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Shaw's Use of Vergil's *Aeneid* in *Arms and the Man*

Calvin T. Higgs, Jr.[1]

Students often wonder what would have been the result if the heroes of epic literature had been given free rein to make individual decisions. Would the works have ended in the same way or would chaos have resulted? In his first widely recognized success, *Arms and the Man,* George Bernard Shaw attempts to analyze this question. To do this he adopts Vergil's *Aeneid* as his model. A parallel construction is immediately suggested by his title:

> Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
> Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
> litora . . . . (I.1-3)[2]
>
> Arms and the man I sing, who first from the shores of Troy, an exile of destiny, came to Italy and her Lavinian shores.

Although the title's source is widely acknowledged, few critics have paused to examine Shaw's use of the *Aeneid* in the play itself. Both Vergil and Shaw were concerned with the forces which drive the history of human consciousness. Both recognized an ultimate force in the universe, but each had his own perspective with which he interpreted the events of the world around him. Vergil sings of the man, Aeneas, founder of Rome, the hero driven by destiny through the agency of the immortal gods. Shaw sings of modern man, Bluntschli, driven by a destiny defined by human society and individual will.

Even before he entered school, Shaw received his first lessons in Latin from his uncle, William George Carroll, under whose tutelage he advanced to such a degree that upon entering Wesleyan Connexional School he rose almost immediately to the head of his class. Of his instruction at Wesley, Shaw recalls: "My school was conducted on the assumption that knowledge of Latin is still the be-all and end-all of education. . . . I was ordered to learn the declensions and conjugations and instalments of the vocabulary by rote. . . . When I could do this, which was easy enough to a child accustomed to pick up new words and memorize them, Caesar's commentaries and Virgil's famous epic were thrust into my hand, and . . . I was ordered to enter the lists against Dryden and extemporize translations of these works."[3] To this firm basis of knowledge, Shaw added a familiarity with the most popular

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[1]Currently at the University of Oklahoma, Mr. Higgs moves on to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in June.

[2]Frederic A. Hirtzel, ed., *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1900), is the reference text for Latin passages.

[3]*Shaw: An Autobiography 1856-1898,* comp. Stanley Weintraub (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1969), pp. 50-51.

translations, especially those by Morris, Salt, and Dryden. Although Shaw financially assisted in the publication of the Salt translation, Dryden's edition seems to have been his favorite, and it is from this source specifically that Shaw's title is taken.[4]

Both in structure and theme the play may be read as a form of mock epic. Present interpretations tend to concentrate on the aesthetic effect of the play upon the audience. To examine the play in relation to Vergil's epic is to investigate the link established between the playwright and the play in its developmental stages. Desiring to produce a literary expression of his developing philosophy, Shaw was drawn to those elements of Vergil which seemed to demonstrate a positive determinism operating on human actors. In fact, one finds that Book IV, which deals primarily with the relationship of Aeneas and Dido, could indeed be transferred to the stage with little modification. All the conventions are present: a familiar story, a struggle between love and duty, a contest between realism and romance.

Shaw, however, was not interested in convention. He could very easily have presented the story in a straightforward manner, producing the traditional response. Intrigued by the opposition of realism and romance, he wanted to force the audience to think, to experience the production at a deeper level. To do this, he adds depth to the epic's psychological element, expanding its application by adding the construct of individual will.

The play's beauty lies in the fact that it does not conform to the traditional conventions of mock epic, specifically that of treating a trivial subject in a "grand style." No subject for Shaw was ever really trivial, nor would he care to ape the grand style of past literary traditions. He chooses to mock on the thematic rather than the stylistic level, creating a work which fits none of the standard literary patterns.

Structural parallels are found primarily in the sequence of events and in characterization. The fact that Act I contains more parallels is easily explained. First, in expanding the epic tale, Shaw endeavors to present the basic elements as soon as possible so that the action can then move to more Shavian concerns. Secondly, the discontinuity which many critics sense between the first two acts suggests that Shaw, realizing he was drawing dangerously close to a rigid parallelism, sought to pull away from Vergil's pattern.

In the play Bluntschli, driven from the battlefield, takes refuge in the bedroom of the heroine, Raina. He later reminds her of his reception: "I appealed to you as a fugitive, a beggar, and a starving man. You accepted me. You gave me your hand to kiss, your bed to sleep in, and your roof to shelter me."[5] When Aeneas makes his first appearance in

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[4]Ibid., p. 282.

[5]Bernard Shaw, *Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1962), III, is the reference text for *Arms and the Man.*

the realm of Dido he has been driven there by a storm at sea which was brought on by the wrath of Juno. He, too, is "a fugitive, a beggar, and a starving man." Bluntschli's reminder to Raina parallels a dialogue in the epic. Both speeches appear in similar positions within the structure of each story. Bluntschli is attempting to win the heroine's affections after what appears to be an initial rejection of his bid for her hand. In the *Aeneid* the scene is reversed. Here the heroine reminds the hero of his miserable condition when she found him on her shores: she too had given the hero her hand, her bed, and shelter. Dido's speech is a bitter invective against a hero who has decided to leave. Here motive for the confrontation, however, is very similar to that of Bluntschli: the person she loves has made a decision which will adversely affect their relationship.

The comparison of these two scenes is instructive, because it demonstrates several techniques Shaw used in remodeling the tale. Three methods are employed. The first of these is direct parallelism, demonstrated in the above example by linking the two fugitives. Whenever this method of transference is employed there is always a conscious diminution of the epic characters and action. In this case, Aeneas, the famous and fearless warrior, is translated into a relatively insignificant artillery captain, afraid to descend a drain pipe. Aeneas, after ten years of fighting and several years of wandering, still appears relatively sturdy; Bluntschli, after three days of combat, must admit that he is exhausted. Ironically, even in reducing the hero this far, Shaw has only brought him down to the level of reality. Of course, in doing so he is effectively able to fashion a biting satire on warfare and the romantic notions often held about military campaigns.

His second method is that of reversal, which is used to sustain the mock epic quality of the work. The assignment of the Dido speech to the hero reduces the epic conventions to the level of the absurd. In the play, the heroine does not sacrifice herself after a rejection by a hero who sails into the sunset. Instead, the hero, knowing he must leave, is himself forced to convince her that she should wait for him — a dramatic convention all too familiar in Shaw's time.

Lastly, Shaw uses the method of omission: first to hold the play within its intended framework; secondly, to maintain the interest of the audience by withholding significant elements of the story. Use of omission tends to establish an anxiety level among the readers or viewers of the play; the greater the anxiety aroused, the more effective the play. Shaw uses two types of omission: total omission and the practice of borrowing an important passage of epic dialogue and placing it in the stage directions. This latter device may heighten the involvement of the theater audience by taxing its powers of observation.

As each tale opens, the hero has been driven into hostile territory. For some reason the two females are compelled to aid the fugitives. In the *Aeneid* the gods cause the Carthaginians to grow friendly toward the Trojans; Dido, of course, is first to fall captive to Aeneas' charm:

> . . . ponuntque ferocia Poeni
> corda volente deo; in primis regina quietum
> accipit in Teucros animum mentemque benignam. (I.302-04)
>
> and so the Carthaginians put aside their hostile feelings as the god had wished. Dido was one of the first to accept a peaceful disposition and kindly intention toward Aeneas.

This same pattern is repeated in the play. However, it is not the intervention of the gods which causes peaceful relations between the two armies, but a truce ending hostilities. Petkoff is quick to remind Catherine, as well as the reader, that the treaty declares peace "but not friendly relations." In either event something beyond the control of the individual character is at work. Responsibility has been transferred from the Olympians to the level of human society.

The conversion of the heroine also deserves some examination at this point. Both heroines, as has been noted, are among the first to accept the foreign heroes. Vergil makes it perfectly clear how Dido is won to her favorable disposition. Cupid deliberately sways her from her vow to her dead husband:

> . . . at memor ille
> matris Acidaliae paulatim abolere Sychaeum
> incipit et vivo temptat praevertere amore
> iam pridem resides animos desuetaque corda. (I.719-22)
>
> Obedient to Venus' wishes, Cupid gradually begins to remove Sychaeus and with a living love attempts to surprise her spirits and feelings now long unstirred and unaccustomed.

Something similar must be occurring with the spirit of Raina in Act I, but no direct reference is made to her transformation. Only at the end of the act does the reader begin to sense that she has warmed to the charms of the hero. To her mother's dismay, she refers to Bluntschli as "the poor darling." In speaking to her sister Dido talks of her "poor darling" in a somewhat different manner:

> quis novus hic notris successit sedibus hospes,
> quem sese ore ferens, quam forti pectore et armis! (IV.10-11)
>
> What a marvelous stranger this is who has come into our house, bearing such a grand appearance, such a strong chest and arms!

Such descriptions of the hero by Dido are numerous. Raina, however, rarely pauses to describe Bluntschli. Shaw translates Aeneas' "grand appearance" and "strong chest and arms" into Bluntschli's *"undistinguished appearance"* and *"strong neck and shoulders."* The hero in the play is no son of Venus.

In this same speech Dido describes how it might be possible for her to fall in love with Aeneas:

degeneres animos timor arguit. heu quibus ille
iactatus fatis! quae bella exhausta canebat!
si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet
ne cui me vinclo vellem sociare iugali,
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit;
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque fuisset,
huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae. (IV.13-19)

Fear makes clear the ignoble spirits. Alas, how the fates have tossed him about! What exhausting battles he was telling me about! If only it were not already decided that I should not attach myself to anyone since my first love cheated and deceived me by his death; if only I were not so tired of the bridal bed, it might have been possible for me to succumb to this one weakness.

These sentiments are never specifically voiced by Raina. The audience, however, is led to suspect that such emotions are indeed felt and that they are analogous to those of Dido since she too is torn between two heroes, Bluntschli and Sergius.

The element of bravery which Dido attaches to Aeneas is reversed when applied to the drama: in Act I, fear is used to describe Bluntschli. Raina chides the hero for his lack of bravery, telling him that she is as brave as he. Sergius, on the other hand, is "the bravest of the brave." Such a transference fits well with the developing figure of Sergius as a romantic character. For Shaw bravery was nothing but a romantic convention.

Raina's remark concerning her own bravery may, however, be viewed as a definite clue that she is more than a weak female figure. Like Dido, she appears as a strong female character in charge, one might say, of a kingdom of males. Vergil uses many devices to maintain the figure of Dido at a relatively high level within the structure of the epic. Shaw does the same for Raina by just such devices as this remark.

Before leaving the discussion of this last passage from the epic, notice should be taken of several other parallels. First, the "exhausting battles" suggest those mentioned in the play. Also, Dido's vow to her dead husband, whom she describes as having deceived her, is translated into the betrothal and the deception of which the audience becomes aware.

Another parallel is the scene in which the hero enters and approaches the heroine. Both heroes enter unexpected and unobserved. In the epic Aeneas is for a short while invisible, hidden from view in a cloud. Bluntschli is not blessed with such supernatural aids and must make his entrance at night to achieve the same effect. It is important to notice in some detail the differences between the two scenes. In the epic, Dido does not sense that the hero is nearby, but he is able to discern everything that is happening around him. Raina, however, realizes that there is someone in the room, while Bluntschli can see

nothing. In fact, he is not aware of her presence until she reveals herself. Immediately following the entrance of the hero in both stories a group of soldiers is ushered into the presence of the heroine. In the Dido story the group consists of Aeneas' comrades; in the play the group is composed of soldiers of the opposing army. At this point both heroes are still invisible. Aeneas has remained in his cloud; Bluntschli has exchanged the cloud of darkness for the window curtains of the bedroom. Even in this action, diminution is operative: Aeneas' concealment is perfect; Bluntschli's is not. Human efforts at concealment are less effective — if not more realistic. Bluntschli's efforts at concealment are threatened by the fact that his pistol has been left on the ottoman. That the soldiers are searching the bedroom is proof that the initial cloak of darkness was itself not too effective.

It is important to note that Louka is the only one to become aware of the pistol and the presence of the hero. The possibility of this occurring is very slight, but the very unlikeliness of the event adds to its effect. In this short action Shaw has effectively created a link between Raina and Louka. A similar correspondence was established earlier in the study between Sergius and Bluntschli. Sergius and Louka, who are both products of Shaw's psychological expansion of the epic, will be discussed later.

The physical appearance of the hero following his disclosure is another point of comparison. Vergil describes the hero in terms of the effect his appearance has on the heroine:

> Obstipuit primo aspectu Sidonia Dido,
> casu deinde viri tanto, et sic ore locuta est:
> 'quis te, nate dea, per tanta pericula casus
> insequitur? quae vis immanibus applicat oris?' (I.613-16)
>
> At first Dido was shocked by his appearance, then she asked him about his misfortunes: "What fate follows you, Aeneas, through such perils? What force drives you to our mighty shores?"

Shaw, choosing to do the reverse, places the hero's description in the stage direction: *"He is a man of about 35, in a deplorable plight, bespattered with mud and blood and snow, his belt and the strap of his revolver-case keeping together the torn ruins of the blue tunic of a Serbian artillery officer."* No direct indication of the effect of Bluntschli's appearance is given. Raina, too shocked for words, asks no questions as Dido had done, although Dido knew much more of her fugitive and of the two Raina should be the one to ask the questions. The questions are given rather to Bluntschli: "Excuse my disturbing you; but you recognize my uniform? Serb! If I'm caught I shall be killed. [*Menacingly*] Do you understand that?" Dido's grand speech is condensed to Raina's one-word reply: "Yes."

The elaborate description which Shaw offers of the bedroom tends to burlesque Vergil's description of Dido's palace:

at domus interior regali splendida luxu
instruitur, mediisque parant convivia tectis:
arte laboratae vestes ostroque superbo,
ingens argentum mensis, caelataque in auro
fortia facta patrum. . . . (I.637-41)

The splendid inner palace is arrayed in regal luxury. Banquets are prepared, and beautiful tapestries of proud purple are spread. Large silver pieces sit on the table, and the brave deeds of the early heroes carved in gold. . . .

The interior of Raina's bedroom, "not like anything to be seen in the west of Europe," possesses an oriental character not unlike that of Dido's palace. However, the Carthaginian tapestries have now become Bulgarian window curtains and tablecloths; Aeneas' banquet, a box of chocolate creams.

The cave scene is also reflected here. Aeneas and Dido, separated from their hunting parties by a storm, take refuge in the same cave. Venus, the goddess of love, and Juno, the goddess of wedding vows, have conspired to effect the arrival of the two at the cave:

speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem
deveniunt. prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno
dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether
conubiis, summoque ululârunt vertice Nymphae.
ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
causa fuit. (IV.165-70)

Dido and the Trojan chief arrive at the same cave. Both Mother Earth and Juno the bridesmaid give the sign; lightning flashes and heaven is a witness to the marriage vows, and the nymphs shout from the mountain top. That was the first day of the destruction and the first day was the reason for the evils.

In the play the dark cave gives way to the dark interior of the bedroom; the flash of the lightning, to the thundering of the cannon. Even the shouts of the nymphs are heard in the streets below her window. Bluntschli's entrance does, in fact, mark the first day of their relationship and is the cause which sets in motion the events which follow.

In the bedroom Shaw presents many physical clues to the association between the works. One of these is the large photograph of Sergius, which stands on a miniature easel near a candle on the chest of drawers. The easel appears immediately following a speech by Catherine in which she describes Sergius as the "idol of the regiment" and suggests that Raina "worship him when he comes back." Following this suggestion, Raina approaches the easel as she would a shrine: *"Then she goes to the chest of drawers, and adores the portrait there with feelings that are beyond all expression. She does not kiss it or press it to her breast, or shew it any mark of bodily affection; but she takes it in her hands and elevates it, like a priestess."* In the epic Dido visits a similar shrine after a discussion with Anna, to whom she had pleaded her love for Aeneas; Raina, however, must be convinced by Catherine of her affection for Sergius. In the temple, Dido seeks to be released from a vow to her former husband, Sychaeus; Raina reverses this by pledging herself anew to a vow which

has already been made. As it turns out, neither prayer is received favorably.

Besides operating as a foil for Bluntschli, Sergius also corresponds to Sychaeus:

> huic coniunx Sychaeus erat, ditissimus agri
> Phoenicum, et magno miserae dilectus amore,
> cui pater intactam dederat primisque iugarat
> ominibus. (I.343-46)
>
> Her husband was Sychaeus, richest in the land of the Phoenicians, and loved greatly by his poor wife with a great passion, to whom her father gave her as a virgin and joined them with the first rites of marriage.

Sergius is described as a member of one of the "richest and most important families in the country." The "first rites of marriage" are the strongest link, appearing in the play as vows of betrothal. Dido's promise of faithfulness is echoed by Raina: "[*looking up at the picture*] Oh, I shall never be unworthy of you any more, my soul's hero: never, never, never."

Not satisfied with a vow to a dead husband, Shaw effectively exhumes this dead memory and makes it a contributing force in the play's psychological development. In doing this he adds depth to the narrative by splitting the figures of Aeneas and Dido, presenting not one hero driven by the will of the gods but two, Bluntschli and Sergius; not one heroine driven by passion but two, Raina and Louka.

Psychological development had been presented in the epic, especially in the character of Aeneas which develops along a continuum of psychic acceptance of divine destiny. At first he is vaguely aware of the forces acting upon him, not yet instructed as to his life's mission. One observes a visible development from romanticism to realistic determinism. In the play such a shift is shown primarily in the interaction between Bluntschli and Sergius. Representing the early romantic Aeneas, Sergius is a dashing hero in battle, surviving not without the help of fate or chance. The romantic female readily responds to him. On the other hand, Bluntschli, the later Aeneas, is fully involved with the deterministic force in the drama. The progression taking place is not so much in the characters themselves as it is in the total structure. The composite male persona (Bluntschli-Sergius) represents a dynamic unit in which Shaw demonstrates a gradual metamorphosis, defined and understood only by the awareness of the audience. The consciousness of the audience is the background from which the deterministic character of the hero develops.

The composite female operates similarly; however, in the developing relationship between the characters of Raina and Louka the audience witnesses the early strugglings of a philosophy which will emerge later as Shaw's mature Life Force. At this early stage he has not yet integrated the various aspects of this philosophy. The embryonic Life Force appears as two separate universal drives: physical and material determinism. The play may be read as an attempt to integrate these

forces. The fact that Bluntschli and Raina, as well as Sergius and Louka, are to be married is a rather prophetic suggestion that such will, indeed, occur.

Dido had been incapable of integrating these two deterministic forces. In Carthage, a country also ruled by a widowed queen, Shaw could have seen nineteenth century English society. Unless England, still dedicated to romantic conventions, was willing to accept the determinism of Shaw's philosophical position, there would be little doubt of a similar outcome — sacrificial death, the hope of future greatness sailing away.

The force which drives the hero to the eventual founding of Rome is fate or destiny, the agents of which are immortal. The agents of Shaw's philosophical force are the characters themselves, who through their interactions propel the play toward its conclusion. To understand this, one must examine the historical flow of the story. Both Aeneas and Bluntschli have emerged from wars in which their sides have been defeated. Each takes shelter in the domain of a foreign lady, later departing to find his fortune. Both inheritances are fated, one by the gods and the other by family tradition. The relationship of the ultimate grandeur of Rome and the immediate glory of Carthage, which is considerably less, is echoed in the play in the Petkoffs' pride in their house and in Bluntschli's inheritance. The manner in which Bluntschli's promise of future greatness is revealed to the Petkoffs is also important. Unable to recognize his worth using their preestablished scale of materialistic values, they are unwilling to see Bluntschli as a candidate for the hand of their daughter. They enjoy the highest level in their society, yet they are in one sense still barbarian. They are, in fact, denying their future generation the possibility of a higher estate. That Bluntschli at last comes forward to jolt them from their state of ignorance is an implicit Shavian call to action.

Two other physical symbols are also important: the robe and the pistol. The robe operates as a means of insuring Raina's cooperation. In the epic, Aeneas, in order to win the immediate guarantee of safety from the queen, orders that the robe of Helen be brought from the ship. Less ceremoniously, Shaw pictures Bluntschli throwing the robe to Raina at the approach of the intruders. Significantly, this scene is controlled by the hero in the epic; in the play control is given to the heroine.

The other symbol, the pistol, is more threatening than useful since there are no bullets. It represents a means of coercion introduced from an external source. In the *Aeneid* a similar effect is obtained when Venus dispatches Cupid to use his arrows against Dido. Cupid has the ammunition and uses it; Bluntschli has neither the ammunition nor the inclination. In a characteristically Shavian twist, Raina sits on the pistol!

The parallel which exists between Dido and Raina is best examined by a careful comparison of the play and Book IV of the epic.

Raina's mood at the opening of the play is suggestive of that of Dido:

> At regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura
> vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni.
> multa viri virtus amino multusque recursat gentis honos: haerent infixi pectore vultus verbaque, nec placidam membris dat cura quietem. (IV.1-5)
>
> The queen wounded for some time by cruel love nourishes her wound with her lifeblood and is consumed by a hidden fire. Often she recalls the valor of the hero and the great honor of his race. His features and words hang fixed upon her heart, and because of these cares she is unable to sleep.

Raina appears as *"a young lady, intensely conscious of the romantic beauty of the night, and of the fact that her own youth and beauty are a part of it"*. Dido's passion has become a generalized romantic tendency. Raina too has her hero, but at this early stage her own Aeneas is still Sergius. Furthermore, she does not recall his valor and honor and must be reminded by Catherine, who functions in much the same way as Dido's sister, Anna. While Catherine counsels Raina to respect her vows to Sergius, Anna suggests that Dido forget hers and yield to Aeneas. Catherine chides Raina about her delay in announcing the betrothal. Anna expresses her concern differently:

> 'solane perpetua maerens carpere iuventa?' (IV.32)
> "alone will you waste away grieving through your remaining youth?"

Another parallel occurring in the exchange between Catherine and Raina is the latter's remark: "O what faithless little creatures girls are!" This is almost a direct translation of Vergil's "varium et mutabile semper/femina" (IV.569-70): Woman is ever a fickle and changeable thing!

The second point at which Anna appears in the action is in the scene in which she, approaching Aeneas repeatedly at Dido's request, fails to convince him to remain in Carthage:

> . . . sed nullis ille movetur
> fletibus, aut voces ullas tractabilis audit;
> fata obstant. (IV.438-40)
>
> Aeneas is not moved by her laments and does not sit still to listen to her soft words; the fates are opposed.

This action appears in Act II in the scene involving the return of the coat; however, several elements are reversed: Bluntschli comes to Catherine, and instead of begging the hero to stay, Catherine insists that he leave. Neither hero is responsive. Unlike Anna, however, Catherine is acting on her own without Raina's knowledge, displaying much more control. Shaw has shifted the center of conscious will from the central female figure to her attendant. Raina is as much a passive character as Dido is an active one. Dido's destruction had resulted from her operating outside the course prescribed by destiny; Raina survives primarily because she remains within the Shavian dynamic.

Act III depends to a large extent upon the message regarding the hero's inheritance, an inheritance of which he has been only slightly

aware. Although the appearance of a revealing message was a dramatic device often criticized by Shaw himself, its use here seems to give the required dramatic results, especially when compared with the epic in which Jupiter (Destiny) sends Mercury to inform Aeneas of his inheritance and to encourage him to set sail immediately:

tum sic Mercurium adloquitur ac talia mandat:
'Vade age, nate, voca Zephyros et labere pennis
Dardaniumque ducem, Tyria Karthagine qui nunc exspectat fatisque datas non respicit urbes,
adloquere et celeris defer mea dicta per auras.
. . . . . .
quid struit? aut qua spe inimica in gente moratur
. . . . . .
naviget! haec summa est, hic nostri nuntius esto.' (IV.222-37)

Then he addresses Mercury and commands: "Go, my boy, summon the Zephyrs and decend on your wings and address Aeneas, who now dallies in Carthage and does not regard the cities given by the fates. . . . What is he planning? Why does he delay in this hostile land? . . . Sail! This is the chief thing, this is our message."

The details of the passage of the message to Mercury and his subsequent trip to Aeneas are purposefully avoided by Shaw. Ordained destiny is replaced by the natural death of Bluntschli's father; a message from Jupiter Omnipotent by a blue envelope from the family solicitor; Mercury by a messenger who does not appear on stage.

When the message is delivered, Bluntschli is busy drawing up plans and orders for Petkoff's forces. Similarly, when Mercury reaches Carthage, Aeneas is busy helping the queen build fortifications around her city, the future enemy of Rome. Mercury is shocked:

ut primum alatis tetigit magalia plantis,
Aenean fundantem arces, ac tecta novantem
conspicit. . . .
. . . . . .
continuo invadit: 'tu nunc Karthaginis altae
fundamenta locas pluchramque uxorius urbem
exstruis? heu, regni rerumque oblite tuarum!' (IV.259-67)

When he first touches the huts with his winged heels, he sees Aeneas building towers and making houses new. . . . Immediately he addresses him: "Are you now laying the foundations for high Carthage and building up this beautiful city as a badgered husband? or forgetting your kingdom and affairs!"

While Aeneas' assistance is active and grand, Bluntschli's aid is passive and deals with the problem of starvation among the victorious survivors. This parallel successfully reflects Shaw's contempt for war.

Another comparison is the reaction of the hero to the message. Aeneas appears shocked and does not quite know what to do:

At vero Aeneas aspectu obmutuit amens,
arrectaeque horrore comae et vox faucibus haesit.
ardet abire fuga dulcisque relinquere terras,
attonitus tanto monitu imperioque deorum.
heu quid agat? quo nunc reginam ambire furentem
audeat adfatu? quae prima exordia sumat? (IV.279-84)

But Aeneas frenzied by his very aspect stood speechless, his hair standing on end in horror. He burns to leave fleeing this sweet land, astounded by such a warning and command from the gods. What can he do? With what address now might he dare to conciliate the impassioned queen? What first steps can he take?

He cannot piece together a plan of action and is afraid of telling Dido. Unlike Aeneas' emotional response, Bluntschli's reaction is curiously devoid of emotion, especially since the message concerns his father's death. Aeneas' decision requires many lines; Bluntschli's decision is almost instantaneous: "BLUNTSCHLI. Oho! Bad news! RAINA [*rising and advancing a little remorsefully*] Bad news? BLUNTSCHLI. My father's dead. [*He looks at the telegram with his lips pursed, musing on the unexpected change in his arrangements. Louka crosses herself hastily*]. RAINA. Oh, how very sad! BLUNTSCHLI. Yes: I shall have to start for home in an hour." Aeneas' burning desire to flee has been transformed into Bluntschli's calculated precision. Only at the very end of the play is there any indication of a nervous energy to depart: "[*He looks at his watch and suddenly becomes businesslike*]. Time's up, Major. You've managed those regiments so well that you're sure to be asked to get rid of some of the infantry of the Timok division. Send them home by way of Lom Palanda. Saranoff: don't get married until I come back: I shall be here punctually at five in the evening on Tuesday fortnight. Gracious ladies [*his heels click*] good evening. [*He makes them a military bow, and goes*]." In this short paragraph Shaw has condensed the dramatic elements of Aeneas' departure: the hero starting from his sleep, his frantic commands to his men, his farewell to the ladies, and his departure.

The fact that Bluntschli receives news of his father's death in such an unemotional way is important also in that is sets up an exchange between Louka and Raina concerning Bluntschli's capacity for feeling: "LOUKA [*knowing instinctively that she can annoy Raina by disparaging Bluntschli*] He has not much heart, that Swiss. He has not a word of grief for his poor father. RAINA [*bitterly*] Grief! A man who has been doing nothing but killing people for years! What does he care? What does any soldier care? [*She goes to the door, restraining her tears with difficulty*]." Such direct exchanges reflect Dido's mental state when she senses Aeneas' impending departure:

At regina dolos (quis fallere possit amantem?)
praesensit, motusque excepit prima futuros
omnia tuta timens. (IV. 296-98)

But the queen (who can cheat a lover?) suspects deceits and fearing everything which she had considered safe understood at once that Aeneas was leaving.

Louka's delivery of the letter to Bluntschli and her harsh questioning of his inability to feel emotion echo the feelings of Dido:

num fletu ingemuit nostro? num lumina flexit?
num lacrimas victus dedit aut miseratus amantem est? (IV. 369-70)

Did he take pity on my tears? Did he bend his eyes? As one conquered did he shed tears or pity the lover?

Raina is saved from having to make such a discovery by his telling her himself. Shaw has taken the emotional fire out of one of the most suspenseful portions of the Dido story. Raina does not accept the fact of his departure until her exchange with Louka, as evidenced by her tears. Her exit from the room reflects the manner in which Dido reacted to the realization:

> saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem
> bacchatur. . . . (IV.300-01)
>
> Bereft of spirit she rages and rushes inflamed wildly through the whole city.

Dido had insisted that their mutual love should be enough to hold Aeneas:

> nec te noster amor nec te data dextera quondam
> nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? (IV.307-08)
>
> Does our love not hold you nor our vows nor that Dido will perish by a cruel death?

Her relationship to Aeneas has two components: their mutual attraction and developing love and the notion of the exchange of vows. These elements are separated in the play and assigned to the two males.

Another parallel in the play occurs as a result of a remark by Raina concerning her chance observation of an embrace between Louka and Sergius: "Do you know that I looked out of the window as I went upstairs, to have another sight of my hero; and I saw something I did not understand then. I know now that you were making love to her." A similar passage occurs in the epic:

> quis tibi tum, Dido, cernenti talia sensus,
> quosve dabas gemitus, cum litora fervere late
> prospiceres arce ex summa, totumque videres
> misceri ante oculos tantis clamoribus aequor! (IV. 408-11)
>
> Then Dido what feelings did you have seeing such things, or what sigh did you make, when you beheld from your high tower that the shore was busy everywhere, and the entire sea mixed before your eyes with such shouts!

Both women were looking down on events whose only explanation was that the men with whom they enjoyed shared vows were willfully drifting away from them. Sensing the import of the situation immediately, Dido flies into a frenzy. Raina appears comparatively well composed.

Unlike Bluntschli, Aeneas does not admit to Dido that he is leaving until she approaches him with her suspicions:

> . . . te propter eundem
> exstinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam,
> fama prior. (IV.321-23)
>
> because of you my honor has been lost and my prior fame, by which alone I will approach the stars.

Are these the stars upon which Raina gazes at the beginning of the play? The confrontation appears in the only scene in which all four

principals are present. Dido's rebuke of Aeneas appears in a remark made to Raina by Sergius: "You allow him to make love to you behind my back, just as you treat me as your affianced husband behind his." However, Sergius is also guilty of trifling with her honor: "You were with her this morning all that time after — after — Oh, what sort of god is this I have been worshipping!"

Raina accuses Sergius directly; only indirectly does she rail at Bluntschli: "[*passionately*] This is the doing of that friend of yours, Captain Bluntschli. It is he who is spreading this horrible story about me." This companion is Shaw's counterpart for personified Rumor: "tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri" (IV.188), a messenger holding as much to falsehood and wrong as to truth. Following the scene in which Dido and Aeneas are brought together, Rumor flies through the countryside spreading her story:

> haec passim dea foeda virum diffundit in ora.
> protinus ad regem cursus detorquet Iarban
> incenditque animum dictis atque aggerat iras. (IV.195-97)
>
> Everywhere the goddess spreads these foul stories in the mouths of men. Immediately she turns her course to King Iarbas and inflames his mind and increases his ire.

Rumor goes immediately to Iarbas, the chief native contender for the hand of Dido. News of Bluntschli and Raina does reach Sergius, Raina's principal suitor.

Thematically the works are parallel in that they each present the action on three specific levels: historical, psychological, and universal. Both authors use the historical level for their structural framework: Aeneas' landing at Carthage and the battle in the Dragoman Pass. Each of these is only one episode in a larger event, and each occurs in a country foreign to the author. Relying strongly on secondhand information, both authors color their works with local culture. This makes the works more understandable to their audiences and provides an easier identification between the culture being examined and the culture of the author.

In Vergil the first hints of a developing consciousness are seen, although the characters are still controlled by the dictates of fate. The psychological elements operate principally through two mechanisms. The first is the increasing consciousness of the characters to the operations of providence. In Aeneas' expanding awareness of his destiny the diminishing of subjectivism is observed. His development is from romantic self determination to realistic determinism. Dido remains on the romantic level throughout the story, and her death may be viewed as the defeat of romanticism by realism. On a psychological scale spreading from romanticism to realism, Vergil begins both Aeneas and Dido at the same end of the scale. Gradually drifting toward the opposite pole, Aeneas by the end of the work is diametrically opposed to Dido, and the audience anticipates the tragedy with which the

Shaw, on the other hand, begins with the two sets of characters at opposite poles and by the conclusion has drawn them to a mid-point at which the audience can anticipate the two marriages.

Although the gods of the epic may be read into the play on any of the three thematic levels, they are best understood as agents of fate. Both authors present a "universal will" controlling the total action of existence. Destiny has declared that Aeneas will found the Roman empire. Neither the mortal nor the immortal characters can permanently thwart the push of this force. Intermediate actions do occur to retard the push of destiny, but over-all the impetus is always forward and always positive. The same driving force is operating in the play; however, Shaw brings this construct of will down to the human level, placing the gods within the self of each character and providing each with individual will. Their collective wills combine to form a universal force possessing unique characteristics: insurance of species continuity, preservation of individual wills, and positive evolutionary progress.

Despite a growing tendency in modern scholarship to discount the influence of the classical authors, it is apparent, as this study has shown, that in *Arms and the Man* Shaw demonstrates an intimate knowledge of Vergil's *Aeneid.* Far from being reserved in his opinion of the quality of his own art, Shaw undoubtedly was gratified to find in Virgil a story worthy of adaptation. Following the structural and thematic construction of the Dido episode, Shaw was able to construct a mock epic which would be accepted as his first unqualified success.

FROM THE SHAVIAN PAST LXXXV

"Dialogue's not bad, but these great long speeches – that's a mistake. People want action, excitement. I know – you *think you're Bernard Shaw. But where's he today? Eh? People won't listen to him."*

Producer Barney Evans to George Dillon,
in *Epitaph for George Dillon,* by John
Osborne and Anthony Creighton (1955).