



Arms and The Man – An Anti-Romantic Comedy

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KEYWORDS

Rare injury , Ipsilateral , hip , knee, ankle.

G. B. Shaw has aptly called 'Arms and the Man', 'An Anti Romantic Comedy' for in the work he has bare the worthlessness of the dreamy notions of adore and warfare, acted for the first time in April, 1894. It is a funny revelation of the glory of war and romantic love. By romanticism, Shaw means all that isn't based on fact and reality so all the false conventions are romantic because they are not based on facts. Their unreality and irrational nature can easily be demonstrated. Throughout his career Shaw waged a war beside dreamy and optimistic philosophy of existence. Against duplicity his war began with 'Arms and Man'. The play is anti-romantic because in it Shaw has attacked the dreamy veneration of life and it is also a comedy because in it he has open to the elements and ridiculed the worthlessness of romantic love and valiant concept of conflict. Shaw laughs but his laughter has a stern objective. He is both sharp and notion maddening. This play is a didactic play. The purpose of the dramatist is to mark his readers see the truth about love and war.

The story is based on an incident in a war between Bulgaria and Russia in 1885. The Petkoffs signify an well-bred Bulgarian family consisting of Major Petkoff, his wife Catherine and his daughter Raina, who believes in romance and is in love with Sergius, considered to be a hero. Into this circle enters as an ordinary soldier, Bluntschli, a Swiss who has joined the Russian army as a mercenary.

Raina-Sergius their romantic notions of War:

The play opens on a note of romance. The romantic idea about war is that it is a glorious adventure. Everyone thinks that soldiers are great figures of courage, romance and self-sacrifice. It's not true that soldiering is a noble and patriotic profession. In 'Arms and the Man', Sergius has no illusions about war, tells the bare fact about it when he happens to look for protection in Raina's bed chamber one night from the callous execution of the Bulgarians. The plot is skillfully developed to show that the hero of Raina's dreams, Sergius, is really a humbug, and his so-called military exploits are a mere folly.

Sergius is not a false hero on the battlefield alone but also in love. Though in feel affection for with and betrothed to Raina, he flirts with the maid, Louka. In course of time, it is found that Raina herself cares more for her 'chocolate cream soldier', Bluntschli, than for her engaged Sergius. Thus, Shaw tears off the mask of sentimentality surrounding war and love.

Raina is a romantic girl who holds the view that war is business of brave people. She is excited to hear that captain Sergius with whom she has been engaged, has performed splendidly in the war. Sergius becomes the hero of the hour and is ordered by Raina on his returning home. Raina calls him her "Hero" and Sergius calls him her as his "Queen". Eventually Raina and Sergius live in a world of relation and hollowness. In the very opening of the play Shaw shows how Raina has been put in doubts about their romantic ideas. They have derived from their reading of Baron and Pushkin. But their romantic is soon shattered through its very first contact with reality. Bluntschli is the representative of solid reality.

It should be noted that though Shaw is pacifist, he is disparate not so much to warfare as to the so-called exaltation of war. He requests that people should not intertwine a dreamy halo surrounding it, but know its dismal and horrible truth. It is not a juncture for the display of valour or any other noble qualities. 'Soldering' in the words of dramatist, is the coward's talent of offensive harshly when you are sturdy and keeping out of harm's way when you are feeble. That is the whole secret if successful fighting. Get the enemy at a disadvantage, and never, on any account, fight him on equal terms.'

Through him the dramatist presents the relevant facts and arguments before Raina and her romantic notions of war are soon shattered. Raina is told that Sergius is a fool and block-headed because he and his regiment nearly committed suicide, only the pistol missed fire. Further she is told that food is more important than ammunition. It is the duty of the soldier to live as long as he can and should run away from the field. Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools. Thus Shaw shatters the romantic illusion of war.

Similarly, Sergius is also disillusioned by war and realizes that soldiering is a trade like any other trade. At the initial stage Sergius is shown as brave and dashing soldier. He charges against the enemy on a white horse slashing with his sword like hero of a fairy tale. Shaw proves that he is not a hero but an idiot. The real hero is Bluntschli. He knows that war is not a romantic adventure but dirty, horrible and bloody business. He keeps chocolates and not cartridges in his pocket. War is not great courage but the coward's skill of hardheartedly violent when you are strong and having your enemy at a disadvantage.

Romantic Love:

Both Raina and Sergius are disillusioned in their romantic ideas of love. Sergius finds, to his great disappointment, hat behind his back Raina made love to Bluntschli. Raina realizes that her idol is made of mud and can flirt with her maid in her absence. Raina turns to Bluntschli not because he faces bullets but because he faces facts. Bluntschli breaks the web of illusion woven around her.

Thus Shaw is a realist who aims at making people think and understand the facts of life. It is in this way that Shaw spreads truth and tear down all that is bogus and illogical by focusing on it in search beam of sense and motive. It means that his pragmatism is not simply photography realism. In order to achieve his anti-romantic purposes, the dramatist resorts to exaggeration of reality. His anti-romantic intentions are in contrast with absolute fidelity facts and the dramatist often becomes incredible. A fugitive soldier may demand food when he is hungry but one can't believe that he would require chocolates. Sexual instincts may be an impersonal but in real life Sergiuses are usually married to Rainas and not Loukas.

The Note of Romance:

As a matter of fact there is enough romance in the play though it is an anti-romantic play. The play undo in an ambience of passionate melo-drama. There are thrilling and

shutting and fugitives and pursuers. There is news of a heroic knight and his heroic cavalry charge. There is also a beautiful and romantic girl enjoying the beauty of nature and inspired by thought of her love. There is also love at first sight between Raina and her chocolate-cream soldier. Such things do happen, but they do happen in a romantic fairy tale.

Thus 'Arms and the Man' is an anti-romantic comedy with certain elements of romance. Shaw with his brilliant intelligence and humour rips off the quixotic illusion of war and love and shows what they really are. This is light comedy giving a serious message. The play is remarkable for the Shaw's grip on character. Here the wit and moralist, on the one hand, and the performer, on the other, seem to move violently for incomparability. Bluntschli is a well-drawn personality and seems to carry the play away on his back. Shaw has depicted in this play an anti-hero as the vital stature, the leading actor being secondary. The engage in recreation was innovative for this reason.

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