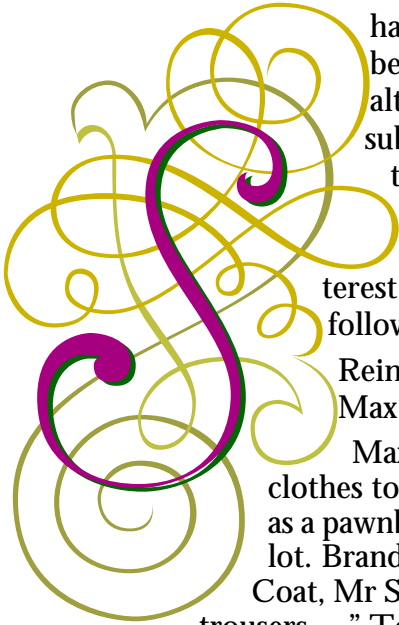


Chapter Two

Man and Superman

Shaw's Non-Dramatic Writings



Shaw was a failed novelist, and a successful journalist and critic before he became a playwright. His criticism for newspapers, although interesting and voluminous, frequently deals with subjects that are not relevant to the central issue of his relations to contemporary philosophical ideas. His three extended attempts at criticism, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, *The Perfect Wagnerite*, and *The Sanity of Art*, are of more immediate interest and will each receive a brief discussion in the sections that follow.

Reinhold Grimm and Michael Holroyd have both described a Max Beerbohm cartoon that depicts Shaw:

Max was to draw a caricature of Shaw bringing a bundle of clothes to the Dutch critic, Georg Brandes (who is represented as a pawnbroker) and asking for immortality in exchange for the lot. Brandes protests, "Come, I've handled these goods before! Coat, Mr Schopenhauer's; waistcoat, Mr Ibsen's; Mr Nietzsche's trousers—." To which Shaw answers: "Ah, but look at the patches!"¹

The previous chapter has been devoted to showing the clothes that Shaw used and patched together to form the philosophic basis of his dramas and his beliefs. It is time now to look at the patched garments that Shaw stitched together from the philosophic clothing of his predecessors.

Man and Superman and *Back to Methuselah* are not isolated incidents in Shaw's literary life. Throughout a long and active literary career he continually asserted his belief in the primacy of the will, and he just as vociferously expressed his belief in evolution. To show the continuity and development of Shaw's philosophy, it is necessary to do some preliminary work and to look at his evolutionary dramas in the context of their development.²

Shaw's literary career began with several attempts at novel writing, and, when that proved unsuccessful, he eventually turned to journalism. The journalism took the form of art, music, and theater criticism for a number of different papers and literary journals, but because of its essentially ephemeral nature, it is not as relevant to our discussion as his more extended dramatic, musical, and artistic essays.

¹ Holroyd, *Power*, 69. For Grimm's description see his "The Hidden Heritage: Repercussions of Nietzsche in Modern Theater and its Theory," *Nietzsche-Studien: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Nietzsche-Forschung*, 12 (1983) 355. Grimm's article is concerned mostly with an evaluation of the influence of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.

² This is, as Kaufmann says, the appropriate way to read Nietzsche, "*rück- und vorsichtig*: with consideration and caution—but the contrast of the two prefixes which literally mean 'back' and 'fore' also suggests that he needs to be read with an eye for what comes before and after..." (Kaufmann, *Mind*, II, 154). It seems to be appropriate to Shaw as well.



**Program Cover for first performance
of *Man and Superman***

tion. Shaw here displays his knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art and music and attempts to defend the avant garde movements of the time against the charges that Nordau brings forth. In the process he repeats some of what he has already said in the other books.

The Quintessence of Ibsenism and Schopenhauerean Will

The *Quintessence* was originally written in 1891 and was subsequently revised by Shaw in 1913. The revisions consisted of additional material that related to Ibsen's last four plays, *The Master Builder*, *Little Eyolf*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, and *When We Dead Awaken*. Other material that appears to have been added includes his comments on Strindberg and his plea for an Ibsen theater. The *Quintessence*, as it exists in the Ayot St. Laurence edition of Shaw's collected works, consists of about 100 pages of material from the original 1891

Shaw, as noted earlier, complained that he and not Schopenhauer had taught his critics the distinction between will and intellect in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. The extent of Shaw's debt to Schopenhauer, if any, should be apparent in this relatively early (1891) work.

Shaw's devotion to Wagner prompted him to write *The Perfect Wagnerite*, essentially a Socialist reading (hearing?) of Wagner's *Ring*. *The Perfect Wagnerite* came out in 1898, two years after Shaw had read *Nietzsche contra Wagner* and had recommended it to Janet Achurch as something Charles Charrington might enjoy.³ Shaw's review of the two volumes of Nietzsche came out in 1899, the year following the publication of *The Perfect Wagnerite*. It is possible that Shaw may show some understanding of Nietzsche's feud with Wagner, or some appreciation of his criticism of Wagner and the Wagner cult.

The 1895 critique of Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, *The Sanity of Art* is Shaw's response to a challenge that the art of the mid- to late-nineteenth century was an art that was caused by physiological degeneration.

³ (*Letters*, I, 621). See also page 76, above.

edition and about twenty-five to sixty pages added in 1913. Most of the material that we are concerned with appears, in fact, in the first eighty or so pages of the work and can safely be assumed to represent material from the 1891 edition.

The *Quintessence* starts by describing the two types of pioneers “of the march to heaven.” These represent two attitudes towards moral doctrine:

The second, whose eyes are in the back of his head, is the man who declares that it is wrong to do something that no one has hitherto seen any harm in.

The first, whose eyes are very longsighted and in the usual place, is the man who declares that it is right to do something hitherto regarded as infamous.

The second is treated with great respect by the army. They give him testimonials; name him the Good Man; and hate him like the devil.

The first is stoned and shrieked at by the whole army. They call him all manner of opprobrious names; grudge him his bare bread and water; and secretly adore him as their saviour from utter despair. (15)

Shaw gives as an example of a proposition from the second type of pioneer: “It is wrong to kill animals and eat them.” This is taken from Shelley’s avowed vegetarian position, a position that was also Shaw’s. Shaw’s example of a proposition from the first type is: “It is not wrong to take your sister as your wife.” This proposition was also advocated by Shelley (15). One of these propositions advocates abstinence from, and the other advocates indulgence in, certain appetites. In the first case Shelley appears as the gentle advocate of *ahimsa* (non-injury), a “gentle humanitarian,” while in the second case he appears as a “corrupter of public morals and family life” (16). Shaw postulates that if *The Daily Telegraph* attacked Ibsen in the same way that *The Quarterly Review* was wont to attack Shelley, “There must be something of the first pioneer about Ibsen.”

Shaw contrasts the attitude of the British newspapers towards Ibsen, as represented by *The Daily Telegraph*, and the attitude of the progressive reformers towards him. His task, as he conceives it, is to explain how part of the population could regard Ibsen as a pornographer, for a play such as *Ghosts*, while another portion of the British public could regard him a great “dramatic poet and moral teacher” (18). The Shavian hypothesis is that Ibsen is a moral pioneer and that Ibsen’s pioneering efforts involve the destruction of existing moral institutions:

...social progress takes effect through the replacement of old institutions by new ones; and since every institution involves the recognition of the duty of conforming to it, progress must involve the repudiation of an established duty at every step. (19)

One part of this repudiation of duty, and a part that has its share in Shaw’s appraisal of Ibsen’s most famous and most feminist play, is woman’s repudiation of duty. The repudiation of duty means that in theory the freethinker is free to do as he sees fit without the restraint of moral codes. Shaw describes this as appearing to “the pious man” as “claiming the right to rob and murder at large.” Shaw’s contention is that “The freethinker soon finds reasons for not doing what he does not want to do; and these reasons seem to him to be far more binding on our conscience than the precepts of a book of which the infallibility

cannot be rationally proved” (20). This position is similar to that described by Sartre in his essay “Existentialism”:

About 1880, some French teachers tried to set up a secular ethics which went something like this: God is a useless and costly hypothesis; we are discarding it; but, meanwhile, in order for there to be an ethics, a society, a civilization, it is essential that certain values be taken seriously and that they be considered as having an *a priori* existence.... In other words... nothing will be changed if God does not exist.⁴

Shaw’s derivation of ethics seems to be the same process employed by Sartre’s “French teachers.” This process of substitution does not seem to have the same affective content as it does for the existentialist. The non-existence of God was a source of anguish for Nietzsche and for the Sartrean existentialist:

The existentialist, on the contrary, thinks it very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him; there can no longer be an *a priori* Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it.⁵

The existential *angst* of Sartre over the nonexistence of God contrasts sharply with that of Shaw. Shaw shares Sartre’s position that certain moral doctrines are not innate, but that they are derived from human teachers and human doctrines. This characteristic is for Shaw a source of rejoicing, while for Sartre it is a source for anguish and concern because it involves man in the responsibility for creating his own values. The moral doctrines that Shaw wishes to enforce, however, are frequently those very practices and doctrines that are advocated by the “pious men.” There is, within the Shavian ethos, no room for divinely inspired moral codes, but neither is there an *a priori* basis for the imposition of the Shavian or Ibsenite moral code. If the death of God was for Nietzsche a source of anguish, as exemplified in aphorism 125 of *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, and a source of distress for Sartre, nothing so profound happens in the realm of Shavian ethics. The rejection of faith in a transcendent God leads not to existential angst but to a substitution of one transcendent entity for another. The entity that is substituted is the will.

Shaw recognizes the will as something distinct from reason and identifies it with Schopenhauer:

In our own century the recognition of the will as distinct from the reasoning machinery began to spread. Schopenhauer was the first among the moderns to appreciate the enormous practical importance of the distinction, and to make it clear to amateur metaphysicians by concrete instances. (22–3)

In a lengthy footnote Shaw clarifies what he means by “the moderns”:

I say the moderns, because the will is our old friend the soul or spirit of man; and the doctrine of justification, not by works, but by faith, clearly derives its validity from the consideration that no action, taken apart from the will behind it, has any moral character: for example, the acts which make the mur-

⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, trans. Bernard Frechtman and Hazel E. Barnes, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957) 21–2.

⁵ Sartre, 23.

derer and the incendiary infamous are exactly similar to those which make the patriotic hero famous. "Original sin" is the will doing mischief. "Divine grace" is the will doing good. Our fathers, unversed in the Hegelian dialectic, could not conceive that these two, each the negation of the other, were the same. Schopenhauer's philosophy, like that of all pessimists, is really based on the old view of the will as original sin, and on the 1750-1850 view that the intellect is the divine grace that is to save us from it. It is as well to warn those who fancy that Schopenhauerism is one and indivisible, that acceptance of its metaphysics by no means involves endorsement of its philosophy. (22-3)

What is evident here is that Shaw does not care to make careful distinctions. The Schopenhauerian will is not the soul of man; it is a transcendent force that creates a world of illusion. Further, unless Shaw is identifying the will with faith, it would seem more appropriate to identify the will with justification by works, which is the actualization of the potentiality of the will, rather than with justification by faith. Original sin is not the will doing anything at all; it is an inherent tendency in the will to choose evil over good. Hegelianism is dragged in so that an identification can be made between "Original sin" and "Divine Grace." But grace is a gift from God, and even with Hegelian dialectics the thesis and the antithesis are not the same; they are negations of each other. Shaw's final remark implies that he sees a distinction between Schopenhauer's philosophy and his metaphysics. The distinction between these two aspects of Schopenhauer is unclear from Shaw's footnote. This is a relatively early example of Shaw's tendency to conflate ideas that may or may not be similar and then to claim that because they are similar that they are identical.⁶ Similarity, contrary to Shaw, does not imply identity. A Persian cat is similar to a lion (in that both are cats), but it is not identical to a lion. The same principle applies to ideas. There may be a similarity between the Hindu and the Christian trinities, but they are not identical. Shaw glosses over the distinction between intellectual concepts and postulates their identity.

Shaw's letter to Archer of 25th October 1891, cited above, repeats the distinction between Schopenhauer's philosophy and his metaphysics. In this letter he contended that the distinction between intellect and will was a natural fact. The metaphysical aspect of Schopenhauer is evidently, for Shaw, the distinction between the intellect and the will. The philosophical aspect, again for Shaw, is to be found in the pessimism and in his "conviction that the will was the devil and the intellect the divine saviour."⁷

Because Shaw has set up an opposition between intellect and will, and has claimed that this will is the same as the will of Schopenhauer, he is able to say that we now recognize ourselves as "willful creatures." This means a loss of faith in reason as the "prime motor." Shaw, as we have already seen, refused to think in the conventional channels defined by philosophy. The academic philosopher would dissent from the Shavian identification of certain ideas with other ideas. The academic philosopher would also dissent from Shaw's division of society into Philistines, idealists, and realists. The latter two terms, in the professional discourse of philosophers, signify specific positions regarding the reality of the external world.⁸ To Shaw, however, the two terms signify an attitude towards social

⁶ (*Letters*, I, 316-7). See also page 75, above.

⁷ (*Letters*, I, 316-7). See also page 75, above. Philosophy and metaphysics are not usually separated as Shaw appears to separate them and his distinction is confusing at best. What Shaw appears to mean is that acceptance of the distinction between Will and Idea does not imply acceptance of Schopenhauer's pessimism.

relations. The Philistine is the everyday citizen who is perfectly happy with existing social relations. The idealist is the person who perceives his own unhappiness as a result of societal prohibition but attempts to rationalize the existing conditions.⁹ The realist is aware of his own dissatisfaction with existing arrangements and attempts to replace them with arrangements that are more to his liking (28–30). Idealism is defined as:

the policy of forcing individuals to act on the assumption that all ideals are real, and to recognize and accept such action as standard moral conduct, absolutely valid under all circumstances, contrary conduct or any advocacy of it being discountenanced and punished as immoral, may therefore be described as the policy of Idealism. (30)

This obviously has similarities with Platonic idealism. The ideal, the British family, in Shaw's example, exists in a realm that cannot be achieved in the real world. Platonic idealism, however, goes beyond claiming that concepts exist in the realm of the ideal and goes on to claim that the entire perceptual world is an image from that ideal world. Shaw does not go on to elaborate and say if he has in mind this kind of Platonic idealism. Shaw does distinguish between the idealist and the realist.

The realist, in the Shavian schema, is the man who looks at an institution, such as marriage and says:

This thing is a failure for many of us. It is insufferable that two human beings, having entered into relations which only warm affection can render tolerable, should be forced to maintain them after such affections have ceased to exist, or in spite of the fact that they have never arisen... Let us provide otherwise for the social ends which the family subserves, and then abolish its compulsory character altogether. (30-31)

This violates the idealist view of social relations. To Shaw the idealist is the man, or woman, who wishes to disguise the facts of social relations by imposing on them something that the idealist wishes to be true. The realist repudiates the idealistic concept of family life; this means that he refuses to accept the necessity of sacrificing his own inclinations, or, as he sees it, himself, to the obligations that are imposed on him by the idealists. This leads Shaw to describe the idealistic self-sacrificer as:

...always a drag, a responsibility, a reproach, an everlasting and unnatural trouble with whom no really strong soul can live. Only those who help themselves know how to help others, and to respect their right to help themselves. (38)

This is the passage that led the German mathematician to assume that Shaw had read Nietzsche. Shaw, in a 1912 footnote, says:

⁸ Holroyd points out that, "As a model for his argument Shaw had adapted Matthew Arnold and used a threefold division of mankind into philistine, idealist and (pending the word superman) realist. This division required the inversion of the terms realist and idealist which he cleverly justifies in the context of Ibsen's writings" (Holroyd, *Love*, 200.).

⁹ Rationalize in this context means to find reasons for existing prejudices rather than to make rational.

Shortly after the publication of this passage, a German lady told me that she knew “where I had got it from,” evidently not meaning from Ibsen. She added “You have been reading Nietzsche’s *Through Good and Evil and Out at the other Side*.” That was the first I ever heard of Nietzsche. 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 Gorki, Tchekoff, and the post-Ibsen drama. (38)

Shaw is noticeably flip in his description of the German lady’s conversation. The translation of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* is *Beyond Good and Evil Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (Kaufmann’s translation). There is nothing to imply a journey through Good and Evil and emerging on the other side of something that is not defined. Shaw’s 1906 preface to *Major Barbara* gives a similar account but he gives the main title in German (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*). Shaw links eight writers in the space of three short sentences. This serves to identify Schopenhauer, Wagner, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Bergson, Gorki, and Tchekoff (Chekhov) with a movement in philosophy. Presumably the movement is that of realism, i.e., the rejection of romantic ideals as a basis on which to organize society.

The main point to be observed in reading these lists is that Shaw implies that the people he names are all similar. If Shaw can link himself with Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes, as he sometimes attempts to do, then he can plausibly suggest that his stature is the same as theirs. If he can link his philosophy with Bergson’s, then he can claim a sort of philosophic respectability by saying that he and the academic French philosopher share the same beliefs. The lists thus serve to foster the illusion that Shaw actually has a detailed knowledge of the work of the people he has just named. In some cases it does appear to be true. It remains to be seen whether he exhibits this kind of familiarity and knowledge with regard to all the thinkers whose ideas are associated with his drama: Lamarck, Darwin, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Butler.

The work on Ibsen, after Shaw has made his distinctions between Philistine, idealist, and realist, becomes for a while a Shavian *Tales From Ibsen*. Shaw’s discussion of *Peer Gynt* brings forth this comment on Peer and the will:

The man who cultivates an indomitable will and refuses to make way for anything or anybody, soon finds that he cannot hold a street crossing against a tram car, much less a world against the whole human race. Only by plunging into illusions to which every fact gives the lie can he persuade himself that his will is a force that can overcome all other forces, or that it is less conditioned by circumstances than a wheelbarrow is. (48–9)

Shaw’s statement here about the “indomitable will” stands in a sharp contradiction to his evolutionary position. The latter position asserts that it is possible for the will to change the world, i.e., that one can will to build muscle or to create an eye or a brain.

Shaw's later statements, in *Back to Methuselah*, indicate that he believed such processes could be effected by the individual. This is the opposite of Schopenhauer's view that these processes were effected by the world will. Shaw's position here, however, is to assert a distinction between the world of illusions created by Peer Gynt and the world as perceived by realists such as Ibsen and himself. Shaw comments on Peer's retreat into the mountains that: "the world-will is outside Peer Gynt as well as inside him" (49).

This reference to the world-will seems to be a reference to Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will. This doctrine, as we have seen earlier, postulates a will that is a metaphysical principle, a creative force that becomes objectified in the world of the senses. The world-will is present in different objects in different ways. The will is present in a piece of iron, but it is present in a higher way in the magnet that attracts the iron to itself.¹⁰

Shaw again asserts a distinction between will and intellect in discussing *Emperor and Galilean*. He says of Ibsen that:

His will, in setting his imagination to work, had produced a tough puzzle for his intellect. In no case does the difference between the will and the intellect come out more clearly than in that of the poet, save only that of the lover. (53)

Shaw uses this as a prelude to asserting that the poet does not himself know the meaning of the passages that he writes. This places Shaw in the line of critics from Plato's *Ion* to Barthes' *Death of the Author* that have denied the role of the author's intentions in formulating the meaning of the work. Shaw contends that the author's intellect has no role in the conception of the poem. This position, while it may have some significance for the underlying motivation in producing the work, or in explaining certain kinds of *vers libre*, is unable to explain the formal patterns in which the work is embodied. A work such as *The Faerie Queen* derives from a source that may be unconscious and may be unknowable, but the formal pattern, its construction in books and cantos and the metrics of the stanzaic form, are consciously constructed by the intellect. Ibsen's, and Shaw's, inspiration may be unconscious, but their construction of plot and incident is an intellectual exercise.

Shaw sees *Emperor and Galilean* as embodying a "piece of old-fashioned freethinking." This is described as "the dilemma that moral responsibility presupposes free-will, and that free-will sets man above God" (54). Shaw continues by saying that Cain, "Comes upon the stage to claim that murder is fertile, and death the ground of life, though, not having read Weissman on death as a method of evolution, he cannot say what is the ground of death" (54).¹¹ The seed that will culminate in *Back to Methuselah* is present here. Weissman's remarks on death as necessary for the production of new members of a species provide the springboard for the preface to that play.

Shaw recognizes in Ibsen "a fearless observer of the cruelty of Nature," but one who is "quite independent of Darwin." There is in Ibsen "an unmistakable Darwinian atmosphere, but not the actual Darwinian discoveries and technical theory" (56). Shaw insists that social Darwinism means "an increase in the severity of the material conditions of existence" that goes against the interests of the working classes who were pushing for allevi-

¹⁰ See also page 30, above.

¹¹ August Weismann (1834–1914). Originator of the germ-plasm theory of heredity. Denied that acquired characteristics were inheritable. Shaw's preface to *Back to Methuselah* refers to Weismann's experiment on mice. The "ground of death" is the need to make room for new individuals.

ation of those conditions. Ibsen's "prophetic belief in the spontaneous growth of the will made him a meliorist without reference to the operation of Natural Selection" (57).

Shaw sees a dialectical opposition within *Emperor and Galilean*. Each of the titular characters represents a negation of the others. Maximus's description of the synthesis that should arise from these antithetical elements anticipates the Shavian Superman. Shaw quotes Maximus telling Julian that the person who will conquer both emperor and Galilean is "He who shall swallow up both emperor and Galilean" and adds in a 1912 footnote, "Or, as we should now say, the Superman." The Ibsenite Messiah is "self-begotten in the man who wills" (60-1).

What Shaw has been insisting on so far can be summarized briefly. First, he insists on the primacy of will over intellect. Will is conceived in what appears to be a Schopenhauerian sense, something that exists independently of any agent who actually wills, hence it is sometimes called the world-will by Shaw. Second, he presents a fusion of Hegelian-Marxist dialectics that sees the presence of the triadic elements of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in places where it is not otherwise obvious. In Shaw's treatise this takes the form of the triad Philistine, Idealist, Realist that he uses to describe the moral positions of himself and Ibsen. Third, he shows some familiarity with Weissman and his work. Fourth, he describes the Superman as an equivalent of the Messiah of the third empire described by Ibsen in *Emperor and Galilean*.

The moral position that Shaw finds Ibsen staking out is an immoral position, one that is in conflict with societal norms, or ideals. This, according to Shaw:

...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" (130).

The immoralist, or antinomian, position could be plausibly represented by a number of symbolic figureheads that came to prominence in the late 18th and early 19th century. These include William Blake, Shelley, and Byron among the English writers and de Sade and some other French authors, among them Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Baudelaire. The name most frequently associated with this kind of reversal is Nietzsche, because of a few phrases and titles such as "The Revaluation of All Values" and *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Shaw is essentially claiming in this portion of the *Quintessence* that Ibsen belongs in this antinomian tradition. Shaw's phrase "on the side of the prophets" suggests that he sees the prophet opposing societal norms. That there is Biblical evidence for the correctness of Shaw's view is actually beside the point. The overall tendency on Shaw's part, now and later, is to assume that societal norms are wrong and that the prophetic tendency is embodied in some person who stands in opposition to society. The most extreme Shavian prophet in this sense is probably St. Joan. She flouts conventions governing dress, hair, her relationship with God, and her relationship to the Dauphin (she addresses him as "Charlie"). All of these social unconventionalities are taken as evidence of immorality. The Shavian point here, and one that follows from his rejection of a divinely inspired morality, is that morality is relative to each society. The things for which Joan was condemned are largely ignored today and the issue that concerned Nora and Torvald is largely irrelevant in the West. Given the human origin of morality and religion, it therefore follows that any in-

novator in morals or religion will appear to deny rules and formulae that are, to the masses at least, the very foundations of society. The innovator's adherents, such as Shaw, will protest that the innovations are a new form of religion or a return to, that is a revival of older norms, and fully in accord with a certain tradition. This Shaw has attempted to do by linking Ibsen to his interpretations of the Biblical tradition of prophecy and criticism.

Shaw is also attempting to link the prophetic function to the concept of will. When Shaw says "the spirit or will of Man is constantly outgrowing the ideals," he is linking Ibsen, through the exercise of the prophetic function, with the Schopenhauerean conception of the will as something abstract and metaphysical but which is embodied or objectified in the "spirit or will of Man."

The need to tolerate dissent, whether of the kind preached by Ibsen or by someone else, is justified by Shaw not in terms of the competition of ideas in a sort of intellectual market place but in terms of evolution.

The need for freedom of evolution is the sole basis of toleration, the sole valid argument against Inquisitions and Censorships, the sole reason for not burning heretics and sending every eccentric person to the madhouse. (131)

A defense of toleration rooted in the conception or image of an intellectual marketplace in which philosophers, prophets, and scientists competed with each other in attracting customers to their wares would be anathema to a socialist who has rejected the inevitability of markets and the existence of the "invisible hand." Shaw, however, wants to have toleration for Ibsen, and probably by extension for himself; he must therefore find a means for justifying toleration, and he finds it in social and biological evolution. If he has rejected the concept of competition in a market place of ideas, he has substituted for it a more ruthless form of competition, that of the biological world. Despite Shaw's repeated asseverations in his later works that economic competition means "doing the other fellow down," the reality of economic competition is not that one firm tries to destroy another. Shaw and many others, however, take as their model of competition not the *agon* of athletic competition, but that of military combat. The Darwinian evolutionary model keeps to this image of competition and sees the extinction of animals as resulting from their competition for food. When Shaw asserts that the evolutionary impulse is the "sole basis" for toleration, he is suggesting that the necessary result of the evolutionary process is the extinction of some ideas by some other ideas. The derivation of toleration from the evolutionary impulse is therefore an attempt to replace a conception of competition that derives from an economic model with one that derives from a biological model.

The Perfect Wagnerite

The Perfect Wagnerite is Shaw's study of Wagner's *Ring* and a Socialist reading of Wagner's music dramas. Shaw sees the various figures, such as Alberic and Mime, as embodying aspects of capitalism. He opens his description of Alberic's mine in this manner:

This gloomy place need not be a mine: it might just as well be a match-factory, with yellow phosphorus, phossy jaw, a large dividend, and plenty of clergymen shareholders. Or it might be a whitelead factory, or a chemical works, or a pottery, or a railway shunting yard, or a tailoring shop, or little gin-sodden laun-

dry, or a bakehouse, or a big shop, or any other of the places where human life and welfare are daily sacrificed in order that some greedy foolish creature may be able to hymn exultantly to his Plutonic idol:

Thou mak'st me eat whilst others starve,
And sing while others do lament:
Such unto me Thy blessings are,
As if I were Thine only care. (191)

Shaw has again catalogued a number of horrors of the late Victorian era. The whitelead factory is significant to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; Vivie's mother chose prostitution over the whitelead factory. The horrors of the mine are the result of Alberic's renunciation of love in the first scene of *Das Rheingold*. Alberic is opposed by what Shaw calls Godhead.

The mysterious thing we call life organizes itself into all living shapes, bird, beast, beetle and fish, rising to the human marvel in cunning dwarfs and in laborious muscular giants, capable, these last, of enduring toil, willing to buy love and life, not with suicidal curses and renunciations but with patient manual drudgery in the service of higher powers. 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 affections, 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 up from mere savagery. (186)

Shaw's theme here is one that he will treat five years later in *Man and Superman*, that in the evolutionary process some people occupy a position vis à vis mere mortals such that they appear to be gods. In *Man and Superman* the overall goal of evolution is expressed as: "...in short a god" (III, 626). Life itself that is the motive force behind evolution, and God is, to borrow Teilhard de Chardin's term, the omega point towards which life evolves. This means that God has been displaced from his position as Aristotle's unmoved mover, and Life has been substituted for him. This leads Shaw to say that, "Life itself, with its accomplished marvels and its infinite potentialities, is the only force that Godhead can worship." This statement foreshadows subsequent statements that Don Juan will make in the Hell scene of *Man and Superman*.

Shaw's description of Wotan's predicament at the end of *Das Rheingold* is also echoed in his evolutionary drama:

After all, a god is a pitiful thing. But the fertility of the First Mother is not yet exhausted. The life that came from her has ever climbed up to a higher and higher organization. From toad and serpent to dwarf, from bear and elephant to giant, from dwarf and giant to a god with thoughts, with comprehension of the world, with ideals. Why should it stop there? Why should it not rise from the god to the Hero? to the creature in whom the god's unavailing thought shall make his way straight to truth and reality over the laws of Fricka and the lies of Loki with a strength that overcomes giants and a cunning that outwits dwarfs? Yes: Erda, the First Mother, must travail again, and breed him a race of heroes to deliver the world and himself from his limited powers and disgraceful bargains. (196-7)

Shaw's interpretation of Wagner's treatment of the Nordic myth assigns creative power to the female principle. Erda is the First Mother. In *Man and Superman* Dona Ana will experience an apotheosis in which she yearns for a mother for the superman, and in *Back to Methuselah* the first mother, and the creative power out of which humanity evolves is the Hebraic and Talmudic figure of Lilith. The image of the primal mother preparing a new birth will be repeated again in Lilith's final speech at the end of *Back to Methuselah*, but in a new and different context.

If Erda is the earth mother, the creative principle, then "Wotan is Godhead and Kingship, and Loki Logic and Imagination without living Will (Brain without Heart, to put it vulgarly)" (200). Shaw has again identified will with something else, in this case heart, which is symbolic of passion, emotion, or feeling generally—in short, with the irrational aspects of humanity. Shaw links the will to the evolution of society and to the Hero. Speaking of the next step up from the gods he says:

History shows us only one order higher than the highest of these: namely, the order of Heroes.

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, and the less perishable of their appurtenances be classes with Stonehenge and the cromlechs and round towers as inexplicable relics of a bygone social order.... This is precisely what must happen some day if life continues thrusting towards higher and higher organization as it has hitherto done....

...Above all, we must understand—for it is the key to much that we are to see—that the god, since his desire is toward a higher and fuller life, must long in his inmost soul for the advent of that greater power, whose first work, though this he does not see as yet, must be his own undoing. (201–2)

Shaw does not use the term Superman here, but it is clear that the Hero, as represented by Julius Caesar, has something in common with the Superman. In "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion," which Shaw represented as being written by Tanner, and which he attached to the end of *Man and Superman*, Caesar is described as one of the Supermen.¹² In *The Perfect Wagnerite* Shaw does, a few pages later on, refer to Siegfried as a "totally unmoral person, a born anarchist, the ideal of Bakoonin, an anticipation of the 'overman' of Nietzsche" (212).

The phrase "higher and higher organization" recurs when Shaw is describing Wotan's encounter with Erda. He characterizes Erda's work as "[the] eternal work of thrusting the life energy of the world to higher and higher organization." Shaw's vision has the organic principle, consistently personified through feminine archetypes, such as Ann Whitefield and Lilith, assuming a creative role and seeking to attain a more highly organized form. Organization, in this case, refers not only to the formation of social groups and arrangements, but also to the creation of organs that are the expression, the physical embodiment, of the will, i.e., of the creative principle. Michael Holroyd sees this belief in the capacity

¹² It should be remembered that Tanner's pamphlet is supposed to be written before the play opens. It is a question for possible discussion as to how Tanner is changed, if at all, by the events of the drama and the consequences of the dream sequence. For the discussion of the relations between Tanner, Shaw, and Don Juan see pages 202ff.

to evolve as “a moral commitment to progress through the Will, answering the need for optimism in someone whose observation of the world was growing more pessimistic.”¹³

The will is interpreted through the private judgment of the individual. Shaw recognizes this as being an offshoot of Protestantism and considers it the same as anarchism (226). The will, however, even though embodied in heroic figures, such as Siegfried, cannot bring about a regeneration of humanity through the existence of great single figures:

No individual Siegfried can rescue them from this bondage and hypocrisy; in fact, the individual Siegfried has come often enough, only to find himself confronted with the alternative of governing those who are not Siegfrieds or risking destruction at their hands. And this dilemma will persist until Wotan's inspiration comes to our governors, and they see that their business is not the devising of laws and institutions to prop up the weaknesses of mobs and secure the survival of the unfittest, but the breeding of men whose will and intelligences may be depended upon to produce spontaneously the social wellbeing our clumsy laws now aim at and miss. (227)

In a footnote to this passage Shaw comments on the replacement of a governing aristocracy bred for ruling by a democracy bred without selection, i.e., promiscuously. Shaw, in *Man and Superman*, comments on the necessity of breeding for democratic rule. In the dream sequence Don Juan addresses the necessity of breeding mankind to ever greater heights, and in the “Revolutionist's Handbook” Tanner addresses the question of breeding the superman and the necessity that there be a race of supermen to make true democracy possible.

Shaw, although he does not acknowledge Nietzsche's sarcastic comments on Wagner's penchant for having his characters redeemed by love,¹⁴ does see Wagner as indulging in what he calls “the love panacea” (230). Shaw's earlier comments on Alberic's renunciation of love for the Rheingold do seem to be in the Romantic tradition of Shelley and Wagner (183–7). Shaw does not keep to this romantic tendency, however, and he again links the problem to an evolutionary solution:

The only faith which any reasonable disciple can gain from The Ring is not in love, but in life itself as a tireless power which is continually driving onward and upward—not, please observe, being beckoned or drawn by *Das Ewig Weibliche* or any other external sentimentality, but growing from within, by its own inexplicable energy, into ever higher and higher forms of organization, the strengths and the needs of which are continually superseding the institutions which were made to fit out former requirements. (234)

Shaw in his 1913 additions to *The Perfect Wagnerite*, adds this comment on Alberic and his pursuit of money:

... for though greed may suffice to turn tens into hundreds and even hundreds into thousands, to turn thousands into hundreds of thousands requires economic magnanimity and a will to power as well as to pelf. (254)

¹³ Holroyd, *Power*, 13–14.

¹⁴ See Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, Section 3 (Nietzsche, *Basic*, 615–19).

Shaw's use of the phrase "will to power" confirms his acquaintance with Nietzsche and the full context of Shaw's use shows that Shaw meant power over others. He does not, in this passage, show that he accepts or knows of Nietzsche's use of the phrase to mean, in its highest form, power over self.

Shaw concludes his study of Wagner by bringing out the influence of Schopenhauer on Wagner. He points out that in the *Quintessence* he had asserted that Ibsen was unconscious of the thesis of his dramas; now he contends that Wagner was likewise unconscious of his thesis. He claims the support of a letter that Wagner wrote to Roeckel on August 23, 1856:

How ... can an artist expect that what he has felt intuitively should be perfectly realized by others, seeing that he himself feels in the presence of his work, if it is true Art, that he is confronted by a riddle, about which he, too, might have illusions, just as another might? (259)

Shaw and Wagner thus fall into the critical tradition that begins with Plato's *Ion*, that the artist is not himself qualified to interpret his own work because he works under inspiration. This was also the interpretation that Schopenhauer was to put on art, that it was the outflowing of the irrational will and that the artist himself was not capable of interpreting his own work. Shaw argues that Wagner's interpretation of Wotan's destiny came about after reading Schopenhauer's treatise:

Wagner says of himself that "seldom has there taken place in the soul of one and the same man so profound a division and estrangement between the intuitive or impulsive part of his nature and his consciously or reasonably formed ideas." And since Schopenhauer's great contribution to modern thought was to educate us into clear consciousness of this distinction—a distinction familiar, in a fanciful way, to the Ages of Faith and Art before the Renaissance, but afterwards swamped in the Rationalism of that movement—it was inevitable that Wagner should jump at Schopenhauer's metaphysiology (I use a word less likely to be mistaken than metaphysics) as the very thing for him. (260–1)

The Sanity of Art

The Sanity of Art (1895) falls between the *Quintessence* (1891) and *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), but it will be discussed out of its proper historical sequence because it seems advisable to link the studies of Ibsen and Wagner, since they each deal with single authors. By contrast, *The Sanity of Art* is Shaw's reply to Max Nordau's attack on modern art.¹⁵

Shaw, as he had in the *Quintessence*, praises passion:

Passion is the steam in the engine of all religious [sic] and moral systems. In so far as it is malevolent, the religious are malevolent too, and insist on human sacrifices, on hell, wrath, and vengeance. You cannot read Browning's Caliban upon Setebos (Natural Theology in *The Island*) without admitting that all our religions have been made as Caliban made his, and that the difference between Caliban and Prospero is not that Prospero has killed passion in himself whilst

¹⁵ Modern, in this case, means the art of the late Victorian period, including the impressionists and post-impressionists.

Caliban has yielded to it, but that Prospero is mastered by holier passions than Caliban's. (316–7)

Passion is dominant and is the source of religion, but rather than Prospero having mastered his passions, as might be the case of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, his passions differ from those of Caliban. The Schopenhauerean will is present in this description of passion. Shaw makes this evident a little later on in speaking of what he terms "Protestant Anarchism."

Yet it was not the churches but that very freethinking philosopher Schopenhauer who re-established the old theological doctrine that reason is no motive power; that the true motive in the world is will (otherwise Life); and that the setting-up of reason above will is a damnable error.... Further, the will of the theologian was the will of a God standing outside man and in authority above him, whereas the Schopenhauerian will is a purely secular force of nature, attaining various degrees of organization, here as a jelly-fish, there as a cabbage, more complexly as an ape or a tiger, and attaining its highest (and sometimes most mischievous) form so far in the human being. (323)

Shaw makes an identification of his subject (the Schopenhauerean will) with its historical antecedents, but he also explicitly recognizes what Schopenhauer actually believed, i.e., that bodies are in some way an objectification of the will. This passage bears comparison to Pygmalion's description, in part five of *Back to Methuselah*, of the difficulty in fixing a high potential life force.¹⁶

Shaw, in this book, also addresses the question of evolution. Nordau had stipulated that the art of the late nineteenth century was due to physiological degeneration. It is therefore to be expected that Shaw would include some comment on evolution, and he does so in a comment that shows the influence of Lamarck and Butler:

As the race evolves, many a convention which recommends itself by its obvious utility to everyone passes into an automatic habit, like breathing. Doubtless also an improvement in our nerves and judgment may enlarge the list of emergencies which individuals may be trusted to deal with on the spur of the moment without reference to regulations; but a ready-made code of conduct for general use will always be needed as a matter of overwhelming convenience by all members of communities. (320)

Shaw is here advocating the doctrine of acquired habits and is positioning himself on the Lamarckian side of the evolutionary controversy.

Shaw's only references to Nietzsche in *The Sanity of Art* come in the 1907 preface to his essay. The first instance is a mere list:

Indeed counsel on the other side mostly threw up their briefs in consternation, and began to protest that they entirely agreed with Dr Nordau, and that though they had perhaps dallied a little with Rossetti, Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, and the rest of the degenerates before their true character had been exposed, yet they had never really approved of them.... [T]he Nietzscheans were only too glad to see Tolstoy catching it.... (297)

A little later Shaw refers to the Superman:

¹⁶ See page II, 230–32.

The Superman will certainly come like a thief in the night, and be shot accordingly; but we cannot leave our property wholly undefended on that account. On the other hand, 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. (300)

These references do not indicate a profound acquaintance with Nietzschean thought. The questions that are raised by this paragraph (What is a “higher set of virtues”? What part of “respectable morality” is to be tossed out? Are the “new and strange customs” primarily sexual, economic, religious, or social? and so on) are largely unanswered in Shaw’s essay. These questions cannot be answered by referring to Nietzsche as Shaw’s master and the source for the Shavian criticism of morality, i.e., the answers must be sought within Shaw’s work and not Nietzsche’s.

The Nietzschean position on morality, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is primarily critical. It looks not at the moral values themselves (Nietzsche does not question the value of chastity, honesty, and other virtues in themselves) but at their psychological origins. The Nietzschean critique of morality sees a difference in the value of the chastity of the man who is chaste out of fear (fear of a relationship, fear of syphilis, fear of AIDS, or some other fear) and the man who is chaste because his will to control his passions is strong enough to redirect the sexual impulses to another form of expression (in art, for example).

Shaw’s references to constructing a new morality imply that some sort of inversion of moral and religious codes is going on. The naive expectation may be that Shaw advocates some kind of inversion, a negation of shalt and shalt nots in the Decalogue, so that the new code might read “Thou shalt commit adultery (or at least not feel guilty about it because monogamy is so obviously unworkable)”, or “Thou shalt commit murder,” or “It is permissible to covet your neighbor’s goods because the distribution of wealth in capitalist society is inherently inequitable, so your desire is perfectly natural”. Shaw never explicitly advocates such inversions of the Mosaic Decalogue. The Shavian ethical position is that monogamous marriage is inherently unworkable and that the distribution of wealth under capitalist forms of production is inherently unfair, but these positions are expressed through the Shavian preface or through the dialogue of the plays and are not expressed in the form of moral commandments.

If the Superman is to throw out certain ethical and moral values, then it is fair to ask what values the Shavian Superman would discard and what values he would create. The answer may be found in Shaw’s plays and in the prefaces to those plays. The sections that follow will look briefly at Shaw’s drama before *Man and Superman* and examine the evolutionary and ethical notions in the Shavian drama before his attempt at writing a new religious document.

Shaw's Drama Before *Man and Superman*

The Shavian drama before *Man and Superman* consists of a number of plays generally classified as "problem plays," i.e., they deal with a specific social problem as it is exemplified or concretized in the lives of a number of individuals. A play such as *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is generally supposed to be about prostitution and to present a Shavian analysis of the causes of prostitution. That the Shavian analysis has been proven by events to be inadequate does not invalidate the dramatic situation, which revolves around the possibility of a consanguineous relationship between Vivie and Frank, although it does render the social thought behind the play, the Fabian socialism of the 1880's and 90's, largely irrelevant to current political concerns.

Other plays, such as *Widower's Houses*, or *The Philanderer*, concern themselves with issues such as slum landlordism and the relations between the sexes. One play, *The Devil's Disciple*, in its title presumes to present a Diabolonian viewpoint. Shaw's preface to that play, or rather to the collection, *Three Plays for Puritans*, also raises expectations of some kind of transvaluation of values, some kind of negation that destroys all existing moral codes. Whether either the play or the preface delivers on the implications of the title, and whether either of these has any relation to Nietzsche's philosophy and ethics, and whether the Diabolonian ethic is expressed in *Man and Superman*, is the subject of the sections on *The Devil's Disciple* and *Man and Superman*.

Widower's Houses and The Philanderer

Shaw's first play, *Widower's Houses*, is not directly concerned with evolution, although it contains one line that may allude to Malthus and to Social Darwinism.¹⁷ One thing that may illuminate a discussion of *Man and Superman* is its Shavian inversion of ethical attitudes. The hero of the piece, Sartorius, launches rhetorical attacks that overwhelm Trench. When Sartorius reveals that he is a slumlord, he defends himself against Lickcheese's urgings that he renovate his property, and against the urgings of a society that wishes to hide the fact that it profits from the slums: "My young friend: these poor people do not know how to live in proper dwellings: they would wreck them in a week" (IV, 533).

Sartorius expresses a conservative viewpoint, one that recognizes the insufficiency of attempts to ameliorate the condition of the poor through legislation. The unspoken subtext operating within the play, however, can be expressed this way: "The situation I have described is what exists under Capitalism, with its system of economic and class inequalities; if we want to improve things for these people, then we need to abolish the Capitalist structure of society and substitute a Socialist one." Shaw expresses this himself when, in his preface, he describes *Widower's Houses* as:

...a grotesquely realistic exposure of slum landlordism, municipal jobbery, and the pecuniary and matrimonial ties between them and the pleasant people with "independent" incomes who imagine that such sordid matters do not touch their own lives. (III, xiv)

He concludes the preface by explicitly stating that:

¹⁷ This occurs when Cokane responds to Sartorius's assertion that "Every man who has a heart must wish that a better state of things was practicable. But unhappily it is not." Cokane's response is "Not a doubt of it, my dear sir: not a doubt of it. The increase of the population is at the bottom of it all" (IV, 535).

I must, however, warn my readers that my attacks are directed against themselves, not against my stage figures. They cannot too thoroughly understand that the guilt of defective social organization does not lie alone on the people who actually work the social makeshifts which the defects make inevitable, and who often, like Sartorius and Mrs Warren, display valuable executive capacities and even high moral virtues in their administration, but with the whole body of citizens whose public opinion, public action, and public contribution as ratepayers, alone can replace Sartorius's slums with decent dwellings, and Mrs Warren's profession with honourable industries guarded by a humane industrial code and a "moral minimum" wage. (III, xxviii)

Shaw's description of the play as "grotesquely realistic" is not itself a realistic description as regards the characters and setting. *Widower's Houses* is not realistic in the same way that Gorki's *Lower Depths*, or O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* is realistic. The realism of the play, in Shaw's view, can be seen in Sartorius's recognition of the facts of Capitalist society; he refuses to cover over the fact that it is impossible for him to make a profit and maintain decent conditions in the slums at the same time. He blames this on the organization of society. This recognition of the social reality and the actions that result from it make Sartorius, in terms of the categories proposed by Shaw in the *Quintessence*, a realist. Trench, the romantic lead, falls into the category of Idealist because he imagines that his income derives from sources other than the oppression of the poor and that it is possible for him to receive his income while at the same time improving the living conditions in the slums. Cokane represents the Philistine, one who makes a few polite noises in the direction of slum clearance and improved living conditions, but who cares nothing about social problems as long as he continues to receive his income. When Trench realizes that he cannot have Sylvia and his ideals too, he throws over his ideals for the sake of the woman he loves and recognizes that in the imperfect Capitalist world Sartorius is right. Within the Shawian world view this recognition on Trench's part marks a movement from Idealism to Realism.

By using Sartorius as his spokesman Shaw asserts an inversion of values. The inverted values are those of middle class reformers who assert that if only slums, or low-income housing, were a little nicer and were fixed up with stone or concrete steps, and if landlords would stop gouging their tenants for rent regardless of the effect that such charity would have on the landlord's own income and family, then everybody would be happy and the poor would not be so threatening. Sartorius inverts this and says that the poor will always abuse the landlord and his property and that, given this social reality, the only thing to do is exploit it until the social situation changes.

Sartorius's position as a slumlord is changed not through any change of heart, but through Lickcheese's news that the political and economic situation with regard to his property makes it more profitable to renovate his property so as to make a greater profit when it is condemned to make way for a road.

Shaw's position in the play can be read, as we have stated, as a conditional hypothesis, "If the social situation is as I have described it, then these actions are appropriate." The hypothesis parallels his own discussion, in the *Quintessence*, of the situations in *Hedda Gabler* and *The Wild Duck*. Both plays deal with illusions and the perception of reality, but Shaw and Ibsen both appear to draw the conclusion that in some cases illusion is necessary to life and in others disillusionment and the confrontation with reality are necessary. This,

of course, differs markedly from the situation in O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, in which the recognition of reality is inevitably either a mark of insanity, as in Hickey, or a cause of suicide. The Shavian view is more complex and is voiced not directly but in the subtext that underlies the play.

This inversion of values does not, however, appear to be a Nietzschean transvaluation. The Shavian inversion is not an attack on values as such, and neither is Nietzsche's transvaluation. Nietzsche's position is rooted in psychological analysis, and is relativistic to the extent that it situates ethical decisions within a psychological framework that varies among individuals. Shaw's ethical position, unlike Nietzsche's, is rooted in a belief that certain social conditions, such as capitalism, make it impossible to implement the values that we proclaim and that such values can be implemented only under changed social conditions. Shaw's own values can be found in the preface to the first volume of *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant*:

As a humane person I detested violence and slaughter, whether in war, sport, or the butcher's yard. I was a Socialist, detesting our anarchical scramble for money, and believing in equality as the only possible permanent basis of social organization, discipline, subordination, good manners, and selection of fit persons for high functions. (III, ix)

These are precisely the values that Sartorius refuses to practice because they cannot be implemented in the society of late Victorian England. The poor, in Sartorius's view, will always be with us and will always be the same. His dramatic representation by Shaw seems intended to alienate the audience from its own sense of values. In this respect Shaw can be taken as anticipating Brecht's theories of the epic theater.¹⁸ The alienation exists because of Shaw's presentation, through the attractive figure of Sartorius, of values that contradict those of himself and of his putative audience. This contradiction between explicit statement and contradictory subtext gives the play its tension.

Shaw's second play, *The Philanderer*, deals explicitly with the same kind of situation found in *Man and Superman*, the pursuit of the unwilling male by the somewhat predatory female. This is usually recognized as being a portrait of Jenny Patterson, Shaw's partner in his first serious love affair. William Irvine says of her and of Shaw's relationship to her that:

...from her he first experienced the acute and oppressive sensation of being pursued by a female. Characteristically she lingered in his memory chiefly as a theory. She typified the Vital Woman. Julia Craven was a photograph, somewhat touched up. Ann Whitefield was a quintessential abstraction, sublimated by comedy. Jenny Patterson became an important aspect of the Life Force.¹⁹

Shaw's affair with Jenny Patterson has been described at some length by Michael Holroyd, and it is clear from his description of the affair that some of the incidents became part of the drama of *The Philanderer*. Julia Craven, whose name may suggest the cowardice of a woman who is unable to become the New Woman, is obsessed with Charteris.²⁰ This

¹⁸ See Holroyd (*Power*, 19, 247, 279) for his comments on the relationship of Shaw and Brecht.

¹⁹ William Irvine, *The Universe of G.B.S.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968) 152.

²⁰ Holroyd calls it "a cowardly name for the character based on Jenny Patterson" (*Love*, 286). This may imply that Holroyd thinks that Shaw was cowardly in portraying Jenny as Julia Craven.

situation parallels Shaw's affair with Mrs. Patterson. Jenny, for example, called on Shaw on the morning of May 13, 1886, and caused a scene that ended only after "much pathetic petting and kissing."²¹ Jenny may have been pregnant by Shaw in 1886, and may even have miscarried.²² This experience may account for some of Jenny's rages and misbehaviour. There was a jealous scene on 16 October 1890 over Shaw's new relationship with Florence Farr.²³ These scenes continued as late as 1893.²⁴

Julia is obsessed with Charteris, much as Ann is obsessed with Tanner, but she is willing to accept Paramore as a substitute for Charteris. This is unlike Ann, who will not accept Octavius as a substitute for her Don Juan. This revision of the last act of the play serves as a means for resolving the dilemma but fails of a true comic resolution by avoiding the element of *gamos* (marriage) that underlies the comic vision. The ending shows Charteris rejected by Grace, because of his attraction to the Womanly Julia, and the pending union of Julia and Paramore. This engagement, despite its anticipation of marriage is not in fact a comic resolution for the play. A truly comic resolution would show some kind of marriage, either symbolic or implied, between Charteris and Grace. In *Man and Superman* Ann captures Tanner and despite his resistance involves him in union, and thereby giving a true comic resolution to the drama.

Julia embodies the will, at least in its sexual aspect as conceived by Schopenhauer:

It is further to be regarded as a phenomenon of this peculiar individual character, distinguishing man from all the animals, that, in the case of the animals, the sexual impulse seeks its satisfaction without noticeable selection, whereas in the case of man this selection, in an instinctive manner independent of all reflection, is carried to such heights that it rises to a powerful passion.²⁵

This sexual passion will be portrayed in a more flattering light in Ann Whitefield. Julia's passion, which is irrational, is the focus of her will, and of the will in general:

Quite especially, however, love affairs are called affairs of the heart, *affaires du cœur*; because the sexual impulse is the focus of the will, and the selection with reference thereto constitutes the principal concern of natural, human willing....²⁶

The sexual impulse is then the primary means of expression of the will for both Schopenhauer and Shaw, and this manifestation of the will is the subject of *Man and Superman*.

The Diabolonian Ethics of The Devil's Disciple

Shaw's plays after *The Philanderer* (1893) include *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893), *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1894), *The Man of Destiny* (1895), and *You Never Can Tell* (1896). These plays although interesting and amusing are tangential to our primary concern, the dramatic expression of Shaw's philosophy of evolution and its antecedent source-

²¹ Quoted from Shaw's diary by Holroyd (*Love*, 165).

²² Holroyd, (*Love*, 251).

²³ Holroyd, (*Love*, 248).

²⁴ Holroyd, (*Love*, 259).

²⁵ Schopenhauer, (I, 132)

²⁶ Schopenhauer, (II, 237)

es. In *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), however, the title itself seems to promise a Shavian inversion of values equivalent to the Miltonic "evil be thou my good." Moreover, evidence of Shaw's Lamarckism and of his debt to Samuel Butler occurs not in the play itself, but in the preface to the volume in which it was published, i.e., *Three Plays for Puritans*, where this utterance appears:

If every mirror reflected our noses twice their natural size, we should live and die in the faith that we were all Punches; and we should scout a true mirror as the work of a fool, madman, or jester. Nay, I believe we should, by Lamarckian adaptation, enlarge our noses to the admired size; for I have noticed that when a certain type of feature appears in painting and is admired as beautiful, it presently becomes common in nature; so that the Beatrices and Francescas in the picture galleries of one generation, to whom the minor poets address verses entitled To My Lady, come to life as the parlormaid and waitresses of the next. (III, xliii)

Several elements are at work in this passage. This may be a reference to Shaw himself who had said in the preface to the first volume of *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* that, "The critic adds the privileges of the court jester to those of the confessor" (III, xi). Also, he implies that Lamarckian adaptation is accomplished not through use and disuse (noses are not usually subject to being stretched) but through will. The passage also seems to be related to Butler's description of Charlotte in *The Way of All Flesh*:

A few months before this girl was born Christina paid a visit to the John Pontifex in London, and, knowing her condition, passed a good deal of time at the Royal Academy exhibition looking at the types of female beauty portrayed by the Academicians, for she had made up her mind that the child this time was to be a girl. Althea warned her not to do this, but she persisted, and certainly the child turned out plain, but whether the pictures caused this or no I cannot say.²⁷

What is evident is that both of them, one an art critic and the other an artist, used the idea of picture gazing as influencing the appearance of subsequent generations.

Shaw's preface to *Three Plays for Puritans* continues with an extended passage entitled "On Diabolonian Ethics."²⁸ The question is what kind of ethics does the Devil maintain. Two possible models are the Miltonic Satan, who chooses evil as his good, and the Sadean hero/heroine, who categorically denies God and proclaims his own passions and desires as the supreme good, even if they involve the destruction and murder of others. The choice of Milton's Satan involves a logical paradox in transposing the values of Satan for those of the Deity. The Sadean choice involves a substitution of the Self for God and the continual negation of commonly received ethical values, even if this negation means that ultimately one is alone and the rest of humanity consumed by one's passion. Either of these models may be able to serve as an exemplar of the metaphysical revolt described by Camus in *L'Homme Revolté* and seen in the French *symbolistes* such as Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Verlaine.

²⁷ Butler, (*Way*, 115–6).

²⁸ "Diabolonian" is formed by analogy to "Babylonian." The OED credits its first occurrence to John Bunyan's *The Holy War* (1680).

Does Shaw choose either of these models, or does he choose some other ethical system as providing the framework for his “Diabolonian Ethics”? Shaw describes the religious situation of Dick Dudgeon in these words:

Dick Dudgeon, the devil’s disciple, is Puritan of the Puritans. He is brought up in a household where the Puritan religion has 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 all his mother’s indomitable selffulness, but 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. Once this is understood the play becomes straightforwardly simple. (III, xlix)

This statement does not define the Diabolonian position. Shaw chooses to exemplify rather than define:

The Diabolonian position is new to the London playgoer of today, but not to lovers of serious literature. From Prometheus to the Wagnerian Siegfried, some enemy of the gods, unterrified champions of those oppressed by them, has always towered among the heroes of the loftiest poetry. Our newest idol, the Superman, celebrating the death of godhead, may be younger than the hills; but he is as old as the shepherds. (III, xlix)

Shaw compresses the roughly twenty-five centuries between the origins of the Prometheus myth and Siegfried’s appearance in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* into a few words, and then drags in the Superman, who is posited as an equivalent concept. The phrase “celebrating the death of godhead” shows some familiarity with *Zarathustra*, but it does not show that existential anguish that we noted in Sartre, nor does it show any familiarity with *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Shaw then follows by referring to Bunyan and to Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Nietzsche is mentioned again:

But they need not go back to Blake and Bunyan. Have they not heard the recent fuss about Nietzsche and his Good and Evil Turned Inside Out? (III, 1)

This was written after Shaw had written two reviews of translations of Nietzsche, but like the review that we have already discussed it shows little understanding of Nietzsche’s evaluation of religion and morality.

Shaw’s reference to Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is not very helpful either. Blake’s book is a series of poetic visions and not a coherent ethical treatise. That Blake has an ethical position is obvious to the reader of his poetry and prose; it is that the oppressive restraints of social organization inhibit vision and the direct perception of reality. This reality is the reality of imagination and of energy, one that sees every bird as containing a world of “infinite delight.” Blake does not seem, however, to have arrived at a final ethical and moral position. His ethical conceptions seem to vary with each work and sometimes within each work.

The nature of the transvaluation in *The Devil’s Disciple* can be described in terms of a reversal of sentimental expectations. Shaw describes Mrs. Dudgeon, in both the preface

and the stage directions, as a bitter woman with “an unquestioned reputation for piety and respectability” because of her self-denial, a denial which Shaw says, “Is easily extended to others-denial” (III, 271). The Diabolonian with whom Mrs Dudgeon is juxtaposed, her son Richard, shows his Diabolism by attending his uncle’s execution as a rebel against George III. Anderson’s report to Mrs. Dudgeon is that Dick sent his father a message that, “He would stand by his wicked uncle and stand against his good parents in this world and the next” (III, 277). Historical relativism is in fact part of Shaw’s point here.

Dick Dudgeon’s wickedness, however, when examined in terms of concrete actions, involves nothing particularly reprehensible. That he is a smuggler is true, but the evasion of customs duties, or other taxes, although illegal, is not in itself a morally reprehensible act. Dick extends sympathy and compassion to Essie and describes his creed in these words:

I was brought up in the other service; but I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and friend. I saw that he was in the right, and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear. I prayed secretly to him; and he comforted me, and saved me from having my spirit broken in this house of children’s tears. I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next.... That promise and that oath made a man of me. From this day this house is his home; and no child shall cry in it: this hearth is his altar; and no soul shall ever cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid. (III, 294)

Dick’s response to Essie, and it must be taken as a subtext in Shaw’s description of his Diabolonian ethics, does have a Biblical basis:

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1: 27)

Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless; nor take a widow’s raiment to pledge.... When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the orphan. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the orphan. (Deut. 24: 17, 19–21)²⁹

Dick’s rebellion against his mother, and her false asceticism, takes the form of a reaffirmation and reinterpretation of values that are actually present in the Biblical religions. He does this in a sentimental fashion; by affirming the value of the orphan Essie with whom he aligns himself in a romantic idealization of childhood and children. This romantic reinterpretation of Biblical religion sees the child as a symbol of innocence and purity. Dick affirms these values by accepting Essie. Mrs Dudgeon’s rejection of the child makes Essie into a symbol of divine wrath and justice. This runs counter to romantic notions of child-

²⁹ KJV.

ish innocence and thus Mrs Dudgeon and Dick exist in a state of moral and ethical opposition.

Dick's transformation into a minister of the Gospel at the end of the third act is symptomatic of the Shavian transvaluation. Dick affirms values that are not a negation of ethical norms but a reinterpretation of values that are present, even if ignored, in the ethics of his home. The values that say that the widow and the orphan are entitled to a special kind of charity, values that forbid excessive thoroughness in harvesting, and that demand that something be left for the impoverished, coexist with the values that say that adulterers are to be stoned and cities of heathen destroyed. The romantic interpretation focuses on texts such as 1 Corinthians 13 and puts values such as love and kindness and mercy in opposition to values such as justice. This interpretation describes love and kindness as Christian and New Testament values. Justice, particularly retributive justice, is classed as a Jewish and Old Testament value. That this paradigm of ethical evaluation is applicable to the romantic authors can be seen in Blake's critique of ethics in *The Everlasting Gospel* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Shaw's response to this kind of ethical evaluation can be seen in the section of *The Perfect Wagnerite* entitled "The Love Panacea," which questions Shelley's assumption that love can remake the world.

Shaw's early draft of a scenario for *The Devil's Disciple* describes a situation with this cast of characters:

A is an Ishmael better than his people and therefore rated as worse, and rating himself so.

B is a high-minded moralist, the clergyman of the place. He is A's sternest censor and opponent. A hates him and jibes at him; but B steadily refuses to condescend to resentment.

Z is B's wife. She is very hard on A, and will not forgive him on principle like her husband. She is obsessed with his wickedness and has no suspicion that this obsession is so near love that a touch will reveal her to herself as passionately attached to A.³⁰

These are, as Holroyd points out, "Quintessential examples of the Shavian realist, idealist and philistine."³¹ Dick Dudgeon's realism, and his transvaluation of values, lies in his acceptance that his moral impulses and the ethical basis of his actions resides in his own nature. In this respect he is like de Sades's figures who affirm that their natures lead them to their actions; he is also like them in failing to question what lies behind this nature. The specific values that Dick instantiates through his actions, however, do not differ from those that are routinely accepted as being part of the standard ethical code, i.e., honesty, forthrightness, and so on. Where he differs from both Anthony Anderson and Judith is in his recognition that the source of his values is not in emotions, such as love, but in something that, while not necessarily rational, is distinct from the emotions. His Diabolonian ethics then are a rejection of sentimentalism and the ethic of feeling.

The Caesarean Superman

There are two references to Julius Caesar in *The Revolutionist's Handbook*, which Shaw appended to the end of *Man and Superman*:

³⁰ Holroyd, (*Love*, 394).

³¹ Holroyd, (*Love*, 394).

Caesar's capacity for fighting without hatred or resentment was defeated by the determination of his soldiers to kill their enemies in the field instead of taking them prisoners to be spared by Caesar; and his civil supremacy was purchased by colossal bribery of the citizens of Rome. (III, 700)

Until there is an England in which every man is a Cromwell, a France in which every man is a Napoleon, a Rome in which every man is a Caesar, a Germany in which every man is a Luther plus Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the pyramid of Cheops. (III, 701)

Shaw's version of Julius Caesar departs from the historical reality, at least insofar as the records left by Plutarch and Suetonius can be regarded as recording historical reality, in several respects. Caesar, although he was frequently merciful, as recorded by Plutarch, was also vengeful, as witnessed by his crucifixion of the pirates who kidnapped him. The historical Caesar's interest in Cleopatra, unlike that of Shaw's Caesar, was also sexual; for Cleopatra had borne him a son (named Caesarion) before his leaving Egypt. Shaw transfers the murder of Pothinus from Caesar, where Plutarch assigns it, to Cleopatra and Ftatateeta. Caesar himself refers to this death as an execution carried out at his orders. Plutarch gives the total number of enemies confronted by Caesar at three million, of which one million were killed and another million were made prisoners. Shaw also ignores Caesar's bisexuality, which Suetonius records and immortalizes in the epigram that Caesar was every man's wife and every woman's husband.³²

Shaw's Caesar is not the Caesar of history any more than Shakespeare's Caesar is the historical Caesar. Shaw himself would be the first to acknowledge this fact, so we must deal with his interpretation of Caesar. It should be evident that in taking Caesar as his hero later as a type of Superman that Shaw was projecting his own ideal onto the figure of Caesar. The Caesarean Superman, and possibly the Don Juan of *Man and Superman*, may both be regarded as Shaw's idealized portraits of himself.

Shaw's portrait of Caesar is that of a Machiavellian manipulator, one who, as Shaw says:

... understands the paradox of money, and gives it away, when he can get most for it: in other words when its value is least, which is just when a common man tries hardest to get it. He knows that the real moment of success is not the moment apparent to the crowd. Hence, 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. (III, 479)

Caesar may be taken as being beyond good and evil, in Nietzsche's sense of not being concerned with those ethical categories. Caesar has virtue and "no need of goodness" (III, 479). This would seem to put him into the same category as Blake's Jesus, who is all virtue and acts from impulse. Impulsiveness and what Shaw describes as Caesar's originality is shown in a number of ways; one such incident is Caesar's acceptance of the tripod as a

³² Plutarch's life can be found in his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, Caesar's description occurs in his commentary on the civil wars, and Suetonius's description of Caesar's bisexuality can be found in the section of *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* devoted to Julius Caesar.

chair when he is conversing with Ptolemy. (The tripod has incense burning on it before a statue of Ra; the response of the court to Caesar's action is "Sacrilege" III, 389.) When Britannus responds with shock to the knowledge of Cleopatra's incestuous (and customary) marriage to her brother Ptolemy, Caesar's response is to rebuke Britannus for his ethnocentricity: "Pardon him, Theodotus: he is a barbarian, and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature" (III, 393).

The crucial point, however, in Shaw's portrait of Caesar as a Superman is political. Rome is not a true republic; its citizens are not capable of governing themselves. Recognition of this fact that prompts Caesar to tell Lucius Septimus that "Caesar is no Caesarian. Were Rome a true republic, then were Caesar the first of Republicans" (III, 398). We have already seen, in one of the passages from *Man and Superman* cited above, that Shaw/Tanner demanded "a Rome in which every man is a Caesar," i.e., a nation of Supermen, as a prerequisite for democracy.

One of Caesar's traits, as envisioned by Shaw, is his rejection, or possibly his sublimation, of the sexual instinct into his work. When Cleopatra is asking Caesar to send Mark Anthony to her she says, "If only I were a little older; so that he might not think me a mere kitten, as you do!" (III, 402). In the prologue that Shaw added in 1912 Ra describes Cleopatra, "as yet but a child that is whipped by her nurse" (III, 361). This is in sharp contrast to the historical Caesar who fathered Caesarion upon the much younger Cleopatra.

Caesar is also destructive. Like Nietzsche's lion he wishes to destroy the past, but he sees in the destruction the prelude to construction of something new. When Theodotus informs him that the library of Alexandria is burning, the following exchange takes place:

THEODOTUS [*wildly*] Will you destroy the past.
CAESAR. Ay, and build the future with its ruins. (III, 407)

A similar exchange takes place between Tanner and Ann in the first act of *Man and Superman*.

ANN [*bored*] I am afraid I am too feminine to see any sense in destruction. Destruction can only destroy.

TANNER. Yes. That is why it is so useful. Construction cumpers the ground with institutions made by busybodies. Destruction clears it and gives us breathing space and liberty.

ANN. It's no use, Jack. No woman will agree with you there.

TANNER. Thats because you confuse construction and destruction with creation and murder. Theyre [sic] quite different: I adore creation and abhor murder. Yes: I adore it in tree and flower, in bird and beast, even in you. (III, 550)

In *Man and Superman* the discussion of creation and destruction has sexual overtones, overtones missing in Caesar's discussion with Theodotus, but in both of these the central idea governing the conversation is that destruction must be a prelude to the creation of anything new. Nietzsche's lion, in *Zarathustra*, serves as a model of the rebellious, destructive spirit that precedes the creative child.³³ In Shaw and Nietzsche the idea is repeatedly emphasized. The process of value creation must be preceded by a period in which the old values are systematically denigrated and exposed as the failures that they are. The values

³³ See the chapter entitled "The Metamorphoses of the Spirit" in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

with which they are to be replaced are, in the Caesarian example, a sublimation (possibly a negation) of sexual energy into work; benevolence, when it will secure the devotion and friendship of former enemies; a non-ethnocentric outlook upon other cultures; a willingness to condone murder (Ftataeteeta's) when it is done in anticipation of an attack; an abstemiousness and disdain of luxury; the ability to command loyalty in retainers; the ability to rule "Without punishment. Without revenge. Without judgment" (III, 467). All of these traits add up to Shaw's portrait of Caesar and of the Superman prior to the writing of *Man and Superman*.

The characteristics just described, however, are not biological characteristics, nor are they evolutionary. In this respect at least, Shaw's Caesar is close to the Nietzschean conception of the *Übermensch*, which is, as seen earlier, not a biological conception at all. The *Übermensch* will not be achieved through natural selection, and may not be achieved, in Nietzsche's view, by Lamarckian processes either. Shaw's Caesar, to the extent that he can be taken as an anticipation of the Superman advanced in the later play, is primarily a moral phenomenon. Caesar sees past the customs and pretensions of his own society and evaluates them as being essentially meaningless. It is because Caesar evaluates customs as social and not moral phenomena that he appears to violate moral norms.

This evaluation is the same one made by both Dick Dudgeon and John Tanner. Tanner evaluates Violet's pregnancy not as a violation of a moral prohibition, but as a violation of a social custom. This evaluation says that Violet's pregnancy is a biological fact, and as such it belongs in the same realm as the pregnancy of a cat or a dog. It exists outside moral norms, and the condemnation at first cast upon Violet is for violating a social taboo. Tanner's evaluation of the fact that Violet is pregnant out of wedlock, is, however, dependent upon the very existence of the social norm that she appears to be violating. Tanner's rebellion and destruction are meaningless without the resistance of the society that he attacks, and when Violet responds by asserting her conformity to that norm Tanner collapses.

The Evolutionary Drama

Tanner's collapse under the revelation of his inadequate perception of Violet's character and of her conformity to social norms is part of the irony of *Man and Superman*. This is one aspect of the play that makes it a comedy. Within its everyday and comedic aspects, however, there is a drama that has at its heart the hellish debate over evolution and the Superman. This drama comes within the comedic situation of the play and throws our perceptions of Tanner into a new light. If Tanner is Man and Don Juan is Superman, a crude formulation at best, then the evolutionary drama arises not only from the debate in hell but also from the relation between Tanner and the ego ideal of Don Juan.

Shaw's "Epistle Dedicatory" to Arthur Bingham Walkley announces that *Man and Superman* is a Don Juan play and that it deals with the relations between the sexes. The play, however, does not deal with Don Juan's "*mille etre*" [sic] adventures with women, but with the relations between the sexes (III, 486, 495). It is Shaw's contention that what fascinates the modern audience in its perception of Don Juan is that he has dared to be "the enemy of God" (III, 489). This conception of Don Juan links him and Shaw to the Romantics, such as Blake, who saw Satan as the real hero of *Paradise Lost*. Don Juan, as the enemy of

God, is placed by Shaw in a tradition that includes Blake, who is an antinomian and a mystic, Shelley's Prometheus, and the Faust of Goethe.

Shaw eliminates Don Juan's romantic intrigues and turns them into adolescent fancies:

His thousand and three affairs of gallantry, after becoming, at most, two immature intrigues leading to sordid and prolonged complications and humiliations, have been discarded altogether as unworthy of his philosophic dignity and compromising to his newly acknowledged position as the founder of a school. (III, 492)

This sounds self-referential. Shaw may well be referring to his own relations with Jenny Patterson and Florence Farr, relations that preceded his decidedly non-sexual relationship with his wife. Tanner's love affair, or adolescent infatuation, with Rachel Rosetree is described in terms that scarcely fit in with either Tirso's or Mozart's Don:

I got up a love affair with her; and we met one night in the garden and walked about very uncomfortably with our arms around one another, and kissed at parting, and were most conscientiously romantic. If that love affair had gone on, it would have bored me to death.... (III, 548)

Tanner's love affair is scarcely anything that would get an adolescent in trouble today, but Shaw has presented it as being charged with sexual overtones by referring to it as a "love affair," and then negated this by specifying the conditions of the love affair (walking with arms around each other and kissing good night). These conditions trivialize Tanner's love affair and cast it into the role of the "immature intrigue." Implicit in this trivialization of Tanner and his love affairs and his failures in perception is the aggrandizement of his mythic and archetypal counterpart Don Juan. The relations between Tanner and his alter ego will form the subject of a later section, but it is important to realize that any discussion of either Tanner or Juan as a Shavian spokesperson means that it is possible to separate out the positions of Shaw, Tanner, and Juan. These positions may be distinct, or they may be latent and not realized on a conscious level by Shaw. Shaw's position was that he had no final word on the meaning of his plays, and the recognition of multiple voices in this triad (Shaw, Tanner, Juan) means that it may be impossible to assign one person the definitive role as Shavian spokesperson.

The overtly biological section of Shaw's preface comes when he discusses the nature of marriage. It is here that he raises the possibility of breeding Supermen:

We must either breed political capacity or be ruined by Democracy, which was forced on us by the failure of the older alternatives. Yet if Despotism failed only for want of a capable benevolent despot, what chance has Democracy, which requires a whole population of capable voters.... Plutocratic inbreeding has produced a weakness of character that is too timid to face the full stringency of a thoroughly competitive struggle for existence and too lazy and petty to organize the commonwealth co-operatively. Being cowards, we defeat natural selection under cover of philanthropy: being sluggards, we neglect artificial selection under cover of delicacy and morality. (III, 504)

For the first time, within the preface, Shaw raises the standard of Darwinian selection. The implication here is that the philanthropy that prohibits Victorian and Edwardian England

from letting the laboring masses die of exhaustion, which would leave a hardier and more capable laboring class, and thereby advance evolution, is a form of cowardice. The prudishness of the Victorian era is also a cover for laziness and interferes with the ability to breed human beings in an intelligent fashion.

The central biological and philosophical question, that of breeding a type of man that is to be a Superman, is not raised until the third act and the Hell scene. Don Juan has just described to his interlocutors, Ana, The Statue, and The Devil, his vision of heaven and has entered into a description of the Life Force:

... Life: the force that ever strives to attain greater power of contemplating itself. What made this brain of mine, do you think? Not the need to move my limbs; for a rat with half my brains moves as well as I do. Not merely the need to do, but the need to know what I do, lest in my blind efforts to live I should be slaying myself. (III, 617-18)

Don Juan, in this statement, is linking evolution to a goal oriented, purposive metaphysics. There is an impersonal force, which Juan terms Life, and which is engaged in a kind of metaphysical omphaloskepsis, or self-contemplation. This self-contemplation has as its goal self-understanding and self-knowledge and as a subsidiary goal an increase in power over self. Juan seeks in Heaven no joy other than that of "helping Life in its struggle upward" (III, 618). The need for increased brain power is made evident to Juan by the fact that:

... brainless magnificence of body has been tried. Things immeasurably greater than man in every respect but brain have existed and perished. The megatherium, the ichthyosaurus have paced the earth with seven-league steps and hidden the day with cloud vast wings. Where are they now? Fossils in museums, and so few and imperfect at that, that a knuckle bone or a tooth of one of them is prized beyond the lives of a thousand soldiers. 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, 619)

The Devil's reply, the great speech beginning "And is man any the less destroying himself for all of this boasted brain of his?" sets forth what Shaw regards as a sentimental and idealist position. Briefly put, the Devil's position is that Man venerates death over life. He finds evidence for this in the elevation of tragedy over comedy; the money spent on funerals; the sophistication of instruments of war, torture, and execution compared to the instruments of culture and industry (typewriters, locomotives, and bicycles). Dante and Milton are relegated to the position of boring fools who had no experience of the sublimity of Hell as organized by the Devil. On the basis of his evidence the Devil asserts that no Life Force exists.

Juan denies the Devil's assertions and counters that the Devil is taking Man at his own valuation, but that this valuation is essentially a romantic idealization of his own cowardice. Juan then goes on to present his own position, that Man can be transformed into a hero by "putting an idea into his head."

The antithetical positions of Juan and the Devil seem to anticipate Freud's late conception of the division of the instinctual life into "Two fundamentally different kinds of instincts, the sexual instincts in the widest sense of the word (*Eros*, if you prefer that name)

and the aggressive instincts, whose aim is destruction.”³⁴ Freud’s postulate explicitly integrates both of these instinctual drives into the human personality and sees the various neuroses and psychoses as stemming from disorders within the instinctual life. Shaw does not attempt this integration; his concern is not with a psychoanalytical portrait of the interior life, but with the dialectical opposition of the two forces and the evolution that comes about as Life achieves the upper hand. Juan, however, is forced to negate the importance of death:

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. (III, 623)

This sounds very noble for Victorian and post-Victorian England; it sounds less so in the light of *The Gulag Archipelago*, and the atrocities of Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot, none of whom had any sympathy for slaves. Juan’s contention is that when a man is shown “a piece of what he now calls God’s work to do... you can make him entirely reckless of the consequences to himself personally” (III, 624).

Ana’s response to Juan moves the symposium onto the subject of women and sexual relations. Juan contends that to woman man is merely a device for impregnation:

Man is Woman’s contrivance for fulfilling Nature’s behest in the most economical way. She knows by instinct that far back in the evolutionary process she invented him, differentiated him, created him in order to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce. (III, 624)

The human male, unlike the male, or drone, bee, whose life is extinguished upon completing his sexual purpose, has gone on to use his excess life span and his excess brain and muscle for something other than sexual activity: “He has created civilization without consulting her, taking her domestic labor for granted as the foundation of it” (III, 625).

The civilization produced by man is a means to an end, that end being the production of a Superman. Juan puts the point succinctly when he asks:

Are we agreed that Life is a force which has made innumerable experiments in organizing itself; that the mammoth and the man, the mouse and the megathorium, the flies and the fleas and the Fathers of the Church, are all more or less successful attempts to build up that raw force into higher and higher individuals, the ideal individual being omnipotent, omniscient, infallible, and withal completely, unilludedly self-conscious: in short, a god? (III, 626)

This is an anticipation of Juan’s proclamation of the Superman; it also anticipates the Ancients in *Back to Methuselah*; those beings whose aim is to become a vortex. Juan does not deal with this point immediately; however, he deals first with the notion that Life has a purpose. This purpose is given by Juan in the form of a metaphor:

Just as Life, after ages of struggle, evolved that wonderful bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going and what was coming to help or threaten it, and thus avoid a thousand dangers that formerly slew it, so it is evolving today a mind’s eye that shall see, not the physical world, but

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 54, p. 849.

the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present. (III, 627–28)

The purpose of the Life Force is not defined till much later and is revealed in this colloquy:

DON JUAN....This Life Force says to him “I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain—a philosopher’s brain—to grasp this knowledge for me as the husbandman’s hand grasps the plough for me. And this” says the Life Force to the philosopher “must thou strive to do for me until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to carry on the work.”

THE DEVIL. What is the use of knowing?

DON JUAN. Why, to be able to choose the line of greatest advantage instead of yielding in the direction of the least resistance. Does a ship sail to its destination no better than a log drifts nowhither? The philosopher is Nature’s pilot....(III, 646)

The purpose of Life is greater self-awareness and self-consciousness, in short greater knowledge. This is, as the Devil recognizes, a pursuit of the Superhuman, and he also recognizes, which Shaw sometimes seems to forget, that “the pursuit of the Superhuman... leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the Human” (III, 648). The Devil identifies the Superman as something “raked up” by “that German Polish madman.... Nietzsche,” and adds that he “is as old as Prometheus” (III, 648).

The scene ends with Ana’s apotheosis and her cry of maternal longing: “A father! a father for the Superman!” All of this is clearly biological. The Superman is not a product of a moral attitude but of a biological program. This biological program is inherent in nature, and nature begins as an originally unconscious, non-material, or metaphysical force. Shaw has chosen to call this force the Life Force and to postulate that it blunders along, somewhat in the fashion of Darwinian selection, i.e., it has no purpose or idea as to its methods in achieving a vaguely defined goal. When the force achieves consciousness, however it realizes that it has accomplished things through pure chance. Now it wants to achieve them in a more controlled, directed manner. Juan’s hypothesis is that the evolution to the Superman is a biological evolution, and as such linked to some kind of cerebral development; further this biological development can be consciously bred and selected for, just as horses can be bred for greater draught, or greater speed.

The conscious breeding of the Superman is the subject of Tanner’s pamphlet, *The Revolutionist’s Handbook and Pocket Companion*, which Shaw appended to *Man and Superman*. Tanner’s thesis is that changes in institutions are all inconsequential. These changes are:

...from military and priestly dominance to commercial and scientific dominance, from commercial dominance to proletarian democracy, from slavery to serfdom, from serfdom to capitalism, from monarchy to republicanism, from polytheism to monotheism, from monotheism to atheism, from atheism to pantheistic humanitarianism, from general illiteracy to general literacy, from romance to realism, from realism to mysticism, from metaphysics to physics, are all but changes from Tweedledum to Tweedledee.... (III, 691)

The biological changes:

...from the crab apple to the pippin, from the wolf and fox to the house dog, from the charger of Henry V to the brewer's draught horse and the race-horse, are real; for here Man has played the god, subduing Nature to his intention, and ennobling or debasing Life for a set purpose. (III, 691)

Tanner takes up "The cry for the Superman," which he admits "did not begin with Nietzsche," and presents the Superman as a biological phenomenon (III, 691–92). Tanner, and presumably Shaw, do not specify exactly what the Superman is. The closest thing to a specification is this:

You ask, not for a super-apple, but for an eatable apple; not for a superhorse, but for a horse of greater draught or velocity. Neither is it of any use to ask for a Superman: you must furnish a specification of the sort of man you want. Unfortunately you do not know what sort of man you want. Some sort of good-looking philosopher-athlete, with a handsome healthy woman for his mate, perhaps. (III, 692)

Tanner admits that this description is vague but says that "It is a great advance on the popular demand for a perfect gentleman and a perfect lady." Ultimately, "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 ..." (III, 692). The Superman is neither a super athlete nor a super Victorian, i.e., he is not conventionally moral.

Tanner follows by demonstrating that property and marriage, as popularly conceived, are obstacles to the creation of the Superman. Property, although inherently inequitable, was not dangerous to society as long as it was a question of mere national communities, but Tanner asserts, "We have now reached the stage of international organization" (III, 693). Marriage is a failure because it prohibits the mating across class lines of people who may have superior genetics but who also have personalities that are intolerable, to each other.

Thus the son of a robust, cheerful, eupeptic British country squire, with the tastes and range of his class, and of a clever, imaginative, intellectual, highly civilized Jewess, might be very superior to both his parents; but it is not likely that the Jewess would find the squire an interesting companion, or his habits, his friends, his place and mode of life congenial to her. (III, 695)

The marriage across class lines means the abolition of property and that every person should be regarded as a possible mate to every other person:

Not only should every person be nourished and trained as a possible parent, but there should be no possibility of such an obstacle to natural selection as the objection of a countess to a navy or of a duke to a charwoman. Equality is essential to good breeding; and equality, as all economists know, is incompatible with property. (III, 694)

This equality is not something that can be taken as some sentimental notion that all men are inherently equal; it is a precondition to selection: "Besides, equality is an essential condition of bad breeding also; and bad breeding is indispensable to the weeding out of the

human race" (III, 694). Tanner phrases his continuation in terms of two antithetical opposites, health and disease, and refers to "diseased stocks." This antithetical treatment ignores the reality of heredity and disease, i.e., it is possible to have either an acquired disease, such as secondary syphilis, or a genetic disorder, such as diabetes, and make valuable social contributions. It is obvious that no one wants to have either syphilis or diabetes, and that the elimination of either or both diseases is desirable, but to speak of "two really unhealthy people" getting married and having "a great number of children who will all die before they reach maturity" and describe it as "a far more satisfactory arrangement than the tragedy of a union between a healthy and an unhealthy person," is strangely harsh (III, 695). But Shaw is allowing for the eliminative effects of selection. The unhealthy "go away" and leave no living memorials; all of the unhealthy children simply die out before they can breed. The argument ignores the possibility that healthy people might become sick (diabetes and epilepsy can appear after adolescence). The essential point, however, is that Tanner is asserting a Darwinian/Malthusian model in which the result is the diminishment of the loser. This model recognizes no second-place winners.

The earlier discussion of Nietzsche suggested that he too believed in competition, but that his model was that of the Greek athletic contest, the *agon*. Despite Shaw's and Tanner's linking themselves to Nietzsche, they both ignore this aspect of his thought. For both Shaw and Tanner the end of competition, whether in the market place or in biology, is destruction and the emergence of the favored few. Once the unfit are eliminated, whatever the means, the favored few, the competent, the biologically and intellectually superior specimens, are left, and these are the potential breeders of the Superman.

The model of competition implicit in both Tanner and Shaw is that all competition is what is referred to as a zero-sum game. In this type of competition the profits of the winner can only come through the losses of the losers. The total won must equal the total lost by the other participants. Non-zero sum games do not have a necessary connection between harm to another competitor and winning. Shaw and Tanner both saw the market place as a zero-sum game in which the seller profits at the expense of the buyer. The zero-sum approach when applied to evolution contends that one species can only profit at the expense of another, or of all other species. Competition among species must, in this view, result in an ultimate winner and in the extinction of other species. Shaw and Tanner apply this model to the human species, and see the emergence of the Superman as being dependent upon the elimination of the unfit competitors.

Tanner's conclusion about the method of breeding the Superman is given in these words:

As to the method, what can be said as yet except that where there is a will, there is a way? If there be no will, we are lost. That is a possibility for our crazy little empire, if not for the universe; and as such possibilities are not to be entertained without despair, we must, whilst we survive, proceed on the assumption that we have still energy enough to not only will to live, but to will to live better. (III, 725)

Tanner goes on to suggest the establishment of a Department of Evolution, or a private society to encourage good breeding. The discursive, non-epigrammatic part of the *Handbook* concludes with a call for a conference:

A conference on the subject is the next step needed. It will be attended by men and women who, no longer believing that they can live for ever, are seeking for some immortal work into which they can build the best of themselves before their refuse is thrown into that arch dust destructor, the cremation furnace. (III, 728)

Oddly enough, it is precisely the rejected belief, that people can live forever, that forms the basis for Shaw's second evolutionary play, *Back to Methuselah*. Tanner's call for a conference on the subject of evolution and breeding still leaves a number of questions hanging. These questions revolve around the nature of the ethics of the Superman and the notion of property and sexual relations. Shaw may have envisioned a situation similar to the one that was installed under Lenin almost twenty years later, a socialist state that attracted "free spirits" such as Isadora Duncan and that encouraged futurists and avant garde poets such as Mayakovsky, Bunin, and Esenin. This is speculation, however, and the Leninist experiment deteriorated rapidly into a society that was repressive sexually as well as economically.

One question, to be dealt with in a later section, is how far we can regard each of these pieces as representative of Shavian thought. Tanner is, after all, a fool and a windbag and the pamphlet, as a representative of Tanner's, but necessarily Shaw's, thought, must be taken as being written before the dream sequence. What is the relationship between Tanner and Juan, and does this affect our reading of the evolutionary drama of *Man and Superman*? These questions are important but must be postponed until we discuss the questions of Darwinism/Lamarckism, and Shaw's relations to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

The Lamarckian/Darwinian Opposition: Does it Exist in Man and Superman?

The name of Lamarck is not specifically invoked in *Man and Superman*, and the opposition between Darwinism and Lamarckism may not seem as evident in this play as it does in *Back to Methuselah*. The earlier play does insist on the elimination of unfit specimens that we saw in Tanner's *Handbook*, and it stresses competition as a means of weeding out the unfit. These things bear the traces of Social Darwinism and of eugenics, i.e., an emphasis on breeding healthy people and eliminating undesirable traits.³⁵

The distinction between artificial and natural selection is not inherently Darwinian or Lamarckian. In fact, recognition of the process of artificial selection led Darwin to formulate the principle of natural, or circumstantial selection. The part of the drama that seems most clearly Lamarckian is the insistence on a goal and conscious striving for new attainments. Our reading of Lamarck, however, insists that the zoologist did not believe organisms can will to make bodily changes, at least not beyond a certain level of biological organization. The will, Lamarck insists, is, along with intelligence, an attribute of vertebrates, and the true Lamarckian would reject the idea of, say, lobsters growing new claws through an act of their will. The Lamarckian position does not insist that there is a goal to evolution, nor does it insist on a goal and on a purpose attributable to some metaphysical force. It may be found in some of Lamarck's latter day disciples, but it is not an essential characteristic of Lamarckism as we understand it.

³⁵ A celebrated example of the belief in eugenics is Justice Holmes's remark, "Three generations of morons is enough," which was in its turn subjected to rather scathing criticism by H. L. Mencken.

Neither is the idea of the Superman Lamarckian. Shaw attributes the idea to Nietzsche, but he regards it as an old idea, synonymous with daring to be “the enemy of God,” that has representatives in mythic heroes such as Prometheus. One interpretation of Nietzsche’s doctrine of the *Übermensch* was to regard it as a Darwinian, or evolutionary, event. Nietzsche did not regard the Superman as a Darwinist, or evolutionary event. This distinction will be commented on at greater length in a following section, but it is important to note that Shaw is, in *Man and Superman*, subscribing to what Walter Kaufmann described as the “Nietzsche legend.”³⁶

What remains to be considered is the relation of the Schopenhauerean will to Shaw’s Life Force, a more detailed commentary on Nietzsche’s and Shaw’s views of the Superman, and a final consideration of the relations between Shaw, Tanner, and Don Juan.

The Schopenhauerean Will

Shaw’s “Epistle Dedicatory” to *Man and Superman* contains this passage on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche:

It may seem a long step from Bunyan to Nietzsche; but the difference between their conclusions is merely formal. Bunyan’s perception that righteousness is filthy rags, his scorn for Mr Legality in the village of Morality, his defiance of the Church as the supplanter of religion, his insistence on courage as the virtue of virtues, his estimate of the career of the conventionally respectable and sensible Worldly Wiseman as no better at bottom than the life and death of Mr Badman: all this expressed by Bunyan in the terms of a tinker’s theology, is what Nietzsche has expressed in terms of post-Darwin, post-Schopenhauer philosophy.... Nothing is new in these matters except their novelties: for instance, it is a novelty to call Justification by Faith “Wille,” and Justification by Works “Vorstellung.” The sole use of the novelty is that you and I buy and read Schopenhauer’s treatise on Will and Representation when we should not dream of buying a set of sermons on Faith versus Works. (III, 511)

What is noteworthy is that Shaw sees both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as expressing older ideas. Nietzsche’s criticism of morality is made identical to Bunyan’s criticisms, and Schopenhauer’s philosophy is reduced to a Protestant tract on faith versus works.

Actual traces of Schopenhauer’s philosophy can be found throughout the play and the hell scene.³⁷ Shaw and Schopenhauer both insist on the existence of an impersonal, meta-physical force. Shaw’s definition of the “true joy in life” is an example of the impersonal force acting on human beings:

³⁶ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 7; Nietzsche, *Basic*, 717.

³⁷ Another aspect of Schopenhauer’s philosophy that influenced Shaw was Schopenhauer’s conception of genius. Carl Mills ascribes this influence to Schopenhauer’s essay on genius. Mills describes the Schopenhauerean genius as having, “a double intellect: one for himself and the service of his will; the other for the world of which he becomes the mirror because of his purely objective attitude toward it.” The genius is, in Mills’s description, one “in whose mind the world is presented as an object in a mirror,” but the genius perceives with greater clarity and precision. All men of genius, therefore, “show peculiarities of character and mind, so that the gift of their works is one which they alone could ever have presented to the world” (Mills, 104–5). Compare with Shaw’s description of the genius in the preface to *Saint Joan*. “A genius is a person who, seeing farther and probing deeper than other people, has a different set of ethical valuation from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuations in whatever manner best suits his or her specific talents” (II, 269).

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base. (III, 510–11)

The “purpose” of the first part of this quotation does not necessarily exist outside of human beings, but it does contrast with what Shaw describes as the “only real tragedy,” that of being used by “personally minded men.” The contrast implies that the first purpose is impersonal and may well be a purpose of something other than human will. Shaw has linked this first “purpose” with his comments on Bunyan and Shakespeare.

The Will was for Schopenhauer an impersonal force that objectified itself and took on a material form. We have already seen that Schopenhauer considered that magnetism was a form of will that engaged in a struggle with gravity, and that he unified all forces into a manifestation of the will. Shaw’s personification of Life and his presentation of the Life Force are clearly similar to Schopenhauer’s will:

Fortunately for us, whose minds have been so overwhelmingly sophisticated by literature, what produces all these treatises and poems and scriptures of one sort or another is the struggle of Life to become divinely conscious of itself instead of blindly stumbling hither and thither in line of least resistance. (III, 500)

Shaw seems clearly to have derived his identification of the Life Force with a blind, striving will from Schopenhauer. Shaw’s insistence, an insistence that he was to carry on throughout his work, that he was the agent of impersonal forces, and his substitution of these forces for theistic ideas link him most clearly with Schopenhauer. Shaw, however, rejects Schopenhauer’s pessimistic conclusions and his romantic idealization of art; Shaw does not desire to escape into Nirvana, or to cease to be. Holroyd comments in this regard that “Shaw took Schopenhauer’s philosophy of Will and turned it into a doctrine of optimism by subduing the individual to the universal Will, the Will of Nature.”³⁸ In contrast to Schopenhauer’s interpretation of Vedantic and Buddhist doctrine we have a Don Juan who wants a feeling of increased being and who proclaims: “I am; therefore I think...I would think more; therefore I must be more” (III, 631). Schopenhauer’s will has no teleology. He imposes one on man by finding in the will the root of suffering and by contending that the way to salvation is by a cessation of the will. This is, however, a purpose for those who are objectifications of that will, i.e., for people and not the will itself.

The idea that Nature has need of knowledge can be found in Nietzsche’s essay *Schopenhauer als Erzieher*, but Shaw could not have known an English translation of this essay until 1909, when *Thoughts out of Season* was published. This idea, as it appears in *Man and Superman*, may be original with Shaw, or it may derive from Nietzsche through a secondary source, i.e., articles about Nietzsche, or even his sister’s propaganda. This idea is subsidiary to the main problem of Shaw’s relationship to Nietzsche: what is the relation of the Shavian Superman to the Nietzschean *Übermensch*?

³⁸ Holroyd, *Power*, 19.

The Nietzschean Superman?

Shaw's Superman is, according to the definition proposed by Don Juan, "completely, unil-ludedly self-conscious: in short, a god" (III, 626). Shaw regarded certain individuals as Supermen or as early sketches of the Superman. We find this in a relatively early non-dramatic work such as *The Perfect Wagnerite*, where Shaw refers to Siegfried as a "totally unmoral person, a born anarchist, the ideal of Bakoonin, an anticipation of the 'overman' of Nietzsche."³⁹ Perhaps a typical example of Shaw's non-Nietzschean evaluation of characters and individuals is his appraisal of Siegfried as a Superman. This is the character of whom Nietzsche wrote:

Perhaps Wagner's strangest creation is inaccessible, inimitable, and beyond the feelings of the whole, so mature, Latin race, not only today but forever: the figure of Siegfried, that *very free* man who may indeed be much too free, too hard, too cheerful, too healthy, too *anti-Catholic* for the taste of ancient and mellow cultured peoples. (*Beyond*, 256)⁴⁰

Shaw's Superman is an intellectual; there is no sense of the recognition of the irrational drives; he is an "arrant intellect-monger." Shaw has, as David Thatcher comments, ignored "Zarathustra's admonitions to the despisers of the body. It is here that the gulf between Nietzsche's superman and that of Shaw looms widest."⁴¹ Thatcher has pointed out the major differences between the Shavian Superman and the Nietzschean *Übermensch*:

The major difference between Nietzsche and Shaw is that Shaw employed the superman concept to infuse dynamism into a socialist doctrine endangered by inertia, whereas Nietzsche thought of the superman as an antidote to the nihilism which was bidding fair to engulf the whole of Europe....In grafting the Nietzschean figure on to a socialist programme, Shaw produces a hybrid—and a loss of vitality, richness, and imaginative appeal. The yoke of Benthamite social thinking weighs heavily on Shaw, and this partly explains his "incurable tendency to mentalize, socialize, and domesticate the more dangerous insights of rebel artists and philosophers."⁴²

Thatcher also notes the difference between Shaw's and Nietzsche's attitudes towards tradition and Shaw's constant insistence on seeing identity where only similarity may exist:

Nietzsche's superman reveres tradition and ancestry, and rejects the ideals of socialism and anarchism which are so prominent a part of Siegfried's make-up. This difference escapes Shaw, who here — as so often — is intent on forging identities in the face of manifest dissimilarity. Shaw's appreciation of nature never descended to the perception of differences, and on one occasion he confessed that one tree looked exactly like another to him. Homogeneity and synonymy were part of a philosophic creed which held that truth was one and indivisible, however multiform the various expressions of it might be, and it is this belief which is responsible for a certain myopia in some of Shaw's strange cultural equations.⁴³

³⁹ See also page 93, above.

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *Basic*, 388.

⁴¹ Thatcher, 186, 198.

⁴² Thatcher, 200.

The Shaw/Tanner/Juan Triad

Reference has been made several times to the fact that Tanner and Juan cannot necessarily be supposed to represent Shaw's thought on evolution. The relations among characters and their relationship to the author remains open for examination. This question arises because Shaw has chosen to surround his drama of evolution, the Hell sequence, with a domestic comedy and with material that is supposed to have been written by one of the characters within that domestic comedy. This naturally brings up the question that attends the pseudonymous writings, such as *Either/Or* of Kierkegaard, or the relations between the Socrates of *The Apology* and the Socrates of *The Republic*. Is the pseudonymous author of the *Either* volume to be regarded as Kierkegaard's spokesman or not? Is the Socrates of the early dialogues to be regarded as representing things that Socrates actually said and the later one to be merely a spokesman for Plato's views? The device of assigning the pamphlet to Tanner may have the same kind of function as Kierkegaard's pseudonyms or Plato's use of Socrates. It is possible that the solution to the problem may well turn out to be its dissolution and the discovery that it is not a problem after all.

Two methods of dealing with this problem, if it exists, are through those of ordinary literary history, and through a psychological reading of Shaw's works. A psychological reading of the Don Juan of *Man and Superman*, and of Shaw, based on a Freudian interpretation of the syndrome can be derived from comments in *Tales of Love* by Julia Kristeva. Kristeva describes the Don Juan of Mozart as "the seducer who is basically an artist." The Don's actual progeny, the satyrs of modern life, are "imitators of Don Juan." She sets the literary Don "apart from those who confuse the fantasy of phallic allmightiness with an athletic performance of their genital system and seek, in the reality of feminine conquests, to appease an imaginary, symbolic impotence." In her case of history of Don Juanism she sees the patient's symptoms as "bordered by sadistic anal drive on the one hand, and on the other by an idealizing and terrifying identification with an immediately superegotistic ideal Ego who orders impotence."⁴⁴

Evidence of the Don Juan syndrome, as described by Kristeva, can be found in both Shaw's work and in his life. The fact that his marriage was never consummated, and that he failed to consummate a love affair with Mrs. Patrick Campbell suggest a form of impotence.⁴⁵ The callousness that he demonstrates towards the prospect of mass punishment and "liquidation" runs throughout his work. Notable examples of this callousness can be found in the *Handbook* (III, 710, 716–18), and in the prefaces to *The Millionairess* (1935), *Geneva* (1945), and *On the Rocks* (1933).

Shaw's admiration for the dictators and strong men of history such as Cromwell, Caesar, Hitler, Lenin, and Stalin, also suggests a need to identify with a strongly dominant father figure. All of these factors strongly suggest that Shaw's prescriptions for society and for evolution derive from his own psychological needs.

What emerges from an attempt to psychologize the Shaw/Tanner/Juan triad is that Shaw either consciously or unconsciously projected certain qualities onto Tanner and Don Juan that were present in himself. This result is interesting, but it does not solve the problem of whether Shaw's spokesman is Tanner or Don Juan or both. A more conven-

⁴³ Thatcher, 200.

⁴⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1987) 204–5, 208.

⁴⁵ Holroyd, *Love*, 437–65; *Power*, 315–17.

tional approach would be to look at Shaw's other writings, in many cases the same material that was mentioned in connection with the psychological portrait. This may result in a determination that there is no problem of psychological projection at all, and the plays may show a consistency of ideas throughout Shaw's life-span.

Tanner, in his pamphlet, says that the adoption of Fabian policy "would be carried out by brute force exactly as our present property system is" (III, 710). Later, Tanner offers a catalog of barbaric punishments (III, 716–18). Tanner had also postulated that "Bad breeding is indispensable for the weeding out of the human race" (III, 694). Shaw in the preface to *On the Rocks* glosses over "the slaughter of millions of quite innocent persons" (V, 479). Shaw did not maintain a principled, i.e., consistent and inflexible, opposition to capital punishment. In *The Crime of Imprisonment* (1922, 1946) he suggests that criminal recidivists be put to death. Shaw does not put the number to be liquidated in Great Britain at more than one a year.⁴⁶ Shaw's position on toleration and Inquisitions, as expressed in the preface to *Saint Joan*, *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*, *On the Rocks*, and *The Millionairess* is to advocate toleration at home, but to excuse the inquisition in the Communist and Fascist regimes of the thirties.

The elimination of the unfit is part of the agenda of socialist agitation and a necessary prerequisite for the production of the Shavian Superman. This position can be seen to be consistently advocated throughout Shaw's life and renders some of his work unpalatable. This elimination of the unfit can be demonstrated to be a counterpart to the Darwinist doctrine of circumstantial, or natural, selection.

The resolution of the problem raised by the richness of the texts, the play, the preface, and the handbook, as we have said, may not be a problem at all. It may be possible to dissolve the problem, in somewhat the same sense that Wittgenstein dissolved problems, by looking at the terms of the problem and then seeing if they are really true. The premise that creates the problem is that in presenting the material in the form of a dream sequence and associating it with a pamphlet that is supposed to be written by "Don Juan's descendant," Shaw distances himself from this material and disclaims responsibility (III, 505). Any interpretation of *his* philosophy must rest on whether one or more of the characters is Shaw's spokesperson. In order to interpret Shaw's philosophy one may have recourse to a Freudian reading that sees the characters as projections of Shaw's psychic contents, or a somewhat less hostile reading that sees the various texts as a form of Nabokovian game.

A more purely literary way, however, and one that is more traditional, is to look at the text and to see whether it corresponds with either Shaw's public or private utterances. In this instance much of what Tanner says in the pamphlet will reappear in Shaw's later writings. Shaw maintains Tanner's attitude towards the locking up of non-socialist dissidents in his later plays, such as *The Millionairess*, *On the Rocks*, *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* among others. The clearest indication that the Shavian position is given by Tanner as well as the Don, both of whom function as Shavian spokesmen, is to be found in his writings prior to *Man and Superman*. In these we find that Shaw advocates what he terms the Diabolonian position, essentially a socialist morality that disvalues property and advocates a reform of marriage. Tanner, in this respect, continues in the same line as Dick Dudgeon, i.e., he advocates a moral position that seems to be clearly at variance with contemporary mores. Like Dick Dudgeon and Shaw, however, he is also vague and unspecific in what his

⁴⁶ George Bernard Shaw, *The Crime of Imprisonment* (New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1946) 65.

reevaluation of morality really means. Both Tanner and Shaw link this moral reevaluation to Nietzsche, without showing any extensive knowledge or understanding of the Nietzschean position and certainly without any understanding of the Nietzschean concept of resentment that is so crucial to Nietzsche's psychology and ethics.

Shaw advocated the elimination of the unfit, and he believed that agencies such as the Cheka and the Inquisition played useful roles. There is evidence for this attitude as early as 1898 and in *The Perfect Wagnerite*:

The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive; and no serious progress will be made until we address ourselves earnestly and scientifically to the task of producing trustworthy human material for society. In short, it is necessary to breed a race of men in whom the life-giving impulses predominate before the New Protestantism becomes politically practicable. (227)

Tanner, as we have already seen, countenances the use of force to bring about the Fabian society; in this respect he resembles Shaw. The emphasis on breeding is present in the 1898 book and in the 1903 play and its ancillary materials.

Tanner's pamphlet and the Don's speeches and beliefs can, in sum, be shown to be congruent with material that Shaw wrote before *Man and Superman*, so that the problem of the relations of Tanner, Juan and Shaw remains an interesting psychological problem but one that need not affect our reading of the play.

The Intertwining of Thought and Plot Event

Aristotle's *Poetics* lists thought and plot among the six elements that make up the drama.⁴⁷ Aristotle's contemporaries may have seen the intertwining of the anti-war thought of *The Trojan Women* and *Lysistrata* and the action of the plots of those dramas; a modern audience may have difficulty in seeing the connection between Shaw's evolutionary thought and the action of the romantic comedy that embodies it. It may appear that the presence of the evolutionary thought is confined solely to the third act of *Man and Superman*, and to the Shavio-Socratic dialogue of the hell scene within that act. If Shavian evolutionary thought is not confined to the Hell scene but permeates the entire play, how does it affect the action of the drama? Is Shavian evolutionary philosophy instantiated within the drama on the level of plot event?

Shaw's portrait of Ann Whitefield embodies traits that can be found enunciated in the preface and in the Hell scene. Shaw's preface assigns sexual initiative to the woman: "... the serious business of sex is left by men to women" (III, 495). Later on in the preface Shaw compares the activity of the woman seeking a mate to that of a spider:

It is assumed that the woman must wait, motionless, until she is wooed. Nay, she often does wait motionless. That is how the spider waits for the fly. But the spider spins her web.... (III, 498)

The first conversation between Tanner and Octavius attributes "unscrupulousness" to her. Tanner describes Ann as having "plenty of money and no conscience." This and the

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *The Poetics*, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. 1946) 25. Bekker number 1450^a9.

existing social conditions will permit Ann to act as she likes. Tanner's guardianship of her is reduced to unimportance by the fact that Ann will be able "to load up all her moral responsibilities" on him. Tanner compares the ineffectuality of his guardianship to a similar ineffectuality that would exist in a marriage between him and Ann: "I might as well be her husband" (III, 525). Tanner compares Ann to a boa constrictor (III, 526). The comparison to the boa constrictor does several things. First, it establishes that Ann is cold blooded. The popular conception of being cold blooded is someone who is passionless, e.g., "He is a cold-blooded killer." This lack of passion is connected to appetite; the snake constricts around its victim before consuming it in a single gulp. Tanner's reference to the "embrace" of the snake conjures up the dual image of loving arms about the neck and the serpent coiled about the neck. This equates the sexual, or amorous instinct with the appetitive function, and implies a sexual initiative on the part of the woman.

Shaw's description of Ann emphasizes her sexuality, although he has chosen to call it "vitality." Ann is described as "one of the vital geniuses," and 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." She is "a cat" (III, 530-31). This may seem a step up the evolutionary ladder, but implicit in the comparison is the idea of sneakiness, and viciousness, traits popularly ascribed also to cats.

The comparison to a cat is enlarged from the domestic feline to *Felis leo* when Tanner compares Ann to a lioness:

Why, man, your head is in the lioness's mouth: you are half swallowed already—in three bites—Bite One, Ricky; Bite Two, Ticky; Bite Three, Tavy; and down you go. (III, 536)

Ann's hand is compared to the lioness's paw, and the sexual appetite is compared to the appetite for food: "... the question is, which of us will she eat? My own opinion is that she means to eat you" (III, 536). These comparisons, and later ones in the pages that follow, serve to point up Ann's apparent lack of concern for her victims. Her sexual urges function on the same level as the desire for food. Both desires are amoral, i.e., not subject to moral concern. Tanner continues to equate Ann to various animals, including the grizzly bear and the Bengal tiger, and to equate her appetite for Tavy to an appetite for food: "she patted your cheek as if it were a nicely underdone chop" (III, 538).

When Tanner and Ann are alone, after the revelation of Violet's pregnancy, he accuses her of hypocrisy and lack of conscience. Tanner again compares Ann to a boa constrictor: "The boa constrictor doesn't [sic] mind the opinions of a stag one little bit once she has got her coils around it" (III, 553). This image again focuses on the equation of the sexual and the feeding appetites. What is noticeable here is that sexes are assigned to the animals; the stag is male and the boa constrictor is female. This runs in opposition to the standard association of the snake with masculinity. (The snake is phallic in shape, and the traditional interpretation of snakes in terms of symbolism is that they are masculine.) The stag would, realistically speaking, be too big for a real boa to consume, but the image is not intended to be realistic. The image of the stag conveys the idea of masculinity and fleetness, but these qualities are useless against the female boa who simply waits and drapes herself around her victim's neck. The stage business that immediately follows, in which Ann "laughs and throws her boa around his neck," and Ann's line, "Doesn't [sic] it feel nice and soft, Jack," followed by her putting her arms around his neck should serve to warn Tanner

that he is to be Ann's prey (III, 553). This piece of stage business is the point at which it becomes obvious that Ann's real intention is to trap Tanner into marriage. This instantiates the pursuit of the man by the woman.

Tanner perceives, correctly, that Ann is in pursuit of a male. He perceives, incorrectly, the object of that pursuit. It is only Straker who recognizes that Ann's intended victim is Tanner. Straker's knowledge is reflected in his line, "And Miss Whitefield herself is going in the other car? Not with you?" Tanner's response, "Why the devil should she come with me? Mr Robinson will be in the other car," reveals the ironic contrast between Tanner's idea of himself as a supremely knowing individual, and Straker's lower-class clear-headedness that does not permit him to be deluded (III, 564).

Tanner's persistence in self-delusion is revealed when he tells Tavy about Maeterlinck's book on the bee. Tanner persists in trying to tell Tavy that Ann is pursuing him, something that Octavius devoutly wishes to be true. When Ann comes in, after forbidding Rhoda to ride with Tanner, he compares her to an elephant. This comparison leads to an unusually bad pun:

ANN. I am getting on. Yesterday I was a boa constrictor: today I am an elephant.

TANNER. Yes. So pack your trunk and begone: I have no more to say to you. (III, 574)

The equation of Ann with an elephant is on one level a continuation of the recognition of Ann's sexuality. On another level, one that Shaw himself may not have known, it is an implicit recognition of Ann's native intelligence and wisdom. This association stems from the portrayal of the Hindu god Ganesh, the god of wisdom and knowledge, as a man with an elephant's head. This association, whether Shaw was aware of it or not, continues the contrast between Tanner's foolishness and Ann's practical wisdom. Tanner's foolishness is finally confirmed when Straker reveals that Ann is "arter summun else" (III, 583). Tanner's recognition prompts realization that he is "the bee, the spider, the marked down victim, the destined prey," and the subsequent attempt to reach Biskra (III, 584).

Tanner's flight from Ann results not in a trip to "a Mahometan country where men are protected from women," but to Spain, a country deeply influenced by the Moorish conquests (III, 584–85). The Spanish-Moorish setting of the Sierras is the setting for Shaw's dramatic evocation of the Don Juan legend through the dream sequence. This sequence assigns primacy to the intellect over the sexual drives and relegates the feminine role in evolution to the maternal function. The Hell scene can be played either as part of the drama, which is rarely done, or staged by itself. If the Hell scene is omitted, it can still be shown that Shaw has instantiated the evolutionary theory at the level of plot event. The Hell scene presents an explicit statement and poses a dialectical antithesis to the anti-intellectual course of the primary drama surrounding it.

When Ann decides to let Octavius know that she is not interested in marrying him, she does it by placing the blame for her action on her mother (III, 670). Octavius's reaction, that Jack has been "playing with" him, prompts Ann's alarm as she realizes that a confrontation between Octavius and Tanner would reveal her manipulation of the former. This is precisely what Tanner had predicted, that Ann would act irresponsibly and would transfer the blame for her actions to another person (III, 524).

The dialogues that ensue after Octavius leaves the stage are designed to force Tanner to accept Ann. Tanner finally acknowledges Ann's sexual satisfaction by saying, "The Life Force. I am in the grip of the Life Force." This is quickly deflated by Ann: "I dont [sic] understand in the least: it sounds like the Life Guards" (III, 681). Tanner's philosophical conception is reduced to nonsense by Ann. Tanner's assertion that the poetic temperament is barren because "the Life Force passes it by" is a final recognition that the romanticist, the Tavys and Marchbanks of the world cannot function in the real world of biological reproduction and nurturing. The conclusion with its classical ending in *gamos* is the culmination of Ann's entrapment of Tanner.

Ann is the knave in the comedy, but Tanner is the fool. His finest oratorical outbursts are punctured first by Ramsden, and later by Ann. Ann's response to Tanner's speech beginning "Ay; but what other people," is to say "I am so glad you understand politics Jack: it will be most useful to you if you go into parliament." This reaction causes Tanner to collapse "like a pricked bladder" (III, 529, 552–3). Tanner's oratory is a form of preening, the peacock displaying his feathers for his mate, but it is deflated by Ann's rejection. This rejection, however, is merely part of the courtship that will eventually conclude with the *gamos* at the public registrar's office. Ann wonders if Tanner is really clever because he seems to "understand all the things I dont [sic] understand," but she realizes that he is "a perfect baby in the things I do understand" (III, 554). The things that Ann understands are precisely those things that Tanner has been discoursing about.

Tanner's inversion, or transvaluation, of values is first expressed when the news of Violet's pregnancy is announced: "We suddenly learn that she has turned from these sillinesses to the fulfilment of her highest purpose and greatest function—to increase, multiply, and replenish the earth" (III, 540). This is not a radical departure from the ordinary state of Victorian ethics. What is radical is Tanner's acceptance of Violet's presumably unmarried condition. Tanner departs from the moral customs of Victorian England by seeing Violet as someone who "wants respect and congratulation; she wants every chance for her child" (III, 541). Tanner enunciates a socialist view of Violet's pregnancy: "Violet is going to do the State a service." This odd utterance will have a literary echo almost fifty years later in Orwell's *1984*, where marital sexual relations are described as a duty to the State. Tanner continues with an ironic statement of the consequences of Violet's service to the State: "she must be packed abroad like a criminal until it's over" (III, 543).

Tanner's values express themselves in the form of sympathy for Violet, who is, according to Tanner's judgment, performing her natural functions without regard to social conventions. When he is finally able to tell Violet his feelings, he frames his compliment to her in terms of natural science:

But I know, and the whole world really knows, though it dare not say so, that you were right to follow your instinct; that vitality and bravery are the greatest qualities a woman can have, and motherhood her solemn initiation into womanhood; and that the fact of your not being legally married matters not one scrap either to your own worth or to our real regard for you. (III, 558)

Violet's response immediately punctures Tanner's attempt to praise her for following her instincts and creates the pretext for the subplot involving Malone:

Oh! You think me a wicked woman, like the rest. You think I have not only been vile but that I share your abominable opinions....I wont [sic] bear such a horrible insult as to be complimented by Jack on being one of the wretches of whom he approves. (III, 559)

Tanner's attempt at holding up Violet as an example of moral transvaluation is negated by the fact that she has been secretly married. Tanner's moral philosophy is relegated to a mere matter of "bad taste" (III, 559).

Without the Hell scene Shaw has written an anti-intellectual, anti-feminist comedy. With the Hell scene there is a clash between the earthly forms of Tanner, Ramsden, Mendoza, and Ann and their otherworldly, almost Platonically Ideal, counterparts in the netherworld. This dream sequence is not dramatic, i.e., it does not advance the course of the romantic comedy that surrounds it, but it does present the idealizations of Tanner and the other participants in the Shavio-Socratic dialogue.

Don Juan/Tanner is the spokesman for the evolutionary viewpoint. This viewpoint is expressed in Juan's description of heaven and its pleasures:

...as you enjoy the contemplation of such romantic mirages as beauty and pleasure; so would I enjoy the contemplation of that which interests me above all things: namely, Life: the force that ever strives to attain greater power of contemplating itself. (III, 617)

Juan, as Tanner's ideal self, is not undercut by ironic comments from Ana or the other participants in the Hellish colloquy. He is able to voice the Shavian concern with evolutionary development by saying that he seeks to take part in "the work of helping Life in its struggle upward." Life wastes itself by raising obstacles to its progress, and destroys itself because of its "ignorance and blindness" (III, 618). Juan contends that the purpose of evolution is knowledge, and that the megatherium and the ichthyosaurus perished because they lacked brains enough to "know how to carry out their purpose, and so destroyed themselves" (III, 619). The Devil's response is the speech beginning "And is Man any the less destroying himself" (III, 619-21).

Juan's demand for knowledge on the part of the evolutionary force, his assertion that Life needs and can receive help "in its struggle upward," asserts the Shavian position that the Life Force has proceeded by trial and error. A necessary corollary of this position for Shaw is that what is done by trial and error can be done better through knowledge. The assertion that nature proceeds by trial and error is part of the Shavian reassertion of teleology. The notion implies a purpose that is to be achieved but an uncertainty as to methodology. The experiments that have proved unsuccessful—trilobites, ammonites, megatheria, and ichthyosauri—are discarded and doomed to extinction. The purpose that Juan is advocating here is knowledge, a knowledge that has as its aim the direction of evolution itself. Juan summarizes this by attributing this utterance to the Life Force:

I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and follow the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain—a philosopher's brain—to grasp this knowledge for me as the husbandman's hand grasps the plough for me. (III, 646)

Juan assigns intellect the primal place. The Life Force can be guided and manipulated through the knowledge of philosophers. The Superman, however, is not mentioned by Juan; the Devil brings up the Superhuman and the Superman. The Devil says that the Superman regards men and women as mere species who exist outside of the moral world (III, 648). It is also the Devil who describes Nietzsche as a “German Polish madman,” and a “confirmed Life Force worshipper” (III, 648).

As the Devil and the Statue descend into the Stygian depths towards the palace, Ana questions them about where she can find the Superman. When she is informed that he is not yet created, she experiences an apotheosis that ends in her “crying to the universe” and asking for “A father! a father for the Superman!” (III, 649). Ana’s cry is a cry of maternal longing that has as its background the view that her, or woman’s function, from a purely biological or evolutionary standpoint, is that of nurturing and procreation. Juan and Shaw have departed from the mythological viewpoint that assigns man primacy in creation:

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 evolutionary process she invented him, differentiated him, created him in order to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce. (III, 624)

(This may not be true in the phylogenetic sense, but it is true in the ontogenetic sense. No fetus, whatever its chromosome arrangement, becomes male until the mother unleashes a flood of the hormone androgen into the placenta.)

Juan goes on to describe how man has invented civilization:

... Man has multiplied on her hands until there are as many men as women; so that she has been unable to employ for her purposes more than a fraction of the immense energy she has left at his disposal by saving him the exhausting labor of gestation. This superfluous energy has gone to his brain and to his muscle. He has become too strong to be controlled by her bodily, and too imaginative and mentally vigorous to be content with mere self-reproduction. He has created civilization without consulting her, taking her domestic labor for granted as the foundation of it. (III, 624–5)

This description encapsulates a transition from matriarchy to patriarchy. This transition will be symbolized in the later *Back to Methuselah* by the transition between the Edenic situation of the first act of the first part and the second act of that part. The later play will show the emergence of the male dominated warrior society and contrast it with the agrarian labors of Adam.

Juan and Shaw have assigned the female a role that is governed by reproductive urges. This aspect of woman’s role is related solely to her biological functioning; as a biological creature woman is designed for child bearing. Juan’s position, and by extension Shaw’s, is not that this is a “woman’s whole mind,” but only her sexual role (III, 624). This, by itself, does not imply anything about woman’s roles outside of reproduction.

The tension that exists between the two parts, the Hell scene and the romantic comedy, is due to the contrast between the immanent, the earthly romantic comedy; and the transcendent, the Hellish colloquy. Juan uses the drama as a metaphor to describe the relations between the netherworld and earth: “If the play still goes on here and on earth, and all the world is a stage, Heaven is at least behind the scenes” (III, 617).

The description of earth as a play, with its Shakespearean echo, implies that earthly life is a series of roles assumed by individual men and women, and that Heavenly life is the life of real men and women. The people "behind the scenes," the director, electricians, stage manager, carpenter, and so on, are the ones that make possible much of the drama. Juan's comparison of Heaven and earth invokes a Platonic comparison. The earthly drama comprises the shadows on the cave wall; the real drama is created and directed by the unseen Heavenly forces. This comparison implies that Tanner, Ann, Mendoza, and Roebuck are the earthly representations of their ideal forms as Juan, Ana, Devil, and Statue.

In this scheme of interaction between the two parts of the play we have the tension between the visible world and the ideal world. In the visible world Tanner appears as a fool. He is incapable of perceiving that even though he sees a truth, Ann is pursuing a man, that he sees through a glass darkly and incorrectly, Ann is pursuing him. In the visible world Ann is assigned the dominant position; she traps Tanner despite his attempts at flight and denial. In the same manner Mendoza and Roebuck are lesser versions of their hellish counterparts. Mendoza's sentimental idealization of Louisa Straker becomes generalized, within the Hell scene, into a romantic fascination with beauty and aesthetics. Ramsden's conservative adherence to the liberal ideas of the 1860's is generalized into a philistinism that refuses to acknowledge the bankruptcy of contemporary institutions.

In the visible world, the intellect, as represented by Tanner, is relegated to ineffectual discourse. This is symbolized in the conclusion of the play by the "universal laughter" that greets Tanner's final word, "Talking" (III, 686). In the ideal world of the Hell scene, the final word is given to Ana, who expresses her longing for "a father for the Superman" (III, 649). Ana's longing is for the "Life to Come," a biblical echo that implies that the Superman is a step analogous to the transition between earth and Heaven in the Christian religion. The Shavian Superman, however, is not to be found in the afterlife but in the eventual evolution of man into Superman.

The dialectical opposition of earth and Hell is resolved in the Superman. In relation to him Tanner's ideas can become real, through impregnating Ann. The fruition of the Tanner/Ann union means that in the visible world the man, who is trapped into marriage by the woman, fulfills his sexual purpose of impregnation. This impregnation holds out the possibility of further development of the species; it becomes another step in the evolutionary drama. The hope that lies hidden in the marriage of Tanner and Ann is that the union of these two dissimilar people will produce fruit. Tanner's intellect is put at the service of Ann's maternal drives. This reflects the Hell scene in which Juan and the other Life Force worshippers conceive of the Superman, and Ana recognizes that she is to be the receptor of the impregnating seed. The ending of the domestic comedy, within this schema, becomes an echo of the ending of the Hell scene. Ana needs to be impregnated in order to conceive the Superman. The idea for the conception has already been planted by Juan, and the concept enunciated by the Devil, but in order for her to produce the Superman she needs a masculine element. The Hell scene ends on this note of longing. The longing is resolved by the earthly marriage of Tanner and Ana, and the implicit realization that Ann and Tanner will be engaged in creative activity. Tanner's earlier declaration to Ann that he adores creation "in tree and flower, in bird and beast, even in you," causes "a flush of interest and delight" to chase the boredom from Ann's face (III, 551). This leaves no doubt that Ann's interest in Tanner is not only romantic but also procreative.

The closing marriage, or engagement, leaves no doubt that the longing expressed in the Hell scene is to be fulfilled in the closing of the play. The marriage of Tanner and Ann thus completes the biological discussion by making real, in concrete, procreative terms, the ideal that is embodied in all of Tanner's "talking."