

Full Length Research

Critical Reading of Marriage and outside Barriers in GB Shaw's *Arms and the Man*

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"Arms the Man" by George B. Shaw deals with many topics such as war, idealism, social classes, love etc. nevertheless, this research work focuses on romantic love in the play in order to clarify how significant love, especially romantic is, both in the play and in real life nowadays. This study uses literary criticism theory to broaden our understanding of romantic love as depicted in the play in combination with what people should know about romance in general. The results of this study show that love is a variety feeling, states and attitudes that range from impersonal to interpersonal affection. Romantic love is work experiencing. It should deal with trust, recognition and support of each other. But the way to reach marriage and self-satisfaction in full of barriers. True love stars with trust between the lovers.

Key-words: Love; Romanticism; Idealism; Realism.

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INTRODUCTION

"*Arms and the Man*" by Georges B. Shaw was written in the Victorian Era When most of the plays were lighter drams or comedies in the vein of the important of having good manner and other Victorian conventions. The most interesting thing about the play is that, although it is a comedy, it deals with several political and social themes covertly; some ideas such as idealism behind war and romanticism of love, which, though satiric, arc clearly elucidated alongside issues of social class. Even though the play deals with other specific topics such as money, status, heroism, marriage, love etc., this research work focuses on love, especially love at first sight.

Oxford¹ Advanced learners' dictionary defines love

as affection, an enjoyment, or a strong feeling that something or somebody gives you. In other words, love is a strong feeling of deep affection for somebody especially a member of family or a friend or for something. Romantic love can then be defined as a feeling of deep affection for somebody that one is sexually attracted to. Love is a complex theme to deal with in "*Arms and the Man*" by Georges B. Shaw. In fact, the characters (Raina, Serguis, Bluntschi and Louka) embody the meaning the author gives to love in the play.

In the play, Raina and Sergius have paired themselves for all the wrong reasons: their social status requires a mate from the same social level because Sergius plays the role of the type of hero that Raina has been taught to admire; Raina plays the role that Sergius expects from a woman of her status. The problem is that nothing is portraying on their real

¹ Oxford Advanced Learners' dictionary, 8th Edition

selves, their so-called love is based on outward appearances and not on strong feeling. They are both acting out a romance according to their idealized standards for courtship rather than according to their innermost feelings. When Bluntschli and Louka force Raina and Sergius to examine their true feelings, both discover that they have the right to follow their hearts instead of seeking to meet social expectations and to pair themselves with the ones they truly love.

This research work aims at explaining all the different meanings of love in the Victorian era and nowadays; that is to say I examine the love our old parents experienced and the way they expressed it are examined alongside with the reality surrounding love matters nowadays. The study is divided into four parts. The first, deals with the research context and problem statement. The second relates to the literature review and research methodology. The third gives the depiction of love in *Arms and the Man*. The last, is the personal stand. All these parts enlighten the readers about the different types of love and show the reasons why some events may occur in a romantic love and the true facts behind them.

Research context and problem statement

Context of the Research

Love is very complex theme to be dealt with. The definition of love is vague and yet so simple. All of us fall in love at a given moment of our lives but now many of us truly understand its meaning? The meaning of love can't really be explained; it has to be experienced. Perhaps love is just a word we use when we have to define a feeling that no one else can understand, this positive strong feeling that leads one heart faster than normal and a soul to be totally attached to and attracted by someone.

But, it is sometimes noted that although people confessed their pure love towards one another, they still nourish hatred to themselves. Or, despite the hatred they nourish to one another, they stand and fight next to one another. Can we then qualify that kind of feeling love, or give it another name? Do we really know what love means, what it is able to do, where it can lead someone and what its essence is? This research is to reveal how powerful love is.

Context of the Play

At the time George B. Shaw wrote the *Arms and the Man*, there were a number of class struggles taking place in Britain as a new wave of socialism ideology. Until then, workers in Britain were often paid low

wages and were offered little security as their country became ever further industrialized. In response, there were several workers' movements. Furthermore, *Arms and the Man* by George B. Shaw occurs during the Serb-Bulgarian War in 1885. Raina, the protagonist, is supposed to marry one of the heroes of the war who she admires in terms of the idealized version of soldiers. The peace of the beginning scenes is interrupted with the arrival of a Swiss soldier in Raina's bedroom asking for a safe place to hide. She offers him refuge and laughs because he does not carry guns or ammunition but chocolate instead. By the end of the play, Raina finally declares her love to the soldier. Sergius and she, despite the admiration they have for each other, decide to follow their own heart and to reveal their strong feeling. What is love? Why do some love relationships succeed and other do not? Does the word betrayal really exist in love? These different questions I have mentioned are the major things that the society should understand. As I said above, almost everybody talks about love but few people really care about what it means.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, I notice that there are some couples who live in perfect harmony and others in chronic troubles. Thus, I have learnt from the life experience of a young man, both working in an administration of the place. I remember that one day, the man returned from sport very tired and slumped on the couch of his living room. He asked his wife to serve him coffee. Often, they used to eat at the dining room but because of his fatigue, he decided to take his coffee in the living room. Minutes later, a friend of his visited him and while standing to welcome his guest, he broke the cup. The wife rushed in a broom in her hand, picked up the shards of glass and apologized for the incident. "If I had been vigilant, I would have realized that you had finished, to get rid of it before the arrival of your guest. Sorry, "sweetheart" said the woman to her husband. The latter confessed that it was not her fault saying if only he had taken his coffee in the dining room, the incident would have been avoided. Moreover, if he had taken his coffee at the habitual place it is supposed to be taken, it would not have happened. Then, it dawned on me to know: "is it only the strong feeling that leads both to act so gently towards each other? No; I am not sure. I finally realized that love goes hand-in-hand with humility, gentleness, education, self-questioning in any kind of situation that occurs and mainly on the respect for one's partner.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature review

Scientists and researchers all over the world have been trying to define the concept of love long years ago. Love is and has been the subject of countless poems, ballads, songs, novels, etc.

“Thus in its various acts as major facilitator of interpersonal relationships and owing to central psychological importance, it is one of the most common themes in the creative arts”².

According to Cambridge dictionaries, love is “the feeling of liking another adult very much and being romantically and sexually attracted to them or the strong feelings of liking a friend or a person in your family”³. This definition respectively talks about romantic love and affection. Oxford Advanced learners’ dictionary also considers love as affection and a strong feeling. Then, as for romantic love, “it is a strong feeling of affection for somebody that is romantically attracted to”⁴.

Thanks to the definitions from the two dictionaries, love is a variety of feelings, states, and attitudes that range from impersonal to interpersonal affection. Love is indeed an expression of emotion. Love, it is said, can make you walk miles barefoot in the rain just to the person you can’t stop thinking of. It takes many forms but the word typically describes an affection that is deep and emotional. If you say you are “in love”, that tends to refer to the romantic king of love. Many other languages use multiple words to express their different conception of the word “love”. Cultural differences in understanding love doubly impede the establishment of a universal definition of the word.

According to Christianity, love comes from God because God Himself is love⁵. Christians believe that love for God and one’s neighbours as oneself, with one heart, one mind, and one strength, is the most important things in life, the greatest command of the Jewish Torah⁶. Thus Christian theologians see God and as source of love, which is mirrored in human and their own loving relationship. In this sense, St Thomas Aquinas summarized the practical definition of love as

“to will well of another, or desire for another to succeed”⁷. This explanation includes to love one’s enemies.

Love is a basic human emotion but understanding how and why it happens is not just easy. In fact, for long time, many people suggested that it was simply something too primal, mysterious and spiritual for science to ever fully understand. One of the first theories was developed by Sigmund Freud⁸. Attributing human nature to unconscious desires, Freud’s theory was centred on the need for an “ego ideal”. His definition of love, an ego ideal, is this: the image of the person that one wants to become, which is patterned after those whom one holds with great respect. Another theory by Maslow that those who have reached self-actualization are capable of love. Wilhelm Reich in this theory about being in love, maintains that being in love was said to be attainable for those who could love for the sake of loving people, not just fixing one’s own problems.

When theories about love moved from being clinically based, they became focused on types of love, as opposed to becoming able to love. To define romantic love, Tick Rubin in his theory of “loving vs liking” concludes that attachment, caring and intimacy are the three main principles that are important to make the difference between liking one person and loving them”⁹. In Sternberg’s theory, one of his main principles is intimacy. It is clear that intimacy is an important aspect of love.

In *The colors of love*, psychologist John Lee compared styles of love to the colour wheel. Just as there are three primary colours, Lee suggested that there are three primary styles of love which are:

Eros (passionate), *Ludos* (game) and *storge* (natural affection). Continuing the colour wheel analogy, Lee proposed that *Justas*, the primary colours, can be combined to create complimentary colours, these three primary styles of love could be combined to create nine different secondary love styles. Sternberg then created his triangle next. The triangle next. The triangle’s points are intimacy, passion and commitment. Sternberg believed love to

⁷ Matthew 4 v 43-48

⁸ Martin S. Bergmann (1988), *Freud’s Three Theories of Love in the Light of Later Developments*, Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association, Volume: 36 issue: 3, page(s): 653-672

⁹ Sternberg, Robert J. « Triangulating love ». In Ood, T. J. the Altruism Reader: Selections From Writings on Love, Religion and. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation. (2007). P. 992.

² Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1998) – Miriam- Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2000)

³ Cambridge Advanced Learners’ dictionary, 4th edition, September 2014.

⁴ Oxford Advanced learners’ dictionary, 8th edition, 2010

⁵ I John 4V 16

⁶ Mark 12 V 28-38

progress and evolve in predictable ways, that all couple in love will experience intimate, passionate, and committed love in the same patterns.

In Shakespeare's plays, love and romance are often treated in ambiguous ways. Romantic love frequently ends in death, as in the tragedies, but such love may be presented in an idealized manner, shown to be uncourageous and unconditional. In Shakespeare's romantic comedies, the traditional comic ending featuring one or more marriages often tempered by a more serious note, which questions the so-called "romantic". Comedies may feature a certain degree of tension between romantic and anti-romantic elements. Marriage, typically viewed as the goal of romantic love is also treated ambiguously by comedies and tragedies; marriages are frequently disrupted by the husband's usually irrational fear of being cuckolded. Evelyn Gajowski (1992) examines the qualities shared by Juliet (*in Romeo and Juliet*) Desdemona (*Othello*), and Cleopatra (*in Antony and Cleopatra*), maintaining that all three women, give themselves freely to their beloveds without expecting or demanding reciprocal emotion. Gajowski notes that women, like the speaker in Shakespeare's sonnets, possess "the courage to love despite awareness of the vicissitudes of human existence".

METHODOLOGY

The reliability and validity of a research work in assessing evidence is based on a methodology. My research work's theoretical background is centred on literary criticisms in literature are most of the time based on the interpretation and the study of literature. They are not concerned with evaluating the quality of the piece of literature; however, the focus on arguing on a reasonable understanding of either what a text is writer intends throughout it or what meaning different cultures and ideologies give to it. Literary theory proposes particular, systematic approach to literary texts. To understand clearly what love is in *Arms and the man*, some concepts are analyzed and explained? The method adopted is either analytical or critical. To complete this work, I proceeded by evaluating, comparing and making synthesis of the existing data.

Depiction of love in *Arms and the man*

Understanding the title of the play

A good title should be apt and suggestive. It should also be attractive and attractive so as to capture the

attention of the audience or the reader. Just as a signboard indicates the contents of shop, a good title indicates the theme of the play. The title *Arms and the man*, as Shaw himself says in his preface, has been taken from the first line of Dryden's translations of Virgil's *Aeneid* begins with the following couple.

"Arms and the man' I sing, who forced by
fate
...And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate."

Shaw has also quoted "Arms Virumque Cano" as a motto in his play in which the is more than his weapons. The Arm Virumque Cano of Virgil is a mounting and ascending phase which suggest a superb procession which should bring on to the stage the brazen and more terrible because unarmed. As an ironical significance, the title "Arms and man «is chosen after careful consideration. The title is both apt chosen attractive and the dramatist's choices justified. It is an ironical reverse of Virgil's original intention. Virgil in his famous epic *The Aeneid* resounds for the martial exploits and adventures of Aeneid. But shawl does not perceive war as did Virgil. The title of the play is interesting and ironical. Furthermore, it gives Shaw full vent to his comic genius along with his serious engagement with major social ethical issues. Thus, *Arms and the man* is the befitting title to a drama in which war is the mainspring of action and through. No doubt it treats of romantic love but the main theme is the fictitious glory of war. The play amply demonstrates the power of man over arms. It shows how man controls situations, overcomes obstacles and thereby proves him superior to arms. This makes the title quite appropriate.

The structure of the play

The play is sequenced in three Acts. The play begins in the bedroom of Raina Petkoff in a Bulgarian town in 1885, during the Serb-Bulgarian war. In act 1, a fleeing member of the Serbian army desperately climbs through Raina Pickoff's bedroom window to escape capture, but he turns out to, be a Swiss mercenary officer by the name of Captain Bluntschli. Raina scolds him for being coward and inform him of the bravery of her fiancé, Sergius, a cavalry officer who led the Bulgarian Victory. Bluntschli informs her of the foolish nature of Sergius charge in the battle and then explains that chocolates are more valuable in a war than bullets statement that outrages Raina. He shocks her even more when he reveals that he is afraid and unwilling to die. However, when come seeking out the run-away, Raina soldiers hides the

fugitive, and only her maid, Louka, is aware of her actions.

Act II takes place four months later, when Raina's father and fiancé returned after the war. The two men talk about a young Swiss officer who had impressed them with his practical approach to the exchange of soldiers. The men also laugh about the tale of the officer's escape and how a young girl had given him shelter in her bedroom, little suspecting that it happened in Major Pickoff's own house. Meanwhile in secret, Sergius has been flirting with Louka. Unexpectedly, Captain Bluntschli shows up to return an overcoat that Raina had lent him for his escape; and she panics when her father invites him to stay for lunch.

In act III, while Bluntschli is helping the men plan for the transport of troops, Raina is worried that her father will find the photo she had secretly left in the coat pocket for her «chocolate cream soldier». When Sergius sees Bluntschli, he challenges him to a duel, but Raina interrupts and expresses her real feelings for Bluntschli. Louka succeeds in securing Sergius for herself and the Major Petkoff and his wife give consent to Bluntschli to marry Raina.

Different form of love mas seen in the play

There are two forms of love; Impersonal love and interpersonal love which are subdivided into many types.

Impersonal Love

It is a deep commitment to a non-human like a country, a principle, a goal, a religion, etc. This form of love is known by a number of different terms like nationalism, dogma, or object orientation. All of these are of course a justification for war, thus demonstrating that war is the highest form of love. At present, a significant proportion of the world are involved in a war on terror, a terror is making love to us right back. People can also love material objects, animals, or activities. This is known as paraphilia, bestiality and autoeroticism.

Interpersonal Love

Interpersonal love refers to love between human beings but it does not necessarily equate with sex. It is a more potent sentiment than a simple liking for another person. Interpersonal love is most closely associated with interpersonal relationship. Such love might exist between family members, friends, and

couples. Interpersonal love includes familial love, agape love, courtly love, romantic love, etc.

Personal Stands

Love is an intense passion and a physical attraction that is nearly impossible to control. We lose sight of who we are and what we need. Romantic love bases on cupid's arrow of lust and physical attraction and it happens rather quickly. It is true that lust is the first stage of falling in love. But it is driven by desire; the sex hormones play an important role at this stage which makes sense. Some signs that may make you know about cupid's arrow are:

- You're focused on the physical appearance of the person of your desire.
- There is a strong desire to have sex, but not deep emotions.
- You'd rather keep the relationship on a fantasy level, not discuss real feeling.
- You are lovers, but not necessarily friends.

Lust can transform into love, but usually it takes time. Two individuals will transform their lust into love when they get to actually see the whole individual and get past the «fantasy level». As far as romantic love is concerned, it should deal with trust, recognition and support of each other. You meet the sweet lady or the cool guy and your heart starts, and for a while, all the pictures that pass through your mind are the ones to be with him or her, to wed and to spend the rest of your life with him or her. But the way to reach that dream is full of barriers. True love starts with trust between the lovers. If your partner should not trust you, your relationship has no future. And this is source of some teenager's pains. Most of them think that it is sufficient to romance a girl for having her love. The aim of being together for forever in love begins from there. One should create all the conditions in order to settle down heart complicity. The first step to love is lust, and then recognition and support follow by themselves. When somebody trusts you, he will be able to appreciate at the fair value, your efforts.

Love should lead to a mutual effort, and both partners should work to make the other life better and help him to be a better person. In the example above about the couple whose man broke the cup of tea, and the wife with a broom to clean everything up, we notice an effort from both to calm down the situation, and bring back peace and joy. They made some rules that are to be followed, but one of them broke it, but instead of blaming someone, they helped each other to pass over the situation, and gave each other a

hand to move forward because they know that there are more important things to share than mere quarrels.

We see some relationships which start off with so much passion and excitement, and then turn into common man/woman roles, like husband and wife, mother and father etc. Those relationships often reason why one is supposed to make an effort to please one's partner, day by day. That's what brings some poets to write "Sweetheart, I'll love you all my life, today more than yesterday, and less than tomorrow".

Romantic love can generate many powerful feelings. It can provide a profound ecstasy, and a deep suffering when frustrated. To some people, romantic love is irrationality can seem like an emotional storm and it involves suffering. In *As you like it* by Shakespeare, we see male lovers such as Orlando, Oliver, Silvius and even Audrey lamenting after their lovers just to be accepted. Shakespeare's vision about romantic love is strongly portrayed in a very strange way. In *Romeo and Juliette* where apart from their suffering, the lovers ended in death. It's the same case with the history of The Titanic Boat. In fact, romantic love frequently ends in death, as in the tragedies, but such love may be presented in an idealized manner, shown to be courageous and unconditional.

CONCLUSION

Love is a variety of feelings, states and attitudes that can be either impersonal or interpersonal. George B. Shaw's *Arms and the Man* is simply centred on the concept of the love, everything from the bawdy love of the lower class characters to the courtly love of the nobles. In his sonnets and plays, George Shaw mixes non sexual love and sexual love with skill and heart. For him, love is a force of nature. Romantic love is a way to focus our energy, our curiosity and desire for adventure. It is also a source of pleasure, inspiration and is worth pursuing. It confirms our lovable and capable nature. It is very common to hear these days that romance is dead, or that love relationships of the present age just do not have the passion of the old days. But how true is that? Were relationships of the past so filled with romance and 50 per cent perfect as often described? The truth is, all those amazing love stories that are told in great novels and movies, even when real, are the rarest of relationships. From an early age, a perception is created in people's minds about love relationships? That it should all be as in fairy tales or in a romance; that love, when it comes, will be forever and will be a perfect and a smooth ride. Human

beings are not perfect; therefore, their relationships can't be perfect either.

Realities show that we are not much different from people who lived centuries ago; our core is still the same, our desires and feelings are unchanged. However, there was no internet love, but today, things have radically changed and people can look for their soul mates on internet. Also, love is entirely bases on money nowadays; George B. Shaw really emphasizes this through the character of Catherine. She wants her daughter for a hero, an upper class man of the same level as their own, not minding whether this choice size her or not. Nevertheless, there is no barrier to romantic love. Pure love will still subsist whatever the barrier will be. For Shaw, finally, whatever love is, it has its advantages and drawbacks.

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