

# War in Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut and Catch-22 by Joseph Heller Essay

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Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut and Catch-22 by Joseph Heller both have a striking resemblance in the themes of anti-war and of free will. Both don't come into full force right in the beginning but eventually become more evident. Both novels focus on one character throughout the entire novel, and each protagonist is affected by all the events around them. It changes their perspective and how they view life as a whole. Both Billy in Slaughterhouse Five and Yossarian in Catch -22, dislike war and are known as anti-war heroes. They also believe in the idea that they have free will and that their actions can be controlled. What makes these two novels so different from other war novels is that both protagonists don't die for their country, they live through the end to see the world around them change. The idea of free will is savored by everyone. Throughout both novels, each protagonist reaches a certain point in which they have to make a decision. Instead of waiting for that decision to happen, the event happens nevertheless (QUOTE EXAMPLE). In Slaughterhouse Five, Vonnegut proclaims that there is no such thing as a free will and that what will happen cannot be changed. The protagonist Billy Pilgrim was told by Tralfamadorians that they see time chronologically and that nothing can change or be changed. No matter what we chose to do, all the choices we make, are made

unconsciously. Similarly in Catch-22, the theory is the same but it's presented in a different manner. Catch-22 is a paradox, with no clear outcome. No matter what one says or does, escaping is not an option thus there is no free will. The catch is very well described when Yossarian states, "You don't have to fly anymore missions if you're crazy, but you have to..... middle of paper .....y. It changes the world around them in a definitive way. In Billy's case defeating the Germans was a cause of celebration but at the same time it was a time of mourning due to the bombing of Dresden. For Yossarian, countless lives were lost just so that Milo could make some extra cash. Milo took the war as a joke and didn't care if his country won or lost the war. He was there just to collect profit, which could be seen as an example of Anti-War. The protagonists feel like toys being thrown around in order to do the bidding of commanding officers. The soldiers had no free will as they had to listen to their orders and do as their told. In the end the world around them had changed due to the events of the war. Works Cited Heller, Joseph. Catch-22. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961. Vonnegut, Kurt. Slaughterhouse Five. New York: Random House Inc., 1969. Print.

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