

# Against war essays example

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## **Introduction**

The book Captain Corelli's Mandolin is a book based on themes surrounding war. Betrayal, separation, heroism and hope are some of the enduring themes throughout the book. The setting of the book, Greek island of Cephalonia, a previously un-adulterated island, primes the book on exposing the atrocities war and tragedy are capable of on the human condition. It soon becomes apparent that in the face of adversity, the human condition is frail and is prone to cave in under pressure. The author exposes these vulnerabilities through some extra-ordinary happenings such as the betrayal of Mandras by Pelagia, the in-expressible love Carlos holds for Francisco, to the extent that he would risk his life in the name of love. These instances represent instances of inconsistency, a sudden realization of how fragile life is, and confusion on the path to follow in difficult times; to follow your heart desires persevering, and oblivious of the danger around, or to panic and lose sense of self. This review focuses on a different aspect altogether, that of continuity, heroism and anti-war in the face of adversity.

I found the chapters 1-8 fitting for this essay as it encompasses the development of the various characters, weaving them together and presenting them as ordinary people. The beginning of the war is the best place to evaluate characters as they appear as natural as possible, and unchanged by the war. Mandras for instance was just a local fisherman, living and hoping to fall in love, which he eventually does with Pelagia, however, war and tragedy changes everything.

While war and suffering dominates, it upon people to react in various ways, each seeking to protect them, and in extension the people they love from harm. War has the capacity of turning individuals from a state of stability to one of unpredictability. The betrayal of one individual against the other comes as a consequence of circumstances of war but not out of the free will of the persons themselves. In truth, most characters in the book are against war, and the atrocities that accompany it. However with the increase in threat, and the need to take a position on a conflict, individuals find themselves steeped in it in ways they never expected. Corelli for instance is an embodiment of a man trying to cheer up life in times of adversity. In a conversation with Dr. Iannis, Corelli states, 'This is how we should be. We should care for each other more than we care for ideas, or else we will end up killing each other. Am I not right?'(52) Betraying his stance against war. His habit of playing the mandarin to cheer both himself, and the people around him up brings an image of an individual who still sees the beauty in life in bleak times. The fact that he is indeed a soldier, actively involved in the conflict and leading the Italian troops, paints the image of a man fighting to fight war. Corelli's active involvement in the troops in Greece provided him the chance to lead them in a humane manner, in a way that their humanitarian impact was less, than for instance, the German soldiers who were ruthless with the local people.

The case of Mandras provides the sad case where war deprives him of all he knows both physically and in spirit. After his subscription into the war, he loses touch with Pelagia with his inability to write dispossessed him the ability to reply to her letters and ultimately, Pelagia presumes him dead. This

loss leads him to become a resentful rebel and commits atrocities mainly to avenge for his wasted life, rather than a support for war.

### **Summarizing argument**

War, while we might not be in support of it, has its way of changing us. Everyone hopes to live well, war comes to great detriment of our will to live well, and despite our best effort to avoid it, it affects adversely everyone involved in it, the contrast of Corelli, who was initially in the war as a soldier, but against war and its atrocities by living life, and Mandras, who was not in the war, living life and loving, but ends up in war, committing atrocities sums up how war turns our lives upside down. Corelli's view on this situation correctly sums up the situation Mandras finds himself, What I regret is having had to learn a most bitter lesson about the way in which personal ambitions can lead a man, against his will and against his nature, into playing a part in events that will cause history to reap him with opprobrium and contempt,'(91) as he eventually has to commit suicide for his self imposed revenge mission against society and life in general.

### **Works Cited**

De, Bernières L. Captain Corelli's Mandolin. London: Minerva, 1995. Print.