

Love, lust, hatred: is it  
all the same in catch-  
22?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

During war, men and woman are swept by emotions that make it difficult to overlook their experiences in war. Jack Croasdile, a prisoner of war, drew under his captivity in 1941 by the Germans a picture titled Anticipating 1942. Featured in the picture, he and his deceased wife are covered by a shadow with their heads rested on one another and their backs turned to the picture, the figures gazing down into the fireside. His illustration represents his own piece of heaven in a grotesque war where he feels the warmth and love of his sweetheart; like many other soldiers, he yearns for love in the war. In war, men and women are riddled with the fear of dying, of being alone, forgotten, and take solace in bedding with a stranger in order to release bottled-up emotions to reach a brief moment of peace. These individuals try to keep their minds sound with sex and some pretend or delude themselves to fall in love. The emotions felt during war can be narrowed down on to a spectrum: lust will be to the far left, love will be in the middle at equilibrium, and hatred will be to the far right. The love spectrum, as it will be referred to, defines love as a bond between a man and woman transcending sexual needs and emotional validation.

In Catch- 22, Joseph Heller exposes the emotions felt by both men and women in relationships during war that all have a place on the love spectrum helping to overall determine where the lines stand in war when it comes to lust, love, and hatred. At the far left side of the love spectrum resides Yossarian and his relationships with Luciana and Nurse Duckett. Yossarian believes with each sexual encounter he has, he will find a kind of inner peace. Yossarian can be compared to a drug addict. When he finds a woman who will have sex with him, he explodes into ecstasy and then plummets into

depression. Yossarian has never felt love for any woman. Like so many other young men in the army, he searches for women in the name of sex.

During his visit to Rome, Yossarian meets Luciana. She playfully coos to him throughout their evening together, “ All right, I’ll dance with you... But I won’t let you sleep with me” (153). Because Luciana plays on his lustful desires, he deludes himself to fall in love with her. Yossarian had the brief moment of serenity he feels after sex and because he was able to release his feelings and almost make them impalpable, he impulsively wants to always have that impalpability and decides to marry Luciana. This is the ecstasy he feels after sex. Luciana rejects him and leaves him and he doesn’t care until “ all at once he was surrounded by images of Luciana getting out of her clothes and into her clothes and caressing and haranguing him tempestuously in the pink rayon chemise she wore in bed with him and would never take off” (163). He sinks into depression after Luciana leaves him and misses her terribly. Yet, the same can be said to happen to him when he encounters Nurse Duckett afterwards. As Yossarian lies next to her on the beach, the author unmasks Yossarian’s feelings: “ he [draws] solace and sedation from her nearness. He [has] a craving to touch her always, to remain always in physical communication” (335) and then author goes on to the next page to state, “ evenings when Yossarian felt horny he brought Nurse Duckett to the beach with two blankets and enjoyed making love to her more than he sometimes enjoyed making love to all the vigorous bare amoral girls in Rome” (336). The author mocks Yossarian’s lust for women. He uses sexual language and describes Yossarian fornication with other women as an act of love making. Nurse Duckett like Luciana is another drug

for Yossarian. When he is near her, he feels safe and succumbs to the extreme high he loves. But when she dumps him, and when Yossarian returns to Rome, Yossarian again plunges into depression at losing Nurse Duckett: “ Despair gnawed at him. Visions beset him. He wanted Nurse Duckett with her dress up and her slim thighs bare to the hips” (351). Yossarian has extreme highs and lows when it comes to love. He creates instability in his life placing him to the far left because until he learns to be with a woman to nurture a relationship, he will always search for sex. Even so, Yossarian is hopeless when it comes to women, but he enjoys the idea of falling in love because it is the only comfort he can afford to dream about in a desolate place where he knows everyone wants to kill him.

Another relationship leaning towards the lust side of the love spectrum is Chaplain and his wife. The Chaplain writes letters to his wife in order to maintain a bond with her. Many men in the war do this in order to remind themselves of what their fighting for: the lover they left at home. “ The chaplain loved his wife and children with such tameless intensity that he often wanted to sink to the ground helplessly and weep like a castaway cripple” (271): some may consider this groveling for one’s loved ones a sure sign of devotion, and yet one must consider what type of characteristics Chaplain possesses. Chaplain is a weak-hearted man who never asserts himself and hides in order to avoid any confrontation from his superiors. Chaplain grovels only for self- pity. Chaplain’s love for his wife can be disproved by his irrational fear he has of his wife being “ raped and murdered repeatedly as soon as [a man drives] her off to a deserted sandpit” (271). Most men in the war dream, like the prisoner of war, Jack

Croasdile, of being at home with their wives; however, Chaplain rather dream of his wife being raped and killed. Chaplain's reveries cannot be disputed as a concern for his wife because they signify a repressed longing to get rid of the reason why he is fighting in the war. Chaplain selfish reveries do not cease. The lust aspect of Chaplain oozes through when he dreams of the inevitable " reunions with [his wife] that [end] in explicit acts of love-making" (271). Chaplain not only sickly dreams of his wife being ravaged by other men but dreams of her being ravaged by him. Never does the Chaplain dream being at home with his wife whispering " I love you" as if it were the last words he could ever tell her. Instead, Chaplain becomes insecure about the love he has for his wife and doubts the love she harbors for him. He wonders, " There [are] so many other men... who could prove more satisfying to her sexually" (377). This type of insecurity has no place in real love. When two people love each other, they know they will always be faithful to the other, thus the transcending of physical validation. The fact that Chaplain doubts his wife's faithfulness shows and feels she only wants to be pleased shows he thinks love is based only on sex.

Nearing equilibrium, but still in the lust area of the love spectrum is Nately and the love he feels for his whore. Their whole relationship mocks the idea of first love. Nately has never fallen in love and decides to fall head over heels for a whore when he could have another woman. Affluent Nately wins this covetous whore's love almost like a fairy tale, but instead of winning her love by true love's first kiss, he wins it by letting her sleep. But why does Nately fall so desperately in love with her? Why does "[he try so earnestly to] capture the attention of the bored, phlegmatic girl he ha[s] fallen so

intensely in love with and [try to] win her admiration forever” (244)? She is Nately’s first love and he is hers. The truth is young people always fall the hardest for their first loves, just look at Romeo and Juliet. Nately tries hard to gain her affection because he feels he needs her to validate him in order to make him feel complete as a man. His need for validation sets them close to reaching equilibrium in the love spectrum because she returns his love. When she finally acquires “ a good night’s sleep”, she beckons Nately into her bed: “ The girl smiled with contentment when she opened her eyes and saw him, and then, stretching her long legs languorously beneath the rustling sheets, beckoned him into bed beside her with that look of simpering idiocy of a woman in heat” (356). Although it is superficial that a good’s night sleep pushed her to return his love, it should be considered love nonetheless. Overall, the love created here was proliferated by sex and yet was developed over time. Love is not spontaneous; it takes time to grow and to develop into a meaningful bond which Nately’s whore proves happened when she goes berserk after swallowing the news of Nately’s death: “ when [Yossarian] broke the news to Nately’s whore in Rome she uttered a piercing heartbroken shriek and tried to stab him to death with a potato peeler” (392). If Nately had not died, the love the two started to grow could have actually become real love, but considering the love blossomed sexually and barely bloomed emotionally, they will admittedly be determined as something close to love.

After lust, the descent towards hatred takes a sharp right to arrive at extreme hatred exemplified by Aarfy because not only does he rape and murder an innocent woman, he admits to coercing multiple women to have

sex with him and he takes advantage of women he deems worthless and weak. In Aarfy's case, it would be appropriate to isolate him and refrain from identifying him in a relationship with any woman. Aarfy's slogan is "nobody has to pay for it for good old Aarfy. I can get all I want any time I want. I'm just not in the mood right now" (241). Aarfy is a troubled man. Aarfy enjoys having sex with women he deems unworthy of other men. Aarfy is a bully and like a bully he feels unloved and takes his anger out on women by making them feel unloved. He represents the men in war who cannot feel love because the atrocities of war deem them unlovable. The more a man kills, the more a man lives in misery, the more a man sees less and less of human kindness, the more a man will hate himself and hate everyone else. Even Aarfy's notion of love proves he knows little of love as the author explains: "Aarfy was the authority on the subject of true love because he had already fallen truly in love with Natelly's father and with prospect of working for him after the war in some executive capacity as a reward for befriending Natelly" (288). Aarfy loves money because he believes it will buy him happiness, but even when Aarfy pursues women who are rich, he is displeased with them. Aarfy enjoys ravishing women who remind him that he is filthy and spiteful: "She had sallow skin and myopic eyes, and none of the men had ever slept with her because none of the men had ever wanted, none but Aarfy, who had raped her once that same evening and had then held her prisoner until the civilian curfew sirens sounded and it was unlawful for her to be outside. Then he threw her out the window" (417). He killed her because he thought she deserved to die, much like how he believes he deserves to die. Aarfy hates life because each time he flies, he leads the men into enemy fire which could be his attempt at redemption by dying in

war. Aarfy hates himself and hates the people he tries to love. Therefore, he pretends to love himself on the surface and look out for the well-being of good girls. He is the demoralized soldier who no longer cares about right or wrong, he does what he wants to because he can and doesn't know what else to do. Since he cannot love himself, no one can therefore love him. War has morphed him into a beast that devours the lives of the innocent and pure in order to validate his own worth.

Next, near the far right of the love spectrum, the analysis of the relationship between Doc Daneeka and Mrs. Daneeka must be examined. Doc Daneeka and Mrs. Daneeka are a relationship turned sideways due to miscommunication, but it leaves the reader wondering if Mrs. Daneeka left Doc Daneeka in the dust on purpose in order to cash in on his insurance policies. At any rate, Mrs. Daneeka can be justified as loving her husband and therefore the relationship they share can be set somewhere near love and near hate because she betrayed Doc Daneeka by deserting him in his time of need. Mrs. Daneeka after learning her husband had died mourns over him and "split[s] the peace of the peaceful Staten Island night with woeful shrieks of lamentation" (341). Mrs. Daneeka has the appropriate response every wife should have when learning her husband has died on the line of duty. She plays a convincing role of mourning wife until her husband sends word he is not dead and she refuses to believe him: "the style [of the letter] resembled her husband's and the melancholy, self-pitying tone was familiar, although more dreary than usual" (342). She knew her intuition was saying he was alive and was ready to take action to save him until she received payment s from her husband's insurance claims. Mrs. Daneeka embodies the



stereotypical materialistic woman during war who wants to buy fancy garments. When she became affluent and popular that “the husbands of her closest friends began to flirt with her. [She] was delighted with the way things were turning out and had her hair dyed” (343). Perhaps Heller was saying we tend to marry people who are exactly like us or that love could never trump money? Or perhaps he is saying women will gladly desert their men for money? In this case, Mrs. Daneeka greedily appears to be cashing in on her husband’s misery when Doc Daneeka belabored to her through letters he was still alive, “it was indeed he, her husband, Doc Daneeka who was pleading with her, and not a corpse or some impostor” (344). This is why their relationship is on the right side of the love spectrum because she may have loved him at the beginning, but she stopped loving him at the end. She deserted her husband in his time of need for money. If the purest love is devotion, then the most corrupt love is desertion. The love they had was one that could not defy the boundaries of war or money, and left Mrs. Daneeka rich and her greedy husband alone and forgotten. Next, the right of the love spectrum approaches two relationships where the women are considered sex objects and are neglected; however, to distort any confusion, even though Yossarian and Chaplain considered women sex objects as well, they treated their women with some level of dignity.

To resume, the first relationship is that between Lieutenant Scheisskopf and his wife. If there ever was love between them, their love faded because of war. Lieutenant Scheisskopf fell in love with his parades and his wife fell in love with her husband’s men. Lieutenant Scheisskopf is a war fanatic and workaholic. He lives and breathes parades because perhaps like sports he

doesn't have to think or feel anything, he just has to instinctively do. The author describes Lieutenant Scheisskopf's feelings about his wife: "It was the despair of Lieutenant Scheisskopf life to be chained to a woman who was incapable of looking beyond her own dirty, sexual desires to the titanic struggles for the unattainable in which noble man could become heroically engaged" (73). Lieutenant Scheisskopf represents the men who feel they can win their wife's love and admiration by gaining recognition and influence from a higher power: i. e. government, church, corporations. Unfortunately for Lieutenant Scheisskopf, he and his wife do not see on eye to eye. His wife feels burdened with a sexually repressed husband because says: "My husband has a whole squadron full of aviation cadets who would be only too happy to shack up with their commanding officer's wife just for the added fillip it would give them" (178). Lieutenant Scheisskopf's wife embodies the image of the neglected wife who has to look for attention from her husband in the form of bad behavior. She stoops to acting like she is a sex object to which Lieutenant Scheisskopf can take advantage of. Her efforts are futile because her cry out for attention make Lieutenant Scheisskopf sink himself deeper into his work. The two represent love dying and love turning into toleration of the other.

The second relationship involves General Dreedle and the Nurse. General Dreedle is a rash man who doesn't care about anyone but himself with the exception of his daughter. General Dreedle utilizes his Nurse as only a sex object. She could be compared to that of a sex slave or a dog: "General Dreedle's nurse always followed General Dreedle everywhere he went" (219). Whether she represents the women of the era that followed men

without question or represents the stereotype of the dumb blonde, she symbolizes the woman almost every man wishes for. General Dreedle admits to his compatriots, “ You should see her naked...Back at Wing she’s got a uniform in my room made of purple silk that’s so tight her nipples stand out like bid cherries...I make her wear it some nights when Moodus is around just to drive him crazy” (216). General Dreedle uses her to drive his sexually repressed son-in-law Colonel Moodus insane. General Dreedle is his nurse’s master because he tells her what to wear and who to seduce. He represents the callous men who treat woman as just objects that must adhere to their will. They represent the type of relationship where there is no emotion, just the physical. In any case, finally the equilibrium, the part where true love is reached, is approached. Ironically placed at the beginning of the novel, a brief glimpse of a lover’s story that transcends the sexual needs and emotional validation other characters in the novel feel they need in order to feel complete.

Of course, what would become of us if not a sliver of people could actually fall in love during war time? Devastatingly, romantic movies such as *Casablanca* would unravel at the seams. The author narrates the end of a love story between a man and a woman in the hospital; the hospital that is white, that represents hope, new beginnings, and safety. In the man’s last months, the woman spends her time whispering gently into his ear and tending to his bed side. If he were to perish, her precious face would be the last image that flashes before his eyes. The two are described in the hospital: “ in a bed in the small private section at the end of the ward, always working ceaselessly behind the green plyboard partition, was the

solemn middle-aged colonel who was visited every day by a gentle sweet-faced woman with curly ash blonde hair” (14). The woman is not a member of Red Cross or a Wac girl sent to comfort soldiers; rather, she is a woman who has come by herself to visit this man. It is safe to assume she loves him and he loves her considering she wears “ pretty pastel summer dresses” (14) every time she sees him. Most women, when they wear pretty clothing, especially to a hospital, do it in order to impress somebody; she dresses beautifully in order to cheer him up. This beautiful woman could spend her time chasing someone else to satisfy her sexual or emotional needs but instead chooses to spend time with her colonel: “ Neat, slender, and erect, the woman touched him often as she sat by his bedside and was the epitome of stately sorrow each time she smiled” (15). This is true love because she is devoted to him as he is devoted to her. The woman’s smile proves she does not love the man for lustful reasons because she mentally prepares herself to reserve her emotions in order to make him happy. Although this could be seen as an end to the two lover’s story, considering their lover’s story has a white background, could not it be reasoned that the background foretells their love withstanding the test of time? In a war filled with lustful and odious men and women, the two provide hope for love and teach the purest form of love is unwavering devotion. In war, there is little room for love and growth.

From the analysis of the variety of relationships between men and women in the novel *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, the defining line between lust, love, and hatred can be observed. The far left, lust, has men and women indulging in their sexual needs at the cost of love. These individuals are gluttons for the peace they attain for each sexual encounter, like heroin addicts who crave

that one high they acquired their first time on heroine. The far right, hatred, has men and woman deteriorating on the inside from lack of love and kindness and feeling worthless preventing others from loving them. They reciprocate the hatred they receive and feel to find their peace in the ruin of others like a man beats his wife to make her feel as awful as him. The love at equilibrium has people avoid looking for sexual pleasures and validation of their own self-worth from others, and fortunately due to the couple that reaches it in the novel, love can be perceived as an escape from the horrors of war. The people trapped in the far left can realize that sexual pleasure gives them a love high creating crashing ups and downs in their life that can become stabilize- meaning a well-balance life, a simple life- when they search for a meaningful relationship that will eventually reach love. The people on the far right can approach themselves internally and learn to love their selves. Once they realize they are valuable, they can realize the value of others and come to the equilibrium of the love spectrum. War endeavors to hinder love and morph people into monsters and demons, but as long as people fall in love, everyone has an ideal median to achieve in order to escape war's disfigurements.