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**LOVE AND WAR: THE TWO FACES OF THE COIN IN G B SHAW'S  
ARMS AND THE MAN**

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**Abstract:**

*Shaw satirizes War as futile and worthless whereas Love as useful and productive because War is death and Love is life. He exposes the romanticism of war as a mere misnomer in all ages. Peaceful discussions have always given rise to numerous solutions for a better tomorrow and to build a strong nation. Indeed, Shaw the 'miracle man' tried to put forth his desires and aspirations to develop a society free of atrocities, barbarism and wickedness. World War I that lasted for four brutal years from 1914 to 1918 has claimed more than thirty seven million casualties with sixteen million deaths and twenty million wounded. World War II from 1939 to 1945 for six years ushered more than sixty million deaths that was more than 2.5 percentage of the world population during that time. The resonance of this massacre will echo in the annals of future if the blanket of peace is not covered all over the world and of course good human race should prevail under the ubiquitous shadow of humanity. Arms. Arms and the Man (1894) is a romantic comedy that stands out to be one of his masterpieces that regulate the Shavian concepts in the play. It satirises war and supports marriage that is far better, where the pair witnesses happiness at the end. Shaw ridicules the system of war that weakens humanity, relationships, and normalcy in the world. It is love and marriage that is superior to disaster. The Swiss mercenary Bluntschli carries chocolates in the war rather than bullets and Raina, a wealthy Bulgarian calls him a chocolate cream soldier, both fall in love, and get married at the end of the play.*

**Keywords:** *War & Peace, War & Peace, Arms and the Man, World Wars, Marriage, Higher Love, A farewell to Arms, Chocolate Soldier, Miracle Man, etc.*

*Arms and the Man* is still an effective comedy on Love and War. Shaw attacks the romantic idea of the war. He has taken the title of the play *Arms and the Man* from Virgil's *Aeneid*, a Latin epic poem written between 29 and 19 BC. The first line of the poem forms the title of the play 'I sing of arms and the man...' In this poem Virgil glorifies war and celebrates soldiers and weapons but Shaw in his play makes parody of them. *Arms and the Man* was written on April 21, 1894 and first performed in the same year at the Avenue Theatre in London and was published in 1898. Class struggle is also one of the themes of the play. It decodes the humanistic values to the brim of socialism that evaporates the existence of being human. England experiences class struggle during the times of Shaw as a profound socialist propounds him to write the play as well. Shaw pejoratively rejects physical beauty to be always the cynosure and brightens his focus on the darker world of class and character in his plays. The play *Arms and the Man* (1894) is one of the Plays Pleasant that changes Shaw's perspective as a dramatist to a genteel and productive writer of the era. The play conspire war and its demerits in the shade of hyperboles and satires, which lure the audience in a new twist of reality of being a soldier in the warfront. A soldier who carries chocolates instead of bullets symbolise the grim reality that it is not the death but life that marks

humanity in the world. Shaw exemplifies the true colour of war and marriage that is productive and blissful to the core of Shavian retrospection. Ideologies on war have been retaliated in the limelight of battles and pride of nations in the wake of authority, power and politics. Mother Earth witnesses many fragile and frivolous wars that rage disaster and destruction of mankind. Shaw in the light of inhumanity foresees the vision of total annihilation of mankind on the earth, as he himself witnesses the two World Wars to its deadliest nature.

Two themes: war and love are intertwined in this drama. Shaw's conviction is that war is evil and stupid while love, culminating in wedlock is desirable and good. This kind of theme finds its dramatic expression in this play. But both being wrapped in romantic illusions deceive one as highly exciting games. This play occurs during the Serbo-Bulgarian War in 1885 and Shaw after ten years wrote the play to evoke the grotesque massacre of humanity. The main message embodied in *Arms and the Man* was said by David Smith, that "a romantic approach to life is no longer viable, if needed it ever was" (Smith, 76). The narrative technique of this play is omniscient and authorial with an unfathomable discussion on the two themes of war and love. The author knows best when to attack the audience with his brilliant dialogues and moves from character to character to give a broad picture about his intensions through the play. It is a mixture of vulnerable hypothesis about war and love with shrewd consciousness in satirizing and aiming the audience to think and realize the drastic adversities of war and the benefits of love and marriage. Shaw retaliates with his wit and prudence in cataloguing the differences about useless war and useful love and marriage to the society.

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel published in 1929 is an excellent piece of work set during Italian campaign of World War I that mimics GB Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. *A Farewell to Arms* speaks volumes about the emotions and vulnerabilities of war and love. This novel includes two major characters Frederic Henry, an American ambulance driver who serves the Italian army during World War I and Catherine Barkley, an English nurse at the nearby British hospital. Henry always hated war and ran away from such treacherous way of life. He intends to forget the war life completely. He hates war in one way as Bluntschli, the Swiss mercenary hates war in Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Catherine Barkley who lost her fiancée is determined to forget her past life and the death of her fiancée shocks her immensely all the time. She wants to come out of this disaster in her life. When Henry was admitted into the hospital, Catherine was the nurse who took care of him. Both fell in love in the hospital as Bluntschli and Raina fell in love in bedroom when both the incidents happen for the first time in their lives. Henry is so moved and sees his future in good hands. Their relationship turns out seriously and they get married. Henry describes the hair of Catherine as 'waterfall' and 'the camp tent' where he was mesmerized deeply. Henry recovers from the knee problem and was again at the war front which was inevitable for him to serve the wounded Italian soldiers. He was caught by the Italian soldiers from the melee, a confused fight, but escapes successfully by jumping into the river and reaches Catherine. He promises to himself that he will not return to this place again and both secretly go to Switzerland to start a new life. This is a symbolic representation of love and marriage that gives a good life. War life is hell and gives pain. Bluntschli makes up his mind to marry Raina and decides to lead a new romantic life with his beloved. He comes to Raina's house to have another look at Raina, and there he confronts Sergius who invites him for a bout. Bluntschli rejects his offer and wins Raina by elucidating the consequences of the fight and the war. The reunion of Bluntschli and Raina brings the fortune of wealth, happiness and excitement as the reunion of Henry and Catherine brought new life, pleasures and enthusiasm in their lives. Hemingway and Shaw looked war as an abominable cry of pathos, sorrows and unproductive but love and marriage as ecstasy and productive.

Bluntschli believes in himself completely and argues that food is more precious than bullets in the war as food fills the stomach and bullet poisons the body. He is a professional soldier but attributes his socialistic approach to war that preaches equity and parallelism rather than cynicism. He acts as a guide to Raina and gives awareness about war and love. As Bluntschli carries chocolates instead of ammunition, Raina mocks at him that he is like a school boy carrying chocolates. He prefers to eat rather than killing, a very practical thing to do in the warfront. He is an ardent lover of Raina and wins her in his life though he loses in the war. Meanwhile her servant maid Louka knocks at the door of Raina's bedroom to inform that a Serb soldier has been seen climbing into the house of Petkoff's by the Bulgarians and they want to check her bedroom. Raina

hides her fugitive behind the curtains. Bluntschli says from behind the curtain: Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools.... If they find me, I promise you a fight: a devil of a fight (Shaw, AM, 401).

Raina protects him and convinces Louka and her mother saying that nobody is there except her and thoughts about her war hero Sergius. Catherine and Louka go back heart-fully to sleep. Bluntschli reconciles his fear and Raina takes up the pistol and hands it to him. With much sarcasm he pokes Raina:

The Man: No use, dear young lady: theres nothing in it. It's not loaded.... Ive no ammunition. What use are cartridges in battle? I always carry chocolate instead; and I finished the last cake of that hours ago.

Raina : Chocolate! Do you stuff your pockets with sweets—like a school boy—even in the field? (Shaw, AM, 402)

Raina is shocked to know that he carries chocolates in the war front, but pities him and gives him her box of confectionery to eat. He happily rejoices:

Youre an angel! ... Bless you, dear lady! You can always tell an old soldier by the inside of his holsters and cartridge boxes. The young ones carry pistols and cartridges; the old ones, grub. Thank you. (Shaw, AM, 403)

Bluntschli's comments show that he is a man of some sophistication to be able to compare Sergius to an operatic tenor as well as Don Quixote. It is also noteworthy that while he describes the foolishness of the Bulgarian soldiers, he is realistic about his own side. It's the height of irresponsibility that the Serbians did not have proper ammunition to retaliate. The Bulgarians have won a victory out of sheer luck or else their strategy was suicidal. In his opinion Sergius ought to be court marshalled for being so unprofessional. It is important to notice that Bluntschli feels embarrassed when he recognizes Sergius in the photograph and learns that he is Raina's lover. He is apologetic. He does care for her feelings. He has succeeded in deflating Raina's exaggerated picture of Sergius's heroism.

Bluntschli, after having disclosed his identity and his adventure, he proposes to marry Raina, since Sergius has been engaged to Louka. Raina, who has been under the impression that Bluntschli, is a married person, surprises to hear his proposal. She refuses to marry Bluntschli. Bluntschli says:

...I appealed to you as a fugitive, a beggar and a starving man. You accepted me. You gave me your hand to kiss, your bed to sleep in, and your roof to shelter me. (Act III, P.471)

Raina Petkoff is the only child of Major Paul Petkoff and Catherine Petkoff in Bulgaria. Their family is the richest with all luxuries and comforts according to a Bulgarian standard. Raina is of course a complex woman in her mind but a simple, loving and respectable lady at heart. She is the darling of the house and everybody likes her. She is at first very proud about her fiancée Sergius who has come home after a victory over the war and dreams only about him. She changes her mind about war when she meets Bluntschli, a Swiss mercenary who fights for Serbians against Bulgarians. Her heart beats for Bluntschli and slowly shifts her love towards him. He opens her eyes about the brutalities of war and its consequences.

As the play opens, Raina is alone sitting in her bedroom thinking about her lover Sergius, who is fighting against Serbs. The flashing shootings and war crimes and cries outside the house grip her attention, when she is bubbling with joy to hear about her lover's adventures in war. Her mother, Catherine Petkoff, enters the bedroom to tell Raina of the victorious battle in which Raina's betrothed Sergius led the cavalry charge. Soon after Catherine leaves the room, a soldier by name Bluntschli enters her room by the help of a water pipe. He points an unloaded gun at Raina

and begs her to guard him from the Russian army. Bluntschli is a Swiss mercenary in the Serbian army who arms himself with chocolates instead of ammunition. She says:

Raina : ... Some soldiers, I know, are afraid to die.

The Man: All of them, dear lady, all of them, believe me. It is our duty to live as long as we can. (Shaw, AM, 401)

They both get immersed in a discussion about war. Bluntschli explains the discomforts of war and cavalry charge and speaks of the first man who is in charge of a cavalry. At this instance she gets excited as Sergius is the first man of one of the cavalries in the war and anxiously demands him to tell about the first man. He ridicules Sergius because he saw how Sergius mismanaged his cavalry and how his horse went off from him. By this, Raina gets furious and tells:

Raina: ... but I don't believe the first man is a coward. I know he is a hero!...  
(Act I, P. 403)

Raina is intrigued by his honest opinions about the war that she so romanticizes. He speaks eloquently about war by shattering her illusions, that she has been entertaining regarding her lover's exploitations on the battle field. The fugitive gives a crystal clear picture about war and her lover's ostentations moves in a realistic manner. Raina gets mesmerized about her dashing Bulgarian major whom she loves and caresses his photo and being perturbed by the fugitives' account of Sergius' quixotic feats on the battle field, shows his portrait to Bluntschli. Bluntschli stands in contrast to the other characters, who serve primarily as farcical characterizations of late eighteenth century aristocracy. While they are each consumed by their own romantic worlds, he alone is able to step outside himself and appreciate the harsh reality of war. His stoicism, punctuated by a biting dry wit, elevates him above the mayhem that marks the turbulent life of the Petkoff family.

Shaw's reputation as a stage director and a good playwright does not reach the theatre-goers until this play is performed. It established Shaw as a more popular playwright. This play brings reputation, commercial and a debate to Shaw, in that "it has brought me enough money to live on for six months, during which I will write two more plays" (Henderson, 430). Romance is seen hygienic and organized in the play from its tainted sagacity of command and meekness only to obtain a positive meaning in it. The comic brilliance is best visualised in the play that enjoys public victory. The comic flavour takes over the plot once Raina, the Bulgarian woman is realised about the mature ideologies of war and love through Bluntschli, a Swiss mercenary, and the latter half of the plot enjoys masquerading the characters with skilful demonstrations of realism in a confused family of Petkoff's. The play purely discusses higher love that restores romance at an advanced level. Raina is childish in the initial stages of the play who dreams about romance and the pride of being a part of the war as her hero Sergius fights on the warfront. She believes in the capabilities of her hero as a potent and strong patriot who devours the homes and shelter of his enemy. She projects herself in a fashionable and artistic flavour that emerges as the divine caricature in her household. Shaw through Raina and Bluntschli advocates truth and fact on war, as being the worst sin on the earth, and marriage a pure and noble cause for the world. He assures us his invincible sarcasm on war to make us blatant on how war scourges in the heart of mankind.

Bluntschli proves Sergius as mere pretender and sham on contrary to the fact of being a hero in the war. He bullies Sergius for being a coward and running away from the front, as witnessed by Bluntschli. Raina is shocked to know about her love and degrades him for his betrayal. She joins the Swiss mercenary and gathers strength to accept the reality of war and soldiering. These two Shavian 'Doolittle(s)' derive the pleasure to be the messengers of higher love. Sergius is seen with Louka, a servant maid who is a Shavian woman as well, aspires to cherish development in her social career. She depicts the native escapade dissolving herself in the romance of Sergius for profitable business. She explores Sergius's attitude as a 'third level' romance as nonsensical and blemishes the sanctity of higher romance in the solitude of his conscience. Louka is of course one of the most important characters of disdain in the house. She rivetingly captures Sergius with her scorn on Raina and Bluntschli revealing the hidden secrets of the lovers. She contemptuously brings out her wishes and aspirations to activate her desires. She

dares enough to petrify Nicola, male servant and discerns him for having unscrupulous behaviour and mannerisms of a servant. Louka under the tutelage of Shaw brings out the true relationships among the partners. She even ridicules Sergius for his inconsistent love towards Raina and Louka, clears the air of petty prejudices Sergius possesses over Raina and Bluntschli by enlightening the truth about Raina and chocolate cream soldier that they are madly in love with each other. This irritates Sergius initially but soon he is reconciled and accepts Louka as her soul mate. Louka displays the quality of womanly woman who does not cry over small things and brushes away the pain over indictment and strikes back confidently as a business-like woman. Shaw's women are present in every act of his plays disclosing the charm of Shavian etiquettes by their intellect, and by not physically or emotionally which is in contrast to Shavian ethics.

The exchange of the partners suggests higher realisation and travel from one world of ideas to the other as Raina travels from childish to matured woman, from Sergius to Bluntschli, from novice to growth and from theory to practicality. Whereas Sergius travels from pride to modesty, war to love, and from high to low. This complex yet simple combination gives an idea on transformation of ideals and attitudes towards mankind and marriage, and of course romance is the vehicle with which the partners enjoy the ride of Shavian epoch. Shaw grows more matured in advocating his tremendous zeal to collaborate such women with a tinge of Shavian wit and bravery, and all of them rise above his levity. Shaw is an ardent believer in socialism that makes him to write *Arms and the Man* during the period of great class structure struggle going on in England. He visits Russia and is impressed to his heart's content about the socialistic life. The advocacy on class struggle forms the basis of the play and so many new developments emerge to satisfy the needs of aristocrats of London. These people believe in hierarchy where the labourer and household servants are out of security zone. Shaw condemns this perspective of Londoners and in retaliation pens this play for motivating and instructing the believers of class racism which is an enemy that hampers the growth of a good society.

The theme of class struggle of London facades in the play of a light-hearted tragicomedy only to be conspicuous after the dosage of the laughter that ends in the last acts of his plays. War is another theme that grins initially and succumbs to a bitter revelation of it that slips its tunic form towards the theme of higher love alarming the cry of class bigotry at the end of the play. In the contentious pamphlet *Common Sense About the War* (1914) he disparages the wrong notions of initiating the war offenses, Great Britain and Germany for their reprehensible acts of war and makes his stance for amiable negotiations and peace. In his play *Heartbreak House* (1919) he exposes the spiritual insolvency of the generation accountable for the war's mayhem and the charm of Europe being spoiled by the politicians to the disgrace of mankind. Shaw's point of discussion on war, class distinction and romance are the weapons of creating the platform to raise issues like infidelity, loathsome jealousies, and above all the massacre of mankind in guise of war to its ugliest profits of the nations. His repartee in the play over such sensitive and delicate issues bargains mankind in a deluge of over sympathetic allusions; hypocrisy that attributes the death of relationships among humans in a congestion of trivial mannerisms is evident and struck in the future World War scenario as well.

The 'great depression' shook the world in World War I and World War II. America, China, Germany, Russia and Japan are some of the major conflicts that may lead to a disaster in maintaining the economic budgets and national income of respective countries. As Andrew Handley points out, "The US government is close to seventeen trillion dollars in debt and China owns seven percent of that... North Korea attacks South Korea with missiles with a range of five hundred kilometres" (Handley, <http://listverse.com>) that may hit Japan or the borders of China.

"The most recent launch was on March 2, 2014...and North Korea is building a Nuclear Arsenal... Iran has potentially become stronger with an air force of 30,000 men with several hundred aircrafts... cruise missile with a range of 2000 kilometres... and dispatched a fleet of ships in January 2014 towards US national waters" (Handley, <http://listverse.com>). That means Iranians can land their missile into the US base camps in the Gulf as well. The alliances between China and Russia on Ukraine won't give us a clear picture and why China has made a pact with Ukraine for protecting it which is some five thousand eight hundred kilometers away from China.

"America backing up Japan and Philippines against China with its naval force stationed in the Pacific, China authoritatively managing the Japanese waters at the Senkaku islands that belongs

commonly to Japan and China and China is controlling the islands, a group of rocks, which also controls the shipping lanes, fishing waters and potential oil field and the Crimean issues” (Handley, <http://listverse.com>). Whatever may be the issues going on this time the guns are much bigger than before.

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