George Bernard Shaw's Religion of Creative Evolution: A Study of Shavian Dramatic Works

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by

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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore Bernard Shaw's religious and philosophical development and indicate how far his personal thoughts and religious ideas relate to his philosophical background and contemporaries, including his view as a philosophical artist. This study focuses on the particular plays, which use a variety of theatrical genres to explore Shaw's development towards the full-blown myth of creative evolution during his life. The first part of the thesis, demonstrates that Shaw's own religious and philosophical development and also considers that of his contemporaries and a review of the literary context in which Shaw's plays were written. In the second part of the thesis, the eight plays in which Shaw's philosophical religious ideas appear are critically examined especially by comparing the relationship of each character to the main action of the play and to the main theme or idea of the play. Through the chapters, this thesis shows how Shaw dramatizes the purpose of the life force, in order to make clear what humanity can do to aid its progress. This is because the life force is the central fact of Shaw's creative evolution. The life force provides the impetus for evolutionary progress as the basic structural element of Shaw's plays.

This study explores the eight major plays which have a particular relation to his development of a religious dimension: The Man of Destiny, The Devil's Disciple, Pygmalion, Caesar and Cleopatra, Major Barbara, Heartbreak House, Man and Superman and Back to Methuselah. In focusing on these eight plays, the characters of the plays chosen reveal the progression of Shaw's combination of social ideas with the religious dynamic that would culminate in his creed of creative evolution. These plays had explicitly their ideological origins in religious ideas. In these plays, therefore, religion is itself part of the texture of the social/historical material that Shaw chose to dramatize.

Each play chosen will be analyzed from the perspectives established in the introductory chapters in relation to dramatic themes and types of genres by grouping the plays.
To My Mother and Father with Respect, Gratitude and Love Forever...
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Shaw’s plays reflect his interest in contemporary political, economic, sociological and religious issues. This interest becomes the dominant factor in the plays which continue Shaw’s playwriting career. According to his biographers, Shaw was deeply interested in religion, and many of his plays are centrally concerned with religious themes. As a philosophical writer, he expressed his own ideas about politics, economics, religion and society. Hardwick writes, Shaw “responded to the rational religious discussion in his home, so that his atheism was early ingrained; although a sense of the mystery of life... always directed his mind towards a kind of spiritual creativity”.\(^1\) Shaw expounded his ideas on this subject in several lengthy prefaces.

Shaw’s religion emphasises human will and desire for social progress. Shaw conceived of religion in terms of social values rather than in terms of spiritual redemption. To Shaw, religion involves political and social constitutions and the ends of civilization. As a dramatist, he combined both his socialistic and artistic interests in his plays. In this respect, the dramatic conflict in his plays seems to be the conflict of ideas and belief from a socialist standpoint. Shaw despised sentimental passion in plays and rejected art for art’s sake. In this respect, the dramatic method in his plays is based on the conflict of ideas from his socialist viewpoint. For this purpose, Shaw’s protagonists in his dramatic works are mostly intellectuals whose roles are to propagate his socialist and religious ideas, while changing society as his agents of the life force.

For the dramatic themes, from the mouth of characters, Shaw pronounced his religious and philosophical beliefs not only about the vision of society but also about the contemporary matters. He chose religious subjects for the plays because of his growing interest in self-consciousness and self-knowledge based on his perception of himself in relation to creative evolution. All of Shaw’s chief characters have significant roles in society, including supervising the religious life of others. All Shavian protagonists, in varying degree, are agents of the life

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force. They are all unconventional realists who have no illusions about life and the world. All these characters are turned to the service of humanity. Most of them are gifted with natural genius and natural leadership. Because of Shaw's dissatisfaction with the social and religious institutions of his time, he develops his own religious belief. As an iconoclast as well as a Fabian, he attacked existing institutional religion, in particular Christianity, throughout his life.

First of all, Shaw was interested in social problems in terms of the development of human society. With his optimistic attitudes, he combined his political views with his artistic activities to achieve the better world advocated by the Fabian Society. He believed that the life force of creative evolution, initiated by the power of human will, was essential to human progress. As Smith points out in his summary of Shaw's religious beliefs: "Religion must be practical. It must concern itself with justice and economics and the social order and the divine values of human life".² Holroyd asserts, "For him, the question was not whether creative evolution was objectively 'true' but that life was unendurable without it".³ Barnes insists that "Creative Evolution... is for Shaw not a philosophic or scientific concept (as in Bergson and Butler) but a religious and mystical one".⁴ However this observation is certainly not to the point because Shaw's religious view cannot be explained in isolation from his philosophical ideas. Creative evolution does act on behalf of the life force. That is to say creative evolution can be achieved by the life force. As a philosophical writer, Shaw's political, economic, religious and social theories were related to and informed by his concept of creative evolution. As Berst points out, "balance in Shaw was shifting from socialism informed by a personal religion toward a personal religion informed by socialism".⁵

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⁵ Charles A. Berst, ""Some Necessary Repairs to Religion": Resurrecting an Early
through the long period of his literary career.

As a social humanist, Shaw also repudiated conventional religious orthodoxy and advocated his unorthodox religion, of which the governing deity is the life force. He was influenced by the most discernible trends in the scientific advances of the Victorian era. This is why Shaw's literary career cannot be explained in isolation from the contemporary context. Along with many of his contemporaries, he maintained that evolution was purposeful and changeable by means of creative progression. He regarded change as the eternal law of nature in unorthodox terms. He opined about this point in the preface to *Saint Joan*, "as the law of God in any sense of the word which can now command a faith proof against science is a law of evolution, it follows that the law of God is a law of change, and that when the Churches set themselves against change as such, they are setting themselves against the law of God". 6 Shaw seems to believe that change is the only force which allows progress to take place.

Shaw wrote some of his plays specially to present his religious audacity. As Mills properly explains, "The great artist is the instrument that life creates to fulfill that purpose, an intermediary or an inspiration from the life force". 7 Through his plays, such as *The Devil's Disciple, Caesar and Cleopatra, Man and Superman, Major Barbara, Pygmalion* and *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw revealed the progression of a religious dynamic that would culminate in his creed of creative evolution. In the early twentieth century, Shaw's heterodox opinions continued to have a significant role in his middle plays. During this period he used the term 'life force' which is the basic element of creative evolutionism for an impetus of human evolution. Shaw presents his unorthodox interpretation of Christianity and his own positive vision of the impetus driving human beings forward. The creative evolution concept is spelled out in the dream scene of *Man and Superman* (1902). The play has intellectual links

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with *Back to Methuselah* (1920). The theory as developed in the preface of *Back to Methuselah* is a Shavian interpretation of traditional and contemporary evolutionary thought.

Shaw had adopted an evolutionary philosophy from his contemporaries principally Charles Darwin, Chevalier de Lamarck, Samuel Butler, Henri Bergson, Friedrich Nietzsche and developed his theory of the life force and his own religion, creative evolution for the twentieth century. Unlike Darwin's mechanistic application in his evolutionary theory, Lamarck believed that mankind was driven by a desire for alteration in its generation. He proposed that new forms came about not only from environmental reasons but also to meet new needs. According to Bergson, man's intellect has developed in the course of evolution as an instrument of survival. To him, *elan vital* is immaterial force, whose existence cannot be scientifically verified, but it provides the vital impulse that continuously shapes all life. Butler believed that species change and adapt to their environment not merely fortuitously but purposively, and that these changes would be proceeded from generation to generation. Nietzsche's idea of the Ubermensch was accepted by Shaw as a means of self-realization. Shaw's superman has his own personal moral values which tend to overrun the moralities of conventional men. Shaw and Nietzsche also believed in the importance of a superior man and the that of the human will. Shaw was indebted to those contemporaries for a number of his ideas on evolutionary religion.

Shaw moved from Darwinian science to his own vitalist faith: evolutionism. In his ideas, the individualistic and advancing aspect of human development was emphasised by compatible evolution. Shaw explains the real progress of creative evolution through eugenic breeding, a conscious and deliberate attempt to produce an evolutionary successor to the human species. In relation to the theory of evolutionism, eugenic progress toward the superman will be operated continuously in evolutionary steps beyond average man by trial and error. The openendedness of creative evolution and the incompleteness of the life force strive to evolve into the higher form: "The proof of the superman will be in the living; and we shall find out how to produce him by the old method of trial and error, and not by waiting for a completely convincing
prescription of his ingredients". Shaw wanted the development of superior human intelligence and the eugenic breeding of a super-race of supermen through his characters. The first step would be the evolution of men with both brains and practical power. Shaw believed that in pursuing this quality of greatness, man could become superman and then attain godhead. He believed that only the geniuses who have vital superman spirits can improve society.

In Shaw's view, creative evolution is an essential element for supermen to achieve social progress. Shaw's idea of the superman is based on the realization of an individual's self-awareness and self-enlightenment for human betterment. Even though Shaw exploits his idea of Shavian Utopia focused on the notion of the superman, he emphasises the every man's self-improvement to fulfil man's better life. Shaw's superman has its own ends and purposes to reform the institutional society: "we now call for the superman, virtually a new species, to rescue the world from mismanagement". Shaw's superman is the bridge of development for human beings towards creative evolution. One of the ways in which Shaw's notion of the superman differs from the Nazi idea of a master race seems to be that he envisioned the change of social progress from a closed society to an open one. And this can be possible only when man changes his attitude toward life from a personal, narrow one, to an altruistic open one not like in the Nazi idea of a master race with a special destiny with a unique blend of nationalism, militarism, blind jingoism and racial theory that Shaw attacked.

To Shaw, religion is very broad and universal. It embraces all humanity. In Shaw's view, established religions particularly Christianity had failed to attain what they professed to have come to heal. He opposed the doctrines and creeds of Christianity and its supernaturalism. Instead, he believed that the universe was being driven by the life force. Therefore the life force is the deity existing in all human beings. Shaw conceived of the life force to be both scientific and mystic. It ultimately rests on faith, like all religions, it is linked to biology on its evolutionary

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side. According to Joad, Shaw's religion is "any synthesizing conception of the meaning and purpose of life as a whole".\textsuperscript{10} To Shaw, religion is somewhat broader and more philosophical than the idea of religion which most people have. To Shaw, religion cannot be separated from politics, evolution and even economy. Therefore, Shaw's evolutionary and philosophical thoughts come together to make up his religion. Unlike traditional religions, it postulates an evolutionary process which depends on purposeful creation, instinct and human will. Shaw derived his concept of the life force from various sources, and combined it with aspects of evolutionism for his own theory of creative evolution. Shaw believed that his creative evolution was the new religion with a universal dogma that could replace the traditional religion. Ultimately the purpose of creative evolution makes every man strive toward superman attaining godhead.

Shaw believed in the possibility of achieving a race of supermen through the process of creative evolution aided by human will. Shaw passionately believed it possible and desirable to raise the general level of all mankind. In \textit{Man and Superman}, Shaw noted that man would have to alter his nature in order to change. For this purpose man has to intelligently plan breeding as the first step toward this change in terms of the Fabian eugenic socialism. In order to fulfil the life force's evolutionary aim, the purpose of marriage is a means of breeding a better kind of man combining intellectual force and instinctive force. This kind of union is a step of evolution towards the superman. Most Victorian women were obliged to confine themselves to the merely personal or familial. As Watson observes, Victorian women were treated "as intellectually inferior and legally subordinate".\textsuperscript{11} The womanly women were the idealized embodiment of the angels in the house. The Victorian women's job was just pursuing and preserving the conventional marriage, which provides them with well-being and security among the higher social classes, and it depended on established social structure. Unlike the


Victorian women's role, the role of women in Shaw's plays is given as the agent of biological power, never giving in to another force in pursuit of what she wants as the positive drive of instinctive/biological will for the production of offspring. From Shaw's point of view, women characters are seen as having always played the most positive part in the evolutionary process because of the nature of their role in procreation of a superior race to serve the purpose of the life force. Each is a highly individualized personality, working for the future in a fully realized social context. Shaw recognizes the differences of the instincts of man and woman as representatives respectively of intellectual ability and instinctive or emotional activities particularly in his *Man and Superman*. In the play, he exploits instinctive role as a biological agent of evolutionary progress and intellectual role as an intelligent agent of the life force for the life force's way of breeding human improvement.

To Shaw, the purpose of life is the pursuit of progress towards omnipotence and omniscience, therefore man's pursuit is that "it is the path to godhead". As a realization of the Shavian Utopia, the idea of the superman to create a superior race was first introduced in *Man and Superman*. And the idea was fully developed in his later plays. In the epilogue to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw hints through Lilith's final speech that "there is a goal, and a purpose behind the activities of the life force". The life force moves to transfigure the common people with its purposeful ends. The future of humanity, according to the creed of creative evolution, depends on man being aware of the power of creative evolution as an agent of the life force. Shaw believed that an advanced impulse of the life force acts for the rest of the race for their evolutionary level of near-superman. He insisted that godhead evolved gradually and continuously until it became man in whom the life force working preeminently "will produce something more complicated than man, that is Superman".

In *Man and Superman* Shaw envisages a breeding of a single

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superman through the union of life forces combining intellectual force of man and biological force of woman. However in his later play Back to Methuselah he presents longevity as the way of attaining godhead. In that play, Shaw exploits an essential characteristic of future generations, the lives of long-livers, near-supermen as off-springs of the superman. Back to Methuselah seems to seek a religion which might redeem life from the narrow confinement of time and make it more meaningful and worth living. In the preface to Back to Methuselah, he emphasizes that "civilization needs a religion as a matter of life or death; and as the conception of Creative Evolution developed I saw that we were at last within reach of a faith which complied with the first condition of all the religions that have ever taken hold of humanity".\(^{15}\) According to Shaw, with their progress toward a godlike race, the future of humanity will be stepping toward creative evolution continuously and when all mankind become the race of supermen, the human progress will have attained godhead.

Creative evolution is the most significant element among the various themes which Shaw dealt with in his drama and he developed the idea through the long period of his literary career. Creative evolutionism is based on the philosophical idea that assumes the innate rationality of man and the inevitable improvement of his lot encouraged by his reason. To Shaw, his idea of evolution is inextricably bound up with the idea of progress. With Shaw, acting in the manner that life is given every possible chance may lead us to the superman and beyond to omnipotence and omniscience.

For detailed study, I have chosen eight plays, which particularly relate to Shaw's development of a religious dimension. The Man of Destiny (1895) deals with the historical military genius Napoleon Bonaparte. In the play Shaw emphasises the supermanlike qualities which relate to the ingredients of the Shavian prescription of a great military man. The Devil's Disciple (1896), using the conventional melodramatic trick of the mistaken identity, intends to reverse what virtue is compared to in the view of conventional religion. The play shows the instinctive passion of the life force for the religion of humanity. Caesar and

\(^{15}\) Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 61.
Cleopatra (1898) is a historical drama in terms of its characteristic element. Shaw's Caesar, is naturally great and virtuous, free from the institutional morality of reward and punishment, and is distinguished by his passion for humanity. Man and Superman (1902), in which he used elements of the traditions of romantic comedy, introduces the concept of the Superman developed from Nietzsche. Shaw's first attempt at a dramatization of a legend embodying the idea of creative evolution had been made in Man and Superman. Major Barbara (1905) is one of the most complex of his plays in its treatment of themes relating to money and religion. Through the play Shaw attacks the crime of poverty and contrasts two ways of redemption represented by the Salvation Army and the munitions factory. Shaw reveals his socialistic optimism on the issue of power and money and his utopian vision for the future in the play. The subjects of the play are connected with some of the central issues of the twentieth century and reflect his work for the Fabians. Shaw's didactic purposes are obvious through Pygmalion (1913). Pygmalion is largely structured as a romantic comedy which stresses the growth of individualism based on self-awareness and self-realization with vitality. Heartbreak House (1917), written during the war years but not made public until 1919, treats philosophically the state of England in the period just before World War I. Throughout the play, Shaw portrays a drifting England of disorder and complacency and analyses a civilization brought to the brink of destruction by its apathy and loss of purpose. As Shaw's epic fantasy drama, Back to Methuselah (1920) presents his concerns with the social, political, and religious issues of that time. Back to Methuselah adds the gospel of longevity to the first credo as the most significant element. Through the preface, he sets out the philosophical foundation for his legend of Methuselah in which science in the form of creative evolution is offered in place of religious belief.

Heartbreak House and Back to Methuselah were written in the war years and early post-war era. They stand out as Shaw's fullest and most direct dramatizations of the situation that led to the war and the consequences of it for his view of the future of the human race. His attitude to the war and its aftermath is discernible in the treatment of themes and characters throughout Back to Methuselah. In the play, his despairing doubts about man's future prospects were more emphatic than
ever. Instead of dealing with a single imaginary family in *Heartbreak House*, *Back to Methuselah* covers the whole history of the human race and projects symbolically into the future.

Through the plays above, I would like to explore Shaw's religious and philosophical development and indicate how far his personal thoughts and ideas relate to his philosophical background and contemporaries, including his view as a philosophical writer. For these reasons, I have chosen to focus on these particular plays, which use a variety of theatrical genres to explore Shaw's development towards the full-blown myth of creative evolution elaborated in his long life. In focusing on these eight plays, the characters of the plays chosen reveal the progression of Shaw's combination of social ideas with the religious dynamic that would culminate in his creed of creative evolution. Shaw's most explicitly ideological plays had their origins in a religious system. Shaw has written plays in order to teach his reality, his new religion of creative evolution. In these plays, therefore, religion is itself part of the texture of the social/historical material that Shaw chose to dramatize.

It is true that Shaw was one of the dramatists who tried to provide a hopeful vision related to his new religion, creative evolution. His political, economic, religious and social theories were related to and informed by his concept of creative evolution. A good many of Shaw's ideas having been developed by means of comparison in relation to his creative evolution. It seems that his dramatic technique is related to his religious attitudes. For these reasons above, some of my themes have previously been considered by critics. Even though my thesis is indebted to all the previous critical works, this study distinguishes itself in several points. First, while absorbing the tradition of previous Shaw criticism, this thesis examines Shaw's religious and philosophical development emphasising the purpose and the power of the human will in terms of the concept of creative evolution. In doing so, it traces Shaw's change through the formative influences of his upbringing and reading and engages more closely with seminal contemporary work. Second, this thesis explores developments in Shaw's scientific and intellectual thinking on evolution and eugenics during the period spanned by my selection of plays comparing these with how his contemporaries reflect changes in thought on the subject and related issues. Finally, this thesis
focuses on Shaw's characterization of figures related to Shaw's religion
of creative evolution with due consideration for content analysis.

As I noted above, many of Shaw's plays are concerned with
religious issues. Many critics seem to consider Shaw's life force of
creative evolution as just a religious and mystical one rather than a social,
philosophical or scientific concept. Thus they seem to deal with Shaw's
socialism as subject matter separately from religious issues. Of course, I
am not denying that there are strong socialist figures who desire for
social reform within a non-religious context. However, Shaw's view of
social reform and even economy are inextricably bound up with the
religion of creative evolution. Accordingly, this thesis challenges this
view by arguing that Shaw's political, economic, philosophical and social
theories were related to and enlightened by his religion of creative
evolution in both his plays and non-dramatic works.

As has been said earlier, this thesis attempts to explore and examine
rather than categorize and classify. A descriptive approach is used for the
purpose of examining the theme in individual plays. This study explores
how Shaw's life force of creative evolution is likely to be perceived in a
group of plays with its various dramatic genres. It is one of the purposes
of this thesis to show how political and social interests and activities
were synthesised in his creed of creative evolution, by Shaw the
philosophical writer, in a distinctive manner. For these reasons above, I
will be examining Shaw's religious and philosophical development in his
works emphasizing the purpose and the power of the human will. In the
following ways of focusing on purposive life force in terms of his new
religion, creative evolution, my thesis essays an original study of this
aspect of Shaw's work.

My research will consist of two parts: the first part of thesis will
include the introductory chapters. In the first chapters, I shall deal with
Shaw's own religious and philosophical development and also consider
his contemporaries and a review of the literary context in which Shaw's
plays were written. The second part of the thesis will consist of chapters
dealing with an analysis of each play chosen for detailed attention, The
Man of Destiny, The Devil's Disciple, Pygmalion, Caesar and Cleopatra,
Major Barbara, Heartbreak House, Man and Superman and Back to
Methuselah, both structurally and thematically including the conclusion.
I shall examine critically the eight plays in which Shaw’s philosophical religious ideas appear, hopefully showing how his contemporaries reflect changes in thought on evolution and related issues; establishing a sense of the development in Shaw’s ideas as reflected in the selected plays which do after all span several decades. It is because Shaw’s religion of creative evolution was made up on the ground of the contemporary evolutionary and philosophical thoughts. It is vitally important because much of what happened in Shaw’s thought and plays cannot be explained in isolation from the historical context.

Especially, I intend to focus on how far the characters in Shaw’s dramatic works play a major role in the development and communication of his religious philosophy of creative evolution, since Shaw’s characterizations of the plays seem to be an integral part of his whole approach to playwriting. It is because most of Shaw’s characters are the agents of the life force of creative evolution for the life force’s way of breeding human improvement. I am especially interested in comparing the relationship of each of these characters to the main action and theme of the play. This is because the plays examined are representative of the various phases of Shaw’s dramaturgical development. These will be looked at in relation to dramatic themes and types of genres by grouping the plays based on a blend of chronological considerations.

Each play will be analysed from the perspectives set up in part I. In this way, by examining the characters and his plays, this study of Shaw will be able to shed additional light on his dramatic work.
PART ONE

I  Introduction : Shaw, The Shavian and Shavianism

Chapter 1  The Origins and Development of Shaw’s Philosophy of
Creative Evolution

Many of Shaw’s ideas about contemporary life can be related to
biographical details such as his education, religious upbringing and in
particular their Victorian context. Through many prefaces of Shaw’s own
writings, the biographical details of his life are explained. He
experienced the stultifying and conflicting relationships between his
father and mother in childhood. He wrote of the family difficulties of his
early life: “I hate the Family... I loathe the Family. I entirely detest and
abominate the Family as the quintessence of Tyranny, Sentimentality,
Inefficiency, Hypocrisy, and Humbug”. ¹ Shaw’s mother, Lucinda
Elizabeth Gurly did not love her family. She was neglectful of her son.
Even after Shaw’s marriage, Shaw and his wife never visited Shaw’s
mother and his mother in her turn never visited them either. In the
preface to London Music in 1888-9, he portrayed an unloving mother:

I should say she was the worst mother conceivable, always, however, within the
limits of the fact that she was incapable of unkindness to any child, animal, or flower,
or indeed to any person or thing whatsoever... She went her own way with so
complete a disregard and even unconsciousness of convention and scandal and
prejudice that it never occurred to her that other people, especially children, needed
guidance or training, or that it mattered in the least what they ate and drank or what
they did as long as they were not actively mischievous.²

According to Michael Holroyd, Shaw’s biographer, Shaw’s father,
George Carr Shaw was an unsuccessful wholesaler in the wheat and flour

xi.
trade, who influenced Shaw's religious and moral attitude. Shaw "received his first moral lesson from his father, who expressed such a horror of alcohol that the boy made up his mind never to touch it and became a convinced teetotaller".\(^3\) In his autobiographical *Sixteen Self Sketches* Shaw remembered his boyhood and wrote that when he realised his father was drunk he made up his mind and hereafter never "believed in anything and anybody".\(^4\) He continued that "[my father] was a hypocrite and a dipsomaniac... it must have left its mark on me".\(^5\) He wrote of his father in the preface to *London Music in 1888-9*:

My father was in principle an ardent teetotaller... He was the victim of a drink neurosis which cropped up in his family from time to time: a miserable affliction, quite unconvivial, and accompanied by torments of remorse and shame.\(^6\)

Shaw was not loved by his parents and they left him free. As Berst points out, "when he was almost ten his irreligious parents at last gave up the middle-class practice of sending him to church... the aesthetic and religious effects of these events on Shaw were no doubt greater than his relief at leaving church"\(^7\), which seems to be one of the reasons for his rejection of established religion. Shaw's mother, Lucinda Elizabeth Gurly had abandoned the faith of Christianity and declared herself an atheist. Shaw was baptized in the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland by a clerical uncle, the Rev. George William Carroll. He says that he was never confirmed however, as his parents did not take the rites of the church very seriously. Shaw's father possessed not only a strong sense of social and religious respectability, but also a strong sense of humour. Shaw wrote of his father,

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The more sacred an idea or a situation by convention, the more irresistible was it to him as the jumping off place for a plunge into laughter... When I scoffed at the Bible he would instantly and quite sincerely rebuke me telling me,... that the Bible was universally recognized as a literary and historical masterpiece that even the worst enemy of religion could say no worse of the Bible than that it was the damndest parcel of lies ever written.8

He continued that “with such a father my condition was clearly hopeless as far as the conventions of religion were concerned”.9 His father did not permit Shaw to associate with Roman Catholics. Shaw reveals his repugnance for Irish Protestantism in *Sixteen Self Sketches*:

Irish Protestantism was not... a religion: it was a side in political factions, a class prejudice, a conviction that Roman Catholics are socially inferior persons who will go to hell when they die and leave Heaven in the exclusive possession of Protestant ladies and gentlemen.10

It seems certain that during early childhood Shaw’s attitude to religion was influenced by his parents’ religious affectation as Holroyd explains, “[Shaw] had inherited from his parents incompatible qualities which he must reconcile within himself... From this process emerged his concept of the Life Force which is not a symbol of power but a unit of synthesis”.11 Because of his emotionally undemonstrative parents and his debt to influential contemporaries, Shaw seemed to develop a total scepticism concerning life, religion, human nature and human relationships. Many of Shaw’s plays have reflected his doubting childhood due to the reasons mentioned.

One of the persons most influential on Shaw’s life, his mother’s music teacher George Vandaleur Lee, affected him in many respects. Lee’s musical influence seems to provide Shaw with the foundation of

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9 Ibid.
10 Shaw, *Sixteen Self Sketches*, p. 45.
musical themes in his plays. In the preface to *London Music in 1888-9*, Shaw acknowledged how much he “owed to the meteoric impact of Lee, with his music, his method, his impetuous enterprise and his magnetism”. Shaw was deeply impressed by the great music masters, in particular Wagner and Mozart, whose emphasis on rationalism influenced Shaw’s plays. Pearson writes, “It was through music that he became sceptical concerning the teachings of the Established Church”. Under the control of Lee, there were many operas, concerts and oratorios rehearsed constantly in Shaw’s house especially on Sunday nights. Protestants and Roman Catholics came to sing and play, and mingled melodiously there. Despite Shaw’s father’s repugnance for Roman Catholicism, his mother sang publicly with Roman Catholics in Roman Catholic Chapels. According to Shaw, these contradictory attitudes of his mother and father’s affected his attitude to religion. Shaw reveals his predicament in childhood:

> My first doubt as to whether God could really be a good Protestant was suggested by the fact that the best voices available for combination with my mother’s in the works of the great composers had been unaccountably vouchsafed to Roman Catholics... If religion is that which binds men to one another, and irreligion that which sunders, then must I testify that I found the religion of my country in its musical genius, and its irreligion in its churches and drawing rooms.

Shaw’s early educational experience also influenced his attitude toward the existing institutions. He did not have any advanced education. Shaw received hardly any systematic education in Dublin. When he was very young, he had been taught at home by a governess, Miss Hill, and afterwards he attended the Wesleyan Connexional School at the age of nine, where his teachers were “untrained in pedagogy, mostly picking up a living on their way to becoming Wesleyan ministers”. When he was twelve, he transferred to a private school near Dalkey and then to a

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14 Shaw, *Sixteen Self Sketches*, p. 46.
15 Ibid., p. 21.
Roman Catholic school. Seven months later he transferred to another Protestant school. He left school in 1871, then entered a Dublin estate office as a junior clerk. As Shaw used to say, "My university has three colleges... they were Dalkey Hill, where Lee bought a seaside cottage for Shaw’s family, the National Gallery, and Lee’s Amateur Musical Society". He used to say that he had not learned from systematic instruction, and he gradually became more and more vehement in his freethinking.

Shaw was self-taught and after moving to London used the British Museum Reading Room daily. The musical activities at home and reading alone influenced his enthusiastic career throughout his life. As Pearson points out, "the depth and diversity of his reading quickened his imagination... he began to create a world of his own which was full of fantastic and burlesque happenings". Reading alone virtually became the nutrition of religious themes in his plays. Hardwick explains this point:

He haunted picture galleries and theatres and responded to the rational religious discussions in his home, so that his atheism was early ingrained; although a sense of the mystery of life, which he was later to describe in Man and Superman as the Life Force, always directed his mind towards a kind of spiritual creativity. It was to inspire perhaps his greatest play, Saint Joan, as well as the extraordinary prophetic theme of creative evolution in Back to Methuselah.

Shaw and his father had been left in Dublin after his mother followed Lee to London to pursue her career as a singer. With Lee’s help, Shaw moved to London, where he slowly established himself as an author and dramatist through the opportunities for experiencing art and philosophical discussions there.

To Shaw, poverty was the greatest evil faced by humankind and the

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main theme in the beginning of his life as a dramatist. Shaw felt that the poor are neither virtuous nor honest: "‘poor but honest,’ ‘the respectable poor,’ ‘but amiable,’ ‘fraudulent but a good after-dinner speaker,’ ‘splendidly criminal,’ ‘or the like’". 19 According to many of the prefaces to Shaw’s plays, his socialism arose from his early years in London. In London Music in 1888-9, he wrote that when he was a child he was taken to the Dublin slums by a nurse-maid and afterward he regarded poverty as the worst evil: "...thus were laid the foundations of my lifelong hatred of poverty, and the devotion of all my public life to the task of exterminating the poor and rendering their resurrection for ever impossible".20

Karl Marx’s Das Kapital was the most influential book for the shaping of Shaw’s political views. As Shaw remembered, “I sermonized on Socialism at least three times a fortnight average. I preached whenever and whenever I was asked”, 21 and he was very enthusiastic about spreading his social creeds. As a socialist and religious iconoclast, he wrote five novels between 1879 and 1883 including Immaturity, The Irrational Knot, Love Among the Artists, Cashel Byron’s Profession and An Unsocial Socialist, to reflect his denunciation of the existing institutions. For Shaw’s activities in the Sunday Lecture Society, he had favorite topics: "I always replied that I never lectured on anything but very controversial politics and religion". 22 Shaw joined the Zetetical Society, founded in honor of the John Stuart Mill in 1878, where he had his first experience of public speaking. He also belonged to such debating, literary and discussion societies as the Dialectical and the Bedford, the Browning23, the Shakespeare, the Chaucer and Ballad and the Shelley

21 Shaw, Sixteen Self Sketches, p. 59.
22 Ibid., p.60.
23 The Bedford Society, one of debating and discussion societies, was founded by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke (1832-1916), Fabian socialist and Unitarian minister at Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury. The Browning Society is one of literary societies founded by F. J. Furnivall (1825-1910), the early proponent and editor of the Oxford English Dictionary.
societies as well as the Democratic Federation and the Fabian Society.

As a prominent member of the Fabian Society founded in 1884, he had built up his socialist views, throughout many writings. In a letter to E. Strauss in 1942, Shaw wrote that "As a socialist it is my business to state social problems and to solve them. I have done this in tracts, treatises, essays and prefaces".\(^{24}\) He edited *Fabian News* and wrote many of the society's tracts, including *Labour Manifesto* of 1891 for the Fabians. He continued to write pamphlets to express not only his political views but also unorthodox religious ideas in order to establish the new social organization. As emphasised, Shaw's socialism and unorthodox beliefs about existing institutional religion cannot be explained in isolation from the Victorian age, an age of doubt, and from his contemporaries as well. (This will be considered in the next chapter.)

Shaw was a central figure in the development of Fabian thought and demonstrated the broad outlines of their position. As a leading group in 1880s Britain, the Fabian Society consisted of intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the inadequacy and incompetence of existing society and sought to change it by their intellectual skills. For the Fabians, the role of the educated person was central in the transition to a new type of society. They stressed the elite nature of their membership. Fabian socialism, identified by Beatrice Webb, was always intellectual. As Shaw wrote, "Membership of the Fabian Society was presented as a rare and difficult privilege of superior persons"\(^{25}\). The nature of the membership differentiated within the general category of 'brainworkers', what is called, 'intellectual'. The Fabian's chief concern was not with the working class as the agency of social reform. Fabian ideology was pivoted by the middle class. They are mainly devoted to mental labour. Most of the Fabians were writers, teachers, journalists, civil servants with one or two stockbrokers and clerks far from the ruling class in society. They associated with several other groups founded in the 1880s. The Fabians strove to reconstruct the existing society into the new


socialist one. According to Alexander, "in the 1880s, Britain was in the throes of severe economic depression with characteristics of lavish wealth for the few with a relatively high level of income among the employed, while the unemployed lived in chronic want". For these reasons, the Fabians criticised capitalism for its inefficiency and inability to organise human affairs.

The Fabians envisioned the new world developing through a modification of social relationships. As an influential Fabian, Shaw was enthusiastic to improve English society. Shaw proclaimed "I am working for the purpose of the universe, working for the good of the whole of society and the whole world, instead of my merely looking after my personal ends". Shaw wrote of the society's effectiveness, for "we know that for a long time to come we can only make headway by gaining the confidence of masses outside our society who will have nothing to do with us unless we first prove ourselves safe for all sorts of progressive work". He was eager to deliberate his socialist view in every field. Shaw was in fact a genuine representative of the central Fabian ideas.

As a dramatist, he combined both his political and artistic interests in his plays. In this respect, the dramatic conflict in his plays seems to be the conflict of ideas and belief from a socialist standpoint. At the beginning of his life as a dramatist, Shaw seems to deal with social issues as the main theme, whereas religious themes tend to be the main issues in his later plays. As the effect of the war, it seems that after World War I, Shaw began to consider far more seriously his growing lack of comprehension of the world and thus his socialist goal emphasises changes in human nature through his religious views.

Shaw despised sentimental passion in plays and rejected art for art's sake. Instead, he appreciated art as a means of social reform. As Mills properly explains, "The great artist is the instrument that life creates to

fulfill that purpose, an intermediary or an inspiration from the life force".\textsuperscript{29} Even though Shaw exploited his political and artistic thoughts in the preceding conventional tradition beyond the Victorian age, he wrote that “the nineteenth century has crowned the idolatry of Art with the deification of Love”\textsuperscript{30} in the preface to \textit{Three Plays for Puritans}. In this respect, he ultimately transferred dramatic conventions and whole genres into the materials of his own drama of ideas from his socialistic standpoint.

Shaw's Fabian socialism has its own ends and purposes to reform social institutions. Shaw's socialist ideas are stressed in his plays and many prefaces. It seems that Shaw regards Fabian socialism as the only solution for all social problems of existing society. For Shaw, socialism means “not a principle but a certain definite economic measure which would bring about equality of income”.\textsuperscript{31} In an interview, Shaw said a Fabian is “a socialist who is not a socialist at all, a man who keeps his eye definitely on certain concrete reforms which the Fabians want to bring about and the man who is so far an economist that he thoroughly understands the way in which competitive private property in land, and private enterprise in industry, throw a large part of the nation's wealth into idle hands; who is dead against it; and who, in short, wants to get rid of unearned incomes. If a man is that much of a collectivist he is Socialist enough for us”.\textsuperscript{32} Shaw also advocates that the socialism of the Fabian Society “has not been to reform the world ourselves, but to persuade the world to take our ideas into account in reforming itself”.\textsuperscript{33} According to Shaw, socialism devotes “unconditional equality of income for everyone without regard to character, talent, age, or sex. This is the


\textsuperscript{31} Shaw, \textit{Fabian Essays in Socialism}, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{32} A. M. Gibbs, ed., \textit{Shaw : Interviews and Recollections} (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 65. This quotation is from Percy L. Parker, “Who is it to be a Fabian? An Interview with Mr George Bernard Shaw”, in \textit{Young Man}, April 1896.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 67.
true diagnostic of Socialism, and the touchstone by which Socialists may be distinguished from Philanthropists, Liberals, Radicals, Anarchists, Nationalists, Syndicalists, and Malcontents of all sort".34 The Fabian's central belief was that the high level of national property was sufficient, if properly directed to give every man a comfortable standard of living.

The general Fabian position was that socialism was society rationalized. Shaw was saying that socialism was a man-made rational structure. Indeed, he gave socialism pseudo-religious overtones. The Fabian socialist convictions were entirely influenced by sociological positivism.

Shaw, with his political influences as a prominent Fabian, had been editing Fabian News and wrote thirteen Fabian Tracts, Why Art the Many Poor?, A Manifesto, To Provident Landlords and Capitalists, What Socialism Is, Socialism and Superior Brains, What Socialism is, The Impossibilities of Anarchism, A Plan of Campaign for Labor, Report of National Efficiency, Fabianism and the Fiscal Question and The League of Nations. Evans asserts “[Shaw] was a Marxist and an anti-Marxist, a revolutionary and a reformist, a Fabian and a despiser of Fabianism, a Communist and a crusader against super-tax”. However, Evans himself put the important aspects of Shaw’s political characteristics:

There are two other important aspects of the political Shaw. The first concerns the personal application of his general approach to political themes in the plays... The second important aspect relates to Shaw's deeper thoughts on the development of Western society... Yet his assessment of the development of human society was always optimistic.35

The Fabians agreed with Marx’s economic theory but rejected his theory of struggle between classes. They regarded radical Marxism as “self-defeating and devoid of pragmatic guidance on how to administer

the modern nation-state". Instead, they emphasised collectivism and the growth of the state as the essential elements of historical progress. Shaw's socialism emphasises the distributive rather than the proprietorial state ownership without equal distribution of the wealth. According to Fabian principles, "collective ownership wherever practicable; collective regulation everywhere else; collective provision according to need for all the impotent and sufferers; and collective taxation in proportion to wealth, especially surplus wealth". So it was socialism within a capitalist economy rather than communism. For the Fabians, socialism was inevitable and the intellectual could play a main role in reforming the institutional society. The Fabians joined other socialists groups to cooperate with them to reconstruct existing society. They criticised poverty and the ineffectiveness of modern capitalistic industry. They strove to modify rather than transform the existing social relations to advance their socialistic ends.

Shaw envisioned the ideas of Fabian socialism, achieved by the privileged and propertied class, for the new generation through his plays as well as his Fabian tracts. For this purpose, Shaw's protagonists in his plays are mostly intellectuals whose role is to propagate his socialist and religious ideas, while changing society as his agents. As Evans notes, "Shaw's plays were merely propagandistic or proselytizing in intention".

The Fabian Essays were presented as an epoch-making contribution

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to the labour movement. Shaw contributed to Fabian socialism throughout his Fabian theory in *Fabian Essays in Socialism*:

It is on the devotion of these to the service of Society, as the development of the social instincts teaches men to identify their interests with those of the community, that socialism must ultimately rely for progress; but in saying this we are only saying that Socialism relies for progress on human nature as a whole, instead of on that mere fragment of it known as the desire for gain... All that we need are courage, prudence, and faith. Faith, above all, which dares to believe that justice and love are not impossible; and that more than the best that man can dream of shall one day be realised by men.39

In his preface to *Fabian Essays in Socialism* he seemed to take pride in Fabianism's services to social stability:

It is still alive doing its old work, which was, and is, to rescue Socialism and Communism from the barricades, from the pseudo-democracy of the Party System, from confusion with the traditional heterodoxies of anti-clericalism, individualist anti-State republicanism, and middle-class Bohemian anarchism: in short, to make it a constitutional movement in which the most respectable citizens and families may enlist, without forfeiting the least scrap of their social or spiritual standing.40

Many Fabian socialists also joined Christian Socialism for social reforms.41 According to Norman, "The first Christian Socialists actually failed to discern the Christian elements within Chartism; their purpose was to re-introduce the unchurched masses to the conventional

40 Ibid., 295.
41 Shaw addressed on “The Economic Basis of Socialism” at King’s College, Cambridge in 1889, where he said that Christian Socialism is the form “in which Socialism can best be served to the middle-class religious people. The Fabian Society consists to a great extent of people who are anti-religious”. For further details, see Stanley Weintraub, “Bernard Shaw Besieged: Political Progresses to Oxbridge, 1888-1892”, in *Shaw: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies*, Vol. 11 (1991), pp. 37-46.
Anglicanism of the times, through educational and social reforms”. The first Christian socialists focused on defining and debating theological texts written by influential clergymen, such as Frederick Denison Maurice, John Malcolm Ludlow and Stewart Headlam. In the beginning, Christian socialism focused on religious and moral issues rather than political concerns. This movement had become involved in the socialism movement to change society within the church. Shaw had a good relationship with the Rev. Headlam, an active Christian socialist and Anglican clergyman. The Rev. Headlam was assumed as the nearest model to Morell in Shaw’s early play, Candida. He, as one of the members of the Guild of Saint Matthew and the Church, attended Shaw’s Fabian Society for activities on political issues. According to Shaw’s letter to Walter Crane in 1895, “The Fabian Society stood in with the general democratic compact, and got two of its members selected as candidates - Stewart Headlam for Bethnal Green and Graham Wallas for Hoxton”. Shaw wrote of his involvement to the Guild of St Matthew in his preface to Plays Pleasant,

Religion was alive again, coming back upon men, even upon clergymen, with such power that not the Church of England itself could keep it out. Here my activity as a Socialist had placed me on sure and familiar ground. To me the members of the Guild of St Matthew were no more ‘High Church clergymen’... there is only one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it.

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42 Edward Norman, The Victorian Christian Socialists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 10. See also Gilbert Clive Binyon, The Christian Socialist Movement in England: An Introduction to Study of Its History (London: Macmillan, 1931), p. 53. According to Binyon, “The Christian Chartist Movement was in some measure a protest against the exclusiveness and the Toryism of the Established Church, and against the repellent narrowness of some of the Dissenting bodies, notably of the Wesleyan Methodists. It was also partly due to a desire to base democratic principles upon the strong rock of Christian doctrine”.


Shaw's Fabian socialist view was pursued with his new religion as the means to establish the new society. As a social reformer, Shaw's own socialist views cannot be separated from his own religion, creative evolution. Shaw believed that society could not be reformed unless men were willing to change their principles—religious as well as political. "The religion, Shaw declares, which emerges from such a system is a reflection of its cheating, its adulteration, its struggle to get as much as possible for as little as possible, and finally, to get something for nothing". As Hugo asserts, "for the betterment of the day for the benefit of tomorrow— for the fulfilment of the life force". Shaw's own letters to Sydney Webb and Charles Rowley in between 1892 and 1907 shows his own identical purpose as an enthusiastic Fabian:

I am a Socialist because I have learnt from the history of Manchester & other places that freedom without law is impossible; and I have become a religious agitator because I have observed that men without religion have no courage.

Because of Shaw's dissatisfaction with the social and political institutions of his time, he develops his own religious belief. As an iconoclast as well as Fabian, he attacked existing institutional religion, in particular the Christian creed and the traditional faith of Christianity throughout his life. McDowell defines the spiritual atmosphere in the Victorian background in relation to Shaw's religious and social attitudes:

The central problem of the period 1870-1914 lay in the relationships of the

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individual to the new science and of spiritual values to empiric fact. In the adjustments entailed by this problem, the Christianity of tradition was either abrogated (as with the Secularists, the Positivists, and the free-thinkers) or else it was greatly modified.48

Frequently in his religious writings, Shaw portrays the institutional deity as being unscientific and irrational:

'I am the Lord of Hosts: I made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. I made the poison of the snake and the milk in your mother's breast. In my hand are death and all the diseases, the thunder and lightening, the storm and the pestilence, and all the other proofs of my greatness and majesty. On your knee, girl; and when you next come before me, bring me your favorite child and slay it here before me as a sacrifice; for I love the smell of newly spilled blood'.49

Shaw said that the major problem with Christianity is that it relieves the responsibility of its believers. In the preface to Androcles and the Lion, Shaw wrote,

We must infer from his teaching... that the business of a Christ was to make self-satisfied sinners feel the burden of their sins and stop committing them instead of assuring them that they could not help it, as it was all Adam's fault, but that it did not matter as long as they were credulous and friendly about himself. Even when he believed himself to be a god, he did not regard himself as a scapegoat.50

Later in the postscript to Back to Methuselah, Shaw remarked that "we must not stay as we are, doing always what was done the last time, or


we shall stick in the mud”.

With his socialist stand-point in relation to religious ideas, Shaw believed that the hope of evolution lies through the intellectual indicating that he recognizes an intellectual, ethical and social direction for the evolutionary process. As Bentley says, “In the higher man the brain is the means to something even more remarkable. It enables him to understand life and thus to control it”. To Shaw, his idea of evolution is inextricably bound up with the idea of progress. With Shaw, acting in the manner that life is given every possible chance, may lead us to the Superman and beyond to omnipotence and omniscience.

Shaw conceived of creative evolution as the answer to a world which he felt could no longer accept Christianity, but had found nothing but empty Darwinian materialism with which to replace it. Christianity, he said, was a dead letter, an idea which, he argues with some exaggeration, the nineteenth century had almost universally rejected.

The idol was, as Shelley had been expelled from Oxford for pointing out, an almighty fiend, with a petty character and unlimited power, spiteful, cruel, jealous, vindictive, and physically violent. The most villainous schoolmasters, the most tyrannical parents, fell far short in their attempts to imitate it.

Shaw’s concept of creative evolution is concerned with religion. Shaw believed that the human race can be saved only by means of creative evolution, since it is only by means of evolution that we can create a being superior to ourselves. In fact, Shaw confidently presented it as the religion of the twentieth century, one designed to replace the outworn religions that could no longer satisfy man’s spiritual needs. According to him, religion was essential to life:

We must have a religion if we are to do anything worth doing. If anything is to be done to get out our civilization out of the horrible mess in which it now is, it must be done by men who have got a religion.

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Unlike other religions, it had to be a working religion rather than just a spiritual guide. He conceived of creative evolution as a working philosophy, a pattern by which to live, an inescapable process which enveloped and contained all living things. As Smith points out in his summary of Shaw's religious beliefs: "Religion must be practical. It must concern itself with justice and economics and the social order and the divine value of human life." Creative evolution is more concerned with process than with ultimate ends and final causes. Shaw interprets evolution as a process, in which, as man emerges into godhead, he will increasingly reach the most noteworthy and valuable goal of evolution. Shaw conceived of creative evolution as an inescapable process which enveloped and contained all living things. Shaw's creative evolution emphasises a working process for the daily conduct of life rather than as a spiritual guide which the traditional Christianity focused on. To Shaw, the conception of 'God' is not a supernatural deity because he cannot accept the idea of 'God's' creation. He rejects the Christian conception of 'God' on metaphysical grounds. Shaw says, according to the teaching of Christianity there is nothing man can do but worship, sin, be forgiven, die and be damned or saved because the world was created whole by the deity of 'God' who is complete, omnipotent and perfect. According to Shaw, the life force has been constantly moving toward a more and more evolutionary step with the life force's purposes.

In one of his major religious speeches given in 1912, Shaw claimed that most intelligent persons living in the nineteenth century experienced the idea of such a deity:

The whole consciousness of people in the first half of the nineteenth century had got saturated with the idea of continual – I won't say miraculous to every intelligent person – but interferences entirely capricious and anarchic, following no sort of natural law. This was so demoralizing that the ablest people were ready to welcome any sort of theory that would get rid of this kind of God.56

55 Ibid., p. xxii.
56 Ibid., p. 47.
Unlike traditional Christianity, Shaw’s religion emphasises human will and desire for social progress. As Holroyd asserts, “For him, the question was not whether Creative Evolution was objectively ‘true’, but that life was unendurable without it”. As a deity of Shaw’s new religion, the life force aims to develop remarkable intelligence of human nature to contribute to humankind through its experimentation. It is because man has emerged as the most advanced product of the life force’s exertions in Shaw’s evolutionary development. Basically, Shaw’s life force theory is derived from the evolutionary theories of the nineteenth century. In relation to this respect, it becomes increasingly apparent that the view of Darwinian evolution and Galtonian eugenic ideas (this will be discussed in the next chapter) had indeed a major debate in late-nineteenth and even early twentieth-century. The eugenic movement seems to be a response to the question of reproduction and degeneration by intellectuals. Eugenics grew in popularity in late Victorian Britain as the future direction of man’s social evolution.

In terms of Darwinian evolutionary ideas, Shaw only accepts the fact of evolution and rejects the mechanical aspect of “the survival of the fittest” since it is based on the conviction that the cosmos is governed by mere chance. Even Shaw believes that Darwinism caused an atmosphere of fatalism and opportunism which culminated in the horror of World War I. Darwin’s natural selection demonstrated that the development of the human species could be explained in terms of natural causation, that organic beings were not the work of a creator but had become highly developed beings through the occurrence of fortuitous events. Thus Shaw prefers the theories of Chevalier de Lamarck and Samuel Butler which permit the presence of mind or will in the evolutionary process. While Darwinian evolution results from mechanical environmental chance, that is, organisms evolve by adapting to their surroundings, Lamarck’s concept of evolution permits every individual organism’s self-determining volition in the evolutionary process. Even though his evolutionism was influenced by the social implications of Darwinian evolution, he attacked both Christianity and Darwinism, “the unspeakable

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horror of the mindless purposeless world presented to us by natural selection". 58 For Shaw, the life force imbues man with creative inspiration towards a higher purpose for evolution. He believed that the human race was capable of further perfection, achieving a god-like superman by changing man’s nature through evolution. He proclaims his new religion, creative evolution, as the new theology:

The aim of the New Theology is ... to conceive of the force behind the universe as working up through imperfection and mistake to a perfect, organized being, having the power of fulfilling its highest purposes. In a sense, there is no God as yet achieved, but there is that force at work making God... I am God and here is God,... still advancing toward completion. 59

Shaw’s philosophy of creative evolution includes metaphysical as well as biological implications and is based on a concept of vitalism which equates the conception of Christian deity of ‘God’ with a life force, a purposeful will. In contrast to the omnipotent and omniscient ‘God’ of Christian creed, Shaw believed that the life force was imperfect and often made mistakes, which then had to be counteracted in cooperation with man. When man emerged, the designs of the life force could no longer be defined only in biological terms. The life force operates within man as the inner force of man, the life force makes man explore his potentiality and live better life by virtue of his self-improvement. Shaw’s socialism related to this vitalism in creative evolution which is based on a concept of his new religion whose deity is a life force. Shaw never set down a systematic explication of creative evolution. The theory appears in various stages of development throughout his plays. In the preface to On the Rocks, Shaw appraises his theory:

I do not present my creed of Creative Evolution as anything more than another provisional hypothesis. It differs from the old Dublin brimstone creed solely in its greater credibility... No future education authority... will imagine that it has any final

and eternal truths to inculcate: it can only select the most useful working hypotheses and inculcate them... All provisional hypotheses may be illusions; but if they conduce to beneficial conduct they must be inculcated and acted upon by Governments until better ones arrive.\textsuperscript{60}

Whatever it may be called, Shaw’s conception of the life force is akin to institutional God in a sense. Shaw substitutes “life” for God, and “life force” for Divine Providence. But, unlike the traditional view of God, Shaw’s God as life is still evolving, less than perfect and not yet completed. Life as Shaw’s metaphor for God fulfils itself in the evolutionary process of the universe in general and of man in particular. Consequently, man as “the highest miracle of organization yet attained by life”\textsuperscript{61} is still evolving toward his perfection fulfilling the will of the life force which is the eugenic breeding of Superman. In this sense, the theological aspect of Shaw’s life force is solely based on human ethics and not on the metaphysics of conventional theology.

Throughout his life, Shaw proclaims his belief in the life force and the sanctity of life. If man develops according to the promptings of the life force, he will eventually evolve into a higher form—the superman—but the process of evolution will have been considerably accelerated by man. The life force will progress at some point toward its completion.

Shaw’s dissatisfaction with the social and political developments of the twentieth century, and his refusal of such reality, caused his attitude toward the life force. From viewing its progress practically, and as a socialist artist, he came to depend more and more on the developments of evolutionary process for solving the current problem.

In the plays beginning with \textit{Man and Superman}, he modifies his socialist view. Fabian socialism was not the only answer to social problems but it would “make the improvement of race more feasible”.\textsuperscript{62} Reflecting on his past outlook as a Fabian reformer, he observes that

\textsuperscript{60} Shaw, \textit{Prefaces}, pp. 365- 66.
reforms are useless till man has reformed himself. Thus, man must change himself first in order to change society. According to Shaw, man cannot reform himself till the life force has informed him. To Shaw, social progress is based on every individual's self-improvement. So it is prerequisite for man to change himself in order to move society forward and to bring forth social progress. Shaw stresses his view of social progress in relation to human improvement in 'The Revolutionist Handbook' of Man and Superman:

Whilst Man remains what he is, there can be no progress beyond the point already attained and fallen headlong from at every attempt at civilization; and since even that point is but a pinnacle to which a few people cling in giddy terror above an abyss of squalor, mere progress should no longer charm us.

According to Shaw, all human beings are the products of the life force, not yet completed, but still advancing toward completion. This can be achieved only when they are working for the higher purpose of the universe. As a result, the "goodness of the society can be attained as a by-product of man's working for an object higher than one's own goodness and happiness". In this regard, real social progress can be achieved only through every individual's evolution based on vital force into a godhead.

One of the ways in which Shaw's thought differed was that Shaw envisioned the aim of social reform as the foundation of the evolutionary process, rather than one of spiritual redemption. Shaw's views on the religion of the future are expressed in the final play of the Back to Methuselah cycle entitled, 'As Far as Thought can Reach' and in a later series of dramatic sketches called Farfetched Fables. "[I] go back to the legend of the Garden of Eden. I exploit the external interest of the philosopher's stone which enables men to live for ever. I am not, I hope, under more illusion than is humanly inevitable as to my contribution to

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64 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 236.
the scriptures of Creative Evolution". Shaw believed that man could be able to improve himself and to live longer beyond the enemy of not only poverty but death through the constant process of creative evolution.

As a whole, Shaw’s vision of social progress is the change from a closed society to an open one. And this can be possible only when man changes his attitude toward life from a personal, narrow one, to an altruistic open one. The life force operates within man as the inner vital force. The life force makes man explore his potentiality and live a better life by virtue of his self-improvement. And each man’s self-improvement brings forth the improvement of human life as a whole and subsequent social progress. As a result, man’s self-improvement embraces the universal significance. Shaw develops his idea of the life force as a driving force for the improvement of the human world. In fulfilling man’s better life through his self-improvement, the life force in man is the vital source. The life force, moving onward and upward, prompts man to make every effort for a better life.

Shaw’s new vision, the actual progress of the life force, will be examined through his plays in the following chapters in detail. In the plays it will be possible to trace how vigorously religious ideas are reflected and developed in Shaw’s works and ultimately his thoughts through analysing plots, action, characters and conflicts of the plays, both structurally and thematically.

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Chapter 2 The Shavian Debate on the Victorian Contemporaries

In order to understand many of the literary details in the work of Shaw, it is necessary to look at certain contemporary writers such as George Eliot, Samuel Butler, Henri Bergson, August Strindberg, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Sir F. Galton, Ibsen, J-B. de Lamarck and P. B. Shelley (even though both were died before Shaw was born, it is evident for them to influence Shaw’s thoughts and plays) in terms of preliminary considerations. It is because much of what happened in Shaw’s thoughts and plays cannot be explained in isolation from the Victorian context.

For the survey of the early sources of Shaw’s religious and social attitudes, the Victorian background must be outlined. Unlike the dependence on God in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in the Victorian period human scepticism of God’s existence spread widely, and new scientific knowledge appeared to contradict existing Christian beliefs. The existing Christian beliefs based on the horror of sin generated doubt and skepticism and ultimately atheism. What happened in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was significant for Christian religion. The impact of science in the early Victorian period in England caused religious crises, which provoked widespread cynicism about the creeds of traditional Christianity. During the period the value of science was highly regarded. This critical debate on religious and social thoughts emerged in the precarious atmosphere of Victorian society. Through the Victorian era the spirit of science permeated literature in every department. “The very pervasiveness and variety of religious experience in Victorian literature is a sign of its importance in the culture at large and, from one perspective, of its vitality”¹. Most of the Victorian writers took account of the religious dimension in their works. Passmore wrote of the emerging doubt about existing religion:

The main tendency of nineteenth-century thought was towards the conclusion that both ‘things’ and facts about things are dependent for their existence upon the operations of a mind... None of [the main] writers was prepared explicitly and

consistently to assert that facts are merely recognized by the mind, not made by it. And in this refusal they were seconded in the genetic science - biology, psychology, anthropology - which flourished in the nineteenth century as never before.²

As this quotation shows, it is almost certain that scientific debate on existing Christian religion in relation to the intellectual tradition of philosophy and scientific evolution in the Victorian society spread widely among contemporaries. In other words, men's lives are controlled not by the providence of the Christian deity but by individual’s free will and value in human experience itself. It is well to stress that the Victorian period was a time of powerful confidence in science and scientific thinking as the main key to considering and solving the problems of life.

Because of the influence of the scientific discovery as expressed in Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* published in 1859, the sceptical view of religion was becoming widespread. After Darwin’s evolutionary theory of human origins, scientific paradigms became increasingly central in other fields of human behaviour and thought and even instructed the social dimension of religious life itself. Shaw reflects the prevailing Victorian ideas of science and intellectual traditions. Shaw’s account of his new religion is found as his response to scientific thinking against the outdated doctrines among which he lived. Shaw’s unorthodox views on religious matters are widely spread over many of his prefaces, lectures, and plays. Shaw was particularly familiar with the influence of science in the nineteenth century. He accepted the intellectual dilemmas of his own century and added his own viewpoint of the age:

It flashed on me then for the first time that the conflict between Religion and Science, the overthrow of the Bible, the higher education of women, Mill on Liberty, and all the rest of the storm that raged around Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, and the rest, on which I had brought myself up intellectually, were a mere middle-class business. Suppose it could have produced a nation of Matthew Arnolds and George Eliots!... You may well shudder.³

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³ Bernard Shaw, quoted in Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the...*
Darwin's epoch-making investigation of evolutionary theory, titled *The Origin of Species*, influenced not only scientific fields but also almost every great issue in philosophy, ethics and religion. The existing thoughts and religious view were challenged and attacked in a new light because of *The Origin of Species*. *The Origin of Species* changed people's conception of the world beyond biological implications. *The Origin of Species* caused the conflict between science and religion in the nineteenth century. As Walker says, it is certain that "in the whole history of science there is no better example than that afforded by *The Origin of Species* of the patient piling up of facts, observations and thoughts".4

Shaw's concept of evolutionism was influenced by Darwinism. Shaw recounted that "I had been caught by the great wave of scientific enthusiasm which was then passing over Europe as a result of the discovery of Natural Selection by Darwin".5 However, Shaw gradually rejected Darwin's theory of evolution. It should be pointed out that Shaw's interest in Darwinism has very little to do with its evolutionary aspect except perhaps in a very broad and universal sense. For Shaw, Darwin's evolutionism and natural selection based in a fully indiscriminate random process were too mechanistic, deterministic and purposeless. For Darwin's answer to the personification in his idea of natural selection, he states in *The Origin of Species*:

'It has been said that I speak of natural selection as an active power of Destiny... Everyone knows what is meant and is implied by such metaphorical expressions... So again it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature. I mean by Nature, only the aggregate action and product of many laws, and by the sequence of events as ascertained by us."6

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In the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw wrote

Darwin was given an imposing reputation as discoverer and founder of Evolution when he had really only sidetracked it by shewing that many of its developments can be accounted for by what he called Natural Selection, meaning that instead of being evolved to fulfil some vital purpose they were the aimless and promiscuous results of external material pressures and accidents leading to the survival of the fittest to survive under such circumstances. With, of course, the extinction of the unfit.7

Even though Shaw was influenced by Darwin’s evolutionary theory, he emphasised man’s spontaneous will to improve rather than the mechanistic implications of natural selection. Shaw is obviously not interested in mechanistic and materialistic changes which give the appearance of superficial progress. Shaw attacked Darwin’s theory of evolutionism with “the lecture on the 23rd March in the prophets of the Nineteenth Century series... on Darwin”:

The horror of this conception would have caused its repudiation had it not been for the worship of Jehovah, a Jewish idol who was supposed to have designed the world and whose attributes were of so low an order morally that belief in him was no longer endurable. The world embraced Darwinism because it explained the world without reference to Jehovah, and shewed that the apparent cruelties of nature were not the work of an almighty fiend, and had, in fact, no moral significance whatever. Marxism, a similar intellectual product to Darwinism, overthrew the idolatry of the capitalist respectable man, and was welcomed on that account, just as Darwinism overthrew Jehovah. But when Darwinism and Marxism have done you that service, you have to get rid of them both in order to recover your spiritual energy and political initiative; for a doctrine that reduces men to flies on the wheel of Natural Selection or the Evolution of Capitalism is deadly to the human mind. An active Socialism would be absurd if we did not believe that humanity would develop by its own will even if the operation of Natural Selection were entirely suspended. In fact, our work is largely to defeat Natural Selection, and give free play to the Lamarckian process.8

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As is revealed in the passage quoted above, Shaw rather believed Lamarckian philosophical salvation that life would strive by its own efforts toward higher forms. He proclaimed Lamarckian evolutionary process through his plays, particularly in *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw conceived of the concept of the inherent purposefulness of life, creative evolution. Shaw meant to portray the process of life as the creative evolutionists understood it. As Shaw advocates, Lamarckism emphasises that human beings can be improved by exposure to better conditions and goes beyond this. To Shaw, the Darwinian struggle for existence had to be replaced by purposeful and creative process for creative evolution. The writing of *Back to Methuselah* is directly related to Shaw’s reaction to Darwin’s work. Shaw’s evolutionary theories focus not only on the religious/scientific areas, but also on the political and economic ones. According to Shaw, to Darwin, “civilization was an organism evolving irresistibly by circumstantial selection”.9 However, to Shaw, Darwin’s natural selection was not the central element in the conflict over ideas about human creation and destination. According to Shaw, Darwin’s natural selection cannot explain an ultimate role for humanity because life is a metaphysical and primal process. Shaw continuously argued that

Darwin was an industrious naturalist... who traced the part played in Evolution by accident chance variation, and pressure of circumstances co-operating with the simple appetites of reproduction and alimentation. The Evolutionists before Darwin, notably Lamarck, had in effect made the will of the evolving organism the main and direct factor in the process. Lamarck’s theory, in fact, came to this: that you acquired a function and its organ by wanting and trying... Darwin showed that the existence of organs wonderfully adapted to perform their functions may conceivably have been brought about without any purpose or design, by the accumulation of chance variations favorable [sic] to survival, and by such simple volitions as hunger and sex appetite. In Butler’s phrase, he “banished mind from the universe”, and shewed that the world might have developed without design, purpose, aspiration, or intellectual

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Darwin himself seemed to understand the evolutionary progress of organisms for better adaptation in a functional sense rather than moral one. He wrote:

Main conclusion that man is descended from some lower form- Manner of development - Genealogy of man - Intellectual and moral faculties- sexual selection- concluding remarks... Men tend to increase at a great rate than his means of subsistence; consequently he is occasionally subjected to a severe struggle for existence, and natural selection will have effected whatever lies within its scope.11

Shaw remarked in the preface to Back to Methuselah: if the theory of Darwin’s natural selection were true, “only fools and rascals could bear to be alive”. Shaw’s creative evolution reifies nature’s will to make more complicated and more conscious life forms. Shaw developed his own religion, creative evolution including metaphysical implications based on a concept of life force. Creative evolution is considered as a natural law in terms of its relationship with the life force. There is no absolute good or evil in the tenets of creative evolution. To Shaw, religion is not limited to a specific creed or a metaphysical faith or a spiritual redemption. Joad has rightly recognized the universal nature of Shaw’s religion when he defined it as “a doctrine of the purpose and meaning of human life”.12 In the preface to Back to Methuselah Shaw explained what he thought:

I knew that civilization needs a religion as a matter of life or death; and as the conception of Creative Evolution developed I saw that we were at last within reach of a faith which complied with the first condition of all religious that have ever taken hold of humanity: namely, that it must be, first and fundamentally, a science of 

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metabiology... Evolution shews us this direction of vitality doing all sorts of things: providing the centipede with a hundred legs, and ridding the fish of any legs at all; building lungs and arms for the land and gills and fins for the sea; enabling the mammal to gestate its young inside its body, and the fowl to incubate hers outside it; offering us, we may say, our choice of any sort of bodily contrivance to maintain our activity and increase our resources.\textsuperscript{13}

Shaw's account asserts that "historical evolution was neither a mechanical process of adaptation in the Darwinian sense, nor something subject to artificial acceleration through such social organizations".\textsuperscript{14} Darwin's circumstantial selection put everything to chance; it left no room for an organizing principle or for the existence of purposeful will. For Darwin, any improvement does manifest itself by accident. Life is thus reduced to a desperate struggle simply for existence.

Darwinian proclaimed that our true relations is that of competitors and combatants in a struggle for mere survival, and that every act of pity or loyalty to the old fellowship is a vain and mischievous attention to lessen the severity of the struggle and preserve inferior varieties from the efforts of Nature to weed them out.\textsuperscript{15}

In the preface to \textit{Back to Methuselah}, Shaw presents the logical outgrowth of the evolutionary thinking that had been in wide circulation long before Darwin. Shaw moved away from the pure theory of Darwinism to his belief in a life force focusing on each human being's free will and higher purpose. With evolution based on the creative will, with the life force, improvement becomes inevitable through man's conscious efforts to advance himself. Even though Shaw opposed Darwin's aimless mechanistic evolutionary theory for fitness to survive, his religion, creative evolution, is modeled on the work of Darwin's discovery.

In George Eliot's novels, she also dealt profoundly with religious

\textsuperscript{13} Shaw, \textit{Back to Methuselah}, pp. 14, 61.


\textsuperscript{15} Shaw, \textit{Back to Methuselah}, p. 41.
conflict. She rejected orthodoxy completely and turned to the spiritual and religious values in human experience itself. She believed in moral evolution as the first step of a new faith in the capacity of mankind for continuous growth:

> The great conception of universal regular sequence without partiality of caprice - the conception which is the most potent force at work in the modification of our faith, and of the practical forms given to our sentiments - could only grow out of that patient watching of external fact and that silencing of pre-conceived notions, which are urged upon the mind by the problems of physical science.\(^\text{16}\)

Eliot contended profoundly with religious conflict and was moved to question Christian orthodoxy. Finally she rejected the Christian orthodoxy completely and reverted to the spiritual and religious values of the individual experiences themselves. Instead, Eliot valued the morality of human beings related to in the capacity of mankind for continuous growth rather than faith in outdated doctrine. She emphasised a moral law pursuing a secularized humanism and giving the individual freedom to determine their way in intent and purpose. She shared the atmosphere of her days and expected for the future advancement of society the individual would contribute to a contemporary social organism. Knoepflmacher asserts the “important aspects of her thought which went into the making of her novels: her scientific positivism, her ‘humanization’ of Christianity”.\(^\text{17}\) In George Eliot’s novels, scientific principles rather than religious belief become the main basis for her quest to reveal the truth about human nature and behaviour. As Knoepflmacher points out, “her... novels are a testing ground for some of the scientific assumptions of her contemporaries”.\(^\text{18}\)

Eliot explores psychological and spiritual dimensions of human beings in the nineteenth century. She tries to offer a religious answer to the questions in the form of humanism based of English realism.

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Naturally she presents moral questions which arise from the bondage of human life in their various social relationships. She seems to explore in the course of the search for relationships the common happiness of the individuals through love.

The plots of her novels are on the whole extremely entertaining and absorbing, though the themes are very profound and significant. According to her view of life, the individual is doomed to be a social being as soon as he is born in a human society, and the rest of his life is the process of how he goes through various stages of human interaction. In this sense Eliot's primary concern is how an individual interacts with other individuals and how the human beings are related to their environment. In such a context, Eliot always presents characters whose ideal is to help each other, love each other. Eliot's characters are always thrown into the merciless world of agony, frustration, unhappiness, alienation and even death. This is the point of her moral theme in which human beings realize ultimately their love and moral obligation through the common fate of human existence.

Within this background Eliot's humanism is based on the conflicts that arise between the individual's universal egoism and his unselfish duty toward his society. Eliot suggests that the evolution of human nature can be achieved only when the individual transcends egoism and develops sympathy and compassion. Therefore the morality which becomes the main cornerstone of her art is a morality dependent on the behaviour of responsible individuals. Her novels held man to a moral law while giving him freedom to determine his way. For example, one of her greatest novels, *Adam Bede*, is a story of causal patterns in human relations such as those found in nature. The disaster of Hetty can be related to the invariability of scientific sequence based on human experience beyond traditional ethical and religious values. In Eliot's vision of the operation of universal principles, Adam is morally rectified and spiritually nurtured by all of the human grief and misery around him, not by the dogmatic assertions of institutional religion. If one goes on with a loving mind, one will eventually achieve happiness in human society. In other words, by following the evolution of human nature, the development of ideal society, ideal nation, and ideal world will be obtained sometime. As Knoepflmacher asserts, "Evolutionism confirmed her in the empiricist
position she was to maintain for the remainder of her life, but also sharpened her urgent need of imposing a new moral order".19

Even though both Eliot and Shaw suggest the evolution of human nature as an essential element, Eliot’s humanism does not seem to be relevant to Shaw’s. While Eliot emphasises the importance of human love to each other rather than that of the conventional deity, Shaw emphasises that of the human will of the evolutionary process for the solving the current problem. Even though there are some contrasts between them, Eliot and Shaw had similarities in their works intending humanism throughout the individual’s free will and the vision of social progress as dramatic materials.

Whereas the writers of the eighteenth century tried to harmonise science and religion, influential Victorian writers such as George Eliot and Samuel Butler were inspired by humanism, scientism and aesthetic movement. Unlike George Eliot, Butler moved from Darwinian science to his own vitalist faith evolutionism, which was to be inherited and clarified by Shaw. Shaw was indebted to Butler for a number of his ideas on religion. Evans notes that “He[Shaw] acknowledges his debt, first to Lamarck and then to Samuel Butler, for his doctrine of creative evolution”.20 Joad emphasises that “… [for] the theory of Creative Evolution… Butler may in a very real sense be regarded as a precursor”.21 Shaw himself insisted that his religious philosophy was the creation of his own mind. The ideas of Butler and Shaw are similar enough to suggest that their religious philosophy grew out of their radical dissatisfaction with orthodox Christianity. Butler took Jean- Baptiste de Lamarck’s view that characteristics can be acquired and inherited.

In comparison with Darwinism, the Lamarckian approach seems to focus on the same biological progression of organisms exhibiting ever-increasing biological complexity. In 1809 Lamarck published his famous work, Philosophie Zoologique (translated into Zoological Philosophy in 1914) developing his theory of transmutation. His theory explains

19 Ibid., p. 29.
as a process of increasing complexity and perfection not driven by chance. He wrote:

Nature, in producing in succession every species of animal and beginning with the least perfect or simplest to end her work with the most perfect, has gradually complicated their structure... time and favorable conditions are the two principal means which nature has employed in giving existence to all her productions. We know that for her time has no limit and that consequently she always has it at her disposal.  

As a botanist and zoologist Lamarck insisted that each individual strives to advance and to adapt during its life time and that attributes accomplished were inherited by its offspring from generation to generation. For his evolutionary theory, he refutes mechanistic exercises, he rather believed that it was followed up by a desire/will for alteration in each generation. For Lamarck’s answer to the personification in his idea of transmutation, he wrote in his foreword to Zoological Philosophy,

as nature comes to create, one after the other, the different specialized organs and also to increase more and more the complexity of organ structures, the animal acquires different special faculties according to the degree of that complexity, faculties which, in the most perfect among them, are numerous and very strongly marked... I recognized that nature, obliged at first to borrow from the environmental surroundings the stimulating power for vital movements and actions in imperfect animals, was capable, when creating animals of increasing complexity, of bringing this power right inside these creatures, and that finally she succeeded in putting this same power at the disposal of the individual... thus this Philosophical Zoology presents the result of my studies of animals, their general and particular characteristics, their organic structure, the causes of their developments and diversity, and the faculties they have acquired from it.  


23 Ibid., p. xiii.
Lamarck emphasises in his theory: the organic, inherent desire of living things to improve themselves as the essential feature: "Lamarck, who, whilst making many ingenious suggestions as to the reactions of eternal causes on life and habit... really held as his fundamental proposition that living organisms changed because they wanted to". Lamarck allowed for the existence of the will, or the evolutionary appetite for improvement. In other words, Lamarckian philosophy emphasises that human beings can be improved by exposure to better conditions and goes beyond this. According to Lamarck, improvement can be inherited over a series of generations.

Unlike Darwin's view of evolution, Lamarck's evolutionary application emphasises environmental reasons and individual needs as essential elements. In Lamarckian views of evolution, biological determinism was regarded as the central element of the process of human development. Therefore, this highlighted the role of education and social reform. His ideas of evolution was becoming influential among intellectuals for the purpose of social reform in the period of the nineteenth century. Butler developed the work of Lamarck into his theory of evolution, believing that species change and adapt to their environment not merely fortuitously but purposively, and that these changes could be preceded from generation to generation.

For Lamarckism, life itself is seen as purposeful and creative. Life becomes an active force in nature. Thus, then is connection between the conceptions of Lamarckism and Bergson's creative evolution, which directly leads to Shaw's religion of creative evolution. This theory of evolution was to be inherited and clarified by Shaw. Shaw wrote, "I call special attention to Lamarck, who, whilst making many ingenious suggestions as to the reaction of external cause on life and habit, such as changes of climate, food supply, geological upheavals and so forth, really held as his fundamental proposition that living organisms change because they want to". Shaw defended Lamarckism as an essential bulwark in a far more positive philosophy against materialism. Shaw found Lamarck's theory an agreeable alternative since it allowed him to construct an

24 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 16.
25 Ibid.
evolutionary philosophy in which science and philosophical idealism remained compatible. Shaw was a leading advocate of Lamarckism through his plays, particularly in *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah*, proclaiming Lamarckian philosophical salvation that life would strive by its own efforts toward higher forms.

Butler wrote a number of articles and four books on the theory of evolution: *Life and Habit* (1878), *Evolution Old and New* (1879), *Unconscious Memory* (1880), and *Luck or Cunning* (1887). Through these books, Butler attacked Darwinism and set out his ideas on evolution. "I confess that I do not like the thought of his... for it has resolved itself into a downright attack upon view of evolution, and a defense of what I believe to be Lamarck’s... As for ‘natural selection’, frankly it now seems to me a rope of sand as in any way accounting for the *Origin of Species*".26 Butler made a decision in favor of Lamarck. Butler developed his view on evolution particularly in his *Life and Habit*. Butler thought his view on evolution was learnt by Lamarck. In *Life and Habit* Butler introduced a neo-Lamarckian theory of evolution introducing a teleological view of development. He wrote,

> It will be our business in the following chapters to consider whether the unconsciousness or quasi-unconsciousness, with which we perform certain acquired actions would seem to throw any light upon Embryology and inherited instincts, and otherwise to follow the train of thought which the class of actions above-mentioned would suggest; more especially in so far as they appear to bear upon the origin of species and the continuation of life by successive generations whether in the animal or vegetable kingdoms.27

Also he disseminated his concept of purposive evolution and published a science fiction novel, embodying his own evolution theory, titled *Erewhon* (1872), which moved from Darwinism and establishes an evolution theory that leads to Shaw’s Life Force. Shaw and Butler who


could not bear the thought of a mindless and completely materialistic universe such as that proposed by the Darwinian theory of natural selection. Shaw wrote, “Darwinism has been acting not only directly but homeopathically, its poison rallying our vital forces not only to resist it and can’t it out, but to achieve a new reformation and put a credible and healthy religion in its place. Samuel Butler was the pioneer of the reaction as far as the casting out was concerned”.28 It seems that “It was Samuel Butler who thawed that first tiny hole in the icy crust of Victorian morality, through which were soon to pour the floods of Shavian invective”.29 Shaw developed his theory of the life force, based on the theory of evolution of Butler, as his deity and creative evolution as his new religion. Shaw called Samuel Butler “that man of genius... [and] the greatest exponent of the reaction against the materialism of Marx and Darwin”.30

Butler opposed the doctrines and supernaturalism of Christianity. Butler can be considered one of the discriminating and most momentous critics of Christianity in modern times. “Butler was hailed as a ‘modern’ iconoclast who dared to clear his era of ‘English Victorian rubbish’”.31 He wrote about the Divinity of Christian religion, “as our expression for Men’s highest conception of goodness, wisdom and power”.32 Butler also criticised conventional pious people;

I have since met with many very godly people who have had a great knowledge of divinity, but no sense of the Divine: and again, I have seen a radiance upon the face of those who were worshipping the Divine either in art or nature- in picture or status -in field or cloud or sea- in man, woman, or child- which I have never seen kindled by any talking about the nature and attributes of God. Mention but the word divinity, and

28 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 51.
29 Joad, Samuel Butler., p. 16.
our sense of the Divine is clouded.\footnote{33}

In his Utopian work *Erewhon*, he disseminates his view on Christian supernaturalism and presents how absolute theology and religion is made up out of Higgs’ escape from Erewhon in a balloon. Higgs, the hero of *Erewhon* is considered the founder of a new religion, Sunchildism and Divine by the Erewhonians. In “The Musical Banks” in *Erewhon*, Butler levelled at Christian hypocrisy and ethical dualism as for the most part a fraud and a sham. Yet in spite of his criticism of Christianity, he said in *Erewhon Revisited*, “better a corrupt Church than none at all”.\footnote{34} Unlike the majority of nineteenth-century critics, he did feel that Christianity is better than nothing for the modern religion. In the preface to *Erewhon Revisited*, he wrote that “If I may be allowed for a moment to speak about myself, I would say that I have never ceased to profess myself a member of the more advanced wing of the English Broad Church. What those who belong to this wing believe, I believe. What they reject, I reject”\footnote{35}

In *Erewhon Revisited*, Butler makes clear that man is the only highest form of life since he possesses a mind. His religious ideals are the manifestations of God’s will asserting itself towards a richer and better life. According to him, “It is all very well for mischievous writers to maintain that we cannot serve God and Mammon. Granted that it is not easy, but nothing that is worth doing ever is easy... The true laws of God are the laws of our own well-beings”.\footnote{36} In *Erewhon*, Butler had expressed his belief in the importance of acquired habit and his faith in a vital principle. The country of “Erewhon” satirically means “Nowhere” with a double function. It attacks the convention of Victorian society and the Anglican Church of nineteenth-century England worshipping blind conventionality. Through *Erewhon*, Butler presents his religious evolutionism and depicts an idealized Utopia by hero, Higgs.

Shaw’s criticism of orthodox religion in the nineteenth century is

\footnote{34} Butler, *Erewhon Revisited*, p. 221.  
generally similar to that of Butler. Like Butler, Shaw was opposed to Christian supernaturalism. Shaw’s attack on Christian Orthodoxy was apparent in the substitution of his new religion. Like Butler, Shaw regarded Christianity as hypocrisy and ethical dualism. In “the Revolutionist’s Handbook” in *Man and Superman*, Shaw wrote,

> The Christian doctrine of the uselessness of punishment and the wickedness of revenge has not, in spite of its simple common sense, found a single convert among the nations: Christianity means nothing to the masses but a sensational public execution which is made an excuse for other executions.37

Shaw did not believe in original sin: he could not accept the view that “the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked”.38 Instead he agreed with his contemporaries that the human race was capable of further perfection, such perfection could be achieved only by a change in man’s nature, and thus he tried to encourage man’s religious sense for further growth and development through evolution. Butler and Shaw reject the doctrines and the creeds of Christianity. Henderson wrote: “Shaw... left to mankind a new religion with a Bible thrown in for good measure. This Bible embodies Shaw’s philosophy of the Life Force”.39 As Butler did, Shaw refused the Darwinian conception of evolution as a fortuitous world of natural selection, and the doctrines of Christianity. Instead, he believed that man could reach a godlike race with purposive creative force.

Shaw assented to what Butler believed that morality served useful purpose in society. Shaw asserted that morality was very valuable to society: “It imposes conventional conduct on the great mass of people who are incapable of original ethical judgment, and who would be quite lost if they were not in leading-strings devised by law-givers, philosophers, prophets, and poets for their guidance”.40 Rather, Shaw

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emphasised the intellectual activity of men. He declares in the preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*:

What is wrong with priests and popes is that instead of being apostles and saints, they are nothing but empirics who say 'I know' instead of 'I am learning,' and pray for credulity and inertia as wise men pray for scepticism and activity. Such abominations as the Inquisition and the Vaccination Acts are possible only in the famine years of the soul, when the great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life, faith that the unknown is greater than the known and is only the As Yet Unknown, and resolution to find a manly highway to it, have been forgotten in a paroxysm of littleness and terror in which nothing is active except concupiscence and the fear of death.41

Such of Shaw's characters as Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Dick Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple* and Joan in *Saint Joan* possess “the great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage”.42 They are all unconventional realists, rebellious against established codes of morality, wilful and efficient in carrying out their plans. Through these characters, Shaw depicted unconventionality and heroic rebelliousness in the society. In Shaw's terms, they are religious men: “Any man of honor is a religious man... What I mean by a religious person is one who conceives himself or herself to be the instrument of some purpose in the universe which is a high purpose, and is the native power of evolution... that is, of a continual agent in organization and power and life, and extension of life”.43 For Shaw, it was clear that the religious desire was the instrument of some purpose.

Like Shaw, Butler rejects the god of orthodox Christianity. He proclaims that the orthodox conception of God is self-conscious and personal. Butler asserts that “God is God to us only so long as we cannot

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42 Ibid.

This lecture was delivered to The Heretic Society, Cambridge, 29 May 1911
see him... All these living beings are members one of another and of God". For Shaw, he asserted that such a God of Christianity is “either an Almighty fiend... or a sentimental dupe”. As he says in the preface to Back to Methuselah:

We do not now demand from a religion that it shall explain the universe completely in terms of cause and effect, and present the world to us as a manufactured article and as the private property of its manufacturer... It is as easy for me to believe that the universe made itself as that a maker of the universe made himself: in fact much easier; for the universe visibly exists and makes itself as it goes along, whereas a maker for it is a hypothesis.

Instead, Shaw believed that the universe was being driven by the life force. Therefore the life force is the deity existing in all human beings. He insists the godhead evolved gradually and continuously until it became man in the life force working preeminently in him. In a sense, as Bailey points out, “Shaw’s life force is not a food, but in Methuselah it effects intellectual and spiritual growth”. Henderson wrote, “[The life force will] produce something more complicated than Man, that is, Superman; then... the Angel, the Archangel, and last of all the omnipotent and omniscient God”. Both Butler and Shaw believed that man is the instrument and the only means of the life force in reality, carrying on the work of the vital force to bring the next generation into the world, by which the life force could fulfil the purpose of life namely the aim of the universe:

Needing eyes and hands and brain for the fulfillment of its purpose, it evolves them. We are its brains and eyes and hands. It is not an omnipotent power that can do things without us; it has created us in order that we might do its work. In fact, that is the

44 Butler, Erewhon Revisited, pp. 151-52.  
48 Henderson, George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century, p. 772.

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way it does its work — through us. When you get this conception of the universe you become religious; you perceive that this thing people have always called God is something in yourself, as Jesus is reported to have said.49

To carry on the work of the life force for human society, “Great power and greater knowledge [are essential]: these are what we are all pursuing even at the risk of our lives and the sacrifice of our pleasures. Evolution is that pursuit and nothing else. It is the path to godhead. A man differs from a microbe only in being further on the path”.50 Shaw asserts that in pursuing this quality of greatness, man could become “superman and then super-superman, and then a world of organisms who have achieved and realised God”.51 Shaw does have a vision of man in the universe and that vision constitutes the essence of his own religion. Shaw, unlike Butler, conceives of a final cause for the evolutionary process, that is, he envisions a magnificent destiny and an ultimate purpose for the evolutionary process. Shaw believes that if man can control his evolutionary development, man can improve himself. Above all things, the primacy of the individual, creative over the environment and the dominance of mind over matter is Butler’s most important contribution to Shaw’s evolutionary thought.

Shaw’s theory of creative evolution and that of the well-known French philosopher Henri Bergson were congenial in terms of a dynamic view of life. Bergson’s four principal works are Time and Free Will (1889), Matter and Memory (1896), Creative Evolution (1907) and The Two Sources of Morality and Religion (1932). The term “Creative Evolution” is the title of Bergson’s 1907 treatise L’ Evolution Creative. Bergson’s Creative Evolution explains the continuity of all living beings as creatures and for the discontinuity implied in the evolutionary quality of this creation. Creative Evolution was considered as the main challenge to the mechanistic view of nature. In relation to his metaphysical view, Bergson wrote that “Philosophy introduces us into spiritual life. And at the same time, it shows us the relation of the life of spirit to the life of

50 Shaw, Back to The Methuselah, p. 74.
51 Ibid., p. 35.
Bergson rejects the Darwinian concept of natural selection as the creative urge. In *Creative Evolution*, which contains Bergson's theory of creative evolution in its most complete form, he argued that man's intellect has developed in the course of evolution as an instrument of survival. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson insisted,

consequently, our intellect triumphs in geometry, wherein is revealed the kinship of logical thought with unorganized matter, and where the intellect has only to follow its natural movement, after the lightest possible contact with experience, in order to go from discovery to discovery, sure that experience is following behind it and will justify it invariably... It will be said that, even so, we do not transcend our intellect, for it is still with our intellect, and through our intellect, that we see the other forms of consciousness. And this would be right if we were pure intellects, if there did not remain, around our conceptual and logical thought, a vague nebulosity, made of the very substance out of which has been formed the luminous nucleus that we call the intellect.53

According to Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, life must be equated with creation. To him, creativity alone can adequately account for both the continuity of life and the discontinuity of the products of evolution. Bergson explained that moral progress is dependent upon the appearance of mystics and saints who raise humanity. Among them, the life force is the paramount common denominator of constantly changing organisms, which seek further development. Bergson's thought is more metaphysical rather than social. He objected to the mechanistic concept of life and evolution yet, he accepted that man was made up of physicochemical elements through the scientific method as a means of matter. Bergson says what drives life onward and forward is a force which he calls the *Elan Vital*, vital impetus. Bergson's vital impulse is "unceasing life, action, freedom [and a] centre from which the worlds shoot out like

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53 Ibid., pp. ix- xii.
rockets in a fireworks display". \(^{54}\)

According to Bergson, vital impulse, what he calls the *elan vital*, is the essential element in the evolutionary process which drives all organisms towards constantly more complicated and higher levels of organization. Like Shaw, Bergson believes in a life force or *elan vital*. In this regard, Shaw wrote,

> Bergson is the established philosopher of my sect, I set myself down as a Creative Evolutionist... the operation of a natural agency which the Churches call Providence and the scientist phlogiston, Functional Adaptation, Natural Selection, ... I have called it the Life Force and the Evolutionary Appetite. Bergson called it the *Elan Vitale*... They all come to the same thing: a mysterious drive towards greater power over our circumstances and deeper understanding of Nature. \(^{55}\)

The *elan vital* provides the vital impulse that continuously shapes all life. For Bergson, the vital impulse is the key to a proper understanding of evolution. This creative force as it manifests itself in man is part of a universal vital impulse. He believed that the vital impetus is transmitted from generation to generation. Nevertheless, he did not believe that acquired characteristics are transmitted. According to him, all life originates from the same source, but manifests itself in a completely different form. Bergson sees evolution is "not only a movement forward, in many cases, we observed a marking time, and still more often a deviation or turning back". \(^{56}\) In short, there is no final cause for evolution in Bergson's thought. In Bergson's conception of a world, there is a psychological force in the process of evolution, and a common effort on the part of the individual organisms. On this point Bergson wrote,

> Our thought, in its purely logical form, is incapable of presenting the true nature of life, the full meaning of the evolutionary movement. Created by life, in definite

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 271.


circumstances, to act on definite things, how can it embrace life, of which it is only an emanation or an aspect? Deposited by the evolutionary movement in the course of its way, how can it be applied to the evolutionary movement itself?... In fact, we do indeed feel that not one of the categories of our thought-unity, multiplicity, mechanical causality, intelligent finality, etc. — applied exactly to the things of life: who can say where individuality begins and ends, whether the living being is one or many, whether it is the cells which associate themselves into the organism or the organism which dissociates itself into cells? In vain we force the living into this or that one of our molds. All the molds crack... And most often, when experience has finally shown us how life goes to work to obtain a certain result, we find its way of working is just that of which we should never have thought.57

There are some similarities of thought between Shaw and Bergson. Both believed that life evolves into higher and higher forms. In Bergson’s evolutionary theory, man is the highest point of evolution and the most important of the evolutionary forms. However, even though he admits the possibility of a superman, he cannot believe that there is a human progress in terms of evolutionary direction. His evolution suggests that the end of life is the multiplication of forms.

Bergon’s anti-intellectual ideas on vital force was different from that of Shaw. Unlike Shaw, Bergson emphasised the development of man’s intuition. By contrast, Shaw’s idea of evolution based on vital force emphasised an intellectual evolutionary process. Compared with Shaw’s evolutionary ideas, that of Bergson is relativist. He insists that “the main lines of evolution along which life has traveled by the side of that which has led to the human intellect. The intellect is thus brought back to its generating cause, which we then have to grasp in itself and follow in its movement”.58 He admitted life is repetition and permanence of mechanism. He wrote, “we try on the evolutionary progress the two ready-made garments that our understanding puts at our disposal, mechanism and finality”.59 Therefore, there is no progress in relation to the idea of evolution. To him, the purpose of life is the multiplication of

57 Ibid., p. x.
58 Ibid., p. xv.
59 Ibid., p. xiv.
individual forms. Bergson did not regard life as a continuous process.

Bergson's anti-intellectuality implies that the end toward which the 
elan vital directs itself would resemble Butler's ideal of the instinctive 
rather than Shaw's. Bergson's force is immanent in the individual and yet 
transcending it. Shaw's evolutionary theory holds that a universal 
consciousness was seeking to fulfil itself in organic life, the Bergsonian 
theme. Bergson believed only intuitive knowledge is valid; the whole 
truth is unknowable as an arrangement of things. According to him, 
"Intellectual knowledge, in so far as it relates to a certain aspect of inert 
matter, ought, on the contrary, to give us a faithful imprint of it, having 
been stereotyped on this particular object. It becomes relative".60 Shaw 
believed with Bergson that change is the constant in the life force's 
unending search for life forms which will serve its purposes.

Bergson's Creative Evolution (1907) and Matter and Memory (1896) 
attempted to integrate the findings of biological science with a theory of 
consciousness. Bergson challenged the mechanistic view of nature and 
anticipated modern scientific theories of the mind. Shaw's theory of 
creative evolution contains scientific theory, yet insisting upon Bergson's 
conception of an evolutionary force effecting the process of the 
individual organisms. The influence of Bergson is stressed in the division 
between life and matter in Shaw's Back to Methuselah. Shaw believes 
along with Bergson that matter is a reality in the process of unmaking 
itself as life evolves into higher and higher forms.

With respect to the idea of vital impetus, Shaw's evolutionary 
thought is remarkably similar to Bergson's. Evans says that "Bergson 
contributed something to his[Shaw's] mythology of the Life Force, which 
proceeds by trial and error in its age-long drive to attain self-
understanding".61 Both Bergson and Shaw objected to the materialistic 
and mechanistic conception of life. They could not accept the idea that 
life cannot be explained solely in terms of physicochemical elements or 
environment, and that evolution was the result of natural causation. They 
put the elan vital and life force as the driving force behind all evolution. 
Unlike Bergson, Shaw emphasised that the hope of evolution was in more

60 Ibid., p. xi.
brains and greater consciousness. He recognizes an intellectual and social
direction for the evolutionary process. For Bergson, the inheritance of
acquired characteristics is denied, however, it is of fundamental
importance to Shaw, for his idea of evolution is inextricably bound up
with the idea of progress. For Bergson, the goal of evolution can be
nothing more than unceasing individuality, "in which reality would be
followed in its generation and its growth".62 In his thought there is no
human progress and specific hope for evolution. This point seems perhaps
the most important difference between the thoughts of Bergson and Shaw.
Whereas, unlike Butler's and Bergson's, Shaw's theory of creative
evolution envisioned an aim for the evolutionary process.

Most importantly, in late Victorian society eugenics became the
basis of social engineering. From the late nineteenth century to the early
twentieth century, eugenics became a definite topic of public discussion
in books and articles. Most intellectual people drew upon biological and
eugenic discourses for practical social and political ends. Understandably,
eugenics was associated with social and political views of the time. As
Stone writes, "the eugenics movement appealed to those who had been
involved with the 'national efficiency' campaign of the turn of the
century".63 In his recent book, Breeding Superman Stone points out the
significance of the relationship between eugenics movement and policy in
each nation.64 He sees the eugenic movement in terms of a racist world
view primarily by the middle classes. As is well known, the eugensics
movement was determined by national background and historical context.
In Britain, class concerns were a major factor behind the ideas of the
eugenics.65 As Stone argues, it seems that the sentiment of patriotism in

63 Dan Stone, "Race in British Eugenics", in European History Quarterly, Vol. 31
64 See, Dan Stone, Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian
and Interwar Britain (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002).
65 For a more detailed discussion, see G. R. Searle, Eugenics and Politics in Britain
1900- 1914 (London: Leyden, 1976), pp. 106- 11, K. Jones, Mental Health and Social
Britain", in Social Studies of Science, Vol. 6 (1976), pp. 499- 532. Mathew Thomson,
relation to the problem of national efficiency unites with the enthusiasm for humanity as to the future direction of man’s social evolution in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The idea of eugenics was first formulated by Sir Francis Galton in 1865 (the term, “eugenics” meaning “good breeding”), and eventually came to encompass the idea of using social policies. Galton’s theory began by studying the way in which human intellectual, moral and personal traits tended to run in families. Galton’s basic argument was that “genius” and “talent” were hereditary traits in humans. In his introduction to the Hereditary Genius (1869), Galton wrote that he expected similar results applying the same principles to human beings by using artificial selection to exaggerate traits as in animals.

I propose to show in this book that a man’s natural abilities are derived by inheritance, under exactly the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world. Consequently, as it is easy, notwithstanding those limitations, to obtain by careful selection a permanent breed of dogs or horses gifted with peculiar powers of running or of doing anything else, so it would be quite practicable to produce a highly-gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations.66

Galton first used the word “eugenic” in his Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development (1883), where he specified that the purpose of the work was “to touch on various topics more or less connected with

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that of the cultivation of race, or, as we might call it, with 'eugenic' questions'.

Galton's formulation of eugenics was based in a strong statistical approach to describe the heredity of traits. Galton believed that with the improvement of the human species through intelligent selection eugenics could be embraced as a religion. His idea of artificial selection took on an almost religious significance. In his autobiography, Memories of My Life (1908), Galton notes: “I take eugenics very seriously feeling that its principles ought to become one of the dominant motives in a civilized nation, as much as if they were one of its religious tenets, I have often expressed myself in this sense”. Galton's ideas of eugenics are shown in four major separate texts, Hereditary Genius (1869), English Men of Science, Their Nature and Nurture (1874), Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development (1883) and Natural Inheritance (1889).

Galton's ideas influenced a larger nineteenth-century scientific development, which was seen as a part of the new scientific faith initiated by Darwin. After reading Darwin's The Origin of Species, Galton was struck with an interpretation of Darwin's work. He wrote,

The publication in 1859 of the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin made a marked epoch in my own mental development, as it did in that of human thought generally. Its effect was to demolish a multitude of dogmatic barriers by a single stroke, and to arouse a spirit of rebellion against all ancient authorities whose positive and

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unauthenticated statements were contradicted by modern science.69

The theories of eugenics were derived from that of Darwinian evolution and selection, and explicitly opposed the Christian ethic of the individual. According to Galton, selection can improve the evolution of human beings by sudden mutations rather than the natural selection of individual variations. Eugenics focused on human selective reproduction with the intent to create children with desirable traits. Galton defines eugenics as

the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had.70

Galton focused on how heredity and the transmission of intelligence and physical traits are manifested in offspring. According to Galton, eugenics was “what an extraordinary effect might be produced on our race if its object was to unite in marriage those who possessed the finest and most suitable natures, moral, and physical!”. 71 Eugenics, through selected breeding, contradicts traditional views of marriage, parentage and human right. Many eugenicists agreed that hereditary influences contributed to the formation of mental ability. Also eugenicists thought that social problems could be resolved through scientific knowledge and intelligent reproduction. Galton’s eugenics took an almost religious significance among contemporaries who thought that the Darwinian struggle for existence could be replaced by an artificial form of selection. However, one of Galton’s Victorian contemporaries, G. K. Chesterton criticised eugenics as unholy in his Eugenics and Other Evils:

There exist today a scheme of action, a school of thought... a thing that can still be

69 Ibid., p. 287.
70 Galton, Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development, p. 25.
71 Galton, Memories of My Life, p. 315.
destroyed, and that ought to be destroyed... I know that it numbers many disciples whose intentions are entirely innocent and humane... but that is only because evil always wins through the strength its stupid dupes; and there has in all ages been a disastrous alliance between abnormal innocence and abnormal sin.72

The Roman Catholic Church was a prominent opponent of eugenics.73 As key figures, Father Thomas Gerrad, G. K. Chesterton, H. Belloc reproached eugenics. As a Roman Catholic Chesterton resisted what eugenicists agreed and believed in condemning eugenics from a Christian, anti-scientistic and anti-industrial point of view. Father Thomas Gerrad of The Catholic Social Guild in Britain commissioned a pamphlet denouncing eugenics. Eugenics was opposed particularly by Catholic Clerics as an attack on the traditional sphere of religious authority because of encouraging sterilization in terms of negative eugenics. The Church denounced eugenics, along with contraception, sex education and sterilization, in the Papal Encyclical on Marriage, Casti Connubii, issued in 1930.

On the contrary, the Fabian socialists were very enthusiastic about Galton's view of eugenics, "the science of improvement of the human race germ plasm through better breeding... [and] the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally".74 They attended the meeting of the Eugenics Education Society.75 Most Fabians, particularly

74 Galton, Memories of My Life, p. 260.
75 The Eugenic Society was founded in 1907 as the Eugenics Education Society and had the publication of its journal, The Eugenics Review from 1909 to an end in 1968 (Vol. 1- 60), with the purpose of promotings to paraphrase Sir Francis Galton, those agencies under social control which might improve the human race. In 1989, the
Shaw, advocated the improvement of the human race through Galtonian selective breeding. Shaw wrote, "The only fundamental and possible socialism is the socialization of the selective breeding of Man: in other terms, of human evolution". Eugenics became widespread and was promoted by the Fabian Society. Beatrice and Sydney Webb argued for birth control in *Fabian Tract*;

In Great Britain at this moment, when half, or perhaps two-thirds of all the married people are regulating their families, children are being freely born to the Irish Roman Catholics and the Polish, Russian and German Jews, the thriftless and irresponsible... This can hardly result in anything but national deterioration... or this country falling to the Irish and the Jews.

Shaw goes even further than this view. For Shaw, eugenics was concerned with the question of the breeding of a single type of superman. Shaw turns his emphasis on breeding "a race of men in whom the life-giving impulses predominate" to cope with the complexities of modern civilization. Shaw accepted Galton's eugenic religion as a supplement to conventional religion:

I believe that if we can drive into the heads of men the full consciousness of moral responsibility that comes to men with the knowledge that there never will be a God unless we make one - that we are the instruments through which that ideal is trying to make itself reality- we can work towards that ideal until we get to be superman, and then super-superman, and then a world of organisms who have achieved and realized God.

To Shaw, socialism and eugenics seem to be inseparable. Also

Society changed its name to the Galton Institute, and shifted the main focus of explorations of heredity in developing countries.

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76 Shaw, *Man and Superman*, p. 245.
79 Shaw, "The Religion of the Future", p. 35..
socialism seems to be a precondition for eugenics. Tanner in *Man and Superman*, explains: “Equality is essential to good breeding; and equality... is incompatible with property”. In the first volume of *The Eugenics Review*, the organ of the newly founded Eugenics Education Society, Mugge argued that “selective mating, can produce equally great results when applied to other higher species, including man”. He also continued that “Eugenics and the Superman are only [a] new formulae for old ideas”. Mugge’s argument seems to relate the ideas of the superman to eugenics.

The higher-men must work towards the Superman, who will be a hero and a genius, uniting in himself all the partial excellences of former heroes- he will be a strong and perfect man, both in body and soul. With this conception Nietzsche may be considered as an ally of Galton, his superman is a poetic dream of the latter’s Eugenics.

Shaw was to some extent sympathetic to this viewpoint, for he accepted the eugenicists’ claims that eugenic breeding was necessary in order to maintain a worthy civilization of the individual. Shaw replied to

the question of eugenics:

I agree with the paper and go so far as to say that there is now no reasonable excuse for refusing to face the fact that nothing but a eugenic religion can save our civilisation from the fate that has overtaken all previous civilisations... what we must fight for is freedom to breed the race without being hampered by the mass of irrelevant conditions implied in the institutions of marriage.\textsuperscript{81}

As is well known, Fabian eugenicists were concerned with the professional middle class. The Fabians took the middle class as their prime reference group. Particularly Shaw's eugenic views on marriage are shown throughout his plays. As Richardson notes, "Galton's idea of improving the human race through rational reproduction had its greatest appeal in the late nineteenth century, as social and sexual ideas were in ferment, and the possibility of a new role for women arose".\textsuperscript{82} Moral and social changes of the nineteenth century offered different viewpoints on marriage. As Richardson says, women could contribute for nations' sake through their reproduction. The importance of motherhood and racial improvement are emphasised as an aspect of the relationship between eugenics and feminism through the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In terms of eugenic feminism, the woman seems to be encouraged in the reproduction of intellectually more desirable healthy offspring. The advancement of the race depends on women in the selection of the fathers of their children for the next generation. Eugenic feminism persuaded women to select breeding in practice to have opportunities for better children. Shaw was to some extent sympathetic to this viewpoint, for he accepted that selective breeding was necessary in

\textsuperscript{81} Shaw, Sociological Papers, pp. 74- 5.

order to improve the human race and better civilization. Shaw’s eugenic feminism regards the role of women as the vital contribution of evolution for the reproduction of a higher race. Shaw seems to regard selective breeding as the most noteworthy and valuable products of evolution from a biological point of view.

Moreover, Shaw’s Fabian socialism, relating to British eugenics, concentrated on the social problems of poverty and pauperism. In the view of Fabian socialism, the Fabians were concerned with social wealth emphasising the productive parts of eugenic purposes. Many eugenic socialists believed that Darwinian selection had to be replaced by Galtonian artificial selection not only to prevent the outbreeding of the unfit but also encourage the number of the fit in all classes of society. Most progressive eugenicists carried their argument for this purpose. One well-known propagandist and popularizer of eugenics, Herbert insists: “We have the environment acting, as it were, like a sieve, separating the fit from the unfit and selecting those who are best adapted to their surroundings. Every change of environment necessarily alters the incidence of selection, the type of the survivors in each instance being determined by the survival-value”. Many eugenic socialists were to some extent sympathetic to this view point, for they accepted the eugenicists’ claims that selection was necessary in order to maintain a better civilization of humankind. As has been said, Meliorism, Darwinism and Galtonian hereditarianism provided the elements of the eugenic movement at the turn of the century. Each eugenic movement was determined by national background and historical context. Several

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writers see eugenics as a racist world view causing racial imperialism. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, social Darwinism inspired various political and intellectual ideologies to some degree. As mentioned earlier, the influence of Darwinism on philosophical, social and political ideas was considerable and many-sided. Darwinism gave considerable support to materialist interpretations particularly formative influences on German Nazism. Social Darwinists insisted that evolutionary progress of mankind is advanced by inter-racial or international struggles. The theory of evolution could be and was used in justification of wars for national or racial supremacy. Social Darwinism argues that the struggle for existence among humans may be expected to further social progress and produce evolutionary adaptive results. In the years after the experience of Nazi Germany, many ideas about eugenics were rapidly renounced publicly by members of the scientific community and politicians alike. Along with these other reactions to Nazi ideas, eugenics was almost universally reviled in many of the nations in which it had once been popular. Shaw's growing pessimism in the wake of the First World War was expressed through his later plays. Shaw reveals his antagonistic attitude toward the social Darwinism displayed by the Wars, and it is clear that Shaw's socialism was deeply shocked by the destructive and divisive effects of mindless nationalism. Following the First World War and the emergence of the Nazism, the eugenic movement declined and was negatively identified with fascism. After the Second World War, egalitarian thoughts increasingly became acceptable. However, it was true that during the Victorian periods, eugenics was the domain of social scientists and philosophers in spite of its negative effects.

Shaw's biographer, Archibald Henderson, insists that although Shaw was influenced by Schopenhauer, he never made a in-depth study of his philosophy. He says what Shaw remarked to him one day that "If all this talk about my indebtedness to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche continues, ... I really will have to read their works in order to discover just what we have

in common”.\textsuperscript{86} Shaw never discusses Schopenhauer’s ideas systematically. He was quite selective in what he gleaned from Schopenhauer. Shaw rejected considerably more of Schopenhauer’s philosophy than he accepted.

Schopenhauer’s most single important contribution to Shaw’s thought was his conception of the Will. In Schopenhauer’s term, Will is not derived by rational or intellectual thought. As Shaw put it, the Schopenhauerian Will was “the metaphysical compliment to Lamarck’s natural history, as it demonstrates that behind evolution is a will to live”.\textsuperscript{87} From this statement it is evident that even though Shaw’s Life Force and Schopenhauer’s Will are not identical in meaning, Shaw recognized in Schopenhauer’s conception of the will to live an idea similar to his own concept, the Life Force. For Shaw, the Will was aimed at self-preservation and was leading man upwards. Schopenhauer’s Will is blind and purposeless, which was not acceptable to Shaw; whereas Shaw believed that the Will had a purpose and a goal. The Will was “struggling through us to become an actual organized existence... that to many of us is the greatest conceivable ecstasy, the ecstasy of a brain, an intelligence, actually conscious of the whole, and with executive force capable of guiding it to a perfectly benevolent and harmonious end”.\textsuperscript{88}

The ideas in the Schopenhauerian synthesis, which stressed the will as an instinctive alogical element, were attractive to Shaw.

Schopenhauer was naturally disposed to pessimism; Shaw on the other hand, was essentially an optimist. Schopenhauer’s pessimistic view that life was not worth living was repugnant to Shaw. As Shaw asserts it, “I cannot accept for a moment Schopenhauer’s fundamental doctrine that the will, which urges us to live in spite of the fact that life is not worth living, is a malign torturer, the desirable end of all things being the


\textsuperscript{87} Shaw, \textit{Back to Methuselah}, p. xxix.

Hirvana of the stilling of the Will, and the consequent setting of life’s sun ‘into the blind cave of eternal night’".\(^8\) In his thought, Shaw regarded the Will as deity: "What God is doing is making himself, getting from being a mere powerless Will or Force... I believe that if we can drive into the heads of men the full consciousness of moral responsibility that comes to men with the knowledge that there never will be a God unless we make one—that we are the instruments through which that ideal is trying to make itself a reality—we can work towards that ideal until we get to be supermen, and then super-supermen, and then a world of organisms who have achieved and realized God".\(^9\) To Shaw, the Will was an essential vitality to operate life in the world.

When it was heard by Shaw that he was influenced by Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* in the question of human will as expressed in his *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw denied hearing of Nietzsche at the time of writing that passage. He explained:

I mention this fact, not with the ridiculous object of vindicating my 'originality' in nineteenth century fashion, but because I attach great importance to the evidence that the movement voiced by Schopenhauer, Wagner, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Strindberg, was a world movement, and would have found expression if every one of these writers had perished in his cradle. I have dealt with this question in the preface to my play *Major Barbara*. The movement is alive today in the philosophy of Bergson and the plays of... the post Ibsen English drama.\(^9\)

Five years after the publication of *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, the works of Nietzsche's, which would influence Shaw, were translated. In particular, Nietzsche's idea of the superman was appealing to Shaw's philosophy on his own terms, as a concept of his theoretical scheme. In his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche believed that men might evolve into a world-elite of 'Übermenschen' or supermen. Supermen would be their own master and might succeed to the rank and authority traditionally associated with God. Don Juan in *Man and Superman* is

\(^8\) Archibald Henderson, “The Philosophy of Bernard Shaw”, p. 231.


\(^9\) Shaw, *Major Critical Essays*, p. 34.
described as "Shaw’s superman, the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world", creating his own ethics and philosophy and overwhelming the conventionality of morality. Shaw’s superman is similar in his spiritual superiority in Nietzschean terms. It seems true that as Valency rightly points out, “Shaw’s idea of the Superman was not a systematic concept. It was patched together from various sources, but mainly from Nietzsche”. However, unlike Shaw, Nietzsche did not use the term biologically as denoting a higher species. To Nietzsche, the ‘overman’ was not a superior being toward which mankind should try to evolve but was instead a type that has turned out supremely well. Shaw could not accept the Nietzschean conception of a privileged master racism.

According to Nietzsche’s view, the strong man, who has power and vitality, dominates the weak. Like Nietzsche, Shaw believed that man should follow his own belief by his self-expression not by the creeds of the Church or by the conventions of society. For Shaw, the superman is a superior being who should try to evolve to better mankind, whereas Nietzsche’s concept of Overman does not mean a higher species biologically. In terms of political powers, Shaw’s superman paralleled Nietzsche’s Overman. Shaw agreed that there are similar thoughts between Nietzsche’s position and his own. For this man, they acclaimed such historical figures as Caesar, and Joan of Arc not as religious saints. When in *Man and Superman* Shaw dealt with the question of how this higher type of humanity might be eugenically produced, he used the concept and idea of Nietzschean Ubermensch. Nietzsche, as is well known, has been interpreted in eugenic terms and used to justify philosophical and political arguments. Nietzsche provided the eugenicists with his basic ideas. Mugge insisted that

To Sir Francis Galton belongs the honour of founding the science of eugenics. To Friderich Nietzsche belongs the honour of founding the Religion of Eugenics... both

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aim at a superman, not a Napoleonic individual, but an ideal of a race of superman, as superior to the present mankind.94

For the views on marriage and love, both men have much in common. Like Shaw, Nietzsche also holds that the end of marriage is the procreation of a higher offspring. Both Shaw and Nietzsche consider sexual attraction as the instrument for the procreation of a superior race. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche said: “Thus do I counsel all honest ones; and what would be my love to the Superman, and to all that is to come, if I should counsel and speak otherwise: Not only to propagate yourselves onwards but upwards—thereto, O my brethren, may the garden of marriage help you!”95 Like Nietzsche, Shaw stresses that marriage has to be made to produce better descendants for the development of mankind. In the preface to *Getting Married*, he argues for probationary marriage and easy divorce. He insists: “make divorce as easy, as cheap, and as private as marriage... If on the other hand, you think a couple perfectly innocent and well conducted, do not condemn them also to perpetual wedlock against their wills, thereby making the treatment of what you considered innocence on both sides the same as the treatment of what you consider guilt on both sides”.96

Nietzsche emphasises the law of life, as self-overcoming, Will to Power to destroy the traditional morality of Christianity and blind faithfulness for the higher development of mankind. With a philosophical viewpoint, Shaw’s Life Force is close to Nietzsche’s Will to Power. Nietzsche’s attacks on Christian creeds, traditional morality, idealism and convention which restricted free will was appealing to Shaw. As Nietzsche criticised the conventional members of society as the walking dead, Shaw borrowed Nietzsche’s idea in the preface to *Fanny’s First Play*: “I hate to see dead people walking about: it is unnatural. And our

respectable middle-class people are all as dead as mutton".\textsuperscript{97}

Nietzsche believes that the requirement of human greatness is based on a hierarchical social structure. In many respects, his critique of social politics establishes the insights of the modern schemes by attacking the malaise of religious authority, the decay of the traditional state, and the decline of traditional law and custom. Politically, Shaw condemned Nietzsche's ideas concerning disapproving of modern democracy, socialism and Pauline Christianity. Shaw insists that

To him modern Democracy, Pauline Christianity, Socialism, and so on are deliberate plots hatched by malignant philosophers to frustrate the evolution of the human race and mass the stupidity and brute force of the many weak against the beneficial tyranny of the few strong. This is not even a point of view: it is an absolutely fictitious hypothesis: it would not be worth reading were it not that there is almost as much evidence for it as if it were true, and that it leads Nietzsche to produce some new and very striking and suggestive combinations of ideas.\textsuperscript{98}

Henderson argued that Shaw's dramatic characters were "mere mouthpieces of the ideas of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Ibsen".\textsuperscript{99} For Schopenhauer, it seems that the meaningless life is pessimistic, whereas Nietzsche's concept of evolutionary process leads to the possibility of the goal of life. Shaw and Nietzsche both took Schopenhauer's concept of the Will and transformed the pessimistic thought into an optimistic one. Even though there are some different attitudes in many positions, after reading Nietzsche in translation and reviewing several of Nietzsche's works for \textit{The Saturday Review}, Shaw admitted that there were some resemblances between his thought and that of Nietzsche. Accordingly there is some Nietzschean material in Shaw's later works. As Shaw confesses in the preface to \textit{Major Barbara}, "I am echoing Schopenhauer, Nietzsche... or some other heresiarch in northern or eastern Europe".\textsuperscript{100} In particular,

\textsuperscript{100} Shaw, \textit{Major Barbara}, p. 9.
Shaw's intellectual and religious similarities with those of Nietzsche's are evident. It could be said that for his own concept of the Life Force, Shaw drew from Schopenhauer's world as Will and Nietzsche's Will to Power to formulate his own theory, Creative Evolution.

It is evident that Shelley had strongly influenced Shaw in particular by his political and intellectual thoughts as well as religious thoughts. Shaw confessed "My attention had been called to the subject, first by Shelley (I am an out-and-out Shelleyan), and later on by a lecturer". In *Sixteen Self Sketches*, Shaw expressed his reverence for Shelley, "Shelley cured me of all that. I read him, prose and verse, from beginning to end. This took place at the end of my teens".102

Shelley was an uncompromising spirit, "who had successfully broken away from the traditional bounds"103, and who attacked the existing views on religion, politics, society and marriage with his unorthodox outlook and iconoclasm. Peart observes, "Shaw vigorously employed a large stock of matter from Shelley's essays on religion, in several of his own prose pieces".104 Shaw affirmed in the preface to *Man and Superman*, "Shelley...[is] among the writers whose peculiar sense of the world I recognize as more or less akin to my own".105 Like Shelley, Shaw established dramatic new ideas as a political or social thinker and expressed his own ideas in plays to promote the goal of reforming the existing institutions of his society. In his book *Bernard Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Tradition*, Kaye declares that "Shelley's influence on Shaw was an early and abiding one" and then goes on to add that "Shaw's own religious development parallels Shelley's".106 And yet another critic, Duerksen, in his article, "Shaw and Shelley" maintains that Shaw relied

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heavily on Shelley's *Essay on Christianity* in writing the preface to *Androcles and the Lion*.\(^{107}\) As is revealed through the study of Shaw, the unconventional nature of Shelley in his artistic belief seems to have inspired Shaw's early philosophical progress. Shaw's vegetarianism was the most famous trait of his conduct derived from Shelley. It is true that "Shaw's debts to Shelley, sometimes for key motifs or phrase, are endless".\(^{108}\)

As the revolutionary idealist, the political nature of Shelley's art seems to have been instrumental in shaping Shaw's early political view. Shelleyan political thought influenced the Fabian society through the twentieth century. The Shelleyan Society (1886-1895), consisting of a few Fabian socialists including Shaw, played a significant role in considering Shelley's political influence. The Fabian socialists were highly inspired by Shelley's political ideals, and in a sense Fabianism and Shavianism were largely the same thing. In other words, "Shelley was Shaw's kind of socialist".\(^{109}\) Shaw wrote "I had read much poetry; but only one poet was sacred to me: Shelley... like Shelley I am a Socialist, an atheist and a vegetarian".\(^{110}\) "Shaw made [Shelley's politics] a part of his own political creed".\(^{111}\) Shaw was also imbued with Shelley's spiritual or intellectual nature in terms of social concerns:

He was by this time a committed Shelleyan... Shelley, who was to make Shaw into a momentary anarchist and lifetime vegetarian, completed the job of clearing away the refuse of those religions repugnant to his constitution, ready for the planting of Creative Evolution... As a 'Republican, a Leveller, a Radical of the most extreme type', Shelley had cleared Shaw's mind of old-fashioned moralities in politics and religion and made room for the planting of Creative Evolution.\(^{112}\)


Archibald Henderson, Shaw's biographer, observes, "Shelley profoundly influenced Shaw's thought and conduct, but probably exerted upon him no literary influence whatever". 113 Shaw was eager to accomplish high truth in his work as much as Shelley. Shaw admired Shelley as "a religious force".114 Shelley attacked all conventional social systems to obstruct the idea of evolution, which was adapted in line with the Fabians' idea that society can be reformed gradually and their conception of the way in which society must be transformed. Shelley and Shaw both attacked conventionality with fervor. Shaw upheld idealistic optimism as a vehicle to achieve a great goal in his plays as much as Shelley. "Idealistic optimism, a concern with economics and politics, the desire to improve the human condition, and the belief in art as the most effective educational force... are affirmed by Shaw".115 Shaw's art is intended to accomplish the socialistic goal which is based on Fabian socialism. "[Shaw] is himself the perfect Fabian who cares more for Socialism than for art. His choice is Shelley the conspirator, not Shelley the poet. The latter he would in reality tear for his bad verses, which get in the way of maxims".116 Both Shaw and Shelley called themselves atheists because they did not believe in the existence of the God of orthodox Christianity. It is chiefly revealed in their attitudes towards the conception of deity and the religious doctrines. Both Shaw and Shelley reject the Christian conception of God on metaphysical grounds. Shelley's conception of God is so imbued with mysticism. Shelley calls the Deity "the overruling Spirit of collective energy of the moral and material world... [and] the Overruling Spirit of all energy and wisdom included within the circle of existing things".117 He instead regarded God as a creative power working towards mysterious forces:

God is ... the Power from which or through which the streams of all that is excellent

and delightful flow; the Power which models as they pass, all the elements of this mixed universe to the purest and most perfect shape which it belongs to their nature to assume.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 234-35.}

Shaw’s conception of God is quite similar to Shelley’s. Like Shelley, he cannot accept the idea of an anthropomorphic or supernatural deity nor can he accept the idea of God’s creation. He maintained that, “All life is a series of accidents, but when you find most of them pointing all one way, you may guess that there is something behind them that is not accidental”.\footnote{Bernard Shaw, “A Catechism on My Creed”, in The Religious Speeches of Bernard Shaw, ed., Warren S. Smith (New York: Mcgraw - Hill Book Co., 1963), p. 203.} To Shaw, this “something” seems to be the evolutionary life force and it is “the divinity that shapes our ends rough-hew them how we will”.\footnote{Shaw, “What is My Religious Faith”, p. 78.} Shaw’s objection to the deity of Christianity is similar to Shelley’s but whereas both Shaw and Shelley reject the Christian conception of God on metaphysical grounds, their primary objection to this conception of God is a moral one. Both men looked upon the Christian God as nothing more than the anthropomorphic tribal idol of the Old Testament, Jehovah. In Queen Mab, Shelley refers to Jehovah as an “omnipotent fiend”.\footnote{Shelley, Notes to Queen Mab I, p. 152.} In the preface to Back to Methuselah, Shaw echoes Shelley’s sentiments and declares that Jehovah is “an almighty fiend, with a petty character and unlimited power, spiteful, cruel, jealous, vindictive, and physically violent”.\footnote{Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. xxxvii.} In line with Shelley’s atheism, he denied the existence of the Christian conception of heaven and hell as places of reward and punishment, believing that it was an invention of Christ’s biographers which carried the idea of the Last Judgment. To Shelley, death was the pathway to “Another and a more extensive state of being, rather than the complete extinction of being, will follow from that mysterious change which we call death. There shall be no misery no pain no fear. The empire of the evil spirit extends not beyond the boundaries...
of the grave".\footnote{123} For Shaw like Shelley, instead of believing the existence of heaven and hell as reward and punishment, he emphasised the immortality of average man beyond the fear of death. Shaw rather believed in the essential goodness of man and the evolutionary will within man:

Paul's fantastic conception of the damned Adam, represented by Bunyan as a pilgrim with a great burden of sins on his back, corresponded to the fundamental condition of evolution, which is, that life, including human life, is continually evolving, and must therefore be continually ashamed of itself and its present and past.\footnote{124}

Although both Shelley and Shaw did not accept much of Christianity, they admired Jesus only as one of the prophets with his political radicalism not as the divine. Shelley looked upon Jesus as a leveller—a prophet who preached the idea of political and economic equality among men only to have his doctrines destroyed by "demagogues of the infant republic of the Christian sect".\footnote{125} Shaw agreed with Shelley and likewise maintained that Jesus preached a doctrine of political and economic equality, contending that the only thing which had prevented His doctrines from being implemented was that "nobody has ever been sane enough to try his way".\footnote{126}

Shaw and Shelley considered Christianity as a force of social and moral repression in the world. Shelley saw that all morality had become identified with Christianity. On the contrary, even though Shaw saw Christianity as an institution which was preventing an evolution in morals, Shaw preferred to renovate Christianity rather than to destroy it. This was probably influenced by Butler. He illustrated this with the character of Dick Dudgeon in \textit{The Devil's Disciple}, who in his immorality is more moral than his Christian neighbours.

According to Michael Holroyd, Shaw's biographer, Shaw found

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\item \footnote{123} Shelley, \textit{Essay on Christianity}, pp. 235-36.
\item \footnote{124} Bernard Shaw, \textit{Androcles and the Lion} (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1946), p. 77.
\item \footnote{125} Shelley, \textit{Essay on Christianity}, p. 251.
\item \footnote{126} Shaw, \textit{Androcles and the Lion}, p. 3.
\end{itemize}
similar attitudes in the dramatic struggles between Ibsen's and his own plays. As another social artist, Shaw regarded Ibsen as an social reformer and realist in terms of the role as a challenger of institutional society. In a sense, it seems Shaw used Ibsen for "not simply a literary symbol but a tool in the unheroic Fabian plan to make things, not as they ought to be (that was utopianism), but as they could be made (that was socialism)." Shaw absorbed the essence of Ibsen's works during the period of 1880s. He understood Ibsen along Fabian lines.

Ibsen has been introduced in England by the efforts of such early Ibsenites as Edmund Gosse, Catherine Ray, William Archer, Henrietta Frances Lord, Philip Wicksteed, Havelock Ellis, Leonard Charteris and Eleanor Marx. Ibsen's reputation as a great master of European literature was already established. By the time, Shaw had become the drama critic of *The Saturday Review* and his reviews in it show that he held Ibsen higher than any other dramatist in the world. Even though Shaw was not one of the Ibsenites, he was getting involved in Ibsen after the production of *A Doll's House* by Charles Charrington and his wife Janet Achurch at the Novelty Theatre in London in 1889 and he had written a number of articles about him. Shaw was requested by his fellow Fabians to give them a lecture on this Norwegian dramatist. His lecture was later expanded and published in his well-known *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891).

Apart from the analysis of each of Ibsen's plays, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, published by Walter Scott in 1890-1, included essays on 'Ideals and Idealists', 'the Womanly Woman', 'the Two Pioneers', 'The Autobiographical Anti-Idealist Extravaganzas', 'The Objective Anti-Idealist Plays', 'Down among the Dead Men: The Last Four Plays', 'The Lesson of the Plays', 'What is the New Element in the Norwegian School?', 'The Technical Novelty in Ibsen's Plays' and 'Needed: An Ibsen Theatre'. Through the essays in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw presented his own social and philosophical theories and also emphasised the nature of Ibsen's revolutionary contributions to the arts in attacking institutional society. In the Preface to the first edition of *The

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Quintessence of Ibsenism he mentioned that what follows "is not a critical essay on the poetic beauties of Ibsen, but simply an exposition of Ibsenism".\textsuperscript{128} He added that "I have also shewn that the existence of a discoverable and perfectly definite thesis in a poet’s work by no means depends on the completeness of his own intellectual consciousness of it".\textsuperscript{129} In the preface to the second edition of The Quintessence of Ibsenism, Shaw stressed the “new school” of playwrights derived from Ibsen’s plays.

Shaw attacked the ideal and idealism in the third preface to The Quintessence of Ibsenism, where “a war of ideals had the gospel of Ibsen been understood and heeded”.\textsuperscript{130} Turco insists that “Shaw’s essays on Ibsen subverted all forms of idealistic aspiration in favor of an insistently pragmatic perspective”.\textsuperscript{131} In The Quintessence of Ibsenism, Shaw characterised men into the Philistines, the Idealists and the Realists. He condemned the idealists because they have illusions and move away from the reality of life. For Shaw, illusions have to be destroyed to contribute to human progress by the realists.

Shaw’s attitude concerning Ibsen’s plays is shown in the essay on ‘The Technical Novelty’ in Ibsen’s Plays’ in The Quintessence of Ibsenism:

In the new plays, the drama arises through a conflict of unsettled ideals rather than through vulgar attachments, rapacities, generousies, resentments, ambitions, misunderstandings, oddities and so forth as to which no moral question is raised. The conflict is not between clear right and wrong: the villain is as conscientious as the hero, if not more so: in fact, the question which makes the play interesting (when it is interesting) is which is the villain and which the hero. Or, to put it another way, there are no villains and no heroes.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{132} Shaw, Major critical Essays, p. 139.
Shaw’s view of Ibsen’s plays are presented by developing his own characters. Shaw mentioned an unconventional moral behavior in conventional position in Ibsen’s plays. The preface to *Plays Pleasant* has shown similar attitude to *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*:

> At all events, I do not see moral chaos and anarchy as the alternative to romantic conventions; and I am not going to pretend I do merely to please the people who are convinced that the world is held together only by the force of unanimous, strenuous, eloquent, trumpet-tongued lying.\(^{133}\)

Even though many of Ibsen’s opponents attacked the morality of Ibsen’s plays, Shaw supported Ibsen’s smashing the conventional morality in terms of new challenges to existing values. He asserts that “what Ibsen insists on is that there is no golden rule, that conduct must justify itself by its effect on life and not by conformity to any rule or ideal”.\(^{134}\) He adds that we should observe of Ibsenism that “its quintessence is that there is no formula”.\(^{135}\) As Wisenthal puts it, it seems that Ibsen’s morality is “relative, not absolute and Shaw’s exposition of a basic attitude in Ibsen is not only highly interesting in itself and an excellent guide to Shaw’s own plays, but... an invaluable source of insight into an essential aspect of Ibsen’s work”.\(^{136}\) In *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw rebuts what Ibsen’s opponents criticised:

Ibsen’s attack on morality is a symptom of the revival of religion, not of its extinction. He is on the side of the prophets in having devoted himself to shewing that the spirit or will of man is constantly outgrowing the ideals, and that therefore thoughtless conformity to them is constantly producing results no less tragic than those which follow thoughtless violation of them.\(^{137}\)

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135 Ibid.


Shaw's interest in Ibsen limits Ibsenism, namely to the themes and ideas in his drama rather than the plays themselves. As Orage points out, Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* is “truly the Quintessence of Shavianism”¹³⁸ As is revealed in the Shavian use of contemporaries, Shaw emphasised Ibsen's trait as a rebel and iconoclast rather than as a playwright in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. Shaw attempts to analyse the essay in terms of his own philosophical theories. In this essay, Shaw also used the criticism of Ibsen's revolutionary contribution to the arts to continue his own rebellion against society in general. As Britain assents:

> When Shaw spoke of Ibsen in relation to socialism, then, it was not to suggest any affinity between the playwright's views and the political doctrine, but rather to use those views as the basis of a thoroughgoing critique of some of the leading exponents and practitioners of that doctrine... Shaw was trying to present Ibsen as a socialist of the Shavian variety.¹³⁹

Shaw regarded Ibsen as the smashing of the idols and idolatries of society. For this reason, Shaw attacks the incredible doctrines of the churches and institutions throughout the rest of the essay. Shaw considered Ibsen, for example, "one of the major prophets of the modern Bible"¹⁴⁰. Shaw regarded himself not only as another one of these major prophets, but as an iconoclast of his modern religion, the religion of creative evolution. In the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw indicated the limitation of Ibsen's iconoclasm as a new religion: "Many modern playwrights even young ones, are still untouched by Creative Evolution. Even Ibsen was Darwinized to the extent of exploiting heredity on the stage".¹⁴¹ While Shaw denounced the superstitious legends and bibliolatry of traditional Christianity, he saw the need for construction of a new religion. As he writes, "I have written *Back to Methuselah* as a

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contribution to the modern Bible”\textsuperscript{142}, in the preface to Back to Methuselah, Shaw hoped to make the legends and images which would form the basis of the new religion.

Even though many critics say that Ibsen’s influence on Shaw is obvious, Shaw frequently denied Ibsen’s effect on his plays and English drama. He wrote in the preface to Major Barbara, “they confidently derive me from a Norwegian author of whose language I do not know three words, and of whom I knew nothing... I was not Ibsenist even at second hand... I know nothing but the names and some of the illustrations”.\textsuperscript{143} In spite of Shaw’s denial of Ibsen’s influence, there are many similarities between them even though many differences between them always remain. For instance, Shaw’s Candida and Mrs Warren’s Profession have many connections with Ibsen’s plays, A Doll’s House and Ghosts. In relation to Shaw’s links to Ibsen’s plays, Fisher points out “Shaw... promoted the revolutionary new drama, especially the plays of Henrik Ibsen. Later, in his own plays, Shaw introduced the significant, socially-conscious drama onto English stages”.\textsuperscript{144} On the contrary, for the similarities between Mrs Warren’s Profession and Ibsen’s Ghosts, Shaw recognized the same view of consanguinity in both plays in the preface to The Quintessence of Ibsenism:

> We are beginning to recognize the important fact that the absence of romantic illusion as between persons brought up together, which undoubtedly exists, and which used to be mistaken for natural antipathy, cannot be depended on as between strangers, however close their consanguinity, and that any domestic or educational system which segregates the sexes produces romantic illusion, no matter how undesirable it may be. It will be seen later on in the chapter dealing with the play called Ghosts, that Ibsen took this modern view that consanguinity does not count between strangers. I have accepted it myself in my play Mrs. Warren’s Profession.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 15.

\textsuperscript{143} Shaw, Major Barbara, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{145} Quoted from Wisenthal, Shaw and Ibsen (Toronto: Toronto University Press,
For the disparities between them, O'Donnell's points out, "In Shaw's plays individual conflicts are representative of social, evolutionary, and cosmic ones; in a word, private affairs are not at the heart of his plays, as they are in Ibsen's".\(^{146}\) Ibsen's combination of socialism and individualism is also rigorously pursued by Shaw in most of his works though he has more emphasised the socialistic and politic than the individualistic.

As mentioned above, there are many similarities in Shaw's dramatic ideas and characters and Ibsen's. As always, Shaw adapted those characteristics to his own purposes. Even though he criticised many different aspects of Ibsen's plays in terms of dramaturgy, it seems obvious that he was attracted by Ibsen's moral relativism which is not replaced by "any ready-made substitute".\(^ {147}\)

One more person who has to be mentioned is the Swedish dramatist August Strindberg. He had begun to make an impact on dramatic values in the late nineteenth-century theatre. In England he took up a reputation as an eccentric Swedish genius. Shaw was familiar with his plays. As representative dramatists in Europe, even though there are some contrasts between them, Strindberg and Ibsen had similarities in their works intending realism throughout the conflict of sexual relations and social institutions as dramatic material. Strindberg puts a general confession in his preface to *Miss Julie*: "I find the joy of life in its violent and cruel struggles, and my pleasure lies in knowing something and learning something. And for this reason I have chosen an unusual but instructive case- an exception, in a word- but a great exception, proving the rules, which, of course, will provoke all lovers of the commonplace".\(^ {148}\)

Strindberg moves his thematic interests into human relations with

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strong struggles creating a new theatrical environment. Shaw seems to be influenced by these kinds of human relations through his plays. Most of Strindberg's protagonists are unheroic, victimized by cruel mechanistic forces, which could be regarded as a tragedy of determinism. Unlike Shaw, his plot or theme had more psychological details of characters than political and societal issues. He expressed views of the will/power of women in *The Father*.

Miss Julie is a victim of tragedy represented by the prevailing naturalism. Strindberg's *Miss Julie* is considered his most masterful endeavour on account of its naturalism. Strindberg embodied a modern concept of character in the preface to *Miss Julie*:

I do not believe, therefore, in simple characters on the stage. And the summary judgments of the author upon men... should be challenged by the naturalists, who know the fertility of the soul-complex, and who realise that “vice” has a reverse very much resembling virtue. Because they are modern characters, living in a period of transition more hysterically hurried than its immediate predecessor at least, I have made my figures vacillating, out of joint, torn between the old and the new.149

The preface to *Miss Julie* shows Strindberg's view of life as delighting in ruthless struggle for survival. In the preface to *Miss Julie*, Strindberg exposes the moral corruption of human nature and focuses on sin, crime, abnormality and the heartless battle between the sexes. For his plays, he tries to experiment with dramatic materials and themes in many respects. As Gibbs points out:

He would seem to be the most revolutionary spirit in the theater of revolt... Strindberg is certainly the most restless and experimental... The metaphor is precise, for transmutation- the conversion of existing material into something higher- is the goal of all his activity, whether he works in science, turning base metals into gold, or religious philosophy, turning matter into spirit, or in drama, turning literature into music. His entire career, in fact, is a search for the philosopher's stone of ultimate truth through the testing of varied commitments.150

It was Shaw who made an effort to introduce Strindberg to England. Strindberg’s * Lucky Peter’s Travels* was played on the London stage through Shaw’s encouragement.¹⁵¹

Tree [Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the manager of His Majesty’s Theatre] knows that among your early plays is one called Lycho Per [*Lycho-Pers resa - Lucky Peter’s Travels*]; and he also knows that there is only one name that strikes the European imagination more than Maeterlinck, and that is Strindberg. Why not let him have the play?... Apart from the fact that the production of Lycho Per might be pecuniarily useful to you... As a matter of fact, it is necessary to keep a touch of brimstone for some people; and there are circumstances under which I should resent a proposal to begin a Strindberg campaign with Lycho Per as a declaration of cowardice to start with... It would be thoroughly understood that Lycho Per was your Midsummer Night’s Dream and not your Hamlet; and the mere discussion and reiteration of this fact would create a good deal of curiosity to see your Hamlet in London. I therefore venture to advise you to consider the matter carefully and, if possible, favorably. I think it would be worth your while to enter into pourparlers on the subject.¹⁵²

Sprinchorn compares both writers, “Temperamentally they were opposites, but politically they moved in much the same direction, and philosophically they were at the end yoked together”.¹⁵³ Shaw wrote about Strindberg in 1900 in the preface to *Three Plays for Puritans* as “the only genuinely Shakespearean modern dramatist”.¹⁵⁴ For Strindberg’s influence on Shaw’s plays, Sprinchorn asserts that “Shaw went on believing that Strindberg was the voice of pessimism and despair. After *Heartbreak House*, Shaw drew closer than ever to Strindberg”.¹⁵⁵

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However, even the pessimistic aspects in Shaw’s later plays seem to be another exemplification of life force’s purposeful will based on evolutionary process in spite of its negative aspect.

Whereas Shaw created women as representatives of procreation and brains, Strindberg pictured women as greedy, tricky and immoral. For his religion of creative evolution, Shaw’s concept of the life force is explained in the inspiration of geniuses and creative artists, and the biological impulse of men and women for sexual union. Huneker portrays Strindberg’s characteristics: “Always unhappy in his relation with women, often quite mad, and usually living on the treacherous borderland of hallucination, his existence has been fevered and miserable, though his successes are brilliant”.\(^{156}\) According to Shaw, Strindberg “...shews that the female Yahoo, measured by romantic standards, is viler than her male dupe and slave”.\(^{157}\) In contrast, he described men as artists, philosophers or soldiers who struggle themselves to contribute to the civilizing values. In some respect, in depicting men’s characters Shaw and Strindberg have much in common. It can be found in what Shaw’s Don Juan says in *Man and Superman*: “He has created civilization without consulting her, taking her domestic labor for granted as the foundation of it”.\(^{158}\)

For his religious view, like Shaw, Strindberg repudiated Darwinian materialism. Instead, he believed in spiritual forces by naming the Higher Powers relating to Shaw’s the conception of the Life Force.

Darwinism is the philosophy of the upper-class. It is politically conservative, hostile to the people, and the direct opposite of socialism... For the Darwinists there is no other life than this one, and therefore they must adapt themselves to it. They must take their pleasure in this their only life, no matter what the price. There can be no pity in them, for that is weakness. There can be no union of the people (socialism) because without religion there is no honor, no faith, no self-sacrifice. They cannot trust one another because they are all faithless. All this is the triumph of science over


Like Shaw, Strindberg did not depict hell as a place of physical torment rather he describes it as a place of moral torment. Shaw’s Keegan in *John Bull’s Other Island* anticipates a hell, like Strindberg’s hell, far different from Don Juan’s in *Man and Superman*, a place of torment and penance:

a place where the fool flourishes and the good and wise are hated and persecuted, a place where men and women torture one another in the name of love; where children are scourge and enslaved in the name of parental duty and education; where the weak in body are poisoned and humiliated in the name of healing, and the weak in character are put to the horrible torture of imprisonment, not for hours but for years, in the name of justice... There is only one place of horror and torment known to my religion; and that place is hell. Therefore it is plain to me that this earth of ours must be hell, and that we are all here... to expiate crimes committed by us in a former existence.\(^{160}\)

The preface to *Miss Julie* is well known with Strindberg’s dramatic creed explaining what he had endeavoured to do and why:

In the following drama I have not tried to do anything new- for that cannot be done- but I have tried to modernise the form in accordance with the demands which I thought the new men of a new time might be likely to make on this art. And with such a purpose in view, I have chosen, or surrendered myself to, a theme that might well be said to lie outside the partisan strife of the day: for the problem of social ascendancy or decline, of higher or lower, of better or worse, of men or women, is, has been, and will be of lasting interest. In selecting this theme from real life, as it was related to me a number of years ago, when the incident impressed me very deeply. I found it suited to a tragedy, because it can only make us sad to see a fortunately placed individual perish, and this must be the case in still higher degree when we see an


entire family die out.\textsuperscript{161}

Strindberg emphasised evolutionary human development as a result of physical and psychological conflicts in the societal milieu among human beings rather than the God's power of Christianity. Even though Strindberg's naturalism prevailed in his plays in important respects, as Ward points out, "While much naturalistic work was 'photographic' and contemporary, Strindberg's was selective and timeless. Even \textit{Miss Julie} which was largely a naturalistic play, is not restricted by the archaic social structure and curious morality it presumes. It remains, however permanently valuable in virtue of its psycho-sexual understanding".\textsuperscript{162} In conclusion, Strindberg's naturalistic dramas emphasising individual struggling and behaviour, rather than social details, are far different from those of the contemporaries especially from those of Shaw's. For these reasons, Shaw's evolutionary development in human society, even though it is derived from the contemporaries, is evident at those places where Shaw's social and philosophical views are most combined in terms of his own modern religion, creative evolution and the life force. Because of Shaw's dissatisfaction with the social and political institutions of his time, he develops his own philosophical and religious belief. Shaw's religion, creative evolution, is a working philosophy as an inescapable process in human society. With his socialist stand-point in relation to religious ideas, Shaw believed that the hope of evolution lies through the developments of evolutionary process for solving the current problem. Because of this Shaw develops his religion, creative evolution and the idea of the life force as a driving force for the improvement of the human world. From viewing its progress practically, Shaw's ideas of evolution is inextricably bound up with the ideas of progress.

A good many of Shaw's philosophical and religious ideas have been developed by means of comparison in this chapter. In comparing Shaw's theory of creative evolution with his contemporaries, I have pointed out that one of the ways in which Shaw's thought differed from theirs was

\textsuperscript{161} Strindberg, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 11.

that Shaw envisioned an aim for the evolutionary process. It is certain for Shaw that true progress, directed by the life force, can be achieved through the conscious effort of the human will energetically bent toward improving itself. As has been said, Shaw moved away from the thoughts of his contemporaries to his belief in a life force focusing on each human being's free will and purpose. Needless to say, Shaw’s belief in his religion, creative evolution cannot be explained in isolation from the Victorian context. However, Shaw’s religious thought focusing on vital force goes beyond those of the Victorian contemporaries even though he was indebted to them.
PART TWO

II Destiny of the World's Future?

Chapter 3 The Man of Destiny

The Man of Destiny subitled 'A Fictitious Paragraph of History', though not one of Shaw's greatest plays, deals with the historical military genius Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon is involved in an unhistorical episode in a historical background during the Italian campaign in 1796. The play characterizes this with its brevity, its rather slight plot and comedic action. Shaw wrote, "It is not exactly a burlesque: it is more a harlequinade in which Napoleon and a strange lady play harlequine & columbine, and a chuckle headed, asinine young sub lieutenant (capital part for Little) and an inn keeper (equally capital part for De Lange) play clown and pantaloon".1 As Roy says, "The Man of Destiny is a faithful study of a historical personage by placing him in a situation which is unhistorical".2 The play concerns a small fictitious incident in the life of Napoleon as a general commanding the army of Italy. In the earlier dramas, most of Shaw's protagonists are unhistorical characters placed in historical backgrounds. Here Napoleon is involved in a fictional incident. Shaw wrote in the preface to Caesar and Cleopatra: "History is only a dramatisation of events... I never worry myself about historical details until the play is done; human nature is very much the same always and everywhere. And when I go over my play to put the details right I find there is surprisingly little to alter... Given Caesar, and a certain set of circumstances, I know what would happen and when I have finished the play you will find that I have written history".3

According to historical rumour concerning Napoleon, the command of the Alps Army would be given to Napoleon by the Directeur Barras,

the most powerful figure in the French government, as Napoleon's wedding present. Shaw has used historical rumours that Napoleon's promotion was offered by Barras because of his and Josephine's, Napoleon's wife, affair. Napoleon knew Josephine through Barras. The plot of the play is based on a love letter from Josephine to Barras. As Roy points out, "Shaw, in *The Man of Destiny*, has brought Napoleon off the battlefield, and through a short and simple incident revealed the strength and weakness of his character". He left for his post only two days after his marriage, and only two months later won at Lodi. Thus Napoleon, Josephine, and Barras were linked in the triangle which surfaces in the play. Shaw employs the jealousy element for the purpose of showing this weakness of human existence in Napoleon's conduct. Shaw intends to show not whether Napoleon was jealous or not but Napoleon's willingness and ability to suppress his jealousy to achieve his ambitious goal. He had ambition for victory as a military hero although ironically his army is fighting in the name of the French Revolution and its democratic principles. The historical background of this hastily-arranged marriage by the Directeur Barras, and the infidelity of Josephine's character, should lend further plausibility to the plot and enhance the realism of the play. Napoleon has created his own destiny with daring ingenuity, talent, and a bit of good luck.

Shaw’s Napoleon is a self-made genius but he is also a pragmatist who mobilizes all means for an end. In the play, Napoleon’s humanity in terms of his weakness of existence “becomes most human in his relations with Giuseppe and the Strange lady and in his response to Josephine’s infidelity”. In contrasting his play with contemporary plays about Napoleon, Shaw specifically stressed that difference. Approximately one year after writing *The Man of Destiny*, Shaw twice saw *Madame Sans-Gene* by French playwrights Sardou and Moreau who depicted a stereotype, stage Napoleon. After watching the play, Shaw criticised it scathingly. In the preface to *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, Shaw described Sardou’s Napoleon who “is nothing but the jealous husband of a thousand

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fashionable dramas, talking Buonapartuana”. He also added,

Napoleon is an inscrutable person, as becomes the Man of Destiny... With the rest I can pick my way along sufficiently to be almost as much bored as if the play were in English. Surely the twenty minutes or so of amusement contained in the play might be purchased a little more cheaply than by the endurance of a huge mock historic melodrama which never for a moment produces the faintest conviction, and which involves the exhibition of elaborate Empire interiors requiring half an hour between the acts to set, and not worth looking at when they are set.

Even though Shaw criticised the play severely, there are signs that he adopted or paralleled several of Sardou’s melodramatic plot devices in his *The Man of Destiny*. Few critics suggest that the play’s action and characterizations reflect Shaw’s criticism of Sardou’s *Madame Sans-Gene*. In spite of such assumptions about sources of *The Man of Destiny*, Shaw portrayed the hero in the play with his own creative process in melding historical materials and ideas.

Through the play, Shaw focuses on Napoleon’s ambition as a military hero who is born to lead with vital force that must subordinate all circumstances to his ultimate goal at any cost. He is powerful because he believes in and fights for himself: “You are not afraid of your own destiny. You teach us what we all might be if we had the will and courage; and that... is why we all begin to worship you” (184). Henderson asserts that “this *Man of Destiny*... may be reckoned the best presentation of Napoleon thus far achieved in the drama”. Shaw himself wrote in the preface to *The Sanity of Art*, “Napoleon looked on at the massacre of the Swiss, thinking how easy it would be to change the rout

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Hereafter page will be quoted from this text.
into the cheapest of victories... But Destiny will not allow her offers to be completely overlooked".10

Despite the elaborate technique, critics have always complained of the flimsiness of the plot and the apparently improbable events. They said that Shaw attempted to gain popularity in the commercial theatre through this insignificant playlet, *The Man of Destiny*. Carpenter deprecates the play, "*The Man of Destiny* lacks the sharp intellectual give and take of Shaw's middle-period plays... The dramatic conflict arises from the plot, not from any clash of ideas, and is put aside (at times with faint dramatic justification)".11 As Carpenter's argument suggests, the play might lack straightforward intelligible purpose, however, it is definitely worthwhile to study how Shaw develops his theory of creative evolution through the characterization of Napoleon in an early play. In a letter to Ellen Terry Shaw writes: "This is not one of my great plays, you must know: it is only a display of my knowledge of stage tricks- a commercial traveller's sample".12 For this reason, the play has neither been edited before nor given a copyright performance, neither is there any extensive historical or socio-political study of its background. In his preface to *Plays Pleasant*, Shaw describes the play as "hardly more than a bravura piece to display the virtuosity of the two principal performers".13 In 'An Interview', published in *The Daily Mail*, 15 May 1897, he refers to the play as "a trumpery little one-act play".14 It seems that "*The Man of Destiny* is most precisely an updated Napoleon play: a radical humanization of the figure of Napoleon that appeared in the conventional theatre of the nineties".15 The greatest quality of Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny* is that he is as

much above jealousy as well as personal dignity and honour. Napoleon is presented as the realist who is not moved by conventional values. Shaw seems to concentrate on humanizing the image of Napoleon based on historical facts to depict the qualities of Napoleon, “who acts on his own responsibility in defiance of professional precedents or orders from Paris” (165). Unlike the conventional stage soldier, Shaw’s Napoleon confesses to cowardice and reflects on the brave spectacle.

In the beginning of the play, Napoleon’s ambition is revealed in talking with Giuseppe, an inn keeper and he retorts to a suggestion by Giuseppe that he might become Emperor of the world. Napoleon reveals his burning ambition of mind. Napoleon’s ambition, in Napoleon’s own words, a ‘devouring devil’, is related to an impulse of his action.

Giuseppe. I shall enjoy looking on at you whilst you become Emperor of Europe, and govern the country for me.
Napoleon. Emperor of Europe, eh? Why only Europe?
Giuseppe. One man is like another... one country is like another... one battle is like another. Conquer one: conquer all.
Napoleon. And govern for all; fight for all; be everybody’s servant under cover of being everybody’s master, Giuseppe.

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Napoleon. I forbid you to talk to me about myself.
Giuseppe. Your excellency is so unlike other great men. It is the subject they like best

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Napoleon. You have no devouring devil inside you who must be fed with action and victory- gorged with them night and day- who makes you pay, with the sweat of your brain and body, weeks of Herculean toils for ten minutes of enjoyment- who is at once your slave and your tyrant, your genius and your doom... who shews you all the kingdoms of the earth and offers to make you their master on condition that you become their servant!”(168, 199).

The opening scene of the play stresses negative bloody images. Through the scene, Shaw dehumanizes Napoleon and he has used the scene to present this new image of some aspects of his Machiavellian nature Shaw desires to expose.

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Napoleon. Some red ink.
Giuseppe. Alas! Excellency, there is none.
Napoleon, [with Corsican facetiousness] Kill something and bring me its blood.
Giuseppe [grinning] There is nothing but your excellency’s horse, the sentinel, the lady upstairs, and my wife.
Napoleon. Kill your wife.
Giuseppe. Willingly, your excellency; but unhappily I am not strong enough. She would kill me.
Napoleon. That will do equally well.
Giuseppe. Your excellency does me too much honor. (167)

Napoleon refuses the innkeeper’s offer of wine as an expedient. He says that it is wasteful to use wine instead of ink. The innkeeper’s remarks are again ironically sharp. And Napoleon goes even further in his callousness.

Giuseppe. They say you are careful of everything except.
Napoleon. Human life, my friend, is the only thing that takes care of itself.
Giuseppe. Every man to his trade, excellency. We innkeepers have plenty of cheap wine: we think nothing of spilling it. You great generals have plenty of cheap blood: you think nothing of spilling it. is it not so, excellency?
Napoleon. Blood costs nothing: wine costs money.

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Napoleon. Emperor of Europe. Eh? Why only Europe?

The play begins with Napoleon eating alone in an inn and chatting about his destiny with the jovial innkeeper. In the opening scene, the image of Napoleon is described negatively. As Carpenter maintains, Shaw “concentrated on humanizing the image of Napoleon recently implanted in the minds of English playgoers through Sardou’s thin melodrama, Madame Sans-Gene”. A lieutenant enters, a comic gentleman, to report that the dispatches he was to bring were taken from him by a man who betrayed his confidence. Napoleon has angrily just placed the Lieutenant

16 Ibid.
under arrest when the Lieutenant hears a voice. He seizes his sword, for the voice is that of the man who betrayed him. The person to whom the voice belongs is the Strange Lady. The Lady says that it is her twin brother for whom the Lieutenant is looking. Napoleon protects her from the Lieutenant’s bullying and sends the lieutenant from the room. The Lady tells Napoleon she has his despatches in the bosom of her dress. Napoleon says he will have them. She warns him there is a letter among the papers which could cause “an officer” to do something foolish. The Lady stole a love letter of Josephine to Director Barras which got mixed up with the official despatches to keep the letters to herself.

Napoleon orders his lieutenant to seek out the man who betrayed him and find the letters, or to face death. The lieutenant, in contrast, is obsessed by personal and moral matters. Napoleon threatens the lieutenant by claiming: “I shall be called to account for not acting on the despatches. I shall have to prove to all the world that I never received them, no matter what the consequences may be to you” (194). He warns the credulous lieutenant that he must fetch the man who tricked him out of the dispatches “Your honour is at stake, and the fate of the campaign, the destiny of France, of Europe, of humanity, perhaps, may depend on the information those despatches contain” (193). Napoleon knows they will not be found and this will establish that he never received them; therefore, he will not have to defend his honour nor endure a public scandal. The Lady does not want to be the cause of the lieutenant’s death for failing his mission. She promises him she will bring her brother back. The Lady appeals to Napoleon as a gentleman. She appeals to his honour, only to be foiled again. She angers him and tells him if he reads the letter, he will be hurt; he answers by saying he believes his wife to be above suspicion and will not read the papers.

The Strange Lady is sure that when the letter is revealed there seems to be “a duel with Barras, a domestic scene, a broken household, a public scandal, a checked career, all sorts of things” (191). Napoleon reads the letter secretly yet he pretends to ignore the letter as if it had never existed. Napoleon has no respect for moral codes of behaviour. He is wilful enough to make the woman hand over the stolen letters and is prepared to use force against her if she fails to obey his orders. He is, in fact, hypocritical enough to read the disputed letter on the sly and to
pretend afterwards that he had not read it.

Lady. You didn’t want to read the letters; but you were curious about what was in them. So you went into the garden and read them when no one was looking, and then came back and pretended you hadnt. That’s the meanest thing I ever knew any man do; but it exactly fulfilled your purpose; and so you weren’t a bit afraid or ashamed to do it.

Napoleon [abruptly]. Where did you pick up all these vulgar scruples? This [with contemptuous emphasis] conscience of your? I took you for a lady: an aristocrat. Was your grandfather a shopkeeper, pray? (204).

Napoleon presents his view on the nature of the individual which would be Shaw’s own perspectives on men:

There are three sorts of people in the world; the low people, the middle people, and the high people. The low people and the high people are alike in one thing: they have no scruples, no morality. The low are beneath morality, the high above it. I am not afraid of either of them; for the low are unscrupulous without knowledge, so that they make an idol of me; whilst the high are unscrupulous without purpose, so that they go down before my will... It is the middle people who are dangerous: they have both knowledge and purpose. But they, too, have their weak point. They are full of scruples: chained hand and foot by their morality and respectability (204-5).

The action of the play takes place in Northern Italy, at a small village ‘on the road from Lodi to Milan’. For almost a century before Napoleon’s arrival, some parts of Italy had been the battleground of the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. The Italians regarded the French as if they were their liberators from Austrian occupation, which had lasted eighty-three years. Napoleon is shown as having obtained his military rank and commander of the Italy Army by favouritism and by compromising his own personal honour. The stage directions show how the situation is “ruthlessly disdainful of two hordes of mischievous insects which are the French and Austrian Armies” (165). In the stage direction, Shaw mockingly says how the French loot the country as liberators and how the Italians were expected to be thankful for the service rendered to them: “It must be understood, by the way, that the French army does not make war
on the Italians. It is there to rescue them from the tyranny of their Austrian conquerors, and confer republican institutions on them; so that in incidentally looting them it merely makes free with the property of its friends, who ought to be grateful to it, and perhaps would be if ingratitude were not the proverbial failing of their country” (165). Ironically, the Napoleon of history was both Italian and French. He was born in Ajaccio, Corsica, in 1769. “I am a true Corsican in my love for stories” (188). Corsica was sold by the Genoese to Louis XV in 1770. Their heroic resistance for independence was led by Paoli, their inspired guerrilla leader, who was a close friend of the Buonapartes. Napoleon’s parents actually collaborated with Paoli and with the Corsican freedom-fighters against the French rule. In The Man of Destiny, Napoleon refuses to admit his Italian origin, but later he does reveal his dual nationality. When the strange lady says: “I do know you. You are the famous General Buonaparte, (she gives the name a marked Italian pronunciation: Bwawna-parre)”. He angrily snaps: “You are presuming on my patience, Madam. I was born a French subject, but not in France”. He seems to be self-consciously seeking a new national identity.

Lady [amazed]. You! General Buonaparte [Italian pronunciation].

Shaw depicted Napoleon not as a demigod but as a mere man. He is a man of untidy table manners: “There is no revolutionary untidiness about his dress or person; but his elbow has displaced most of the dishes and glasses; and his long hair trails into the risotto when he forgets it and leans more intently over the map” (166-67). His shabby habits relieve the greatness of the hero in the play. According to the stage direction, “He is imaginative without illusions, and creative without religion, loyalty, patriotism or any of these common ideals”. And yet he is not “incapable of these ideals: on the contrary, he has swallowed them all in his boyhood, and now, having a keen dramatic faculty, is extremely clever at playing upon them by the arts of the actor and stage manager” (163). Shaw’s portraiture of the young Napoleon in The Man of Destiny aims at showing not the legendary Emperor with all forceful power but the ambitious military genius at the age of 27, who combines an
unconventional moral code with the brilliant leadership of an army.

Napoleon reveals weakness when he encounters the Strange Lady. Napoleon’s greatness could exist in his own weakness. As Roy properly points out “Shaw’s view of greatness is that it co-exists with matter-of-factness, timidity, weakness of all sorts- as anti-romantic view of the hero”. Carpenter, focusing on Napoleon’s superiority over the Strange Lady, says, “To influence the Strange Lady, Napoleon occasionally strikes heroic attitudes and mouths the conventional precepts of popular idealism”. Shaw considers him as a “real hero”, but in some respects on the contrary, “he is extremely clever at playing upon them by the arts of the actor and stage manager” (166). Napoleon forces the Strange Lady with his heroic attitudes. He “pulls himself piously together, and says, like a man conducting a religious service”, that he wins battles “for humanity- for my country, not for my self” (182). He composes himself with a thoughtful mood and “modelled on the heroes of classical antiquity, he takes a high moral tone” and says “Self-sacrifice is the foundation of all true nobility of character”. The Lady retorts, “Ah, it is easy to see that you have never tried it, General” (183). When Napoleon encounters the Strange Lady, he addresses her coolly:

Now attend to me. Suppose I were to allow myself to be abashed by the respect due to your sex, your beauty, your heroism and all the rest of it? Suppose, I with nothing but such sentimental stuff to stand between these muscles of mine and those papers which you have about you, and which I want and mean to have: suppose I, with the prize within my grasp, were to falter and sneak away with my hands empty; or, what would be worse, cover up my weakness by playing the magnanimous hero, and sparing you the violence I dared not use[;] would you not despise me from the depths of your woman’s soul? Would any woman be such a fool? Well, Bonaparte can rise to the situation and act like a woman when it is necessary. Do you understand? (185-86).

She mocks and continuously states that Napoleon is selfish but the Strange Lady finally praises Napoleon’s triumph based on life force for more than individual:

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The Strange Lady. You wanted to win the battle of Lodi for yourself and not for anyone else, didn’t you?

Napoleon. Of course [suddenly recollecting himself] Stop: no... I am only the servant of the French republic, following humbly in the footsteps of the heroes of classical antiquity. I win battles for humanity: for my country, not for myself.

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The Strange Lady. What is the secret of your power? Only that you believe in yourself. You can fight and conquer for yourself and for nobody else. You are not afraid of your own destiny. You teach us what we all might be if we had the will and courage... I adore a man who is not afraid to be mean and selfish... I don't really mean meanness and selfishness” (182, 184, 203).

She explains her remark: what he did was to fulfil his purpose; and he was not a bit afraid or ashamed to do it. From the opening of the play, she is a strong heroine physically identified with a male character: according to the stage directions, “She is very feminine, but by no means weak: the lithe tender figure is hung on a strong frame” (175). Roy, emphasising the conflicts between Napoleon and the Strange Lady as a thematic element, says “The point of the play is the war of wills between Napoleon and the Strange Lady”.19 She is audacious not to run away, wilful, and strong-minded enough to follow the great conqueror to the battlefield and beat him there.

The strange man appears and tells Napoleon and the lieutenant that his sister is a witch and has placed the letters in Napoleon’s coat pocket. The letters are brought to light and the lieutenant is saved. Napoleon orders the letters burned because they are touched with witchcraft and, while a candle is being found, he and the lady talk. When she is finally offered the chance of reading the letter before burning the dispatches, he says, “I have no curiosity whatever, madam. But since you are evidently burning to read them, I give you leave to do so” (203).

Even though her freedom is in danger by confronting Napoleon, she exposes his own destructive selfishness and ruthless inhumanity, and when the reconciliation takes place it is only after he concedes defeat in

front of her. The Strange Lady in *The Man of Destiny* appeals through her charm and sex appeal. Her instinctive audacity is a kind of manifestation of the life force operating mostly in Shavian plays. The Strange Lady is aware of her position; she knows Napoleon is unscrupulously selfish and mean; she even admires him as he is. Napoleon saying that he is concerned about nobility of character and heroic humanism in his battles is then ridiculed by his whole manner and actions. The Lady knows that Napoleon has no conscience, no scruples. When the Lady says that she adores him because he is not afraid to be mean and selfish, he indignantly replies that he is neither mean nor selfish. But he ultimately admits what the Strange Lady said. He declares mockingly: "Pooh! Theres no such a thing as a real hero". "He rises suddenly, and deliberately poses" for the oration which follows: There is only one universal passion: fear", says Napoleon. "Of all the thousand qualities a man may have, the only one you will find as certainly in the youngest drummer in my army as in me, is fear. It is fear that makes men fight: it is indifference that makes them run away: fear is the mainspring of war" (181). Napoleon's speech on fear reveals the character of *The Man of Destiny* and the author's views on the nature of the individual. Valency considers the play "as an outstanding play for its time... and so clear an insight into human nature". This assertion implies that the play was characterised as one of the Shavian developments of the theory of creative evolution, even though it lacks the dramatic conflict from any clash of intellectual ideas.

Napoleon's attitude to his wife's liaison is to get irritated; he walks around in anger and furiously whispers, "This is your revenge, you she cat, for having had to give me the letters". He says, "This woman will drive me out of my senses". Instead of worrying about the situation, as he has done in other letters, Napoleon in this letter, surprisingly enough, disclaims any jealous feeling and altruistically advises his wife to enjoy herself. He orders burning the letter, "Caesar's wife is above suspicion. Burn it" (207). In a way, unlike conventional heroes in the nineteenth century, Shaw's Napoleon is depicted as the antithesis of the romantic and the jealous man. Shaw emphasises Napoleon's heroic inhumanity in

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the play, however, this seems to be focused not on whether Napoleon was jealous or not but on Napoleon’s willingness and ability to suppress his jealous emotion and to subordinate all matters of personal ‘honour’ to the demands of his ambition.

With military superiority, his leadership of his army overwhells his enemies. He is a pragmatic realist who can and does take the advantage for himself and his army. “Napoleon’s superiority, Shaw has shown, lies in his possession of original values, in his immunity from conventional codes of conduct”.21 Shaw’s Napoleon has special aptitude in commanding discipline and in leading his army to victories in almost impossible conditions because, says Shaw, “this circumstance, which would have embarrassed an idealist soldier, has been worth a thousand cannon to Napoleon”. For the heroic quality of Napoleon’s, Roy explains that “The exceptional endowments of Napoleon that are revealed here are his realism, his freedom from conventional notions and inhibitions and his masterful will. Shaw implies that it is these superman-like qualities of mind and will that enabled Napoleon to overcome all obstacles both on the field and off the field”.22 Napoleon’s callousness to scruples of personal ‘honour’ is generally counted as one of his heroic traits because it reveals his disregard of conventional moral codes. Soon after his arrival at the headquarters of his new command he realizes how appalling the conditions of his ‘Army of the Alpes’ were. When he encounters his soldiers, Napoleon tells them: “You have patriotism and courage; but you have no money, no clothes, and hardly anything to eat. In Italy there are all these things, and glory as well, to be gained by a devoted army led by a general who regards loot as the natural right of the soldier. I am such a general. En avant, mes enfants!” (164). Napoleon’s compassion to his soldiers reflects Shaw’s own concern for humanity. Napoleon incited his soldiers:

Soldiers, you are half starved and half naked. The Government owes you much, but can do nothing for you. Your patience and courage are honourable to you, but they procure you neither advantage nor glory. I am about to lead you into the most fertile

22 Ibid., p. 17.
valleys of the world: there you will reap honour, glory and riches. Soldiers of the army of Italy, will you lack courage? (164).

His mastery over his enemy is caused by "that new faith of his in the efficacy of firing cannons at people" (164). For the major traits and characteristics of Napoleon, he is driven by a mysterious power, vital ambition, life force. He is always obsessed with dreams of crowns and vast kingdoms. In *The Man of Destiny*, Napoleon himself is aware of a natural force that changes the world, therefore, courage, strength of will, superior insight, and disillusion from conventional morality are essential elements of the hero. In the play, Napoleon is obviously not depicted as the saint-hero of the philosopher-king but as a military conqueror. Napoleon's indifference to happiness is considered as a heroic quality. Shaw maintains that "Happiness is not the object of life, life has no object: it is an end in itself; and courage consists in the readiness to sacrifice happiness for an intenser quality of life".\(^2\) In Shavian terms, happiness-seekers do not belong to those who labour for human improvement in the real world. For Shaw, happiness seekers do not have a vital evolutionary appetite, the life force which is an essential element for creative superhuman spirit. They do not devote themselves to improve society to higher form of organization. Happiness-seeking is considered as the self-indulgent and pleasure-seeking: "Happiness! Happiness is the most tedious thing in the world to me. Should I be what I am if I cared for happiness? Anything else?" (184). Through his characterization, Shaw presents a new insight of human nature in depth. Even though Napoleon's overriding ambition destroys the principles of the French Revolution, his ambition is to accept as a genuine quality.

The Machiavellian realist, military genius, and world conqueror is appropriately outwitted on several occasions by a mysterious, nameless woman, simply called the Strange Lady. Her powerful energy, namely a manifestation of the life force, operates in encountering Napoleon. Shaw has chosen to reveal the weakness and inhumanity of Napoleon in contrast with a female character in a fictitious situation. As mentioned earlier, mostly in Shavian plays woman becomes the stronger, the realist

and the pursuer and man the weaker, dreamer and the pursued. In the play, woman has the greater part in the working of new life as an instinctive agent of the creative partnership. It is part of Shavian tradition that this instinct is a manifestation of the life force operating more powerfully in the female character. The Strange Lady is positive, wilful and unequivocal. Her characteristic is not a sign of the womanly-woman weakness, but that of the instinct which is most presented in strong Shavian women. Irvine complained that “we have a feeling of waste, of mighty forces used for trivial purposes, Napoleon is brought upon the stage simply to chase a pretty woman around an innkeeper’s table”. However, as a theatrical device, Shaw used the Strange Lady to scourge Napoleon for his opportunism and bloody ambition. When she asks him to let her take away one particular letter, Napoleon wonders whether that is “a reasonable demand” (180). The Strange Lady asks: “Are your own demands reasonable? Thousand of lives for the sake of your victories, your ambitions, your destiny?” (180). When Napoleon unscrupulously plans to destroy the career of his lieutenant, the Lady’s comment is “You are very hard. Men and women are nothing to you but things to be used, even if they are broken in the use” (195). She outwits him in such difficult positions that he has to occasionally admit defeat, in spite of all his genius, alert mind, strong will and pretended immunity to womanly charms.

In The Man of Destiny, the question of genealogy is mentioned in relation to Napoleon’s name and ancestry and in connection with the Strange Lady’s lineage as well. Though she is French by nationality, she is suspected of being a disguised Austrian spy. Napoleon is Italian by birth but French by citizenship. The functions of the Strange Lady’s unusual connections add a historical dimension to the play:

Napoleon. ... though your grandfather was an Englishman, your grandmother was - what? A Frenchwoman?
Lady. Oh no. An Irishwoman.
Napoleon. Irish!... An English army led by an Irish general: that might be a match for

a French army led by an Italian general (206).

Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny*, as an amalgam of a negative and positive person and a true historical figure, is Shaw’s first vulgar sketch of the strong leader and could be the incipient superman. Napoleon’s conduct is simply justified by his own ambition. It may be that he behaves as he likes contrary to all conventions for his own ends. Henderson notes that “certain critics see in Shaw’s Napoleon only a ranting melodramatic poseur. Significantly enough, the late Professor Morse Stephens, distinguished historical authority, congratulated Shaw on the accuracy and verve of the historical portrait”.25 According to the history of Napoleon, he was waiting for his wife’s possible visit but he received the news of her illness or suspected pregnancy. Instead, Shaw’s Napoleon is waiting anxiously for his messenger to bring him dispatches. The historical Napoleon is known to pretend not to know of Josephine’s affair with Barras. In *The Man of Destiny*, Shaw presents his Napoleon with a slight variation on this theme. His Napoleon also pretends that the news of the scandal never demolishes him for his ambitions. Shaw portrayed Napoleon’s positive as well as negative qualities in proximity to the historical background. Even though the Strange Lady foils, outwits and scourges Napoleon, ironically she does not humiliate him as a great military hero. The young military genius and would-be world conqueror is understandably saved from humiliation.

Shaw has sympathetically portrayed a ‘heroic’ Napoleon who could be a miniature of Caesar. “Napoleon, as a merciless cannonader of political rubbish, is making himself useful: indeed, it is even now impossible to live in England without sometimes feeling how much that country lost in not being conquered by him as well as by Julius Caesar” (164). We distinguished between Napoleon and Caesar as representing two different categories of heroic figures. Napoleon may share several qualities with Caesar.26 He may possess the attributes of the heroes of history and mythology: courage, strength, determination, greatness over

fear and vital force. Shaw's Napoleon, nevertheless, lacks one important quality which Shaw calls 'original virtue'. This virtue exists in Caesar’s character. Compared with Caesar, Napoleon is not a noble or a virtuous hero. Henderson describes Shaw’s Napoleon as "a curious composite of noble and ignoble impulses". 27 Even though Napoleon is far from being the ideal of adequate nobility of humanity, however, he directed himself towards Shaw’s ideals of the life force which Shaw would have desired for the first step of the betterment of humankind. As Roy points out, it seems that "it is in the sketch of Napoleon that the Shavian conception of greatness is revealed, though partially, for the first time". 28 Through the play, Napoleon’s actions show that he was not an agent of destiny but a creator of his own destiny. As he proclaims, he seems to be always free from illusions and always the master of his destiny. The play seems to be interpreted as Shavianized history which parodies its hero as truly heroic.

The Man of Destiny is Shaw’s first historical play dealing with one of the greatest military geniuses of all times. Because it contains Shaw’s earliest attempt at a portrayal of a historical world figure, the play seems to be the prior step for the next greatest hero, Caesar. For theatrical purposes, Shaw invented the episode of the letter and the encounter between Napoleon and the Strange Lady to show the play’s historical origin. It seems that through The Man of Destiny, Shaw emphasises the supermanlike qualities which relate to the ingredients of the Shavian prescription of a great military genius even though there are lots of negative sides of Napoleon’s heroic attributes.

27 Ibid.
Chapter 4  The Devil’s Disciple

The Devil’s Disciple, subtitled, ‘A Melodrama’ in Three Acts, was written during 1896 and 1897 and was included in a volume of three plays entitled Plays for Puritans and first produced by Richard Mansfield in America in 1897. Shaw’s sympathetic handling of American nationalistic aspirations in The Devil’s Disciple led to his greatest box-office success hitherto. The play’s premier in England came two years after the first American production. It was not immediately welcomed in England mainly because of its critical attitude towards the English.¹ Shaw wrote this melodrama for William Terriss who enjoyed great popularity at the Adelphi Theatre as the leading melodramatic actor in London.

Terriss wants me to collaborate with him in a play the scenario of which includes every situation in the Lyceum repertory or the Adelphi record... I have written to Terriss to tell him that I have kept my promise to him & have “a strong drama” with a part for him.²

Shaw mentions to Mrs. Mansfield, “The Devil’s Disciple is a melodrama, made up of all the stale Adelphi tricks- the reading of the will, the heroic sacrifice, the court martial, the execution, the reprieve at the last moment”.³ According to Shaw, “The Devil’s Disciple has

...a genuine novelty in it. Only that novelty is not any invention of my own, but simply the novelty of the advanced thought of my day. As such, it will assuredly lose its gloss with the lapse of time, and leave The Devil’s Disciple exposed as the threadbare popular melodrama it technically is.⁴

¹ The first professional production in England was by Murray Carson in Kennington on 26 September 1899. Henderson in his Man of the Century, p. 445, points out that the play was given a suburban performance at the Grand Theatre, Croydon.
The Devil's Disciple presents a satire on melodrama through the use of the techniques of melodrama. It seemed that Shaw realized that the melodramatic genre could be used to convey the deepest and most basic in human nature; "A good melodrama is a more difficult thing to write than all this clever-clever comedy: one must go straight to the core of humanity to get it". Therefore, he suggested that a good melodrama should be both entertaining and didactic instead of being used for mere sensation and crude sentimentality. As the theatrical technique for his main themes, Shaw used the conventional trick of the mistaken identity through the play. For the technique of action, the exchange of coats between the minister Anderson and the devil's disciple Dick Dudgeon functions as an extended dramatic symbol and metaphor for the conversion. The play deals with the conventional melodramatic devices to approach the action of plot and which turns in an unexpected fashion.

In the Plays for Puritans, the conversion process of a character is particularly emphasized bringing new awareness of his place in the scheme of the life force; the three plays, The Devil's Disciple, Captain Brassbound's Conversion and Caesar and Cleopatra, also deal with the theme of romantic love as an obstacle that the life force has to overcome. As Irvine notes:

[The Plays for Puritans] exalt the Shavian puritan dedicated to work and action and ridicule the romantic hero dedicated to love and conventional heroics. They ridicule the romantic and conventional irrationalities of vengeance and legal punishment and emphasize the sudden benefits of unforeseen conversion or education. They set forth with particular clarity the central Shavian conflict between realistic vitalism and dead, unreal convention... in each play a vitalist hero opposes an artificial system and melodrama and at the same time educates another character to vitalism.

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The Devil's Disciple seems to follow the conventional incidents of the melodramatic genre with imitations of the incompatible characterizations and situations. However, Shaw exemplifies melodramatic devices in style and action through Shavian principles. Grene argues that the play is "one of the few plays of Shaw which is not thoroughly Shavianised in style and action". This does not seem to me to represent adequately Shaw's intention or achievement in the handling of the form. The Devil's Disciple uses traditional theatrical conventions and the two main subjects of melodrama, heroism and love, to introduce ideas wholly alien to those conventions. As Dervin says, "The Devil's Disciple...is a melodrama of conversion to Vitalism". Through the play Shaw challenges the traditional romantic motivation of the nineteenth-century theatre.

In his preface to Three Plays for Puritans, Shaw insists that the play "does not contain a single even passably novel incident... the stage tricks of The Devil's Disciple are not... the forgotten ones of the sixties, but the hackneyed ones of our own time". The plot of The Devil's Disciple relates to the heroism in two inversions. The plot of the play is reflected by Shaw's anti-romanticism. Shaw mentions the advantage of the melodramatic genre:

[Melodrama has to] represent conduct as producing swiftly and certainly on the individual the results which in actual life it only produces on the race in the course of many centuries.

The period in which the play was set was during the American war of independence from England. As in Saint Joan, Shaw's antagonistic attitude toward English jingoism appears through warriors of national liberation. As has been shown in the other plays, Shaw disparaged

9 Shaw, Three Plays for Puritans, p. 24.
narrow-minded patriotism which he often refers to as 'jingoism'. He was, on the other hand, sympathetic to wars of national liberation. *The Devil's Disciple* has the closest resemblances to *Saint Joan* in this particular respect for they both reflect Shaw's antipathy towards the jingoism of the English conquerors. In *The Devil's Disciple*, even though Richard's motivation seems to be from the patriotic as a decisive motive, Shaw seems to emphasise the motivation to the universal.

As a historical context, "the rebellion of the American colonies provides a political analogy to Dick Dudgeon's anti-religion". 11 Ironically the English hanged the wrong person rather than pastor Anderson as an example to warn rebellious people for their attempting to achieve the American revolution.

*The Devil's Disciple*... is just the play for America, as it occurs as an incident in the War of Independence. It is exactly the play for Richard- a splendid leading part, powerful life and death situations, any amount of singularity and individuality, simple enough for a village, and subtle enough for New York... there is an older man- a Presbyterian minister of 50 who holds his own with the hero all through. 12

The action takes place in a small town, Websterbridge, New Hampshire in New England during the American Revolution. The action of the plot relates to the unhistorical episode in historical context.

The most inevitable dramatic conception... of the nineteenth century [was] that of a perfectly naïve hero upsetting religion, law and order in all direction, and establishing in their place the unfettered action of humanity doing exactly what it likes, and producing order instead of confusion thereby because it likes to do what is necessary for the good of the race. 13

The main events of the play center on the relationship between

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Richard [Dick] Dudgeon, the Devil’s Disciple of the title, the American anti-hero in an institutional religious hypocritical society, and Anthony Anderson, the town’s minister. These two figures represent the life force in the struggle that characterizes creative evolution. They find themselves through self-recognition as the agents of creative evolution, led by instinctive passion for life, and throw off the conventional morality as Shavian realists. They fulfil the purposes of the life force by doing what they want for the improvement of human society. As is mentioned in the previous chapter, Shaw recognized in Schopenhauer’s concept of the will to live, an idea similar to his own concept, life force. For Shaw, the will had a purpose and a goal, was aimed at self-preservation and was leading man upwards. Both Dick and Anderson have the nature of innate virtue for the sake of the life force. As Grene concludes, “The way of action and the way of suffering, embodied in Anderson and Dick Dudgeon, remained for Shaw the alternative roads to salvation”.14 Dick, an independent man who is the hero of natural, spontaneous and mysterious character related by instinct to Shaw’s life force rather than to reason. He renounces the narrow-minded, hypocritical Christian piety presented by his dour, conventionally religious mother. He unexpectedly inherits his father’s small fortune, to the consternation of the rest of the community which regards him as immoral, an ungodly agent of the devil. However, Shaw notes that “Ishmael [Richard Dudgeon] - better than his people and therefore rated worse”.15

In this play, Shaw deals with the confrontations between Richard and the other characters. Even though Dick has his diabolonian nature, he is certainly of a much humbled and humanized stature in whom we can recognize our own humanity. Like Shavian religious men, Dick, with original virtue, is chosen by the life force to fulfil its purposes and promote the consciousness of the universal will by doing naturally what he wants to do. In his preface to ‘The Sanity of Art’, Shaw asserts the priority of human will over reason with his concept of the life force:

it was not the churches but that very freethinking philosopher Schopenhauer who re-

15 Shaw, Collected Letters 1874-1897, p. 667.
established the old theological doctrine that reason is no motive power; that the true motive power in the world is will (otherwise Life); and that the setting up of reason above will is a damnable error.\textsuperscript{16}

In the setting of the opening scene, Shaw sketches a dismal atmosphere of the Dudgeon's family implying a lifeless Puritanism.

At the most wretched hour between a black night and a wintry morning in the year 1777, Mrs. Dudgeon is sitting up in the kitchen and general dwelling room of her farm house... Mrs. Dudgeon's face is grimly trenched by the channels into which the barren forms and observances of a dead Puritanism can pen a bitter temper and a fierce pride.\textsuperscript{17}

In the first act, the Dudgeon family gathers according to the will of Dick's father one day after his death. The reading of a will is one of most melodramatic devices for developing action of plot in the conventional drama. Even though they have not seen one another for such a long time, they all gathered and expect a sudden fortune. Through this scene, Shaw presents a family, a society in which religion is hypocritical and money is the only deity. Shaw illustrates how money-based relationships are built on selfish materialistic terms. With Shaw's socialist view, the play relates the roots of the conflict to a money-based society. According to her late husband's will, her elder son, Dick Dudgeon inherits the farmhouse and property, which makes Mrs. Dudgeon curse her son.

Richard [boisterously derisive]. Now then: how many of you will stay with me; run up the American flag on the devil's house, and make a flight for freedom? [They scramble out, Christy among them, hustling one another in the haste] Ha ha! Long live the devil! [To Mrs Dudgeon, who is following them] What mother! Are you off too?

Mrs Dudgeon [deadly pale, with her hand on her heart as if she had received a deathblow]. My curse on you! My dying curse! [She Goes out].

Richard [calling after her]. It will bring me luck. Ha ha ha! (I, 67).

\textsuperscript{16} Shaw, \textit{Major Critical Essays}, p. 310.

\textsuperscript{17} Shaw, \textit{Three Plays for Puritans}, p. 43.
It seems that the inheritance of the house is satirized in the beginning of new religion, represented by the devil instead of old Puritanism represented by Mrs. Dudgeon.

Richard. From this day this house is his[devil] home; and no soul shall never cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid. Now [turning forcibly on the rest] which of you good men will take this child and rescue her from the house of devil? (I, 66).

The dead Puritanism represented by Mrs. Dudgeon and Diabolonianism represented by Richard Dudgeon are contrasted as the play proceeds. This contrast between virtue and vice reveals dramatically how irreligious the religious puritan is and how religious the devil is. The reverse between virtue and vice becomes an impetus to reveal the worthlessness of the morals in puritanical faith. "Where virtue is obviously mean-minded and sanctimonious and where vice is not only cheerful and witty, but generous, cruel only to dishonesty and hypocrisy". 18 As a representative of the dead- Puritanism, Mrs. Dudgeon's tragic character stems from her choosing a man for money over the man whom she loved. She married a religious man, which though it made her proud exacted the price of self-denial. It seems that Mrs. Dudgeon stayed with her husband because of his money. She is one of the despicable woman characters in Shaw's plays. As Innes points out:

For this reason she has married a "good" man instead of the man she loved and has tried to inculcate the same values into Dick. Since Dick has rebelled against these values it seems only proper to her way of thinking that she should be rewarded and he punished. But she is not content with only eternal rewards and punishments; she wants her reward on this earth in the form of her husband's money. 19

She despises the minister, Anderson because of his choice of a much

younger wife rather than a God-fearing woman as she is. She is cruel and heartless to Essie, who was sent to Mrs. Dudgeon's house after her father was hanged, the only child of her brother-in-law. Dick is the only person who treats her with the utmost kindness. Dick mocks the selfish love of hypocritical religious men concerned with their interests: "they could all rise to some sort of goodness and kindness when they were in love" (III, 94).

In her religious hypocrisy, Mrs. Dudgeon hates the joy of life. The family values and their pretense to hold a puritanical faith are symbolic to reveal how the state of the church of Puritans is hypocritical. The people around her pretend to have puritanical faith in front of Mrs. Dudgeon. They pretend to respect Mrs. Dudgeon's Christianity for they don't want to be rebuked by her unmerciful and callous creed. Namely, her puritanical faith is not the object of virtue but of fear. She expels his elder son, Dick because of his blasphemy. She calls him the devil. It seems that the religious violence stems from her unhappy marriage with the man she did not love. In relation to the unloving marriage, her dead Puritanism is revealed in the way she treats others, which can be the extreme of self-torment. She is always willing to judge other's attributes by her self-denial puritanical faith.

Through the characteristics of the play, Shaw intends to reverse what virtue is compared to the view of conventional religion. Even though Mrs. Dudgeon is represented as a faithful Puritan according to her creed, paradoxically her puritanical faith would result in wretchedness. Through the characteristics of Mrs. Dudgeon, Shaw illustrates the falsehood of the unloving relationships among family based on unloving religion. She is anti-life in terms of the life force, because her ruling passion is hatred; she is anti-religious in Shavian terms, she represents the narrowness and sterility of traditional Christianity; she embodies the hypocrisy, greed, and destructive self-interest of the conventional mind.

Mrs. Dudgeon. We are told that the wicked shall be punished. Why should we do our duty and keep God's law if there is to be no difference made between us and those who follow their own likings and dislikings, and make a jest of us and their Maker's word? (I, 49).
Dick's instinctive nature against human hypocrisy is revealed by his expressed responses in a Shavian paradox saying, "I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows" (III, 94). Shaw says that Richard Dudgeon "is a Puritan of the Puritans...[and] a man impassioned only for saving grace and not to be led or turned by wife or mother, church or state, pride of life or lust of the flesh".²⁰ He is the opposite of the self-seeker to the extent of being a self-sacrificer without having any of the conventional motives of reward and punishment. He is a true disciple of the religion of humanity. He fulfils the purposes of the life force by doing what he wants to do for the consciousness of the universal will. Shaw presents his own controversial opinion on Puritanism in the preface to the play saying:

I have, I think, always been a Puritan in my attitude towards Art. I am as fond of fine music and handsome building as Milton was, or Cromwell, or Bunyan. But if I found that they were becoming the instruments of a systematic idolatry of sensuousness, I would hold it good statesmanship to blow every cathedral in the world to pieces with dynamite, organ and all, without the least heed to the screams of the art critics and cultural voluptuaries.²¹

Shaw was not impressed by the pure Puritanism of Bunyan, rather he adopted Bunyanean allegory and the ideology of the era. Dick was brought up in an institutional Puritan family among conventional Puritans in decaying religious society. "I am thinking. It is all so strange to me. I can see the beauty and peace of this home: I think I have never been more at rest in my life that at this moment; and yet I know quite well I could never live here. It's not in my nature" (II, 78). He is disowned by his niggard mother because of his rebellion against her religious authority. He declares himself that "I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and captain and friend...I promise him my soul..." (I, 66). His crimes of theft, smuggling and piracy can be seen as a reflection of his acts against deprivation, injustice and hatred of his mother. His free-will stimulates him to behave as the devil free from the institutional

²⁰ Shaw, The Three Play for Puritans, pp. 34-5.
²¹ Ibid., p. 21.
restraints. Shaw links Dick’s diabolonian characteristics as a great rebel for human betterment to Shelley’s Prometheus in *Prometheus Unbound* and Blake’s devil in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

From Prometheus to the Wagnerian Siegfried, some enemy of the gods, unterrified champion of those oppressed by them, has always towered among the heroes of the loftiest poetry... there is a way to heaven even from the gates of hell. A century ago William Blake was, like Dick Dudgeon, an avowed Diabolonian: he called his angels devils and his devils angels. His devil is a Redeemer. Let those who have praised my originality in conceiving Dick Dudgeon’s strange religion read Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.²²

As a hero of Shavian vitality, the unconventional Shavian puritan, Dick is eager for a better world and a higher improvement of mankind. He is characterized by innate virtue to risk his own life for the sake of protecting and creating a free and harmonious world. Without the romantic and the patriotic motives which were prevalent in contemporary melodrama, he behaves altruistically rather than selfishly. Dick has rejected the hypocritical habit of the dead Puritanism which has been respected by his mother and instead has decided to become the devil’s disciple. As the devil’s disciple, “Dick’s diabolonian ethics serve his turn as a rebel against the Puritan God, but his devilish attributes are largely cosmetic”.²³ As Bentley points out, the conflict between Dick and his mother is “the conflict between vitality and system pervasive”.²⁴ Dick’s diabolonian characteristic had been rejected by his family and relatives and considered as the epitome of vice. In a traditional melodrama, all of Dick’s characteristics could be considered as an unsympathetic villain. According to a stage direction, “his expression is reckless and sardonic, his manner defiant and satirical, his dress picturesquely careless... and his eyes are the eyes of a fanatic” (I, 58). However, Shaw depicts Dick

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²³ Maurice Valency, *The Cart and The Trumpet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 163. Valency says Dick is an anarchist, also he links the play with Ibsen’s *The Master Builder*.
not only as the devil’s disciple but also the savior. Shaw characterizes Dick Dudgeon as a religious iconoclast as Shaw himself has challenged the institutional religion. As he wrote to E. D. Girldestone:

Let us be religious, if you will, but not virtuous, not moral, not good—anything but that. My only boast is that in these days when it is so easy & cheap to be a Christ, I have ventured to follow the poor, despised, but always right Devil.25

The paradox is that the devil of institutional Puritanism can be the angel of the new religion focused on vitality. In a sense, Dick’s diabolonianism is considered as the merciful morality of new religion instead of institutional religious authority. Shaw formally presents the concept of the superman in the preface to Three Plays for Puritans during his discussion of diabolonian ethics:

The Diabolonian position is new to the London playgoer of today, but not to lovers of serious literature... Our newest idol, the superman, celebrating the death of godhead, may be younger than the hills; but he is as old as the shepherds.26

In Shavian meaning, Dick symbolizes the resurrection of new religious morality, namely immorality which Shaw said “All religions begin with a revolt against morality” in The Quintessence of Ibsenism.27

As an another anti-hero, pastor Anderson finds himself as a militia captain rather than as a clergyman. According to the stage directions, he is described as the minister having, “an altogether secular authority, sweetened by a conciliatory, sensible manner not at all suggestive of a quite through-going other-worldliness... [he is] still a man capable of making the most of this world, and perhaps a little apologetically conscious of getting on better with it than a sound Presbyterian ought” (I, 46). Also Shaw depicts Anderson, “the love of solemn family councils, especially funeral ones, is not in his nature” (I, 57). When the minister attends to read the will, Dick blasphemously mocks the minister.

25 Shaw, Collected Letters 1874-1897, p. 268.
27 Shaw, Major Critical Essays, p. 121.
Anderson and his wife before the reading of his father’s will. The minister’s behavior is contrasted to that of the devil’s disciple. Here in the opening scene the roles of the two men in the play are established dramatically, which is reversed ironically at the end of the play.

In the opening scene, Anderson plays the professional clergyman consoling a recently bereaved family: “Anderson, sensible enough to know that these demonstrations can only gratify and encourage a man who is deliberately trying to provoke them, remains perfectly goodhumored (I, 47)”. At the beginning of the play, he (like Morell in Candida) seems to be somewhat smug and self-satisfied, having accepted his comfortable place and position without much soul-searching. He is a promising candidate for conversion to Shavian religion. “He is a strong, healthy man too, with a thick sanguine neck; and his keen, cheerful mouth cuts into somewhat fleshly corners. (I, 47)”. Anderson throws off the conventional trappings as a Shavian realist. The church cannot give him his identity in society any more.

In the second act, the conflict between Dick and Anderson is intensified. When Anderson invites him to stop and have tea with him and his wife, Richard replies:

I know I am not welcome for my own [sake], Madam, but I think I will not break bread here, Minister.
Anderson [cheerily]. Give me a good reason for that.
Richard. Because there is something in you that I respect, and that makes me desire to have you for my enemy.
Anderson. Thats well said. On those terms, sir, I will accept your enmity or any man’s (II, 74).

As an influential person in the town, the English choose the minister, Anderson to be hanged in order to make an example of disposition for rebellion. Anderson recognises that he is surrounded by the power of an institution and captured by the destruction of war. He thinks he cannot do his job as a servant of God for peace any more and decides to join the liberty-warriors at the same time. When Judith tells him that Dick is going to be hanged in his stead, the stage directions indicates his abruptly changing mental state: “His fists clench; his neck
thickens; his face reddens; the fleshy purses under his eyes become injected with hot blood; the man of peace vanishes, transfigured into a choleric and formidable man of war" (II, 87). His characteristic nature as a man of action is seen when he sold his “family Bible to buy a pair of pistols” and instigated the town’s people to rebellion. “Anthony Anderson, have conducted the service, and sold your family bible to buy a pair of pistols... run up the American flag on the devil’s house; and make a fight for freedom” (I, 65). In a sense, “he is a soldier at heart, not a clergyman. Whereas, quite clearly, Dick is a clergyman at heart”.28 This exchange may seem paradoxical, but it exemplifies the way in which the life force moves. Later he realizes that Dick has been imprisoned for him. It seems his arrival home could be another chance to show his heroic sacrifice of conventional melodrama, yet when his wife asks to pray for Dick, he replies,

Pray! Can we pray Swindon’s rope off Richard’s neck?
Judith. God may soften Major Swindon’s heart.
Anderson [contemptuously]. Let him, then. I am not God; and I must go to work another way...
Judith. Have you forgotten even that you are a minister?

It is clearly in contrast to what he said when he attended to the Dudgeon’s family business of reading the will, saying “Sister: the Lord has laid his hand very heavily upon you... I will take no offence at what you say in the first bitterness of your grief... The Lord forbid that I should come between you and the source of all comfort... [and] Our poor afflicted sister will be with us in a moment” (I, 48). At a glance he looks a stereotyped minister, yet he is secular to hide his hypocritical tendencies. However, as Wiedner indicates “Anderson proceeds to subordinate outer reality to it, as Dudgeon has done all along”.29 Like

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29 Elsie M. Wiedner, “Shaw’s Transformation of Ibsen in The Devil’s Disciple”, in The Shaw Review, Vol. XXII (1979), p. 27. She links The Devil’s Disciple with Ibsen’s A Doll’s House and Ghost focusing on thematic affinities and contrasting
Morell in *Candida*, he realizes who he is. Whereas Morell is strong at first and then gradually becomes weaker and weaker, Anderson seems to be weak but finally appears the stronger character at the end of act III. At last he returns not as a coward but as a military leader, captain Anthony Anderson. Finally he appears as a military hero in reality transformed from a double-faced person in the parody of conventional melodrama. He is "reborn into a new reality and a new life".  

I thought myself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to me, I found that it was my destiny to be a man of action, and that my place was amid the thunder of the captains and the shouting. So I am starting life at fifty as Captain Anthony Anderson of the Springtown militia (III, 117).

Then, the newly-born man of war rushes out like an avalanche, and does not reappear until the climactic moment of the play when he rescues Dick, topping Dick’s "my life for the world’s future", with "Amen; and stop the execution" (III, 115). Anderson understands quite well what has happened to him, and he explains his transformation and the theme of the play to General Burgoyne who might have some sympathy:

Sir: it is in the hour of trial that a man finds his true profession. This foolish young man... boasted himself the Devil’s Disciple; but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his destiny to suffer and be faithful to the death. I thought myself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to me, I found that it was my destiny to be a man of action and that my place was amid the thunder of the captains and the shouting. (III, 117).

But Burgoyne cannot really understand: "My good sir, without a Conquest you cannot have an aristocracy" (III, 117); he is part of the old order which Anderson has overthrown. The significance of Anderson’s transformation, as revolutionary soldier, is not so much that he has become a man of war, but that he has thrown off conventional religion and authority. It is Anderson’s new decision to take revolutionary change.

dramatic techniques among them.

As Anderson says: "It takes all sorts to make a world- saints as well as soldiers" (III, 118). And as a soldier he has now joined his will to that of the life force.

It seems certain that Shaw asserts his argument- the real purpose of religion is not to obey traditional duty but to find himself in reality- through the inversion of character.

Anderson. You don't know the man you're married to. (II, 89)

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The episodes of the action as well as the protagonist and the other characters - except General Burgoyne - are all unhistorical in the historical context. Through the presentation of the characters in the play Shaw attacks incompatible human natures represented by jingoism, religious hypocrisy and self-righteousness, callousness, institutional Puritanism, ideal romanticism, narrow moralism, mammonism and militarism. Dukore characterizes Dick as Shaw's embodiment of spiritual victory:

The major pattern of the play, as Shaw explains, is the revelation of Richard's superiority, first to conventional religion and morality (as exemplified by his mother), then to conventional romance (Judith), and then to gentility (Burgoyne).31

Compared with the minister, Anderson, the general, Burgoyne is a historical figure and is an unconventional soldier. General Burgoyne is a civilized man who has risen to a position of eminence in society and his position, accomplishments, beliefs, and identity are dependent on the continued existence of that civilization. Through Burgoyne, Shaw reveals a cynical view of mankind's incorrigibility in his existing condition. Shaw explains the role of Burgoyne as a realist in a letter to Ellen Terry:

Ellen: Burgoyne is a gentleman; and that is the whole meaning of that part of the

play. It is not enough, for the instruction of this generation, that Richard should be superior to religion and morality as typified by his mother and his home, or to love as typified by Judith. He must also be superior to gentility— that is, to the whole ideal of modern society... Burgoyne pleads all through for softening and easing the trial by reciprocal politeness and consideration between all the parties, and for ignoring the villainy of his gallows, the unworthiness of his cause, and the murderousness of his profession. The picture is completed by the band playing Handel’s music, and the Christian clergyman reading the Bible to give the strangling an air of being an impressive ceremony. 32

Through Burgoyne, Shaw presents the power of established institutions and the system of empire. Burgoyne has dual characteristics as spiritual rebelliousness and as the agent of empire. His characteristics are imposed when he and Judith converse about execution:

Burgoyne. My good lady, our only desire is to save unpleasantness... I am sure we are greatly indebted to the admirable tact and gentlemanly feeling shewn by your husband. Judith [Throwing the words in his face]. Oh, you are mad. Is it nothing to you what wicked thing you do if only you do it like a gentleman? Is it nothing to you whether you are a murderer or not, if only you murder in a red coat? (III, 103).

In act II, Dick is left alone with the minister’s wife, Judith. He says to her “Your love helps him to be a good man, just as your hate helps me to be a bad man” (II, 78). He has been arrested by the British soldiers in the minister’s house instead of the minister, Anderson. During his arrest, he is wearing the minister’s coat unconsciously, “the idea of himself as a parson tickles him” (II, 79). For this dramatic device, Turco points out that “the donning of the coat is a true accident, a purely chance occurrence that inadvertently penetrates to the heart of a mystery”. 33 This happening hints at the fact of Dick’s self-recognition as a disciple of Shaw’s new religion as Captain Anderson says, “the Devil’s Disciple here will start presently as the Reverend Richard Dudgeon” (III, 117). The

irony is that the English army, because they wanted to hang a real puritan rather than an anti-puritan, seems to help the victory of Puritanism on the surface. He responds in an unexpected fashion in the conventional situation. When the minister, Anderson heard of what had happened to Dudgeon, he also runs away instead of going to Dudgeon in prison as expected.

Judith, the minister’s wife, as a typical melodramatic heroine, also has been influenced by Mrs. Dudgeon’s religious view. Judith is a conventional Victorian young woman brought up on melodramatics for emotions and romantic love to which she can cling. Her melodramatic concept of love to Dick is not aggressive in this play; it is loving of an ideal. She preaches Essie to be saved with her Christianity.

You must not mind if your aunt is strict with you. She is a very good woman, and desires your good too... Dick Dudgeon! Essie: do you wish to be a really respectable and grateful girl, and to make a place for yourself here by steady good conduct?... Then you must never mention the name of Richard Dudgeon—never even think about him. He is a bad man... You are too young to know what it is to be a bad man. But he is a smuggler; and he lives with gypsies; and he has no love for his mother and his family; and he wrestles and plays games on Sunday instead of going to church. Never let him into your presence, if you can help it, Essie; and try to keep yourself and all womanhood unspotted by contact with such men (I, 55).

When she attends the reading of the will, she reveals her antipathy towards Dick Dudgeon, saying “You should be burnt alive” (I, 66). She is prejudiced against Dick because of his unconventional behaviour. “Is it wrong to hate a blasphemer and a villain? I can’t get him out of mind” (II, 71). After his arrest for her husband, she realizes the essence of Dick’s character. In the trial scene, the romantic and sentimental heroine, Judith Anderson has illusions about Dick’s behaviour as romantic love. When meeting Dick alone in the courtroom, she speaks to offer her love to him: “Then why not try to save yourself? I implore you—listen. You said just now that you saved him for my sake... Well, save yourself for my sake. And I will go with you to the end of the world” (III, 94). Dick rejects the role of romantic lover and dismisses the self-sacrifice and has no desire to revoke hanging. For his rejection of romantic woman, “He has risen
above conventional morality, conventional romantic love, or the consolations of traditional religion”.  

Judith interprets Dick’s heroic sacrifice as love for her in accordance with the rules of melodrama. To her, he is a noble creature despite his rough ways. In terms of the life force, Judith is capable of recognizing the man of the life force and also enough of a creature of the life force to have chosen instinctively the right husband to father a possible Superman in a sense. But she is limited to understand her motive and not able to recognize the emptiness of her illusions. When Anderson returns, she reverts to her original feelings for him. As Nethercot notes, “After all ... since it is natural that her love should flood back to him”. As Shaw says in the stage directions introducing her: “Rather a pathetic creature to any sympathetic observer who knows how rough a place the world is” (I, 53).

As a representative of vital force, Dick declares he will follow his inner natural law rather than social law. As Whitman puts, “Dick’s motives include self-sacrifice... not to the commands of any code of ethics or religion, but to his own nature”. The act of sacrifice is not for Judith, or for any other reason but because he discovers then that he is unable to do otherwise. The real motive behind why he has sacrificed himself for pastor Anderson is not romantic love of a woman or patriotic motives rather led by instinctive passion for life and self-sacrifice without any apparent motive. His sacrificial act is interpreted unmelodramatically in direct opposition to the expectations that the melodramatic form has set up. Here the melodramatic expectation is reversed as Shaw himself intends,

Never mislead an audience, was an old rule. But the new school will trick the spectator into forming a meanly false judgment, and then convict him of it in the next

36 Whitman, “The Passion of Dick Dudgeon”, p. 64.
Dick finds himself unable to resist the pull of the life force, acts only according to his own nature with his responsibility to a larger humanity. Because Dick is a realist, the devil's disciple, and an unconventional puritan. He follows the law of nature which is in tune with the will of the life force. This will must be free of any conventional sense of duty as an "acceptance of the impulse towards greater freedom as sufficient ground for the repudiation of any customary duty, however sacred, that conflicts with it". Dick has repudiated conventional Christian puritanism, and romantic idealism. He is acting in accordance with the life force. His last words on the scaffold; "Amen! My life for the world's future!" (III, 115). make it evident that he understands the consequences of his act and his necessary role in creative evolution. He is the self-sacrificer without having any of the conventional desires of reward and punishment to some extent. He rejects any system and religion of society and he is defiant to the rule of systematic power. His vitality attacks the gentility of the conventional religion in order to show how hypocritical it is. The devil's disciple is the true religious person who can perform a gratuitous act because it is in his nature. Perhaps the most important confrontation Dick faces seems to be that between his will to live and the inexplicable force that puts him to his death. His reasons for hanging on the scaffold instead of Anderson are in direct opposition to the expectations that the melodramatic device has set up. Within the confines of the play, Dick's motives are not easily explained because it is not particularly logical. Dick cannot really explain what has happened to him. Dick's somewhat puzzling, inexplicit explanation relates to the integral relationship between the play and Shaw's conception of creative evolution. But in terms of the life force, his explanation is entirely appropriate in describing the actions of a Shavian realist:

What I did last night, I did in cold blood, caring not half so much for your husband, or [ruthlessly] for you... as I do for myself. I had no motive and no interest: all I can

37 Shaw, Major Critical Essays, p. 145.
38 Ibid., p. 23
tell you is that when it came to the point whether I would take my neck out of the noose and put another man's into it, I could not do it. I don't know why not: I see myself as a fool for my pains; but I could not and I cannot. I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows (III, 94).

For the purpose of the play, melodramatic action is transformed into an enactment of creative evolution at work at the end of the play. As Barr notes, "it [creative evolution] gives us something to hope for. Ideally it will lead to the Superman, who will be free of many of our limitations and follies". For the new religion of vitality, the life force interacts through the devil's disciple of institutional religion with men who are caught up in a revolution which itself symbolizes the historical progress of the life force.

Shaw's Dick Dudgeon in The Devil's Disciple represents the nature of innate virtue for the sake of the life force like his other historical hero and heroine, such as Caesar in Caesar and Cleopatra and Joan in Saint Joan. Dick's self-sacrifice is based on his vitality as an embodiment of the life force, which is the main reason of his death by hanging. His strong vitality is supposed to conflict in the conventional world surrounded by men who share an existing system and institutional faith. Dick is the focus of a conflict between the individual intention and institutional constraints. Dick's self-sacrifice with anti-Puritanism symbolizes Shaw's belief in the inner truth of the individual as a higher source of vitality.

Shaw shows us his hope of world betterment through Dick's last speech. Shaw's religion of creative evolution is basically optimistic and he never loses hope completely in the future of the human race. Through The Devil's Disciple, Shaw gives us the prospect that tragedies of all sorts will continue to recur until a radical change is achieved in human society. However, since he had found the elements of the superman in his plays, his belief is strengthened that the human race will evolve into a better future when self-realization and the will for progress are accepted.

This is how Shaw presents his religious idea based on the life force through *The Devil's Disciple*. As he points out in the preface to *Man and Superman*, "My conscience is the genuine pulpit article: it annoys me to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable; and I insist on making them think in order to bring them to conviction of sin".40 *The Devil's Disciple* is the play which carries out that purpose most effectively.

Chapter 5  *Pygmalion*

The original five-act play *Pygmalion*, written in 1912, and copyrighted in 1914 and 1916, was first performed at the Hofburgertheater in Vienna on October 16, 1913, then the Lessingtheater in Berlin both times with great success. The play was produced in London at His Majesty's Theatre on April 11 directed by Shaw in 1914, with Beerbohm Tree as Professor Higgins and Mrs Patrick Campbell in the role of Eliza. It has continued to make theatrical history in its original play form and as the basis for one of the world's most successful musicals ever made. *My Fair Lady*, the musical version, makes the relationship between Eliza and Higgins significantly more romantic. Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's *My Fair Lady* opened at the Mark Hellinger Theatre in New York on 15 March 1956, where it achieved a big success.

In 1891- twenty-one years before the play was written Shaw wrote a letter, which anticipated his writing *Pygmalion*, to the actress Florence Farr:

> Prithee persevere with the speaking: I found with unspeakable delight last time that you were beginning to do it quite beautifully. There is much more to be done, of course, much ill usage in store for you, but success is now certain. You have reached the stage of the Idiotically Beautiful. There remain the stages of the Intelligently Beautiful & Finally of the Powerfully Beautiful & until you have attained the last you will never be able to compel me to recognize the substance of that soul of which I was shown a brief image by Nature for her own purposes.¹

One of Shaw’s letters to Ellen Terry in 1897 also reveals the origins of *Pygmalion*:

> 'Caesar & Cleopatra' has been driven out of my head by a play I want to write for them in which he shall be a west end gentleman and she [Mrs. Patrick Campbell] an

Shaw wrote about the experimentation of human life as material in the preface to *Misalliance* in 1914 a year after the first production of *Pygmalion*:

An experiment. A fresh attempt to produce the just man made perfect: that is, to make humanity divine. And you will vitiate the experiment if you make the slightest attempt to abort it into some fancy figure of your own: for example, your notion of a good man or a womanly woman. If you treat it as a little wild beast to be tamed, or as a pet to be played with, or even as a means to save you trouble and to make money for you (and these are our commonest ways), it may fight its way through in spite of you and save its soul alive; for all its instincts will resist you, and possibly be strengthened in the resistance.  

There are many divergent elements of myth, legend, phonetics and didacticism in *Pygmalion*. They were used for the purpose of dramatic progression in reality. Gibbs insists that "a Frankenstein-like relation between creator and creature are also present in *Pygmalion". Shaw said that he recalled classical myth about the beautiful statue Galatea when visiting Paris as well as when seeing W. S. Gilbert’s play *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871). In creating his Galatea, Shaw chooses a flower girl, who is neither divine nor beautiful but vulgar and dirty from the gutter. She is transfigured into a lady who speaks the King’s English with good manners after six months’ training.

Lorichs asserts that "in *Pygmalion*, the modernized form of the myth, the main theme is supposed to be phonetics". It seems that at least one of Shaw’s purposes in writing the play was evident with emphasising the important role of phoneticians as he does in the preface to the play:

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2 Ibid., p. 803.
If the play makes the public aware that there are such people as phoneticians, and that they are among the most important people in England at present, it will serve its turn... It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else.6

St. John Ervine wrote that “G. B. S.’s interest in phonetics was not only profound but was almost lifelong”.7 Shaw stresses the importance of a didactic purpose for phoneticians. In terms of the important role of phonetics, Shaw employs language metalinguistically to convey ideas to the audience. It seems “the play is a tract about phonetics rather than a Cinderella romance”.8 In the preface to the play, Shaw stresses the crucial role which the phonetician ought to play in society.

The English have no respect for their language, and will not teach their children to speak it. They spell it so abominably that no man can teach himself what it sounds like. It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him... The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play.9

Shaw wrote about Professor Henry Sweet, who was actually a phonetician. Shaw points out that Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion* was modeled on him:

Henry Sweet, then a young man, lacked their sweetness of character: he was about as conciliatory to conventional mortals as Ibsen or Samuel Butler. His great ability as a phonetician (he was, I think, the best of them all at this job) would have entitled him to high official recognition, and perhaps enabled him to popularize his subject,
but for his Satanic contempt for all academic dignitaries.\textsuperscript{10}

Crompton points out that "the central theme of \textit{Pygmalion} is the contrast between the Promethean passion for improving the race and the ordinary human desire for the comforts and consolations of the domestic hearth".\textsuperscript{11} This point seems to be related to Shaw's passion for improving the human race in terms of his religious ideas, creative evolution. Bauschatz's approach is that "\textit{Pygmalion} is in large part about the power of money to determine social class".\textsuperscript{12} However it seems appropriate to maintain what Grene says, "\textit{Pygmalion} does express Shavian teaching on certain issues as acutely as his more obviously didactic works".\textsuperscript{13} The passage quoted above is correct in pointing out the significance of the Shavian purpose focusing on the process of self-realization to gain identity and independence in terms of the evolution of vitality.

Even though Shaw's didactic purposes are obvious through the play, critics maintain different points of view in terms of the dramatic theme. On the one hand, the play has the elements of the Cinderella story between Eliza and Professor Higgins. Pedersen compares the similarities and differences between Shaw's \textit{Pygmalion} and Shakespeare's \textit{The Taming of the Shrew} in terms of the roles and relationships between heroes and heroines, that "\textit{Pygmalion} seems deliberately designed to challenge and contradict Shakespeare's handling of this central situation".\textsuperscript{14} This is because the heroes in both plays undertake the task of transfiguring a woman using bullying methods.

The play contains most of the conventional elements of the romantic comedy: the church front setting, Eliza's collision with Freddy, the frustrated love story between a couple, change of social status, characters

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
of lower and upper affirmed of the social order etc. Moreover Eliza is largely a conventional West End heroine and is a refutation of criticism that Shaw could not create or enjoy such a woman. However, more importantly the play is largely structured as a romantic comedy which stresses the growth of individualism based on self-awareness and self-realization with vitality. Also Pygmalion is an enjoyable play that displays conflict and sentiment in portions that entertain and charm. The characters each serve their purpose.

For the characteristics of Eliza, there is no doubt that the vitality and charm of Mrs. Pat Campbell gave Shaw substance for his idea of Eliza Doolittle, and he wrote the play with her in mind.

By the time she and Shaw met in 1887, Mrs Campbell was one of London’s reigning stars and acknowledge beauties, having scored triumphantly... It was not until 1912, however when Shaw wrote Pygmalion for her.¹⁵

Unlike the film and musical versions, for which the ending of the play was revised, Shaw did not seem to conclude with a future marriage between Higgins and Eliza. Instead of fulfilling playgoer’s expectations, according to Shaw’s own Epilogue, he denies the prospect of marriage between Higgins and Eliza:

People in all directions have assumed, for no other reason than that she became the heroine of a romance, that she must have married the hero of it. This is unbearable, not only because her little drama, if acted on such a thoughtless assumption, must be spoiled, but because the true sequel is patent to anyone with a sense of human nature in general, and of feminine instinct in particular.¹⁶

Unlike most contemporary plays, Shaw’s ending of Pygmalion is unconventional in terms of a happy marriage between hero and heroine. Ervine says that “the end of the [play]... denies the laboured account of the flower girl’s future,... that she married Henry Higgins and bore him

¹⁵ Shaw, Collected Letters 1874-1897, p. 564.
¹⁶ Shaw, Pygmalion, p. 134.
many vigorous and intelligent children”. During the period in which the play was written, many intellectuals supported the eugenic movement as a response to the question of reproduction. As in many of Shaw’s plays, particularly in *Man and Superman*, it seems that the best way of improving the human race was intellectual selection with the intent to create better children through a marriage between intellectual man and instinctive woman with desirable traits. It is clear from the contemporary reviews that the ending of *Pygmalion* was indeed felt to be inappropriate in terms of eugenic purpose. However, in relation to the central theme of *Pygmalion* for human improvement through teaching, Webb’s assertion is appropriate to support eugenic purpose in the play: eugenics’s object was “not merely to produce fine babies but to ensure the ultimate production of fine adults”. Higgins as a potential superman, will be alone with his single-minded devotion to the life force. Matlaw says, “Marrying Eliza would be preposterous for Higgins, a superman with the vitality of a soul... who lives on an entirely different plane, a plane where sex and marriage indeed, are unknown”. Many playgoers expected the Cinderella story of mating with the hero. Watson insists that Shaw’s ending was the right thing:

If *Pygmalion* were to end as sentimentalists think it should, all the starch that charms us in these two warring collaborators would wilt away... The very qualities that led Higgins to create a new Eliza make him impossible as a husband. The circumstances of the theater also mislead an audience. It seems that the beautiful leading lady and the impressive leading man must make a rapturous couple. Being infatuated, the audience overlooks the fact that Higgins was a ‘predestinate’ bachelor and that for Eliza the satisfaction of storming his fortress would be small compensation for having to live inside it ever after. Again, the play that ends without a wedding is the more romantic play.

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20 Barbara W. Watson, *A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman* (New York: Norton,
There are many stage versions of the Cinderella theme in Shaw’s *Pygmalion*. The theme of Cinderella—declassment theme—was popular in the nineteenth century stage, and Shaw directly acknowledged this in the context of Shavian development of Eliza. However, *Pygmalion* is a play not about the Cinderella story of marriage between hero and heroine, but about the heroine’s recognition of her identity and self-respect through struggle and defiance. In a play largely structured as a romantic comedy which stresses the growth of individualism either ending could conceivably occur. Eliza is a step toward the extreme self-realization of the life force. She seems to possess the Shavian concept of vitality of the life force based on self-realization. Eliza’s vision of life has improved through her conflict with Higgins. She has escaped the blindness to reality which is death to the soul. Otherwise, we cannot expect to serve the higher purpose of the life force in working for a better world. Eliza finds herself, “If I only could go back to my flower basket! I should be independent of both you and father and all the world! Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I’m a slave now, for all my fine clothes” (V, 129). Gibb’s assertion is appropriate that “Shaw’s *Pygmalion* does indeed create (or recreate) a woman. But the essential sign of her coming to life is that she is no longer a doll-like projection of her creator’s will. She has gained self-ownership and freedom of choice”.21 Her defiance of Higgins elicits from him the wondering comments: “By George, Eliza, I said I’d make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this... Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round your neck. Now you’re a tower of strength: a consort battleship” (V, 132). Even though he expects Eliza’s compliance with his wishes, Eliza defies Higgins’s confidence of making her a woman: “you can turn round and make up to me now that I’m not afraid of you, and can do without you” (V, 132). He misunderstands what making a woman of Eliza means because he is elated with the success of his experiment.

There are different illuminations regarding characteristics of Eliza. In Act II, different kinds of expectation are revealed through the

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exposition of characters. Higgins regards Eliza as a phonetic experiment rather than a human being. To Pickering she is to be treated with sympathy as a naïve young girl. To Mrs Pearce, she is a poor, unprivileged human being. To her father, Mr. Doolittle, she is a good thing for making some money. Eliza herself arrives at Higgins's laboratory with great expectation in a kind of illusion.

Liza. Whood marry me?
Higgins [suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in his best elocutionary style]. By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.
Liza. ... I'm going away. He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teaching me (II, 42).

In confronting him, Eliza throws the slippers at Higgins. It is symbolic of her personal and social independence from him. When Eliza confronts Higgins with her future, Higgins callously tells her to "go back to [the] gutter", where life is "real, warm [and] violent" But Eliza defies him, saying "What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?" (IV, 102). As the play progresses, she is getting realised "her realism and her self-respect. Having these, she is not deluded by Higgins's intellect and social position". Crompton expresses his discontent about Eliza's development, saying that "She has nothing of the impersonality of the world-betterer, nothing of Higgins's scientific passion for reform". However, Eliza's efforts to improve herself, even though it's a desire for its own sake, has been based on her vital will. To Shaw, the growth of self-improvement is based on self-realization with intellectual force.

Eliza acquires not only good manners, but a refined way of speech, which leads her to become independent. For Eliza's self-independence, Burst explains that "through successive stages of inspiration, purgation, illumination, despair, and finally, brilliant personal fulfillment, Eliza progresses toward self-awareness as a human being. Most simply, here is

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a movement from illusion to reality; most grandly, she undergoes a spiritual voyage from darkness to light". Berst is correct in pointing out the significance of Eliza’s disillusionment for self-betterment. As Berst maintains, it is almost certain that Eliza’s efforts to improve herself stem from her vitality.

According to a stage direction, Higgins is described as a man “of energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently, interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings” (II, 34). Though “he [Higgins] is an artist in his sense of dedication, he is a cerebral one, quite Shavian, and his final proposed union is intellectual, not physical”. Shaw declares in the Epistle Dedicatory to Man and Superman that the man of genius is “an atrocious egoist in his disregard of others” (p. xx). Like other Shavian heroes, he is a person who is chosen by the life force to fulfil its purposes and promote the consciousness of the universal will by doing naturally what he wants to do. Even though he lacks ordinary human manners, he will sacrifice those around him for the sake of his art. Shaw wrote, “The real business of artists is to form the human mind; and the proof that they do this is shown by the way their ideas dominate life”. To him, others are considered as the materials which can be made for higher purposes of human beings.

Higgins [as he shuts the last drawer]. Well, I think that’s the whole show.
Pickering. It’s really amazing. I haven’t taken half of it in, you know.
Higgins. Would you like to go over any of it again?
Pickering. ... No, thank you: not now. I’m quite done up for this morning.
Higgins. ... Tired of listening to sounds? (II, 34).

Act I opens in the darkness of the night with rain. The circumstances around Eliza are contrasted with the privileges of Higgins.

25 Ibid., p. 200.
The illustration of the atmosphere of the opening scene: the bells from church, the lightning and thunder shows what Shaw wished to reveal for his societal interest. "Shaw's decision to place his opening scene in this location... reflects more than this need for a realistic motivation. The contrast between market and church, between a place of commerce and a place of the spirit, immediately sets up a conflict that is to pervade the entire play: between the outer and the inner life, the artificial role and the living person". Shaw contrasts stage settings; flowers, the garden party, the notebook etc, to present true and vital values.

Higgins, "Shaw's Prometheus of phonetics", is interested in the job, not the woman. For Eliza's complaining, "What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?", Higgins says that "Why, because it was my job" (V, 128). For the issue concerning romance between Higgins and Eliza, it seems true that "Shaw stresses a reason other than romance for Higgins's attachment to Liza". Higgins's attachment is in his job of transfiguring Eliza not Eliza herself. After Eliza's arrival, Mrs. Higgins objects that her son and Pickering are playing with their live doll, Eliza. Higgins explains how important their job is training a naïve young girl. "Playing!" he exclaims,

The hardest job I ever tackled: make no mistake about that, mother. But you have no idea how frighteningly interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul (III, 81).

Shaw gives Mrs. Higgins the role of ideal mother to reveal Higgins's attributes and to discern the qualities of personages in the play. She is a dignified, intelligent and well-cultivated woman. He is treated as a baby, "rather like a very impetuous baby" (II, 34), by his mother. He himself says to Pickering in Act II that he has "never been able to feel

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really grown-up and tremendous, like other chaps” (II, 52). Higgins cannot consider how Eliza’s feelings are conceived. To him, she is merely an object to be taught. As Wisenthal suggests “like Tanner: he is a master only in his own higher intellectual pursuit, while in dealing with other people (especially women) he is frequently a blunderer”.  

Pickering [in good-humored remonstrance]. Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feeling?

Higgins [looking critically at her]. Oh no, I don’t think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. [Cheerily] Have you, Eliza?

Liza. I got my feelings same as anyone else.

Higgins [to Pickering, reflective]. You see the difficulty?

Higgins. To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough. (II, 43-4).

Crompton says that “Like Caesar in Caesar and Cleopatra, he is part god and part brute; but unlike Caesar, he cannot boast that he has ‘nothing of man’ in him”.  For Higgins is another protagonist of the elan vital and freed from matter, to the whirlpool of pure intelligence proclaimed in Back to Methuselah. To reaffirm man’s dignity and responsibility, Shaw emphasises the power of mind over matter and creative evolution.

Act III takes place in Mrs. Higgins’s drawing room after Eliza’s six months training by Higgins. He wants his mother to test Eliza’s new King’s English. After Eliza’s exit during mid-act with her “Walk! Not bloody likely... I am going in a taxi” (III, 78), Higgins and Pickering explain to Mrs Higgins what has happened to Eliza and what she has been training to do. As always in major Shavian plays, teaching is the central passion as the necessary step for creating a new better life. In Lamarckian-views of evolution advocated by Shaw, acquired characteristics could be transmitted, which was regarded as the central element of the process of human development. Therefore, this biological

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30 J. L. Wisenthal, The Marriage of Contraries: Bernard Shaw’s Middle Plays (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 120.

determinism highlighted the role of education and social reform. In spite of the Galtonian belief that ability is inherited and cannot be enhanced by education, Shaw emphasised the role of education to enhance the characteristics of the inferior by the superior who have vitality throughout his plays particularly in *Pygmalion*.

Through Act IV, Eliza tries to keep away from Higgins. He disregards Eliza as a human being with tyrannical attitudes. In Act IV, Eliza's self-realization increases in her despair. Eliza was completely lacking in self-control at the beginning of the play. She has to learn how to speak, dress and have manners for others. Finally she made herself into a woman who can be a duchess at the garden party. "It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it", and tells Pickering that her "real education" came from Higgins. She knows that he provided her with the example of self-restraint and consideration for others: "You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there (V, 121)".

Eliza, complaining about how Higgins treats and humiliates her, says to Pickering that the real beginning of her transformation came with "Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me" (V, 122). Physical abuse is not employed to dominate Eliza in the play. Instead he responds to Eliza's independence. Pedersen asserts that

At the conclusion of *Pygmalion*, there is a deliberate repudiation of the idea of male domination of female which underlies the theme of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Furthermore, that this repudiation is not only simply Eliza's view, but is the view set forth by the play, is suggested by the fact that Higgins shares it.\(^32\)

Higgins misapprehends the conventional status between men and women in terms of his materialistic views. Higgins speaks frankly to

Pickering, “I find that the moment I let myself make friends with a woman, I become selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything” (II, 50). “Higgins is impossible, his treatment of those around him is atrociously insensitive, he is a tyrannical egotist, and yet we delight in his impossibility, his insensitivity, his egotism”. 33 “I don’t and won’t buy in affection. You call me a brute...”. After Eliza has declared her independence of Higgins, he says: “You damned impudent slut, you!... By George, Eliza...” (V, 132). Higgins is self-centered, “through Higgins’s character Shaw counters the romantic expectations of the final act... creating a perverse tension between the anticipated and the actual”. 34

Higgins [catching her wrists]. Ah! Would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you shew your temper to me? Sit down and be quite. [He throws her roughly into the easy-chair]

Liza [crushed by superior strength and weight]. What to become of me? What to become of me?

Higgins. How the devil do I know what to become of you? what does it matter what becomes of you?

Liza. You don’t care. I know you don’t care. You wouldn’t care if I was dead. I’m nothing to you - not so much as them slippers (IV, 100).

Eliza’s question, “What to become of me?”, in Act IV is still unanswered. The question had been raised by Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Pearce. “By George, Eliza, I said I’d make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this. (V, 131- 32). As the play progresses, Eliza begins in Acts I and II as a flower girl; in Acts III and IV she is a lady; and by the end of the play she has become a woman. “We have here an ingenious version of the Pygmalion/Higgins makes the stone/girl into a statue/lady, which Venus/the Life Force causes to come alive as a woman”. 35

Mr Doolittle, “whatever society wants to make of him” 36, is Shaw’s most amusing achievement, in the philosophy of “the undeserving poor”

(II, 58). According to Shaw’s epilogue, “his wit, his dustmanship (which he carried like a banner), and his Nietzschean transcendence of good and evil” continue unchanged.37 Doolittle is one of the main spokesmen for Shaw’s social satire:

What am I, Governors both? I ask you, what am I? I’m one of the undeserving poor: that’s what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he’s up agen middle class morality all the time. If there’s anything going, and I put in for a bit of it, it’s always the same story:... What is middle class morality? Just as excuse for never giving me anything (II, 58).

The purpose of Doolittle’s visit to Wimpole Street is to sell his daughter, Eliza to the rich:

Regarded in the light of a young woman, she’s a fine handsome girl. As a daughter she’s not worth her keep; and so I tell you straight. All I ask is my rights as a father; and you’re the last man alive to expect me to let her go for nothing; for I can see you’re one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what’s a five-pound note to you? and what’s Eliza to me? (II, 57).

In Act V, Doolittle is resplendently dressed. He has been left an income of 3000 pounds a year by an American millionaire. As a concession to middle-class morality, he is on his way to church to marry Eliza’s sixth stepmother. Mrs. Higgins suggests that Eliza’s father can now take care of her: “Yes, maam: I’m expected to provide for everyone now, out of three thousand a year” (V, 117).

Eliza, provoked by Higgins’s unmannerly treatment, professes defiantly, “I can do without you”, however, Higgins tells her not in disappointment, “I know you can do. I told you you could”. He takes a pride in himself, “I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire” (V, 127). “Shaw thus uses a romantic plot to show what it really means to be not only a lady, but a woman and a human being”.38 As Crompton puts it, “for Eliza, the very essence of human

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37 Shaw, *Pygmalion*, p. 139.
38 Sara Moore Putzell, “Another Source for *Pygmalion*: GBS and M. E. Braddon”, in
relations is mutual caring, for Higgins it is mutual improvement". Crompton is correct in pointing out the significance of the relationships between characters and thematic purpose in *Pygmalion*. As has been said, it might be impossible to explain human improvement in isolation from Shaw's religion, creative evolution. According to Shaw, social reform can be achieved by means of creative evolution that we can create a superior being to advance a better society.

Higgins. ... I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well.

Liza. We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

Higgins [waking up]. What do you mean?

Liza. I sold flowers. I didn't sell my self. Now you've made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else (IV, 102-3).

At some level, Higgins reveals that he thinks of himself in terms of immature attributes such as timidity, modesty, and diffidence. He seems to be a man who is blind to his own personality. He says to Pickering about Mrs Pearce: "You know, Pickering, that woman has the most extraordinary ideas about me. Here I am, a shy, diffident sort of man. I've never been able to feel really grown-up and tremendous, like other chaps. And yet she's firmly persuaded that I'm an arbitrary overbearing bossing kind of person. I can't account for it" (II, 52). However, he reveals his resolution to make Eliza better as her creator: "Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble" (V, 128). Higgins wants to get vitality working in Eliza's new life and make Eliza, who has ordinary human desire for the comforts, realise her identity and to develop herself for a better life. With the help of Higgins', Eliza has gained self-awareness and self-respect which has to be the first step towards creation and evolution for a better life.

Through the play, Shaw also tries to show the prejudice and class distinction between the privileged and the poor in society. The

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interrelations of language, class and money are presented in *Pygmalion*. What Eliza wants from agreeing with Higgins's training is materialistic, namely a move upwards in the world: "I want be a lady in a flower shop stead of sellin at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they wont take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well here I am ready to pay him" (II, 38). Grene, emphasising the advantages and disadvantages of the relationship between Higgins and Eliza, suggesting "a love interest between Eliza and Higgins should be most carefully avoided".⁴⁰ Any critical disagreement over the play concerns the ending. One side of the argument is stated clearly by Ervine: "The published work is followed by an account of Eliza's life after the play ends. It convinces nobody who reads it... the facts of the play cry out against its author".⁴¹

In terms of a conflict of wills between hero and heroine in *Pygmalion*, to Higgins, Eliza is a subhuman who is transformed into a truly human being because she struggles and develops a will of her own, and is able to confront Higgins as an equal. In a sense, the process of transformation into a higher being is quite Bergsonian in that man's intellect has developed in the course of evolution as an instrument of survival. Eliza and Higgins face each other as individuals when Eliza comes alive through finally understanding Higgins and fighting him as an equal. Eliza's life force is raised by the conflict with Higgins, which would be the first step for realizing vitality of reality.

With Eliza, Shaw created a new type of character. Eliza is lovely, fascinating, spirited and charming, a slum girl who becomes a lady. She is not a pursuer like Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman*; she has no Shavian predecessor for her type. With her Shaw creates sentiment. Eliza stands for no major principle of womanhood, though often she does represent individualism in general. Act by act, Eliza has developed in learning and becoming an independent person. Eliza is a fair lady and is also moving towards full self-realization. Her self-awareness is a way to an insight of realization, which proceeds to gain final control of the situation.

Eliza as a potential human being is guided to fulfilment by Higgins

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a superior man. A girl from the gutter who can speak the King’s English, which adds dramatic dynamic to the play. Eliza rises to be a middle class woman who wants that class’s virtues. Higgins is, at the end, a Shavian hero standing alone; this is, then, the correct ending for the play, and expectations of Eliza’s marrying Higgins are false and sentimental. In a sense, for Higgins, earthly happiness and harmonious fulfilment of his goal seem to be beyond the realm of phonetician’s mind. As Shaw said in an interview published in Reynolds News in 1939, “I cannot conceive a less happy ending to the story of Pygmalion than a love affair between a middle-aged, middle-class professor, a confirmed old bachelor with a mother-fixation, and a flower girl of eighteen”.42 By 1916, according to the preface to the printed version of the play, “A Professor of Phonetics”, and its sequel, “What Happened Afterwards”, in which we are informed that Eliza marries the docile and devoted Freddy, not Higgins, and opens a shop. Whereas Mr. Doolittle and Eliza have progressed in the society, Freddy came down to learn life from Eliza. “Freddy loves me: that makes him king enough for me. I dont want him to work: he wasnt brought up to it as I was. I’ll go and be a teacher” (V, 131). Even though Eliza’s intention of marrying Freddy would not seem to fit in its sequel of the ending in terms of creative evolution, she can choose her own career not as a mere appendix to a man. Eliza recognises who is the man that needs her love and care thus she chooses Freddy, like Candida in Candida, selecting the weaker of the two men. After marrying Freddy, she could play dominant role of vitality through the newly gained self-knowledge from Higgins’ training. Eliza will provoke Freddy’s vitalism with her vitality. With new understanding and knowledge gained through her training and conflict, as Eliza says, she will support Freddy with her vital force by teaching phonetics as an assistant:

Higgins [rising in a fury]. What! That imposter! That humbug! That toadying ignoramus! Teach him my method! My discoveries! You take one step in his direction and I’ll wring your neck... Do you hear?
Liza [defiantly non-resistant]. Wring away. What do I care? I knew yourd strike me

some day... Aha! Now I know how to deal with you. What a fool I was not to think of it before! You can't take away the knowledge you gave me. You said I had a finer ear than you. and I can be civil and kind to people, which is more than you can. Aha!... Now I don't care that... for your bullying and your big talk. I'll advertize it in the papers that your duchess is only a flower girl that you taught, and that she'll teach anybody to be a duchess just the same in six months for a thousand guineas... when all the time I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself. (V, 131-32)

Even though Higgins cannot conceive of the feelings of a woman, he can discern what is actually happening to Eliza. As is shown, Higgins is "an idea of human perfection... a superman attempting to transform subhumans into humans". As a motivater, he sees the life force working in Eliza's new life. He is the creator of Eliza the lady. Like Galatea with a new life, Eliza is no longer a flower girl, rather she has strong vitality with courage and self-reliance. Putzell, comparing Higgins with Pygmalion as givers, says that "each man considers himself an apostle of his culture's highest moral and aesthetic values, and he believes he has the right and the power, therefore, to improve the inferior woman whose vulgarity confronts and appalls him". As Shaw says, "Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable". When Higgins asks her to stay with him and Pickering, she explains that what she wants is a little kindness. "I know I'm a common ignorant girl, and you a book-learned gentleman; but I'm not dirt under your feet... I come -came- to care for you; not to want you to make love to me, and not forgetting the difference between us, but more friendly like" (IV, 104).

Ironically Eliza has gained self-respect and self-confidence to resist Higgins successfully not only by his linguistic training but also by his bullying treatment through the situation. "Eliza turns the tables on Higgins to show vitality emerging from system". Crompton asserts that

45 Shaw, *Pygmalion*, p. 143.
it is Higgins who has given vitality with his "passion for improving the race" to Eliza with her "ordinary human desire for the comforts and consolations of the domestic hearth".\textsuperscript{47} Higgins's main purpose for Eliza is to "help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life" (II, 42). In a sense, as Holroyd insists, "Teaching is the central passion in all Shaw's major plays:... it is the victory of \textit{Pygmalion}".\textsuperscript{48}

In the last act, Higgins, has "superhuman passion for changing the world... as the artist-creator"\textsuperscript{49}, and is left alone on stage as the curtain falls. As always in Shavian plays, Eliza and Higgins serve their purposeful roles as giver and taker in terms of the evolution of vitality.

Chapter 6  Caesar and Cleopatra

Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra, written in 1898, is identified as nineteenth-century historical drama in terms of its characteristic element. The historical aspect of the play is illuminating in terms of Shaw's religious ideas. Even though he subtitles the play 'A History', which is a series of historical episodes ostensibly linked chiefly by the relation of the principal characters during a certain period of time, his facts are basically drawn from accredited history. He is not interested in history as just chronicled facts but in the meaning and interpretation of facts.

As already noted in a previous chapter, Shaw attacks jingoism, dogmatism and patriotic prejudices through his plays. In his Note to Caesar and Cleopatra, Shaw asserted that "the play follows history as closely as stage exigencies permit... Many of these authorities have consulted their imaginations, more or less. The author has done the same". Shaw is not primarily concerned with historical authenticity in his dramatization of Caesar. Rather he intends to illustrate arguably the greatest man who ever lived. Caesar has his own personal moral values and strong human will as the possibility of the appearance of superman. Caesar is an example of the higher consciousness, the biological improvement toward which the life force is striving. The need for a Superman is evident in the development of Shaw's thought.

For his dramatization of Caesar and Cleopatra, Shaw took the German historian, Mommsen's ideas concerning Caesar. Whatever extra material Shaw might have incorporated in writing Caesar and Cleopatra,

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2 The German historian, Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903) was one of the most articulate and most enthusiastic contributors in reshaping opinions about Julius Caesar. Shaw said that he had consulted and preferred Mommsen's of all the authorities about Caesar because it coincided with his own. Shaw's main source was Mommsen's The History of Rome on which he depended. The book was published in Berlin in 1854-1856 and in English translation in 1862-1866. The major events and the traits of the principal characters in Caesar and Cleopatra are supported by Mommsen.
his main source was Mommsen's *The History of Rome*. Mommsen's Caesar is depicted as a genuine statesman, a born ruler and reformer of world calibre. Mommsen calls Caesar "the sole creative genius produced by Rome, and the last produced by the ancient world". Mommsen's Caesar is the amalgam of the intellectual, the military genius, the world statesman, the revolutionary, and the man of original virtue. These attributes are rarely gathered in one human being. He is a unique combination of heroism and virtue which is exactly what Shaw was looking for in a real man from history which he revealed in his first historical play. The Sphinx scene and the rug scene are fictional materials different from Mommsen's. Shaw says that the Sphinx scene (Act I of the play) was suggested by a French picture of *The Flight into Egypt*. He declares:

> the engraving, which I saw in a shop window when I was a boy, of the Virgin and child asleep in the lap of a colossal Sphinx staring over a desert, so intensely still that the smoke of Joseph's fire close by went straight up like a stick, remained in the rummage basket of my memory for thirty years before I took it out and exploited it on the stage.4

On the contrary, Meisel points out that "Shaw's histories often lie as close to their sources as Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra in her barge”. It is likely that in writing *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw had in mind Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as well as *Antony and Cleopatra*. But Shaw's play by no means can be regarded as if it were a mere reaction to Shakespeare's handling of Caesar. Shaw reviewed the production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in *Our Theatres in the Nineties*,

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It is when we turn to *Julius Caesar*, the most splendidly written political melodrama we possess... There is not a single sentence uttered by Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* that is, I will not say worthy of him, but even worthy of an average Tammany boss. Brutus is nothing but a familiar type of English suburban preacher: politically he would hardly impress the Thames Conservancy Board. Cassius is a vehemently assertive nonentity. It is only when we come to Antony, unctuous voluptuary and self-seeking sentimental demagogue, that we find Shakespeare in his depth; and in his depth, of course, he is superlative. Regarded as a crafty stage job, the play is a triumph: rhetoric, claptrap, effective gushes of emotion, all the devices of the popular playwright, are employed with a profusion of power that almost breaks their backs. No doubt there are slips and slovenliness of the kind that careful revisers eliminate; but they count for so little in the mass of accomplishment that it is safe to say that the dramatist's art can be carried no further on that plane.6

Shakespeare has chosen for his *Julius Caesar* the period of Caesar's assassination and the civil wars that ensued instead of choosing the great man's triumph. At the stage of his artistic and philosophical development, Shaw was in the mood to present his own portrait of Caesar in a way which had never been done before. According to Shaw's response concerning the question of the chief differences in values between Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and his *Caesar and Cleopatra*:

the themes are not the same. The shallow romantic soldier Antony and Caesar the genius are as different as possible. The real contrast is between the Shakespeare-Plutarch Caesar, a megalomaniac with his head turned by popularity, and the Shaw-Mommesson-Goethe great man.7

In the preface to *Three Plays for Puritans* titled 'Better than Shakespeare?', Shaw attacks Shakespeare's Caesar and Antony for their failure as heroes:

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Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* must needs be as intolerable to the true Puritan as it is vaguely distressing to the ordinary healthy citizen, because, after giving a faithful picture of the soldier broken down by debauchery, and the typical wanton in whose arms such men perish, Shakespeare finally strains all his huge command of rhetoric and stage pathos to give a theatrical sublimity to the wretched end of the business, and to persuade foolish spectators that the world was well lost by the twain.

Shaw wrote of the differences between the conventional portrait of the great man and the new perspective as conceived by him through Mommsen. Shaw wrote to Pearson concerning Mommsen's influence on his historical play:

It is what Shakespeare called a history: that is, a chronicle play; and I took the chronicle without alteration from Mommsen. I read a lot of other stuff, from Plutarch, who hated Caesar, to Warde-Fowler; but I found that Mommsen had conceived Caesar as I wished to present him, and that he told the story of the visit to Egypt like a man who believed in it, which many historians don't. I stuck nearly as closely to him as Shakespeare did to Plutarch or Holinshed. I infer from Goethe's saying that the assassination of Caesar was the worst crime in history, that he also saw Caesar in the Mommsen-Shaw light.

Shaw asserts the superiority of *Caesar and Cleopatra* in a letter to Mrs. Richard Mansfield: "*Caesar and Cleopatra* is the first and only adequate dramatization of the greatest man that ever lived. I want to revive, in a modern way and with modern refinement, the sort of thing that Booth did the last of in America: the projection on the stage of the hero in the big sense of the word". He says that he has written the play for Forbes-Robertson "because he is the classic actor of our day".
the first program of *Caesar and Cleopatra* Shaw claimed, "I never collect authorities nor investigate conditions. I just deduce what happened and why it happened from my flair for human nature, knowing that if necessary I can find plenty of documents and witnesses to bear me out in any possible conclusion".12

According to Shaw, the common man is too blinded by false ideals, too tied to outworn conventions, and too bound to existing institutions to heed the promptings of the life force. Therefore, certain people, by virtue of their own superiority, must lead the rest. Shaw proclaims Caesar "the greatest man that ever lived",13 whose character he would have wished to make the prototype of an advanced phase of humanity. Shaw's Caesar is the exemplar of the heroic and the superman of history. Shaw also names that "Caesar as the psychological woman tamer"14. In a letter to Sidney Webb in 1898, he wrote: "I am working at *Caesar and Cleopatra*, which will throw a new light on history".15 Shaw imbues his prospective superman with the characteristics of Caesar:

> even if Shakespeare had had no failures, it was not possible for a man of his powers to observe the political and moral conduct of his contemporaries without perceiving that they were incapable of dealing with the problems raised by their own civilization, and that their attempts to carry out the codes of law and to practice religions offered to them by great prophets and law-givers were and still are so foolish that we now call for The Superman, virtually a new species, to rescue the world from mismanagement.16

Shaw's superman refuses to accept anything on authority, and narrow conventional morality. Shaw describes superman as the realist in

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The Quintessence of Ibsenism:

The realist at last loses patience with ideals altogether, and sees in them only something to blind us, something to numb us, something to murder self in us... The realist declares that when a man abnegates the will to live and be free in a world of the living and free, seeking only to conform to ideals for the sake of being, not himself but 'a good man', then he is morally dead and rotten.17

There are many characters who are would-be Supermen representing a higher form of life and advancing over the common run of humanity. As a realist in Shaw's plays, however Caesar, who outrages conventional morality, would be the incipient Superman. For the progress of the life force, Shaw declares the problem of how the Superman was to be recognized in 'The Revolutionist's Handbook' in Man and Superman:

The proof of the Superman will be in the living; and we shall find out how to produce him by the old method of trial and error, and not by waiting for a completely convincing prescription of his ingredients.18

Shaw continues the characteristics of Superman in 'The Sanity of Art' in Major Critical Essays:

We cannot ask the Superman simply to add a higher set of virtues to current respectable morals; for he is undoubtedly going to empty a good deal of respectable morality out like so much dirty water, and replace it by new and strange customs, shedding old obligations and accepting new and heavier ones. Every step of his progress must horrify conventional people; and if it were possible for even the most superior man to march ahead all the time, every pioneer of the march towards the Superman would be crucified. Fortunately what actually happens is that your geniuses are for the most part keeping step and marking time with the rest, an occasional stumble forward being the utmost they can accomplish, often visibly against their own notions of propriety.19

18 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 216.
19 Shaw, Major Critical Essays, p. 288.
In *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw emphasises Caesar the great statesman and philosopher rather than the soldier. In the prologue to the play, Shaw differentiates between the mighty soldier Pompey whose way is the way of death and Caesar whose way is the way of life: "so it comes that a god at the end of his way is wise and a soldier at the end of his way is a fool" (prologue, 130).

In the Notes to *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw wrote that he was convinced that Christianity failed to reform the world rejecting "expiatory theories of moral responsibility, guilt, innocence, reward, punishment, and the rest of it". In relation to the failure of traditional religion’s reforming society, Caesar is Shaw’s harbinger of the true morality which all religions failed to convey to mankind. He is naturally great and virtuous, free from the institutional morality of reward and punishment, and is distinguished by his passion for humanity. Caesar is the man of action, the warrior, the leader of men, the statesman, the philosopher, world-saviour, and the godhead. Through the play, Caesar plays a warrior, negotiator, administrator, and instructor to Cleopatra with his supreme gifts. Caesar’s principal troubles lies elsewhere not with Cleopatra or other characters through the play. Shaw mentions to William Archer:

Caesar was so completely superior to his adversaries that there was virtually no conflict, only a few adventures.... Of course, the main feat to be performed was to do what Wully Shakespeare didn't (his object being to heroify Brutus): that is, present Caesar as a great man with a genuine differentiation of character & view in the greater direction.... It is true that I have done this by making rather small beer of the protagonists; but I think he dwarfs them fairly and that his eminence is something more than an illusion produced by the flatness of the surrounding country.

In short, Caesar is a rare being, a god-in-man, an advanced step in the experiments of Shaw’s theory of creative evolution. As Meisel says:

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20 Shaw, *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 254
Caesar's heroic quality becomes an internal matter. His greatness is presented as something quite different from that of the ordinary conquering hero, who acts and speaks up to the splendor of the setting. Caesar's greatness is established, not only by the coloring lent to his actions by the magnificent setting, but by his superiority to the setting and by the independence of his actions and ideas.22

Caesar stands for a principle of acting for the general good as conceived by the life force not in the interests of his own selfish purpose:

In order to produce an impression of complete disinterestedness and magnanimity, he has only to act with entire selfishness; and this is perhaps the only sense in which a man can be said to be naturally great. It is in this sense that I have represented Caesar as great.23

The presence of a god, Ra in the Prologue of the play gives the necessity of change, warning on war and the theatrical illusion in the play. Through the speech of Ra, Shaw emphasises the universality of the political and ethical topics. Ra's words epitomize Shaw's optimistic philosophy: no matter how hopeless things may appear, the life force will never stop progressing. In the Prologue, Shaw links past and present between nations and cultures, "Even as there is an old England and a new, and ye stand perplexed between the twain; so in the days when I was worshipped was there an old Rome and a new and men standing perplexed between them". The god, Ra in the Prologue is a manifestation of the life force:

And now I leave you; for ye are a dull folk, and instruction is wasted on you; and I had not spoken so much but that it is in the nature of a god to struggle for ever with the dust and darkness, and to drag from them, by the force of his longing for the divine, more life and more light (Prologue, 134).

The play takes place in the period of the end of the xxxiii dynasty in Egypt, B. C. 47-8. The first Act takes place on the Syrian Border in

23 Shaw, Three Plays for Puritans, p. 252.
Alexandria. In Act I in the desert, Caesar addresses the Sphinx as a prototype of the Shavian great man:

I have wandered in many lands, seeking the lost regions from which my birth into this world exiled me, and the company of creatures such as I myself. I have found flocks and pastures, men and cities, but no other Caesar, no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's deed, and think my night's though... My way hither was the way of destiny; for I am he of whose genius you are the symbol: part brute, part woman, and part god--- nothing of man in me at all. (I, 146).

*Caesar and Cleopatra* presents the treatment of the full-length portrait of historical ideals. "Shaw's Caesar is a genuinely original man... displayed (except in the fourth act) not in moments of greatness, but doing what he naturally wants to do". 24 Caesar is Shaw's most compassionate and admirable great man in all his plays. Shaw asserts that what Caesar is concerned with is not just military triumph: "Caesar's victories were only advertisements for an eminence that would never have become popular without them. Caesar is greater off the battle field than on it". 25 "Caesar is Shaw's idea of what a hero should be: a man strong both inwardly and outwardly, at once efficient and magnanimous, idealistic yet devoid of illusions". 26 Shaw demonstrates his superiority with clemency quietly and generously. Despite his greatness, Caesar has petty human concerns and frailties, which make him sympathetic as a dramatic character. Berst relates the attributes of Caesar to the characteristics of the play:

Caesar himself represents both entrenched authority and subversion... he is revealed as existing in the perilous opposition between his magnificence as a god, a sphinx, a conqueror, and his insignificance as a mortal, an almost laughable vain old man, a species facing extinction. His greatness, emerging at the end, is more remarkable and

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spiritual to the extent that it suppresses this irony. As the irony is negated, the play offers hope; as it survives, the play is a tragedy.27

Caesar is touchy about his age and his waning physical powers:

Cleopatra. You shall always be my king; my nice, kind, wise, good old king.
Caesar. Oh, my wrinkles, my wrinkles! And my child's heart! You will be the most dangerous of all Caesar's conquests. (I, 155).

Caesar has not only his superiority but also common humanity in his characteristics. He is also sensitive about being bald and always wears a laurel to hide his head. Shaw wrote that "factitious raptures on artificial agonies, has fallen off; and the demand now is for heroes in whom we can recognize our own humanity".28 Shaw made his ideal hero realistic and convincing to appeal to the common people. Shaw blended Caesar's heroic nature and humble humanity together for dramatic purpose. Shaw exclaims that Caesar and Cleopatra is "an attempt of mine to pay an instalment of the debt that all dramatists owe to the art of heroic acting".29 Caesar is described as godlike in the play. Shaw wrote in 'The Perfect Wagnerite' in Major Critical Essays:

And these higher powers are called into existence by the same self-organization of life still more wonderfully into rare persons who may by comparison be called gods, creatures capable of thought, whose aims extend far beyond the satisfaction of their bodily appetites and personal affection, since they perceive that it is only by the establishment of a social order founded on common bonds of moral faith that the world can rise from mere savagery.30

Caesar reshapes the world in his own image as Shaw does. In Sixteen Self Sketches, Shaw describes Caesar:

29 Ibid., p. 306.
He has in an extreme degree the mercurial mind that recognizes the inevitable instantly and faces it and adapts itself to it accordingly... He knows much sooner and better than most people when he is in danger and when out of it; and this gives him an appearance of courage when he is really running no risk. He has the same advantage in his sense of value of money, knowing when it is worth spending and when it is worth keeping; and here again he often appears generous when he is driving a very good bargain. When we stand amazed at his boldness and liberality, it is doubtful how far he is capable of facing a real danger or making a real sacrifice.31

Shaw made Caesar anti-heroic in his spiritual maturity that makes his clemency even greater than the melodramatic heroics of conventional stage conquerors. Caesar is laughed at for being bald by the Egyptian court, and different from reader’s expectations of a would-be hero, Shaw doesn’t beatify or glorify him. Caesar’s frailties give the hero a touch of realism. “It is Shaw’s Caesar, with all his human frailties upon him, who is the true hero”.32 For Shaw, real heroes always do the impossible but as “touching the summit only at rare moments, and finding the proper level of all occasions, condescending with humour and good to the prosaic ones as well as rising to the noble ones, instead of ridiculously persisting in rising to them all”.33 Shaw represents vital dimensions through the characteristics of Caesar: “Caesar’s sense of humor, his several masks, his contradictions, vanity, values, asceticism, and kindness are quite Shavian”.34 Valency explains that “Caesar has an irresistible urge to expend energy to some purpose. He is the greatest living manifestation of the will to live”.35 This assertion is correct in pointing out the role of the would-be superman in terms of Shavian religion. He is fulfilled in a

vigorous spirit and comic undertones. Shaw observes Caesar's inner strength in terms of humanity and his great achievement as spiritual nobility. Caesar's superior qualities demonstrate mankind's potential and hope, which illustrates Shaw's realistic concept of heroism.

The play opens with Caesar addressing the Sphinx and being answered by a kitten-child, Cleopatra. At this point Cleopatra adds an unreal quality and a kind of feminine magic to the action. Through the play, Cleopatra is described as an offspring of the Nile river, yet Caesar is depicted in the same lineage of the gods and the life force. Cleopatra was in fear of the Romans and declares of Caesar's ancestors that "his father was a tiger and his mother a burning mountain... and his nose like an elephant trunk" (I, 150). This seems to show that Cleopatra feels antagonistically against Rome.

Cleopatra begins the play as a timid child, but as the play progresses she is possessive, selfish, and cruel without heroic vision. She develops basically anti-heroic qualities: ruthlessness, inhumanity and guile. The education of Cleopatra to qualify for the job of queenship is one of Caesar's chief tasks which he undertakes soon after his arrival in Egypt. Shaw depicts the education theme of a tutor-pupil relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra.

Cleopatra. I am Queen of Egypt ... Do you speak with Caesar everyday for six months: and you will be changed.

Pothinus. It is the common talk that you are infatuated with this old man?

Cleopatra. When I was foolish, I did what I liked... Caesar has made me wise, it is no use my liking or disliking: I do what must be done, and have no time to attend to myself. That is not happiness; but it is greatness. If Caesar were gone, I think I could govern the Egyptians (IV, 211).

Shaw's Caesar is an entirely different character from that described by other sources. Shaw's Caesar is an incarnation of the life force revitalizing the letter of history and of law with the spirit of the evolving. Caesar's vision is dramatically realized in large part through the candor of his statements and the directness of his actions. Unlike Shakespeare's Cleopatra who is almost exclusively seen as a love goddess, Shaw's Cleopatra is an unscrupulous coquette who is more interested in her own
sovereignty. Shaw depicts Cleopatra much younger and crueler, for the 
dramatic purpose of emphasising the role of Caesar and the growth of the 
young queen: "The mentor-and-disciple theme which recurs throughout 
the Shavian canon". \textsuperscript{36} Woodbridge asserts Caesar’s superiority in relation 
to the educational theme: "It was essential to Shaw’s purpose that the 
relation between Caesar and Cleopatra should be entirely free from sex 
entanglement; it would never do for the superman to be involved in a love 
affair with a woman less than half his age. Caesar’s attitude must be 
consistently paternal or avuncular". \textsuperscript{37} Shaw sees pursuing an ideal of 
love and charms as anti-life, since they prompt destructive emotions as 
jealousy, greed, self-aggrandizement and desire for vengeance and petty 
retribution.

Through the acts Shaw makes Cleopatra a young unsophisticated 
inferior, kittenish and impulsive to contrast with Caesar’s superiority and 
his influence on her and old Egypt. In a sense, Cleopatra is essential to 
emphasise Caesar-Shaw’s philosophy. Caesar admonishes her as a bad 
child when he wants her to behave. She completes the role of antagonist 
and helps in setting the play in a historical period. At the opening of the 
play, the Sphinx with the body of a lion protects a kitten between its 
paws. She comes dimly to understand her incompatibility with Caesar:

\begin{quote}
Cleopatra. Can one love a god? Besides, I love another Roman: one whom I saw long 
before Caesar - no god, but a man- one who can love and hate - one whom I can hurt 
and who would hurt me.
Pothinus. Does Caesar know this?
.....
Cleopatra. He promises to send him to Egypt to please me!
Pothinus. I do not understand this man. (IV, 213)
\end{quote}

Even though the child woman seems to be turned into the artfulness

\textsuperscript{36} Stanley Weintraub, “Shaw’s Mommsenite Caesar”, in \textit{The Unexpected Shaw: 
Biographical Approaches to GBS and His Work} (New York: Frederick Ungar 

\textsuperscript{37} Homer E. Woodbridge, \textit{George Bernard Shaw Creative Artist} (Carbondale and 
of a young mature woman to accomplish the Shavian purpose, she is never fully aware of the nature of the life force. She is spiteful, small-minded, and self-indulgent. She is not a true disciple of Caesar. She uses superstition and charm to make an erotic atmosphere in order to conceal from Caesar the murder of Pothinus. She can never be converted to Caesar's way. She is a slave to her passions and her emotions. Cleopatra is on the quay waving goodbye like a fascinating child-woman. For the scheme of Creative Evolution, she has to be changed instinctively.

As a strong benevolent leader, Caesar first helps to restore Cleopatra's self-confidence, transforms Cleopatra's fear into courage and teaches her that a great queen must not cry and that she should learn to face her responsibilities bravely. Caesar tells her to face the issue at hand: "my poor child: your life matters little here to anyone but yourself" (III, 203). He leads her from a terrified kitten-like young girl to her throne. Before meeting Caesar, she was an unsophisticated child in fear and did not control herself; as the play progresses she is becoming wise and knows what to do responsibly. She finds herself capable of ruling Egypt after Caesar's departure.

In the preface to Three Plays for Puritans, Shaw identifies Cleopatra with "Circe as the Homeric sorceress who turned heroes into hogs". Shaw used to take the younger characters, who have the vitality for attack on institutional conventions in previous plays, yet he chooses the older Caesar in Caesar and Cleopatra as his hero who can give the power and wisdom to overcome the enemy. When Caesar hears from Pothinus that Cleopatra is scheming against him, he does not resent the treachery:

Resent! O thou foolish Egyptian, what have I to do with resentment? Do I resent the wind when it chills me, or the night when it makes me stumble in the darkness? Shall I resent youth when it turns from age, and ambition when it turns from servitude? To tell me such a story as this is but to tell me that the sun will rise tomorrow (IV, 220).

Cleopatra says to Caesar in triumph, "Listen to me Caesar, if one man in all Alexandria can be found to say that I did wrong, I swear to

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38 Shaw, Three Plays for Puritans, p. 29.
have myself crucified on the door of the palace by my own slaves”. Caesar replies: “if one man in all the world can be found, now or forever, to know that you did wrong, that man will have either to conquer the world as I have, or be crucified by it”. Caesar points out Cleopatra’s secret intention saying:

These knockers at your gate are also believers in vengeance and in stabbing. You have slain their leader: it is right that they shall slay you. If you doubt it, ask your four councilors here. And then in the name of that right shall I not slay them for murdering their Queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as the invader of their fatherland? Can Rome do less then than slay these slayers, too, to show the world how Rome avenges her sons and her honor. And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand (IV, 230).

When Cleopatra tells Caesar that Pothinus lies about the scheme, Caesar says to her in clemency: “It is true, though you swore it a thousand times, and believed all you swore” (IV, 220). Caesar has to free himself from all restraining human entanglement for the improvement of the human race. His indifference to conventional sentiment makes him immune to any desire for revenge. His principal characteristic is indifference from romantic entanglements and blood vengeance. For him, blood vengeance is a hindrance to the progress of the life force, and must be rejected by the man of action. He does not execute Pothinus who supports Ptolemy in opposition to the Caesar-backed forces. In Caesar’s view, vengeance opposes the life force and is an impediment to the progress of the life force because it allows an individual to indulge his whims rather than furthering the interest of the entire race.

The dinner is interrupted by Pothinus, who tells Caesar of Cleopatra’s plot against him. Cleopatra becomes a vengeful child and orders Ftateeta, a monstrous character, to murder Pothinus. Pothinus leaves. The dinner is resumed with an air of death. Caesar’s philosophical vision is represented when he condemns Pothinus’s murder: “if one man in all the world can be found, now or forever, to know that you did wrong... (IV, 230)”. The murder of Pothinus is contrasted with Rufio’s slaying of the murderess, Ftateeta. This murder is acceptable, according
to Caesar, Ftatateeta has to be destroyed by an instrument of the life force, because it was done according to Caesar’s way. Lucius Septimus, the slayer of Pompey reproaches Caesar for the death of Vercingetorix:

Lucius [cold and undaunted]. Pshaw! You have seen severed heads before, Caesar, and severed right hands too, I think; some thousands of them, in Gaul, after you vanquished Vercingetorix. Did you spare him, with all your clemency? Was that Vengeance?
Caesar. No by the gods! Would that it had been! vengeance at least is human. No, I say: those severed right hands, and the brave Vercingetorix basely strangled in a vault beneath the Capitol, were [with shuddering satire] a wise severity, a necessary protection to the commonwealth, a duty of statesmanship... follies and fictions ten times bloodier than honest vengeance! What a fool was I then! To think that man’s lives should be at the mercy of such fools! [Humbly] Lucius Septimus, pardon me: why should the slayer of Vercingetorix rebuke the slayer of Pompey?. (II, 170)

In Act IV, Cleopatra is no longer as she was. Even though Caesar was trying to teach her the love of humanity, she just discards fear and becomes a cruel tyrant and fails to prove Caesar’s benevolent moral implications. She uses her political power to eliminate her opponents. In her understanding of queenship, she seems to bear the influence of her father, the great king of Egypt who cut off her sister’s head. As Berst says, “Cleopatra’s maturity is in large part a facade which superficially conceals her natural savagery”.39

In Act V Cleopatra appears at Caesar’s leavetaking dressed soberly in mourning black. Ftatateeta has been killed and Cleopatra says that she wants justice. Caesar promises her a present, and again Cleopatra is like an eager child. Caesar realizes that there is an illusion of Cleopatra’s growth. Through the play, she is described as a person of limited capacities whose growth takes place only in specific directions. It would be beyond her capacity to understand by instinct as a savage self-centered girl. Whereas Caesar is instinctively god-like “she is a dramatic objectification of the barbarity of the society which later concurs in her

She agrees to let Caesar go back to Rome, and dispatch Mark Antony to her instead. At the end, she chooses the fleshly and inferior Antony.

Cleopatra. ... when a Roman slays an Egyptian. All the world will now see how unjust and corrupt Caesar is.

Caesar. What! As much a child as ever, Cleopatra! Have I not made a woman of you after all?

Cleopatra. Oh, it is you who are a great baby: you make me seem silly because you will not behave seriously. But you have treated me badly; and I do not forgive you.

Caesar [coaxing]. I will send you a beautiful present from Rome.

Cleopatra [proudly]. Beauty from Rome to Egypt indeed! What can Rome give me that Egypt cannot give me?

Caesar. Shall it be Mark Antony? [She throws herself into his arms] (V, 242-43).

Rufio sneers at her choosing: “You are a bad hand at a bargain, mistress, if you will swap Caesar for Antony” (V, 243). She is not fully aware of Caesar from the beginning. For this point, Bentley insists that “she is of a lower nature and her growth, to use the metaphor of the play itself, is from a kitten to a cat the proficiency she develops is precisely in the area which Caesar keeps out of revenge and erotic passion”.41 This point shows perhaps the most important difference between the attributes of Caesar and Cleopatra in terms of the Shavian conception of vitality. Cleopatra rejects considerably more of Caesar’s thoughts than she understood.

Burning the library also seems to be symbol of Shaw’s objection to a dead and irrelevant past. Caesar’s rejection of past intellectual achievement is based on the same grounds as his rejection of dream-inducing art: “I am an author myself; and I tell you it is better that the Egyptians should live their lives than dream them away with the help of

40 Ibid.
books" (II, 179). When Theodotus, the “passion of pedant” asks Caesar: “Will you destroy the past?”, Caesar replies: “Ah, and build the future with its ruins” (II, 179). Britannus, Caesar’s private secretary, does not understand completely either. He says about him, “his manner is frivolous because he is an Italian, but he means what he says” (III, 200). When Caesar arrives in Egypt in pursuit of his rival Pompey, he finds that the Egyptians had employed a Roman soldier to slay Pompey and present his head to Caesar. Caesar shows his hostile horror of such murder. Caesar confronts the blindness of society. Shaw’s Caesar is a man of vitality and efficiency with exceptional wisdom and shrewdness.

In Act IV, he strongly condemns the murder of Pothinus by Ftatateeta. On the contrary, he admits the murder of Ftatateeta herself by Rufio. Shaw explained the necessity of Caesar’s approval of killing:

To confess the truth, if there is a point in the play on which I pride myself more than another, it is the way in which I have shewn, how this readiness to kill tigers, and blackguards, and obstructive ideologues (Napoleon’s word) is part of the same character that abhors waste and murder, and is, in the most accurate sense of the word, a kind character. Caesar throughout expresses the greatest horror of judicial academic murder and cruelty, whether committed by himself on Vercingetorix and the Gauls or imagined by him as what Rufio might have done to the savage Egyptian nurse whose throat he has cut as he would that of a mad dog. A murder of a higher man by a lower one, as Pompey by Septimius, or a treacherous and spiteful murder like that of Pothinus, revolts him; but his readiness to remove human obstacles by the sword if they will not step out of the way of the Gods is not a contradiction of this side of his character, but a part of it.42

To kill without malice, like to kill brutes, is permissible in Caesar’s judgment. Shaw wrote in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* that “conduct must justify itself by its effect on happiness [life]”, which relates to the cosmos, and “not by conformity to any rule or ideal”.43 As a Shavian realist, Caesar can make judgments “quite independently of convention

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and moral generalization”. Caesar has refused to judge and revenge his enemies according to conventional law and morality. His greatness is shown “not as mortifying his nature by doing his duty... but as simply doing what he naturally wants to do”. He is capable of judging his own actions honestly. He is the person who is chosen by the life force to fulfil its purposes and promote the consciousness of the universal will by doing naturally what he wants to do. Like a god, his decision seems to be the divine will of the universe, Cleopatra says that “Caesar loves no one... He has no hatred in him... He makes friends with everyone as he does with dogs and children” (IV, 212). He always treats his men with kindness and tolerance. Bentley writes of “the man who is too strong to be attacked and the man who is too humble to mind”. Rufio complains about his clemency: “Mark this, Caesar. Clemency is very well for you; but what is it for your soldiers... I tell you that your next victory will be a massacre... I, for one, will take no prisoners... I will kill my enemies in the field... this is your accursed clemency, Caesar” (II, 171). He denounces him roughly when Caesar is about to speak to Pothinus: “Caesar, the dinner will spoil if you begin preaching your favourite sermon about life and death” (IV, 219). When Cleopatra asks Caesar why he allows Rufio to insult him, Caesar replies: “Teach him to be my enemy and to hide his thoughts from me as you are now hiding yours... I am not Julius Caesar the dreamer, who allows every slave to insult him” (IV, 228). Through his response to his men, his strategy and wisdom in treating them he is shown as Shaw’s ideal dictator. His image is revealed more as a great political reformer and a liberator than a selfish usurper. Even though Rufio, Caesar’s blunt militarist lieutenant, sneers at Caesar defiantly, Caesar appoints Rufio as a governor of Egypt, which is considered as an example of Caesar’s liberal democracy. Rufio’s qualifications are “by service, Caesar’s shield; by quality, Caesar’s friend; by rank, a Roman soldier” (V, 238). Even though Caesar knows Rufio’s limited qualifications, he appoints Rufio, governor of Egypt saying: “That is the right way, the great way, the only possible way in the end. Believe it

44 Ibid., 201.
45 Ibid.
Rufio if you can” (V, 241).

Caesar, in his struggle against the old Roman, exclaims: “shall we leave Rome behind us - Rome, that has achieved greatness only to learn how greatness destroys nations of men who are not great!” (IV, 224). Caesar is the chief exemplar of his theories in ethics and politics in terms of new moral values. Caesar has no illusion about his own ethics and concept of life. When Pothinus says to him: “Caesar: you have taught Cleopatra the arts by which the Romans govern the world”, Caesar replies very confidently: “Alas! They cannot even govern themselves” (IV, 220). Caesar is the closest real historical character to Shaw's concept of the superman. The Caesarean superman indicates the possibility and shows the way to sustain the hope for the evolution of mankind.

Shaw used sex in unexpected directions as in his other plays, thus the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra is clearly not a sexual one. Rather it dramatizes the irrelevance of romantic infatuation. MacCarthy regards Caesar as “an ascetic philosopher who was born looking down from an eminence upon the passions of mankind”. Caesar tries to help Cleopatra to realize her vital dream of queenship. In spite of Caesar's role as a teacher, few critics observe his notable lack of success. Under Caesar's tutelage, Cleopatra is the one character in the play who undergoes some growth and change. In each stage in the play, the educative process is shown as a vital pattern; Caesar as a teacher, Cleopatra as a learner particularly in Act III.

There is no sexual involvement in Caesar and Cleopatra. Shaw makes Caesar a Shavian hero, rather magnanimous, who seeks voluntary

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47 Pearson, Op. Cit., p. 223. He insists that Caesar is Shaw; Chesterton, George Bernard Shaw, p. 154. He also maintains that “Caesar is really the only great man of history to whom the Shaw theories apply. Caesar was a Shaw hero”; Leon Hugo, Bernard Shaw: Playwright and Preacher (London: Methuen, 1971), pp. 101-2. He finds that the affinity between Caesar and Shaw in their originality and loneliness.


49 The Caesar/Cleopatra relationship seems to be the focus of several teacher/learner pairings. It is also the basis of Trilby, the highly popular play in which Tree played Svengali.
obedience. Caesar expressed Shaw’s idea of the superman as ruler. Caesar is also Shavian in being a benign statesman who rules without punishment, without revenge or judgment. Caesar is a military genius, the thinker, the benign human being rather than tyrant or dictator who rules by the infliction of punishment. Caesar loves no one; he has, instead, kindness and no hatred in him. Shaw’s Caesar is even the alternative to all institutional religious doctrines to reform a corrupted world and a way of salvation. Like Christ, even though he achieves many triumphs in Egypt, he is put to death by his people. Before leaving Egypt, Caesar has foreboding and knows what will happen when he returns to Rome.

Rufio. Caesar: I am loth to let you go to Rome without your shield. There are too many daggers there.

Caesar. It matters not: I shall finish my life’s work on my way back; and then I shall have living long enough. Besides: I have always disliked the idea of dying: I had rather be killed. Farewell (IV, 239-40).

Few critics argue that even though Shaw tries to create the historical heroic drama, he could not revive the proper characteristics of Caesar’s role in the modern context. Berst classifies Caesar and Cleopatra as a rather romantic fantasy than historical play. Grene also criticises the play: “What is actually wrong with Caesar and Cleopatra is that it does not have a real dramatic dynamic animating the action throughout”.  

However they seem to overlook the significance of the relationship between Caesar and the play’s theme. Valency keeps saying: “In comparison with its historical basis the situation depicted in Caesar and Cleopatra seems simple, reasonable, and relatively comprehensible. Perhaps this is its chief shortcoming as drama”.  

When the play was criticized as failing in an historical sense, Shaw adds in more detail:

The chronicle ties you to the exposition of Caesar’s position at Alexandria; and there is no drama in it because Caesar was so completely superior to his adversaries that there was virtually no conflict, only a few adventures, chiefly the hairbreadth

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escape when he jumped into the harbor... I solved the problem by making Cleopatra commit a murder... It is true that I have done this by making rather small beer of the protagonists; but I think he dwarfs them fairly and that his eminence is something more than an illusion produced by the flatness of the surrounding country. That achieved, I give up the rest as hopeless.52

Henderson proclaims that the play is "a combination of the most absolute fantasy with the most absolute truth".53 Shaw insists that he was following "the precedent of the ancient myths which represent the hero as vanquishing his enemies, not in a fair fight, but with an enchanted sword, superequine horse and magical invulnerability". 54 Unlike the conventional typical hero who is always superior with his physical prowess to average men, Shaw's Caesar is "a figure above man, a superman, with a distinctly human heritage",55 aging and balding, with physical limitations and humanness.

In relation to the mission of savior as with Jesus, Caesar's destiny is to bring peace to the world for mankind. Leary compares Caesar with the general figure of Christ as an outline of the life force and argues that there is a historical Messianic pattern in the play. "Shaw's Caesar is an incarnation of the Life-Force revitalizing the letter of history and of law with the spirit of the evolving unknown".56 Meisel, also relates Caesar to the coming Jesus, saying that "Even more pertinent is Caesar's role as the New Man, isolated and superior, born into a world filled with the Old Adam... Caesar is very much about the encounter of civilization, of history and modernity. After returning to Rome, his destiny is drawn to death".57 Even though Shaw's Caesar is doomed to fail to change the

52 Shaw, Collected Letters, 1898-1910, p. 94.
world because of mankind's incorrigibility, as Valency observes: "The play depicts one of his triumphs, and the end is appropriately... optimistic". Shaw still waits optimistically for the world to prepare to receive his hero as in *Saint Joan*. Through Caesar, Shaw gives us the prospect that tragedies of all sorts will continue to recur until a radical change is achieved in human society. However, since he had found the elements of the superman in a real historical figure, his belief is strengthened that the human race will evolve into a better future when self-realization and the will for progress are accepted.

According to Shaw, the predominant hero is guided by his own ethics not by conventional or romantic morality. In *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw chooses a magnanimous strong hero instead of a contemporary romantic hero:

My stories are the old stories; my characters are the familiar harlequin and columbine, clown and pantaloon (note the harlequin's leap in the third act of *Caesar and Cleopatra*); my stage tricks and suspenses and thrills and jests are the ones in vogue when I was a boy, by which time my grandfather was tired of them.

Caesar's greatness clashes with conventional notions of greatness. In the Sphinx scene, Caesar expresses his loneliness and alienation from ordinary people: "I have found flocks and pastures, men and cities, but no other Caesar, no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's deed and think my night's thought... Sphinx, you and I, strangers to the race of men, are no strangers to one another" (I, 146-47). In the Sphinx scene, there is an allusion that Caesar, like the Sphinx, has the secret to solve the riddle of life. The Sphinx is thematically a key symbol and dramatically very effective. Caesar becomes the propounder and the interpreter of the riddle. Caesar obviously identifies himself with the Sphinx to the exclusion of all mankind. The Sphinx seems to be the symbol of Caesar's genius. Shaw wrote in 'A Postscript' to *Man and Superman*: "I would have my mob all Caesar instead of Toms, Dicks, and

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Harry".\(^{60}\) Through the play, Shaw seems to scatter his vision that when human nature and nations become changed like Caesar’s, all institutional social systems will disappear and will be guided toward the evolution of mankind. Shaw wrote his idea of such a vision in ‘The Perfect Wagnerite’ in *Major Critical Essays*:

Now it is quite clear—though you have perhaps never thought of it—that if the next generation of Englishmen consisted wholly of Julius Caesars, all our political, ecclesiastical, and moral institutions would vanish... Julius Caesar would no more trouble themselves about such contrivances as our codes and churches than a Fellow of the Royal Society will touch his hat to the squire and listen to the village curate’s sermons.\(^{61}\)

As Berst argues, “it is not Shaw’s purpose in *Caesar and Cleopatra* to reproduce history in any conventional sense. Rather, he uses history to achieve specific effects in art: effects which are then turned back upon their historical sources in a curiously revealing light”.\(^{62}\) The play emphasises the development of Cleopatra’s self-awareness through the relationships between Caesar and Cleopatra as learner and teacher relating to thematic patterns in other plays such as *Major Barbara*, *Pygmalion*, *Heartbreak House* and so on. As learners and teachers through the plays:

Cleopatra’s development follows much the same pattern as other “learners”: Barbara Undershaft or Liza Doolittle or Ellie Dunn. They all start out in almost complete spiritual and intellectual opposition to a figure possessing superhuman clarity of perception and strength of purpose, whom they never really understand, but who in a series of educational confrontations lifts them to higher levels of self-consciousness and of realism in their awareness of the world around them.\(^{63}\)

\(^{60}\) Shaw, *Man and Superman*, p. 37.


Shaw identifies Caesar not only as one who is a godhead and fulfils the will of the gods, but also as an agent or representative of the future of mankind. Caesar enhances the spirit of vitality and energy of life. At the end, Caesar embarks for Rome, where he will be assassinated by conventional men representing a world not prepared to accept his greatness. His choice of death stems from his vitality. In this sense, while Nietzsche's superman exceeds good and evil, Caesar possesses "the strength and loneliness of the true realist, the freedom of self-assurance and a vitality that transcends death".\(^\text{64}\) Caesar is a hero not as idealized by the soldier but as a great statesman and philosopher who functions and fulfils the purpose of the evolution of vitality as a Shavian hero. They treat him as a dangerous one who must be destroyed. Caesar's assassination in Rome seems to be the recurrent tragedy of the hero who tries to reform a corrupted world. For this rather cynical view of mankind's incorrigibility in this illusory world, Shaw points out:

In truth, the period of time covered by history is far too short to allow of any perceptible progress in the popular sense of Evolution of the Human Species. The notion that there has been any such Progress since Caesar's time (less than 20 centuries) is too absurd for discussion. All the savagery, barbarism, dark ages and the rest of it of which we have any record as existing in the past exists at the present moment.\(^\text{65}\)

Even though Caesar's major task in Egypt was historically military and imperialistic, the relationship between Caesar and Cleopatra in terms of the Shavian purpose seems to be regarded thematically as the main action of the play. In *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Shaw describes a great man who holds his power and uses his superior mind and heightened consciousness to accomplish a way of the life force. As Shavian superman, embodying a life force and representative of the vitality and creative evolution, he would lead the way to a new social order.

In the Shavian view, history seems to follow a process of trial and error in the way of life force. It is obvious that Shaw's concern is not in


\(^{65}\) Shaw, *Three Plays for Puritans*, p. 245.
the mechanistic and materialistic changes of a superficial progress, but in man's spiritual and vitalistic evolution which Caesar strove for. For the real progress of humankind, Shaw uses a great man as a model and attempts to produce an evolutionary successor to the world. In Caesar, the Shavian superman, lies the ultimate hope of humankind in Shaw's religious philosophy focusing on the vitality and creative evolution. It seems quite convincing that as Shaw's agent of new religion, Caesar's philosophical vision is scattered through the play. In a sense, Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* could be the first step for shaping his superman for his creative evolutionism.
IV Life Force in Action

Chapter 7 Major Barbara

In Major Barbara, subtitled “A Discussion in Three Acts” written in 1905, Shaw sets up the unusual burlesque of English upper class families of the time not least in respect of their religious situation. Shaw uses the misalliance theme in conventional romantic comedy for “the contrast between the illusions of the misallied couple about the social reality”¹ in Major Barbara and describes a critical social condition through English upper class families for the dramatic ends. The main conflict in the play lies in Major Barbara’s religious disillusionment in favour of reality. There is a discrepancy between ideals and reality based on disillusionment in Major Barbara. Even though the play seems to be the story of the romance of Barbara and Cusins on the surface, it attacks the crime of poverty and contrasts two ways of redemption represented by the Salvation Army and Undershaft.

The play shows Major Barbara’s dilemma over accepting the morally tainted money donated to the Salvation Army by her father, an armaments millionaire. Barbara’s conflict lies between these two ideologies and results in her decision to turn to her father’s resources. In spite of disagreements over which many critics argue, Shaw’s preface implies that the play reveals the triumph of Undershaft over that of Barbara and the Salvation Army. Even though the Salvation Army has its weaknesses, Shaw agrees that it has worked for the poor particularly in the slums of London, unlike many other religious organizations, through its efforts to alleviate their suffering and to reach out to them by different methods. The Salvation Army did not try to get the working classes to attend chapel services; instead they went down into the streets and alleys of East London and preached to them there talking to the poor in a language which they could understand. Unlike other religious institutions, the Army has the vitality of what they preach.

Shaw says in the preface to the play, “the greatest of our evils, and

the worst of our crimes is poverty, and that our first duty, to which every other consideration should be sacrificed, is not to be poor”. Shaw argues that poverty does not improve human beings, rather it depraves people into conscienceless inhumanity. The problem of poverty and social redemption are dealt with as the main themes in this play. Even though many critics insist on the variety of themes in the play, the action of the plot can be shifted from economics to the religious theme. Garner claims that "Major Barbara was about poverty, but it deals much more fundamentally with power, in all of its forms: Blood and Fire, Money and Gunpowder". As mentioned in the introductory chapters, to Shaw, poverty was the greatest evil faced by humankind and the main theme in the beginning of his life as a dramatist. In this sense, the problem of poverty has to be explained in terms of his political view based on his religious ideas. Shaw shows the schemes of social reform based on eugenics socialism particularly in Major Barbara. In the play Shaw emphasised an effective means of reforming society with establishing real power newly gained in relation to the evolutionary life force. Shaw believed that the problem of poverty could be solved through the union of intelligent breeding and the practical power of money. Major Barbara pursues simultaneous social and spiritual redemption through the union of the material and the spiritual in terms of eugenic purposes. Reflecting contemporary evolutionary thought, Shaw’s attitude to social progress in the late nineteenth century is evident in the action and dramatic purpose of Major Barbara. In the play, Shaw emphasised social improvement in relation to economic and biological bases.

In Major Barbara, Shaw dramatizes Barbara’s religious dilemma and conversion through the conflict between real life and the romantic imagination. Shaw also tries to present his concept of earthly hell and heavenly earth proclaimed in Man and Superman through the action of the play. In relation to Barbara’s religious dilemma, Yorks insists that “Major Barbara debates the role of even the most well-intentioned

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religion". However in term of themes, if Barbara's conversion is just considered as the most important thing in the play, it would not properly address the purpose of Shaw's dramatic end. In *Major Barbara*, Shaw makes the consideration of economic problems as the essence of the drama in relation to his religious view of creative evolution. As always for Shaw, poverty is the worst sin of man and society. As a major in the Salvation Army, Barbara's denying tainted money can be seen as far from the reality. According to Shaw, poverty has to be overcome by disillusionment. *Major Barbara* can be regarded as Shaw's most direct dramatization of his Fabian socialist purpose. Shaw presents his social concerns in the theory of playwriting:

My plays are no more economic treatises than Shakespeare's... It is true that neither *Widowers' Houses* nor *Major Barbara* could have been written by an economic ignoramus, and that *Mrs Warren's Profession* is an economic exposure of the White Slave Traffic as well as a melodrama. There is an economic link between Cashel Byron, Sartorius, Mrs Warren and Undershaft: all of them prospering in questionable activities. But would anyone but a baffleheaded idiot of a university professor, half crazy with correcting examination papers, infer that all my plays were written as economic essays, and not as plays of life, character, and human destiny like those of Shakespeare or Euripides?5

The plot of the play centers on Barbara and Cusins's inheritance of the Undershaft munitions factory and her leaving the Salvation Army and taking up service in the arms factory. Through the characterization in the play, Shaw encompasses the power of the munitions maker Undershaft, the spiritual reformer Barbara and the intellectual philosopher Cusins in *Major Barbara*. At the end of the play Shaw combines the powers of the Salvationist Barbara and the intellectual scholar Cusins, who is based on Gilbert Murray, a Greek scholar. It is true that Shaw always seems to combine the spiritual and the intellectual for his purpose of social reform. They are agents of the life force for Shavian ends. Shaw's conception of

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the life force is embodied in the main characters, Undershaft, Barbara and Cusins. Most of Shaw's characters, who have faith and energy, become heroic in the service of their ideas and evolve into something better in their pursuit of societal ends. Barbara develops her role from the domestic spheres into the new stage of participation in public life as a social, political reformer and saviour heroine. Barbara, representative of the leisured, educated young women at the turn of the century, is a wealthy young lady who sacrifices herself for others. She is vital and direct. She is an individual trying to fulfil herself. Barbara's faithful devotion to her desire for the salvation of society is embodied when she is aware of the systematic social ills that bind together the individual and society. As Noel points out, "she is led reluctantly from idealism to realism, or an idealism based on realistic appraisal of the world". Barbara, as a vital genius, represents the female principle which will lead to the birth of superman. When she obtains self-knowledge through her father's speeches, she discards her unrealistic social ideals. She realizes that the Salvation Army is not free from accepting the tainted money to ameliorate poverty and that her family are dependent upon such money for their security and earnings. Finally Barbara faces Shavian realism and incorporates it into her vision of social redemption.

The play becomes a struggle between Barbara's conviction of Christian morality and her father's belief that poverty is the greatest crime. When Undershaft proves that the army will take his money, which Barbara considers tainted, Barbara is disillusioned. Her father convinces her later that his workers are in a condition to live a better life than the poor of the slum because they are not starving and so willing to sell themselves for food and shelter. In *Major Barbara*, Shaw deals with economic problems as the action of the play. The play considers economic reality in the capitalist system. In the play, Shaw put forward the Fabian argument that national property has to be properly directed to give every man a comfortable standard of living and to satisfy man's practical needs. Fabian socialism was a man-made rational structure influenced by sociological eugenic positivism. In the view of Fabian socialism, the

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Fabins encourage and improve public wealth in terms of productive eugenic purpose for social reform.

Wisenthal observes that "the aspect of Major Barbara which Shaw wished his readers to consider, or which he himself saw as the essence of the play, is the economic one". However, Shaw's concern for economic problems is always dealt with alongside his religious ideas emphasising the purpose of the life force. With his socialist stand-point in relation to religious ideas, Shaw believed that the hope of evolution lies through social reform. To Shaw, his idea of economic problems is inextricably bound up with the idea of progress. Valency insists that "Major Barbara is concerned not with the eternal life, but with the life of the body, and it suggests an interesting way to combine the service of God and Mammon". In his preface to the play Shaw remarked, "Creeds must become intellectually honest. At present there is not a single credible established religion in the world. That is perhaps the most stupendous fact in the whole world-situation". For this point, Shaw regards power represented by money and gunpowder as the reality of life. As Undershaft asserts in the play, true progress of society cannot be accomplished until economic salvation is achieved. Shaw believed that the Christianity of the Salvation Army could no longer satisfy man's practical needs. The army fails because it is unproductive; it cannot reform. Through the play, Shaw presents his religious and political beliefs regarding social ills, poverty and salvationism. As mentioned in previous chapters, Shaw attacked existing institutional religion, in particular the Christian creed and the traditional faith of Christianity throughout his life. Unlike other religions, Shaw's religion has to be a working religion rather than just a spiritual guide.

The play is focused coherently on radical and religious action. Major Barbara follows familiar Shavian patterns, showing disillusionment from the idealistic faith and ideals of the Salvation Army.

9 Shaw, Major Barbara, p. 49.
to a realistic awareness of economic facts. While Barbara’s Salvation Army represents spiritual institutionalized Christianity, Undershaft represents the political power to control the wealth of nineteenth-century society. Shaw said that Christianity was a dead idol, an idea which the nineteenth century had almost universally rejected. As mentioned in the introductory chapters, the value of science permeated in every respect, whereas the creed of traditional Christianity was regarded as an anachronistic faith. Instead, Shaw conceived of his new religion, creative evolution as the answer to a world which he felt could no longer accept Christianity. Shaw attacks the traditional Christianity emphasising sin, redemption, penitence, conversion, holiness and self-sacrifice through the mouth of Undershaft in the play. Through Undershaft’s religion of money and gunpowder, Butlerian influences on Shaw’s thought are revealed. As is well known, Butler, “the great moralist of Erewhon and the forerunner of the present blessed reaction towards creative evolution”\(^{10}\), turns Christian values up-side down. He declares that “to love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature, and a fair balance of cash in hand... the true laws of God are the laws of our own well-being”.\(^{11}\) In *Erewhon Revisited*, Butler insists that man is the highest form of life since he possesses a mind. Thus, man is the supreme instrument and the manifestations of God’s will asserting itself towards a richer and better life. Shaw went on to use Butler’s thoughts to formulate his religion of the life force for the betterment of humanity. Shaw makes clear what role man plays in carrying on realizing his responsibilities and fulfilling his humanity.

The play begins as an attack on poverty by a millionaire capitalist who manufactures munitions. He is the unconventional man, the realist who attacks hypocrisy. The munitions works is a model of production, efficiency, and harmony among the workers. Shaw suggested to Henderson that he had thought of calling the play “Andrew Undershaft’s Profession”. “Perhaps a more suitable title for this play, save for the fact


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of repetition, would have been *Andrew Undershaft's Profession*".\(^{12}\) This point underlines that Undershaft is apparently referring to the central doctrine of Shaw's religion. Just as in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, to Undershaft, single-minded pursuit of money is the only possible way to survive and succeed in a capitalistic society. As Watson points out:

[Undershaft] is not a man who celebrates murder, merely a realist who calls it by its true name. If his realism makes us shudder, that is intended to make us shudder at ... the truth itself, not at Undershaft. That he should be the form in which the life force triumphs under our present system is in fact our tragedy.\(^{13}\)

As one of the realistic heroes of Shaw's plays and as his spokesman, Undershaft's religion influences both his conduct and his social acceptability. Shaw regards Undershaft's attitude as a starting-point for a new moral standard. “To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching Man to regard himself as an experiment in the realization of God”.\(^{14}\) And Shaw himself returned to it: “he is only the instrument of a Will or Life Force which uses him for purposes wider than his own”.\(^{15}\) Wisenthal opines that “Undershaft, then, has achieved neither the religious nor the political goals of the play”.\(^{16}\) However Shaw describes the millionaire Undershaft as “a man who has become intellectually and spiritually as well as practically conscious of the irresistible natural truth which we all abhor and repudiate”.\(^{17}\)

As a process of disillusionment in *Major Barbara*, Shaw uses bargaining for souls between Undershaft and Barbara. Shaw rejects the

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\(^{15}\) Shaw, *Major Barbara*, p. 22.


\(^{17}\) Shaw, *Major Barbara*, p. 15.
conventional belief that man can be redeemed by Christianity.

And here my disagreement with the Salvation Army, and with all propagandists of the Cross (which I loathe as I loathe all gibbets) becomes deep indeed. Forgiveness, absolution, atonement, are figments: punishment is only a pretence of cancelling one crime by another; and you can no more have forgiveness without vindictiveness than you can have a cure without a disease. You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable and pardonable, or in a society where absolution and expiation are officially provided for us all. ¹⁸

Undershaft, the Shavian spokesman, the wealthy munitions maker, is determined to provide the people with employment, good salaries, and good homes and to leave them to choose their religious beliefs on their own. The Salvation Army was particularly committed to physical welfare, which might be seen as a bribe.

those who do not care a rap about historical Christianity may be led into the mistake of supposing that if we discard revenge, and treat murderers exactly as God treated Cain: that is, exempt them from punishment by putting a brand on them as unworthy to be sacrificed, and let them face the world as best they can with that brand on them, we should get rid of both punishment and sacrifice. ¹⁹

To Shaw, as Watson asserts, “good will and good works are not enough... but must be guided by a realistic understanding of the world as it is”. ²⁰ Most critics consider Major Barbara as religious drama or social drama dealing with economic issues. With the threefold theme of sin, repentance and salvation, money, in Shavian metaphor, can make a moral contribution. The power of money determines a challenge to social control for the benefit of society. Money, represented as new religion in Shavian metaphor, could change traditional religion. Ultimately that

¹⁸ Ibid., p.32.
could replace the institutional social systems for the sake of the evolution of institutional society. Shaw’s relativist morality is based not on any absolute moral ethics but on the needs of particular circumstances.

The play begins with Lady Britomart, the upper-class matriarch and the estranged wife of Andrew Undershaft, telling her son Stephen about the nature of Undershaft’s business. Lady Britomart is based on Rosalind Countess of Carlisle, who went to extraordinary lengths to achieve the succession to Castle Howard that she wanted. As a typical conventional Victorian woman of her class in her time, money is the main reason for being Mrs. Undershaft in spite of separation from her husband. Marriage between aristocrats and newly rich were quite a feature of the period, one provided breeding, the other money. One of Shaw’s contemporaries, Slaughter observes how conventional Victorian society seeks the interest of the business of marriage for personal desires and social ambitions among the middle classes (even though *Major Barbara* is ‘Edwardian’, female characters, except Barbara, in the play are in the sheltered Victorian household as the angel in the house): “The grades of successful individuals being thus established, it is clear that the social recognition accorded them will give them and their offspring better opportunities of preserving, continuing and augmenting the value of their stock. To the aid of all these agencies will come those influences which operate upon mating for the preservation of what is known as ‘family honour’”.21 As Slaughter points out, the marriage of Undershaft and Lady Britomart implies the achievement of well-being and security among the higher social classes by their money and lineage. For this reason, as Watson points out, “The central conflict of the play is between the ideas of Andrew Undershaft on the one hand, and the ideas of the whole of society, represented by his whole family, on the other hand”.22 She separated from her husband because their son’s rightful inheritance was disregarded. Lady Britomart belittles her husband as a vulgar tradesman because his wealth derives from the manufacture and sale of armaments.

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I couldn't forgive Andrew for preaching immorality while he practised morality. You would all have grown up without any knowledge of right and wrong, if he had been in the house. You know my dear, your father was a very attractive man in some ways. Children did not dislike him; and he took advantage of it to put the wickedest ideas into their heads and make them quite unmanageable. I did not dislike him myself: very far from it; but nothing can bridge over moral disagreement (I, 59).

She needs more money for her children's marriages. She explains there will be on family meeting to discuss the family's money problem. As Baskin says, "Key moral relationships among the characters are dramatized in economic terms". Undershaft "who is a sort of demi-god", has many of his negative characteristics revealed by Lady Britomart's description. He was illegitimately born. He is a munitions maker of low birth. He is "fabulously wealthy, because there is always a war going on somewhere" (I, 55), but he proclaims that the munitions factory must be inherited not by his son, Stephen, but by another foundling as he did. Undershaft is looking for another foundling to be inheritor of the munitions factory.

Through the opening scene, Shaw embodies a significant topic of the play in relation to the tainted money. He also reveals the world of philistines, like Lady Britomart, Stephen, Sarah who is a typical spoiled girl, and Lomax. The marriage of Lady Britomart and Undershaft does reflect the union of breeding and money that was so prevalent at the time. Sarah and her choice of Lomax contrast with Barbara and Cusins. Shaw describes the society of Wilton Crescent as one of aimless parasites bounded by conventional morality.

Lady Britomart. I must get the money somehow.

Stephen. We cannot take money from him. I had rather go and live in some cheap place like Bedford Square or even Hampstead than take a farthing of his money.


Lady Britomart and the house on Wilton Crescent are represented as the philistine institutions of social order. Lady Britomart belittles Undershaft to their son, "He is always breaking the law. He broke the law when he was born: his parents were not married" (I, 56). Undershaft confronts his wife's hostile attitude:

Not at all. I had the strongest scruples about poverty and starvation. Your moralists are quite unscrupulous about both: they make virtues of them. I had rather be a thief than a pauper. I had rather be a murderer than a slave. I don't want to be either; but if you force the alternative on me, then, by Heaven, I'll choose the braver and more moral one (III, 143).

The confrontation between Major Barbara and Undershaft is the most important aspect in act I.

Lomax [shocked] But not your sort of blood and fire, you know.
Undershaft. My sort of blood cleanses: my sort of fire purifies.
Barbara. So do I (I, 69).

Barbara and Undershaft agree to exchange invitations to each other. In act II, Undershaft visits the Salvation Army shelter according to their agreement. Barbara visits the munitions factory in Act III in turn. Through the scene, their desire to convert each other is revealed in conflict:

Undershaft. May I ask have you ever saved a maker of cannons?
Barbara. No. Will you let me try?
Undershaft. Well, I will make a bargain with you. If I go to see you tomorrow in your Salvation Shelter, will you come the day after to see me in cannon works?
Barbara. Take care. It may end in your giving up the cannons for the sake of the Salvation Army.
Undershaft. Are you sure it will not end in your giving up the Salvation Army for the sake of the cannons?

Barbara. I will take my chances of that (I, 72).

In the beginning of the play, Major Barbara devotes herself to the Christian faith of the Salvation Army, founded in the mid-nineteenth century by William Booth as a means of religious redemption and social alleviation. By the end of Act II, she is becoming aware of the Shavian reality that the financial problems of the Salvation Army for the mission for the lower classes cannot be maintained without the capitalist’s support. At one moment Mrs Baines, Barbara’s superior, enters and asks Undershaft for a financial donation with an urgent voice, emphasising that the mission of the Salvation Army is to keep the poor from rebellion. When her appeals are accepted by Undershaft, Barbara is upset to see her superior officer doing this because she has never thought the Salvation Army would accept the tainted money. Mrs. Baines explains that Barbara must receive the money contributed by Undershaft as a direct answer to prayer to carry on their work for the poor in a vicious society. Mrs. Baines’s acceptance of a large contribution from the owner of a successful munitions works shows how Christian redemption is hypocritical and a vicious circle of sin and forgiveness without the redemption on earth. Unsurprisingly enough, Barbara loses her determined moral stand focused on Christian faith of the Army. As Walker’s commentary hints, “Wot prawce Selvytion nah?” (II, 111), and by Cusins' distribution of the Army flag and the band instruments in anticipation of the triumphant parade. Finally, Barbara removes the silver S brooch from her uniform and tells Mrs. Baines, “I cant pray now. Perhaps I shall never pray again” (II, 110). In the final moments of Act II, Barbara desperately acknowledges the limitation of the Salvation Army’s uncompromising methods of redemption. In Act III, she then accepts her new mission to educate the middle class employees in Undershaft’s munitions factory. As Valency says, “Major Barbara’s conversion is... a matter of turning from illusion to reality... the salvation of humanity as it is presently constituted lies not in the rejection of material values, but in
their acceptance”.25 Undershaft's munitions works are seen as the means to the end of improving the controlled economic and political high levels of society. Undershaft claims that his religion is grounded in “money and gunpowder; freedom and power; command of life and command of death” (II, 96). To Undershaft, money is the commander of freedom and life as well as defender from social ill. To him, morality exists in the greatest good for the greatest number. Shaw asserts Undershaftian beliefs in his preface to the play:

Undershaft, the hero of Major Barbara, is simply a man who, having grasped the fact that poverty is a crime, knows that when society offered him the alternative of poverty or a lucrative trade in death and destruction, it offered him, not a choice between opulent villainy and humble virtue, but between energetic enterprise and cowardly infamy... What is new, as far as I know, is that article in Undershaft's religion which recognizes in Money the first need and in poverty the vilest sin of man and society.26

Undershaft prides himself on saving Barbara's and her family's souls by his money from the seven deadly sins of food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children, which are different from those of conventional Christianity, pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth. And he reminds Barbara he is the savior of her and her family of souls. As Undershaft insists, Perivale St. Andrews provides his workers with a better life and a chance of saving their souls not by conventional redemption of Christianity but by power of money. Cusins asks in admiration, “What drives this place?” and Undershaft remarks, as he proudly displays his cannon factory, “A will of which I am a part” (III, 139). Shaw regards power represented by money and gunpowder as the reality of life. Through the mouth of Undershaft, Shaw argues that true progress of society cannot be accomplished until economic salvation is achieved. Because he removed the seven deadly sins, the crime of poverty has been destroyed in Perivale St. Andrews, and he has done more to save his workers than Barbara. Undershaft accomplishes his own paradise in

26 Shaw, Major Barbara, pp. 18, 19, 22.
Perivale St. Andrews. Whitman argues that Undershaft has failed his religion and “...all his money and gunpowder have no purpose, no goal... it carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction”.27 However, Shaw advocated the enlistment of the human will in the service of the life force as the most efficient way of using the life force's energy to further its productive ends. Sometimes, for the purpose of the life force, economical use of the boundless energy of the life force is not limited even with its own destructive thing. On the surface, Undershaft's materialism wins over Barbara's salvationism because of her conversion, but he cannot save human society as a whole without Barbara's and Cusins' devotion. Therefore Undershaft's material power has to rely on the life force in Barbara and Cusins, who seem to challenge and synthesise both the material and the spiritual.

In a sense, Undershaft symbolizes the “mechanisms for reconciliation and self-justification”.28 Barbara and Cusins have to provide their saviour role on the foundation of Undershaft's earthly power. New idealism related to material realism is symbolized in the union of Barbara and Cusins. They would provide salvation based on the necessary precondition of salvation Undershaft accomplished.

Undershaft. My religion? Well, my dear, I am a millionaire. That is my religion.
Barbara. Then I'm afraid you and Mr Shirley wont be able to comfort one another after all. Youre not a millionaire, are you, Peter?
......
Undershaft. [gravely] Poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of (II, 88).
......
Undershaft. Have you ever been in love with poverty like St. Francis? Have you ever been in love with Dirt like St. Simeon! Have you ever been in love with disease and suffering like our nurses and philanthropists? Such passions are not virtues but the most unnatural of all the vices. This love of the common people may please an earl's granddaughter and a university professor; but I have been a common man and a poor

man: and it has no romance for me. Leave it to the poor to pretend that poverty is a blessing: leave it to the coward to make a religion of his cowardice by preaching humility: we know better than that. We three must stand together above the common people: how else can we help their children to climb up beside us? (II, 97).

Bargaining for souls seems to be crucial to the dramatic strategy of the play. The conflict and competition between Barbara and Undershaft frames the action of the play. In Act II in the shelter in West Ham, some of the poor, such as Snobby Price, Rummy Mitchens, Peter Shirley, Bill Walker and Barbara's colleague, Jenny Hill, are described as the self-served of the Salvation Army. The Army exchanges promises of eternal, individual salvation and handouts of soup and bread for promises of atonement. The sinner is forgiven again and again, and thus given leave to sin again without ever truly atoning:

I do not call a Salvationist really saved until he is ready to lie down cheerfully on the scrap heap, having paid scot and lot and something over, and let his eternal life pass on to renew its youth in the battalions of the future.29

Shaw shows the attitudes of hypocritical profession of Christian salvation through the episode of Price:

Rummy. Who saved you, Mr Price. Was it Major Barbara?
Price. No: I come here on my own. I'm going to be Bronterre O'Brien Price, the converted painter. I know wot they like. I'll tell em how I blasphemed and gambled and wopped my poor old mother—
Rummy. [Shocked] Used you to beat your mother?
Price. Not likely. She used to beat me. No matter: you come and listen to the converted painter, and you'll hear how she was a pious woman that taught me prayers at er knee, an how I used to come home drunk and drag her out o bed er snow white airs, an lam into er with the poker (II, 77).

Shaw believed that hypocrisy and ethical dualism were the key features of Christianity. Shaw regarded orthodox Christianity as nothing

29 Shaw, Major Barbara, p. 321.
more than lip-service in the modern-day. In the preface to *The Adventure of the Black Girl in Search of God*, Shaw argued that the Ten Commandments should be abandoned as principles of moral guidance since they were “unsuited and inadequate to modern needs”.\(^{30}\) Shaw thought that social problems could be solved through economic equality and intelligent reproduction. Shaw believed man can create his own morality and also man can improve himself. According to Shaw, Man’s soul can be saved not by conventional creeds of Christianity but by the capacity of humankind related to man’s religious sense for further growth and development through creative evolution. Since, to Shaw, the creative power of mind over matter was emphasised to reaffirm man’s dignity and responsibility in separation from the moral principles of Christianity. Shaw was opposed to the promises connected with Christianity. Instead he believed that man’s intellectual activity might serve a useful purpose for a better future.

Snobby Price, the unregenerate petty thief will confess anything in exchange for a hot meal. Shaw thought that only through socialism and through “the redemption of the whole nation from its vicious, lazy, competitive anarchy”\(^{31}\) salvation could be achieved. Barbara’s West Ham shelter is shown as an unsuspecting collusion in the violence and desperation of the lower class. They are not likely to eradicate deceit, falsity, scepticism and conscienceless cruelty. “Whereas Act I presents a view of society from the top of the social scale, Act II presents a view from the bottom”.\(^{32}\) The poor in the West Ham shelter seem to have no evolutionary capacity and therefore have to rely on the life force in Barbara and Cusins, who between them seem to compass both the material and the spiritual. This point relates to Shaw’s ideas of the development of superior human intelligence which leads the way to social reform. As always, Shaw regards the intelligent as more superior against social institution. To Shaw, intelligent ability is an essential element to


\(^{31}\) Shaw, *Major Barbara*, p. 27.

make the human being grow up and change in terms of social evolutionism. This point can be explained in terms of the Fabian socialism based on the eugenic movement in late Victorian society. Fabianism relating to British eugenics concentrated on the social problems of poverty and pauperism. A eugenic socialist claims that, "We are dealing with people who are not capable of guiding their own lives, and who should for their own sake be under tutelage and we are entitled to impose our own conditions of this tutelage having the general welfare of society in view". The problem of the urban residuum was significantly widespread in terms of national degeneration. The Fabian eugenicists agreed that socialism protected the fit from sterilization and degeneration and the unfit from the pauperism, mental deficiency and chronic illness by using eugenic schemes. As Searle concludes, "The most important eugenic problem was to prevent the crossing the line between the 'fit' and 'unfit' sections of the working class". In a sense, Shaw's eugenic thoughts have extreme aspects in relation to negative eugenics, "Extermination must be put on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely and apologetically as well as thoroughly... [if] we desire a certain type of civilization and culture, we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit in". In terms of the Fabian eugenics socialism for the schemes of social reform, Shaw encouraged procreation of the fit while discouraging that of the unfit.

In *Major Barbara* Shaw anticipated rational selection in order to teach the lower classes. Herbert continued his argument for this point: "eugenic teachings are... essentially communistic in spirit. It is the common interest of each social unit with the whole, which the eugenists wishes to evoke as the central motive power in society. And it is just here, in the most vital part of its programme, that the eugenic ideal shows complete identity with that of the socialist". Webb wrote in a

sympathetic reference to eugenics in relation to social scheming; “We cannot afford to leave... bad environment alone... The ‘survival of the fittest’ in an environment unfavourable to progress may... mean the survival of the lowest parasite... It is accordingly our business, as eugenics, deliberately to manipulate the environment so that the survivors may be of the type which we regard as the highest” 37 Even though the Fabian eugenics contradicts traditional views of marriage, parentage and human right, to Shaw, eugenics best meet an ideal of racial purity as well as elimination of undesirable traits. Along with this respect, for Shaw, creative evolution based on social progress is for the benefit of those who are capable of it and for the general good as well.

Shaw prepares a dramatic foundation for showing his view on social ill and religion through the various scenes. In Act III, Barbara visits her father’s munitions factory at Perivale St. Andrew’s, and there she discovers a better way to salvation. In Act III she fulfils her promise to her father to come to his plant to see his life. She sees the validity of his argument and is converted to working for the sake of the work. Undershaft’s Perivale St. Andrews seems to be a reformed social utopia as projected in Tanner’s speech in Man and Superman. Undershaft challenges Barbara, “It is cheap work converting starving men with a Bible in one hand and a slice of bread in the other... Try your hand on my men: their souls are hungry because their bellies are full” (III, 142-3). Finally she admits that she must learn the side of life for “life is all one” (III, 151) and agrees to save the souls of the people of Perivale St. Andrews. Even though she remains as a savior of men’s souls, she will

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carry on her commission with a different method of salvation instead of a
naïve idealist of the Salvation Army. "Her teaming up with him does not
mean that she surrenders to his philosophy; it means she must work with
him to temper his energy with her spiritual insight". She accepts the
redemption of human beings in terms of the Shavian concept of religion.

I have got rid of the bribe of bread. I have got rid of the bribe of heaven. Let God's
work be done for its own sake; the work he had to create us to do because it cannot
be done except by living men and women. When I die, let him be in my debt, not I in
his; and let me forgive him as becomes a woman of my rank... Yes, through the
raising of hell to heaven and of man to God, through the unveiling of an eternal light
in the Valley of the Shadow. Oh, did you think my courage would never come back?
Did you believe that I was a deserter? Never, never, never: Major Barbara will die
with the colors (III, 152, 153).

As one of the agents of vitality, Barbara will follow a new religious
viewpoint modified by Undershaft's philosophy to reform social ill. As
she finally realises, God's work "cannot be done except by living men
and women" (III, 152). Barbara's conversion has been an important
concern in the play. Many of Shaw's realists are marked characteristically
by their realization and acknowledgment of the role of the life force as
representatives of creative evolutionism. As always in Shavian plays,
self-realization is based on the idea of evolution theory as a means of the
first step of superhuman spirit. Instead of caring for the poor, as a
starting-point for a new religious standard she turns to the task of making
a new social system in which poverty itself will be abolished. Rather than
holding out the prospect of a heaven after this life, she wants to build a
better world here on earth. Barbara is captured by the life force, which
combines her Christian love with earthly power and humanism. Barbara,
proclaiming a new mission through the combination of spiritual vision
with Undershaft realism, is no longer wearing the uniform of the
Salvation Army. Undershaftian salvation is disconnected from Christian
redemption through the action of the play. According to him, men have to

face the reality and transform it in order to progress. Barbara finally confronts her reality recognizing Undershaft’s view of the power of money:

> When we feed a starving fellow creature, it is with their bread, because there is no other bread; when we tend the sick, it is in the hospitals they endow: if we turn from the churches they build, we must kneel on the stones of the streets they pave. As long as that lasts, there is no getting away from them. Turning our backs on Bodger and Undershaft is turning our backs on life (III, 151).

Undershaft’s religion is based not on traditional morality but on money. He embodies the power of money and forces of gunpowder in the real world:

> Think of my business! Think of the widows and orphans! The men and lads torn to pieces with shrapnel and poisoned with lyddite!... All this makes money for me; I am never richer, never busier than when the papers are full of it. Well, it is your work to preach peace on earth and goodwill to men.... every convert you make is a vote against war... Yet I give you this money to help you to hasten my own commercial ruin (II, 108).

Shaw regards Undershaft as one of his agents of life force for the evolutionary progress for human betterment in relation to his religion of money and gunpowder:

> Undershaft exudes the Life Force, ingenuity, and his own gospel. Like Tanner, he maintains a personal philosophy consistent with the wellsprings of his spirit, a vital idealism enmeshed in the deepest sense of self and purpose. He is another manifestation in Shaw of Bergson’s elan vital.39

When Barbara loses her confidence in Christian faith, she recognizes the sentimental nature of the salvation in the Army. As a result of her father’s preaching, she also slowly awakens to the fact the Army

can be maintained only by unconscionable money. Barbara responds to this, "Yes, through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God, through the unveiling of an external light in the Valley of The Shadow", when Cusins asks, "Then the way of life lies through the factory of death?". Finally she decides to get "rid of the bribe of heaven" (III, 152) by the end of the play. Barbara will do her mission to raise the hellish world of poverty, violence and ill into the earthly heaven. When Cusins tells Undershaft that Barbara has accepted her mission, saying that "She has gone right up into the skies." Barbara will not escape from the world, but instead will embrace and transform her new religion. "Though not praying to any divinity. She is unquestionably embracing the Shavian theology which translates 'God' into the Life Force". Barbara's God was not the omnipotent, omniscient God of Christianity any more, but a finite, limited being towards something better, a higher form of organization. The life force drives human fertility and self-improvement in order to achieve its goal of the eugenic breeding of superman and true social progress.

The mood of Major Barbara embodies Juan's answer in Man and Superman:

It is not death that matters, but the fear of death. It is not killing and dying that degrades us, but base living, and accepting the wages and profits of degradation. Better ten dead men than one live slave or his master. Men shall yet rise up, father against son and brother against brother, and kill one another for the great Catholic idea of absolving slavery.  

Major Barbara illustrates an important departure from the ideas expressed by Don Juan in the "Don Juan in Hell" sequence in Man and Superman. But Major Barbara takes place in the real world where violence and death are everyday possibilities. The play is deliberately disturbing, with its emphasis on death, violence, and destruction. In Act II, Undershaft says to Cusins, "I am a millionaire; you are a poet; Barbara

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is a savior of souls. What have we three to do with the common mob of slaves and idolators?”. Undershaft’s remarks are seen as the hint of thematic purpose in the play. It seems true that “the three main characters form a sort of Shavian Superman at the end of the play, the emphasis throughout the drama reveals that it is Barbara and Cusins who will form the new deity. Undershaft functions as a sort of instructor”. At the beginning of Act II, Barbara shows strength of self in her work with the Salvation Army. However, she holds to her ideals too strongly and is disillusioned in her work and in her faith. Barbara attempts to convert Bill Walker by alluding to his moral sense and manliness with her religious superiority. She alludes to him not only for eternal reward, but for happiness and abundance in this world. She exhorts him to “Come with us, Bill. To brave manhood on earth and eternal glory in heaven” (II, 91). She derives personal forcefulness and the ability to sway others. Barbara’s method of salvation shows men can be saved by their behavior. Barbara’s attitude to Walker can be seen as a reflection of Shaw’s religious view, which focuses on the quality of present life. The Salvationists were admonishing the poor to do something about their condition emphasising their own moral responsibility. Instead of observing the Ten Commandments, Shaw believed that each man should create his own morality in order to establish their validity. In ‘The Sanity Art’, Shaw insisted; “Try how wicked you can be: it is precisely the same experiment as trying how good you can be. At worst you will only find out the sort of person you really are”. Shaw’s morality is based on the turning the conventional values upside down. Through Barbara’s religion Shaw attacks the salvation taught by conventional Christianity. As Albert puts it, “she is committed to a new theology in which human obligations are not only to be met: they are to be transcended”.

Barbara. [softly: wooing his soul] It’s not me thats getting at you, Bill.

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Bill. Oo else is it?
Barbara. Somebody that doesn't intend you to smash women's faces, I suppose. Somebody or something that wants to make a man of you.
Bill. [blustering] Mike a menn o me. Aint Aw a menn? Eh? Oo sez Aw'm not a menn?
Barbara. Theres a man in you somewhere, I suppose (II, 90).

As Undershaft recognizes, Barbara's religion is not the traditional Christianity of the Salvation Army focusing on the salvation of man's soul even though her idealism is based on Christianity. When Cusins tells Undershaft, "Barbara is quite original in her religion" (II, 96), Undershaft replies, "Barbara is a savior of souls... Barbara must belong to us, not to Salvation Army" (II, 97-8). Undershaft recognizes this quality in his daughter, he decides on Barbara as his heir: "I shall hand on my torch to my daughter. She shall make my converts and preach my gospel... money and gunpowder. Freedom and power. Command of life and command of death" (II, 96). Barbara's religious nature is inconsistent with the traditional Christianity of the Salvation Army for redemption by atonement or forgiveness. For this reason, Undershaft reveals his interest in Barbara's religion. "Her inspiration comes from within herself... It is the Undershaft inheritance" (II, 96). Another meaning of Barbara's religion in this play is that the attitudes of the religion of Barbara's style allows her to be converted to Undershaft's religion. When she accedes that the Army must accept the tainted money, she throws up her mission with the cry, "Drunkenness and Murder! My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (II, 111). Barbara's cry is the emotional climax in this play. But by the end of the play, her cry of despair is transferred to a new worldly faith in reality for the betterment of human beings. Barbara's heartbreak is initiated by her realization of the insight gained into reality. She is no longer captured by the spiritual guide the Army emphasised. She now understands that "life is all one". Cusins also recognizes, saying to her, that "all power is spiritual. You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too". Barbara's religion becomes real when she accepts working to give people a fuller life here and now.

Cusins, Barbara's prospective husband, is a professor of Greek, who hates war and is sensitive, who is supposed to be an official heir to the ownership of Undershaft's munitions factory. As Shaw says in the
Preface to *Back to Methuselah*, the process of finding an inheritor can be described as an intended selection of eugenics.

It is evident that the evolutionary process is a heredity one, or, to put it less drily, that human life is continuous and immortal. The Evolutionists took heredity for granted... This belief in heredity led naturally to the practice of Intentional Selection. Good Blood and breeding were eagerly sought after in human marriage. In dealing with plants and animals, selection with a view to the production of new varieties and the improvement and modification of species has been practised ever since men began to cultivate them.\(^45\)

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Shavian eugenic socialism is based on Galtonian rational selection focusing on how heredity and the transmission of intelligence and physical traits are manifested in offspring to advance the institutional society Shaw attacked. As is well known, Shaw advocated the improvement of the human race through eugenic socialism. Shaw seems to believe that intentional selection is necessary in order to maintain a worthy civilization of society and humanity. It is obvious that the significant facts of eugenics socialism are promoted by the Fabians. At the meeting of the Fabian Society, Shaw carried a biological argument for the improvement of the human race through eugenic socialism:

It is necessary to improve the race because our political capacity is clearly outstripped by the weight and complexity of the problems set up by our huge civilizations. It is useless to attempt human improvement by stud-farm methods, because we do not know what sort of man we want. For all we know to the contrary, the so-called degenerates of to-day may be Nature's first abortive and disastrous attempts at the Superman, who may, when he arrives, be a controlled epileptic fed on proof spirit, and who will certainly be what we should call a lunatic. In our ignorance as to the goal of Evolution we are forced to fall back on the voice of Nature: that is, on ordinary sexual selection. But this has very little play in a society minutely stratified into small classes, with each class breeding in and in. To effect any improvement we should make the whole community intermarriageable; and this can be

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done only by establishing equality of income.46

As Shaw’s near-superman, the new inheritor, who has evolutionary capacity, would lead the way to a new social order. Undershaft’s adoption of Cusins surely raises the question of selection whereas Stephen presumably raises doubts about eugenics. This point can be explained in terms of Shavian religion, creative evolution. Like Undershaft, Cusins, “the fundamental contemplative Shaw”47, is another foundling to inherit future munitions work as an intended selection. Unlike Darwin’s view of evolution by natural selection which Shaw attacked, Cusins is adopted intentionally as a inheritor of the munitions factory by Undershaft who believes that conventional society can be changed by the evolution of men with both brains and practical power. Shaw believed that the best way of improving the human race is rational selection of higher man as an effective eugenic agency. Shaw seemed to agree that hereditary influences contribute to the formation of mental ability. In Major Barbara, Galtonian eugenic thought, focusing on how heredity and the transmission of intelligence and physical traits are manifested in offspring, was emphasised in choosing Cusins as an official heir of Undershaft.

Unlike Barbara, Cusins feels that a man is saved if he has been saved from poverty. As one of agents of the power of intellect, like Tanner/Juan in Man and Superman, Cusins accepts Undershaft’s proposal to inherit his factory. When Undershaft insists that the cannon works should provide arms “to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of people of principles”, Cusins repudiates this attitude by claiming on the condition that “I shall sell cannons to whom I please... I have more power than you, more will”. Undershaft’s reply is that “from

the moment when you become Andrew Undershaft, you will never do as you please again” (III, 139). Cusins’s vague declaration that he is going to save the world by putting the means of destruction into the hands of the “common man” is frightening in the extreme: “I want a power simple enough for the common man to use, yet strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good”. Undershaft provides a rather ominous answer: “Whatever can blow men up can blow society up. The history of the world is the history of those who had courage enough to embrace this truth”. Through the conversation between Cusins and Undershaft, Shaw reveals his socialist view based on his Fabianism. As one of the Fabians, Shaw regarded the collective organization of society as the general good for public service in reforming the social system. To Shaw, economics are concerned with the problem of distribution; that is, how to effect the most efficient distribution of a limited supply of an economic good to satisfy an unlimited demand. The Fabian socialists tried to establish national minimal standards for wages, wealth, housing, child nurture, and employment. In *Major Barbara*, Shaw deplored this kind of problem through the Army’s shelter. Shaw came to advocate equal distribution of wealth because he saw this as the most efficient way of improving a society which was characterized by crippling poverty.

Cusins seems to synthesise Barbara’s idealism and Undershaft’s realism. Bentley says Cusins is “the synthesis of Barbara’s idealism and her father’s realism”.48 Cusins and Undershaft have much in common. Cusins confesses that he is “a collector of religions; and the curious thing is that I find I can believe them all”. Cusins’ “understanding of the essential part he must play” is to “manipulate the strongest of powers in an effort to achieve social equality”.49 Cusins is aware that he must sacrifice some of his ethical principles to achieve his goals. Cusins departs from Undershaft’s faith into the real world of life. “Society will

not be saved until Greek professors become makers of gunpowder or
gunpowder makers become professors of Greek".50 As always in the
Shavian concept of the intellect, it is emphasised that society needs
intellectuals who have passion and ideas to ameliorate the institutional
society attacked. Cusins accepts Undershaftian idealism, proclaiming "the
people must have power; and the people cannot have Greek... yet for the
general good" (III, 150). He will join Barbara's fundamental concern for
saving men's souls in the end. Cusins is embodying the intellectual will
and is the spiritual complement of Barbara. It seems certain, like the
relationship between Tanner and Ann in Man and Superman, that "The
attraction which draws him to Barbara is identified as the power of
creative evolution... towards the creation of a higher human being, the
superman, godhead. The marriage of Cusins and Barbara, therefore,
transcends mere social progress".51 To reform society, their spirituality
and intellectuality are not enough: rather they must be impacted with the
worldly power represented by Undershaft. When Cusins tells Barbara that
he has decided to accept Undershaft's offer, because "I want to make
power for the world" (III, 149), she replies, "I want to make power for
the world too; but it must be a spiritual power" (III, 149).

At the play's end, both Cusins and Barbara agree to compromise
with power beyond their control. They would preach to the comfortably
converted and to sell armaments to national governments. Barbara and
Cusins plan to effect social changes and to "make war on war," for
benevolent ends not for destroying humankind as Cusins proclaims it in
Act III, "I love the common people... I want a power simple enough for
common men to use" (III, 150). Cusins' intellectual will intends to
combine Barbara's spiritual power and Undershaft's worldly power,
which seems to be described as an essential marriage of heaven and hell.
Cusins' religion emphasises the divinity that is inherent in humanity. He
also recognises Barbara's religious attitude, saying "I adored what was
divine in her". In order to achieve their socially altruistic ends, the

50 Bernard F. Dukore, "Revising Major Barbara", in The Shaw Review, Vol. XVI
51 Kurt Tetzel V. Rosador, "The Natural History of Major Barbara", in Modern
demand for a combination of intellectual power, religious power, and practical power is essential in Shavian plays. As Wisenthal points out, "The arrival of the young couple at the foundry could well lead to the inauguration of a new era". By "a threefold symbolic marriage", which is "a Shavian Trinity", the poverty engendered by capitalistic society can be swept away. Barbara’s and Cusins’ combination as spiritual reformer and as social philosopher shows their realization that social idealism and spirituality cannot be isolated from worldly resources represented by management of the munitions factory in partnership to reform social change effectively. Even though they are not thoroughly agreed to Undershaft’s gospel of money and gunpowder, they retain money and gunpowder as necessary for their own goals of social reform. In a sense, “the symbolic ending [of marriage between Barbara and Cusins] is a vision of a godhead of power, spirit, and culture". Cusins will be united with Barbara, and their union represents their combined strength which should surpass the strength Undershaft possesses. Cusins’s and Barbara’s intelligence and spiritual insight can combine to overthrow an institutional system.

Barbara’s individual role attains ultimate benevolent ends beyond domesticity, taking a public role in ameliorating society. Shaw’s savior heroine, Major Barbara, embodies the expansion of Edwardian woman’s social and political concerns. She is the active agent as a soul saviour, and has the responsibility for social change with Cusins as an agent of social change. Barbara, as feminine principle of the life force, represents the spirit, while Cusins embodies will and intellect. With their combination, Shaw’s religion, creative evolution, will be accomplished through the redemption and enlightenment of humanity they would provide. Even though Barbara and Cusins plan to marry at the end of Major Barbara, “their marriage is insignificant next to the public roles they have proposed for themselves, as savior of souls and transformer of

52 Wisenthal, “The Underside of Undershaft: A Wagnerian Motif in Major Barbara”, p. 64.
Barbara and Cusins, the new deity of Shaw’s religion of creative evolution will use their newly gained power, as a steppingstone to further social and spiritual improvement for human betterment by their realization of Shavian reality for social redemption.

Shaw presents his religious ideas of creative evolution and creates the role of superman in terms of his Fabian eugenic ideas through Barbara, Cusins and Undershaft in this play. “Shaw’s religion... insisted on the complete interdependence of spirit and body, intellect and imagination, male and female”.\textsuperscript{56} In \textit{Major Barbara}, what is called for is human energy driven by the life force represented by three main characters. In \textit{Major Barbara}, Shaw dramatizes his socialist vision that there is no resolution except by social redemption. Undershaft’s munitions work does represent a step forward on the Shavian evolutionary improvement. In \textit{Major Barbara}, Shaw advocated the enlistment of the human will in the service of the life force as the most efficient way of using the life force’s energy to further its productive ends. In \textit{Major Barbara} the fact that even the life force can destroy social systems, the play represents much of Shaw’s contemplation of life as the practical application of human development in terms of Shaw’s conception of creative evolution.

\textsuperscript{55} Wisenthal, \textit{The Marriage of Contraries}, p. 20.

Chapter 8  *Heartbreak House*

*Heartbreak House* subtitled 'A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes', written at intervals between 1913 and 1919, is a new kind of play for Shaw. Begun in 1913, Shaw's worst experience of the first two years of the war was translated into *Heartbreak House*:

War and the mood of despair that enveloped Shaw during its first years tested his personal religious faith more severely than had anything else. Certainly, the first result of that inward crisis had been *Heartbreak House*.¹

As he wrote to Mrs. Campbell:

I never felt so morose in my life... I cant write: nothing comes off but screeds for the papers, mostly about this blasted war. I am old and finished. I, who once wrote whole plays d'un seul trait, am creeping through a new one (to prevent myself crying) at odd moments, two or three speeches at a time. I dont know what its about. I begin it on the 4th March: and I have hardly come to the beginning of the first scene yet.²

The falling of a bomb near Shaw's home at Ayot St. Lawrence seems to have given him the idea for the end of the play. The play caused many debates because of the theme which is uncharacteristic to Shaw. Shaw considered *Heartbreak House* to be one of his best works. Few early critics agreed with him, though the play has more recently been praised as one of his best. As Gibbs says, "the play is unquestionably one of the most complex of all Shaw's works".³ On the surface, the play does not end triumphantly with life in the ascendant and the powers of darkness seemingly vanquished. The play produces not only the social crisis of "cultured, leisured Europe before the war," but personal crisis as well. Dukore argues that "The collapse of *Heartbreak House* is the collapse of

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² Shaw's Letter to Mrs. Campbell, quoted by Weintraub, p. 155.
England. In this shiplike home, suggesting not only Shotover's occupation but also England's erstwhile maritime supremacy, Shaw represents a broad social spectrum. However this point seems to overlook what Shaw really wants to say through the play. As Wisenthal says, "The metaphor of the ship that needs steering, emphasizing the need for the guiding power of mind in human affairs, is a common one in Shaw's writings." Even though the play was written during the war time, nowhere in the play is war mentioned. However "the play represents... a response to the war which deepened and darkened Shaw's drama into a tragic vision." In *Heartbreak House*, Shaw seems to doubt the possibility that human beings in their present state can reform and transform society, as he had set out at the end of *Major Barbara*. Shaw's public views on the war were expressed in many dramatic and non-dramatic works, in which he can be seen moving on from the optimistic attitude of his earlier works into a tragic vision that reflected its time. It seems to relate to the literary creations from the First World War. Grene insists that "*Heartbreak House* is a satiric comedy telling the severe truth about the war and the mental attitudes that caused it. If fact the play has a much less controlled, a much more reactive relation to the war than that". Green's argument seems to be true on the surface, however, Shaw's interest was not just in the severe truth about the war itself. Rather he tried to show how essential the life force is to achieve social progress he hoped for even though the play has the negative aspects caused by the war. Shaw even used the evil of destruction in war for his evolutionary purpose. Shaw wrote, "the life force, however, benevolent, proceeds by trial and error and creates the problem of evil by its unsuccessful experiments and mistake". At the end of the play, the power of society and religion seem to be destroyed on the surface.

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However, in fact, in the final moment of *Heartbreak House*, it becomes evident that "cultured, leisured Europe" is waiting breathlessly, with happy anticipation, for its own destruction. It seems that "Shaw compounds the illusion by placing this society in the context of an all-encompassing dream".\(^9\) The final explosions of a bombing raid are in progress, and no one expresses surprise. As always Shaw emphasised the role of the elite through his plays, but the characters of *Heartbreak House* represent inability and delusion, which have to be destroyed for the change of the society. Unlike other plays written earlier, *Heartbreak House* seems to have an atmosphere of futility and boredom with undertones of menace. The technique of the play is one of seeming plotless and small incident. Also the philosophic attitude of the characters seem to be fatalistic. "One feels that much of the futile, pointless activity of the Heartbreakers is intended to prevent them from having to face the truth about themselves".\(^10\) Grene properly explains the play in terms of the theme "It is specifically a tragic vision for and of its time, Shaw having moved on from the spirit of his earlier work".\(^11\) As mentioned before, after World War I, Shaw's plays, with one or two exceptions, lack the vitality which characterizes most of the early plays. In *Heartbreak House* his growing loss of faith in contemporary humanity was reflected in the depiction of the characters. For Shaw war caused by frustrated humanity is the inevitable result in the illusive society encompassing various forms of human conflict for the struggle for existence. Shaw experienced the catastrophic consequences of the war. Shaw wrote in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, that saw the evil of war as

the poisoning of the human soul by hatred, the darkening of the human mind by lies, and the hardening of the human heart by slaughter and destruction and starvation' which he believed would leave long-lasting damages 'long after the fums have


During the war, Shaw tries to portray England drifting towards destruction. It seems that "Shaw sees the war as a judgment on late nineteenth-century Darwinist England". According to Darwin, "Man tends to increase at a greater rate than his means of subsistence; consequently he is occasionally subjected to a severe struggle for existence, and natural selection will have effected whatever lies within its scope". Darwinism created an atmosphere of fatalism and opportunism which culminated in the horrors of World War I: "within sixty years from the publication of Darwin's Origin of Species political opportunism had brought parliaments into contempt; ... and wrecked the centre of Europe..." He denounces the effect of Darwinism which led to the outbreak of the war through the mouth of Captain Shotover. "Nothing happens, except something not worth mentioning... The next one will get us. Stand by, all hands, for judgment" (III, 155, 158). In terms of social Darwinism, the theory of evolution could be used in justification of wars for national or racial supremacy. Shaw's objection to Darwinism was its purposelessness based on blind chance and appearing to lack any direction or goal. Shotover warns against coming danger, "Shotover takes on a parodied god-role... [he] expects us to live in the area of danger with a sense that there is a possibility of control over one's destiny". Captain Shotover has a self-sufficient soul which could be happy only when stripped of hope. He shouts, "Navigation. Learn and live; or leave it and be damned" (III, 156). Shotover is convinced that "we must win powers of life and death" (II, 75) over the capitalistic and amoristic degenerates. The characters of the play are described as unprincipled,

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irreligious and selfish, which led to the war. They are drifting aimlessly without intelligent foresight. Shotover tells Ellie:

Ellie [dreamily]. I should have thought nothing else mattered to old men. They cant be very interested in what is going to happen to themselves.

Captain Shotover. A man's interest in the world is only the overflow from his interest in himself... I see my daughters and their men living foolish lives of romance and sentiment and snobbery. I see you, the younger generation, turning from their romance and sentiment and snobbery to money and comfort and hard common sense (II, 128).

As Wilson points out, the play reveals “the emotional shallowness and drifting... Victorian idealism, Empire colonialism, the ruthless ethic of big business, the ineffectuality of romantic daydreamers”. 17 Heartbreak House has the most unreal, dreamlike atmosphere. The characters in the play are represented as highly cultured but aimless Edwardian intelligentsia. It seems that they did not know how to live. In the preface to the play, Shaw depicts how worthless they are:

They took the only part of our society in which there was leisure for high culture, and made it an economic, political, and, as far as practicable, a moral vacuum; and as Nature, with all sorts of refined pleasures, it was a very delightful place at its best for moments of relaxation. In other moments it was disastrous. 18

Shaw had never touched this kind of theme before and, in a way, the play was contrary to his socialist faith. Unlike most of his earlier plays, he dramatizes disintegration and destruction, not the construction that might follow. For the development of his dramatic theme, Shaw uses love-triangles of characters to illustrate their disillusionment through the unexpected way; “Love seems to be presented in this play as a faculty of recognizing truths beyond dualistic moral distinctions”. 19 The plot of

Heartbreak House seems to deal with the love-triangles on the surface, however it seems to show the disillusion of life by confrontation of reality. Shaw’s life force is always based on considerable self-awareness and self-enlightenment.

Through the play Shaw recognizes the fact that the civilization in an affluent society contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction, which is the necessary instrument of the evolutionary force. In terms of creative evolution, the play shows if the life force is impeded by the aimless people at some points, all progress toward its goals would be halted. Heartbreak House concentrates on and stops with the destruction of mankind, rather than looking forward with hope and confidence.

The setting of the play is, as Shaw says in the preface, “cultured, leisured England before the war”. The atmosphere of the play is pervaded by a lack of vitality and sense of purpose. “The beginning of this play creates an atmosphere of sleep and dreams which will saturate the entire action.”20 The atmosphere of the play is one of dreaming, heartbreak and disillusionment. It seems that “The house is called Heartbreak House not only because of the broken love affairs it witnesses, but also because of the larger social dilemma which it symbolizes”.21 Shaw also deals with the burglar motif as topics in terms of economic commentary in the play. Shaw created characters who are materially comfortable, but have lost vitality for further spiritual advancement. According to Wilson:

In Heartbreak House Shaw faced the social consequences of the disappearance of the old religion... and everybody suffering from boredom and wishing that something exciting would happen. And the result was a war that almost destroyed civilisation.22

Throughout the play, Shaw portrays a drifting England of disorder and complacency and analyses a civilization brought to the brink of destruction by its apathy and loss of purpose. The characters in the play are upper middle class, sophisticated but aimless and frustrated. Their dialogue is disconnected, dissonant and self-centered. Act I begins with a

young girl, Ellie Dunn visiting Captain Shotover’s house built like an old-fashioned ship. Even though she has been invited by Hesione Hushabye, who wants to make life romantically beautiful, to stay, no one has come to receive her when she arrives in the house. She was seemingly unexpected and unwelcomed, except by Captain Shotover who recognizes a possible soul-mate. Ellie is the daughter of Mazzini Dunn, who is hopelessly idealistic and has passed on his idealism to his daughter. Ellie confides to Hesione that for the sake of her father she is engaged to the rich and middle-aged Boss Mangan, who represents void, nullity and lacks vitality of spirit. When Ellie persists in marrying Mangan, not for duty, but for money, Hesione instinctively knows that Boss Mangan, to whom Ellie is unofficially engaged, would not be a proper husband for her.

Ellie. What is it to you whether I choose to marry Mangan or not?
Mrs. Hushabye. Do you suppose you can bully me, you miserable little matrimonial adventurer?
Ellie. It’s easy for you to talk: you have never known what it is to want money... In the world for me there is Marcus and a lot of other men of whom one is just the same as another. Well, if I cant have love, thats no reason why I should have poverty. If Mangan has nothing else, he has money.
Mrs. Hushabye. He will be your owner, remember. If he buys you, he will make the bargain pay him and not you (II, 106-08).

But Hesione is caught in her own sentimental view of romantic love. Ellie has already outstripped Hesione. As Ellie says: “Hesione knows nothing about me: she hasn’t the least notion of the sort of person I am, and never will” (II, 106). She is also miles ahead of Mangan. “You are not good enough to clean my father’s boots, Mr Mangan; and I am paying you a great compliment in condescending to make a convenience of you, as you call it. Of course you are free to throw over our engagement if you like” (II, 97). The only character Ellie can learn from is Captain Shotover. Romantic love is an obstruction which must be overcome if the life force is to be truly served. Ellie’s response to the death of romantic love and her decision to marry Mangan is quite pragmatic. She concludes that material comfort can at least free her from the drudgery and misery of
poverty. She is thus determined to marry Mangan, even after he tells her about his supposed rescue of her father from financial ruin:

Mangan [almost beside himself]. Do you think I’ll be made a convenience of like this?
Ellie. Come, Mr. Mangan! You made a business convenience of my father. Well, a woman’s business is marriage. Why shouldn’t I make a domestic convenience of you? (II, 96-7).

Ellie’s words present Shaw’s point of view concerning the nature of woman’s role in procreation in the evolutionary process in terms of eugenics. Ellie seems to search for a self-image within marriage in the beginning of the play. Most Victorian middle class women wanted to marry for personal, economic and social purposes. Most of them are influenced by the Christian morality on the subject of marriage. However, eugenics persuaded women to select the better fathers of their children for the next generation. Even though she was wronged by the illusions imposed by the society she takes up the baton of progress and serves the purpose of the life force. She also confesses that she is really in love with a handsome stranger, Marcus Darnley. “I am bound in honor and gratitude. I will go through with it” (I, 65 ). Marcus Darnly turns out to be Hector, Hesione’s husband. Marcus Darnley has been unveiled and the truth about Mangan has been revealed. The first act is full of instances of mistaken identity. “The immediate result of the series of mistaken identities is to force each of the characters into self-identification” Stockholder, Op. Cit., p. 26.

Shotover tells Mangan that he must not marry Ellie because he is too old. Finally she comes to be freed herself of the dream of financial security and has affianced herself to the captain: “Yes: I, Ellie Dunn, give my broken heart and my strong sound soul to its natural captain, my spiritual husband and second father” (III, 148).

In Act II, Ellie and Mangan discuss their engagement. After that Ellie realizes Mangan is the person who had ruined her father as a matter of business. At last Mangan confesses that he is in love with Mrs. Hushabye.

Mrs. Hushabye. It comes to me suddenly that you are a real person: that you had a mother like anyone else. [Putting her hands on his shoulders and surveying him] Little Alf?
Mangan. Well, you have a nerve.
Mrs. Hushabye. And you have a heart, Alfy, a whimpering little heart, but a real one (II, 112-13)

Ellie is resolved to marry Mangan, for she cannot have Hector: “If Mangan has nothing else, he has money” (II, 108). At the end of Act II, Ellie asks Shotover whether she should marry Mangan for her comfort. Shotover replies, she will be killing her soul if she lets the fear of poverty govern her life.

Ellie. Do you think I ought to marry Mr Mangan?
Captain Shotover [never looking up]. One rock is as good as another to be wrecked on.
Ellie. I am not in love with him... It seems to me quite fair. He wants me for one thing: I want him for another.
Captain Shotover. Money?... It’s dangerous thing to be married right up to the hilt... If you’re marrying for business, you can’t be too businesslike (II, 124-25).

Ellie faces her ideas regarding love, honor, and material comfort through her relations with the other characters, most of whom represent various forms of self-delusion. Finally, Ellie would like to marry Captain Shotover, but he tells her he already has a black wife in Zanzibar, and his wisdom is only sustained by continual nips of rum.

Among the characters, it is Ellie Dunn “who ordinarily would occupy the Vitality role, seeking to organize her energy around new combinations in society, [but she] encounters only fragments in Mangan’s vulgarity, Hector’s random romancing, and Shotover’s drunken dotage”.24 Ellie’s journey to Shotover could be focused on as the theme of the play and as the main element of plot in Heartbreak House, and it brings

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together many of the play's other elements. Each character finds a new reality through the breaking of the romantic illusions. As Shotover says, "they are only happy when they are stripped of everything, even of hope? (II, 131)". In order to serve the progress of human betterment, they have to be faced with their personal reality, hypocrisy and disorder. However they do not try to reform it. Eventually they are chastised by the destruction of the war. Ellie finally finds spiritual motives instead of materialistic and romantic ones. "For Ellie, heartbreak is a release from the trivial; it is 'the end of happiness and the beginning of peace' (II, 123), and leads to marriage with Captain Shotover and her concept of life with a blessing".25

Ellie, as an innocent young girl, finds Shotover's spiritual values during the course of the play beyond the romantic love and materialistic values of other heartbreakers. She was infatuated by handsome Hector and was prepared to marry the wealthy Mangan for her father's sake. Wisenthal describes Ellie's journey in relation to the Shavian notions of Hell and Heaven presented in Man and Superman as "her pilgrim's progress... from the romantic hell of Hector to the Mammonish earth of Mangan to the heaven of Captain Shotover, where the goal is to live more intensely and abundantly...".26 Ellie's successive stages of disillusionment are readied for what ought to be the final step in order to fulfill the life force's evolutionary progress. Ellie, the romantic young girl engages the spiritual old man, they may unite to fulfil the essential synthesis.

As Shaw's spokesman, Captain Shotover, who is a spiritual person seeking out danger because security is stifling and demoralising, reveals the subject of the play. He also embodied fading vitality of the society and the failing energies of Victorian enterprise and inventiveness. Shotover as Shaw's prophetic characters tells Ellie: "You are looking for a rich husband. At your age, I looked for hardship, danger, horror and death, that I might feel the life in me more intensely" (II, 128-29). Shotover, in introducing Mangan, describes him negatively: "Says his name is Mangan. Not able-bodied" (I, 73). Nor is he ableminded. "In

26 Ibid., p. 146.
Heartbreak House a character can be judged according to Captain Shotover’s attitude toward him and according to his distance from Captain Shotover”. Ellie is the only character who can accept and match Shotover’s spirituality. Ellie questions: “You pretend to be busy, and think of fine things to say, run in and out to surprise people by saying them, and get away before they can answer you” (II, 127). Shotover can only point out a few pitfalls to be avoided along the way: “I did not let the fear of death govern my life; and my reward was, I had my life. You are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life; and your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live” (II, 129). He can also give her the Shavian antidote to debilitating happiness:

Ellie. I feel so happy with you. I thought I should never feel happy again.
Captain Shotover. Why?
Ellie. Heartbreak. I fell in love with Hector, and didn't know he was married.
Captain Shotover. Heartbreak? Are you one of those who are so sufficient to themselves that they are only happy when they are stripped of everything, even of hope?
Ellie. It seems so; for I feel now as if there was nothing I could not do, because I want nothing.
Captain Shotover. That's the only real strength. That's genius. That's better than rum (II, 130-31).

Shotover, who is closely linked with Shaw's own viewpoint in Heartbreak House, plays a mentor like Caesar in Caesar and Cleopatra. Stewart puts the differences between Heartbreak House and Shaw's other plays:

For Heartbreak House is the play in which Shaw confronts, for the first time in his imaginative writing, the small extent of his faith in man. What lies just beneath the play's surface is despair. It is thus in intention, or impulsion, radically different from almost all the rest of his work.28

27 Ibid., p. 156.
Valency finds Shotover’s futile spirit, which is no longer able to utilize his genius: “Shotover represents the decline of English greatness... a highly evolved individual whom the life force has exhausted... he can teach her [Ellie] nothing because his searching, his living, has led to war”. However as Shaw’s agent of the life force in spite of the embodied symbol of the failing energies of the society, Shotover has a prophetic role through the play. Ellie collides with these ideals with the help of Captain Shotover and breaks out of the confining delusion. She moves toward the evolutionary step. Through his union with Ellie Dunn, the spirit of the past will somehow be transmitted to the future. Captain Shotover, as the reminder of England’s dominant mistress of the seas, says, “I can give you the memories of my ancient wisdom” (II, 127).

In Act III, the residents of the house discuss themselves in three pairs. “The centre of Heartbreak House is a disquisitory play in miniature about society’s organized methods of retribution”. Ellie says that she never really intended to marry Mangan. She considers herself to be the white wife of Captain Shotover, “my spiritual husband and second father” (III, 149). Dukore argues, focusing on Ellie’s disillusionment, that “Traditionally regarded, Heartbreak House traces the progress of Ellie Dunn from disillusionment with romantic love and materialism to a fruitful union of her vigorous youth with Shotover’s wise age, a union that will create ‘life with a blessing’”. This point could be the proper explanation of what the plot of Heartbreak House is. The play seems to explore the meaning of heartbreak on the surface, however, it deals with the disillusionment of life by confrontation of reality based on considerable self-awareness and self-enlightenment. “Her change, and that of the others, is toward a greater sense of reality, a symbolic movement toward truth which serves the function of the dream”. Shotover and Ellie’s relationship to one another has some resemblance to

the recurring pattern in earlier plays of a realist leading an idealist away from romantic illusion into disillusionment in terms of the service of the life force. Unlike the other characters, Shotover is old; his experience is that the happiness of life can no longer be engaged.

Captain Shotover. I am in my second childhood. I do not see you as you really are. I cant remember what I really am. I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreaded all my life long: the happiness that comes as life goes, the happiness of yielding and dreaming instead of resisting and doing, the sweetness of the fruit that is going rotten (II, 130).

But he is still active and he still fights against the anti-life forces that thwart the progress of the life force. He is a mystic. Crompton suggests that Shotover is “a prefiguration of the Ancients: in Back to Methuselah:

... his quest for the seventh stage of concentration is none other than their quest for godhead through the union of omnipotence and good will and for inauguration of the rule of the philosopher-king, that is the culmination of Shaw's social and political hopes.33

Shotover represents the dark side of creative evolution; he spells out the inevitable end facing enemies of the life force, “She will strike and sink and split” (III, 156). According to Shotover, only one thing can save the race: “Navigation. Learn it and live; or leave it and be damned” (III, 156). Ellie turns with some hope into Shotover’s area: “Turn in, all hands. The ship is safe” (III, 160). Ellie’s progress from idealistic, romantic young girl to a clear-eyed realist is the means of unifying all the other incidents of the play together. In Act III, Ellie gives the house its name:

Yes: This is silly house, this strangely happy house, this agonizing house, this house without foundations. I shall call it heartbreak house (III, 151).

33 Louise Crompton, Shaw the Dramatist (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1969), p. 27.
Hector adds: “And this ship that we are all in? This soul’s prison we call England?” (III, 156). Hector is close to being a tragic figure in the Shavian sense, because he represents a tremendous waste of energy and mind. He is well aware of his predicament, which he sees as being universal. Hector pronounces: “It is a pose like any other. In this house we know all the poses: our game is to find the man under the pose” (II, 133). For him, at least, the answer is obvious: “There is no sense in us. We are useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished” (III, 141). He understands better than any other character how close they may all be to extinction. Hector ends Act II with an anguished cry to the heavens, “Fall, Fall and crush” (II, 138). He says, “I must believe that my spark, small as it is, is divine (I, 87); but he also knows that

One of two things must happen. Either out of the darkness some new creation will come to supplant us as we have supplanted the animals or the heavens will fall in thunder and destroy us (III, 140).

At the end of the scene of Act III, an air-raid has already started and the Rectory has been destroyed while the burglar makes for shelter in the gravel-pit in the grounds. In terms of the apocalyptic ending to Heartbreak House, the light of the thunder at the end of the play “provides an effective symbolic counter of the final development of the play’s tragi-comic vision... the only prospects of life and regeneration lie in a journey of deliberately courted danger and in a union of the forces of light and darkness”.

Lady Utterword says “Providence always has the last word” (II, 99) with unconscious prescience. Mangan is hiding there where Shotover keeps his dynamite. Another bomb falls, right into the pit, killing Mangan, the Captain of Industry and the burglar. Nethercot puts emphasis on the death of two men, “Bombs dropped from the sky are not generally as selective in their victims as Shaw’s are here in removing the two kinds of ‘burglars’ and making it necessary to provide the rector with a new house- or a new religion, such as Creative Evolution”.

35 Arthur H. Nethercot, “Zeppelins Over Heartbreak House”, in The Shaw Review,
Shaw’s point of view, creative evolution willingly accepts the breakup of what we called ‘civilization’. Even though Shaw attacks the war, he used the evil of the war as the means of social change in paradox. Mangan interprets the sound of the bomb in a commercial context, “I tell you it was a train... But a goods train” (III, 140). Hesione hears the sound as “a sort of splendid drumming in the sky” (III, 140). Hector, to whom the sound is, he says, “heaven’s threatening growl of disgust at us useless futile creatures” (III, 140). Hesione and Ellie are unafraid. Hesione says, “What a glorious experience! I hope they’ll come again to-morrow night”. And Ellie agrees; while Randall begins to play his flute. They are willing their own deaths. “Did you hear the explosions?”, Hesione asks, “And the sound in the sky: it’s splendid: it’s like an orchestra: it’s like Beethoven” (III, 158). Even Ellie joins in:

Mrs. Hushbye. But what a glorious experience! I hope they’ll come again tomorrow night.

Ellie [radiant at the prospect]. oh, I hope so. (III, 160)

The bombers will probably come tomorrow, unless heartbreaks can steer the ship out of the storm, the ship will no doubt end up on the rocks. The play has negative and destructive feeling in its overall vision. After the war, Shaw seems to lose faith in humanity and to have a more pessimistic view of reality. The attitudes of *Heartbreak House* seems to be darker, more pessimistic than in his early plays. This can be traced to several political, personal and intellectual factors. Dervin emphasises that “*Heartbreak House* is a vision of the breakdown of Vitalism”.\(^36\) Even though Shaw has an angry depression arising from the war, the play has some positive affirmations rather than tragic despair. However the atmosphere of *Heartbreak House* reveals the attack on the Heartbreakers’ futile love-charades and their aimlessness of life. In contrast, Turco emphasizes the tragic attributes of the play: “If *Major Barbara* had been the culmination of nineteenth century optimism, *Heartbreak House* is the

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harbinger of twentieth century despair". It seems that Shaw had faced something of a dilemma between Christianity and his new religion, creative evolutionism for the future. On the one hand, in relation to Shaw's religious view, Leary says that "Heartbreak House echoes Man and Superman and anticipates Back to Methuselah". Even though there is no hopeful vision for the superman presented in Man and Superman or transcended world shown in Back to Methuselah, it seems certain that Shaw's affirmative view on the development of a better world is revealed through Heartbreak House. The theme of Shaw's creative evolution is linked through his plays in any case. For the evolutionary process to continue to move upward, individuals, who represent aimless intelligentsias and lack of vitality, must die to be replaced by the next generation in relation to his view of eugenic breeding. And it is this improvement which the plays aim for because improvement is what the life force is aiming for. It should be pointed out here that Shaw's interests in eugenic purposes argue that the breeding of the unfit has to be prevented for the next generation. To Shaw, the aimless intelligentsias in Heartbreak House are also regarded as the unfit who were afflicted with inheritable defects. According to Shaw, they should be replaced by the new creative vital offsprings. As has been said in the introductory chapter, Shaw seems to look at people as the most noteworthy and valuable products of evolution from a biological point of view. Biological determinism seems to be regarded as the central element of the process of human development. According to Shaw, the eugenic breeding of a higher race by the life force goes through the evolutionary process, which can be inherited over generations. Even disillusionment in Heartbreak House had become an essential characteristic as another aspect of creative evolution and the life force. After Heartbreak House the nature of the life force undergoes a significant transformation. Heartbreak House seems to anticipate the ending of the beginning. In Back to Methuselah the truly integrated man is seen as capable of transcending death itself. Shaw

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wrote:

what is hardly credible, but true is that the sound of the Zepp’s engines was so fine, and its voyage through the stars so enchanting, that I positively caught myself hoping next night that there would be another raid (III, 171).

Even though there are negative attitudes in the play, Shaw envisioned the change of social progress though possibly only when man changes his attitude toward life from a personal self-centered to an altruistic one. The characters of the play represent various aspects of the British pre-war elite aristocracy. Kaufman describes the heartbreaker in the play,

From the play’s beginning all the characters veer away from the harmonious center of traditional values. Captain Shotover’s houseboat, like the English ship of state, is in complete disorder. Ellie’s youth, beauty, and novelty so desperately needed by the inhabitants of this house, produce only confusion and bewilderment.39

The residents of Heartbreak House being selfish, futile and ineffectual, represent the conditions of its collapse. Morgan has a different view on the house itself, “Heartbreak House itself is an enchanted palace, home of reality... the resemblance of Heartbreak House to a ship is more potent than a staged metaphor of the drifting ship of state likely to crash on the rocks”.40 They are not willing to prevent their lives from drifting into the abyss. The inhabitants of Heartbreak House seem to desire to escape the harsh reality of the house. The characters can be seen in symbolic terms; love, pride, empire, and business. Most of them play games of love and heroism, but they do not aid the life force. They are self-interest, which hinders world-betterment. The bombing at the end of the play is regarded as the inevitable result of the attitudes and behavior of heartbreakers. People die before they have time to learn how to live so the war seems to make life more ephemeral than ever.

Berst says that heartbreak is “not... romantic, but anti-romantic,

being destructive of illusions as the realities of life force themselves upon the individual: heartbreak, in short, is life educating man".  

Berst's statement in terms of the theme of *Heartbreak House* comes closest to describing what I feel was on Shaw's mind. Shaw intends to exhibit the illusive state of England in the war time symbolically through the play. As Nethercot points out, "The danger to the English ship of state, that is, is not from the sea or enemy outside, but from the moral deterioration of the crew". Heartbreak House is a place where people are forced to tell the truth about themselves. At the end of the play they are all stripped away of their shortcomings based on illusion, which make this the most compendious and the most cruel of Shaw's plays.  

*Heartbreak House* is illustrated as negligence, inertia, dishonesty, and stupidity. "Of all Shaw's characters, Captain Shotover is the closest to a self-portrait... Shaw has expressed the frustration and bitterness that he felt before and during the war". Ellie becomes disillusioned in each act, by Hector, by Mangan who is wistful, twisted, rather frightened and the most "cheated" or frustrated person in the house, and by Shotover. Ellie herself does not know what she means by "life with a blessing". She is getting disillusioned about what life is through her spiritual husband, Shotover. "She eventually approaches that desirable stage of wanting nothing".  

Captain Shotover. I tell you happiness is no good. You can be happy when you are only half alive. I am happier now I am half dead then ever I was in my prime. But there is no blessing on my happiness.  

Ellie [her face lighting up]. Life with a blessing! that is what I want. Now I know the real reason why I couldnt marry Mr Mangan: there would be no blessing on our marriage. There is a blessing on my broken heart. There is a blessing on our beauty, Hesione. There is a blessing on your father's spirit. Even on the lies of Marcus there is a blessing; but on Mr Mangan's money there is none... But I know it means something (III, 149-50).

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When Ellie loses her romantic dreams she seems to gain something of a spiritual one. Her heartbreak seems to be "the end of happiness and the beginning of peace" (II, 123). She embraces Shotover’s concept of the heroic life. Instead of choosing Hector or Mangan as her romantic, materialistic husband, Ellie follows Shotover’s spiritual pursuit. In Act I she is disillusioned by Hector (romantic love); in Act II she is disillusioned by Mangan (happiness bought by money); in Act III She is disillusioned by Shotover (wisdom of the old). She becomes aware of her real potential and disillusioned about money and love by Shotover. Ellie, as the real person with a strong will and intelligence, follows Shotover’s belief in suffering and danger as the worth of life instead of seeking worldly happiness as delusion. Ellie is realizing that happiness is that state in which one is "stripped of everything, even of hope" (II, 131). Shaw emphasised that illusions must be destroyed, which would be the first step for realizing vitality of life. Shotover has the wisdom of age and Ellie has the energy of youth. "Her symbolic union with Shotover seems an attenuated synthesis indeed when compared with the trinities of fused forces that dominated Shaw’s previous major work". But Ellie’s symbolic marriage to Captain Shotover is slightly different from the real marriages that ended Man and Superman and Major Barbara. Shotover is too old to take over the munitions works, like Cusins; he is too old to father the possible superman, as Tanner might have done. As Wisenthal notes:

One might think... that the union between Ellie and Shotover offers grounds for hope at the end of the play: that Ellie can somehow give substance and effect to Shotover’s ideas, as Ann can ultimately do for Tanner’s and Undershaft for Barbara’s and Cusins’. But this union does not dominate the end of the play in the way that the other unions dominate the endings of Man and Superman and Major Barbara.

However, even though their union does not predict the result of procreation like in Man and Superman and Major Barbara, in escaping

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the blindness to reality, they envision a better world through their life forces newly gained. More importantly, their spiritual union beyond material limits seems to be an advanced notice for the transcended world in *Back to Methuselah*. In *Heartbreak House*, the life force could frighten and destroy men for the next step in evolution. “Shaw ironically sees the impulse toward death in itself as the hope for the future, the hope for salvation, the phenomenon that stabilized the horrific dreams of modern man”.

For this reason, *Heartbreak House* is Shaw’s cry for his desire for world-betterment in spite of the dark aspect of the play. In this sense, the bombings are not only a punishment for sins, “but a warning that man must change his ways- a warning that could have a desirable effect... its destruction would be a purification of the country, and would make way for progress”. In a sense, England’s social, economic, and moral predicament caused by the war might be solved by such violent means as dropping bombs. Ellie’s last words, “Oh, I hope so” lead right out of the play shattering illusions in negative and destructive mood. Weintraub notes that “Shaw’s [*Heartbreak House*] is less despairing... even prophetic and almost hopeful”. Even though there is a despairing atmosphere in the bombing scene, Shaw intends to show a hopeful vision in the play that the country would be saved by destructive disillusionment.

Through the acts of the play, the unworthiness and inability of the characters are revealed. The residents of *Heartbreak House* are indifferent, or even resistant, to change and fearful and distrustful of creativity; they are conventional and narrow-minded. Lady Ariadne Utterword, Hesione’s sister, has escaped from her home as soon as she could to marry Hastings Utterword, a man who “has been governor of all the crown colonies in succession”, for a comfortable life. She is the most practical, worldly person in the play. Lady Utterword, as a symbol of empire, sought and preserved upper-class English life. She says that “all this house needs to make it a sensible, healthy, pleasant house... is

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horses”:

Yes: horses. Why have we never been able to let this house? Because there are no proper stables. Go anywhere in England where there are natural, wholesome, contented, and really nice English people; and what do you always find?... I never lived until I learned to ride; and I shall never ride really well because I didn't begin as a child. There are only two classes in good society in England: the equestrian classes and the neurotic classes. It isn’t mere convention: everybody can see that the people who hunt are the right people and the people who don’t are the wrong ones (III, 141).

Even though she comes to understand what *Heartbreak House* stands for, she chooses to remain true to conventional values rather than any encouragement the life force can offer:

It is dreadful to think how you have been here all these years while I have gone round the world. I escaped young; but it has drawn me back. It wants to break my heart too. But it shan’t. I have left you and it behind. It was silly of me to come back. I felt sentimental about papa and Hesione and the old place. I felt them calling to me (III, 151-52).

But this self-knowledge does not turn her outward: “This place may be Heartbreak House to you, Miss Dunn... but to me it is only a very ill-regulated and rather untidy villa without any stables” (III, 152). Each character in the house suffers heartbreak. The inhabitants of *Heartbreak House* refuse to act and wait endlessly for something to happen. So the life force kills Mangan and a burglar off at the end. Boss Mangan, who is a debased example of captains of industry, represents another form of conventionality. Mangan is at first presented as a powerful and immensely wealthy, but vulgar and insensitive, industrialist; he is supposed to have rescued Ellie’s father from poverty and failure and Ellie has agreed to marry him for the sake of her father. However, as the play progresses, at the end, Mangan is revealed as a small-minded, inconsequential fraud, whose monetary worth is negligible, whose success depends entirely on a rotten economic order, rather than his own skill, and whose humanity is so doubtful. Mangan is newly-disillusioned
by Ellie who cares for nothing about him but his money. He desperately speaks his own idealism:

Mangan. I was brought up to be respectable. I dont mind the women dyeing their hair and the men drinking: it's human nature. But it's not human nature to tell everybody about it. Every time one of you opens your mouth I go like this [he cowers as if to avoid a missile] afraid of what will come next. How are we to have any self-respect if we dont keep it up that we're better than we really are? (III, 147).

Like Ariadne, but with less understanding, he wants to escape Heartbreak House: “I’ll go back to the city, where I’m respected and made much of” (III, 147). Mangan represents not only a bankrupt economic system, but a nothing in evolutionary terms. In *Heartbreak House* Shaw depicts an entire society in miniature and each character represents a human type. “Shaw’s play indicts a society of drift that was most pronounced in the cultivated among the population. Such a policy of drift, Shaw believed, made wars inevitable”.\(^{50}\) When the bombs fall and the dynamite explodes at the end of the play, only Boss Mangan and the other human, a burglar are handily dispatched. In this case, “What drops out of the skies is not the Life Force but the Death Force in the shape of a German bomb. It destroys Mangan’s capitalism and the Church of England with perhaps more Shavian precision than natural selection”.\(^{51}\)

Shaw presented the solution of hope for the world betterment in *Major Barbara*. However he admits that money will not save men from the evil. In *Major Barbara*, even though Shaw presents his new social vision through the trinities of the fused forces of Barbara, Cusins and Undershaft, the hoped for synthesis between Barbara’s spirituality and Cusins’ intellectuality with Undershaft’s money power had not yet been accomplished by the time of the writing of *Heartbreak House*. In *Heartbreak House* Shaw repudiates many of the ideas put forward in *Major Barbara*. In the play Undershaft boasts that he gives men their souls and better lives but now Shotover tells his son-in-law, Hector, that

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between them and business men: "There is enmity between our seed and their seed. They know it and act on it, strangling over souls... We kill the better half of ourselves everyday to propitiate them" (I, 86-7). Undershaft, an earthly providence, has degenerated into Mangan, the tool of the syndicates. Shaw's attitude toward money in Heartbreak House seems to be that despite its importance, abundance of money is just as damning as lack of it.

"Man has lost faith in himself and without faith there can be no truth. This is the theme of Heartbreak House as it has been the theme of so many of Shaw's plays".52 Heartbreak House seems to deal with the tragic aspects of our days negatively on the surface. As Gibbs says, "The motif of Creative Evolution is heard here only in a most negative key".53 However, it combines the tragic attributes with beneficial desires to search for identity through contemplation. Shaw's view of creative evolution is shown in a different way in Heartbreak House in one of Hector's speeches near the beginning: out of that "darkness some new creation will come to supplant us as we have supplanted the animals, or the heavens will fall in thunder and destroy us" (III, 140). Here Shaw anticipates that if man is not changed, man would be replaced by another form, long-livers appeared in Back to Methuselah, as the evolutionary appetite of the life force. The bomb at the end is greeted and welcomed in a way which leaves us not sad, but even hopeful. The outbreak of World War I must have imprinted on Shaw's pessimistic thoughts, which left a tragic atmosphere in writing Heartbreak House. Shaw also seems to intend to say what the war really meant in terms of human improvement. In the preface to Common Sense About the War, he despairs of human nature altogether:

What really happened was that the impact of physical death and destruction, the one reality that every fool can understand, tore off the masks of education, art, science, and religion from our ignorance and barbarism, and left us glorying grotesquely in the

license suddenly accorded to our vilest passions and most abject terrors.  

Wilson observes that the effect of the war on Shaw's later works was cataclysmic:

There was a collapse of the world he had helped to build, the post-Victorian world with its religion of evolution and human progress. He had never been rashly optimistic about human progress; but with Wagner and Ibsen and Tolstoy and Wells and himself it did seem that the world might be entering a new intellectual era, that an intelligent evolutionism might replace the bankrupt forms of Christianity. And then, overnight, the world was in the middle of an immense war that proved that human nature had not changed in 2,000 years.  

He notes that "The really impressive thing about Heartbreak House is that it represent the first long stride Shaw had taken in ten years - a stride in his actual thinking". Even though Shaw exposes his hatred and disappointment of the war in the play, he does not lose his philosophic optimism. In Heartbreak House, the procedure of destruction seems to be essential for the inhabitants of the house to be brought rebirth. "The final thematic development of Heartbreak House recalls the conclusion in Major Barbara that 'the way of life lies through the factory of death'". For Shaw, progress through the evolution of the life force was the only hope of the future. The idea of creative evolution can still function as the structure and the unifying theme. With its open-ended conclusion, Heartbreak House can be profitably discussed within the context of the life force. In terms of creative evolution, Heartbreak House suggests that all progress toward its goals will be halted if the life force is thwarted by the aimless in the evolutionary process. Through the Heartbreak House, it seems that the life force contains the seeds of its own destruction and those of living things as well. The negative nature of the life force with  

56 Ibid., p. 225.  
its own possibility of destruction looms ominously in *Heartbreak House* unlike in previous treatments of the life force. In contrast to the omnipotent and omniscient God of Christian dogma, the life force was imperfect and often counteracts with man in the world. *Heartbreak House* puts conflicts between humanity and the life force and reveals the destruction of mankind, rather than looking forward with confidence to the super-race Shaw hoped with man's own effort and support.

The opposite values, the desperate hope and the fearful destruction, which are two aspects of the life force, in *Heartbreak House*, makes the play powerful. The play closes with the expressed wish that the bombers will return the next night. But the bombs suggest that the life force can no longer wait for the slow evolutionary process of humanity; it must now seek elsewhere. Man made the forces of darkness and death which is the burden of *Heartbreak House*. These forces of darkness are able to ruin humanity if man cannot rid himself of his false dreams of power, of self-indulgent happiness. To Shaw, however, even "death is not necessarily a failure of energy on the part of the life force"[^58], but necessarily a breeding of better human being. For Shaw, creative evolution is not an interesting idea, but a necessity, a way of life.

V  A New Creed, Creative Evolution

Chapter 9  Man and Superman

Shaw’s *Man and Superman* subtitled “A Comedy and a Philosophy” is related to conventional melodramatic materials of a love story and a happy ending with a farcical approach. The dream scene in the play had been referred to as a separate one-act drama. Shaw proclaims his belief in the life force in creative evolution through the play. The creative evolution concept spelled out in the dream scene of *Man and Superman* has intellectual links with *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw declared, “I think it well to affirm that the third act, however fantastic its lengthy framework may be, is a careful attempt to write a new book of Genesis for the Bible of the Evolutionists”.¹ In his ‘Postscript’ of 1933 to the ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ of *Man and Superman* he writes: “The evolutionary theme of the third act of *Man and Superman*, was resumed by me twenty years later in the preface to *Back to Methuselah* where it is developed as the basis of the religion of the near future”.² In the preface to *Back to Methuselah* Shaw speaks of *Man and Superman* as his “dramatic parable of Creative Evolution”. He continues that he “decorated it much too brilliantly and lavishly... Its tale of a husband huntress obscured its evolutionary doctrine”.³

Shaw maintains men have to labor constantly for creative evolution with vital force. The life force carries on the process of trial and error through the spirit of *Man and Superman*. Shaw was highly interested in evolutionary concepts which were widespread in the thought of the Victorian period. As mentioned in previous chapters, he derived evolutionary theory from his contemporaries, such as Lamarck, Butler, Bergson, Darwin, Galton, Nietzsche etc., and developed his own creative

evolutionism. In *Man and Superman*, his social, political, and evolutionary thought are expressed in terms of his religious ideas about the life force, supermen, and creative evolution. "It's a juxtaposition of real dramatic nerve". Shaw used the term 'Superman' as the English equivalent for Nietzsche's 'Ubermensch', perhaps with the idea of suggesting the similarity between his position and that of Nietzsche. In the play, Shaw introduces the idea of evolutionary development and used the concept of superman to create a superior race. In *Man and Superman*, Shaw deals with the question of how this higher type of humanity might be eugenically produced.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, eugenics, advocating the improvement of human race by selective and artificial breeding, seems to be concerned with sexual relationship as a means to reproduction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Along with contemporary religious views, the ideas revealed in *Man and Superman* linked to the developments in scientific and intellectual thinking on evolution and eugenics during the Victorian period. Breeding raises the question of sexual relations and the woman question, to which Shaw made a major contribution in his dramatic work, as his speech in 1913 demonstrates,

> My contention is that this attraction (between men and women) is the only clue you have to the breeding of the human race; and I do not believe you will ever have any improvement in the human race until you greatly widen the area of possible sexual selection; until you make it as wide as the numbers of the community make it.5

For the purpose of eugenic socialism in relation to creative evolution, Shaw believed that the best way of improving the human race was rational selection that men and women could choose a marriage partner in accordance with the promptings of instinct as effective eugenic agencies. He never set down the specific characteristics that would make the superman instantly recognizable. The need for a superman is evident early in the development of Shaw's thought and stems from his distrust for the common man. Shaw came to realize, society would not be

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4 Charles Spencer, "Man and Superman; Don Juan", in *Theatre Royal* (London, 2004)
reformed until its people were. For Shaw, the life force is the fundamental element of creative evolutionism as an impetus of human evolution. Accordingly, all of Shaw’s characters in the plays realize their roles as agents of the life force and act with understanding of the requirements for real human progress.

Bergsonian dialectic process gives a metaphorical basis to *Man and Superman*, Tanner as the metaphor for intellect, Ann as instinct, and their marriage as the synthesis of these two qualities. In the play the relationship between man, as thinker and woman, as pursuer “demands a surrender of individuality to the life force”.6 As Shaw himself remarks in connection with ‘The Revolutionist’s Handbook’ in the play, “all my characters, pleasant and unpleasant... are right from their several points of view; and their points of view are, for the dramatic moment, mine also. This may puzzle people who believe that there is such a thing as an absolutely right point of view, usually their own”.7 This is because Shaw’s characters always play their roles as Shavian spokesmen.

As in his other plays, Shaw uses many theatrical conventions and the plot of a reversed love chase in *Man and Superman*. In terms of dramatic genre, *Man and Superman* belongs to romantic comedy, and contains a discussion scene in the independent third act. The play uses elements of romantic comedy and farce “to provide the formal dramatic incarnation of a philosophy”.8 Shaw combined melodrama, discussion and extravaganza to create his own genre. However, even though Shaw drew upon conventional materials in *Man and Superman*, as is often the case with Shaw, he adapted and subverted them for his own dramatic and thematic ends. Though using the plot of romantic love, Shaw rather wants to show its unreality, emptiness and worthlessness. As Crompton points out, “With *Man and Superman* Shaw leaves behind such popular forms as

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melodrama and domestic comedy to enter a kingdom peculiarly his own”. Shaw presents the theme of a love chase by a female in the reversed way through the conventional protagonists. Shaw imbues both Ann and Tanner with heroic energy, making the biological and instinctive role of vitality for the creative evolutionary progress. With the full scope to a powerful woman as a love chaser, reproduction seems to be related to the main subject throughout the play. As Shaw says, “as its tale of a husband huntress obscured its evolutionary doctrine I try again with this cycle of plays that keep to the point all through”, it seems true that “in Shaw’s creative-evolutionary philosophy, the love chase became a metaphor for the relation of male and female principles in the universe”. The question which must be asked at this point is whether the characters have any religious dimensions which have been explored through the play.

As is well known, *Man and Superman* is a religious drama, with concepts of hell, heaven and earth in terms of Shaw’s creative evolutionism. However, Shaw’s religion has to be understood in relation to his ideas from his philosophical and socialist standpoint. It seems true that without the Hell scene, the play may seem to be marrying comedy with a conventional love story. The Hell scene seems to be regarded as a statement of Shaw’s theology of new religion in terms of social salvation. The centre of the play is the dream sequence. The pattern of the plot is very similar to a conventional love story. The play illustrates in Shaw’s words, “a trumpery story of modern London life... the ordinary man’s main business is to get means to keep up the position... and the ordinary woman’s business is to get married”.

Through the play, the roles of characters are paradoxically reversed, with women as the love chaser. Most Victorian women were obliged to confine themselves to the domestic area. Typical of this position was the statement made by Alice Ravenhill, one of Shaw’s contemporaries.

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12 Shaw, *Man and Superman*, p. 16.
13 Alice Ravenhill (1859-1954) was interested in home economics and child care as a
describing how Victorian women were to limit themselves to the merely personal or familial: “The enormous influence of women can only be rightly exercised with the support of and in co-operation with men... Most urgent of all, the girl growing to womanhood, whether in the humblest or most exalted sphere of life, should study the needs of infancy and the art of the right rearing of children”.\(^\text{14}\) As Ravenhill points out, such women contributed to human betterment mainly through the limited maternal role. Shaw reflected such domestic female characters in his earlier plays to exemplify the position of Victorian women who are influential within their positive sphere. Victorian women were treated as intellectually inferior to man and legally subordinate. The womanly women were considered as the ideal woman in the house. The Victorian women sought the conventional marriage, which provided them with stable wealth and security among the higher social classes, and it depended on the established social structure. Conventional Victorian woman’s domestic social role was replaced by the Edwardian new woman’s expanded opportunities. The scope of the Edwardian new woman and Shaw’s female characters widened from the traditional concept of woman solely as domestic nurturer to the modern concept of self-determined roles for women in a wider world. Shaw’s Victorian domestic heroines, Candida in *Candida* and Ann in *Man and Superman* (even though, strictly speaking, this play is ‘Edwardian’) represent nineteenth-century woman’s traditional domestic nurturant role, while Shaw’s Edwardian heroines, Liza, Major Barbara and Saint Joan reflect the opportunities to women in relation to the social status of women and the expansion of women’s social role and responsibilities. The female characters at the turn of the century were caught in a changing tide of ideas. Each shows a different route from the sheltered Victorian household to the modern world as the angel in the house evolves into the new woman. It is perhaps worthwhile to note how Slaughter observes the

domestic sciences graduate of the British National Health Society. She was a lecturer in Home Economics at the university of London and became the first woman elected as a Fellow of the Royal Sanitary Institute.

relationships between the business of marriage and social status in conventional Victorian society;

The most important of the influences affecting marriage and therefore affording conditions which determine the course of the affection is social status. This is not the place for its full analysis but it defines one of the primary types of relationship among members of a society. It does not matter very much what the bases of status, or its insignia, may happen to be, - these change with altering conditions. The prestige involved may be due to the individual's own efforts and be the natural result of actual superiority. The normal case, however, is that of membership in a class. 15

As is revealed through Slaughter's remark, many diverse ideas on the business of marriage were included to be practical issues in Victorian society. Since ultimate value of marriage among most Victorian middle class women was grounded in any particular privileged status. Unlike the Victorian women's role, the role of woman in Shaw's plays is emphasized as the agent of biological power. She pursues what she wants as the positive drive of instinctive/biological will for the production of offspring. From Shaw's point of view, women characters are seen as having always played the most positive part in the evolutionary process because of the nature of their biological role in procreation of a superior race to serve the purpose of the life force. In Man and Superman, the importance of motherhood and racial improvement are emphasised as an aspect of the relationship between eugenics and feminism. Especially, the interest in motherhood had been emphasised in the eugenicists' outlook. Saleeby, well-known propagandist and popularizer of eugenics for over twenty years, says; "Any system of eugenics... any proposal for social reform... which fails to reckon with motherhood... is foredoomed to failure". 16 Saleeby, the president of the National Birth-Rate Commission and vice chairman of the National Council for Public Morals, converted to socialism by the influence of Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1910. He


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devoted his energies to the question of race regeneration. He drew attention to the relative significance of heredity and environment. It is clear that although Saleeby opposed feminism, he advocated the eugenic education of parenthood for the breeding of a healthy race. For Shaw, this importance of motherhood was a central issue for his dramatic theme. In terms of eugenic feminism, the woman seems to encourage the selective breeding most desirable for the production of superior offspring. Women were seeking proper partners to reproduce better offspring, which gives them public significance as a new social function. As Slaughter observes, "Many people expect to attend to the business of marriage first and to become eugenists afterward".\(^\text{17}\) Eugenics persuaded women to select breeding to have opportunities for better children. Richardson argues that "the central goal of eugenic feminists was the construction of civic motherhood... In the wake of new biological knowledge... they assumed responsibility for the rational selection of reproductive partners".\(^\text{18}\) Through rational reproduction, eugenic feminists seemed to believe that they made their contribution to the advancement of humankind.

In terms of eugenic purpose in the play, this characterization is most effective dramatically; woman dramatizes a major essential of creative evolution, the active search of woman for a husband as father of her children. With regard to the role of woman in *Man and Superman*, many diverse ideas are given. Through the play, Shaw declared that women played a far more active role in life than his contemporaries suspected. Baughan observes that "it is not true of all women, nor is it true that they look on motherhood as the aim of their life, to be schemed for by dishonourable methods if necessary".\(^\text{19}\) However, it is almost certain that the Shavian view on female characters cannot be explained in separation from his purpose of creative evolution in relation to the procreation of a better race. Shaw identifies the differences of the forces as intellectual


and instinctive activities by man and woman respectively. Each has a highly individualized ability, working for human progress. In the play, he exploits the instinctive role as a biological agent of evolutionary progress and the intellectual role as an intelligent agent of the life force for its way of breeding a superior race. Since the life force needs the raw material provided by the brains of its latest creation, sexual reproduction is the only means of production women retain.

Also the traditional conceptions of heaven and hell are reversed in the play. Shaw’s heaven and hell are metaphors for opposing conceptions of values seemingly contradictory aspects in traditional Christianity. Shaw’s hell is the place for the self-indulgent and pleasure-seekers who abandon themselves to romantic values and advocate romantic idealism and sentimentality. It is worthy noting that in his earlier play, *The Devil’s Disciple*, Shaw reverses Dick’s diabolonian nature, the Devil’s Disciple of the title as an agent of the life force to reveal how irreligious the religious puritan is and how religious the devil is in an institutional, religious hypocritical society. On the contrary, Shaw represents the nature of the devil in *Man and Superman* as an anti-evolutionary pleasure seeker belonging to the hellish people. Essentially the Devil’s Disciple, Dick, one of the heavenly people who is eager for a better world and a higher improvement of mankind, is considered as the agent of the new religion, creative evolution instead of institutional religious authority.

Dick Dudgeon, the devil’s disciple, is a Puritan of the Puritans. He is brought up in a household where the Puritan religion had died, and become, in its corruption, an excuse for his mother’s master passion of hatred in all its phases of cruelty and envy... In such a home the young Puritan finds himself starved of religion, which is the most clamorous need of his nature... with Pity instead of Hatred as his master passion, he pities the devil; takes his side; and champions him, like a true Covenanter, against the world. He thus becomes, like all genuinely religious men, a reprobate and an outcast.20

The Hellish people have no vitality of the life force within

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themselves for human improvement. They therefore either escape from the realities of the world or find easy relief in conventional values without any hope or efforts for human betterment. They either refuse to face true reality or refuse to overcome it, seeking pleasure in escaping from such realities. Juan points out that Hell is devoid of vitality: "Nothing is real here. That is the horror of Damnation" (III, 128). Consequently the hellish people do not contribute to improve human society. They are self-indulgent in seeking false realities without true vitality. The Hellish people take no pains to improve human life and society. Therefore being anti-evolutionary, they have no desires to fulfil the betterment of human life and society. Thus, hell is a place without hope, "based on the assumption that no improvement is possible".21 Their pleasures are purposeless in terms of the life force. They create sentimental and romantic illusions in order to escape from the harsh realities of life. The hellish people regard themselves as the true followers of such virtues as “beauty, purity, respectability, religion, morality, art, patriotism, bravery and the rest” (III, 128). They are devoid of the will of the life force, the evolutionary appetite, which is an instinct to seek “incessant aspiration to higher organization” (III, 165). Thus they fail to improve themselves and institutional society. Juan points out the lack of this instinct within the Devil and other hellish people:

It is the absence of this instinct in you that makes you that strange monster called a Devil. It is the success with which you have diverted the attention of men from their real purpose, which in one degree or another is the same as mine, to yours, that has earned you the name of The Tempter (III, 165).

As Don Juan says, "written over the gate here are the words 'Leave every hope behind, ye who enter'. Only think what a relief that is! For what is hope? A form of moral responsibility. Here there is no hope, and consequently no duty, no work, nothing to be gained by paying, nothing to be lost by doing what you like. Hell, in short, is a place where you have nothing to do but amuse yourself" (III, 133). In Shavian Hell, "here


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you call your appearance beauty, your emotions love, your sentiments heroism, your aspirations virtue, just as you did on earth” (III, 140). In the hellish place there is endless pleasure, gratification of the senses instead of endless physical torment. The main diabolic characters in the play are Octavius, Mendoza and Ramsden. The Devil/Mendoza wastes his life since he was rejected by his lover. He refused to face his reality and escaped from it by indulging himself in sentimental illusions about his hopeless love. The Devil/Mendoza as well as Octavius is an escapist from reality, and thus one of the hellish human beings. As hellish characters, they are condemned because they make no contribution to human betterment. On the contrary, heaven belongs to those who labour for human improvement in the real world. As McDowell points out, “heaven and hell [in the play] are not two places; they are the two ends of a ladder of values”.2

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is working within me of Life’s incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding. It was the supremacy of this purpose that reduced love for me to the mere pleasure of a moment, art for me to the mere schooling of my faculties, religion for me to a mere excuse for laziness, since it had set up a God who looked at the world and saw that it was good, against the instinct in me that looked through my eyes at the world and saw that it could be improved. I tell you that in the pursuit of my own pleasure, my own health, my own fortune, I have never known happiness (III, 165).

Shaw’s heaven is the place for philosophic artists whose arts contribute to life for a better world, not art for art’s sake itself. As Crompton says, “Shaw’s heaven... is the sum of all true values, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic”.23 Shaw says that “what you conventional people think of as heaven is really hell, and what you would

consider hell is really heaven... only the difference between two ways of looking at things... the difference between the angelic and diabolic temperament" (III, 129). According to Shaw, philosophical artists are regarded as driving agents of the life force. Shaw regards the greatest artists as men of genius. They are heavenly people who possess a contemplative and creative superhuman spirit, and they devote themselves to improving society to a higher form of organization. Instead of seeking their own personal desires, they help other people evolve toward a higher being and ultimately towards becoming superhuman which is the true goal of the life force. Men with superhuman spirit are the real dwellers of heaven. They have a vital evolutionary appetite, the life force, and follow its will to improve human life. The superhuman spirit is "a belief in the possibility provided by man's creative and intellectual energies" capable of achieving "higher and higher individuals".24 As Juan observes, a philosophical man is he "who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means" (III, 151). In this respect, the true philosophers are the masters of reality who contemplate and discover the true meaning of life.

Those who can are men of genius: that is, men selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose. Accordingly, we observe in the man of genius all the unscrupulousness and all the 'self-sacrifice' (the two things are the same) of Woman. He will risk the stake and the cross; starve, when necessary, in a garret all his life; study women and live on their work and care as Darwin studied worms and lived upon sheep; work his nerves into rags without payment, a sublime altruist in his disregard of himself, an atrocious egotist in his disregard of others.25

Shaw believes that works of art can influence the process of evolution. They are the masters of reality. Their work is "to show us ourselves as we really are". In Act I, Tanner describes his view of artists:

25 Shaw, Man and Superman, p.20.
Our minds are nothing but this knowledge of ourselves; and he who adds a jot to such knowledge creates new mind as surely as any woman creates new men (I, 62).

Among the characters of *Man and Superman*, Ana/Ann and Juan/Tanner are those who belong to Heaven, because they are not seekers of their own happiness, but of the universal purpose of the life force. A key theme which seems to be emerging in the play is that the life force is proved not for personal advantage, but for more general improvement. Shaw declares that “Happiness is not the object of life, life has no object: it is an end in itself; and courage consists in the readiness to sacrifice happiness for an intenser quality of life”. In Shaw’s words in the preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*, “there is a way to heaven even from the gates of hell” not through repentance, but through his own efforts. Most middle class Victorian women wanted to marry for personal economic and social reasons. Unlike most Victorian women, Ana/Ann choose heaven to pursue a father for superman with eugenic purposefulness. She perceives her unfinished mission of the life force to create superman. Her desire for a husband “is not based on a longing for a lifetime of hellish sentimental bliss but on an unconscious wish to produce the best possible children, children who will contribute to the upward evolution of the human race... it has a eugenic rather than a romantic basis”. Shaw’s eugenics, like Galton’s ideas, accepts the role of women as the vital contribution in regenerating higher race. Shavian eugenics emphasised the importance of motherhood as a factor in the evolution of all the higher species of mankind. As Richardson notes, “eugenic love was... the replacement of romance with the rational selection of a reproductive partner in order better to serve the state through breeding”. It is certainly true that *Man and Superman* is concerned with the eventual replacement of man by a superior species,

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but at this point, Shaw is still hopeful enough of man's capabilities as the favored instrument of the life force.

Ana. ... Tell me; where can I find the Superman?
The Devil. He is not yet created, Senora.
The Statue. And never will be, probably...
Ana. Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done. I believe in the life to come... A father! A father for the Superman! (III, 173).

In the Hell scene, the discussion about sex, ideas and immortality is presented by the diabolic and angelic temperaments in the debate. Juan/Tanner, as a reformer-philosopher, possesses an unselfish spirit concerned for the betterment of human life. Juan speaks in the Hell scene: "at least I shall not be bored. The service of the life force has that advantage, at all events". Thus, his choice of heaven is to serve the universal purpose of the life force, not to gain his personal happiness. Juan declares his philosophical and quasi-religious views in the Hell scene. According to Juan, woman "invented" man "to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce... The great central purpose of breeding the race: ay, breeding it to heights now deemed superman" (III, 160). Since the instinct is the life principle, the most essential quality of instinct is vitality. The intellect cannot gain vitality without the aid of the instinct as Bergson states, "while intellect treats everything mechanically, instinct proceeds, so to speak, organically".30 Whereas Bergson admits the possibility of a superman, he cannot believe that the human race is heading in that direction. According to Bergson, the end of life is the multiplication of forms. For Bergson, the goal of evolution can be nothing more than unceasing individuality. In his thought, there is no specific hope for evolution. On the contrary, Shaw's theory of creative evolution envisions an aim for the social direction for the evolutionary process. For Shaw, life has meaning only if man can conceive of something better and greater than himself. During the

discussion, Juan outlines the theory of creative evolution. Thus man can contribute to the development of life:

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding (III, 165).

Man as he is must change, not only in degree but in kind, he must somehow effect an evolutionary improvement in himself; otherwise, nothing can come of revolution. Shaw also presents his own view on sex, which is essential for the breeding of superman, in terms of the proclamation of his religious ideas through the play. According to him, no real progress can be achieved until the nature of man is changed; and this can only come about through an evolutionary change effected by intelligent breeding. Unlike conventional dramas, "Man and Superman is charged with a sexual energy that is barely contained by the conventions of the Victorian stage". 31 It seems that Shaw's examination of sex was prompted by his own concept of a religion of creative evolution for the purpose of breeding better human species. Shaw's male and female characters have different energy and pursuits. In spite of their conflict of sex, each one has been derived from the inheritance of the life force. Shaw brings the basic relationship between the sexes on the stage; "though we have plenty of dramas with heroes and heroines who are in love... we have no modern English plays in which the natural attraction of the sexes for one another is made the mainspring of the action". 32 He regards Man and Superman as a play "in which [sex] is carefully kept off the stage, whilst it is alleged as the motive of all the actions". 33 Sexual attractiveness in the play is associated not with the romantic sentimental

32 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 8
33 Shaw, Three Plays for Puritans, p. 17.
feeling but with the biological and purposeful needs. Shaw seems to regard people as the most noteworthy and valuable products of evolution from a biological point of view. According to Shaw,

Sexually, Woman is Nature's contrivance for perpetuating its highest achievement. Sexually, Man is Woman's contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest in the most economical way. She knows by instinct that far back in the evolutilional process she invented him, differentiated him, created him in order to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce... But how rash and dangerous it was to invent a separate creature whose sole function was her own impregnation! For mark what has happened (III, 148).

Unlike conventional Victorian dramas, Shaw used the sex duel as the main theme to deal with social issues through Man and Superman. Unlike the romantic sexual play, the role that sexual attraction plays in romantic love is limited to its role in procreation.

[The play] is to deal with sexual attraction, and not with nutrition, and to deal with it in a society in which the serious business of sex is left by men to women, as the serious business of nutrition is left by women to men. That the men, to protect themselves against a too aggressive prosecution of the women's business, have set up a feeble romantic convention that the initiative in sex business must always come from the man, is true; but the pretence is so shallow that even in the theatre, that last sanctuary of unreality, it imposes only on the inexperienced.34

In the dream scene, Shaw uses parallel characters as their archetypes, Don Juan as Tanner, Dona Ana as Ann, and the Statue as Ramsden, and Mendoza and the Devil. These pairs of characters function symbolically in terms of Shavian ideas of religion. In Shaw's spokesman, Tanner's The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion, Shaw says "every genuine religious person is a heretic and therefore a revolutionist".35 Tanner is described as an orator and agitator in the stage direction. When he resists marriage with blindness, Ana/Ann tells him

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34 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 17.
35 Ibid., p. 213.
that “most marriages are perfectly comfortable” (III, 116) and that sex is purposeful for the sake of having children not for love itself. For this purpose, as the embodiment of instinctive vitality, Ann is predatory, relentless in her pursuit of a man to mate with. Ann/Ana’s attitude toward marriage is pragmatic rather than romantic. For Shaw, “marriage means children; and that men should put nourishment first and women children first is, broadly speaking, the law of Nature and not the dictate of personal ambition”. As he asserts in *Back to Methuselah*, “Man and woman are what they are and do what they must”: they are “the Unalterable, the Irresistible, the Irresponsible, the Inevitable”.

As one of the hellish people, self-confident old rationalist Roebuck Ramsden is consoling a young man, Octavius who sorrows for the death of the father of the girl whom he loves in the opening scene. The girl’s father has made Ramsden and Tanner, whom the girl expects to marry, co-guardians of the girl. For sub-plot, Violet, Octavius’s sister, is pregnant without marriage and does not disclose the husband’s name. The two plot lines are eventually resolved in the final act: Ann catches Tanner and the mystery of Violet’s husband is cleared up. In the second act, Ann rejects Octavius’ wooing. Tanner warns Octavius about Ann’s cunning treatment of him by expounding his view of women. Tanner tries to escape Ann by motoring south through Europe at high speed with his chauffeur and servant, Henry Straker. Ann also handles Tanner by using tricks. The third act opens in the Sierra Nevada in which Tanner and his servant are seized by Brigands. Shaw used the technique of coincidence to reveal the bandit Mendoza, the lover of Straker’s sister and Violet’s prospective father-in-law Mr. Malon, an investor in brigandage. In act three in Spain, Tanner has a dream, in which the characters in the play appear as their archetypes. The fourth act is in a hotel in Granada, where the mystery of Violet’s marriage and secret husband are cleared up and Tanner is captured as the role of father the superman.

Even though Ann’s co-guardian, Ramsden, prides himself as an advanced reformer and evolutionist in his radical politics in his age, he is illustrated satirically and institutionally as a conventional Victorian.


figure in the play. He stays in a privileged status in the existing conventional society he attacked without reformer's spirit. He finds relief in the established values of the world without enthusiastic aspiration for the further improvement of human society. In the stage direction, Shaw reveals Ramsden as a reformer in his youth:

He was born... in 1839, and was a Unitarian and Free Trader from his boyhood, and an Evolutionist from the publication of *the Origin of Species*. Consequently he has always classed himself as an advanced thinker and fearlessly outspoken reformer (I, 41).38

He is becoming conventional as he grows older. He condemns Tanner's 'Handbook' for being too liberal and discards it without even reading it. His reaction to the scandal of Violet's pregnancy is typically conventional. He thinks it is more horrible than death:

Ramsden. ... let me say that the news concerns your sister, and that it is terrible news. Octavius. I am not sure that it is not even worse than that (I, 63).

In the Hell scene, Ramsden is transformed into a Statue. As Ana points out, he is now "indeed turned into stone" (III, 126). He is a hellish man who has abandoned his spirit as a reformer, losing his desire in the possibility of human progress, and having no more concern to improve conventional society. Therefore, in Hell, he can live in peace in seeking honor with vanity and sentimental emotion. This point is revealed in his statement at the end of the dream scene.

The Statue. Good. [Reflectively] All the same, the Superman is a fine conception.

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There is something statuesque about it.
The Devil. He is not yet created, Senora
The Statue. And never will be, probably. Let us proceed: the red fire will make me
sneeze (III, 173).

Another woman character in the play, Octavius’s sister Violet is
very worldly and conventional in her quest for her goals. Violet seeks
Hector’s money for the established values of the world. Unlike Ann, she
is a conventional woman seeking the necessity of a guaranteed income in
a privileged status. Violet’s approach to marriage might be modelled on
Slaughter’s contemporary article, observing how conventional Victorian
middle class woman considers the business of marriage as the ultimate
goal of her life. Typical of this attitude toward the business of marriage
was the explanation made by Slaughter. As Slaughter observes, for Violet,
marrige is “in close connection with, and is also auxiliary to, the
observance of certain ideals, modes of living, insignia and manners which
happen to have obtained a higher recognition than others in the social
order”.39 Slaughter’s remark fits exactly the case of Violet’s approach to
conventional marriage in Man and Superman. Most middle class Victorian
women pursue their well-being and social security within marriage. Most
of them are influenced by the institutional convention on the subject of
marriage. It is obvious that class concerns in the Victorian period offered
a conventional viewpoint on marriage. Through the play, Violet is just a
woman who seeks to secure conventional status and the best marital
circumstances for herself. She keeps her marriage secret in order to get
money from Hector’s father, billionaire Malone. As the embodiment of
practical and determined womanhood and a self-centered female, Violet is
attracted by Hector’s money for her own ends in social convention. Her
love for Hector is attached to his father’s money so powerfully. She
audaciously expresses her enthusiasm for money to Hector’s father,
Malone:

Malone. .... When a young lady writes to a young man to come to her quick, quick,
quick money seems nothing and loves seems everything.

Violet. I beg your pardon, Mr Malone: I do not think anything so foolish. Hector must have money (IV, 183).

Violet's concern is limited to the material values of this world. As her remark, "Hector must have money" indicates, she is too calculating and cautious in the matter of money. To Violet, marriage is not based on romantic love but is a means of acquiring greater wealth by marrying the heir of a billionaire. When Hector refuses his father's money, blaming his father for opening a private letter to him, she cunningly sends Hector away to the hotel to get the money back to her. This is clearly seen in her advice to Hector:

Hector. ... Here's my silly old dad, who is the biggest awffice furniture man in the world,... Violet, I dont like deceiving him. I feel as if I was stealing his money. Why wont you let me own up?
Violet. We cant afford it. You can be as romantic as you please about love, Hector; but you mustn't be romantic about money (II, 104).

Malone too is satirized "as an embodiment of predatory, capitalistic force".40 He is also philistine, as an irrational pursuer of money as well as social titles. In the stage direction, Shaw describes Malone's ignobility:

He has a self-confidence of one who has made money, and something of the truculence of one who has made it in a brutalizing struggle, his civility having under it a perceptible menace that he has other methods in reserve if necessary (IV, 179).

Malone as a poor Irish descendant seeks social titles and he wishes to purchase a titled English wife for his son as compensation for his vulgar position in society. He firmly believes that he can buy any position with his money. In a sense, both Malone and Violet are the same kinds of figures irrationally seeking similar earthly concerns related to material wealth. They represent typical vulgar materialism and that ties them together. Violet handles the billionaire businessman, Mr. Malone,

efficiently in her quest for money. Malone is in favor of Violet's calculating propensity in the matter of money. Malone speaks of her as "a grand woman for Hector" and he "wouldn't exchange her for ten duchesses" (IV, 188). Violet hasn't any interest concerning the creation of the superman for human betterment but she is only interested in her child's financial security from her husband.

In *Man and Superman*, Shaw presents the new woman "in which the Force was incarnated", as vital and the sexual aggressor, "the initiator and propeller of the dramatic action", like Ann, achieving her purpose only by choosing a mate regardless of his protests. As a heroine in *Man and Superman*, Ann pretends to be a womanly woman and confines herself to the Victorian domestic role, but she does unwomanly things for what she wants rather than passively hiding her desire through "her marvelous channelling of her desire for Tanner into impeccably proper Victorian behaviour". The different roles of male and female characters are shown for the purpose of life force in Shaw's plays.

In the interpretation of the life force's way of bringing about human improvement, Shaw exploits the instinctive role of woman and the intellectual role of man for evolutionary process for a better human race. Shaw creates Ann Whitefield as a biological agent of evolutionary progress, "who is very much a flesh-and-blood creature". Shaw called Ann Whitefield his most "gorgeous female creation". She is willing to deceive, cheat and lie, and to use other people in order to capture her man. She uses any means, appeals to duty and propriety to achieve her goal. She is bound up in the instinctive force as an instrument of the life force for the eugenic breeding of superman. Unlike female characters in

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conventional plays, Shaw uses the female who seeks a better father for her children, so that the race may continue. As the next step in creative evolution, superman has to be created by the female agent whose vitality is somehow transmitted from generation to generation. Her energies are directed toward this one goal. Ann, as a manifestation of the life force, wants to marry Tanner because she recognizes him as the best available provider for her and father of her children. Finally her instinctive vitality makes Tanner’s capitulation to marriage a necessary step in creative evolution. As a well-known enthusiastic eugenicist Mugge observes how eugenics persuades woman to select breeding to have opportunities for better children. For Ann’s vitality, as Mugge emphasises, “Not as a perfect ideal, for it was based upon an instinct, the racial, the Eugenic instinct, which is a basic in tuition. And this found a twofold expression; in marriage customs aiming at a physically superior race and in man’s hero-worship”. Shaw focuses on Ann’s powerful vitalism in relation to disillusionment:

Vitality is as common as humanity; but like humanity, it sometimes rises to genius; and Ann is one of the vital geniuses. Not at all, if you please, an oversexed person: that is a vital defect, not a true excess. She is perfectly respectable, perfectly self-controlled woman and looks it; though her pose is fashionably frank and impulsive. She inspires confidence as a person who will do nothing she does not intend to do; also some fear, perhaps, as a woman who will probably do everything she means to do without taking more account of other people than may be necessary and what she calls right (I, 54).

Like many of Shaw’s characters, she is knowledgeable about herself and her actions. Her attributes for this can be found in her words, “The only really simple thing is to go straight for what you want and grab it” (IV, 195). Ann also knows exactly what is wrong with conventional romantic idealism:

Ann. Always is a long word, Tavy. You see, I shall have to live up always to your idea

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of my divinity; and I dont think I could do that if we were married. But if I marry Jack, you'll never be disillusioned—at least not until I grow too old.

......

Octavius. I know you mean to be kind, Ann. Jack has persuaded you that cynicism is a good tonic for me.

Ann. You see, I'm disillusionizing you already. That's what I dread.

Octavius. You do not dread disillusionizing Jack.

Ann. I can't: he has no illusions about me. I shall surprise Jack the other way. Getting over an unfavorable impression is over so much easier than living up to an ideal. Oh, I shall enrapture Jack sometimes! (IV, 193-4).

Ann finally captures Tanner with one great effort of will driven by vitality:

Tanner [despairingly]. oh, you are witty: at the supreme moment the life force endows you with every quality.

......

Ann [concentrating all her magic]. From the beginning—from our childhood—for both of us—by the Life Force.

Tanner. I will not marry you. I will not marry you.

Ann. Oh, you will, you will....

Tanner. No.

Ann. [coaxing—imploring—almost exhausted] Yes. Before it is too late for repentance. Yes (IV, 204).

Ann pursues the right husband to father her children. Ann is wise enough to catch Octavius' wooing based on an illusion with idolized love. "I wouldn't for worlds destroy your illusion... I can see exactly what will suit you. You must be a sentimental old bachelor for my sake" (IV, 194). Violet's brother and Ann's wooer, Octavius, idealizes love with illusion. Octavius represents the idealism based on the irrationality and blindness of romantic love. Tanner lectures Octavius:

Tanner. Tavy: that's the devilish side of woman's fascination: she makes you will your own destruction.

Octavius. But it's not destruction: it's fulfillment.
Tanner. Yes, of her purpose; and that purpose is neither her happiness nor yours, but Nature’s. Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation. She sacrifices herself to it: do you think she will hesitate to sacrifice you? (I, 60-1).

Ann rejects Octavius’s idealized love, because she instinctively realizes that the falseness of his illusions about her and knows what would happen after marrying Octavius because “The life force passes it by” (IV, 204). He, idealizing love and the beauty of woman, seeks self-indulgent pleasure and happiness rather than perceiving the true reality of life.

Octavius. Ann: would you marry an unwilling man?
Ann. There’s no such thing as a willing man when you really go for him.
Octavius. It’s quite simple. I love you; and I want you to be happy. You don’t love me; so I can’t make you happy myself; but I can help another man to do it (IV, 195).

After Ann’s rejection, he now begins to enjoy his broken heart. In relation to the self-indulgent human state, Shaw emphasizes the sterility of the romantic idealist who has no vitality to fulfill the will of the life force. As Ann points out, he will “never marry” and will remain “a sentimental old bachelor”, not for Ann’s sake but because of his incurable sentimentality. This is the reason why Ann refuses Octavius. In this regard, the hellish people, like Octavius, who seek romantic abstract values without vitality, cannot produce anything vital in real life. This is why Ann has chosen Tanner as her husband, “he has no illusion about me... I shall surprise Jack the other way. Getting over an unfavorable impression is ever so much easier than living up to an ideal. Oh, I shall enrapture Jack sometimes!” (IV, 194). She knows Tanner has no illusion about her and recognizes Tanner’s sense of reality about her. She follows an unconscious will of activity as a servant of the life force. She is just pursuing what she wants at her will.

Octavius. ... I love you. You know I love you.
Ann. What’s the good, Tavy? You know that my mother is determined that I shall marry Jack.
Octavius [amazed]. Jack!
Ann. It seems absurd, doesn’t it?

Octavius [with growing resentment]. Do you mean to say that Jack has been playing with me all this time? That he has been urging me not to marry you because he intends to marry you himself?

Ann [alarmed]. No, no: you mustn’t lead him to believe that I said that. I don’t for a moment think that Jack knows his own mind. But it’s clear from my father’s will that he wished me to marry Jack. And my mother is set on it.

Octavius. But you are not bound to sacrifice yourself always to the wishes of your parents.

Ann. My father loved me. My mother loves me. Surely their wishes are a better guide than my own selfishness (IV, 192-93).

She does lie to achieve her goals at the urging of the life force. In the first Act, she made Tanner her co-guardian by artifice. Also, she lies to Octavius that her mother determined her marriage to Tanner. In the last act, she confesses that “The will is yours then! The trap was laid from the beginning” (IV, 205). Ann is instinctively attracted to Tanner’s intelligence, vitality and ambition of higher values which are the opposite of qualities she possesses. Ann can be liar and hypocrite to make Tanner her husband.

Tanner. ... I can stand everything except her confounded hypocrisy. That’s what beats me.

Mrs. Whitefield [carried away by the relief of hearing her own opinion so eloquently expressed]. Oh, she is a hypocrite. She is: She is. isn’t she? (IV, 200).

Ann’s life force works with a personal determination to pursue marital desires. The life force makes her reject the womanliness of conventional society.

Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation. She sacrifices herself to it: do you think she will hesitate to sacrifice you? It is the self-sacrificing women that sacrifice others most recklessly. Because they are unselfish, they are kind in little things. Because they have a purpose which is not their own purpose, but that of the whole universe, a man is nothing to them but an instrument of that purpose (I, 60-1).
Tanner, as an intelligent agent of the life force and Shaw’s spokesman for creative evolution in the play is described as a forerunner who endeavors to change the institutional society through his philosophical theory for a better world in human history. He insists that social progress is purposeful in terms of creative evolution. He attacks conventional morality and marriage, duty and virtues idealized in Victorian society. He reveals his attack on Ramsden, “The more things a man is ashamed of, the more respectable he is. Why, you’re ashamed to buy my book, ashamed to read it; the only thing you’re not ashamed of is to judge me for it without having read it; and even that only means you’re ashamed to have heterodox opinions” (I, 52). Tanner’s unconventional attitude toward conventional morality is seen over the issue of Violet’s pregnancy. Without condemnation of her morality, unlike all the other characters, he protects Violet against conventional morality. Like Tanner, Shaw insisted on procreation without marriage for the primary task of evolutionary advance. According to him, conventional morality was an obstacle to the progress of breeding:

The modern devices for combining pleasure with sterility, now universally known and accessible, enable these persons to weed themselves out of the race, a process already vigorously at work.47

Tanner’s speeches against institutional society are mocked by worldly Violet and Ann. Even though he regards himself as a more superior person able to resist social institution, he is treated as merely a talker, or as a big gabbler.

Tanner. ... I am altogether on your side in this matter. I congratulate you,... You are entirely in the right; and the family is entirely in the wrong... Oh, they know it in their hearts, though they think themselves bound to blame you by their silly superstition about morality and propriety, and so forth... that vitality and bravery are the greatest qualities a woman can have...

Violet. Oh! You think me a wicked woman, like the rest. You think I have not only been vile, but that I share abominable opinions... But I won’t bear such a horrible

47 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 225.
insult as to be complimented by Jack on being one of the wretches of whom he approves. I have kept my marriage a secret for my husband’s sake. But now I claim my right as a married woman not to be insulted (I, 81-2).

Tanner seems to act like the advocate against conventional institutions, he is, however, portrayed as an ineffectual chatterbox. In spite of his contempt for the illusion of Philistinism, he doesn’t realise that he needs to learn certain lessons from the worldly world. These can be found in the end of the play:

Ann [looking at him with fond pride and caressing his arm]. Never mind her, dear. Go on talking.
Tanner. talking!
[universal laughter] (IV, 209).

Through Ann’s teaching, Tanner is realizing the purposes of the earth based on human endeavor for better life. Ann’s vital instinct awakes the sense of life in Tanner. Ann is getting to dominate Tanner and she teaches him about the world. In *Man and Superman*, Shaw shows us the paradoxical relation between intellect and instinct through the dramatization of the plot between Ann and Tanner. In Act I, Ann talks to Tanner about the quality of these two forces: “You seem to understand all things I can’t understand; but you are a perfect baby in the things I do understand” (I, 78). The mutual complement of these two opposite forces is essential to comprehend human life. Ann sees the qualities in Tanner which she does not possess and admires them, and Tanner does the same. Thus the marriage between Ann and Tanner is an attempt to harmonize instinct and intellect for the perfection of life. Therefore, without their mutual aids, the real creation will not come true.

The woman’s need of him to enable her to carry on Nature’s most urgent work, does not prevail against him until his resistance gathers her energy to a climax at which she dares to throw away her customary exploitations of the conventional affectionate and dutiful poses and claim him by natural right for a purpose that far transcends
Tanner realizes that his philosophical reality has to confront the purposes of the world as a free agent and finally finds his role as a father. "When the artist man flees the mother woman, and the mother woman pursues the artist man, an irresistible force meets an immovable object". Marriage for Tanner is "apostasy, profanation of the sanctuary of my soul, violation of my manhood, sale of my birthright, shameful surrender, ignominious capitulation, acceptance of defeat" (III, 160). He finally declares, "We do the world's will, not our own. I have a frightful feeling that I shall let myself be married because it is the world's will that you should have a husband" (IV, 203). As Octavius says, "He's so desperately afraid of Ann", Ann's vitality has impelled Tanner's life force:

Tanner. I will not marry you. I will not marry you.
Ann. Oh, you will, you will.

......
Tanner [struck by the echo from the past]. When did all this happen to me before? Are we two dreaming?
Ann. No. we are awake; and you have said no : that is all.

......
Tanner [seizing her in his arm]. It is false. I love you. The Life Force enchants me: I have the whole world in my arms when I clasp you. But I am fighting for my freedom, for my honor, for my self, one and indivisible (IV, 205).

Ann's enchantment makes Tanner fearful because his philosophical intellect and freedom will be defeated by Ann's vitality. Ann is powerfully vigorous and active in her admission. As Tanner remarks, "I adore creation and abhor murder" (I, 74), he adores life itself. In pursuing intellect, the life force seeks a philosopher-man who knows the true meaning of life. In Act III, Juan articulates why he wants to be a philosopher who is the "Nature's pilot":

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48 Ibid., p. 18
Were I not possessed with a purpose beyond my own I had better be a ploughman than a philosopher, for the ploughman lives as long as the philosopher, eats more, sleeps better, and rejoices in the wife of his bosom with less misgiving. This is because the philosopher is in the grip of the life force (III, 169).

As a philosophical agent of the life force, Tanner's conflict is put between self-interest and public usefulness in making himself the servant of the life force. He is made to capitulate by a woman in spite of his free will. Through the instinctive life force with its vital power and the intellectual life force with its self-consciousness and self-knowledge, creative evolution achieves its purposes. Each force contributes to the improvement of the humankind in its own way. These two forces are indispensable for the two primary purposes of the life force. It seems true that in the play women are “childbearers who represented the natural heritage of humanity, while the male carried on the burden of establishing and developing civilization through rational thought”.

Well, the Life Force is stupid; but it is not so stupid as the forces of Death and Degeneration. Besides, these are in its pay all the time. And so Life wins, after a fashion. What mere copiousness of fecundity can supply and mere greed preserve, we possess (III, 148-49).

Juan pronounces that intelligent ability is an essential element to make the human being grow up and change in terms of social evolutionism. He presents a better vision of human betterment against the institutional world around him. As Shaw’s spokesman, Juan debates views

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51 Shaw, Man and Superman, pp. 20-1.
of human progress with the Devil in the Hell Scene. The Devil is identified as the archetype of the talkative sentimentalist and hypocrite in Victorian society; “all history is nothing but a record of the oscillations of the world between these two extremes” (III, 168). Juan enunciates the overpowering grip of the life force. According to him, “The service of the Life Force has that advantage, at all events. So fare you well, Senor Satan” (III, 128). The Devil denies Juan’s belief in the possibility of human progress. Juan asserts “Our only hope... is in evolution. we must replace the man by the superman” (III, 166). Also the Devil attacks Juan’s endeavour for social reform and complains, “I can not keep these Life Worshippers: they all go” (III, 171). As the Ramsden-surrogate, the Statue is on the Devil’s side in this matter. It is Juan who is the victor in the debate. Through the debate, as a new religion, like Bergson’s *elan vital*, immaterial force, which provides the vital impulse that continuously shapes all life, creative evolution, whose deity is the life force, is proclaimed. For this new religion, life is purposeful, as it evolves higher and higher forms of life. For Shaw salvation always exists in the great purpose of individual wills focused on the instinctive and intellectual in terms of self-consciousness and self-understanding. Intellectual will can direct the instinctive will toward the superman. Juan says, “These things lived and wanted to live: but for lack of brains they did not know how to carry out their purpose, and so destroyed themselves” (III, 142). He continues, “To be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer” (III, 169). As a central figure for Shaw’s new religion, Don Juan who is “in his own impulses by an intense and joyous vitality”,52 finds “himself in moral conflict with existing institutions” toward the breeding of an improved race.53 As Shaw’s superman, Juan has a superior and unreasonable mind rejecting society’s conventional attitudes toward sex, marriage, and morality disturbing the creation of the superman. Through his debates, Shaw maintains that the intellectual level attained was possible for the entire race if mankind would abandon conventional ideas on marriage and strive to breed this higher type of

humanity. At last, Tanner realizes marriage is an important way to serve human progress on earth through the procreation of the superman. He “is concerned for the future of the race instead of for the freedom of his own instincts.” For Shaw the progress of humanity can be achieved only through evolutionary means combining both brains and biological power as the first step of the evolution of men. Juan tells Ana as an earthly figure in the Hell Scene, “I can find my own way to heaven, Ana; not yours” (III, 171). Finally, Juan leaves hell for heaven to carry his own end. Ana realises her own role to be a mother for superman which she learns from Juan.

Ana. ... Tell me: where can I find the Superman?
The Devil. He is not yet created, Senora.
The Statue. And never will be, probably...
Ana. Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done. [Crossing herself devoutly] I believe in the Life to come. [Crying to the Universe] A father! a father for the Superman!
She vanishes into the void (III, 173).

After Ana comes back to earth as Ann Whitefield, her work can be achieved through the earthly way. She will complete her aim to find a husband to father the superman and her role as a mother as the servant of instinctive force.

She, in the end, neither goes with Don Juan to heaven nor with the devil and her father to the place of pleasure, but declares that her work is not yet finished. For though by her death she is done with the bearing of men to mortal fathers, she may yet, as Woman Immortal, bear the Superman to the Eternal Father.

Even though Ann satisfies the conventional domestic marital role, she is the servant of Shaw’s religion of creative evolution and the life

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54 Ibid., p. 14.
force. She captures her worldly goal of mating for her offspring which is not limited just for the sake of herself. Through her reproduction of a superior offspring, "it is her privilege to raise the tone of life in all its relations... to promote progress. Is it not manifest that the more adequately she fits herself for this comprehensive sphere, the more completely will she fulfil the function and duties of an active eugenist?". Shaw places Ann in the biological role of women as the aggressors in the duel of the sexes. For this reason the plot of this play seems to show a sex relationship between hero and heroine emphasising each role between them.

Through the play, Ann and Tanner represent the different appetites of the life force in spite of the conflict between them. According to Shaw, the life force works most effectively through the most advanced characters who are either leading others on to improvement or are themselves undergoing conversion to the aims of the life force. The marriage between Ann and Tanner in *Man and Superman* is an emblem of the ultimate identity of the two aspects of the life force. Since for the purpose of the life force's eugenic breeding of superman, it chooses suitable couples who have the best potential to become parents of superman. In a sense, "the mark of a civilized society was that sexual partners were chosen as reproductive partners, for the good of the community". It is the view of eugenic reformers emphasising the processes of rational selection in order to attain desired social goals; "It becomes necessary to supplement the method of the former [eugenicist], which is essentially a selection for parenthood, with that of the latter [reformer], which aims at the protection of the parent and his offspring". What Ann and Tanner want is not sexual pleasure but human progress through the procreation of the superman. As Nietzsche asserts, the end of marriage is the creation of a higher race. "Thus do I counsel

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57 Angelique Richardson, "Eugenics and Freedom at the *Fin De Siecle*", in *Culture and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Media* ed. and Intro., Louise Henson Geoffrey Cantor; Gowan Dawson; and Others (London: Ashgate, 2004), p. 279.

all honest ones; and what would be my love to the superman, and to all that is to come, if I should counsel and speak otherwise: Not only to propagate yourselves onwards but upwards... there to, O my brethren, may the garden of marriage help you!”.\(^{59}\) Even though the purpose of desire in Shaw’s religion is creative, it is not limited to human procreation. Thus the ultimate goal of the life force is the eugenic breeding of superman and true social progress. Slaughters’s assertion supports the purpose of eugenic breeding, “Every one of the average amount of intelligence and feeling will agree that the eugenic aim is an ethically good and even noble one... It [eugenic’s aim] forms a basis for ideas of progress and thus unites with the enthusiasm for humanity in a modern and significant form of religion”.\(^{60}\) As the parents of the superman of a higher form of man, their marriages contribute towards evolutionary progress through their generative vital impulses transmitted from generation to generation. Improvements can be inherited over a series of generations. In this sense, a Lamarckian emphasis is revealed that human beings can be improved by exposure to better conditions and goes beyond this.

The union of Tanner and Ann is a step of evolution towards the superman who could direct the biological progress of mankind. As Mills notes, their union is “the call of the life force for two things: the development of a superior human brain and the eugenic breeding of a superman”.\(^{61}\) Shaw reasons that if creative evolution can be defined in terms of biological evolution, then the appearance of a biologically superior man is equally probable. The superior man is driven by the life force which is able to work more effectively through him than through the common man because of his higher receptivity to its impulse and their more complete dedication to its purposes. As a Galtonian emphasis on the positive value of rational breeding, Shavian eugenics encourages procreation of the fit “with rules for health, rules of intellectual culture, rules of honourable and heroic conduct... a somewhat austere standard of


living" while discouraging that of unfit. The near-superman is more acutely aware of the force that impels him and of the role he is expected to play for the progress of society. Shaw believes that, as Bentley says, "in the higher man the brain is the means to something even more remarkable. It enables him to understand life and thus to control it". Thus, to Shaw, the purpose of their marriage is a means of procreation of the superman, combining Tanner's intellectual force and Ann's biological vitality. For the creation of the superman, potential parents have to possess the life forces as two driving forces, instinct and intellect, which bring forth human improvement. As Searle points out, in eugenic propaganda "the professional middle classes and the intelligentsia [were] the heroes of the play". They can fulfil a higher purpose for human improvement in their marriage by serving the life force.

In Man and Superman, Shaw develops his life force philosophy with his view of the eugenic breeding of the superman. It is a vision of an improved species of man who contributes to the better society. Shaw believes that the eugenic breeding of the human race into superman can be the only way for social progress. Like Butler's ideas, eugenics plays an important part in Shaw's thought as a fundamental part of the marriage of any society: "so far as we are ourselves concerned, ... if asked what is the glory of man we answer 'Good Breeding'". Shaw envisioned that improved species of man would give the better society. Shaw's vision of the eugenic breeding of superman can be understood in terms of an exploration of human potentiality and a belief in its possibilities in the service of the life force. Shaw emphasizes the eugenic breeding of superman as the only remedy for social problems. As Strauss writes, Shaw's ideas on eugenics leads him "to the principle of breeding the superman as the only way out of the unsatisfactory present state of the human race". Shaw goes further, saying that we cannot have real

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democracy until everyone becomes a superman:

To that recurrent catastrophe we shall certainly come again unless we can have a Democracy of Supermen: and the production of such a Democracy is the only change that is now hopeful enough to nerve us to the effort that Revolution demands.67

Shaw’s eugenic breeding of superman in relation to his philosophy of creative evolution includes metaphysical as well as biological implications based on a concept of vitalism with a purpose, an evolutionary appetite. According to Shaw, the life force has not only created man but also inspires man to be creative and to strive towards a higher form of evolution. Shaw looked forward to the evolution of a near-superman, a superman, a super-superman and finally to a state of pure thought in which man would be perfect and free from all his physical impediments. The eugenic breeding of superman in the play can be understood in a spiritual progress. As Juan argues, “I am starving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life’s incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding” (III, 165), man evolves into higher beings and finally into god-like perfect beings. According to Shaw’s view on eugenic progress, evolution can take place slowly through many generations. Also human progress toward the superman will be acted in evolutionary steps beyond average man through the union between man with brain and intellect and motherly woman with instinctive force by trial and error continuously.

For the human progress, Shaw’s development of superior human intelligence relates to the eugenic breeding of a super-race of superman. Shaw insists in Man and Superman that man as he now is is incapable of real progress. A new form of life is now necessary to effect such progress; and this new form can be developed by evolutionary processes from the current form through scientific eugenic breeding, or at last, intelligent mate selection and radical reform of the instinctive marriage. As Slaughter concludes, “it is therefore clear that to influence marriage, and by it mating, is the chief eugenic aim... selective mating, can

67 Shaw, Man and Superman, p. 228.
produce... great result when applied to other higher species, including man".\textsuperscript{68} Tanner’s escape from Ann ironically ends with their marriage by his abandonment of self for the higher purpose of the life force. The superman, as a savior in terms of Shavian religion, may be born through their marriage. With regard to the question ‘how can he [superman] be bred?’ raised in Tanner’s ‘Handbook’, Tanner answers: “The proof of the Superman will be in the living; and we shall find out how to produce him by the old method of trial and error”.\textsuperscript{69} In this sense, man is the only instrument to fulfil the purpose of the life force, and who has a potentiality and a belief in its possibilities in the service of the life force. Even though Shaw’s theory of breeding of the superman seems to be distanced from the real world, his \textit{Man and Superman} is directly identified with his own religion of creative evolution and the life force.

\textsuperscript{68} Slaughter, \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp. 152, 156.

\textsuperscript{69} Shaw, \textit{Man and Superman}, p. 216.
Chapter 10  Back to Methuselah

*Back to Methuselah* was originally subtitled “A Play Cycle in Five Parts” and later Shaw changed the subtitle to “A Metabiological Pentateuch”. After completion of *Back to Methuselah* in 1920, Shaw labelled the play “my masterpiece”. Although *Back to Methuselah* has been produced in its entirety during several seasons by the New York Theatre Guild in 1922, by the Birmingham Repertory in 1923 and 1924, and by London’s Royal Court Theatre in 1928, only in 1947 at London’s Arts Theatre were all five parts of the cycle presented on the same day.\(^1\) With its length, the play is significant because of its central philosophical ideas. Shaw proclaims that *Back to Methuselah* contains “my beginning of a Bible of Creative Evolution”. Throughout the play, Shaw took familiar biblical phrases and references replacing Christianity with his new religion of creative evolution and to show his technique of using orthodox religious terminology in his unorthodox ways. The creed of voluntary longevity in the play is related to his new religion, creative evolution. According to Shaw,

Creative Evolution is already a religion, and is indeed now unmistakably the religion of the twentieth century, newly arisen from the ashes of pseudo-Christianity, of mere scepticism, and of the soulless affirmations and blind negations of the Mechanists and Neo-Darwinians.\(^2\)

Through his preface to the play, Shaw expresses his objections to Bibliolatry, to “submission as an article of religion”. Shaw believes that his creative evolution was the new religion with a universal dogma that could replace the traditional religions. The deity of creative evolution, Life Force, according to Shaw, works within each person to move upward to higher purposes. The Lamarckian view of evolution and Bergson’s evolutionary thought are revealed in *Back to Methuselah*. In the play, Shaw proclaimed Lamarckian philosophical salvation that life would

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strive by its own efforts forward to higher forms. Shaw wrote, "An active socialism would be absurd if we did not believe that humanity would develop by its own will even if the operation of Natural Selection were entirely suspended. In fact, our work is largely to defeat Natural Selection, and give free play to the Lamarckian process". Ultimately the purpose of creative evolution makes everyman strive toward superman, attaining godhead.

*Back to Methuselah* attempts to present what will happen when men and women will to live longer and strive to reach the vortex of pure thought and pleasures. The action of the play with its fantastic settings takes place in a far-distant future after the work of evolution has already been accomplished. For the title of the play, Shaw chose Methuselah, as a biblical character, who had lived to be 969 years in the Old Testament. Methuselah is used to represent the idea of longevity in the play. The five parts of the play deal with the levels of man’s development from Eden to a state of pure thought. The “five direct contradictions in Shaw’s account of the same event” seem to be regarded as a book of Shaw’s own bible. His *Back to Methuselah* is as close as the Old Testament Bible of Genesis in mystifying science and demystifying institutional religion. Creative evolution needs human maturity for its purposes. In the preface, Shaw insists that the process of the life force implements its purpose through those who consciously understand.

Shaw’s longevity seems to be a reaction to his sense of approaching age and death and his response to the murderous World War I and the limitation of man’s ability. Lilith speaks of the importance of the advent of long-lived man in her final speech, “The pangs of another birth were already upon me when one man repented and lived three hundred years; and I waited to see what would come of that” (304). In the section subtitled ‘Voluntary Longevity’ Shaw writes “among other matters apparently changeable at will is the duration of individual life”. Shaw began to write *Back to Methuselah* in 1918, a year before *Heartbreak House* was published. They stand out as Shaw’s fullest and most direct

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dramatizations of the situation that led to the World War I and the consequences of it and his view of the future of the human race. His attitude to the war and its aftermath is discernible in the treatment of themes and characters throughout Back to Methuselah. In the play, his despairing doubts about man’s future prospects were more emphatic than ever and he expressed his uncertainty about man’s capacity to survive in his preface published with the text in 1921. He writes, “namely, whether the human animal, as he exists at present, is capable of solving the social problems raised by his own aggregation, or, as he calls it, his civilization”.

Instead of dealing with a single imaginary family as in other plays, Back to Methuselah covers the whole history of the human race and projects symbolically into the future. The action of Back to Methuselah takes place in a far-distant future with fantastic settings. There are lots of parabolic elements and the imaginative fantasy in Back to Methuselah. Meisel points out that [Back to Methuselah is] “the first of Shaw’s Philosophical Extravaganzas”. On the other hand, Brustein maintains the play is “a dry, dreary, and artless work”. This criticism could be applied in particular to the characterizations and dramatic actions. Crompton maintains that “Back to Methuselah [is] the final working out of the conviction... that the most vexing difficulties facing mankind could be solved only through a radical biological advance”. This point leads to perhaps the most important thematic one as it is presented in the play. Unlike other earlier plays, Shaw seems to be concerned with the radical biological advance. According to Shaw, true progress can only be achieved through the conscious effort of the human will toward improving itself through biological advancement.

In his earlier play, Man and Superman, Shaw noted that man would have to alter his nature in order to change. For this purpose, man has to

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6 Ibid., p. 260.
intelligently plan breeding as the first step toward this change. Along with the contemporary evolutionary thought concerning eugenic ideas, Shaw seems to make a conscious and deliberate attempt to produce an evolutionary succession through the eugenic breeding of superman to human species in the play. To Shaw, the deliberate attempt to produce an evolutionary successor to the human species is the answer to permit real progress. However, in Back to Methuselah he presents longevity as a solution, which can be accomplished through the conviction of its absolute necessity. In relation to the idea of longevity, Shaw’s view about the concept of superman changed in Back to Methuselah. It seems that his growing pessimism in the wake of the First World War and his despairing doubts about man’s future and uncertainty about man’s capacity to survive make Shaw more emphatic. For this reason, as the most significant element, Shaw adds the gospel of longevity to his evolutionary concept of superman in Back to Methuselah. For Shaw, longevity might redeem life from the narrow confinement of time and make it more meaningful and worth living. Additionally with the effect of World War I, a general contemporary view concerning the development in thinking on evolution and eugenics seems to be reflected in Shaw’s attitude. As mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter, the eugenics movement drew much of its appeal from the claim that the reproduction of a higher race of men would solve the problems of humanity. Eugenicists welcomed the process of rational selection in order to attain desired social goals. During the pre-war period, Galtonian eugenicists seemed to develop a sentiment of social order among the naturally gifted and to create class consciousness within each social group. However, after the First World War, for the eugenic movement, class consciousness within each social group seemed to be dismissed because of the mood of egalitarian thoughts. After the First World War eugenic socialism had been increasingly sympathetic towards the working classes rather than the small minorities of the eminently superior. Typical of this atmosphere was the statement made by L. Darwin:

the evolutionary process... has been a very slow process; and as selection between actually existing types might produce marked effects in the course of a few generations, this is the line of advance to which our attention in regard to racial
matters should at all events first be directed. We should now, and perhaps forever, abandon the hope of creating a superman... On the other hand, the possibility of raising all mankind to the level of the highest existing human types, thus producing an almost inconceivable change for the better, opens out vistas of future reforms such as may absorb our efforts for many a century to come.  

As long-time president of the Eugenics Society from 1911 to 1928 and honorary president from 1928 until his death Darwin, who was the fourth son of Charles Darwin, goes even further than this thought. In his major books, *The Need for Eugenic Reform* (1926) and *What is Eugenics?* (1928), Darwin insists on the importance of hereditary transmission for the health of future generations. He maintains that the lower classes especially criminals, drunkards and the feeble-minded were constitutionally incapable of exercising birth control to ascertain eugenic effects. In his article “Quality, not Quantity” in 1916, Darwin asserts that “the state should be regarded as having the right to exercise a limited amount of pressure in order to promote family limitation”. As Darwin’s argument states, it seems to relate to social policy concerning the issue of the birth rate and its control (this will be discussed later in this chapter). Since the Eugenics Society was dominated by the expanded birth control movement of the 1920s, Darwin concerned himself with eugenic selection through birth control as the primary method of eugenics.

Reflecting these egalitarian thoughts, contemporaries’ attitudes toward eugenic purposes during the post-war period do not seem to be accompanied by class prejudices. For the best way of improving future generations, according to Carr-Saunders, the population expert and anti-racist scientist, positive eugenics was “not an attempt to breed a race of supermen, but to raise the fertility of those who are not definitely subnormal until at least they replace themselves”. As Carr-Saunders’s

argument rehearses, during the post-war period there was much comprehension of how the under-privileged classes lived. In line with those egalitarian thoughts, a eugenic socialist claims that "we socialists... maintain that there should be equal opportunity from birth for all members of the community. That is a very stable and, I think, a very shrewd form of competition... [socialism would] by giving equal opportunities to all, create such social conditions as would lead to the automatic and national survival of the types most desired". Even though the nature of eugenic thinking was not altered basically during the post-war period, there was a perceptible shift towards the outlook of eugenics ideas. On this point, Russell raised the issue of eugenic purpose in a series of lectures in *Fabian News*;

The biological sciences had not so far had much effect. Darwinism and evolutionary theories had not contributed to any profound social changes. These sciences, however, apart from possible developments through the study of heredity... had some bearing on spiritual life... Eugenics might further aim at the reproduction of a particular type of human being... it would also mean a levelling-up of the general standard.

Most importantly, by the late 1920s and the early 1930s an important element in the eugenic creed had become "the improvement of the whole population, not... any one section of it... the paramount importance of the great mass of the more or less mediocre and the relative insignificance, in a eugenic sense, of the small minorities of the extreme types; the eminently superior and the abjectly inferior". These changes in thought on evolutionary eugenics seem to be reflected in *Back to Methuselah*. The Galtonian eugenic idea of improving the human race through selective reproduction to create a superior man raised in *Man and

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14 Hon. Bertrand Russell, "Is Civilisation Decaying?", in *Fabian News*, Vol. XXXIV (1923), p. 46. The third of this series of lectures was given at King’s Hall, Covent Garden, on Oct. 30th. The title was "The Effect of Science on Social Institutions".

Superman seems to be focused on transfiguring the common people rather than breeding a superior man in *Back to Methuselah*.

In the play, man would be replaced by another form, a new breeding of long-livers rather than evolving slowly into it. His attitude toward the life force, as the evolutionary appetite, shows more or less mystical acceptance of uncanny powers. Shaw emphasizes the necessity of longer life in Utopian descriptions of the future. He desires to bring about change, not by descriptions of future bliss (Shaw was not interested in happiness and the ancients do not seem to know what the word means), but by conviction of the necessity of living longer. The influence of Bergson, whom Shaw referred to as "the established philosopher of my sect"\(^{16}\), stressing the division between life and matter, was found in *Back to Methuselah*. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, there are some similarities of thought between Shaw and Bergson. Shaw seems to believe along with Bergson that matter is a reality in process as life evolves into higher and higher forms. Bergson's *Creative Evolution* suggests that death can be conquered by life freeing itself from matter, which seems to relate to the theme of *Back to Methuselah*. By living three hundred years, according to Shaw, man would have an adolescence of one hundred years which would give him maturity, while the expectation of a three hundred year life span would turn him into a responsible creature. Shaw's increasing dissatisfaction with political and social evolution after the war seems to cause his change of attitudes. He wrote this point in the preface to the play:

> If Man now fixes the term of his life at three score and ten years he can fix it at three hundred or three thousand, or even until a sooner-or-later-inevitable accident makes an end. Surely our ruinous world-wars should convince him of the necessity for at least outliving his taste for golf and cigars if the race is to be saved.\(^{17}\)

The play moves in time according to the orders of biological evolution as a replacement for Genesis of the Old Testament. Shaw expands Butler's theories into a biological Utopia of the future toward an

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\(^{17}\) Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, p. 15.
evolutionary end. For Shaw, the pursuit of greater consciousness is the goal of evolution: "greater power and greater knowledge: these are what we are all pursuing... evolution is that pursuit and nothing else. It is the path to godhead" (133). In *Back to Methuselah*, no single character dominates the action. The ideas of the play are embodied in the figure of the giver of life, Lilith, and formulated by brother Barnabas. In Shaw's version of Genesis, the serpent is the server of creative evolution. She plays the role of Shaw's mouthpiece in expressing the strength of the human will. The characters of the play in the evolutionary process recur in the guise of various roles as the play unfolds. Some critics suggest that Shaw's use of voluntary longevity combines practical with mythical and spiritual considerations. Leary and Foster observe:

[The play is]... myths calculated to encourage us to live more fully, more responsibly. Man must learn to think of his life, not in the materialistic sense of a few years, but in the Bergsonian sense of mankind's duration.18

The passage quoted above implies that the play explained the evolutionary progress in terms of spiritual purpose. Wisenthal maintains that Shaw takes the idea of longevity as a metaphor, rather than a literal aim of the life force:

The principal function of the idea of longevity in the cycle, it seems to me, is not so much to say that we can and should extend our lives as to provide a basis for the related satirical fact that we behave like children.19

This criticism seems to underestimate the significance of Shaw's literal attempt at longevity as an essential characteristic of future generations. In the play an advanced impulse of the life force acts for the rest of the race for their evolutionary level of near-Superman. In *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw not only assumes a radical biological advance of

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voluntary longevity, but he creates a species, which would replace men, that is really not human at all. In the play, human action becomes irrelevant.

The play opens, ironically, with death unlike in the Biblical Eden. Death, in the play, is satirically considered as the obstruction of human progression. In the Shavian Paradise, Adam and Eve find the death of a fawn, which implies a limitation of their life. Despite the similarity to the Christian Bible in terms of mythical time, Shaw's treatment of Genesis is far from the original. The fall in the Shavian Paradise is gradually beginning to reach the process of creative evolution as a natural law. According to Shaw, a limit on life causes the fall of man. As Morgan observes:

The critical decision reached by Adam and Eve in Part I of the cycle was to exchange eternal life for continuance through generation. From the disturbance of the natural succession of sons to fathers by the carnage of 1914-18, the drama proceeds in strict logic to the reversal of that fabled decision: individual life must now be prolonged, until at last men are ready to accept the burden of eternal life that Adam found too long.20

Unlike the Serpent in the Genesis of the Bible, the Serpent not only plays as a tutor for Adam and Eve, but also lets them know the secret of creative evolution for procreation. Shaw's serpent is a kind of a creator. As an agent of Lilith, she teaches Eve many things about the redemptive death and birth. As Geduld explains, "she appears to be a somewhat ambivalent figure in her relations with man or with any other living creature".21 On the whole, Shaw's Serpent and Lilith play their role as benevolent Nature. Shaw emphasises that his Lilith and Serpent are not restrictive and jealous. The Serpent explains that Lilith, the mother-earth spirit created Adam and Eve through her imagination and will as an exemplification of the process of creative evolution:

The Serpent. She did not know then that imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will (70).

The Serpent is "the voice of the Creative Will [that] tempts man and woman to explore the possibilities of sex, matter, and time". The purpose of 'In the Beginning' is not to portray the fall of man and the loss of Eden through disobedience to a higher power, but to show man's limits and to establish how the life force devotes itself to the continuation of life. The Serpent says, "Life must not cease... That comes before everything" (71). This is the credo of creative evolution and the theme of Back to Methuselah. If man does not realize the role of agent, life will find another candidate for the work of creation. In the final speech of the play, Lilith says,

Is this enough; or shall I labor again? Shall I bring forth something that will sweep them away and make an end of them as they have swept away the beasts of the garden, and made an end of the crawling things and the flying things and of all of them that refuse to live for ever? I had patience with them for many ages: they tried me very sorely (304).

Part I of the play consists of two acts. Act I is set in the Garden of Eden and presents Shaw's version of the temptation of Adam and Eve by the Serpent. In Part I, Eve's traditionally negative image is transformed into something more daring and constructive. As the serpent says, Adam and his son "cannot renew themselves without Eves" (71). As wife, mother and grandmother, Eve foresees and dreams something hopeful.

In Part I, 'In the Beginning', the characterizations of Adam, Eve, and Cain, are revealed in relation to the Shavian concept of the life force. The Serpent worships Eve with a Shavian concept of the beginning of creation. The Serpent, Lilith's agent, reveals to Adam and Eve that they were actually given birth to by Lilith. Adam and Eve's birth is prompted by the urgings of the life force:

The Serpent. Death is not an unhappy thing when you have learnt how to conquer it.
Eve. How can I conquer it?
The Serpent. By another thing, called birth.

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The Serpent... There is a second birth... Listen. I tell you a great secret.
Eve. What is the life?
The Serpent. That which makes the difference between the dead fawn and the live one (67-8).

Lilith’s role changes mysteriously to an almighty goddess in *Back to Methuselah*. Gahan says that “Lilith, the first mother, is the presiding imaginative principle of *Back to Methuselah* itself”. Lilith is described as the Mother who strives to bring forth Adam.

The Serpent. I remember Lilith, who came before Adam and Eve... She was alone: there was no man with her... Shaw had a mighty will... Her pangs were terrible: her groans drove sleep from Eden... When she cast the skin, lo! There was not one new Lilith but two: one like herself, the other like Adam. You were the one: Adam was the other (69).

As a goddess, she watches over man’s transformation in the scheme of longevity through various stages into a thought vortex. She declares, “I lost my life, to make of my one flesh these twain, man and woman” (303). Lilith renewed human life through the power of her desire and imagination. Lilith wishes men to reach towards “the whirlpool in pure intelligence...though I know well that when they attain it they shall become one with me and supersede me, and Lilith will be only a legend and a lay that has lost its meaning” (305). Lilith’s speeches about life in Eden do not mean a paradise forever. According to her, mankind should try to attain redemption from flesh beyond the declination of life. As Franklyn said in Act II, “The power and the glory, world without end,... there is no end and limit in life” (97). Lilith, who is a personification of the life force, prophesies mankind’s progress. She declares that the status

of dissatisfaction in life is a satisfactory condition for its improvement, because life is too short to conquer its limitation, and there is no end. In a sense, it seems true that “Paradoxically, although *Back to Methuselah* traces vast progressive changes over many thousands of years, it ends, in a sense, where it began”.24

Lilith reappears in the end of the final part to explain the burden of creative evolution and its limitless future. She is depicted as a manifestation of the life force; she seems to be, as Morgan says, the “creative imagination”.25

Lilith. They are still not satisfied: the impulse I gave them in that day when I sundered myself in twain and launched Man and Woman on the earth still urges them: after passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in pure force (305).

Eve learns the secret of procreation and eternity from the Serpent. Act I ends with Eve’s realization of the secret of human procreation which the Serpent has whispered to her. Lilith says that “It is enough that there is a beyond... But is that enough?”. Eve has the hope of the future with dreams. It is Eve, rather than Adam, who reveals the stronger instinct to live, while Ann in *Man and Superman* pursues Tanner across Europe in order to bring him to hell. She proclaims:

Of coming true of your dreams and mine. Of newly created things. Of better things. My sons and my sons’ sons are not all diggers and fighters. Some of them will neither dig nor fight (91).

Conversely, Adam complains about the tedium of endless life without change:

It is the horror of having to be with myself for ever. I like you; but I do not like myself. I want to be different; to be better; to begin again and again; to shed myself

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as a snake sheds its skin. I am tired of myself, and yet I must endure myself, not for a day or for many days, but for ever (65).

Adam says, "I am not strong enough to bear eternity" (73). He is unimaginative, understanding only that life without change is intolerable. Adam reveals the contradiction of eternal evolution with repugnance: "If only there may be an end some day, and yet no end! If only I can be relieved of the horror of having to endure myself for ever! If only the care of this terrible garden may pass on to some other gardener!... Only, there must be some end, some end!" (72). Through the play, Adam is described as trying to escape the burdensome monotony after finding the accidental death of a fawn. Conversely, Eve seeks to preserve the human species from mortality. Dramatic action in 'In the Beginning' evolves in relation to the conflict between Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve choose the certainty of death. But the Serpent makes no vow:

The Serpent. I make no vows. I take my chance.
Adam. Chance? What does that mean?
The Serpent. It means that I fear certainty as you fear uncertainty it means that nothing is certain but uncertainty. If I bind the future I bind my will. If I bind my will I strangle creation (78).

The Serpent, as an agent of the life force in the play, accepts the fears of freedom. Through the Serpent, Shaw attempts to stimulate and encourage the imagination and will of creation. "I worship you Eve. I must have something to worship... there must be something greater than the snake" (68-9). The Serpent quickens Eve in such assertions. Eve is awakened to her own procreative powers by the Serpent. Eve responds by agreeing with the Serpent, "Yes... Adam must not perish" (69). Adam and Eve eventually come to understand the basic aim of the life force that life will go on through their offspring. They realize the burden of their own lives for the purpose. In relation to Adam and Eve's adaptability, Dukore points out that "From relative immortality, the first cycle shrunk to mortality, only to enlarge once more to relative immortality. As projected, however, the second cycle moves in the opposite direction, toward life as
Act II of Part I is set in 'an oasis in Mesopotamia' several centuries later. Although life is still filled with digging, spinning and killing, Eve keeps hope and strength to live longer and more nobly. Adam recognises the burden of life and finds himself in the endless tedium of digging through his lifetime. Cain angrily blames Eve for treating Adam as a digger. Adam says to Cain: “Be thankful to your parents, who enable you to hand on your burden to new and better men, and won for you an eternal rest” (92). Eve explains that Adam shares the labor of recreating life for the next generation. Eve knows the weariness of eternity through their long lives. Eve, as the creator of life, has no illusions. She can envision an improved future. Eve hopes that one day the next generation of her offspring will evolve beyond material to spiritual wholeness, and live long enough to reach out towards the final goal for the transfiguration.

Cain. Poor mother! You see, life is too long. One tires of everything. There is nothing new under the sun.
Adam. [to Eve, grumpily] Why do you live on, if you can find nothing better to do than complain?
Eve. Because there is still hope.
Cain. Of what?

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Eve. They can remember their dreams. They can dream without sleeping... the Serpent said that every dream could be willed into creation by those strong enough to believe in it (90-1).

Cain, in a sense, is a Darwinian believer in the survival of the fittest, who has imagination and dreams of a higher form of life: “There is something higher than man. There is hero and superman” (83). But his restlessness and dissatisfaction have no direction; he cannot control the will to create what he imagines, and instead of creating, he destroys himself. As Gahan says, “Cain is a typical example of the destructiveness

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of romantic imagination”. Morgan, having different views relating Cain’s impulse to Shaw’s own attitude toward human progress, says that “[Cain’s] desire to escape human limitations, is manifest in the author’s idea of progress in social responsibility”. Morgan is not correct in pointing out the similarities between Cain’s illusion and Shaw’s desire for human progress.

Cain. I do not know what I want, except that I want to be something higher and nobler than this stupid old digger whom Lilith made to help you to bring me into the world, and whom you despise now that he has served your turn... Why, I - I! That know many more crafts than either of you, am tired of my self when I am not fighting or hunting. Sooner than face a thousand years of it I should kill myself, as the Voice something tempts me to do already (89).

Eve explains to Cain concerning Adam’s efforts: “Through him [Adam] and his like, death is gaining on life. Already most of our grandchildren die before they have sense enough to know how to live” (93). For the conflict between Eve and Cain, Whitman insists, is “the visible manifestations of that eternal tension between flesh and spirit that has made the whole process possible”. Unlike other female conventional characters in Shaw’s plays, she is not a traditional temptress, rather she foretells the rest of Back to Methuselah. She represents hope and futurity through belief and will. She expects that some of her sons and sons’ sons are not diggers or fighters, but dreamers who can make dreams come alive. She dreams of the new who will be dreamers, or musicians or artists among the sons of Adam’s and Cain’s. Even though she is despairing of her role as wife, mother and grandmother at the end of Act II, she has hope of the “coming true of your dreams and mine. Of newly created things. Of better things...” (90- 1). She insinuates hope that her sons and son’s sons will be saved not through Cain’s way, but by freeing them from the tedium of Adam’s:

Man need not always live by bread alone. There is something else. We do not yet know what it is; but some day we shall find out; and then we will live on that alone; and there shall be no more digging nor spinning, nor fighting nor killing (93).

In Part II of *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw presents his new gospel through 'The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas'. It is the gospel of creative evolution and 'Voluntary Longevity'. The title of Part II hints at the meaning of the title of the whole cycle. Like Moses in the book of the Bible, Franklyn and Conrad Barnabas prophesy the promised land, but they do not live there. Their 'gospel' incorporates both "genuine science" and "genuine religion", which, as Shaw writes, are "fundamentally inseparable".30

Part II of the play happens shortly after the First World War, it seems certain that the theory of voluntary longevity, propounded by the Brothers Barnabas, is offered as the element necessary to permit man to transcend the limitations and capabilities of Cain, Adam, and Eve. In relation to the thematic action, Part III, IV and V of the play show how the theory works out as a reality.

As one of the main characters in Part II, Franklyn Barnabas, an ex-clergyman, is described in the opening stage direction, as "an impressive-looking gentleman of 50... dressed in black" (95). He says, "life is too short for men to take it seriously... Our program is only that the term of human life shall be extended to three hundred years" (97, 125). He explains the fall not as one step, but "a whole flight".

Franklyn. I ask you to contemplate our fathers as they came crashing down all the steps of this Jacob's ladder that reached from paradise to a hell on earth in which they had multiplied the chances of death from violence, accident, and disease until they could hardly count on three score and ten years of life, much less the thousand that Adam had been ready to face! (134).

He emphasises the "tremendous miracle-working force of will"

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(141). Franklyn says: "We shall not be let alone. The force behind evolution, call it what you will, is determined to solve the problem of civilization; and if it cannot do it through us, it will produce some more capable agents" (138). According to him, the eternal life is in pursuit of omnipotence and omniscience. Greater power and greater knowledge: these are what we are all pursuing even at the risk of our lives and the sacrifice of our pleasure. Evolution is that pursuit and nothing else. It is the path to godhead. A man differs from a microbe only in being further on the path (133).

He works with his brother Conrad Barnabas, the biologist, for the gospel of voluntary longevity. Through characterizations of the brothers, Shaw represents his concept of creative evolution which combines religious and scientific ideas. Shaw has mixed the role of prophet with that of projective biologist. Shaw makes it clear that longevity will involve an unconscious effort of the will:

Franklyn. I tell you men capable of such willing, and realizing its necessity, will do it reluctantly, under inner compulsion, as all great efforts are made. They will hide what they are doing from themselves: they will take care not to know what they are doing. They will live three hundred years, not because they would like to, but because the soul deep down in them will know that they must, if the world is to be saved (141).

Two politicians, Burge and Lubin who do not serve the ultimate purpose of creative evolution, quarrel about who will lead the country for the next three hundred years. They only partially understand the program, and are interested in it for political advantage. Burge’s and Lubin’s incompetence have led to the war and its aftermath. When the brothers speak to Burge and Lubin, they agree that death is a process which makes room for new life. Franklyn says, “Yes, but the old must not desert their posts until the new are ripe for them. They desert them now two hundred years too soon” (132). Brother Barnabas reminds them that they must not presume on the life force

In the end, Burge and Lubin reject the theory completely, then keep using it politically with conventional minds,
Burge. You may depend on me. I will work this stunt of yours in. I see its value. Of course I can't put it exactly in your way; but you are quite right about our needing something fresh; and I believe an election can be fought on the death rate and on Adam and Eve as scientific facts.

Franklyn. We had better hold our tongues about it. Con. We should only be laughed at, and lose the little credit we earned on false pretences in the days of our ignorance (143, 145).

Eve's grandsons appear in 'The Thing Happens' in A. D. 2170 in Part III of the play. In this part, the creative evolutionary process has moved forward 250 years, and voluntary longevity is becoming widespread. The British still rule their own land. The president of the British Islands is named Burge-Lubin, and the Account General is named Barnabas, although the Chinese and the Blacks are recognized as the efficient and far-seeing administrators. The Chief Secretary is Confucius and Negress is the Minister of Health. Mrs. Lutestring, the Domestic Minister of the British Islands, one of the longlived characters with the Archbishop in the play, remarks that "the negresses and the Chinese make up your minds for you and tell you what orders to give..." (178). Burge-Lubin admits "I grant you we leave the most troublesome part of the labor of the nation to them... the nigger and the Chink are all right from Tuesday to Friday; but from Friday to Tuesday they are simply nowhere; the real life of England is from Friday to Tuesday" (179).

The British Islands are described as a relatively safe, prosperous world, where there are nevertheless still narrow-minded and foolish idealists. Some of the characters are related to people in the previous part. The 'President of the British Isles' resembles a composite of Burge and Lubin of part II; the 'Accountant General' resembles Conrad Barnabas. They are noticeably inferior to their ancestors. Confucius warns Burge-Lubin against interfering with the long-livers:

Confucius. Nothing that we can do will stop it. We cannot in our souls really want to stop it: the vital force that has produced this change would paralyse our opposition to it, if we were mad enough to oppose (187).

The present Archbishop of York is now actually 283 years old and
he resembles the Reverend William Haslam of Part II. He was about thirty-three years old in Part II, here in Part III, he is only forty-five or fifty in spite of his actual longevity of 283 years old. He has been replaced with maturity and self-assurance. ‘In The Thing Happens’, two long livers, the Archbishop, as Bill Haslam and Mrs. Lutestring, as the Parlor Maid, appear from ‘The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas’. These two long-livers are superior and invulnerable compared with the childish short-livers, and essentially cold-blooded.

The Archbishop. Though their lifetime is as short as ours, or shorter, yet do somehow contrive to grow up a little before they die. We die in boyhood: the maturity that should make us the greatest of all the nations lies beyond the grave for us.

Mrs. Lutestring... I felt, even when I was an ignorant domestic slave, that we had the possibility of becoming a great nation within us; but our faults and follies drove me to cynical hopelessness... It is the highest creatures who take the longest to mature, and are the most helpless during their immaturity. I know now that it took me a whole century to grow up. I began my serious life when I was a hundred and twenty (180).

The purpose of the lives of these two long-livers seems similar to what Mrs. Lutestring says, “I ask myself whether even three hundred years of thought and experience can save you from being superseded by the Power that created you and put you on your trial” (177). Their wisdom is put to use by the society as they are older, and therefore wiser than the rest of society. They are more spiritual than their contemporaries. For them, sexual activity is no longer of interest. The Archbishop, as Shaw’s spokesman, has made clear their opinion of sexual activity when he claims,

Can you shortlived people not understand that as the confusion and immaturity and primitive animalism in which we live for the first hundred years of our life is worse in this matter of sex than in any other, you are intolerable to us in that relation? Either we shall go under as greybeards with golf clubs in our hands, or we must will to live longer (176, 180).

There is thus no possibility for conflict or dramatic confrontation between them and the short-livers. The dramatic and thematic importance
of the short-livers diminishes. Mrs. Lutestring claims, "I began my serious life when I was a hundred and twenty" (180). She, two hundred and seventy-four years old, fears for she was a long-liver. After her overcoming the horror, she grew younger and changed identities occasionally. She suggests to the Archbishop that they marry and procreate other long-livers. For their marriage, Leary and Foster observe:

Adam and Eve, we presume, in both youth and middle age were bound by love... but now the Archbishop and the Domestic Minister, both well along in their third century, are bound only by an intellectual awareness of their social duty. Procreation is not self-indulgence: it is a matter of will.31

They will be able to create and organize the earth of long-lived people with a great power. The hope for the future lies in the offspring of the Archbishop and Mrs. Lutestring. If the nature of man is changed, real progress of the human race can be achieved through intelligent breeding practices. Their offspring are to be evolved according to evolutionary change not only in degree but in kind. Social evolution would then work with biological evolution. This is because Shaw seems to see people as the most noteworthy and valuable products of evolution from a biological point of view. Shaw regards biological and social progress as integral aspects of the same phenomenon. The Archbishop and Mrs Lutestring are depicted as superior characters who can achieve what Shaw wants to develop, the form of life. The British Islands is governed by yellow and brown men. Through this Part, the satire on nationalistic and colour-oriented concepts of superiority is shown. He agrees with Mrs. Lutestring that their duty is to save the white race. In the end of the play, the politicians realize that they will not be able to prevent the coalition of the long-livers, and the ultimate triumph of creative evolution.

In 'The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman' in Part IV, Ireland became the home of the long-livers. Whereas The Thing Happens is concerned with the birth of the race of long-livers, The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman relates to the death of the race of short-livers. Laughter, illness, the need for sleep and private property are rare among the


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longlivers. In this part, the division between the two groups is almost absolute. The longlivers, the residents of Ireland, try to understand the Elderly Gentleman as he struggles to understand the longlivers. Shaw tends to demonstrate how deep the gulf is between the long and short-livers and to prophesy the extinction of the short-livers, either through attrition or destruction by the long-livers. Although Zoo, the Elderly Gentleman's appointed guide and guard, is younger in years than the Elderly Gentleman, she is much more advanced; therefore any understanding between them is impossible. Zoo declares, "Therefore I say that we who live three hundred years can be of no use to you who live less than a hundred, and that our true destiny is not to advise you and govern you, but to supplant and supersede you" (221).

The fourth play illustrates the success of the new breed of longlivers and the declining power of the shortlivers group which the Elderly Gentleman represents. Crompton asserts that "For [Shaw]... mankind was only a bridge to the future, and if this bridge failed, others might be found". The Elderly Gentleman is considered to be without intellectual or moral merit by a longlived female named Zoo. The Elderly Gentleman is told by his female longlivers that he may choose to be a longliver. He declines,

Young woman: you are mistaken. Shortlived as we are, we-the best of us, I mean-regard civilization and learning, art and science, as an ever-burning torch, which passes from the hand of one generation to the hand of the next, each generation fanning it to a farther reaching glow. We may be insects; but like the coral insect we build islands which become continents: like the bee we store sustenance for future communities. The individual perishes: but the race is immortal. The acorn of today is the oak of the next millennium. I throw my stone on the cairn and die; but later comers add another stone and yet another; and lo! A mountain (212).

The Elderly Gentleman has difficulty communicating with the longlived people. He no longer understands the idioms, the figures of speech and the phrases of conventional morality in a capitalistic society. He is "absolutely forbidden to approach fully adult natives under any

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circumstances” (193). The Elderly Gentleman died at the end of the part between the world of the short-livers. He is a short-liver and therefore not eligible for Shavian salvation. The Elderly Gentleman’s death signifies the end of the human race in the cycle and the end of human activity in the future. The Elderly Gentleman is called an “ordinary” short-liver by Zoo and finally chooses to stay in the land of the longlived, although he knows he will die of discouragement. At the end of the play, another female companion allows him to commit suicide after experiencing discouragement. The woman says, “There is a deadly disease called discouragement, against which shortlived people have to take very strict precautions” (191). The Elderly Gentleman understands the differences between his life and the lives of the longlivers.

The oracle, who is identified as a “goddess”, tells the Prime Minister “Go home, poor fool” (247). At that moment the Elderly Gentleman says he cannot live “among people to whom nothing is real” (249). He chose to die by looking into the face of the oracle. After he dies the oracle says, “Poor shortlived thing! What else could I do for you?” (249). The Elderly Gentleman dies of discouragement as the play ends.

As the play progresses, the creative evolutionary process is continuing. There is the danger of being killed by the short-livers in the fourth play. “The fourth play shows humanity as we know it dying out, and by the fifth play it has vanished and been wholly replaced by a new species”.\(^{33}\)

In act III of Part IV, Shaw’s attack on Christianity is revealed when the Elderly Gentleman replies to Zozim’s question, “What is a church?”,

All I can tell you is that Mahomet was a truly wise man; for he founded a religion without a Church; consequently when the time came for a reformation of the mosques there were no bishops and priests to obstruct it. Our bishops and priests prevented us for two hundred years from following suit; and we have never recovered the start we lost then (237).

As Shaw himself admitted, he abhorred the doctrines of Christianity.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
Yet, he recognized that man could reach the higher being with the purpose and the power of the human will.

The fifth play, 'As Far as Thought Can Reach' takes place in A. D. 31,920 in which people grow seventy years old in four new years. As The She-Ancient asserts, "Everything happens to everybody sooner or later if there is time enough. And with us there is eternity" (263), 'As Far as Thought can Reach', gives a broad hint of longevity which is Shaw's serious concern. It seems that the fifth Part of the play attempts to replace Genesis of the Bible with a scene using characters as creators and figures who eventually betray the creators. Peoples' goal is to be Ancient with endless progressive thought, and pursue pleasures of thought. The ancients represent Shaw's religious conception of superior man. They illustrate what achievements Shaw feels are possible if man will cooperate with the life force within him. They also establish the way to the godhead that Shaw believes. As a result of the effort of the life force and the appropriation of human will, humankind has achieved a spiritual ascendancy over flesh. These better developed humans are termed 'Ancients'. As Gorden says, "the Ancients’ combination of wisdom and power [seems to be] the desired end of Shaw’s own political idealism". They possess the power of demi-gods over their own bodies and over the natural elements which surround them. Both female and male Ancients are just identified as She or He without any sort of personal identity or relationships. Lilith describes them,

They have accepted the burden of eternal life. They have taken the agony from birth; and their life does not fail them even in the hour of destruction. Their breasts are without milk: their bowels are gone: the very shapes of them are only ornaments for their children to admire and caress without understanding. Is this enough; or must I labor again? (304).

The first two scenes in Part V show how far creative evolution has progressed. The men and women are ready to be born from eggs through

the equivalent of twenty years of immaturity. Sexual love does not contribute to reproduction. It seems rather unnecessary, unproductive, emotional, and has institutional barriers to the progress of the life force. The four years after birth are spent in dancing, singing mating and creating works of art. During this period, they begin to spend their time in thinking, and are called 'Ancients'. The Ancients serve primarily as Shaw's spokesmen for creative evolution. They are made up to pursue human activity between the ages of twenty and sixty. People are born out of eggs without birth from human reproduction. The child from an egg is independent of parents, responsible to no one, and free from all familial ties and responsibilities. They continue to live for three or more centuries. They are put to death only by some accident. When the newly born child asks why she must die of an accident the She-Ancient replies, "There is no why. They do. Everything happens to everybody sooner or later if there is time enough. And with us there is eternity" (263). The Ancients hope that man will progress toward a vortex of pure thought and intellect. Only by eternal existence with pure thought, life can be redeemed from the material world. Martellus, the ex-sculptor, explains: "The body always ends by being a bore. Nothing remains beautiful and interesting except thought, because the thought is the life" (298). Through evolutionary development, human progress acts with the life force. As Lilith says at the end of Part V:

And so much came of it that the horrors of that time seem now but an evil dream. They have redeemed themselves from their vileness, and turned away from their sins (304).

Pygmalion, as an artist and scientist, created life-like figures, as the climax of representational art. He describes what he has found out about the life force.

The life force is not quite so simple as you think. A high-potential current of it will turn a bit of tissue into a philosopher's brain. A low-potential current will reduce the same bit of tissue to a mass of corruption. Will you believe me when I tell you, that even in man himself, the Life Force used to slip suddenly down from its human level to that of a fungus, so that men found their flesh no longer growing as flesh, but
proliferating horribly in a lower form which was called cancer, until the lower form of life killed the higher, and both perished miserably together? (275).

He makes them alive with the chemical ingredients. The figures have hearts and human emotions. They are physically perfect but they are infinitely inferior to their creator and his contemporaries in mental development:

Pygmalion. There really is some evidence that we are descended from creatures quite as limited and absurd as these. I am convinced that what I am about to shew you is the very highest living organism that can be produced in the laboratory. The best tissues we can manufacture will not take as high potentials as the natural product: that is where Nature beats us (279).

Again Shaw anticipates scientific development. This new form of life can be developed through scientific breeding and radical reform of the current form. The anti-religious conception of man, Pygmalion's two dolls have all the characteristics of short-lived humanity, and they kill their creator, Pygmalion. The Ancients judge:

The He-Ancient. The creature has killed that poor youth... These things are mere automata: they cannot help shrinking from death at any cost. You see that they have no self-control, and are merely shuddering through a series of reflexes (285, 6).

They are put to death by burning. For this symbolic scene, Leary and Foster observe: "In their destruction by fire man's body is symbolically disposed of, and the time of the spirit's apocalypse in Shaw's cyclical epic has finally arrived". Artists and scientists should devote their evolutionary appetites toward transcending the body and transforming themselves into something pure. This is the ultimate goal. This part shows Shaw's attitude to art and artists, as well as to science.

The Ancients are dissatisfied with art and do not strive toward this goal anymore. The He-Ancient, as a child, "sought perfection in friends, in lovers, in nature, in things outside myself. Alas! I could not create it...

35 Leary and Foster, Op. Cit., 23
I could only imagine it” (294). The She-Ancient as a child was an artist and strove “to create perfection in things outside myself. I made statues: I painted pictures: I tried to worship them.” but she found there ‘was no life in them’ and turned from art. Now she is able to tell the youngsters” (294). As the She-Ancient says: “The body was the slave of the vortex; but the slave has become the master; and we must free ourselves from that tyranny” (299).

The She-Ancient. But still I am the slave of this slave, my body. How am I to be delivered from it?

The He-Ancient. That, children, is the trouble of the ancients. For whilst we are tied to this tyrannous body we are subject to its death, and our destiny is not achieved.

The Newly Born. What is your destiny?

The He-Ancient. To be immortal.

The She-Ancient. The day will come when there will be no people, only thought.

The He-Ancient. And that will be life eternal (297).

Meanwhile, all visible human habitation disappears. Cain disappears having no interest in such a world. The Serpent says, “I am justified. For I chose wisdom and the knowledge of good and evil; and now there is no evil and wisdom and good are one. It is enough” (304). Eve reappears at the end of the play to see her descendants. She finds everything is well and says that “My clever one inherited the earth” (304). After Eve fades away, Lilith, the manifestation of the life force, appears and foretells the evolutionary process continuing and what is coming since the garden of Eden. Lilith makes the final speech, “They have redeemed themselves from their vileness, and turned away from their sins” (305).

Lilith. I will not supersede them until they have forded this last stream that lies between flesh and spirit, and disentangled their life from the matter that has always mocked it (305).

Eve and the Serpent are content with what has happened over the intervening 30,000 years. Even though the matter still holds the life force back from its goals, the Ancients, the form of life, will advance. As Lilith
herself proclaims:

Lilith. Of Life only is there is no end; and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and through its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. And for what may be beyond, the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond (305-6).

The main concern of part V is to demonstrate what the real goal of the evolutionary process is: "The whole evolutionary process... is a movement toward greater abstraction, away from Adam, the type of Man, towards the dissolution of humanity in a vortex of 'life' or thought".36

Shaw calls *Back to Methuselah* his magnum opus. As a drama it is unbalanced and often dull. As Dukore mentions, "character and plot are less important in *Back to Methuselah* than ideas are. Here, ideas are not fully imbedded in them".37 Many critics say that the dramatic conflicts among characters and actions in *Back to Methuselah* are insensible and lack the full dimensions of drama. They have negative opinions of not only the dramaturgy of the play, but also its length, and its philosophical ideas. In terms of imaginative allegory, "*Back to Methuselah* is an allegory in which the old promise of longer life and man's victory over death is to be taken as a hope that this imaginative capacity can be expanded".38 This point emphasises the imaginative side of human experience in the play. Even though Gahan's argument seems to diminish Shaw's evolutionary purpose, his assertion is certainly to the point. *Back to Methuselah*, therefore is a revelation of Shaw's profound response to life, in spite of too many vague and unhuman attributes in the play. Shaw wrote in the preface to the play, "I exploit the eternal interest of the philosopher's stone, which enables men to live forever".39 The ideas of evolution are more thought-provoking in the preface. Few critics describe

Shaw as a dualist who ranges mind against matter or spirit against flesh. On this point, he writes to Ervine, that “the passion of the body will finally become a passion of the mind”.\textsuperscript{40} Shaw’s self-proclaimed magnum opus, \textit{Back to Methuselah} has not proved to be among his more successful works. One reason for the discrepancy between Shaw’s estimation of the play and its reception by critics and the public seems to be found in Shaw’s attempted interassimilations of religious and scientific converse.

As observed in the introductory chapter, Shaw asserted that neo-Darwinism had produced “a catastrophe of a magnitude so appalling, and a scope so unpredictable, that as I write these lines in 1920, it is still far from certain whether our civilization will survive it”.\textsuperscript{41} In terms of social Darwinism, the theory of evolution could be used in justification of wars for national or racial supremacy. Shaw hopes the spirit will be triumphant over the body. In Act III in \textit{Man and Superman}, Shaw explains, “Life is a force which has made innumerable experiments in organizing itself... [and makes] the ideal individual being omnipotent, omniscient, infallible and withal completely, unilludely self-conscious”.\textsuperscript{42} As the brother Barnabas says, the purpose of life is the pursuit of the progress towards omnipotence and omniscience, therefore man’s pursuit is that “it is the path to godhead” (133). The purpose of desire in Shaw’s new religion is creative, but not limited to human procreation. As emphasized already, Shaw’s religious view cannot be explained in isolation from his philosophical ideas. Additionally Shaw’s religious conception of creative evolution and scientific development seem to be inseparable. Creative evolution does act on behalf of the life force. Namely creative evolution can be achieved by the life force.

Throughout \textit{Back to Methuselah}, Shaw linked matter with spirit in evolutionary thought in the science fiction text. For the dramatic imagination in the play, Shaw uses both scientific knowledge and religious philosophy. He indicated this point in the prefaces to \textit{Misalliance}.


\textsuperscript{41} Shaw, \textit{Back to Methuselah}, p. 9.

Human beings visibly wear out, though they last longer than their friends the dogs... But the fact that new ones are born conclusively proves that they are not immortal. Do away with death and you do away with the need for birth: in fact if you went on breeding, you would finally have to kill old people to make room for young ones. Now death is not necessarily a failure of energy on the part of the Life Force.43

Shaw tries to interpret and identify the biblical story of man’s fall and redemption through the play with his own religious ideas. “Back to Methuselah is Shaw’s magnum opus, and essential for understanding his religious vision”.44 He wrote of this point in the preface to Back to Methuselah in 1920, “I am not, I hope, under more illusion than is humanly inevitable as to the crudity of this my beginning of a Bible for Creative Evolution. I am doing the best I can at my age. My powers are waning; but so much the better for those who found me unbearably brilliant in my prime... Back to Methuselah is a World Classic or it is nothing”.45

The play cycle in five parts begins with Adam and Eve B. C. 4004 in the Garden of Eden and ends in A. D. 31,920. The three middle plays, set in 1920 shortly after the Great War and in A. D. 2170 and in A. D. 3000. Each part of the play is linked thematically. Each subject contrasts youth with age, and immaturity with maturity, in terms of thematic action. The play shows that men can evolve in the direction of greater longevity and greater intellect, when men have great power of life force and will. Also humanity would be freed from body and entangled matter altogether.

Shaw described Back to Methuselah as “a contribution to the modern Bible” of creative evolution.46 For the purpose, Shaw seems to effectively revise Adam and Eve’s story to enhance the mythological nature of the play. Stone-Blackburn claims that “For the most part, Shaw replaces the ‘life force’ of man and superman with the term ‘creative

45 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 62.
46 Ibid., p. 15.
evolution' in *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw’s life force is essentially spiritual".\textsuperscript{47} To Shaw, spirituality is related to intelligence. As in other plays, Shaw’s life force focuses on intelligence in terms of creative evolution in the play. He calls religion "the science of metabiology". According to the play, Shaw makes the premise that human beings are subject to fail because their lives are too short to learn wisdom. For this point, Wisenthal rightly notes that in *Back to Methuselah*, "the important ones are the experience and maturity gained from having lived for a long time".\textsuperscript{48} So men have to strive to live for ever beyond physical limitation towards spiritual perfection for the progress of human kind through the life force. This is what Shaw tries to emphasise through *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw wrote in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, "I exploit the eternal interest of the philosopher’s stone, which enables men to live forever".\textsuperscript{49}

The play alludes to the creation of a new breed of longlivers to surpass their limitation and attain evolution. There is a way of redemption to escape the limitation of death. By birth, man can for ever renew himself. There is no childhood but young men and women appearing on earth from about age eighteen. From birth by eggs, they have consciousness, moral sense, and intelligence. They can die only by accident. As they grow old, they can attain perfection. Shaw says that he improved the eugenic theme in *Man and Superman* and fully developed it in *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw deals with the question of how biological advanced life is created in *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw makes it clear that population is rigidly controlled in the play. As mentioned earlier, there is an important point to be made here about this view. Along with the evolutionary theory of eugenics, the eugenic movement was radical and progressive especially in 1930s. It seems because after the First World War the attitudes of eugenic thinking developed in relation to social schemes concerning the issue of the birth rate and its control in general.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49} Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{50} In the early 1920s the Eugenics Society approved ‘An Outline of a Practical
Schiller wrote in a sympathetic reference to this point;

...the difference [is] between our present society and a rationally organized and eugenical society, not that in the former the individual is free in the latter controlled, but that our present organization is so largely random, aimless, inconsistent, and self-frustrating... while the latter would be planned, and would enable him to rise insensibly above that lurid past and to reach a harmonious development in a perfected society.\(^{51}\)

During the post-war period, eugenicists advocated birth control as a solution to new social problems. Ellis wrote; “birth-control yet remains the only instrument by means of which... eugenic selection can be rendered practicable”.\(^{52}\) Inge carried the issue raised, “... a community which makes itself responsible for the education and maintenance of all who are born within it must claim and exercise some control over both the quality and quantity of the new human material for which it will have to provide”.\(^{53}\) The ideas of population quality and heredity were a fundamental concern of progressive eugenicists. For this reason, Shaw seems to deal with the ideas of the death of the race of short-livers. Shaw spoke,

...there must be considered the question of birth control. This problem was difficult and obscure, the present agitation was artificially and prematurely created by the bad organisation of society. There was no evidence that the world as a whole had reached the limits of the law of increasing returns of either population or foodstuffs, but we had created an artificial diminution of returns. Many families were too large though there might be room for them somewhere in the world. When Socialism brought about

Eugenic Policy' which endorsed birth control for the 'less fit' and the 'poor' as the primary method of progressive eugenics.


increasing returns some general form of birth control would be inevitable. Of the means to be adopted the lecturer confessed himself ignorant. There seemed nothing harmful in the present methods but they might become unnecessary. Nature, prodigal as she was, seemed mysteriously to respond to a situation. When the checks of war and disease were removed and Socialism produced an inconveniently large population, as increase of power and knowledge and a fuller life then nature herself would possibly call a halt.  

The number of those who are allowed to be born is not only limited, but those who are either physically or morally unfit are destroyed. This point can be explained in terms of the Fabian eugenic socialism. As mentioned earlier, many eugenicists agreed that hereditary influences contributed to the formation of mental ability. Along with the eugenic movement, Fabian eugenicists encourage the procreation of the fit while discouraging that of the unfit. As Spektorowski argues, that “Fabian socialism led to the promotion of eugenic policies of sterilization [of the unfit] is open to debate”. It seems that eugenic socialists try to prevent biological degeneration of the fit from the social and political fears caused by the larger numbers of the unfit. The theory as presented in the preface to Back to Methuselah relates a Shavian interpretation of evolutionary thought to contemporary eugenic ideas, even though “the decline of the eugenics movement in Britain is one aspect of the post-war change”. After the First World War and the emergence of Nazi Germany, the eugenic movement declined and was negatively identified with fascism. In accordance with a racist ideology, the sterilization programme of eugenics was set up in Nazi Germany during the 1930s. According to Nazi Germany, the most intelligent and finest race will succeed in the long run, while the hereditary criminal and pauper should be weeded out.

Nazi Germany was heavily influenced by social Darwinism emphasising human biological inequality. They founded their ideas on the radical adherence to a naturalistic Darwinian world view. The Nazi’s radical view of eugenics had been stigmatized in twentieth-century scientific thought as one that was deeply repugnant. This decline of the eugenic movement seems to have been caused in terms of the Nazi idea of a master race with a special destiny with a unique blend of nationalism, militarism, blind jingoism and radical theory. It seems “eugenicist ideas were all [the] rage,... that the term may have begun to shed its Hitlerian taint”.57

In the play, human beings no longer need to die to see life develop further; they have sufficient control over themselves that they can create and shape their souls in whatever way they wish. Back to Methuselah projects the whole history of the human race symbolically into the future. Various legends expressing the creed of creative evolution are embedded in dramatic form in Back to Methuselah. Shaw’s first attempt at a dramatization of a legend embodying the idea of creative evolution had been made in Man and Superman, as he tells us in the preface to Back to Methuselah: “I took the legend of Don Juan in its Mozartian form and made it a dramatic parable of creative evolution. But ... I surrounded it with a comedy... The effect was so vertiginous... that nobody noticed the new religion in the centre of the intellectual whirlpool”.58 The creative evolution concept spelled out in the dream scene of Man and Superman has intellectual links with Back to Methuselah. Shaw declared, “I think it well to affirm that the third act, however fantastic its lengthy framework may be, is a careful attempt to write a new book of Genesis for the Bible of the Evolutionists”.59 In his ‘Postscript’ of 1933 to the ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ of Man and Superman he writes: “The evolutionary theme of the third act of Man and Superman, was resumed by me twenty years later in the preface to Back to Methuselah where it is developed as the basis of

58 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 61.
the religion of the near future”. The creed which Shaw dramatized in 1918-21 evolved in the years between the writing of Man and Superman (1902) and Back to Methuselah (1921). Back to Methuselah adds the gospel of longevity to the first credo as the most significant element. Shaw says that the play “came straight from the life force operating as an elan vital through myself”. The tenets from the preface of Back to Methuselah are related in what Shaw describes in the postscript as “the evanescence of God Almighty and His replacement by a creative force striving by trial and error towards a goal of allknowingness and almighty power over nature”.

As Shaw’s ‘magnum opus’, Back to Methuselah presents his concerns with the social, political, and religious issues of that time. Shaw wrote in 1944, “Immorality is natural, death only an artifice to make it bearable as a burden and get rid of its garments of flesh as they wear out. The legend of Methuselah is neither incredible nor unscientific”. Through the preface, he sets out the philosophical foundation for his legend of Methuselah in which science in the form of creative evolution is offered in place of religious belief. He wrote: “Now I abandon the legend of Don Juan with its erotic associations, and go back to the legend of the Garden of Eden”. In the epilogue to Back to Methuselah, Shaw hints through Lilith’s final speech that “there is a goal, and a purpose behind the activities of the Life Force” (305), the evolutionary process of human kind is infinite in terms of eternal changes.

Shaw, as a creative evolutionist, believed that in the rational human mind there was the scientific understanding of the metaphysical truths. In the preface to Back to Methuselah, he writes, “It is not that science is free from legends, witchcraft, miracles, biographic boostings of quacks as heroes and saints, and of barren scoundrels as explorers and discoverers”. Shaw seems to manifest a future development with a

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60 Shaw, Man and Superman, pp. 37- 8.
61 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 311.
62 Ibid., p. 313.
63 Ibid., p. 314.
64 Ibid., p. 62.
65 Ibid., p. 29.
biological advance in terms of the new breeding of longlivers. He wrote of,

When I contributed my Utopia in a batch of plays entitled Back to Methuselah, in which mind reigned as irresistibly over muscle as Prospero over Caliban, I also had to find such a check; but I could not be satisfied with an imaginary one, as that would have taken me no further towards possibility and credibility than the older Utopians. There is no real hope in impossible Utopias. I had to resort to a power which, as it exists, and is in daily operation, can easily be conceived as capable of evolutionary intensification... I have ranked this as a scientific fact in the fourth part of Back to Methuselah... I made it possible to accept a story in which by evolutionary development of purely natural forces wisdom had become awful to the extent of becoming lethal. For Awe operates through discouragement; and discouragement is the last degree of death.66

Even though Shaw has certain science-fiction elements in the play, Back to Methuselah is not science fiction, either by intention or result. "Dramatically, the play is overwhelmed by its theme. There is no action and talk hardly moves it, but the entire work glows with intellectual light".67 The life force moves to transfigure the common people with its purposeful ends. According to Shaw, Back to Methuselah

... came straight from the Life Force operating as an elan vital through myself and Barry Jackson... In them the Life Force is struggling towards its goal of godhead by incarnating itself in creatures with knowledge and power enough to control nature and circumstances.68

The theory as developed in the preface of Back to Methuselah is a Shavian interpretation of traditional and contemporary evolutionary thought. As in Shaw’s other plays, there is a nearly constant insistence upon thematic statements in Back to Methuselah. As Shaw’s epic fantasy

67 Ibid., p. 267.
68 Shaw, Back to Methuselah, pp. 311-12.
drama, *Back to Methuselah* seems to seek a religion which might redeem life from the narrow confinement of time and make it more meaningful and worth living. The play symbolizes the epic of human existence and speculates about the ultimate destiny of the human species. Through the play, Shaw reveals his desire for immortality for both the individual and mankind, as human beings evolve their own means of reproduction and contrive to live longer without pain. The future of humanity, according to the creed of creative evolution, depends on man being aware of the power of creative evolution as an agent of the life force. In a sense, the play is the quintessence of Shavianism; it reflects his intellectual history and future hopes. By the end, in the last of five linked plays, creative evolution has developed 'As Far As Thought Can Reach'.
Conclusion

Shaw's unorthodox views on religious matters are widely spread over many of his prefaces, lectures and portions of the dialogue of his plays. In most cases, the plays are distinguished for their intellectual or societal themes based on religious beliefs. Shaw insisted that his concern is educating the public; "'for art's sake' alone, I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence".1 As Weales notes:

[Shaw] never doubted that the theater was a place in which to preach and teach, but he complicated the simplicity of thesis drama by consistently writing plays in which the characters have human validity and vitality, which means that they cannot be expected to act simply as mouthpieces for ideas, but except for the fantastic and caricatured plays of the thirties... the ideas always take form in relation to human beings.2

For these purposes, Shaw himself insisted on the point that "I am a philosopher... I reply that there is nothing so interesting as philosophy, provided its materials are not spurious. For instance, take my own materials - humanity and the fine art".3 Also he added that "It is only when we are dissatisfied with existing masterpieces that we create new ones: if we merely worship them, we only try to repeat the exploits of their creator... vital art work comes from a cross between art and life".4 According to Shaw, philosophical men and true artists are inspired agents of the life force. They possess a superhuman spirit, because, being contemplative and creative, they help improve society to a higher form of organization. In this respect, the true philosophers are the masters of reality who discover the true meaning of life while contemplating the true

reality, life.

Through his plays, Shaw tried to reform the conventional institutions of society and to improve individual conditions. As a Fabian socialist, socialism has become a major motif in all his plays. He seeks changes not only in the economic and social system but in human nature, as well. A main theme of the plays, therefore, was the realization of world betterment: the gradual development of society and the improvement of humanity towards a higher civilization. Because of his interest in religion, many of his plays are centrally concerned with religious themes. Shaw’s plays are not to be interpreted literally according to his dramatic purposes:

I am not, I hope, under more illusion than is humanly inevitable as to my contribution to the scriptures of creative evolution. It is my hope that a hundred parables by younger hands will soon leave mine as far behind as the religious pictures of the fifteenth century left behind the first attempts of the early Christians at iconography.5

Shaw seemed to believe that real social development could only be made by man’s self-realization based on the life force. Shaw, with the influences of his contemporaries, not only rebelled against the doctrines of orthodox Christianity but also advocated his own religion, the creed of the life force and creative evolution. In the preface to Back to Methuselah, he emphasizes that “civilization needs a religion as a matter of life or death; and as the conception of Creative Evolution developed I saw that we were at last within reach of a faith which complied with the first condition of all the religions that have ever taken hold of humanity”.6 According to Shaw, for a profound religious life, men “throw away their lives and those of others in the pursuit of... its apparent effect on human welfare”.7

As Shaw’s representatives, the main characters in the plays attack institutionalized religion, outworn doctrines and conventions and

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6 Ibid., p. 61.
morality and pronounce Shaw's religious and philosophical beliefs not only about the vision of society but also about other contemporary matters. During the period of the early twentieth century, Shaw used the term 'life force' which is the basic element of his new religion, creative evolutionism for an impetus of human evolution. Shaw's life force theory is based on nineteenth-century evolutionary theories, especially Butlerian, Bergsonian and Lamarckian theories. For Shaw, Darwin's theory of natural selection is more despairing than any established religion:

[Religion] did at least still proclaim that our relation to one another was that of a fellowship in which we were all equal and members one of another before the judgment-seat of our common father. Darwinism proclaimed that our true relation is that of competitors and combatants in a struggle for mere survival... I found myself regarded as a blasphemer and an ignorant sentimentalist because whenever the Neo-Darwinian doctrine was preached there I made no attempt to conceal my intellectual contempt for its blind coarseness and shallow logic, or my natural abhorrence of its sickening inhumanity.8

Shaw rejects the mechanical aspect of Darwinian theory while he allows the presence of the will or mind in the evolutionary process. With Nietzsche's idea of superman and with the kinship to Bergson's theory of the *elan vital*, Shaw's life force philosophy was widely acceptable. Shaw developed his life force philosophy as the source of the will in the evolutionary process. Philosophically, his theory is akin to Bergson's concept of *elan vital*. Like Bergson's *elan vital*, Shaw's life force is the vital source of the will which improves the quality of human life by fulfilling itself through man's self-realization, that is, through man's final evolution into Superman. These incipient supermen inevitably are unconventional and anti-establishment. They are always in opposition to the established order which resists the change and development in human society.

Shaw's life force gives man a meaningful direction in life, and with which man can attain a higher being. Shaw's life force, as the evolutionary appetite, is still evolving, less perfect and not yet completed.

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Life in Shavian metaphor fulfills itself in the evolutionary process of the universe in general and of man in particular. According to Shaw, all human beings are the products of the life force, not yet completed, but still advancing toward completion which can be achieved only when they are working for the higher purpose of the universe. As a result, the "goodness of the society can be attained as a by-product of man's working for an object higher than one's own goodness and happiness". In this regard, real social progress can be achieved only through every individual's evolution into a superman.

The life force, operating within man, makes man explore his potentiality and live a better life by virtue of his self-improvement. And each man's self-improvement brings forth the improvement of the human race as a whole and subsequent social progress as a whole. In fulfilling man's better life through his self-improvement, the life force in man is the vital source. The life force, moving onward and upward, prompts man to make every effort for a better life. In terms of Shaw's humanistic religion, creative evolution, man's evolution does not mean his bodily perfection. Rather it is to change his way of life from the bodily to change his vision of life from hopelessness to a belief in human possibilities.

Along with the life force of his creative evolution, the idea of the Superman was first introduced in Man and Superman. And the idea was fully developed in his later play, Back to Methuselah. Shaw's concern for human progress through the force of creative evolution led to the birth of a superior being, Superman. Shaw emphasizes the eugenic breeding of superman as the only remedy for social problems. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Shaw advocated the improvement of the human race by means of selective breeding through an effective eugenic agency. For Shaw, eugenics are concerned with the question of the breeding of superman for the sake of his new religion, creative evolution. Shaw believed that the best way of improving the human race was rational selection of a proper partner for the breeding of superman. In terms of the eugenic breeding of superman, the first goal of the life force is to breed man into a better species, and then finally into a god-like being of

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superman. To Shaw, accordingly, the birth of the superman could be regarded as the first step of creative evolution towards the human-god.

The idea of the superman explored in *Man and Superman* is further illustrated in later plays through the various aspects of characterization. Shaw's vision of superman aims at social reform. It is "a vision of an improved species of man who would give Shaw the better society".\(^{10}\) To Shaw, social progress is based on every individual's self-improvement through superhuman spirit. He believes that only the geniuses who have vital superhuman spirits can move society. So it is a prerequisite for man to change himself in order to bring forth social progress.

For dramatic purposes, Shaw chose conventional and unconventional themes and techniques from the conventions of the nineteenth-century theatre. For both his method of characterization and the blend of his dramatic skills, Shaw used the techniques of melodrama, discussion and extravaganza in his plays. As a dramatic technique, Shaw chose the discussion scene to show how his characters developed the purpose of the revolutionary ideas in the plays through the device of disillusionment. Along with the idealistic disillusionment emphasized in the early plays, the realization of societal amelioration is also presented, which shifts continuously in later plays as a goal pursued by Shavian characters. During this period Shaw tends to deal with contemporary social problems and to attack conventional attitudes toward social systems.

Shaw aimed to dramatize the purpose of the life force, in order to make clear what humanity can do to aid its progress. The life force is the central fact of Shaw's creative evolution. The life force provides the impetus for evolutionary progress as the basic structural element of Shaw's plays. Most of Shaw's plays are not so much about the conflicts of personalities, but about the conflicts between individuals and their society. The plays attempt to portray dramatically what the life force wants, how man can help for the purpose of the life force in order for the betterment of humanity. Creative evolution provides a structural and metaphorical foundation for the plays. Shaw's motifs and themes do not seem to have changed much throughout his life. Shaw's questions

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concerning the future of mankind continued to be the basic elements of the plays. For Shaw, as his philosophical religion, creative evolution does work as a basis for social improvement. This is what Shaw was concerned with in his most vigorous plays. Shaw’s final vision of the destiny of the human race in relation to his religion is presented in those plays.

The background of most plays is imbued with some kind of conflict and war. In the Shavian perspective, the ultimate aim of mankind’s evolution must be the elimination of war, conflict, and all causes of intolerance. This aim is only attained in the final stages of man’s evolution, which should be the first step towards releasing the potential which can transform all the human race into superior beings.

I have pointed out the ways in which Shaw’s thoughts and dramatic themes differed from his contemporaries in the Victorian context. As argued in the previous chapters, on the whole in the plays Shaw dealt with illusion and disillusion of the main characters concerning conventional morality, institutional social systems, religion and so on through the stages of self-realization and self-improvement. Most of Shaw’s characters are endowed with what he calls ‘original virtue’ and tuned to the service of humanity. They are gifted with natural genius, natural moral superiority, and natural leadership. The various characters in the plays represent Shaw’s point of view, which is set off against that of the other characters. Shaw’s protagonists in the plays are closely in tune with the aims of the life force, who are able to convert other characters who are exposed as anti-life.

When the life force, presented in Man and Superman, is in action within man as an evolutionary appetite, it functions as two driving forces, instinct and intellect, and makes man strive for self-realization and self-improvement for a better life with proper harmony between these two forces. The main motif in the plays, as in Pygmalion, is showing the life force working in Eliza’s new life. Major Barbara deals with an unworldly saviour who can change the vicious society as a reformer of the spiritual force united with men who provide intellectual and financial powers. At the end of the play, Barbara’s final success seems to alleviate societal ill. In the Shavian vision, The Devil’s Disciple embodies Shaw’s view as iconoclast, humanist and leader against the evils of the society. The protagonists in Caesar and Cleopatra and The Man of Destiny act as
powerful fighters against social evils in their historical context and as heroes in the military field with strong and decisive leadership. After the Great War, most of Shaw’s protagonists as in *Heartbreak House*, surrounded by the conflicts of the society, seem to have a more pessimistic view of reality. Shaw’s vision at the end of *Back to Methuselah* focuses on life as the one eternal fact which started long before man and has better chances of surviving him.

Shaw’s life force is the vital power behind creative evolution. It functions on the principle of trial and error at times. Its aim is always greater self-consciousness and greater self-knowledge. In terms of the Shavian point of view, man is hitherto life’s highest achievement and its evolving godhead incomplete but striving for completion.

In its essence, the concept of creative evolution, which Shaw explores in his drama, is a religion of hope and faith in the capability of the human race to survive the challenges of its existence. According to the creative evolution, if man does not evolve, he will stagnate and perish, or perhaps be superseded by some other creature. In this sense Shaw’s outlook in life and the evolving man is related to a higher link as an endless chain of evolution.

My thesis is a very closed space, my choice of material is highly selective conveying a very private and personal view. Its efficacy and its limitations should be apparent in this research. In this study I have tried to concentrate specially on Shaw’s religious ideas and characters as the agents of his religion, while analyzing the relationship between his method of characterization and his intellectual and artistic trends. In doing so, I do not pretend to give authoritative critical interpretation of the plays; what I can do is to suggest the possibility of such a interpretation for further exploration. The arrangement of the chapters is based on a blend of chronological and thematic considerations to indicate the patterns which have emerged from the analysis of the plays. This grouping provides a closer look at the religious plays and a better standpoint to appreciate their affinities and divergence.

The eight plays analysed above all have religious themes related to real social development in the background of the action and often in the very forefront. As far as theatrical trends are concerned, Shaw’s dramatic technique in the plays chosen for analysis in this thesis can be explained
to a large extent by his didactic purposes as both artist and philosopher. The major characters of the eight plays follow a similar rising pattern as far as their relevance to Shaw’s evolutionary scheme and vision of social development is concerned.

Shaw was one of the dramatists who tried to provide the readers with a hopeful vision related to his new religion - creative evolution. In a sense, Shavian creative evolutionism seems to promote the developing role of men for achieving the stage of the superman in an institutional society as the primary agents of the life force. Thus Shaw’s vision of social progress is on the ground of the eugenic breeding of superman. To Shaw, the ultimate goal of the life force is social progress based on individual self-realization. On this basis, Shaw develops his vision of social progress which can be attained by the dialectic harmony between individuals. In this sense, I would like to conclude my thesis with a quotation from the portion of the play, *Back to Methuselah*: “we had the possibility of becoming a great within us”\textsuperscript{11}, which is the precise entreaty of the life force.

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This bibliography of books and articles which have been cited in this thesis is divided into two sections. The first is a list of works authored by Shaw himself, the second is a list of works produced by other critics and writers.

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