has to take care of his family. "He is the oldest man left in the family and that suffices. By the time he is fourteen he is able to use a drill. Good money for a kid, but down in the shafts, at the extreme end of the tunnel there isn't room to stand" (Mailer 146-147). He leaves his family in the age of 18 and starts moving around the USA before joining the army. "He sees war in the same way as Julio, as an escape from the dilapidated life of his. Likewise, he sees no pleasure in killing. For Red, the war is just nonsense" (Mađerek 26).

As the title suggests, the main idea of the *Catch-22* is practicing:

a number of paradoxes or catches, as he calls them, and other elements which are used by various institutions of the society in order to keep the characters obedient and servile. Every catch is presented as another regulation which benefits the institution, in most cases the American army, and takes away individual freedoms. Still, most characters blindly accept the catches and obey the authority which invents them. This is, not only in the novel, but in the real world, one of the main features of conformism. (Maksimović 14)

Same as in *The Naked and the Dead*, there is a hierarchy and strict rules that determine a person's behavior. Throughout the novel, Heller shows how ridiculous the army is, but also how such an approach gives results. The only soldier who does not care about the war and being a hero is Yossarian, young bombardier who is trying to avoid missions and stay alive, although he is really successful in what he does. After flying forty missions he realizes that

war does not make any sense and he does not want to be a part of that system. Most of the time he pretends to be sick or just flies to Rome to take a rest leave. Eventually Korn and Catchart decide to send him home after he completed seventy missions and refused to fly even one more. Of course, there is a catch. “After all, we can’t simply send you home for refusing to fly more missions and keep the rest of the men here, can we? That would hardly be fair to them” (Heller 336). Their conversation reveals how absurd their way of thinking is. Both of them blame Yossarian for wanting to leave the army which encourages other men to leave, too, but Yossarian explains that it is their fault because they raise the number of missions. “The men were perfectly content to fly as many missions as we asked as long as they thought they had no alternative. Now you’ve given them hope, and they’re unhappy. So the blame is all yours” (Heller 336). Then Colonels start to argue because they promoted him to captain, but in the end they come to conclusion that Yossarian is definitely aware that there is a war going on and that is the reason why he refuses to fly more missions. After telling him that war is over for him, they mention that he also has to do something in return. His duty is to talk nice things about the two of them, and if he does not do that, they will send him to court-martial. And once again titles are being given for no reason:

You see, Yossarian, we’re going to put you on easy street. We’re going to promote you to major and even give you another medal. Captain Flume is already working on glowing press releases describing your valor over Ferrara, your deep and abiding loyalty to your outfit and your consummate dedication to duty. Those phrases are all actual quotations, by the way. We’re going to glorify you and send you home a hero, recalled by the Pentagon for morale and public-relations purposes. You’ll live like a millionaire. Everyone will lionize you. You’ll have parades in your honor and make speeches to raise money for war bonds. A whole new world of luxury awaits you once you become our pal. Isn’t it lovely? (Heller 341).

Their approach shows that they do not think about soldiers’ rights and the only way to make the army function is by depriving each individual of freedom. At the end of the novel Yossarian decides to desert since he realized that he is the next one to be killed. Most of his friends died during combat missions and he knows that if he dies, it would not be for his country, but for Korn and Catchart (Heller 455).

Both novels present obedient characters, victims of paradox and laws made by people who are supposed to protect their nation and their people. Everything that is read in this

novels can be seen in the American society. “Every catch is presented as another regulation which benefits the institution, in most cases the American army, and takes away individual freedoms. Still, most characters blindly accept the catches and obey the authority which invents them. This is, not only in the novel, but in the real world, one of the main features of conformism” (Maksimović 14). *Pharmakos* is presented as an obedient type whose position does not allow him to complain or change the situation. In the end, both of the novels show that there is nothing noble in fighting wars. There is only misery and death.

3. *Trickster in Catch-22*

Novel *Catch-22* illustrates another type of character called *trickster* or *iron* that embodies the main idea of the novel and that is corruption and capitalism. Milo Minderbinder is a prime example of a *trickster*. He starts his career as a mess officer in charge of a dining hall but soon becomes even more powerful than Colonel Catchart. According to Abrams, the *iron* was a dissembler, who characteristically spoke in understatement and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the *alazon* - the self-deceiving and stupid braggart (154).

Milo is well-known among men and it seems that the whole system would stop functioning if he is not there. Though most of the men think that he is a complete idiot, Yossarian also realizes that he is a genius. Tricksters are usually very smart and Milo is not an exception. He starts a syndicate and later on establishes business for all sorts of goods. Even though his actions are not legal and he only does them for his own profit, he assures people that the syndicate makes the profit and everybody has a share (Heller 185). "Unlike heroes, Tricksters are usually morally questionable. They may lie, cheat, or steal to get what they want, and their ends don't justify their means. These slippery characters don't set out to save the world. They set out to get what they want" ("Trickster"). Yossarian learns that Milo is not simply a mess officer; in fact, Milo is major of Palermo, major in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Assistant Governor-General of Malta, Vice-shah of Orah where his person is sacred, Caliph of Baghdad, the Imam of Damascus and the Sheik of Arabi. According to what Yossarian sees in those cities, Milo is even the corn god, the rain god and the rice god (Heller 191). His planes can fly everywhere and he takes advantage of that, too. He informs Germans about attacks. "If I can persuade the Germans to pay me a thousand dollars for every plane they shoot down, why shouldn't I take it" (Heller 205)? Yossarian blames him for the death of a soldier in his tent and he is against his co-operation with the enemy, but Milo finds logic in everything:

Oh I know what you're going to say. Sure, we're at war with them. But the Germans are also members in good standing of the syndicate, and it's my job to protect their rights as shareholders. Maybe they did start the war, and maybe they are killing millions of people, but they pay their bills a lot more promptly than some allies of ours I could name. Don't you understand that I have to respect the sanctity of my contract with Germany? Can't you see it from my point of view? (205)

His greed does not stop there. “He had landed another contract with the Germans, this time to bomb his own outfit” (Heller 206). Although it looks like his end, that is not the case. He continues with his M & M Enterprises and one day even outsmarts Catchart. Apparently Milo wants to fly missions but Catchart realizes that the army cannot function without him so he forbids him to fly. Instead they can make someone from their squadron to fly missions for him, because, as Milo claims, he does everything for them so they ought to do something for him in return (298). “You get the credit, Milo. And if a man wins a medal flying one of your missions, you get the medal” (Heller 298). That results in higher number of missions and the next day men begin their missions but 12 of them die. Most of them finished the required number of missions but because of Catchart’s will and desire for profit, young boys die.

Milo is an important character whose greed represents everything that the army is: corrupted organization run by people whose only wish is to make more money out of it. However, he is different from *alazons* in this novel since he really succeeds in what he wants. Obstacles do not exist for him and he is ready to hurt people around him in order to make more money. Sometimes he acts as if they are not in the middle of war and even works with the enemy, thinking only about himself and just like *alazons*, not worrying about lives of other soldiers. All in all, *trickster* is in similar to *alazon*, but he is smarter and more capable and usually reaches his goals.

Conclusion

To sum up, this paper discussed the topic of the position of soldiers and officers in American World War II. Source of the analysis is Northrop Frye's "Theory of Modes" which describes characters of *alazon* and *pharmakos* who are exemplified based on novels *Catch-22* and *The Naked and the Dead*. Characters acting as *alazons* prove their belief that they are above laws and their only ambition is to gain more power. Contrary to that, *pharmakos* is below *alazon* when it comes to power hierarchy. *Pharmakos* behaves as a weak character, unable to change his position. The third type is *trickster*, a character who puts all effort into accomplishing a certain wish. What is more, the paper also proves that the main goal in the war is not defeating the enemy, but getting a better position and earning more money. In order to get there, *alazon* and *trickster* often show that they are not afraid to do something radical, such as working with the enemy or endangering their comrades. This paper also suggests that such behavior leads to war profiteering and is capable of endangering the American myth of war.

Works Cited

Abrams, Meyer Howard. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Seventh edition, Cornell University, 1999. PDF file.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*., Princeton University Press, 2000.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch-22*. 1994. PDF file.

Mađerek, Petra. *War: Glory or Doom of Humankind*. Osijek, 2017. MA Thesis.

Mailer, Norman. *The Naked and the Dead*. PDF file.

Maksimović, Andrea. *Individualizam vs. konformizam u američkom mitu o ratu*. Osijek, 2016. BA Thesis.

Poljak Rehlicki, Jasna. *Od mita do ironije: lik vojnika u američkoj književnosti 20. i 21. stoljeća*. Osijek, 2013. Dissertation.

Robertson, James Oliver. *American Myth American Reality*. Hill&Wang, 1980.

“Trickster”. *Mythology.net*, <https://mythology.net/mythical-creatures/trickster/>. Accessed 21 June, 2018.