Man and Superman (1901-1903) is the microcosm of Shaw's multidimensional ideas. If Major Barbara shows what religion is not, Man and Superman projects a view of religion which may be called typically Shawian. It will not be an overstatement if we treat the play as the distillation of many of his diffused ideas. He subtitles the play as "A Comedy and a Philosophy". That is, his serious attitude to life is presented in a lighter vein. The play being a multi-faceted one, no single idea can be extracted in absolute isolation. It is a humorous play, a sociological play, a biological play, and a philosophical play. It is also a play on sex, and equally a play on religion. Each facet contributes to the ultimate objective of creating the Superman. So, the religious aspect of the play must be discussed keeping a total view of all the other aspects in mind. Again, often, his religious ideas in the play are given expression in a very oblique way.

Man and Superman is not the first play about the Superman. The idea of the Superman was first envisaged by Shaw in the earlier play, The Devil's Disciple (1897). The Devil's Disciple is also a play essentially on religion in relation to the idea of making the Superman. Richard Dudgeon, the self-acting hero of the play, to a large extent approximates the Shawian image of Superman.

contd...
He does the right thing instinctively without any profit motive. This is the prerequisite of the Superman as has been envisaged by Shaw.

The Devil's Disciple failed to project anything very clearly and coherently. While reading the play we feel like moving in a region under foggy weather, and we see nothing very clearly. This foginess is removed considerably in Man and Superman. And, we begin to find some clarity and coherence eventhough the play is jampacked with different ideas. In the Devil's Disciple, Shaw practically remains silent on his idea of evolution. But, it constitutes the pivot of the play, Man and Superman. Thus, Shaw's idea of evolution and that of the Superman is basically the one and the same thing.

A strict and stereotyped arrangement of the works of Shaw purely on chronological order is often avoidable under certain special considerations, as it has been done in this work, where the beginning has been made with the play, Man and Superman, instead of with The Devil's Disciple. From the chronological point of view, The Devil's Disciple precedes all the other dramatic works of Shaw having an element of religious import. Of such plays The Devil's Disciple was written in the year 1897, while Man and Superman was written in between 1901 and 1903. Chronological order regarding the arrangement of the works of Shaw has not been very strictly adhered to because of the considerations detailed under:-

First, Shaw wrote very few "religious" plays in the

agnd.....
strictly traditional sense of the term. It is mainly because Shaw’s ideas on religion are inextricably connected with the other socio-economic and biologic problems of a man’s life. For this reason it is difficult to decide as to which play is purely religious and which is not. For example, while preparing the complete Bernard Shaw Prefaces the publisher, Paul Hamlyn Ltd., London, has classed the plays like Major Barbara and Man and Superman as the sociological works, while the plays like Too True to be Good, On the Rocks, and the Shaving-Up of Blanche Rosnet have been classed as political works. As per the arrangement made by the same publisher only the following works are classed as religious. They are Back to Methuselah, Androcles and the Lion, Saint Joan, The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, and the famous tale, The Adventure of the Black Girl in her Search for God. But, in our work we have tried to broaden our ambit to include the “sociological” plays like Man and Superman and Major Barbara; and the “political” plays like Too True to be Good, On the Rocks, and the Shaving-Up of Blanche Rosnet etc. also as religious works. It is mainly because in these dramatic works Shaw has made some vital remarks regarding his attitude to religion. For example, the play like Man and Superman and Back to Methuselah aim at the same target—the creative evolution of man. According to Shaw, there is basically no difference between creative evolution and the true spirit of religion.

Secondly, in most cases Shaw has written the prefaces much after the actual plays. For example, the play Androcles and
the Lion was written in the year 1913, while the preface to the play was written in 1916. The play, Saint Joan, was written in the year 1923, while the preface to the play was written in the year 1924. But, for our purpose both the plays and the prefaces are equally important. Again, in many cases the prefaces are more important than the actual plays from this point of view. So it is difficult to follow the chronological order if both the plays and the prefaces are to be studied together. Thus, in the case of most of Shaw's plays, the year of publication is different from the year of production. Let us take the case of the play, Major Barbara. This particular play was first produced in 1905, while the same was first published in its original form as a stage play in 1907. Another important thing to be noted is that both Man and Superman and Major Barbara have been produced at the Royal Court Theatre in the year 1905. Thus, three dates are associated with every play of Shaw: the date of production, the date of publication, and the date of writing the prefaces. In most cases, however, the date of publication and the date of writing the prefaces are very close to one another.

Thirdly, we often find it difficult to trace the gradual growth and development of Shaw's religious ideas in a hard and fast chronological order, although the same cannot be studied said as regards his political ideas. It goes without saying that the political world is a dynamic one, while this element of dynamism is something alien to the religious world. Shaw has

contd....
strongly suggested this in almost all the works.

For these reasons we have placed *Man and Superman* before *The Devil's Disciple*, which ought to have come first from the strict chronological point of view. But, as it is a "lesser" play, at least for our purpose, we have put up the same in the seventh chapter along with some other plays. But, this does not necessarily mean that these plays, put up in the seventh chapter, are lesser plays as plays. We have used the term "lesser" only in the sense that in these plays Shaw has said very little about religion. Otherwise, these plays are as good as as bad as any other plays of Shaw.

A devoted missionary in life, he launched an adventure to pave the way leading to the creation of the Superman, a creature far above the level of ordinary human understanding. He will be endowed with what Shaw calls the 'supermind'. He does not count on physical strength in this connection. While talking about the superman he devotes a large part of the play to the delineation of what heaven and hell are really like.

From the dramatic point of view Shaw only superficially follows the traditionally run Don Juan story. In the traditional Spanish tale Don Juan has been delineated as a seducer of women, whereas in *Man and Superman* Don Juan (Tanner) has taken just the opposite position—he is constantly being pursued by Miss Anne. Through the process of this pursuit Shaw wants to delineate the fact that woman is nature's contrivance in carrying out its...
plan; and man is simply an instrument in her hands in helping both nature and herself in the fulfilment of their concerted plan.

Shaw has clearly pointed out that our conventional socio-economic set-up is unfertile for the growth of the superman. In a sense, the entire play circles around his inveterate disregard towards the conventional moral values. Although, he does not say anything directly about his religious convictions in the play, yet we should not think that he has nothing to say on religion. It is because for him religion does not have any isolated existence far from the main currents of social behaviours. For him a healthy and a creative religion is the life-blood of human civilization.

As an evolutionist Shaw diametrically differs from the Darwinian idea of evolution. Unlike Darwin he believes that the superior beings will survive the inferior beings not by virtue of superior physical strength, but by superior intelligence and superior mind.

In short, Shaw stood for the religion of 'creative evolution'; and as a religionist he always stood against religious obscurantism, intolerance, dogmatism, doctrinal rigidities, and sacerdotal autocracy.

The play is dedicated to his one-time friend Arthur Bingham Walkley. In the dedicatory letter he clearly explains what contd....
the play is really about and the purpose behind it. His deviation from the traditional Spanish Don Juan legend is remarkable as has been explained in the previous lines. As an uncompromising fellow, Shaw was always indignant of man's nature of living, complaining which he remarks: "it annoys me to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable; and I insist on making them think in order to bring them to conviction of sin".  

Shaw calls such endeavour 'social sanitation'. Shaw's exacerbation against the conventional attitude to sex is another important feature of the play. Of course, this biological aspect is correlated with his ulterior motive of creating the better people. 

His stress on self-understanding and self-realization is another most important feature of the play. He deplores man's gross involvements with the material life subordinating the actual mission behind his life and creation. On the one hand, man's entanglements with some illusory and fictitious values have subverted the real purpose behind creation. On the other hand, man's blind and slavish surrender to instincts has eventually defeated the very purpose to which he owes his existence. Maybe, that is why, in a feat of agony Shaw deplores: "In short, there is no future for men".  

In the play, Tanner, a typical Shavian hero, is

1. Epistle Dedicatory—P. ii—iii (Orient Longmans).
2. Epistle Dedicatory—P. xii.

contd...
presented as a man above the illusory values and above the
instinctual forces, two significant features characterising
the superman of Shaw.

Shaw's reference to Prophet Micah has to be taken
seriously in so far as his religious philosophy is concerned.
Shaw can be identified with the Biblical Prophet, Micah. Both of
them questioned the validity of the existing values. Prophet
Micah was one of the most radical of all the Prophets. Prophet
Micah had no good opinion about the priestly class and the
ritualistic pattern of religion. He declared: "If a man should go
about and utter wind and lies, saying, 'I will preach to you of
wine and strong drink' he would be the preacher of this people".
"Thus says the Lord concerning the Prophets who lead my people
astray, who cry 'peace' when they have something to eat, but declare
war against him who puts nothing into their mouths", Micah adds.
He also debunked the conventional religious preachers and the
so-called Prophets: "Its heads give judgement for a bribe, its
priests teach for hire, its prophets divine for money; yet they
lean upon the Lord and say, 'is not the Lord in the midst of us ?'
Prophet Micah was against the killing of animals for the propitiation
of God. He said, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and how
myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offer-
ings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thou-
sands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give
3. Micah, ch. II, vr. 11 (From the Bible, K.S.V, W. Collins Sons & Co.Ltd.)
4. Micah, ch. III, vr. 5
5. Micah, ch. III, vr. 11

contd....
my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of body for the sin of my soul"? Shaw develops the same idea in his famous play Androcles and the Lion and in the story The Black Girl in her search of God. Like Prophet Micah, Shaw also firmly believes that true religion is self-knowledge and self-understanding and self-realization.

Shaw developed within him an independent attitude towards religion. He repudiated the "theistic credulity of Voltaire", the amoristic superstitions of Shelley, the revival of tribal soothsaying and idolatrous rites which Huxley called science and mistook for an advance on the Pentateuch.

In the Postscript to his Epistle Dedicatory Shaw further wants to defend himself from the shower of criticisms hurled at him, saying, "They call me pessimist because my remarks wound their self-complacency, and renegade because I would have my mob all Caesars instead of Toms, Dicks, and Harrys". From this it is obvious that Shaw wanted to replace regressive moralities with progressive ones, conventional religion with the creative one, and finally followed by the transmutation of man into superman.

(II)

Expository in nature, the first act introduces us to the problem of the play. The play does not have any story impor-
tance. What is important is a set of multi-faceted ideas. The story element, if any, serves only as a skeleton. The portrayal of Tanner, the characteristic Shavian hero, makes light of all the traditional values. Among other characters in the act are Goebuck Ramsden, Mr. Robinson, Miss. Anne, Miss. Violet and some others. All of them are well-to-do and traditionally respectable people. Mr. Ramsden professes the century-old morality of mankind. He treats it as sacrrosanct only because it is the product of time and traditions. The best proof of Mr. Ramsden's moral insularity is limelighted in his attitude to Miss. Violet. Miss. Violet is married to some unidentified man, whose name and address she is unwilling to divulge for the time being for the sake of their mutual interest. But her pregnancy provokes a furore among all, but, Tanner takes it very easily. According to Mr. Ramsden, Mr. Robinson, and Miss. Anne, this is an immoral act. But, Mr. Tanner accepts the whole issue without any misgivings and prejudices. He does not bother about the unidentified husband of Miss. Violet: "What on earth does it matter who he is? He's done his part; and Violet must do the rest." Mr. Ramsden could not accept such an opinion of Mr. Tanner: "Stuff! Lunacy! There is a rascal in our midst, a libertine, a villain worse than murderer; and we are not to learn who he is! In our ignorance we are to shake him by the hand; to introduce him into our houses; to trust our daughters with him."

2. Ramsden, Act. I, P-31 contd...
According to Tanner, morality or religiosity should in no case be attached to sex. Sexual relationship between man and woman is mainly instinctual, and in a sense cosmic, in so far as it is creative and progressive in nature. For Shaw, marriage is a very artificial institution. It is mainly because it is the most conventional of all human institutions. On this ground Tanner vindicates the action of Miss Violet, and heartily respects her womanhood, without dragging the question of religious virtue and vice with this instinctual issue of cosmic import.

A staunch realist, Shaw was against any idealization of woman. In this regard, he is against the people like Mr. Robinson. According to him, the traditional marital relationship between man and woman is absolutely regressive in nature, although such relationship has both social as well as religious approbations. Such marital alliances do make men slave to women, and they do not get any scope to develop their own independent individuality. Mr. Robinson thinks that his marriage with Miss Anne, whom he madly loves, would be a kind of 'fulfilment' for him. But, what is fulfilment to Mr. Robinson is 'destruction' to Mr. Tanner. Tanner calls Miss Anne a 'boa-constrictor'.

Shaw does not have any complaint against the instinctual relationship between man and woman. But, what he complains against is the fact that the traditional marital rela-

contd...
Such marital relationship leads to man's spiritual deaths. Warning Mr. Robinson Mr. Tanner says: "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". The given dialogue further reinforces the ideas:

Octavius: Don't be ungenerous, Jack. They take the tenderest care of us.

Tanner: Yes as a soldier takes care of his rifle or a musician his violin. But do they allow us any purpose or freedom of our own? Will they lend be to one another? Can the strongest man escape from them when once he is appropriated? They tremble when we are in danger, and weep when we die; but tears are not for us, but for a father wasted, a son's breeding thrown away. They accuse us of treating them as a mere means to our pleasure; but can so feeble and transient a folly as a man's selfish pleasure enslave a woman as the whole purpose of Nature embodied in a woman can enslave a man?

Octavius: What matter, if the slavery makes us happy.

Tanner: No matter at all if you have no purpose of your

---

3. Tanner, Act. I, P-25

contd....
own, and are, like most men, a mere bread-winner. But you, Tavy, are an artist: that is, you have a purpose as absorbing and as unscrupulous as a woman's purpose.

Shaw puts great emphasis on 'purpose'. What is that purpose? Where does it lead to? By 'purpose' he does not necessarily mean our material progress alone. Material progress is one of the preconditions of our spiritual progress as he has very ably demonstrated in Major Barbara. But, it cannot be the sole purpose of our life. It is the means, but not an end in itself. By 'purpose' he means the universal purpose, leading to the absolute perfection of man, almost to the frontier of divinity.

But the spiritual progress of man is impeded and thwarted by the man-made institutions.

Religion is the life-line of all our human institutions. All our moralities and social behaviours are closely and distinctly related to it. But, Shaw does not find the spirit of Jesus Christ in Christianity. Christianity, devoid of Christian spirit, is negative in spirit. Instead of accelerating man's spiritual progress, Christianity kills his spirit.

Man's tragedy, according to Shaw, lies in his ignorance of that cosmic purpose. Instead of regarding the world as a "moral gymnasium" we should be conscious of its purpose and our role in it. May-be, that is why Tanner at the

4. Tanner, Act-I, P-25

contd...
top of his voice utters: "Morality can go to its father the Devil." Our obsession with what is moral and what is immoral will neither extirpate the impurities from our soul, nor can it lead us to our self-realization. Our morality-mongers do more harm to society than what the so-called atheists and religious boycotts do.

Shaw, further, points out that we are in love with unreality. We are ashamed of the realities about us: "We live in an atmosphere of shame. We are ashamed of everything that is real about us.... The more things a man is ashamed of, the more respectable he is." Such a state of affairs is the direct or indirect outcome of our artificial moralities, which are based on untruth and unreality. True religion emancipates man from the disease of shame, which like a canker eats up the vitals of our individuality. Talking to Miss Anne Mr. Tanner says: "How unreal our moral judgements are! You seem to have absolutely no conscience — only hypocrisy."

"To my experience moral passion is the real passion," Mr. Tanner adds. Without a healthy moral passion there can be no real progress in man. "It is the birth of that passion that turns a child into a man," Tanner further clarifies. In the statements of Tanner Shaw's inner voice is once again heard: "The moral passion has taken my destructiveness in hand and directed it to moral ends. I have become a reformer, and, like all reformers,

---

5. Tanner, Act-I, P-34  
6. Tanner, Act-I, P-16  
7. Tanner, Act-I, P-36  
8. Tanner, Act-I, P-40  
9. Tanner, Act-I, P-40-41. contd...
an iconoclast. I no longer break cucumber frames and burn gorse bushes; I shatter creeds and demolish idols. "10

Such statements would seem paradoxical unless we try to understand what is really meant by destruction. Shaw's idea of destruction is creative and progressive. According to him, "construction cumbers the ground with institutions made by busybodies. Destruction clears it and gives us breathing space and liberty".11 By construction Shaw means our institutionalised moralities, while by destruction he means the destruction of such institutionalised values. Shaw clears the ground: "Thats because you (Anne) confuse construction and murder. They're quite different: I adore creation and abhor murder. Yes; I adore it in tree and flower, in bird and beast, even in you".12 True religion must make man feel the real purpose behind his creation. True religion must enable man to recognise the reality behind what we call reality. Religion must make everyman feel: "I had become a new person", and "I didn't choose to be cut to measure. And I won't be cut to it".14

(III)

The second Act is devoted mainly to the prospective emergence of a new class of practical people, represented by

11. - Ibid-, p-41-42.
12. - Ibid-, p-42.
13. - Ibid-, p-42.
14. - Ibid-, p-44.

contd...
Henry Straker. Straker is Mr. Tanner's automobile driver. Through him Shaw debunks the hollowness of the so-called gentlemanly class. Progress in science and technology has made the 'gentlemanly' class dependent on the peoples like the engineers and technicians. Virtually, they rule the roost in modern machine life. Shaw has sufficient respect for this class of people. Because, like Mr. Robinson and Mr. Ramsden they are not purposeless and idle-thinkers. He calls them 'scientific socialists', whereas people like Ramsden and Robinson are called 'poetic socialists'. Modern people cannot do anything without them. Mr. Tanner clearly expresses his dependence on the service of Henry Straker: "I am the slave of that car and of you (Straker) too."¹

Shaw makes a merciless attack on the university education that the so-called gentlemanly class is proud of. University education makes people 'gentleman', but not practical people. Henry Straker pointed out: "Very nice sort of place. They teach you to be a gentleman there. In the Polytechnic they teach you to be engineer or such like. See?"²

Although, Shaw upholds the cause of Miss. Violet in the first act, he debunks her characteristic conventionality in her attitudes towards everything. She does not allow Mr. Hector

¹ Tanner, Act-II, P-55
² Henry Straker, Act-II, P-57-58 contd...
(her husband) to work for himself: "Do you mean to work? Do you want to spoil our marriage?" She is also indignant of the ideas of Mr. Tanner: "The beast! I hate Jack Tanner." Justifying his previous stand against the institution of marriage Shaw further points out that Miss Violet has already enslaved Mr. Hector, who goes on telling lies for her sake, having practically nothing to do of his own. The second act is virtually silent about Shaw's religious convictions.

(IV)

On 15th October, 1909, writing to Julie Moore, Shaw declared: "the 3rd act of Man and Superman will remain on record as a statement of my creed." There is sufficient truth in the above statement of Shaw. This particular act represents the quintessence of Shavian philosophy, which pivots round the idea of the creation of the superman. For the emergence of the superman we need a superphilosophy and a super-religion. The most important characteristic feature of the act is its dreamy setup.

Mendoza is an excellent character. Though a brigand by profession, he is a comparatively good man. He is not glued to any fixed belief or 'ism whatsoever: "Now, we

---

3. Miss Violet, Act-II, p. 76
4. Miss Violet, Act-II, p. 76
contd...
tolerate all opinions here." Mendoza too represents another aspect of Shaw's personality: "I am not a slave to any superstition. I have swallowed all the formulas, even that of Socialism." His opinions are opposed to the established religious beliefs.

Mendoza encourages certain qualities like courage, endurance, foresight, abstinence and self-control, which Shaw thinks, are essential for the true spiritual progress of man.

Contrary to established conceptions, Shaw holds a completely independent attitude towards heaven and hell. In a sense, he turns the whole idea of heaven and hell upside down. In this regard, he disregards the Biblical explanations. He also does not agree with the explanations given by Dante and Milton regarding hell: hell is only 'unquenchable fire'. Accordingly, all the Christians believe that the hell is a horrible place where the sinners are eternally tormented with fire, worms, and serpents. Dante described it as 'a place of mud, frost, filth, fire, and venomous serpents: all torture'. Similarly, Milton describes hell as a place made of 'liquid fire'. But Shaw rejects all the Biblical explanations. For him, hell is nothing but an extension of our earthly life, without its limitations.

Anna (Miss. Anna) is in hell; but she thinks she...
should be in heaven. Because, she thinks she was a devout disciple of the church. After her death at the age of 70, Ana comes to hell with all her wrong notions about heaven and hell in particular, and life in general. To Don Juan (Tanner) she says: "You do not know to whom you are speaking. I am a lady, and a faithful daughter of the church." Ana thinks, there is no justice even in the next world. She thinks she has been unjustly placed in hell even in spite of her confessions and repentances: "But I have sincerely repented; I have confessed." When Don Juan asks, "How much?", she answers, "More sin than I really committed. I loved confessions." She openly ridicules the Christian way of purging one's soul through official repentance and confessions. Fed and nourished by the Biblical notions of heaven and hell, Ana thinks, hell is a place of eternal torment, but to her utter surprise she does not feel any pain in hell. The fact astonishes her:

The Old Woman (Ana): I tell you, wretch, I know I am not in hell.
Don Juan: How do you know?
The Old Woman: Because I feel no pain.
Don Juan: Oh, then there is no mistake! You are intentionally damned.
The Old Woman: Why do you say that?

7. Ana, Act-III, p-101
8. -Ibid-
9. -Ibid- contd....
Don Juan: Because hell, Senora, is a place for the wicked. The wicked are quite comfortable in it; it was made for them. You tell me you feel no pain. I conclude you are one of those for whom hell exists. 10

Shaw's explanation of hell is remarkable. For him hell is nothing but an extension of our material and flesh-and-blood life. All the so-called virtues, viz., honour, duty, justice etc., dominate life here: "Here is the home of honour, duty, justice, and the rest of the seven deadly virtues. All the wickedness on earth is done in their name; where else but in hell should they have their reward."

The world would have been a better place without such 'moral qualities', Shaw believes. People, who are wedded to such moralities, are the fit people to live in hell. Hell, he believes, is a place of unreality and illusion: "Nothing is real here. That is the horror of damnation." 12 "Heaven", on the other hand is the home of the masters of reality. 13 Because, the conception of heaven and hell is a "question of temperament". 14 People without any hope and purpose and self-understanding are the fit people for hell. In this regard, Shaw concurs with what Dante said about people preparing to enter the hell: "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrati!" 15 (All hope abandon, ye who enter here!).

12. Ibid. p-104. 15. Divine Comedy, Inferno-iii, 9.
presupposes purpose and the fulfilment of that purpose.
So, man without hope does not have any purpose, and no
commitment to fulfill, and thus, enjoy life without knowing
it and without understanding it. Such purposeless people live
in an illusory world, absolutely detached from the level of
higher consciousness. That is precisely what hell is really
like.

Shaw also defies the scriptural explanations con­
cerning the image of the Devil. According to him, "in hell - the
Devil is the leader of the best society." Talking to Ana, Don
Juan says: "All that is superstition, Ana. Reassure yourself.
Remember - the Devil is not so black as he is painted." In
short, the Devil is the leader of the people who live in an
illusory world, completely divorced from the creative intellect.

The Devil also to a large extent represents the
Shavian mind. Reinforcing the Shavian idea he warmly welcomes
Ana: "Ah, Senora, do not be anxious. You come to us from earth,
full of prejudices and terrors of that priestly hidden place.
You have heard me ill spoken of; and yet believe me, I have
hosts of friends there." Shavian abhorrence for the priestly
class is once again hinted here.

The Devil importunes Don Juan to stay and rejoice
in hell. But, Don Juan declines the offer, knowing fully well

---

16. Don Juan, Act II, p. 102
17. Don Juan, Act III, p. 110
18. The Devil, Act II, p. 111

contd....
that hell offers nothing but hollow and purposeless pleasures for the sake of pleasure alone.

The Statue, another representative of popular sentiments, does find 'excellent sense' in the offer of the devil. The most interesting thing about the Statue is that he is fed up with heavenly life. So, he has decided to come down to hell. He could not enjoy heaven because of his hypocrisy: "I cannot complain. I was a hypocrite, and it served me right to be sent to heaven." A man of the world, he found heaven 'dull and uncomfortable'. Because, he was temperamentally immature to remain in heaven. Shaw puts special emphasis on 'temperament' and 'taste'. Heaven, he thinks, is the abode for the 'masters of reality'. The following passage clearly reinforces the Shavian stand:

The Devil: (To Don Juan) Why not take refuge in Heaven? That is the proper place for you. (To Ana) Come, Senora! Could you not persuade him for his own good to try a change of air?

Ana: But can he go to Heaven if he wants to?

The Devil: What's to prevent him?

Ana: Can everybody - can I go to Heaven if I want to?

The Devil: (Rather contemptuously) Certainly, if your taste lies that way.

19. The Statue, Act-III, p-112

contd...
Ana: But why does not everybody go to Heaven, then?
The Statue: (chuckling) I can tell you that, my dear, it's because heaven is the most angelically dull place in all creation. That's why. 20

The Devil epitomises the Shawian idea, saying, "It is a question of temperament," 21 and "the gulf is the difference between the angelic and the diabolic temperament." 22 Illustrating the idea the devil says: "There is no physical gulf between the philosopher's class room and the bull-ring; but the bull-fighters do not come to the class room for all that." 23 Moreover, the Statue's illustration of the 'classical concert' further reinforces the idea.

Jon Juan goes deeper. In the earth man is enslaved by 'flash'. Consequently, he becomes slave to the harder realities like hunger, thirst, age, disease, death and so on. The conventions like faith, romance, science etc. encourage man to make the sole prayer "make me a healthy animal". Hell offers a great deal of freedom in this regard. It eliminates all the barriers posed by "this tyranny of the flash". Jon Juan explains the whole thing: "The earth is the nursery in which men and women play at being heroes and heroines, saints and sinners; but they are dragged down from their fool's

paradise by their bodies: hunger and cold and thirst, age and decay and disease, death above all, makes them slaves of reality: thrice a day meals must be eaten and digested: thrice a century a new generation must be engendered: ages of faith, of romance, and of science are all driven at last to have but one prayer "make me a healthy animal". But, here (in hell) you escape this tyranny of the flesh; for here you are not an animal at all; you are a ghost, an appearance, an illusion, a convention, deathless, ageless: in a word bodiless.... here you call your appearance beauty, your emotions love, your sentiments heroism, your aspirations virtue, just as you --- did on earth; but here there are no hard facts to contradict you, no ironic contrast of your needs with your pretensions, no human comedy, nothing but a perpetual romance, a universal melodrama. 24

"Perpetual romance" and "universal melodrama" cannot lead to any spiritual progress of mankind. Nothing positive can come out of mere hollowness. Then, how to escape this void? Shaw answers: we must develop an angelic temperament within us. Our conventional religion cannot develop within us that 'angelic temperament'. On the contrary, conventional religion anaesthetises the human mind, and

contd....
sterilizes the dormant possibilities in him. In order to obviate this spiritual stagnation man must be conscious of himself and of his role towards the cosmic will. People with heavenly temperament are conscious of the fact. They know the distinction between fact and fiction. Talking to Ana, Don Juan says: "In heaven, as I picture it, dear lady, you live and work instead of playing and pretending. You face things as they are....If the play still goes on here (hell) and on earth, and all the world is a stage, Heaven is at least behind the scenes. But Heaven cannot be described by metaphor. Thither I shall go presently, because there I hope to escape at least from lies and from the tedious, vulgar pursuits of happiness, to spend my sons in contemplation." 25

Then, the creation of the superman is possible only through 'sons in contemplation.' By 'sons in contemplation' Shaw must have meant a process of self-realization and self-understanding, which will open up his inner eyes to see what lies 'behind the scenes,' and thereby understand the purpose of the Supreme Mind. In short, this is the true spiritual awareness of man.

The magnificence and nobility of the universal mind is sheer vacuum to the spiritually blind people.

Maybe, that is why, Don Juan points out to the Statue:"

25. Don Juan, Act-III, p-118

contd...
picture gallery is a dull place for a blind man. Now the question is what can open up the eyes of the blind man? Established religion? Definitely not, it is only the 'sence in contemplation'. But, what should a man contemplate? In the words of Don Juan: "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.'

Here Shaw puts emphasis on 'life' in the tune of Jesus Christ, who said "Live and live abundantly". Shaw equates 'life' with 'creativity' leading to absolute perfection.

Man must know the meaning and purpose of living. Living blindly, or without knowing it, is death itself. In other words, man must be aware of his directions. Don Juan rightly says: "Not merely the need to do, but the need to know what I do," least in my blind efforts to live I should be slaying myself."

In short, Shaw wants people to live with consciousness, so that he can actively help and co-operate in the universal pursuit after perfection. 'In the Heaven I seek, no other joy, but there is the work of helping Life in its struggle upward.'

For the attainment of this consciousness man must undergo a process of mental training accompanied by

26. Don Juan, Act-III, P-118. 27. Ibid., P-119.
28. John, Ch. 10, vs. 10 (The Bible, (SV)). 30. -Ibid-
29. Don Juan, Act-III, P-119. 30. -Ibid-

contd...
troubles and tribulations. Here Shaw accords with Lord Buddha, who said, "Life is suffering." It is only through the process of suffering man can reach the stage of enlightenment, what Lord Buddha calls 'Nirvana'. The Upanishad also strikes the same note: "Lead me from the unreal to the real; lead me from darkness to light; lead me from death to immortality." 31

Body without creative brain is meaninglessness. It is practically anti-life, because it does not know why it lives. Don Juan refers to the instances of some gigantic animals like megatherium and ichthyosaurus. Those animals had titanic bodies, yet they have become extinct. Because, they lacked the creative brain. In his words, "those 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." 32

The examples of megatherium and ichthyosaurus can also be applied to man. Man has the brain, but it is a pity that his brain is directed more towards death and destruction than towards anything creative. The Devil rightly says: "And I tell you that in the arts of life men invent nothing; but in the arts of death he outdoes Nature herself, and produces by Chemistry and machinery all the slaughter of plague, pestilence, and famine." 33 This negative instinct of

31. Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad-I,3,28(Sri. Ramkrishna Math, Mysore)
32. Don Juan, Act-III, P-120. (Madras.)
33. The Devil, Act-III, P-120.

contd...
man may one day put an end to his existence, Shaw fears.

In spite of these destructive tendencies, Shaw is optimistic of a better future for man. Because, in man both the forces are at work. On the one hand, he has the negative and destructive instincts, on the other, he has within him the instinct of self-preservation, which will ultimately gain the ground. Hence, Shaw's stress on 'life-force'. Because, this cosmic force is not dead. It always moves towards the level of absolute perfection. In the words of Don Juan: "Life cannot will its own extinction either in its blind amorphous state or in any of the forms into which it has organised itself." 34 Sooner or later, life-force will teach and inspire man to be conscious of himself, leading to his self-realization and self-analysis. This will again lead to man's psychic growth. This psychic growth will consequently make him "the ideal individual being omnipotent, omniscient, infallible, and withal completely, unilludedly self-conscious; in short, a God." 35

The life of the Ancients (Back to Methuselah) more or less approximates this higher level of human perfection. Like a poet Don Juan says: "No: I sing, not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that

34. Don Juan, Act-III, P-123. 35. Don Juan, Act-III, P-128.

contd...
Will by, the so-discovered means.36 By the 'philosophic man'
Shaw does not mean the 'doctors of divinity', but the man
who would 'contemplate' to discover the 'inner will of the
world' and thereby invent means to fulfil that cosmic will.

Shaw is sure, the doctors of divinity will not
tolerate his stand, because for them anything unsuited to
their interest is invariably irreligious and heretical.
Don Juan says: "the doctors of divinity bade me consider
what I must do to save my soul; but I was not a spiritual
hypochondriac any more than a bodily one, and would not
trouble myself about that either, so they called me an atheist
and went their way."37 In this sense, religion, as we have
to-day, is retrograde in spirit. And, what is worse, anti-life.

Talking about virtue Shaw maintains that virtue is
purely relative. It is the pampered child of vested interest.
Sometimes, in order to hide our vices we discover virtues.
For example, in our society marriage is attached to virtue,
and virtue to sex. In the language of Don Juan: "In that case,
what is virtue but the trade-unionism of the married."38
Life-force, Shaw says, does not care for such man-made and
activated standards of virtues and vices. It is far above
them. "For honor, chastity, and all the rest of your moral
figments it cares not a rap."39 Shaw does not, therefore, feel

---
36. Don Juan, Act-111, p-130.

contd...
the need for making unnecessary hullabaloo about religion, morality, virtue, chastity and the like in the cosmic interest of the Life-force.

So, man's spiritual progress, according to Shaw, cannot be achieved through the established religion, but through his 'will' power. Shaw firmly believed in the dictum: there is a will there is a way. Do you not know that there is a will there is a way? That whatever Man really wishes to do he will finally discover a means of doing...well, the means will be found: the brain will not fail when the will is in earnest. Shaw adds further: "That is the law of my Life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organisation, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clear self-understanding. It was the supremacy of this purpose that reduced love for me to the mere pleasure of a moment, art for me to the mere schooling of my faculties, religion for me to a mere excuse for laziness, since it had set-up a God who looked at the world and saw that it was good (Genesis, ch. 1, vv. 1-25), against the instinct in me that looked through my eyes at the world and saw that it could be improved."

The Devil rightly calls Don Juan a 'life-worshipper': "I cannot keep these life worshippers; they all go." A just statement on Shaw indeed! Shaw was an ardent life-worshipper.

not a church-worshipper. The Devil warns the Statue to beware of such life-worshippers because of their unconventional behaviour: "There is something unnatural about these fellows. Do not listen to their gospel, Senor Commander; it is dangerous. Beware of the pursuit of the superman: it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for human. To a man, horses and dogs and cats are mere species, outside the moral world. Well, to the superman, men and women are mere species too, also outside the moral world. This Don Juan was kind to women and courteous to man as your daughter here was kind to her pet cats and dogs." Shaw's idea of the superman is crystal clear now. He is distantly or closely allied to people like Rembrant, Nietzsche, and Siegfried, because all of them had the common pursuit after the superman.

From the traditional religious point of view Shaw is a heretic; from the traditional moral point of view he is a libertine, and from the traditional social point of view he is a 'social failure'. His philosophy may be mocked at as 'libertine's philosophy'. Superman, Shaw thinks, would be created only when everyman will feel like Ana about his role to play: "Then my work is not yet done. I believe in the Life to come." And, only then God's will "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness," will be realised, and fulfilled.

43. The Devil, Act III, p.153. 44. Ana, Act III, p.155. 45. Genesis, ch 1, v r.26. (The Bible: (SV) contd...
Act four does not convey anything new, beyond what has already been said in the third act. The cat is out of the bag! Violet is publicly declared married wife to Mr. Hector Malone. Anne is wedded to Tanner. For personal interest Tanner was unwilling to marry Anne; but in the cosmic interest of the Life-force he accepts Anne as his wife. Mr. Tanner clearly declares: "We do the world's will, not our own. I have a frightful feeling that I shall let myself be married because it is the world's will that you (Anne) should have a husband." In short, Tanner's unwillingness to marry Anne has been subordinated to the will of the Life-force: "The Life-force. I am in the grip of the Life-force."

Throughout the play Shaw wants to pronounce the idea: the absolute denial of self in the larger interest of Life-force, or call it life-eternal. Shaw's is a religion of life, and its inner growth, leading to the divinisation of man.

(VI)

Shaw purposefully appends the Revolutionist's handbook to the play only in order to reinforce his philosophy already limelighted there. Baconian in style and spirit, each chapter deals with a particular aspect of his philosophy. In the first

1. Tanner, Act-IV, r-190.
2. Tanner, Act-IV, r-191. contd....
chapter entitled, *Good Breeding*, Shaw puts emphasis on the importance of good breeding. By 'good breeding' he does not mean the breeding of the athletes, not idle philosophers either, but people with 'superior mind'. What he wants is that we must spiritually transfigure. He upholds the saying of Mrs. Poyser: "Ye must be born again and born different."

Every birth or every transfiguration must add something new to the personality of a man. This evolutionary process will continue until the superman is created.

Shaw would rather choose Samson the athlete than Calvin the religious preacher: "If we must choose between a race of athletes and a race of 'good' men, let us have the athletes; better Samson and Milo than Calvin and Robespierre. But neither alternative is worth changing for Samson is no more a superman than Calvin.* In short, Shaw did not find 'superior mind' either in Samson or in Calvin. Calvinism as a sect of religion cannot be given the honour of a superior kind of religion as it lacks the capacity to transfigure man into superman.

In *Property and Marriage* Shaw puts forward some suggestions to modify the present ways of property and marriage. He stands for the dissolution of the present set-up of both the institutions in the larger interest of creating


contd....
a better class of men. In this sense, Shaw is in tune with the Socratic school of philosophers, according to whom family and property are the root-causes of an individual's downfall.

In *The Perfectionist Experiment at Oneida Creek* Shaw refers to the failure of the Oneida community, which carried on some experiments in order to bring about some perfection in man. This community was founded in 1848 with the avowed purpose—"That we will devote ourselves exclusively to the establishment of the Kingdom of God." This particular progressive perfectionist community has been able to produce some healthier children, and in doing this suffered a great deal of calumny both from the social organisations as well as from the religious communities. Thus, they had to forcefully carry on their activities in the teeth of many oppositions. But, as the whole endeavour lacked spontaneity and emotional acceptance from the majority of the people, the meaningful purpose of the perfectionists remained mere dreams. Every citizen, according to Shaw, must spontaneously transcend the ordinary human imperfections marked by his political, economic, religious, emotional, and national behaviours: "Until there is an England in which everyman is a Cromwell, a France in which everyman is a Napoleon, a Rome in which everyman is a Caesar, a Germany in which everyman is a

---

3. *Revolutionist's Handbook, Ch. The Perfectionist Experiment at Oneida Creek, P-207.* (Orient Longmans). contd....
Luther plus a Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the Pyramid of Cheops.  

That is to say, for Shaw, mere personal salvation is not enough. What he wants is the total national salvation, which is the precondition to any personal salvation.

In Man's objection to his own improvement, Shaw strikes the keynote by raising the key-problem confronting the human destiny. Man's animal instinct has subordinated his creative spirit. He has aggressively opposed all sorts of progressive ventures for the preservation of some traditional values. Consequently, this has retarded the psychic progress of man. The fundamental reason behind this factuality is that man has mistaken life for animal pleasures and romances:

"The most troublesome opposition will arise from the general fear of mankind that any interference with our conjugal customs will be an interference with our pleasures and romance."

One of the most important chapters is Progress and illusion, where Shaw wants to pinpoint the fact that what is popularly considered to be progress is a mere illusion in the real sense of the term. By progress Shaw invariably means the spiritual progress, and not the mere material advancement alone. Shaw has been an untiring fighter against 'matter'.

---

4. A.H, Ch. The Perfectionist Experiment at Ocmida Creek, P-209.
5. A.H, Ch. Man's objection to his own improvement, P-210.

contd....
He considered it to be the actual stumbling block in man's progressive pursuits towards absolute perfection. That is why, Shaw is virtually conscious both of "man as he is and man as he might become." Man, he thinks, must first undergo a basic mental and spiritual change; a transfiguration of his attitude to life. Man must be sensitively conscious of the brighter possibilities lying dormant in him. He must undergo a psychic transformation. This stage of psychic evolution is the real progress. "...and we may as well make up our minds that man will return to his idols and cuppitudes, in spite of all 'movements' and all revolutions, until his nature is changed."7

The conventional idea of progress is the 'illusion of illusions'; and our duty is to be dehypnotized from this illusiveness, and think of the purgation of soul. Shaw repeats the same idea in the chapter, The Conceit of Civilization. Are we really civilized? Shaw says, "not in the least". In the name of civilization man has become confirmed hypocrites.

In The Verdict of History, Shaw points out the fact that there have been some changes only in our methods, but not in the contents. The chauffeur of a modern automobile does not basically differ from the charioteer of Achilles, or a modern Prime Minister from Julius Caesar. That is to say, man is

---
6. H.; Ch. Progress and Illusion, P-215. (Longmans)
7. H.; Ch. Progress and Illusion, P-220-221. contd....
where he was - "enough, then, of this goose-cackle about progress; man, as he is, never will nor can add a cubit to his stature by any of its quackeries, political, scientific, educational, religious, or artistic." 8

In short, Shaw was against the entire social fabric of the society. Religion as a guiding spirit behind the social mechanism is also not free from its cancerous disease. Although, we make a fuss about Christianity, Shaw thinks, "national Christianity is impossible without a nation of Christo". 9 True, for the realization of the genuine spirit of Christianity we must first of all develop the true Christian spirit in us.

The intolerance of the religious organisations cannot foster free and frank thought within man. Static and immobile religious principles cannot develop dynamism in him. In the language of Shaw "A nation which revises its parish councils once in three years, but will not revise its articles of religion once in three hundred, even when those articles avowedly began as a political compromise dictated by Mr. Facing-Both-ways, is a nation that needs remaking." 10

Many of the articles of religion are made with some political motivations. Now the world has undergone a great change in our religious articles too. Many of our religious articles

---

8. K. Hj Ch. The Verdict of History, p. 231.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid, p. 232. contd....
have become fossils, no longer effective in the present context.

In the concluding chapter, The Method, Shaw puts special emphasis on the importance of 'will' - "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."" Man's indomitable 'will' to spiritually evolve is the only panacea to cure him. Man must be conscious of his brighter possibilities and his inner potentialities - "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."13

In the Maxims for Revolutionists, Shaw shows the importance of action against the mechanical belief. Talking about religion he points out: "Beware of the man whose God is in the skies. What a man believes may be ascertained, not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts."13 Action is the main proof of a man's religiosity. Shaw, thus, repudiates the blind idolaters. Blind idolaters cannot be expected to act prudently and judiciously. Blind idolatry leads only to total spiritual bankruptcy.

12. - Ibid.