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## Arms and the Man: Idealism Vs Realism

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G.B. Shaw was the master of conveying his message to his audience and readers in a very lucid and easy way. He was one of the prominent figures to introduce realism in drama in the contemporary literature. Romanticism was very popular in the contemporary literature which mostly would focus on the idealism in literature. The trend of literary romanticism already had begun to decline its spell in literature around the time Bernard Shaw was born and the play by Shaw is one of the crucial example to illustrate how and why romanticism failed historically because of failing in illustrating the fundamental and actual human experience. The present paper is the focus on how Shaw juxtaposes realism with idealism for illustrating this difference two distinguished characters are introduced.

During 19th century, theatre was entering so called Modern theatre, one of the most important phases of its history. In this phase, theatre is divided into two parts: early and late. The early period was dominated by melodrama and Romanticism. Melodrama refers to a dramatic work that exaggerates plot and characters in order to appeal to the emotions. One of the figures who build this new type of drama is George Bernard Shaw. He wrote frankly and satirically on political and social topics such as class, war, and feminism.

Literature, especially drama, is a branch

of art that is able to convey the characters of a person accurately. Literary realism is a style in literature that presents things and people as they are in real life. It is opposed to romanticism or idealism. It is a clearcut way of seeing, accepting and dealing with situations as they really are without being influenced by emotions or false hopes. It is a concept that believes in reflecting real life situations. Moreover, most often, literary realism refers to the trend, beginning with certain works of nineteenth-century French literature and extending to late nineteenth and early twentieth century authors in various countries, toward depictions of contemporary life and society as they were. The realist writers presented the society as it was. They adopted realistic everyday activities which were common those days.

Throughout the play an underlying conflict is seen between romanticism and realism in the characters. This conflict is presented through two men that come into Raina's life. Sergius exhibits features like passion, impulse, romanticism, and practicality and the character namely Bluntschli stands for strong-minded professionalism. Shaw's portrayal of his characters is a very important aspect of his writing. It is said that the human behaviour is not permanent in nature but it keeps changing as the situation changes. Tracy C. Davis in his article "George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre, he says: **"He is not interested in man's eternal nature but in his changeability. His characters are full of contradiction imposed on them by the environment."** (459)

Change is seen in Arms and the Man with practically every character except Bluntschli as he represents the realism. A deserting soldier, Bluntschli, climbs a balcony to hide in a young woman's room. Realistically, this would be very threatening to a young woman, but Shaw with his magical words projects it in the lightest of tones. The two share a cheerful conversation and the process of falling in love



begins.

The spell of romanticism compels Raina to fall in love with the idea of Sergius as a dashing war hero, and he does the same with her, as Raina is of a suitable class for a man like him. Nevertheless, he prefers Louka, a beautiful and practical maid servant of Raina. This preference shows the idealism instead realism because in a realistic play, this might cause jealousy and hatred.

Captain Bluntschli and Major Sergius Saranoff are having the crucial characteristics which differ from each other in a way or other. Bluntschli, a swish officer runs away from battle field and carries sweets instead of a gun. He also speaks honestly about the brutality and violence of war which attracts the idealistic characters like Raina who remains in love with heroism and gallantry of war. The play simultaneously focuses on 'Love and war' the major concerns which are often regarded as societal ideals. George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* is a pleasant and humorous attack on both. In the words of Tracy Davis, Shaw uses humour as:

**"a vehicle of thought" thus tending to "obscure his subtle satire on war and the genteel classes and his exploration of the romantic-realist spectrum in human disposition." (274)**

These romantic ideals make up the essence of the play's satirical instances and develop the theme of realism. Shaw satirizes romanticism within *Arms and the Man* by contrasting romantic idealism and realism. As the play opens with the scene of Raina Pettkoff engaging in her romantic dream of her fiancé who was away from her on the battle-field she weaves it through the romantic point of view divorcing herself from the reality of the horror and massacre of war. Suddenly her reverie broken down when a fugitive swiss soldier enters in her room. There are two major male characters, namely Captain Bluntschli and Major Sergius Saranoff.

The men have distinctive personalities from one another. Bluntschli is a man who disregards the importance of the conventional values. He is straightforward, humorous, gentle, and practical. On the other hand, Sergius is a man who has handsome appearance and great ideals towards war and life. He is credulous, rude, brave, but gentle. The dialogues of Bluntschli prove to be more realistic and down to earth than Sergius.

The most interesting about *Arms and the Man* is that, although it is a comedy, it deals with several political and social themes though secretly. Ideas such as the idealism behind war and the romanticism of love are attacked through satire and even more importantly, issues of class are brought to the forefront. The play attacks the ideal of the heroic and heroism of the war. It is shown in the title *Arms and the Man* itself. *Arms and the Man* by Bernard Shaw is a satire in the practice of romanticizing war and reckless heroism in war.

Moreover realistic fiction is often opposed to romantic fiction. The romance is said to present life as more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous, or heroic than actuality; realism, on the other hand, is said to represent life as it really is. Thus it is clear that the purpose of realistic fiction is to give the effect that it represents life and society that suits and evokes the common reader.

Thus at the end of the play Shaw succeeds to disclose the futility of the romantic idealism. Raina's appreciation of Bluntschli's down to earth philosophy proves to be more effective and strong example of idealistic mind turn to be more practical in nature. The practical and realistic nature of Bluntschli works as an eye opener for the other characters in a play and the audience too. The horror and ferocity of war which was commonly being presented with the decorative cover of romanticism, cavalry, manhood and other chivalric deeds and idealism but the *Arms and the Man* takes the audience into



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## Fantasy Dealing With Facts: Manifestation Of Society In Badal Sircar's Beyond The Land Of Hattamala

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**ABSTRACT:** Badal Sircar (1925-2011), a prolific Bengali actor, writer and director is known for his formation of the Third Theatre. His Third Theatre is a synthesis of the first theatre i.e. the Folk Theatre and the second theatre i.e. Proscenium Theatre. He not only experimented with the form but also with the content. For him content comes first. Therefore, his theatre can be sources of alternative power- the power of protestation against imperial dominance and the exploitation of the downtrodden. This way, his plays can be called Marxist in their outlook as his plays criticize a class and status-concerned India created by English colonisers, and the humiliation usually done by the aristocrat to the underprivileged Indians. In this Marxist world, the financially developed people continuously denied even the services to the impoverished mass. He tried to present a common solution for the numerous maladies afflicting modern individuals. The present paper intends to discuss Sircar's use of the theatre of the social reformation with the reference of his well known play Beyond the Land of Hattamala.

Among all the arts, drama is a performative art with immediacy of appeal. Drama has had a rich and glorious tradition in India and it is also popular as folk entertainment in India. The form of drama in contemporary