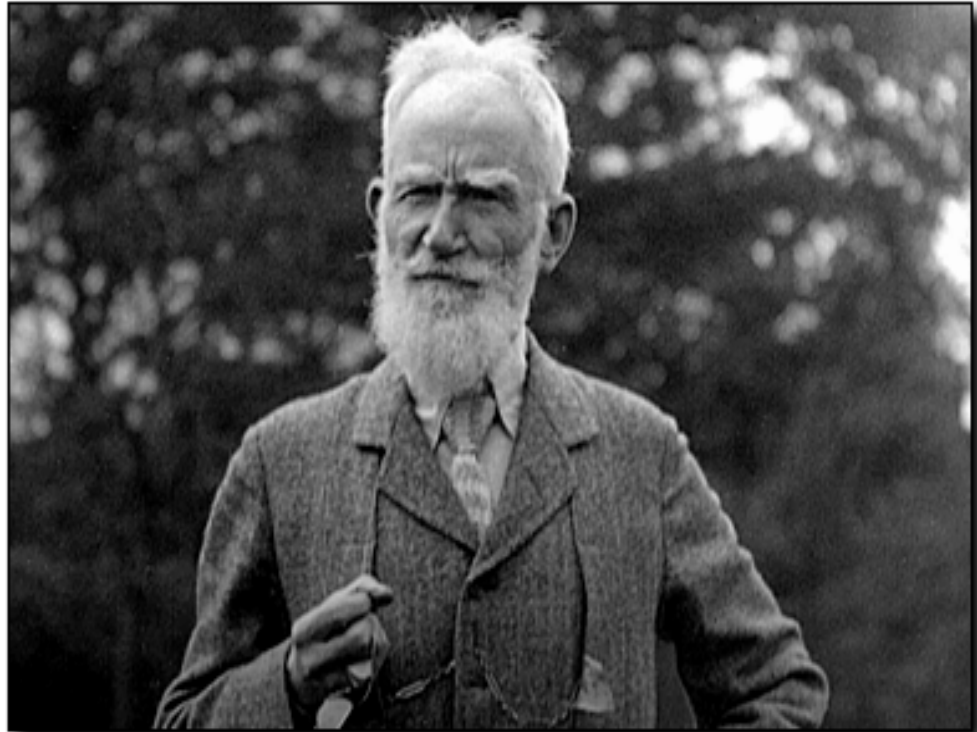


● ● ●

George Bernard Shaw



BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



- **George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950)**
- **Category: Irish Literature**



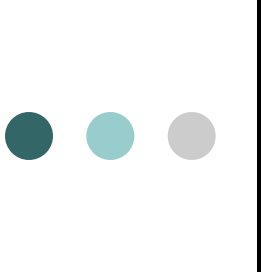
○ Birth: July 26th 1856.

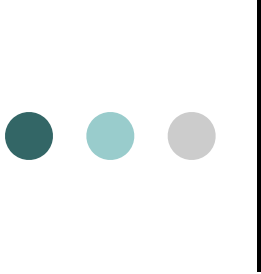
○ Death: November 2nd 1950.

○ Irish born British Dramatist & Literary critic

○ Wrote more than 50 plays.

○ Won the Nobel Prize in Literature in the year 1925.

- 
- Wrote five unsuccessful novels between 1879 and 1883 -
 - Shaw turned to drama and started to write his first play ***Widowers' Houses*** in 1885
 - *Followed by*

- 
- *The Philanderer (1893)*
 - *Mrs. Warren's Profession (1894)*
 - *Arms and the Man (1894)*
 - *Candida (1895)*
 - *The Man of Destiny (1895)*
 - *And You Never Can Tell (1896)*



- he emphasised

- **social and**

- **economic issues**



- After the age of forty

- Shaw proceeded to write his next plays:

- *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1899)

- *Man and Superman* (1905)

- 
- He used high comedy to explore society's foibles-

- *Major Barbara* (1905)
- *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1911)
- *Pygmalion* (1913),
- comic masterpiece.



- Other notable plays:

- *Androcles and the Lion (1912)*

- *Heartbreak House (1919)*

- *Saint Joan (1923). His*



one of his earliest plays

the first commercial success



On the strength of it Shaw was able to give up
being a music critic

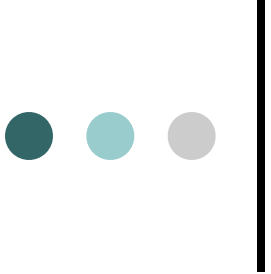
and, at the age of forty, become a full-time
playwright.

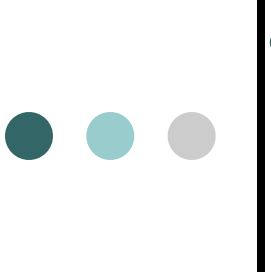


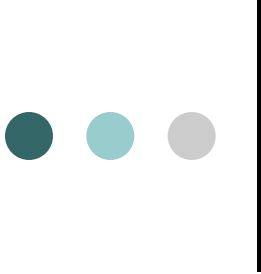
- **unique among Shaw's plays** in several respects:

- first of his plays to be produced in a commercial theatre

- first of his plays to be acted in America

- 
- it is the only Shaw play be printed with **three different final curtain lines**

- 
- some haste to comply with **Florence**
Farr's desire to present a new play by Shaw in a season of "New Dramatists" at London's Avenue Theatre, in 1894
 - Shaw was not completely satisfied with the ending of the play

- 
- revisions
 - substantial deletions
 - Accretions
 - and less lengthy rewordings

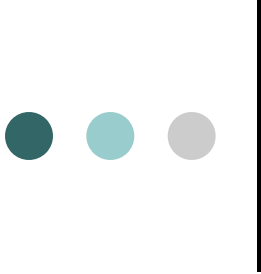
- But in **no other play did he tinker so much with the last line.**



- The original last line –

- "What a man! What a man!"

- found in **Shaw's handwritten** copy of the play now in the **British Museum**

- 
- For **27 years** after the initial publication of the play
 - and **31 after its initial production**, the same line served as the basic ending
 - **Shaw was not happy**



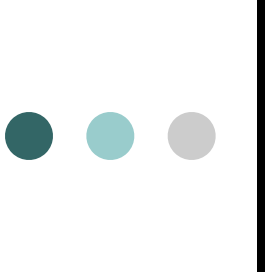
- In the **Collected Edition** 1930-1932

- published by Constable

- Shaw made hundreds of revisions

- Here the last line becomes

- "What a man! Is he a man?"

- 
- Shaw was still not content
 - and in a subsequent alteration –
 - emphatically very large change:
 - **"What a man! Is he a man?"** becomes
 - **"What a man! Is he a man!"**

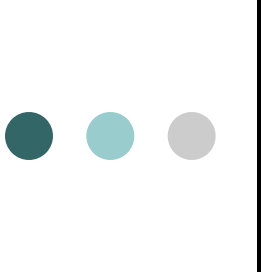


- It is this version –

- "What a man! Is he a man!" –

- found in the last printing

- authorized by Shaw himself, of Arms and the Man in the **Standard Edition**

- 
- Shaw - had **strong views** on almost everything
 - a **prominent figure** during the late 1930s.



- In Geneva and elsewhere –

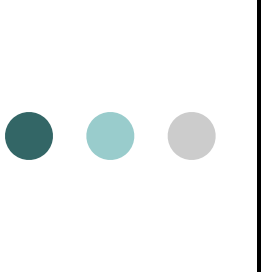
- his **views on Hitler and Mussolini** kept his name and opinions

- on both the drama and editorial pages of the *New York Times*



- Verner Haldene -

- "Like O'Neill, Shaw is one of our best writers for the theatre . . . [and] is a master at stinging satire, and high comedy."

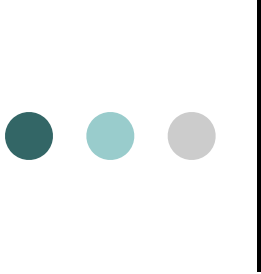


- **preface - argues** - - the play's most timely subject is

- "barbarity - militarism - which raises its horrid head from time to time to cast a doubt on the reality of our civilization"

- 
- **San Diego's director** - name does not
 - appear on the program

- This is a Shaw play! Isn't that sufficient to describe Arms and the Man? Shaw's lines are never clever. One doesn't have to interpret lines in a Shaw play...



- - the actor merely speaks them and he depends on situations to pull him through a dull evening's entertainment.

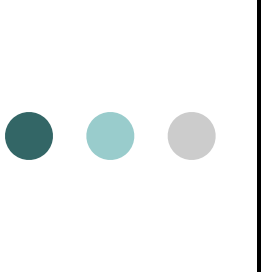
- Shaw is **recommended for students of ancient history** [and] is not recommended for entertainment-seeking audiences.

-



directorial - critical view points equally varied.

If you are a thorough-going pacifist, you might . . . applaud again the way [Shaw] **makes tomfoolery of Balkan and all wars in general** and monkeys of military men...



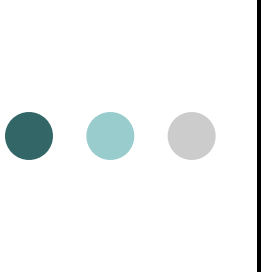
If you have a **social consciousness** too, there is plenty to muse upon, and **if your intellectual dish is satire**, you will find that also in ... an enthusiastic if not stellar reading.

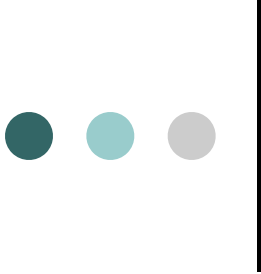


- The play had proved **vital and timely** when it was revived following **World War I**



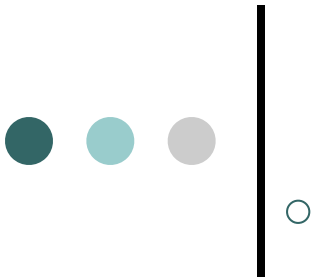
- **A romantic comedy armed with chocolate.**

- 
- As a young lady awaits the return of her heroic fiancé from war
 - a dishevelled soldier sneaks into her bedroom fleeing the fight (6)

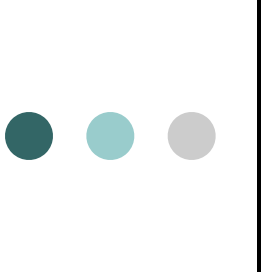
- 
- Simplicity - finds more alluring
 - her fiancé's arrogant posturing
 - she's faced with singling out the real man for her

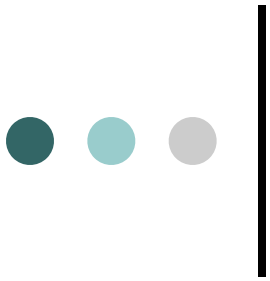


- Will it be the “accidental hero” who is more toy than soldier?
- Or the pragmatic “coward” who comes armed with chocolates instead of bullets?
(10)
-

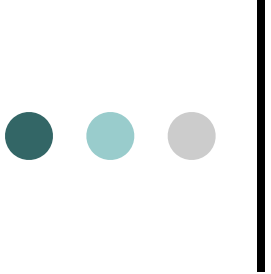


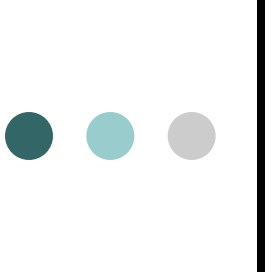
- Crackling with wit, irony and charm, Shaw pokes fun at the dangers of bravado in battle and idealistic notions of love

- 
- **The title-** *Arms and the Man*
 - deserves more careful scrutiny
 - Shaw takes his title –
 - opening line of *The **Aeneid*** - Virgil
 - Dryden's translation

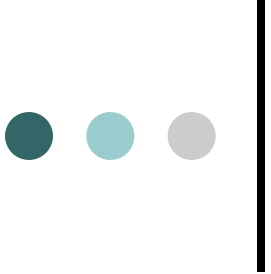


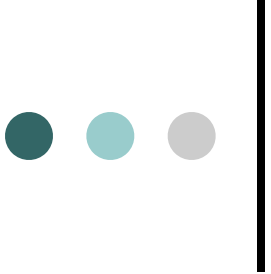
- **Arms and the man** I sing, who, forced by fate
- And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
- Expelled and exiled, left the Trojan shore.
- Long labors, both by sea and land, he bore;
- And in the doubtful war, before he won
- The Latin realm and built the destined town,

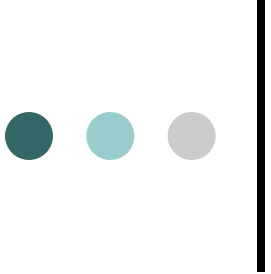
- 
- the reference to *The Aeneid* –
 - gives the play a clear **mock-heroic dimension**

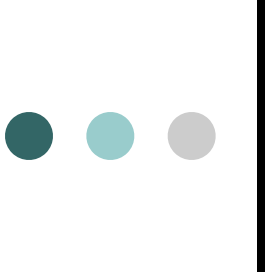
- 
- *an epic-poem describing the **adventures of***
 - **Aeneas**, the Trojan Prince "*of arms and the man I sing*".

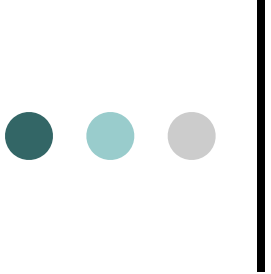
 - *Virgil glorified war and the heroic feats of Aeneas on the battlefield – “**Arms and the man I sing**”*

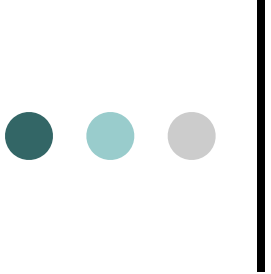
- 
- The **newspapers of the 1890s** were full of **imperial fighting** that might have spurred Shaw to write about war.

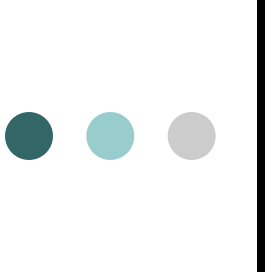
- 
- For example-
 - in 1892, the French fought a colonial war in Dahomey
 - while America declared war against Chile

- 
- in Africa the next year marked not only the first **Matabele War** but also the **Third Ashanti War**
 - and in 1894, there was the **Sino-Japanese War**
 - a conflict that marked the emergence of Japan as a major world power

- 
- Shaw targets any of these...
 - the target of Shaw's mock-heroic debunking.

- 
- **Balkans** – a name given to the region which includes modern day Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania

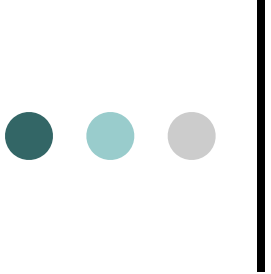
- 
- Exceedingly **complex history-**
 - peopled by a wide **variety of religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups** scattered through this mountainous territory...

- 
- **Dividing up the region into countries** during the latter part of the nineteenth century
 - **became contentious**
 - **resulted in border disputes, civil wars and ethnic massacres**





- *Arms and the Man* satirises the sort of idealising of war
- graphically expressed in Tennyson's famous poem - forty years before-

- 
- memorialising the "Charge of the Light Brigade" in the Battle of Balaclava at the start of the Crimean War.



- **The Charge of the Light Brigade**

- BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

- I

- Half a league, half a league,

- Half a league onward,

- All in the valley of Death

- Rode the six hundred.

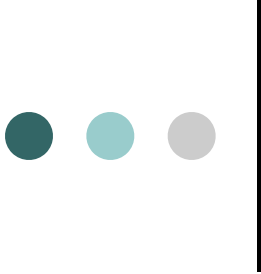
- “Forward, the Light Brigade!

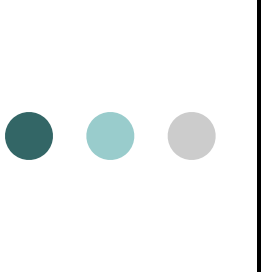
- Charge for the guns!” he said.

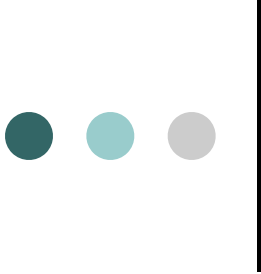
- Into the valley of Death

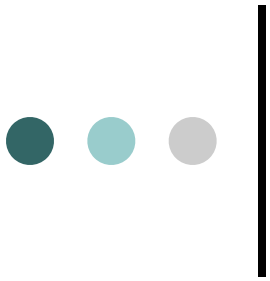
- Rode the six hundred.

-

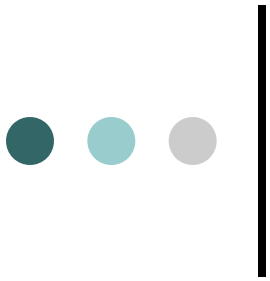
- 
- ||
 - “Forward, the Light Brigade!”
 - Was there a man dismayed?
 - Not though the soldier knew
 - Someone had blundered.
 - Theirs not to make reply,
 - Theirs not to reason why,
 - Theirs but to do and die.
 - Into the valley of Death
 - Rode the six hundred.
 -

- 
- *'Arms and the Man'* is not an anti-war drama
 - but rather a satirical assault on those who glorify the war.

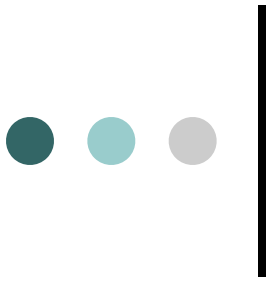
- 
- Shaw has aptly called '*Arms and the Man*' an *anti-romantic comedy*.
 - In the play he has **exposed the hollowness of the romantic notions of love and war.**



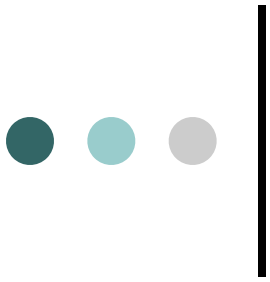
- The **term romantic**, according to Shaw meant **untruth**.
- Romance refers to a kind of fiction, which does not concern itself with real life
-
- it gives greater importance to **idealisation**.



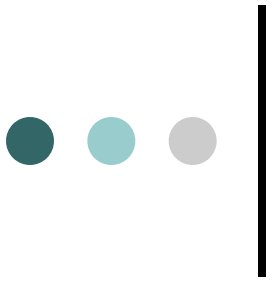
- Shaw was a professed **social reformer**
- Satire was the weapon
- To convert society to his own point of view.
- In each successive play - **he lashes at one social evil after another.**



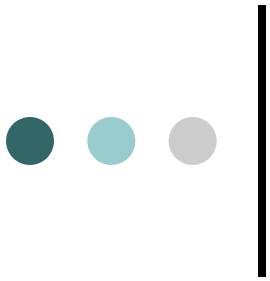
- his main aim was to bring a **correct understanding of the true nature of love and war.**



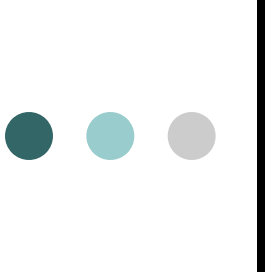
- Shaw had ruthlessly exposed the vanities and follies of man

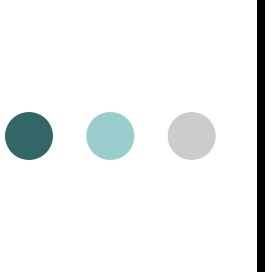


- 'Plays Pleasant' includes:
- *Arms and the Man (1894)*
- *Candida (1894-95)*
- *The Man of Destiny (1896)*
- *You Never Can Tell (1877)*



- Towards the end of the preface-
- "That he can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct 'shedding fictitious glory on robbery, starvation, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, cupidity and all other commonplaces of civilization

- 
-which drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretences that such things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness, and all other names the news papers call them".

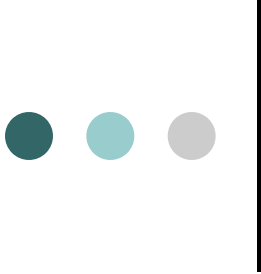
- 
- "Arms and the Man, subtitled as an 'anti-romantic comedy', is a satire on the conventional idealistic
 - views on war and marriage".
 - (Riaz Uddin Ahmed. 1995:16).

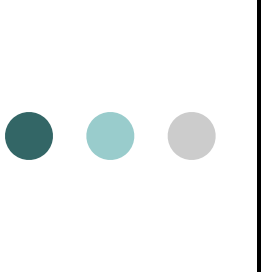


○ **Setting:**

○ **Prince Alexander I**, the **regent of Bulgaria**, led the **Bulgarian army** against the **Serbs** who had declared war in November 1885.

○ **The Russians helped the Bulgarian Army** whereas **Austrians led the Serbs**.

- 
- The Swiss supplied a large number of mercenaries
 - and **Captain Bluntschli** - such a soldier fighting on the Serbian side.
 - These mercenaries had no feelings.

- 
- At a crucial point –
 - **Russia called back her officers** and Bulgaria was left to fend for herself
 - **In spite of such mishaps** the **Bulgarians were victorious** in the Battle of Slivnitza in November 1885.



○

○ **Raina Petkoff –**

the heroine of the play - the only child of Major Petkoff and Catherine Petkoff.

She is a 'romantic' and had romantic notions of love and war.

Catherine Petkoff -

Raina's mother - middle - aged affected woman - wished to pass off as a Viennese lady.

She is 'imperiously energetic' and good-looking.

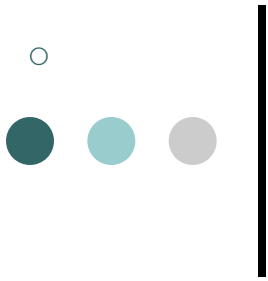
Major Petkoff -

acquired his position in the army more because of his wealth than his ability.

In military strategy he takes help from Bluntschli, but believes that he himself has made all the plans.

However, he is a good father and husband.

○

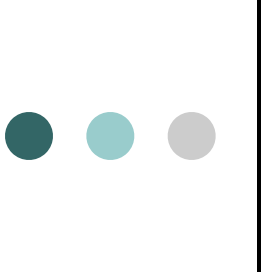


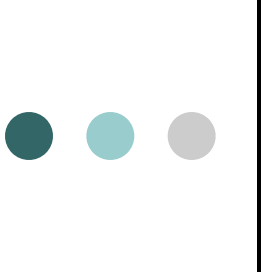
- **Sergius** - handsome, as a romantic hero ought to be, has a good position in the army and is supposed to be brave.
- He supposedly in love with Raina, but flirts with Louka.

- **Captain Bluntschli** - Swiss professional soldier.
- He believes that it is better to be armed with chocolates than with ammunitions on the battlefield.
- In contrast to Sergius he is of middling stature and undistinguished appearance.
- He is energetic and carries himself like a soldier.

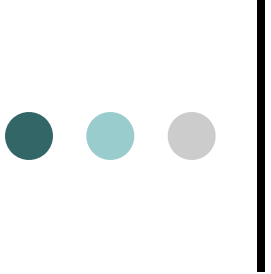
- **Nicola**: an old servant of the family. He displays a lot of discretion in dealing with the members of the family as well as their guests. He is fond of Louka, who disapproves of his servility.

- **Louka** servant girl in the Petkoffs household, is proud and looks down on servility, she is ambitious and wishes to rise up in life.
- Nicola wishes to marry her but she has other plans.

- 
- Treatment - some worldwide themes such as:
 - romance, realism, war, honour, idealism, heroism, patriotism, and marriage.

- 
- Throughout the play – his aim –
 - tries to **make people think**

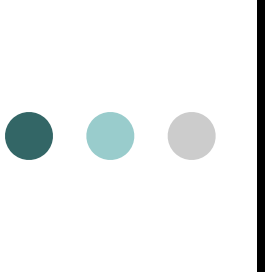
 - **as much as they laugh** in order to **amend**
their wrong ideas.

- 
- Shaw's **dramatic genius** has been **subjected to diverse interpretational frameworks.**
 - different **sociological, economic** and **religious theories, thinkers** and **philosophers ...**



○ Edward Wagenknecht considers

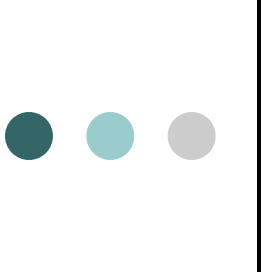
- **Mozart as the biggest influence** on the structure of his plays **besides Shakespeare**

- 
- Margery M. Morgan - examines **Nietzschean imagery** in his plays
 - discusses the impacts of both the **forms of**
 - **nineteenth-century theatre** and the **patterns of Greek drama** in his plays.



- Shaw, according to Morgan –

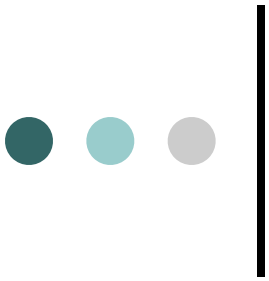
- **experimented with drama** and **moulded the forms of drama already in fashion to his own purpose** which led to an extravagantly individual achievement.

- 
- **S C Sen Gupta** traces the roots of **Shaw's economic theory to Marxism** and considers Karl Marx's *Das Capital* as the *main motivating* force behind his economic theory.
 - Shaw says that it is **not the love of**
 - **money which is the root of evil, but the lack of it.**

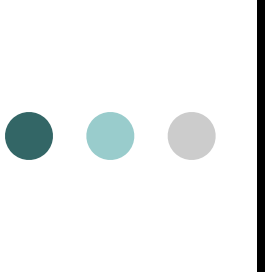


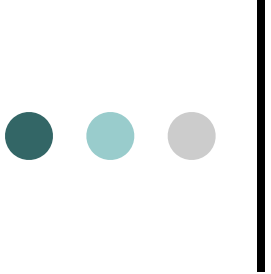
- **Azher Suleiman** focuses on **Ibsenian shades on the Shawian art.**

- Shaw was a great disciple of Ibsen and, like him, used the **stage as a platform to preach his propaganda against capitalism** and the **social evils** generated by the society.



- following the **footsteps of Ibsen**, emerged as a **leading satirist of the upper class hypocrisies**

- 
- Shaw's plays - **serious in purpose** and **content put in the form of comedy** to appeal to the public
 - induce them to listen to his message



- the play's wit (sarcasm) lies in the ideas rather than in external situations

- his devices are paradox

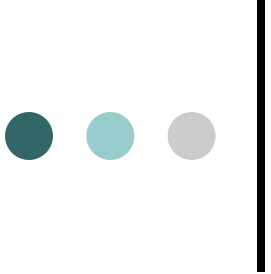
- the inversion of ideas

- The unexpected

- the startling

- the outspoken truth

- speed, exaggeration

- 
- His play **deals** with **universal questions**
 - and problems which the ordinary man can sympathize with



Conflict: between opposing beliefs and ideas.

Protagonist: Raina - She has romantic notions about war and love.

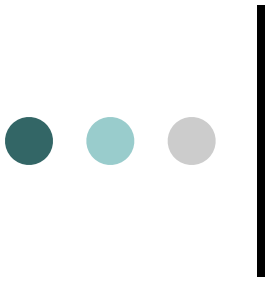
Antagonist: Bluntschli could be considered the antagonist.

Since, he presents a realistic picture of war.

Louka is the other antagonist who makes Raina and Sergius aware of the practical side of love.

Climax: Bluntschli's arrival with the coat is the climax.

At that point the play gets most complicated.



Outcome: The outcome is a happy one.

Raina marries Bluntschli and Louka secures Sergius.

Overall, the main characters come down to the practical realities of life.



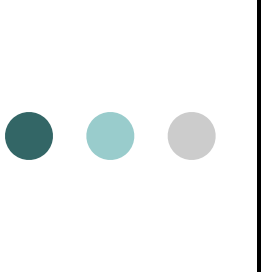
Themes:

The play has two major themes: War and Marriage.

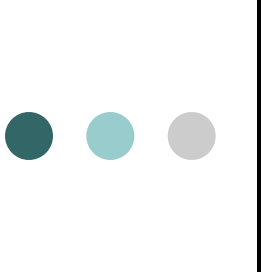
Romantic illusion about war leads to disasters, in the same way **romantic notions of love and marriage lead to un-happy marriages**.

minor theme - **the relationship between the upper and lower classes** as represented by the Petkoffs and their two servants Nicola and Louka.

Shaw upheld social equality.




"*Arms and the Man*" was subtitled '**A Romantic Comedy**' on its first program, and "**An Anti-Romantic Comedy**" in subsequent publications, evidently because original **audiences had tended to enjoy the fun and miss the serious concerns**. The play was particularly concerned with love and heroism. It was a comedy whose point of departure was not Romantic Comedy, but Romantic Drama, and particularly Military Melodrama". (Martin Meisel.1984:186).



"Arms and the Man', is a delightful comedy.

The setting is during the Balkan wars of the 1880's.


Like the area that surrounds modern-day Israel, the Balkans has always suffered from a constant history of unrest and conflict.



"*Arms and the Man*" is a satire that exposes the romantic ideals that center on war

- personified in Bluntschli, a Swiss mercenary, and Sergius, a Bulgarian officer.

Raina Petkoff holds to an unrealistic view of war at first and must eventually decide between her fiance, Sergius and Bluntschli, who hides in her bedroom when he flees from the front lines with the rest of the defeated Serbian army.



"Satire and Romance, rather than dramatizing the dominant patterns of human experience, embody the essential qualities and potentialities of human nature. Romance bears witness to what humanity can be at its best, Satire to what it can be at its worst. Romance offers us an idealized vision of human potentiality, Satire a spectacle of inferior human conduct.

Satire and romance are intended ultimately to produce clear-cut images of good or evil, virtue or vice, wisdom or folly; and those images may be embodied most vividly in characters that are boldly outlined rather than finely detailed. Such qualities may also be highlighted through contrast.

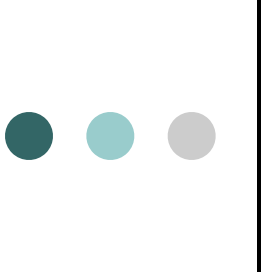
Thus, the plots of satire and romance often bring together characters from both extremes, using their interactions to create emphatic contrasts. In defining the emphasis of any play, we can ask ourselves whether the dramatist has focused on the beautiful or the ugly, on the orderly or the chaotic, on what is best or on what is worst in the world.

A play that emphasizes the beautiful and the orderly tends toward an idealized vision of the world, which is the mode we call '*romance*'.

A play focusing on the ugly and chaotic tends toward a debased view of the world, and this we call '*satire*'. Both these emphasis depend for their effect upon extreme views of human nature and existence. In contrast to these extreme conditions of romance and satire, another pair of dramatic process takes place in a world neither so beautiful as that of romance nor so ugly as that of Satire-in a world more nearly like our own. Rather, than focusing on essential qualities in the world.

In comedy the principal characters ordinarily begin in a state of opposition either to one another or to their world-often both. Satiric drama always expresses a critical attitude toward a particular aspect of human conduct and affairs. The satire may focus on morality, society, politics, or some other dimension of human nature and culture.

Our first purpose in reading a satiric play should thus be to identify the focus of its criticism, as we can do by examining the characters themselves to see what particular types of behavior predominate among them. Once we have identified the dominant vices of the characters, we should explore the consequences of their behaviour, and we can do so by examining the incidents of the plot". (Scholes Robert.1982: 690-91).



In 'The Art and Mind of Shaw: Essays in criticism' Gibbs states that "The two principal and related subjects of satire in the play are: the glorification of war, and the so-called Higher love which is supposed both to stimulated by it.

One dramatic form to which the work is related is the military adventure play, a form, which has a long history in England, going back to the love and Honor drama of the 17 century". (Gibbs, A.M.1983:8).