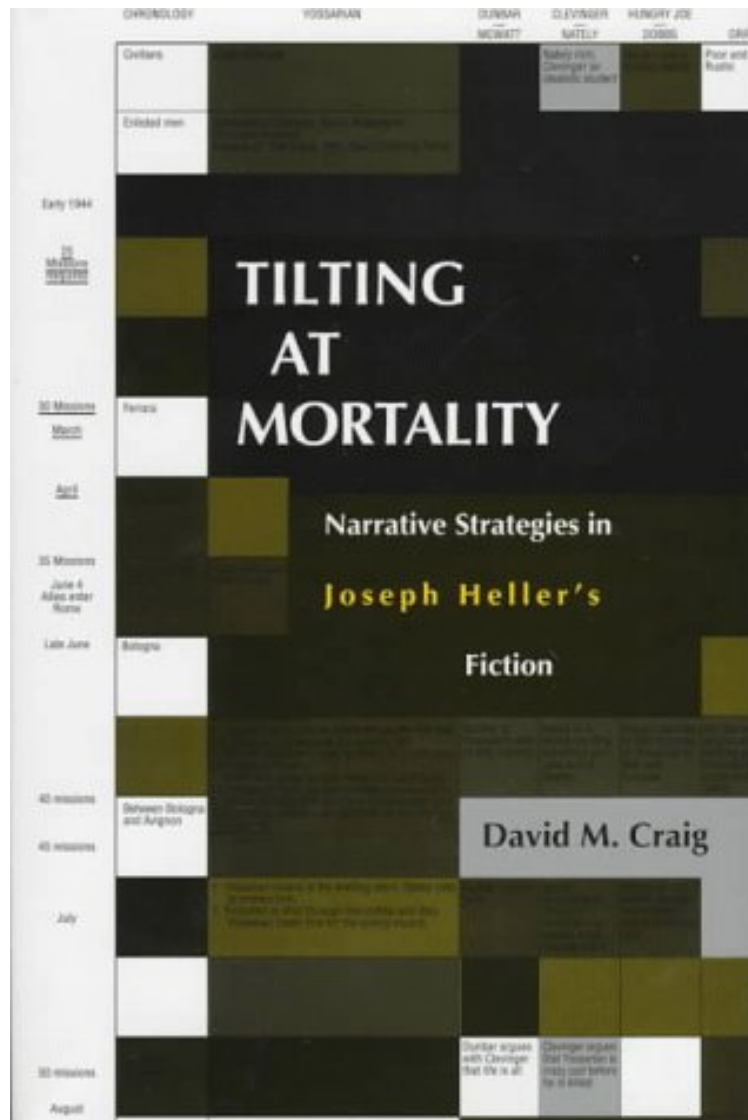


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Tilting at Mortality: Narrative Strategies in Joseph Heller's Fiction (Humor in Life and Letters)

David Craig

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Unlike other studies of Joseph Heller, which focus on his two primary works, *Catch-22* and *Something Happened*, this volume considers Heller's entire career and examines each of his novels on its own terms, including Heller's latest work, *Closing Time*. *Tilting at Mortality* pursues two complementary tracks: first, it explores the evolution of Heller's essential subject, human mortality; and second, it delineates his artistic development as a novelist. Mortality-in particular, the death of children or alternatively of wounded innocents-provides Heller with his core story. In *Catch-22*, Heller addresses this concern in the Snowden death scene, and with each subsequent novel he has revised and retold this story, always concluding with a wrenching death that occurs in the penultimate chapter. Each novel emerges as another gesture of comic defiance, each constituting a strident, insistent, angry, sometimes eloquent protest against mortality.

Craig's study is comprehensive and original, and his access to private papers and unpublished fiction makes the book indispensable for any serious reader or scholar of contemporary American literature. -- CHOICE
Exceptionally strong. . . . smart structuring of Heller's aesthetic world. -- American Literary Scholarship
About the Author
David Craig is an associate professor of humanities and the director of the Honors Program at Clarkson University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame.