

Loving in Truth? The Unrequited and Shifted Love's Ramification in Arms and the Man

Maidul Islam, Junior Research Fellow (JRF), Department of English, Veer Kunwar Singh University, Arrah, maidulislam1880@gmail.com

Article Received: 20/07/2023

Article Revised: 28/08/2023

Article Accepted: 29/08/2023

Published Online: 30/08/2023

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2023.5.08.161

Abstract: The phrase "Loving in truth" refers to the concept of genuine, sincere, and authentic love. In "Arms and the Man" by George Bernard Shaw, the theme of unrequited and shifted love and its effects on the characters play a significant role in exploring the complexities of human relationships and challenging romantic ideals. While the play doesn't explicitly use the term "loving in truth," it delves into the contrasts between genuine emotions and idealized perceptions of love. Unrequited love can have significant emotional and psychological consequences for individuals. While love has the potential to inspire greatness and positive change, unrequited love, where one person's feelings are not reciprocated by the other, can lead to a range of negative outcomes and challenges. This paper will discuss how characters with unrequited love shifted to other persons and not become emotionally and psychologically disturb, rather they become happy of their shifted love. G.B. Shaw beautifully and very technically presents this unrequited and shifted love in his play "Arms and the Man". The play explores the discrepancies between romantic ideals and the reality of human relationships. While unrequited love might not be as prominent as the central love triangle, the play does highlight how societal expectations and personal aspirations can lead to unfulfilled emotional connections among its characters. The theme of unrequited love between Raina Petkoff and Sergius Saranoff plays a significant role in shaping the plot and characters' development. The unrequited love dynamic serves as a catalyst for exploring the contrast between romanticized ideals and the reality of human relationships, ultimately contributing to the comedic and satirical elements of the play. Love is often messy and doesn't always make sense. Being humans, we don't know to whom we fall in love or when we fall in love. We perceive how perplexing love can be and how love can be deceiving on the exterior.

Keywords: Unrequited Love, Shifted Love, Ramification, Discrepancy, Romantic Ideals, Human Relationships, Deceiving.

In "Arms and the Man" by George Bernard Shaw, the concept of love is a central theme that is both explored and satirized. The play examines various aspects of love, including romantic ideals, higher love, societal expectations, and the contrast between idealized notions of love and the realities of human relationships. It satirizes the romantic ideals of war and heroism, as well as the class distinctions prevalent in society during that time. While the play primarily focuses on the love triangle between Raina, Sergius, and Bluntschli, there are elements of unrequited love among the characters as well. Raina is infatuated with Sergius due to his heroic actions on the battlefield. She romanticizes him as a dashing and gallant officer. Sergius, on the other hand, is initially drawn to Raina's idealized perception of him. However, as the play progresses, it becomes clear that their love is somewhat superficial and built on societal expectations. Raina's unrequited love for Sergius is evident when he becomes enamored with another woman, Louka. Raina idealizes Sergius as a heroic figure due to his success on the battlefield. She is infatuated with his romanticized image, considering him the embodiment of valor and chivalry. This idealization of Sergius sets up an unrealistic expectation for their relationship, which becomes evident as the play unfolds. The contrast between Raina's idealized perception and Sergius's actual behavior exposes disconnect between romantic notions and the complexities of real-life relationships.

Louka, a maidservant in the Petkoff household, is drawn to Sergius because of his handsome appearance and charm. However, Sergius's feelings toward Louka are more physical and impulsive rather than genuine love. He uses her as a distraction from his tumultuous relationship with Raina. In their article, "Treatment of Love and War as a hollow sham in Arms and the Man by G.B. Shaw", Renu Singh and Arjum Dubey point out that "Sergius also finds the higher love quite unrealistic and tiresome. He finds Louka more satisfying than Raina for his sexual gratifications".

He wants to know:

Sergius: Louka, Do you know what the higher love is?

Louka (astonished): No sir.

Sergius: Very fatiguing thing to keep up for any length of time, Louka .One feels the need of some relief after it.

Louka's unrequited love for Sergius is highlighted by his lack of serious commitment to her and his eventual engagement to Raina.

Raina's parents, Catherine and Major Petkoff, have been married for years, but there are hints of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled desires between them. Catherine, while dedicated to her husband, often takes charge of their household affairs, and there's a sense that she yearns for more intellectual engagement and appreciation. Major Petkoff, though fond of his wife, is more focused on military matters and seems somewhat oblivious to her needs. Their relationship could be seen as having elements of unrequited emotional fulfilment.

Louka and Nicola work together in the same household and share a mutual understanding of their place in the social hierarchy. Louka, however, has ambitions to rise above her station and desires a more privileged life. She is attracted to Sergius, an officer, and seeks his attention to elevate her social status. Nicola, on the other hand, is pragmatic and content with his role as a servant. He represents a more practical and down-to-earth perspective compared to Louka's aspirations. He is not interested in pursuing a relationship beyond their social boundaries, and he often cautions Louka against her dreams of marrying a higher-ranking individual. Nicola tries to woo Louka. He is expressing his feelings of fondness and tenderness for her through his words:

Nicola (grinning amorously at her): I've been trying all the afternoon to get a minute alone with you; my girl.

However, they have a little experience of unrequited love between each other. Instead, they have a complex relationship based on social dynamics, class distinctions, and personal aspirations. Their relationship is more about their differing views on social mobility and personal contentment rather than a romantic connection. While Louka and Nicola have a significant presence in the play due to their interactions with other characters and their own desires for a better life, their relationship.

As the play progresses, it becomes clear that Sergius's feelings for Raina are not as deep or sincere as she believes. He becomes infatuated with Louka and begins a flirtatious relationship with her. This unrequited love on Raina's part intensifies the comedic element of the play as it highlights the absurdity of the characters' shifting affections and the fickle nature of romantic attraction. Raina's unrequited love for Sergius serves as a vehicle for her character development. As she gradually realizes that Sergius is not the flawless hero she thought him to be, she experiences a sense of disillusionment. Her ideals are shattered, and she starts to see the flaws and complexities of the people around her, including herself. This growth propels Raina's transformation from a naive romantic to a more grounded and self-aware individual. Raina's unrequited love also affects the power dynamics within the relationships in the play. Initially, Raina holds the upper hand due to her perceived superiority over Bluntschli and Louka. However, as she faces rejection from Sergius and starts to lose her illusions, her position weakens. This shift in power contributes to the evolving dynamics between the characters and adds to the overall comedic and satirical tone of the play. The unrequited love between Raina and Sergius is a central element that drives the plot and character development in the play. By juxtaposing romantic ideals with the reality of human emotions and relationships, George Bernard Shaw creates a thought-provoking and humorous exploration of love, identity, and societal expectations.

Unrequited love plays a significant role in both shaping and transforming the life of Raina. Her idealized and unrequited love for Sergius initially contributes to her sense of identity and her perception of the world. However, as the play progresses, this unrequited love leads to her growth, self-discovery, and a re-evaluation of her values. This realization marks the beginning of Raina's disillusionment. Her dreams of a perfect and heroic love are

shattered, leaving her emotionally vulnerable and conflicted. The destruction of her romantic illusions forces Raina to confront the reality of her situation and the flaws in her own perceptions. As Raina's unrequited love for Sergius crumbles, she undergoes a transformation. She starts to see herself, Sergius, and the world around her in a more realistic light. This transformation is evident in her interactions with Captain Bluntschli, who challenges her notions of heroism and courage. Bluntschli's pragmatic and straightforward nature contrasts sharply with Raina's previous fantasies, leading her to question her own identity and values.

Raina's unrequited love for Sergius, coupled with her interactions with Bluntschli, leads to the gradual construction of a new life and identity. She begins to appreciate Bluntschli's practicality and strength, recognizing his true worth beyond societal expectations. Her initial disappointment in love evolves into a deeper and more genuine connection with him. This new relationship is based on mutual respect, shared experiences, and a more balanced understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses. In this sense, while Raina's unrequited love for Sergius initially contributes to her idealized view of the world, it is the subsequent disillusionment and transformation that lead to the building of a more authentic life and identity. The play's exploration of love, illusions, and personal growth is a central theme that highlights how unrequited love can serve as a catalyst for change and self-discovery.

The play primarily revolves around the romantic entanglements of Raina, Sergius, Bluntschli, and Louka, as well as the satirical commentary on societal ideals and class distinctions. Raina's infatuation with Sergius and her later attraction to Bluntschli exemplify this deconstruction. Raina initially idolizes Sergius as a romantic hero, but her interactions with Bluntschli expose the contradictions between her romantic fantasies and the practical realities of love and relationships. The play includes elements of unrequited love, such as Raina's infatuation with Sergius and Louka's ambiguous feelings for Sergius. These instances highlight the complexities of love and attraction, showing that emotions are not always straightforward and that societal expectations can lead to misunderstandings and unfulfilled desires. The play also explores the impact of social status on love. Sergius and Raina's engagement is more influenced by societal expectations and class distinctions than by genuine romantic feelings. Louka's pursuit of Sergius is driven by her desire for upward mobility and personal gain. Shaw uses satire to critique societal norms and ideals. The play mocks the romanticized notions of war, heroism, and love prevalent during its time. Through exaggerated character interactions and absurd situations, Shaw sheds light on the gap between idealized concepts of love and the complexities of human behavior. In the play, love serves as a lens through which Shaw examines the ways in which individuals grapple with societal expectations, personal aspirations, and the dichotomy between idealism and realism. Raina's initial infatuation with Sergius could be interpreted as unrequited love to some extent—because Sergius's feelings don't match the intense admiration she holds for him—Sergius's behavior is more about conforming to the image he believes Raina wants him to be, rather

than harboring true unrequited feelings for her. Sergius's eventual attraction to Louka, a maidservant in the Petkoff household, further underscores the lack of a deep and genuine connection between him and Raina. The play doesn't delve deeply into the emotional nuances of unrequited love between Sergius and Raina, but rather critiques the conventions of love and heroism prevalent in their society.

George Bernard Shaw does indeed contain elements of love conflict, which contribute to the play's exploration of the clash between idealism and realism. The love conflicts in the play revolve around the characters' conflicting desires, societal expectations, and the discrepancy between their romanticized notions and the realities of their relationships. Bluntschli's straightforwardness and practicality contrast sharply with Raina's illusions, leading to a conflict between her idealized perception of love and the more down-to-earth reality represented by Bluntschli. Sergius is another character grappling with love conflicts. He embodies the classic romantic hero, but his affair with Louka highlights the clash between his public image and private desires. Sergius's romantic ideals are challenged by Louka's practical approach to relationships. Louka's ambitions and her pursuit of social advancement conflict with Sergius's image of idealized love, reflecting the tension between romantic notions and personal desires. Her interactions with both Sergius and Nicola underline the tension between her ambitions and her personal feelings. Her attraction to Sergius and her interactions with Nicola showcase a conflict between pursuing romantic affection and pursuing personal advancement. These love conflicts highlight the broader theme of the clash between idealism and realism. The characters' struggles to reconcile their romantic ideals with the complexities of their emotions and social circumstances drive the play's comedic and satirical elements. George Bernard Shaw uses these conflicts to question societal norms and portray how people navigate their relationships and aspirations within the framework of their respective worlds. Captain Bluntschli embodies a more practical approach to love and relationships. His interactions with Raina and Louka are rooted in honesty and genuine connections rather than idealized perceptions. His perspective contrasts with the characters who are driven by romantic fantasies, and his grounded nature encourages them to consider the realities of their emotions. Louka's interactions with Sergius and her ambition to rise above her social status further illustrate the effects of unrequited love. Her attraction to Sergius is mixed with her desire for personal gain. Her unrequited love, coupled with her pragmatic motivations, adds to the play's exploration of the complexities of human desires and relationships.

The concept of shifted love refers to the shifting or changing of romantic affections from one character to another. The play explores various instances of shifted love, where characters' feelings and attractions evolve over the course of the story. Here are some examples of shifted love in the play. Sergius initially engaged to Raina and admired for his heroic image, experiences shifted love when he becomes infatuated with Louka. This shift in his affections challenges his own romantic ideals and exposes the discrepancy between his public image and his private desires. Raina's feelings of admiration and attraction shift from

Sergius to Captain Bluntschli as the play progresses. Initially infatuated with Sergius's romantic heroism, Raina's encounters with Bluntschli lead her to develop deeper and more genuine feelings for him. Her shifted love represents a departure from her idealized fantasies. Louka, driven by ambitions to improve her social standing, initially shows interest in Sergius. However, her own desires and motivations lead her to shift her romantic attention to Nicola. This shift in Louka's love interests highlights her pragmatic approach to relationships. Captain Bluntschli's love for Raina takes a pragmatic and straightforward form. While he doesn't exhibit the same level of romantic idealism as other characters, his interactions with Raina show a genuine connection based on honesty and mutual understanding.

The concept of shifted love in "Arms and the Man" contributes to the play's exploration of the complexities of human emotions and relationships. It underscores how feelings of affection can change based on personal growth, self-discovery, and the influence of external factors. The shifts in characters' love interests challenge traditional romantic ideals and highlight the contrast between idealized perceptions and the realities of love. This theme adds depth to the play's exploration of societal expectations, personal desires, and the dynamics of human connection.

References:

- Singh, Renu, and D. Arjun. "Treatment of Love and War as a Hollow Shame in Arms and the Man by GB Shaw." *Lapis Lazuli-An international Literary journal* 3.1 (2013): 1-10.
- Nayar, Sheila J. "Arms or the Man I: Gunpowder Technology and the Early Modern Romance." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 114, no. 3, 2017, pp. 517–60. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90011223>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2023.
- Safder, Sadia. "THE ANALYSIS OF REALISM IN "ARMS AND THE MAN" BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW." *International Bulletin of Linguistics and Literature (IBLL)* 5.1 (2022): 31-46.
- O'Hara, Michael. "ARMS AND THE MAN AND THE FEDERAL THEATRE: LOVE AND WAR IN TROUBLED TIMES." *Shaw*, vol. 14, 1994, pp. 145–52. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40655116>. Accessed 17 Aug 2023.
- Hadfield, Andrew. "Proportional Form in the Sonnet of Sidney Circle: Loving in Truth." *The Modern Language Review* 95.3 (2000): 797-799.
- Alston, Richard. "Arms and the man: soldiers, masculinity and power in Republican and Imperial Rome." *When Men Were Men*. Routledge, 2013. 205-223.
- Aziz, Sahnudulla Ramadhan, and Assist Prof Dr Timuçin Buğra Edman. "Love and War from both Arms and the Man and Major Barbara."
- Uddin, Md Azim, and Kamol Karmakar. "War-love Dichotomy in A Farewell to Arms and Arms and the Man: a Comparative Study." *Journal of Noakhali Science and Technology University (JNSTU)* 4.1&2 (2020): 49-57.