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THE TRYST WITH REALITY IN G.B. SHAW'S PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

Noble laureate George Bernard Shaw's plays cannot and should not be judged in isolation, as he created them with some end in view. He gave importance to the call of his immediate realities and designed his art and artistic creations so as to give a suitable response to the call of these realities. Really, the imaginative and the fictional aspects of his literary creations are strictly disciplined and properly punctuated by their obedience to reality that always calls for a response. Realizing the fact that the readers or the audience cannot escape the immediacy of their own circumstances Shaw as a playwright stays convincingly faithful to the vast spectrum of the immediate as well as past realities of life. Besides, it is Shaw's faithfulness to the pressing demands of the most immediate realities of life that makes his readers feel their own presence in his plays and makes them accept the plots of his plays as the story of their own life. Shaw successfully exploits man's natural love for his past and produces historical plays with a quite considerable flight of his imagination. In fact, G. B. Shaw, in his tryst with reality, does not spoil the imaginative and aesthetic aura of his themes, and the events and incidents that he arranges for the presentation of his theme successfully satisfy the aesthetic expectations with which a reader or a theatregoer sets himself at work upon a piece of drama.

Let us see how Shaw's originality as a playwright comes to the forefront and how he holds his creative freedom as an artist supreme. This paper also focuses on how the alchemy of his art makes him the supreme monarch who shapes and designs, transforms and modifies, constructs and reconstructs, presents and represents facts and tools as he thinks fit to engrid his readers' as well as the audience's interest.

Key words: realism,idealism, display, romance.

Aristotle says, "Art imitates nature". The word 'art' encompassing all sorts of fine arts indicates indirectly the natural and real features of literary creations including drama. The saying, 'literature is the mirror of society' paves a way to the search of the reflection of contemporary society in every sphere - education, law, municipality, status of women and much else of the same nature in the

dramas by Bernard Shaw. Bernard Shaw as a very sensitive artist feels deeply the disorder in every field in the society of his time and, without infusing his final decision regarding the reform of the whole structure of his contemporary society, offers true picture of the happenings during his period. Before displaying the true picture of society, a fuller appreciation of reasons behind the realistic

character of Shaw's plays is necessary. Bernard Shaw emphasizes the validity of the element of contemporary realities in his plays. He says, "You would laugh at me if at this time of day I dealt in duels and ghosts and "womanly" women." (Prefaces 152)

Thus, Bernard Shaw does not take the total support of fictional aspects as Shakespeare and others do for the sake of popularity. He is an acute realist. He picturizes the modern world where the clash in every field of life has replaced the peaceful society of the past. Arthur Chavender in *On the Rocks* says, "There is the eternal war between those who are in the world for what they can get out of it and those who are in the world to make it a better place for everybody to live in." (Complete Plays 1210)

Bernard Shaw while laying bare the real face of society throws a light upon the reasons behind its defective nature. He writes in *Essays in Fabian Socialism*:

Social order, relics of which are still to be found in all directions, did not collapse because it was unjust or absurd. It was hurt by the growth of the social organism. Its machinery was too primitive, and its administration too native, too personal, too meddlesome to cope with anything more complex than a group of industrially independent communes, centralised very loosely, if at all, for purely political purposes. (Shaw, *Essays in Fabian Socialism* 34)

Thus, Shaw maintains that not one but many factors are responsible for hindering the progress towards the establishment of an ideal society where no evil dares to enter or even peep into. All the aspects of the play i.e., plot, character, dialogues, thought, diction, and spectacle serve Bernard Shaw in one way or the other in displaying the actual reality of the society of the times. Modern disruption in all the fields of society bent upon sabotaging the so far civilized society mesmerizes Shaw's sensitive self so intensely that he turns aspirant and adherent to the disclosure of the heartrending reality behind the seemingly attractive appearances of the society of

his time. Shaw's plays are the medium through which he manifests the pitiable condition of his society torn between the clipping jaws of so many monsters of the corrupted environment of the world of the time.

A significant number of Shaw's plays uncover the false veil from the face of the outwardly attractive world of the rich. The plot of such plays manifests the heartlessness of the capitalists. The poor are just instruments devoid of life, emotions, passions. They rejoice the gains of their blood-sucking toil. The poor are crushed under the wheels of the machine of the rich so cruelly and mercilessly that every sort of moral principles appear meaningless to them. For example, the plot of *Widowers' Houses* lays bare the open secret of the bestial condition of the slum residents and the negligence of the rich towards those upon whose labour they flourish and extract for them from their hard earned money. Sartorius employs Lickcheese who as per Sartorius' instructions collects rent from the slum residents most cruelly. He tells Sartorius about how meanly he behaves with the poor while collecting rent:

Well, Mr. Sartorius, it is hard, so it is. No man alive could have screwed more out of these poor destitute devils for you than I have, or spent less in doing it. I have dirtied my hands at it until they're not fit for clean work hardly: ... (Complete Plays 11)

Thus Lickcheese represents those poor labourers who sell their soul to make their both ends meet together. Bernard Shaw's close acquaintance with the heartrending reality of the poor employees' life makes him express his views in this regard thus:

Food he must have, and clothing; and both promptly. There is food in the market, and clothing also, but not for nothing; hard money must be paid for it, and paid on the nail too; for he who has no property gets no credit. Money then is a necessity of life; money can only be procured by selling commodities. This presents no difficulty to the cultivators of the land, who can raise commodities by their labour but the proletarian being handless, has neither

commodities nor the means of producing something. Sell something he must. Yet he has nothing to sell except himself.(Shaw,*Essays in Social Fabianism*11)

In fact, life has the sourest drink for the poor. Plot, character and dialogues as well in Shaw's plays like *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and *Widowers' Houses* disclose the fact that the doctrines of morality fall flat and ineffectual upon them. Mrs. Warren's life radiates the miserably and pitiably ironical position of those poor who enter even the worst sort of profession to retain their survival. The quality of modesty falls to be an idea to be overlooked. Mrs. Warren narrates the drastic nature of her poverty which enforced her to adopt the business of prostitution. She says that in the earlier period of her life she used to work

as scullery maid in a temperance restaurant where they sent out for anything you liked. Then I was waitress; and then I went to the war at Waterloo station; fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glass for four shillings a week and my board. That was considered a great promotion for me. (Complete Plays 76)

Again, she justifies to her daughter her decision of adopting the profession of a prostitute thus:

Why shouldn't I have done it? The house in Brussels was real high class: a much better place for a woman to be in than the factory where Anne Jane got poisoned ... Would you have had me stay in them and become a worn out drudge before I was forty? (Complete Plays 76)

Obviously, the reality of the life of the poor as illustrated above gets manifested through the various elements of Shaw's dramaturgy fulfilled. The life of the characters like Mrs. Warren displays that the dignified feelings like self-respect are valueless and mere cover to cover the ugliness reigning supreme under the outwardly sophisticated cover of feigned idealism. The plot as a whole displays the fact that poverty is the world where the monsters of starvation, ill treatment, immorality and all other vilest aspects of life remain ready to engulf

them most readily for permanent crushing and sucking the juice of their lives. Really, the crushing wheels of poverty lay the machine of degradation on the run to run over families, government offices, private sector and trade as well. Undershaft in *Major Barbara* brings to the front the horrible face of poverty when he declares that the worst and severest of evils reigning in society are not murders and thefts but poverty. He says to Shirley, "Poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of." In fact, poverty is the breeding ground for all evils and the aristocratic class of the society which exploits the pitiable poor labourers and compels them to bear the thorns of heartrending torture despite their bone-breaking indulgence in the contribution to the development of the country.

The characters and their dialogues in a number of Shaw's plays based on the tragic condition of the poor prepare ground for justification of their decision to reach the prison by committing crimes. They believe that in prison they will get food and residence free of cost. But Mr. Pickwick's example lays bare the crude reality of prison life. Shaw's words are worth quoting here:

The rich could buy a private room, like Mr. Pickwick in the fleet; but the general herd of poor criminals old and young, innocent and hardened, virgin and prostitute, mad and sane, clean and verminous, diseased and whole picked together in indescribable promiscuity.(Shaw, *The Crime of Imprisonment* 102)

Thus, not only society but also the government which is ironically run by the rich authorities threatens the poor more cruelly than the criminals.

No doubt, Bernard Shaw's plays and prefaces reflect the reality of the life of the poor but these reflections turn emotionally and artistically appealing owing to the imaginative tincture with some fictional elements added to the appearance, the way of speaking and behaviour of the characters representing the poor on the stage. For example, in *Arms and the Man* Louka the maid-servant in the Petkoff family neither dresses herself nor does she speak like a servant. When Sergius holding her hand

prevents her from leaving him and exhorts her for love making, she says:

Let me go, sir, I shall be disgraced... Oh will you let go... Then stand back where we cant be seen. Have you no common sense.(Complete Plays 106)

Again, when Raina orders Louka to bring the letters written to her (Raina) by Sergius, Louka appears dressed like a rich girl as gets manifested through the following stage direction:

Louka comes in with a heap of letters and telegrams on her salver, and crosses, with her bold free gait, to the table. Her left sleeve is looped up to the shoulder with a brooch, shewing her naked arm, with broad gift bracelet covering the bruise.(Complete Plays 114)

Further, Giulia, the daughter of Squarcio, the innkeeper in *The Glimpses of Reality* gets furious when Ferruccio addresses her father and Sando as dirty hands and says to him:

You have lived by them, Signor I see no sign of any work on yours own hands. We can bring death as well as life, we poor people, Signor.(Complete Plays 1111)

In fact, Shaw's plays are the intellectualized version of the life and living of the poor. On the one hand he displays the poignant reality of the miserable lot of the poor and on the other hand, he displays the life and living of the rich rolling in the luxuries of life. Most of these rich people extract money for their luxurious needs by torturing the already poor class of men writhing with groans under the crushing wheels of poverty. For example, *Widowers' Houses* displays the miserable and animal like condition of the poor tenants in the houses for which they pay the rent on which the rich like Trench and Sartorius flourish. Lickcheese, the rent collector, mercilessly collects rent from these poor tenants and explains the dangerous condition of the houses to Sartorius, "Well, sir, it was the staircase on the third floor. It was downright dangerous: there weren't but three whole steps in it, and no handrail." (Complete Plays 11) The crumbling of the edifice of Dr. Trench's idealism regarding the evil of dowry after the

disclosure of the source of his own income – the interest from mortgaged tenements –justifies that "Shaw brings to the stage the real living people with their hidden selves and masked absurdities. They later on undergo a process of disillusionment and then accept original and real morality." (Shodhbhagirathi)

Bernard Shaw's piercing eyes pierce through the outward grandeur of war and bring to the foreground its crude reality. Through the plot of the plays manifesting the reality of war Shaw delineates the devastating consequences of war as he himself witnessed the havoc created by the World War I all over the world. Shaw's plays explicitly explain the vanity of war. Young soldiers have to fight willingly or unwillingly. Shaw employs characters to manifest this reality. Bluntschli says in *Arms and the Man*:

You can tell the young ones by their wildness and their slashing. The old ones come bunched up under the number one guard: They know that theyre mere projectiles, and that it's no use trying to fight. (Complete Plays 98)

In fact, Bluntschli represents the soldiers who have no enthusiasm for fighting because of their acquaintance with the futility of war. This dialogue manifests one thing more i.e. the fresh appointed soldiers are quite enthusiastic regarding their duties in war while the old ones take the objectives of war very easily. Not only soldiers but also the officers are not proud of their position. The General in *Getting Married* tells Lesbia about his dullness regarding his shining medals thus, "They represent despair and cowardice. I won all the early ones by trying to get killed." (Complete Plays 550) Thus, through his characters Bernard Shaw brings into limelight the futility of war and the common attitude of some officers regarding war. This type of dullness for fighting for justice in the war is the outcome of the total annihilating consequences of it and the use of the soldiers just like tools. Not only soldiers but also poets, reporters, and so many other intellectuals become tools of fighting while the capitalists' luxurious life does not feel even a jerk. It is the poor and the middle class of

the society who sacrifice their all for the sake of their country. Really, a war is started by the capitalists to protect their own interests, but they need the workers to fight their war for them. Besides, the plot of *Caesar and Cleopatra* manifests the feeling of cruelty which turns man mad and then he behaves like an animal. The victorious are followed blindly. Few of the devotees turn from the previous victor to the fresh one in war. LuciusSeptimus, is a devotee of Pompey who is defeated by Caesar. After his (Pompey's) defeat Lucius cuts his throat for Caesar to gain his favour:

LuciusSeptimus, who welcomed him with one hand and with other smot off his head, and kept it as it were a pickled cabbage to make a present to Caesar. And mankind shuddered; but the gods laughed; for Septimus was but a knife that Pompey had sharpened. (Complete Plays 252)

Thus, war mars the conscience of man and his deeds are directed by his emotions not by his intellect. However grim the nature of war and its aftereffects may be, there is no soldier in reality who is too much inclined to swallow chocolates. A soldier is quite serious and sensible. Besides, the plot of *Arms and the Man* displays one strikingly imaginative aspect of war: if Bluntschli in real life enters a girl's bedroom, the girl there will surely cry out for help. If she is compelled to remain silent, she cannot treat him normally and affectionately as Raina does. Instead, within such a short period of time she nourishes feeling of fellowship for him. Bernard Shaw, the artist restrains his plays from falling into the category of mere description of the realities of life. To sustain the artistic nature of his plays he adds the elements of humour to the reality of war. For example, no soldier in general life behaves and speaks so humorously as does Bluntschli. He is referred to as a chocolate cream soldier because of his extraordinary inclination towards chocolates. Shaw's imaginative power provides artistic touch to the reality of soldier's disinterest in war.

Bernard Shaw's observation of the startling reality of woman's life bears existence through the plots of some of his sociological plays. For example, a part of the plot of *Man and Superman* manifests

the Victorian concepts of woman –'man for the sword and woman for the needle'. Even in office jobs they were thought to be incapable of proper demeanour. After all, they used to get married at a very early age without any concern for their wishes. They depended upon their parents or husbands for the fulfilment of their essential requirements. Tanner in *Man and Superman*, while advising Octavious not to marry so earlier, throws light upon Shaw's reflection of woman's real condition:

It is woman's business to get married as soon as possible and a man's to keep unmarried as long as he can. You have your poems and yours tragedies to work at ; Ann has nothing.(Complete Plays 353)

In fact, Tanner's statements delineate the suffocating reality of the woman of Shaw's times. Besides, here in this plot we witness that despite their wholehearted devotion and dedication to their families, they have to undergo exploitation in the hands of the man-folk as much as possible. Women are born free but everywhere in society they are in chains. But, for men there are no restrictions of any sort. They are free to crush women's ambitions as well as desires the moment they like. The conversation between Ann and Tanner in *Man and Superman* brings to light the same aspect of Shaw's contemporary life. Tanner says:

If we try to go where you do not want us to go want us to go there is no law to prevent us: but when we take first step your breasts are under our foot as it descends; your bodies are under our wheels as we start. (Complete Plays 347)

Of course, Bernard Shaw's confrontation with the tortuous conditions of women gets expressed thought his plays. The exploitation of women was at extensive rate during Shaw's time. Even the employer or the authority of the department never lagged behind in taking an undue advantage of their helplessness. Shaw finds no difference between the so-called pious status of a nurse and that of a prostitute. G.K. Chesterton also observes Shaw's aim behind the delineation of the pitiable lot of women thus:

The equation of the work of prostitute with that of a nurse in a hospital reinforces the fact that Shaw's chief aim in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is to cause his mainly middle class audience to reconsider all their accepted ideas about the employment of women who were generally exploited at the time. (Brown 31)

Besides the presentations of the outward obvious bitter reality of women, the women characters and their way of speaking and the spoken words as well in Shaw's sociological plays present the instinctive reality of the world of women which results from his active imagination. It also provides a swift and smooth gear to the magnitude of the play. The induction of imaginative aspects in the delineation of women and their condition sustains the interest in the play up to the end. For example, in her heart of heart a girl wants to enjoy her life fully rejoicing the company of those whom she likes but she never declares it as Leo does in *Getting Married*:

Well, I love them both. I should like to marry a lot of men. I should like to have Rejgy for every day, and Sinjon for concert and theatres and going out in the evenings, and some great austere saint for about once a year at the end of the season, and some perfectly blithering idiot of a boy to be quite wicked with. (Complete Plays 555)

Thus, women in Shaw's plays are intellectual version of the idea of womanhood in his mind. Shaw first thinks of the possible and liable addition to the personality of the women in his plays and then makes them give an outlet to the inherent emotional reality. For example, no woman in real life brings her lover to her husband's house and nor does she try to sustain balance in her relations with the both. Besides, such type of women cannot remain respectable in their husbands' eyes. Further, the girl of a prostitute like Vivie in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* never rejoices a dignified position as a well-educated and bold girl. Even historical figures like Saint Joan appear with some qualities added to their personality from the store of Shaw's imagination. No doubt, Saint Joan, a girl from a

farmer's family fought for her country but her speeches in the play in sophisticated and dignified language and her dress as well are the projection of Shaw's intellect as well as imagination. An illiterate girl may be enthusiastic but she cannot speak grammatically correct sentences. For example, Joan searches along the row of courtiers and presently makes a dive and drags out Charles by the arm and says to him: "Gentle little Dauphin, I am sent to you to drive the English away from Orlean and from France, and to crown you king in the Cathedral at Rheims, where all true kings of France are crowned." (Complete Plays 973) Further, the religious figures like Eve in *Back to Methuselah* with her life-pattern and language are the emotionalized and intellectualized presentation of Eve in The Bible. Thus, Shaw's plays represent women from every field of society.

The plots of quite a number of Shaw's plays focus upon the intellectual foundation of man-woman relation in day-to-day life in society. His plots display the open secret about the crude reality that women prefer men to get their needs served. If they had been offered full freedom along with economic independence, men would have been in a very pitiable condition. Tanner in *Man and Superman* provides justification to this reality thus: "By heaven, Tavy, if women could do without our work, and we ate their children's bread instead of making it, they would kill us as the spider kills her mate or as the bees kill the drone." (Complete Plays 354) Thus, Bernard Shaw provides an intellectualized reason behind the closeness in relations between man and woman. If woman herself could produce children without any sort of help from man or if she could keep her both ends meet and nourish herself without any economic support from man, she would never pay even the least importance to him. It is interdependence on each other which establishes permanent relations between man and woman.

Bernard Shaw's plays represent characters representing the field of religion. Through these characters he attacks the vanity and internal corruption in the Church. Even the clergy are there supporting and sometimes even indulged in irreligious activities. This hidden reality with its alarming facts gets manifestation through Shaw's

active and productive imagination. For example, the friar in *The Glimpses of Reality* represents the corruption in the church. His role brings into light the fact that the vilest sort of deeds are done in the name of religion. When, on being asked, the girl tells the disguised friar about the nearby location of an inn, he says, "Not hear! Then come closer, daughter, Oh much, much closer. Put your arm round my shoulders, and speak in my ear. Do not be ashamed, my daughter: I'm only a sack of old bones. You can hear them rattle. (He shakes his shoulders and makes the beads of his rosary rattle at the same time)." (Complete Plays 1106) Besides, *Candida* also represents Morell who is a professional speaker in religious matters but has remarkable taste for money. When he is invited by the Hoxton Freedom Group to deliver a lecture, he instructs his typist to see if there is a day free for the lecture. Miss Proserpine Garnett goes through the diary of appointments but finds no day without any sort of appointment anywhere. Then Morell manifests his money minded nature which does not suit a religious speaker. This corrupted reality reigning the world of religion bears interestingly explicit existence through Morell's dialogue thus:

(With a sadness which is a luxury to a man whose voice expresses it so finely) Ah you don't believe it. Everybody says it: nobody believes it: nobody (Briskly, getting back to business) Well, well! Come, Miss Proserpine: can you find a date for the costers? (Complete Plays 124)

Again, the clergyman in *Getting Married* is not stern regarding the piousness of marriage. He behaves like other common folk who never hesitate in taking marriage as a general meeting which can be rearranged if the former one does not suit them. Marriage is just an easy matter for them. Thus, Bernard Shaw brings to the forefront the shallowness entering and flourishing even in religion. But here also the artist in him innovates characters with statements bearing the stamp of his various sorts of human beings with various traits of personality reflecting the variety of the facets in the personality of Adam, Eve and Cain in *Back to Methuselah*. Again, in *Saint Joan* the appearance of the ghosts of Joan and other judges who sentenced

her to burning are the product of Shaw's viewless wings of poesy. *Man and Superman* bears the description of hell with devil, the spirits of the dead Ann, her father and Don Juan discussing difference between heaven and hell like living human being. These are just the outcome of Shaw's wonderfully active imagination. In fact, Shaw's plays with every element of dramaturgy employed therein display the far reaching and positively functioning imagination which most often transcends the world of material and factual realities as well.

Bernard Shaw attempts almost every aspect of the contemporary world and deals with it displaying its sharp reality and also adding some fictional colouring to intensify its appealing grip upon the audience as well as the readers of his plays. The plots of the political plays like *The Apple Cart* impart existence to the corrupted and degraded nature of the political world. During the earlier ages of political life politics was a sort of magnet drawing the meritorious ones but now it has turned to be the home for the virtually discarded people. King Magnus in *The Apple Cart* rightly speaks in this regard:

Politics, once the centre of attraction for ability, public spirit, and ambition, has now become the refuge of a few fanciers of public speaking and party intrigue who find all the other avenues to distinction closed to them either by their lack of practical ability, their comparative poverty and lack of education or let me hasten to add, their hatred of oppression and injustice...(Complete Plays 1025,1026)

Thus, Bernard Shaw focuses upon the selfish nature of the political leaders who despite their crutches provided by the public never cast even a cursory glance over their well-being for which they have been elected by the public. The plot as per the demands of its proper structure represents step by step how the political leaders come into power and how the general and common class of society is kept ignorant of their favour. Boanerges in *The Apple Cart* conveys to king Magnus the reality of the process of election:

I talk democracy to these men as women. I tell them that they have the vote and theirs is the kingdom and the power and the glory. I say to them "you are supreme: exercise your power". "They say, "That's right: tell us what to do"; and I tell them. I say "Exercise your vote intelligently by voting for me." And they do. That's democracy...(Complete Plays 1014)

In fact, the plot of *The Apple Cart* touches every aspect of the political world in a country. The events and incidents in the plot of the play manifest the negligence of the leaders for the public interest. The innocent and ignorant public is used as a ladder to reach the position of leadership. A king remains helpless in this regard. He is just a name in the democratic government. Magnus says to Boanerges, "They bring us letters. We sign... I do not always agree; but I must sign: there is nothing else to be done." (Complete Plays 1013) Boanerges also tells this truth to Magnus "You are, King Magnus An India rubber stamp. That's what you have got to be; and don't you forget it." (Complete Plays 1013) Thus, plot and characters of *The Apple Cart* represent the political plays which reflect the open secret of the political life. Shaw's imagination travels to the medieval world and explores the real face of the time when the king was thought to represent God and was obeyed without any sort of question against his orders or decisions. Thus, Bernard Shaw through every element of play probes into the realities of the political world and exhibits the consequence of the probings with some imaginative aspects in an appealing and interesting way. The manner of Magnus' speaking and behaving in the court and reading of the letters to a king from women like Orinthia by the queen and many other instances indicate the imaginative activeness of Bernard Shaw, the artist.

Medical profession moves Bernard Shaw to laughter more than any other institution in society. He finds that the doctors are neither sincere nor serious about their patients. He delineates this reality in a very humorous way with the help of his intellect and imagination in *The Doctor's Dilemma*. When Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington fails to cure

Louis Dubedat, he contemplates the case and wishes to write a paper on it:

It's an enormously interesting case you know, Colly, by Jupiter. If I didn't know as a matter of scientific fact that I'd been stimulation the phagocytes, I should say I'd been stimulating the other things. What is the explanation of it, Sir Patrick? How do you account for it, Ridgeon?... Nay, have they finally begun to prey on the lungs themselves? Or one another? I shall write a paper about this case. (Complete Plays 536)

Further, in *You Never Can Tell* the meeting of the father and the children is quite appealing imaginatively. Besides, Shaw provides a farcical touch to the incongruity in the relationship between a waiter father and Q.C. Son. It is Bernard Shaw's intellect and imagination which help him in portraying Napoleon's life in a very farcical situation in *The Man of Destiny*.

Shaw's realism displays the elements of intellectualism. He does not provide absolutely emotionalized form of it. At every step, Shaw, an intellectual reformer comes on the board. Because of his reformative temperament he is counted with the propagandists like Galsworthy. Through Tanner's words in *Man and Superman* Shaw expresses the naked reality of human world:

We live in an atmosphere of shame. We are ashamed of everything that is real about us; ashamed of ourselves, of our relatives, of our incomes, of our accents, of our opinions, of our experience, just as we are ashamed of our naked skin.(Complete Plays 337)

On the whole, plot, characters, dialogues and spectacle in Bernard Shaw's plays subscribe to the realistic presentation of the contemporary as well as a part of the historical events like Joan's fight in *Saint Joan* and some part of the battle of Warloo in *The Man of Destiny*. But realism in the Shaw's plays is not just a photographic presentation. It is the intellectualized version of the surrounding Real. For example, Caesar of history is quite superior to Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra* in language as well

as behaviour. Besides, Cleopatra does not recognise Caesar at first. Ptolemy, Cleopatra's younger brother does not take Caesar to be a king and does not fear at all. In fact, to keep the audience rapt in the thought-provoking process of his plays, Shaw induces some events from his imagination. For example, the marriage of Sergius with Louka and that of Bluntschli with Raina look quiet impossible in real life. Thus, Bernard Shaw intermingles the beauties of imagination with the threadbare facts of life viewed from the eyes of a confirmed realist. Such an admixture of imagination and reality puts his plays in easy reach for all the sections of his readers as well as the audience. It is natural that we identify ourselves more easily and more successively to the situations and circumstances that we ourselves face and experience in our actual life. Further, it is dramaturgy that successfully enlists not only the interest but also actively effective partaking of the audience or the readers in the creative process of the play as a whole - the play as it becomes between what happens on the stage and what happens in the mind of the audience.

Shaw's dramaturgy, in the context of dialogues and spectacle, overpowers a tough challenge of keeping the reality intact without harming the delicate feathers of his soaring imagination. He uses a selection of language that is highly denotative, connotative and evocative. His words not only evoke but also provide his readers ample scope to give a flight to their imagination but he never lets them transcend the broader limits of reality constituting the framework of situations and circumstances in which they habitually live.

Shaw's tryst with reality displays the conflict of his text like the conflict of wills that we actually feel in and around us. He develops the type of conflict that makes his readers enter their own well familiar battle ground of day to day life. No doubt, reality and imagination go hand in hand together for a successful perception of reality and Shaw does not go for anything contrary to that but he makes more frequent trysts with realities - starting and challenging realities of life - than with the soft soothing versions of this reality offered by the wonders of imagination. As a result, the actual meaning of a Shavian play is not to be seen so much

with and within the play as out and without the play, in and around us in our own community.

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