

Mark A Cox
Huma 1301-003
Downey
3-5-03

Essay II: All is Fair and Love and War, or is it?

Since the beginning of time, there have been two things that have been a part of civilization, love and war. Sure the way each is conducted has changed dramatically through the years but each still hold an enormous part of our hearts and minds in their wake. If one looks back in history and even to today, love and war are two aspects of life that go together. The Battle of Troy was fought over the love of a woman. In World War II, America went to war because of the love for country and for those lost at Pearl Harbor. All is, in fact, fair in love and war. Several reasons support this theory, including the way war is waged, how love is won, and how each is intertwined together.

Love is a gentle and caring part of our lives, but it can be a very disheartening part of our existence as well. There were many rules for love, the way it was to be conducted, and how a lover's heart was to be won. Some of these rules are defined in *The Art of Courty Love*. This book defines how class in society can be a determinant in how one wins the heart of another. For example, it lays out how one from a certain class level should approach and go about winning the heart of someone of a lower or higher class in society. For example, it is easier for a man of noble stature to win the heart of a woman of the middle class because of his stature and respectability. While it is quite a feat for a man of the middle class to approach and obtain the love of a woman of higher stature, because of the fact that the woman is of higher rank in the society in the world and it would be more of a disgrace for her to drop down into the lower ranks of society to find a lover. Yes, true, there were rules for how to obtain that love, but, in fact, they were more

guidelines to follow by, instead of strictly enforced rules. By any means a man could win the love of a woman, but the most common way was through words. All of this seemed to be out of the reach of Dante when he wrote *La Vita Nuova*. The rules seemed to not apply to him for he never approached the woman he was madly in love with, Beatrice. He only wrote poems and sonnets of her that reflected on how true his love was to her beautiful form and features. He proclaimed his love for Beatrice at nine years old, a rather young age by today's standards, but still he was madly in love with her from that day forth. His own mind even toyed with him while he was very ill. He had a dream about Beatrice dying and it seemed so real that he woke up with tears in his eyes and it left him in grief even though it was only a dream. That truly proclaims the power of what love can do to a person. One part of Dante's story was when Beatrice smiled at Dante and it absolutely drove him crazy, he felt even deeper in love with her and at this point is when he started writing sonnets and poems in her name. All of this because of a smile. All of these points prove that there is no fairness in love, it controls one's heart, emotions, and, sometimes, even well-being. According to *The Art of Courtly Love*, it can control how one would go about living their life in the pursuit of love. A person would go out of their own way in order to please a lover, sometimes guilt from betraying a lover can drive a person in deep depression, and even death because of love is not a far reaching idea. Going into love one must know that the boundaries in how love is conducted are endless. Love is fair because all lovers never know what will happen between them and their lover, so each must expect the unexpected.

Some of these same arguments can be made about war. War does, in fact, have rules that are simply to be used as guidelines, but there are many instances throughout

history that show how these guidelines don't have to be followed. For example, innocent people are not supposed to die in war, but in the attack on Hiroshima by the United States thousands of innocent victims were killed, in order to shorten the war and cause less casualties. Was that bombing fair? Probably not, but no one will ever know how many lives those bombs saved because what happen was something that had to be done in the eyes of United States politicians. The fact that is was something that many looked upon as something that had to be done makes this a fair gesture. Two books give us great examples of how fair war can be. *The Book of Joshua* in *The Holy Bible* gives us a perfect example of how war has no boundaries, therefore, making everything fair. During the course of this book the Lord gives Joshua rules of how to fight war in order to gain The Promised Land for the Israelites. He orders Joshua to kill all inhabitants "...with the edge of the sword" (Joshua 6:21; KJV) of every city that he conquers, including woman and children, and to burn each city. This was done all because Joshua said that the Lord had ordered it. Today these same rules would be considered unfair but during this time period it was perfectly natural to follow the commands of a higher being. These seemingly heinous acts give a perfect example why war has no boundaries and anything in war is truly fair. Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* is another book that proves that war is fair in all of its activities. Sure one could focus on the fact that the whole book is about the guidelines by which one should follow in order to achieve victory in a battle, but the book does comment on deception. It states that "All warfare is based on deception."(Art of War; 66). If all warfare is based on deception then cheating and lying could be determined as deception and would be considered fair in battle. If deception is fair as well

as killing innocent victims is fair then there is not much more one can say to prove that war and how it is conducted is fair.

There is one more aspect that can be used to prove that all is fair in love and war. It is that love and war go together. Truly if you think about it love and war go hand in hand, in fact, most of the time you don't have one without the other. For example, if one refers to all of the different religious wars that have taken place throughout history, The Crusades, the battle for The Promised Land, etc., these battles were all fought because of the followers love for their God. This can even be brought in today's world where Islamic groups have attacked many different innocent victims claiming that it is a jihad, or holy war. If one would keep track of the things that this holy warriors have done then they could realize that there is no end to what happens in these attacks and wars, which are conducted on behalf of the love these Islamists have for there god. This may not be the same type of love that is common place but it is in fact referred to in *Symposium and Phaedrus* as agape love. It is the love one holds for that higher being in their life. Another type of love that can be used to compare love and war is phillio/a, or brotherly love, which is also spoken of in *Symposium and Phaedrus*. People would not join the respective armies of their countries if they did not feel a sense of love for their country and the people in it. If there were no soldiers then there would in fact be no war in the world. These are definitely two ways that love and war are intertwined together. If each is intertwined and all in love is fair then, by these guidelines, all in war must also be fair and vice versa.

As one can read there are several different reasons why all is fair in love and war. The reasons range from loving and the way it is conducted to war and the deception that

is used to achieve victory in war. Since love and war are intertwined because several different causes, what is true for one might possibly be true for the other. Love and war are two of the hardest to explain aspects of life and that may be why all that is done in love and war is truly fair.

Bibliography and Works Cited

“Book of Joshua”; Holy Bible; King James Version; Nashville, Tn.; Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1972.

Tzu, Sun; The Art of War; Trans. Samuel B. Griffin. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Plato; Symposium and Phaedrus; New York: Dover Publications, 1994.

Alighieri, Dante ;La Vita Nuova; Trans. Dante Gabriel Rossetti; New York: Dover Publications, 2001.

Capellanus, Andreas; The Art of Courtly Love; Trans. John Jay Parry; New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1941.