

Shaw and the problem play

According to Shaw, his dramas come under the category of problem plays, argumentative plays or plays of ideas. Shaw depicts society in its true color and discuss all the problems prevalent in society with the help of speechless and discussions in his plays. Shaw was knowledgeable, vivid, occasionally funny, but keen and a match for any critic in the class tradition.

He had a taste for comparative analysis and an essential ability of hitting off a performance in a single stroke. GB Shaw is recognized as the greatest dramatist after Shakespeare. Some even rate him above the bard of Avon. Shaw was a writer who revolutionized English prose. He was in a way a dreamer and that filtered into his writings. He believes that God has given us a beautiful world that nothing but our folly keeps from being it a paradise; we entertain airy notion and fantastic emotions regarding all temporal things. He wants to drive out all these rotten ideas from the mind of men with the help of the west mind. That is why he took up the current social political problems as the subject-matter of his plays.

George Bernard Shaw is one of the greatest writers of the English language and reading him decades after his death, one can realize that apart from writing flawless English he was a revolutionary and a debater on a higher plane, an intellectual plane. Shaw called himself a rationalist, a realist and an anti-romantic.

Shaw has called himself a dramatic realist and has rejected the well-made play and the drop of romanticism. But there are factors of the romantic in the free imagination that he uses in the structure of his plays.

He is fanciful, even fantastic in arranging the plots that will release his ideas.

In *Arms and the Man* the plot is built up with dynamic and unconventional ideas regarding war and love. *Arms and the Man* presents, analyzes and sarcastically exposes the problem relating to love, relationships, heroism and soldiering. Characters represent contrary and confronting ideas; dialogues and situations underscore the problems and conflicting courses. The whole play does have a strong purpose of criticism and reformation.

Arms and the Man is celebrated example of the Shavian drama of ideas. The play aims to satirize the long-cherished conventions of love and romance on the one hand, and those of soldiering and heroism on the other. The victorious Bulgarian cavalry-charge led by Sergius Sarnoff against the Serbian artillery at the battle of Slivnitza which makes him "the hero of Slivnitza" is actually a gross act of romantic adventurism.

Sergius' heroism makes Riana, his betrothed Petkoff daughter, and her mother instantly ecstatic, but Sergius fails to get promoted in the army because his act of adventurism is rightly looked upon as a piece of amateurish foolishness. In the play Shaw intentionally creates Bluntschli as an anti-hero or unheroic hero, who exposes the false romantic ideas of war. He brings all the characters round back to the practical problems of life.

In doing this, he shows that he is truly heroic in the sense that happiness actually lies in that. He is radically rational and logical in his actions and viewed about life. Instead of going to the battle field with arms and ammunition, he carefully loads his cartridge belt with chocolates.

In one of his conversations with Raina, he tells her "I have no ammunition, what use of cartridge in battle? I always carry chocolates instead; and I finished the last cake of that hour ago". Arguably cartridges can kill but not chocolates. Bluntschli's action poses a question on morality of wars. This becomes a debatable issue when we realize that it is the love of the country that makes individuals such as Saranoff to kill and wound his enemies but his love for humanity and the violation of life makes Bluntschli act otherwise. Shaw deliberately allows the war to end in a peace treaty, to show that there could be peaceful alternatives to war and violence.