

Lecture 12

NATURALISM

# Modern Drama

Prof. Abdul-Settar Mal-Allah Channel



## Arms and the Man: Act II



## Act II: Episode Four-

### The Meeting of Major Sergius Saranoff with His Fiance Raina Petkoff





## *Episode Four:* The Meeting of Major Sergius Saranoff with His Fiance Raina Petkoff



We know that Raina was listening all the time and it was her habit to eavesdrop and spy on what other people say. So when, Sergius Saranof asks about Raina, she comes immediately to receive him. Now Major Petkoff and Sergius were engaged in talking about the story of a Swiss officer who fled the battle field on and found his way in the

nearby city on the borders. He could escape from the Bulgarian soldiers who were following him. He could climb a waterpipe of a certain palace and hid himself in a balcony of a certain Bulgarian young lady and then slept in her room, and when he left, he took the coat of the master of the house in disguise.



## *Episode Four:* The Meeting of Major Sergius Saranoff with His Fiance Raina Petkoff



This is the story they told and laughed at, but they ironically enough, did not know they are talking about this palace they are now sitting in its garden. They are talking about Major Petkoff's house, about Lady Catherin and Young Raina. Also, they narrated how the young lady, whom they did not know her name, not only fell in love with that Swiss officer,

but also, the Lady of the house, that was her mother, was fascinated in his character. This is the irony about the whole situation here. Now both Raina and Lady Catherine, as listening to this narration, became irritated and amazed for such a story which they were meant but nobody truly know that they themselves participated in it and were





## *Episode Four:* The Meeting of Major Sergius Saranoff with His Fiance Raina Petkoff

the characters who hid the Swiss Officer and dealt with him. So, they became angry and accused Serguis of being coarse and impolite to narrate such a story that hurt the maiden ears of a girl like Raina. Hence, she stood to leave taking her mother. Serguis at this moment attempted to settle this confusion and gave his apologies to Raina.

- Then the Mother Lady Catherine took her husband Major Petkoff to let him see the electric bell in the kitchen leaving Serguis and Raina together in the garden. And this is the episode of the following Section.



Lecture 12

NATURALISM

# Modern Drama

Prof. Abdul-Settar Mal-Allah Channel



## Act II: Episode Five-

Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles  
of Higher Love





## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

As the both betrothed couples- Raina and Sergius, are left together, they found it quite proper for each one of them to show his or her affection, commitments and oaths of love- such passion and love are expressed in an ideal romantic language brimful of high sentiments but not without a little bit of hyperbole on the part of each one. Let us first,



see Raina's oaths of love, as it seems, she bears in her heart towards her Fiancée and the principles she believes in, below; and then we will be able to judge whether she is true to her own words or not. The same will be followed and shown with Sergius's oaths and principles of Love he bears in heart and mind, as it seems, towards Raina. Let start with Raina's:





## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

1. She considers him 'the paragon of heroism'. She regards him not her hero but also her king, to imply that she is his queen. She uses a language reminiscent of Knighthood as well as politics.
2. She regards him the 'subject of her envy' because he had been out in the world and on the field of battle. As such,

she says, he would be able to prove himself worthy of any woman in the world. She feels very proud that she is loved by this knight.. She praises him a lot trying to idealize his image or to reflect the ideal image the family already portrayed for him in her mind and soul as we see that in Act I. Hence, she put his photo at the table near her bed in Act I. In .







## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

contrast to his image, she draws a base image for her self. She belittles her status before him; looks lowly to her self, being a woman sitting all the time at home, not leaving it to see what is out and "doing nothing that could give her the right to call herself worthy of any man". Hence, she regards herself "useless, dreaming, inactive". Still, she carries a fine



heart that is engrossed with what she terms as "higher love". We have to understand she here expresses her feelings and ideas concerning the status of all women in Europe, in general, and in Bulgaria, as an Eastern European country in which woman lack freedom and was looked as 'a domestic commodity' owned by man. And this is to the status .



## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

of woman, in England as well, the case which G.B.Shaw actually meant when he refers to the inferior view the Victorian society had towards woman. But Raina has a great love she terms as "higher love".

3. He is rendered as the subject of her "higher love", by that she means the kind of love that protects her from committing any mistakes. The "Higher Love" is the shield that guards



her from sin. It is the dam that shuns her mind from thinking of any "ignoble base thoughts", as she terms them. Higher Love is her guarantee for her straightforwardness, her fidelity, her loyalty and her veracity towards the man the Family has chosen as her husband. So we expect her to abide by these principles. Hence, she embraces him quite passionately. Her passion is referred to through



## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

the stage direction as the dramatist tells his readers that she "returns his embrace"!

4. She renders him her 'lord and her god' to reflect a medieval implication looking to men as lords and gods in a courtly love tradition. She resorts once more to employ religious language.



5..The Principle of Trust mixed with Love is immersed in her personality as she looks very highly of his person.

6. The Principle of Absolute Confidence in him personally that he himself is true, faithful and straightforward and he will he will not "disappoint" her.





## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

7. The Principle of Craving for him and Intolerance to be away from him is shown through her body language when she "runs to the top of the steps and turns there to exchange a look with him and wave a kiss with both hands".

8. She regards him as her "omnipresent man" who never goes out of her memory. She keeps thinking of him while he is absent in person,



but present in her soul- "And you have never been absent from my thoughts for a moment".

Also while Raina's talk reveals her principles of Love to her Fiancee, on his part, Sergius expresses his principles of love and shows his standards and commitments to this young lady. These principles include:





## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love



1. He considers Raina like a worshipped goddess whom he adores and expects to be forgiven if he commits a wrong doing. He beseeches her: "Am I forgiven?". His language is religious. This is why he employs an elevated language as he calls her – "my saint!". Also, he describes his attitude to her as one who worships another- he says, "Let me be the worshipper"!

2. He also regards her as his "queen". Again, he resorts to the use of a political language as well as a language related to the Courtly-love tradition. Hence, he uses the term "My Lady" when talks to her. Also, he degrades himself as being "unworthy to have such a girl with pure passion"!

3. He shows high respect and holy awe when he comes near her. This is clear



## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

when he comes near her and kisses her on her forehead with 'holy awe'. Hence, his body language reflects how much he respects her and how highly he considers her. This is clear through the stage direction- the dramatist refers to Sergius's behavior as he writes – "Clasping her reverently".

4. He shows his readiness to attribute all his deeds in the war to her. He shows that whatever he does, belongs to her also as if they have become one body and one soul through this sacred bond of his proposed marriage. He tells her "Dearest! All my deeds have been yours!"

5. To him, Raina is the source of his inspiration- "You inspired me".





## *Episode Five:* Raina and Major Sergius Saranoff Show their Principles of Higher Love

6. He regards her as his angelic protector when he plunges into battles, she observes him and protects him- "I have gone through the war like a knight in a tournament with his lady looking on at him!"

7. The Principle of Pining for her and intolerance to bear her absence or loss. He uses hyperbole to reflect his attitude- he cannot bear to be away from even if it is just

five minutes- "Be quick! If you are away five minutes, it will seem five hours"! And this is reflected through the stage direction the dramatist is much concerned to register and tell his readers about. "Sergius looks after her with emotion for a moment, then turns slowly away, his face radiant with the exultation of the scene which has just passed"







## *Episode Six: The Meeting between Louka and Sergius*

The moment Sergius meets Louka, his eyes gleams at once and he takes a stealthy look at her then he asks her about the meaning of 'the higher love'. She replies, she does not know. Yet he gives his understanding of it- "it is a very fatiguing thing". And "one feels the need of some relief after it". The Sergius tries to flirt with the maid Louka, as she comes to pour some coffee to him. He stretches his hand and taking it, while she pretends to pull it. Later he insists on flirting with her as he lets his hand slip dexterously round her waist asking her if she finds him a handsman! She attempts to go out fearing that she would be disgraced, but he insists further. Hence, she demands him to find another place away from any one lest she could be seen by somebody- "Then stand back where we can't be seen". She even dares to insult him: "Have you no common sense?". Again and again, he keeps on his trials of playing with and putting his arm





## *Episode Six: The Meeting between Louka and Sergius*

round her. He understands that she really wants him to flirt with her despite her ostensible denial and reject. He describes her as a "provoking little witch" and discloses that she keeps following him out of the window with her eyes. Even he praises her as "pretty , witty"; then attempts to kiss her but she avoids his kiss demurely. And she shocks us with two strange news that he made love to her behind Miss Raina's back and that his Fiance makes love with another man behind Sergius's back. She attempts to find excuses for a gentleman like him for not knowing the reality of the girl he has been engaged to- she means Raina as she charges Raina of disloyalty to him- "it is hard to know what a gentleman considers right". Then she reveals that she wants him for her also- she asks him not to be particular for just one woman! Unconsciously, he immediately shouts calling her – "Devil! Devil!". The dialogue uncovers that she is tricky and witty as



## *Episode Six: The Meeting between Louka and Sergius*

she is planning to attract the attention of this man for her, despite her seeming denial and refusal his appeals. She reveals that she has a deep understanding to the nature of men, all men as she says "one of six of men is like me". Sergius understands the reference to men and gives the categories of theses six types of men- one could be a hero, one buffoon, one humbug, one blackguard, one coward and one jealous! Then he asks her to let him know the name of his rival whom Raina is fascinated by. She replies she has seen him but has listened to his voice as that man was in Raina's bedroom and if he comes again, he will marry her. So she gives her anticipations. Fortunately, her anticipation will come true despite Sergius's association of her with the devil and witch, reminiscent of the Biblical reference to woman as a devil or a witch.



## *Episode Six: The Meeting between Louka and Sergius*

He regards her as "abominable little clod of common clay with a soul of a servant". Also, he despises a great deal as he looks to her as "an unclean thing" and he intentionally dusts his hands of her. Moreover, her dialogue with Sergius uncovers her snobbish character. She aspires to change her social status; she aspires not to remain a maid for ever; she refuses to have a soul of being a servant like Nicola who holds much pressure on her to be a servant in soul, not only as a mere career or work. This snobbish nature and wish to change uncover her ability to change her destiny and future and this will come true at the end of the play.





## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughter In a Private Talk*

As Louka leaves, Raina comes again to escort her Fiancee Sergius in their outing. She asks Sergius if he was flirting with Louka while she was away. Of course, he denies that. She says she was joking. Her question implies that either she knows that her Fiancee flirts with the maid, or she doubts. But earlier, her father reveals a certain fact concerning her habit to listen to the talks of others without their knowledge. This means she eavesdrops as usual. Her father describes her habit as "" abominable" just to emphasize such a behavior or nature in her character. This means that she follows the events, she follows the characters and knows their secrets just like what Louka does. Louka keeps listening and spy on others. She admits she spies and eavesdrops. She tells Nikola at the beginning of Act II, that she knows a lot of the family secrets. In reply, Nikola





## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughter In a Private Talk*

her that he himself learns a lot of the family secrets- secrets about Lady Catherine; secrets about Major Petkoff, and secrets about Raina's intention or plan to leave her Fiancee Sergius and gets married to Captain Bluntscheli- such disclosure amazes Louka and she denies that she herself has already tells Nikola about it. "How do you know? I never told you!" and this is why Nikola offers a series of advices- to be respectful and to hold her tongue and to serve the family faithfully. So eavesdropping in this play is among the features of the plot. In addition to Louka's Hhabit of listening to others she proves herself of good knowledge of people the moment she knows their names- she can identify a person's nationality or identity through the name- this happens when she brings a title-card, to her Lady Catherine with the name of Captain Bluntscheli. The lady wonders if the man is a German, but Louka tells her that the name denotes a Swiss man. Then the



## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughter In a Private Talk*

man appears nothing but the Swiss Officer Captain Bluntcheli. And we will see this actually at the end of Act II.

Later, Lady Catherine calls Sergius because he is needed by her husband in the library. So the mother finds it a proper opportunity to ask Raina about Captain Bluntscheli and how long he stayed in her bedroom before Raina came to tell her mother about his presence that night. Raina says she cannot remember how long he remained with her. The mother is afraid that her daughter's would-marriage to Sergius would be ruined if her fiancée heard about this story of a strange man hiding in her bedroom, the man whom Major Petkoff and Sergius told the family his funny story earlier. And that man was the Swiss officer himself, a fact that is not known by



## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughter In a Private Talk*

either the Father nor the Fiancee. The mother anticipates if the Swiss Officer would come to bring back the coat, and she wonders what she would do and how to behave. The first thing the mother was afraid of is the match of the proposed marriage would be broken. To this, Raina replies that she would not care for Sergius the way her mother cares for him. Even she reveals another fact concerning a certain relationship between her mother and Sergius regarding him as "your pet, mother", and she sometimes wishes that Sergius could marry her mother instead of taking her as a wife. She tells her mother that he "just suit you, you spoiled him; you mother him to perfection". Raina does not care much to Sergius. On the contrary she wants to "shock his propriety and scandalize his five senses. I don't care whether he finds out about the chocolate cream soldier or not. I half hope he may!". Yet, for a moment she calls the Chocolate cream





## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughter In a Private Talk*

soldier "a little beast", perhaps because he has left and never asks about her again as she thinks. She feels she is totally attracted to his person, but he is away, he is a man dreamt of, while Sergius is real and in hand. Hence, she is fluctuated between the two, she is confused between the two men - one is a mere illusion, the other, a fact within her reach. A bird in hand is better than many birds on the tree as the proverb goes. Thus, logically speaking, she will go with Sergius for the time being as her interests lie with him now- a rich man having horses and intends to work as a tradesman in future. Of course, things will be changed if the circumstances change. Consequently she will change and turns to the Swiss Officer if he only appears gain- she will behave in another way, she will deal with the matter in a different way. And this what will occur





## *Episode Seven : Mother and Her Daughters In a Private Talk*

nearly at the end of Act III. But now she lives on her own expectations, hopes and dreams. And perhaps, this accounts for her long seemingly pensiveness and dreaming while she is reading a novel for instance

## *Episode Eight : The Arrival of Captain Bluntschli and the Confusion of the Coat :*

Captain Bluntschli would return to the Bulgarian palace bringing back the black coat of the owner of the house where he hid himself as he climbed the drainpipe at that night when he was aided by Raina and then by her mother.

*Thanks to You*

