Back to Methuselah (1921) is basically a grim elongation of *Man and Superman* (1901-1903). After a lapse of long eighteen years Shaw's imaginations have become wilder as well as more creative. The ideas that remained undermined in *Man and Superman* found a fertile soil in *Back to Methuselah*, where Shaw has given free play to his unbridled imaginations. In other words, the ideas, which were conceived in *Man and Superman*, were delivered and developed in *Back to Methuselah*. From the point of stageworthiness this is a great failure, but from the point of view of creative thinking it might be called a dramatic epic in prose; and it can be compared with Plato's *Republic* or with John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. A critic like Margery M. Morgan has already pointed out the similarities that do exist between Plato's *Republic* and Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*.

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In her words: "Shaw took from the Republic some of the principal symbols and concepts on which Back to Methuselah is based...the argument of the Republic is still his source: as reason should rule over appetite and passion in the soul, so should the Guardian (who is the philosopher) rule in the state".

Back to Methuselah has often been regarded by some critics as the masterpiece of Bernard Shaw. There is definitely much logic in the view. The play exhibits a smooth synthesis of Shaw the evolutionist and Shaw the religionist. In the preface to the play he clearly suggests what he really does mean by a true religion. The concept of religion has been very tactfully intermingled with that of evolution, as he has done in his earlier play, Man and Superman, almost two decades back. By evolution he does not necessarily mean the 'evolution' of Charles Darwin. Shavian evolution is 'creative evolution'. According to him, animals evolve not by virtue of their physical force, but by virtue of their superior intelligence and superior brain.

Shaw, as we have already stated, did not have any good opinion about the so-called religious beliefs of the common people. The existing conventional and stereo-


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typed religious beliefs would surely dehumanise and at the same time demoralise man to the level of brainless beasts, unless they have something to do with what he calls 'creative evolution'. He categorically states: "creative evolution is already a religion, and indeed now unmistakably the religion of the twentieth century". Only 'creative evolution' can realize Bernard Shaw's long-cherished dream - the creation of the superman.

The author clearly states how with advancing age he also started losing faith in the conventional setup of religion. "I had doubled my years and my length and I had discarded the religion of my forefathers", he says.

Starting with the basic question of civilization, Shaw points out that the existing form of civilization is no civilization at all in the real sense of the term. In fact, man does not have the capacity to organise even a village or a tribe, let alone what we call 'civilization', which is a much more complex phenomenon, he observes. In a society where there is no basic difference between government and exploitation; and where the world is 'ruled by the childish, the brigands, and the blackguards', there can be no meaning of religion. The author also writes: "But if man is


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really incapable of organizing a big civilization, and cannot organize even a village or a tribe any too well, what is the use of giving him a religion? A religion may make his hunger and thirst for righteousness but will it endow him with practical capacity to satisfy that appetite? Here Shaw wants to suggest the relativity of religion, which he thinks cannot be effective in complete isolation from the other corresponding material issues of life. Such ideas are mere repetitions of what he has already stated almost two decades back in the play, Man and Superman. In the play, Man and Superman, Shaw has already pointed out that there has been no real progress of man. He calls it the 'collapse of civilization'. In order to avert this sad state of affairs, man must be aware of the fertility and creativity latent within him, and thereby find ways and means for his salvation. If man does not pay any attention to this point nature will take its own course and create a superior species, that would supersede man in every respect. In the words of Shaw: "But the pitiless reply still is that God helps those who help themselves. This does not mean that if man cannot find the remedy no remedy will be found. The power that produced man when the monkey was not up to the mark, can produce a higher creature than Man if Man does not come to the mark. What it

means is that if man is to be saved, man must save himself. Like the Neo-Darwinists and the Mechanists Shaw does not believe in ‘accidental selection’. If any betterment has to come it must come through man’s consciousness.

Man has every capacity to develop his own self. He can do and undo anything and everything if he wishes to. If a weight-lifter can develop and rear up his muscles, the philosopher can also develop and rear up the brain. “If a weight-lifter, under trivial stimulus of an athletic competition, can ‘put up a muscle’, it seems reasonable to believe than an equally earnest and convinced philosopher could ‘put up a brain’. He earnestly believes: ‘that the impulse that produces evolution is creative’. So, man must will his own creative evolution.

Shaw refers to the conflict between the Empedoclean and the Evolutionists...both the groups were opposed to the belief that all the creatures were separately created as they are described in the book of Genesis. Shaw was rather attracted to the theory enunciated by Lamarck. Lamarck believed that “species were an illusion produced by the shortness of our lives, and that they were constantly changing and melting into one another and into new forms as surely as the hand of a clock is...”

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5. Preface to Wellmeas of Civilization; p=306.
7. Ibid; contd...
continuously moving, though it moves so slowly that it looks stationary to us. Hence, the phrase 'conflict between religion and science', disturbing the intellectuals of the time. But, Shaw was not at all disturbed. Either he had to believe in the authenticity of the biblical accounts, or he had to be an evolutionist. In this connection, he states: "If you believed that dogs and cats and snakes and birds and beetles and oysters and whales and men and women were all separately designed and made and named in Eden Garden at the beginning of things, and have since survived simply by reproducing their kind, then you were not an evolutionist. If you believed, on the contrary, that all the different species are modifications, variations, and elaborations of one primal stock, or even of a few primal stocks, then you were an evolutionist." Shaw does not hesitate to disregard the Biblical explanations on the strength of scientific truths.

Shaw expressly declares himself to be aligned with the group of the Neo-Lamarchians. Like any Neo-Lamarchian, he also believes that "the great factor in evolution is use and disuse"; that is to say, he overemphasizes the significance of the power of 'will'. "If you have no eyes, and want to see, and keep trying to see,"

contd...
you will finally get eyes. If, like a mote or a subterranean fish, you have eyes and don't want to see, you will lose your eyes. If you like eating the tender tops of trees enough to make you concentrate all your energies on the stretching of your neck, you will finally get a long neck, like the giraffe. Here, Shaw has shown the invalidity of the theory of circumstantial selection, or the theory of the survival of the fittest. As an illustration, he has pointed out that "the man who is learning how to ride a bicycle has no advantage over the non-cyclist in the struggle for existence: quite the contrary". In short, man must instinctively will his own perfection.

He repeats the same idea: "if you can turn a pedestrian into a cyclist, and a cyclist into a pianist or a violinist, without the intervention of circumstantial selection, you can turn an amoeba into a man or a man into a superman, without it". He further adds, "you are alive, and you want to be more alive. You want an extension of consciousness and of power. You want, consequently, additional organs, or additional uses of your existing organs; that is, additional habits. You get them because you want them badly enough to keep trying for

11. Ibid.

contd...
tries until they come. Nobody knows how: nobody knows why: all we know is that the thing actually takes place. Shaw once again puts his emphasis on the question of superconsciousness, i.e., superconsciousness for super power. It is only a healthy religious order that can endow man with this superconsciousness.

Shaw refers to the philosophy of Loren Oken, who defined natural science as "the science of the everlasting transmutation of the Holy Ghost in the world." Shaw was further inclined towards this metaphysical explanation of Evolution, he is equally inclined to the philosophy expressed by Schopenhauer in his *The World as Will* (1819). Like Schopenhauer, Shaw also staunchly believes that behind the evolution there is the 'will to live'.

Shaw discourages any kind of obsession with the 'first cause'. He explains that it is meaningless and unnecessary to perspire on the problem of the first cause. Any fuss to find out the first cause does not lead to anything. Religion also, says Shaw, cannot explain the first cause. He disregarde the heathen beliefs that "the world is supported by an elephant who is supported by a turtle".

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Similarly, he also disregards Mahomet's belief "that the mountains are great weights to keep the world from being blown away into space". No logician, says Shaw, can explain "which comes first - the owl or the egg". So, the problem of creation cannot be explained in cause-and-effect relations. From the logical point of view we can say that if God made the world there must also be someone who made God, and there must be someone to make the maker of God. As a result, there will be a long chain of makers. But, we will not be able to find out the first cause. That is why, Shaw writes, "an infinity of makers is unthinkable and extravagant: it is no harder to believe in number one than in number fifty thousand or fifty million; so why not accept number one and stop there, since no attempt to get behind him will remove your logical difficulty". But, he conclusively believes that behind the whole creation "there was mind and purpose", it is the primary duty of religion to make man aware of that supreme mind and its purpose. In that sense it is nothing but rank heresy to ascribe the whole creation to "pure accident".

More often than not a cry is heard that Shaw is a rank atheist. According to such cries Shaw is a non-believer in God. He clearly points out that like the conven- 

16. Preface; ch. In Quest of the First Cause; p-516. 

contd....
tional and blind believers he does not believe in God in any anthropomorphic form. He regards God not as an anthropomorphic being but as Elan Vital or Life-Force. Here he upholds what was declared of God by the church of England in a convocation in 1562 that he is "without body, parts, or passions". He objected to the popular tendency of treating God as an anthropomorphic idol.

Complaining against this view, and at the same time defending his position Shaw said - "They imposed this idol in practice on the church itself, inspite of the First Article, and thereby homeopathically produced the atheist, whose denial of God was simply a denial of the idol and a demonstration against an unbearable and most unchristian idolatry". From this statement it is clear that he was always against idolatry, misnamed religiosity.

Moreover, Shaw objected to the claim of biblical infallibility, as he has exhibited/his criticism of the Bible in the preface to the play, Androcles and the Lion. According to him, it is nothing but gross distortion of fact into fiction - "science was strangled by bigoted ignoramuses claiming infallibility for their interpretation of the Bible, which was regarded, not as literature nor even as a book, but partly as an oracle which answered..."
and settled all questions, and partly as talisman to be carried by soldiers in their breast pockets or placed under the pillows of persons who were afraid of ghosts. From this statement at least one point is clear that for Shaw the Bible has more literary than any oracular value.

Among all the so-called religious virtues Shaw was for 'self-control', which, he thinks, is the pivotal power behind our creative life. In this respect, he is one with the Vitalist philosophers like Nietzsche. Both of them believe in 'will to power over self', which is ignored by the Neo-Darwinists. In the chapters The Greatest of these is self-control and A sample of Lamarche-Shavian invective, Shaw has shown his agreement with the vitalist philosophers and condemned the Neo-Darwinists for their lack of 'imagination, metaphysics, poetry, conscience, or decency'.

Did Shaw want to formulate a new religious order? Not at all. In this regard he states: "Protestantism was a movement towards the pursuit of a light called an inner light because everyman must see it with his own eyes and not take any priest's word for it or any church's account of it". Instead of trying to establish a new religious order Shaw rather wanted to 'redis-

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18. Preface; ch. The Irresistible lry of order, order; p-518.

contd....
till' the old one - "In short, there is no question of a new religion, but rather of redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible, though they are the stock-in-trade of all the churches and all the schools".

Shaw sought to emancipate the genuine spirit of religion from the heavy weight of romances. Reinforcing the idea he says: "It is the adulteration of religion by the romance of miracles and paradises and torture chambers that makes it reel at the impact of every advance in science, instead of being clarified by it. If you take an English village lad, and teach him that religion means believing that the stories of Noah's Ark and the Garden of Eden are literally true on the authority of God himself, and if that boy becomes an artisan and goes into the town among the sceptical city proletariat, then, when the jibes of his master set him thinking, and he sees that these stories cannot be literally true, and learns that no candid prelate now pretends to believe them, he does not make any fine distinctions: he declares at once that religion is a fraud, and parsons and teachers hypocrites and liars. He becomes indifferent to religion, if he has little conscience, and indignantly hostile to it if he

20. Preface, ch. The Homoeopathic Reaction against Darwinism; p-538. contd....
has a good deal". Such a state of affairs is branded as 'common religion' by Shaw, who very emphatically declares: "Common irreligion will destroy civilization unless it is countered by common religion".

The Biblical as well as other scriptural stories, he asserts, have nothing to do with the real spirit of religion; and if such wrong understandings go on gaining ground on man's minds unabated human civilization is sure to collapse. "Civilization cannot be safely be left in their hands. If the dwindling sects like the Church of England, the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, and the rest, persist in trying to cramp the human mind within the limits of these grotesque perversions of natural truths and poetic metaphors, then they must be ruthlessly banished from the schools until they either perish in general contempt or discover the soul that is hidden in every dogma".

Hereby, Shaw wants to emphasize the point that such misunderstanding of religion will pervert human mind, ultimately negating the very purpose behind the creation of man. "Children should be kept away from the vicious tentacles of such religious distortions."

He, therefore, suggests that religion dogmatized is religion totally destroyed. Religion should unite men instead of dividing them. Religious doctrines should be

22. Ibid.

contd...
equally acceptable to all - irrespective of caste, creed, and nationality. In the language of Shaw, "The test of a dogma is its universality. As long as the church of England preaches a single doctrine that the Brahman, the Buddhist, the Mussulman, the Parsee, and all the other sectarians who are British subjects cannot accept, it has no legitimate place in the counsels of the British Commonwealth, and will remain what it is at present, a corrupter of youth, a danger to the State, and an obstruction to the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." A legend should be treated and regarded as a legend, not as truth. Shaw does not have any complaint against the legends if they are enjoyed merely as legends. "This does not mean that we should throw away legend and parable and drama: they are the natural vehicles of dogma; but woe to the churches and rulers who substitute the legend for the dogma; the parable for history, the drama for religion." Man's attempt to dogmatize the legends and the parables has practically devitalized the genuine spirit of religion. All the wars fought on religious grounds were practically battles against religion itself, Shaw believes. "What are called wars of religion are always wars to destroy religion by affirming the historical truth or material substantiality of some legend,

25. - Ibid- contd...
and killing those who refuse to accept it as historical
or substantial. 26

Shaw's attitude to the legends is purely
literary; and the legends, he thinks, will aesthetically
entertain man in all the ages to come. In his language —
"what we should do, then, is to pool our legends and make
a delightful stock of religious folk-lore on an honest
basis for all mankind. With our minds freed from pretence
and falsehood we could enter into the heritage of all
the faiths. China would share her sages with Spain, and
Spain her saints with China. 27 Shaw's attitude to the
legends and the parables is further expressed in the
statement — "All the sweetness of religion is conveyed
to the world by the hands of the storytellers and
imagemakers. Without their fictions the truths of religion
would for the multitude be neither intelligible nor
even apprehensible; and the prophets would prophesy and
and the teachers teach in vain. And nothing stands be­
 tween the people and the fictions except the silly false­
hood that the fictions are literal truths, and that
there is nothing in religion but fiction. 28

Religion, according to Shaw, should be attached
to science. Without this alliance the genuine spirit of

27 Preface, ch. What to do with the legends, p-540.
28 — Ibid— contd....
the former is negated. Religion and science should be supplementary to one another. Science, he says, is not always free from dogmas, but unlike the religious dogmas the scientific dogmas are less harmful or no harmful at all. In this connection, Shaw writes – "Let the churches ask themselves why there is no revolt against the dogma of mathematics though there is one against the dogmas of religion. It is not that the mathematical dogmas are more comprehensible. The law of inverse squares is as incomprehensible to the common man as the Athanasian creed. It is not that science is free from legends, witchcraft, miracles, biographical boostings of quacks as heroes and saints, and of barren scoundrels as explorers and discoverers. On the contrary, the iconography and hagiology of Science are as copious as they are mostly shallow".

By this Shaw necessarily means to mean that religion should be based on fact and not on fiction. Religion should learn this lesson from science.

Concluding his prefatory notes, Shaw expressly declares the necessity of a healthy and scientific approach towards religion for the furtherance of human civilization. A healthy human civilization is something absurd without a redistilled religion. In the language of Shaw "for I had always known that civilization needs a


contd....
religion as a matter of life or death".

(II)

The play consists of five parts stretching that of over many centuries covering a period from Adam and Eve to the imaginary year, 31,920 A.D. This is a play about evolution from one stage to the other. The first act (Part One - In the Beginning) begins in the Garden of Eden, where the only inhabitants were the first parents of mankind - Adam and Eve. Adam was the first tiller of land and a lover of peace, while Eve was faithful wife to Adam, without any children till then. They were quite unconscious of the ways of the present-day world. They did not know what is life; what is death; what is imagination; what is will; and what is conception. In short, they were the faithful children of God. They were untainted by anything worldly.

Adam is bored of eternal life with Eve. He wants some sort of change - "It is the horror of having to be with myself for ever. I like you (Eve); but I do not like myself. I want to be different; to be better; to begin again and again; to shed myself as a snake sheds its skin. I am tired of myself. And yet I must endure

30, Prefaces; ch. My own part in the Matter; p-546.

contd....
myself, not for a day or for many days, but for ever.
That is a dreadful thought".  

Eve is not at all disturbed by such thoughts. She is very much conscious of her husband, while she does not think about herself - "No! I do not think about myself! What is the use? I am what I am! Nothing can alter that. I think about you." What Eve is mainly concerned with is the fact that sooner or later Adam might die, and she might also die. And, she does not know how to escape 'death'. The serpent exploits the innocence of Eve. The serpent shows her the rosy way to escape death - "I can talk of many things. I am very wise. It was I who whispered the word to you that you did not know. Death. Death. Die."  

Through sweet words and persuasions the serpent has been able to convince Eve of the necessity of death for the conquest of death. The serpent again and again talks of how to create: "Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will." Purely Shavian in spirit, this statement highlights his attitude towards creation.

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2. Eve; act-1 (Part one), p. 856.
3. The Serpent; act-1, p. 858.
4. The Serpent; act-1, p. 858. contd...
Shaw also believed that man must at first will his own spiritual progress. But the Serpent does not want any spiritual progress. He is a deceiver, and he wants to point out the fact that one man or two men will die, but man as a whole will not die. One Adam will die, but many Adams will live, following the conception of Eve. The Serpent whispers in the ear of Eve as to how to conceive and procreate.

The most important lesson we derive from the first act is that nothing is impossible if we have the right kind of iron-will to do it. Shaw always put special emphasis on this point alone, i.e., man must instinctively will his own spiritual uplift.

The second act of the first part highlights two different and almost contradictory directions of life—one is constructive and creative, and the other is destructive and negative. The first one is represented by Adam, the tiller of land. The second one is represented by Cain, the killer. According to the advice of the Serpent Adam and Eve have expanded their family, by giving birth to children. Cain kills his elder brother, Abel. Unlike Adam, Cain is warlike, bellicose, and heartless. His attitude to life is destructive, militaristic, and negatively adventurous.

Adam is disgusted with Cain. Even after killing his elder brother he (Cain) does not suffer from any kind of self-pity.

contd...
He starts opposing his father, and prides in killing. He mockes the peaceful ways of his father: "Still digging? Always dig, dig, dig — sticking in the old furrow. No progress! No advanced ideas! No adventures! What should I be if I had stuck to the digging you taught me?"

Shaw is never for Cain and his bellicosity. He heartily upheld the peaceful and creative ways of Adam's life. He does not accept the ideal of Cain, since he does not find any heroism and superhumanliness in destruction and murder. Adam slighted the achievements of Cain — "What are you now, with your shield and spear, and your brother's blood crying from the ground against you?"

On the contrary, Cain boasts of his militaristic way of life — "I am the first murderer! You are only the first man. Anybody could be the first man; it is easy as to be first cabbage. To be the first murderer one must be a man of spirit."

Adam clearly represents the Shavian attitude to life. Adam knows the utter futility of destructiveness of Cain, destructiveness, he is confirmed, cannot endure longer.

6. Adam, Act-I, p. 562
7. Cain, Act-I, p. 563 — continued...
in the world. For a short term Cain may be able to subdue and kill other animals. But in the long run, the murderousness of Cain will invariably be followed by the similar belligerency of the animals. Such animals will develop protective organs to defend themselves. Adam rightly strikes this point - "You (Cain) are not stronger: you are shorter in the mind: you cannot endure. You have made the beasts afraid of you: and the snake has invented poison to protect herself against you. I fear you myself." 8

Shaw believes that destructiveness of Cain is self-defeating and self-destructive. According to him, creativity should be the guiding spirit of our religion as he has already stated in the preface. He sets aside the Nietzschean ideal of human progress through killing and butchery. As a Nietzschean hero Cain believed - "He who never fought has never lived." 9 Adam, as a typical Shawian hero, does not find any meaning in the words of Cain - "Superman! You (Cain) are no Superman: you are anti-men." 10 Cain's way, Adam believed, is the rosy way to colossal destruction. Adam rightly says - "Mine is the voice of life: yours the voice of death." 11

Eve looks at the problem from a different point of view. Despite all the oppositions from her own son Eve
is still hopeful of better things in life. He is hopeful of a future when man will neither dig nor fight for their living. Man will be above all these things! Man need not always live by bread alone. There is something else we do not yet know what it is; but someday we shall find out; and then we will live on that alone; and there shall be no more digging, nor spinning, nor fighting, nor killing." What we want to mean is that someday or other man will be a higher being, above the ordinary mundane level of living. This is purely a Shavian dream.

(III)

In part two of the play Shaw emphasises long life, which, he thinks, is the precondition for man's mental maturity and its follow-up effects. The Barnabas brothers clearly and consistently highlight the fact that man's short life is the root cause of his immature activities in every field. According to them, for proper maturity of human mind man must live for a period of at least three hundred years. Franklyn Barnabas remarks: "It goes deeper, she (the Parlour Maid) hasn't time to form a genuine conscience at all. Some romantic points of honour and a few conventions. A world without conscience! that is the horror of our condition.".


contd....
Emphasis is laid on conscience, without which actual human uplift is not possible.

Mr. Surge and Mr. Lubin, two important political stalwarts, are mercilessly criticized because of their brainless pursuits after some unneeded, they call principles. For the people of such kind politics is nothing but success in the election. It is seen that in order to win the election these people discover principles, which are mere 'words, words, words', having practically nothing to do with the real uplift of the common people. That is why, Franklyn Barnabas says: "An election is a moral horror, as bad as a battle except for the blood: a mudbath for every soul concerned in it".  

The Barnabas brothers have their own programmes; the most important being - "the term of human life shall be extended to three hundred years". In other words what Miss. Savvy says - "our election cry is 'back to Methuselah'". Conrad Barnabas clearly declares - "it's no use arguing about it. It is now absolutely certain that the political and social problems raised by our civilization cannot be solved by mere human mushrooms who decay and die when they are just beginning to have a glimmer of the wisdom and knowledge needed for their own government". 

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contd...
should recognize these facts of life and live longer.

As a matter of fact, death is not a phenomenon of life. It was invented later for some practical conveniences. Franklyn Barnabas clearly remarks: "...in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were not created mortal, and that natural death, as we call it, was not a part of life, but a later and quite separate invention." He further adds - "Precisely. Adam and Eve were hung between two frightful possibilities. One was the extinction of mankind by their accidental death. The other was the prospect of having to live for ever. They could bear neither. They decided that they would just take a short turn of a thousand years, and meanwhile hand on their work to a new pair. Consequently, they had to invent natural birth and natural death, which are, after all, only modes of perpetuating life without putting on any single creature the terrible burden of immortality." 

This idea of renewing one's body through death and fresh birth has shaken the human mind from the time immemorial. Shaw is also equally imbued with the similar idea of rebirth. He once again expresses himself through the remark of Miss. Savvy - "I believe the old people are the new people reincarnated. Nunz, I suspect I am Eve. I

5. Barnabas, Franklyn; Part-I, p-885. contd...
as fond of apples". Mr. Conrad further reinforces the remark of Miss Savvy, his niece, in the given words — "You are Eve, in a sense. The Eternal life persists; only it wears out its bodies and minds and gets new ones, like new clothes. You are only a new hat and frock on Eve".

This belief of Shaw in rebirth and reincarnation reminds us of a similar idea expressed in the 22nd verse of the second chapter of the Gita —

$\text{Nabani grinhati norohonporani}$
$\text{Tatha sarirani bihaya jirna}$
$\text{Nanyani sanyati nabani dehi.}$

(The Gita, ch. 2, Vr. 22).

Thus, Shaw also thinks that death cannot lead to the end of our life. Death, instead of ending our life, leads to its renewal with renewed vitality and reinvigorated intelligence. Just as we throw away our old and wornout clothes, so also our soul throws away our old and senile body, making a restart in a fresh body, in this regard, he makes a distinct departure from the popular Christian belief in rebirth and reincarnation. Like the Orientalists, he firmly believes in the immortality of the soul, and in its rebirth.

6. Miss Savvy; Part-II, p-886.
7. Barnabas, Conrad; Part-II, p-886. contd...
Man, Shaw believes, is moving towards a stage of progress. In a single life that attainment is not possible. Hence, each of man's births contributes something towards his perfection. He calls it creative evolution. This eternal pursuit will continue until we arrive at a stage, almost bordering on divinity itself. Mr. Franklyn Bernabas calls it "The pursuit of omnipotence and omniscience" — "The pursuit of omnipotence and omniscience. Greater power and greater knowledge: these are what we are all pursuing even at the risk of our lives and the sacrifice of our pleasures. Evolution is that pursuit and nothing else. It is the path to Godhead. A man differs from a microbe only in being further on the path. This noble purpose behind the creation of man has to be clearly, coherently, and consistently explained to him by science. Although apparently science has nothing to do with religion or the Bible, yet for the genuine service to man it must try to explain their problems. In other words, both religion and science should supplement each other:

Lubin

And what does science say to this fairy tale, Doctor Bernabas? Surely science knows nothing of Genesis, or of Adam and Eve.

8. Bernabas, Franklyn; Part II, p-887.

contd...
Conrad: "Then it is not science. That's all.
Science has to account for everything and everything includes the bible."  

Shaw always wanted a happy inter-relationship between science and religion. This inter-relationship makes science meaningful, and religion creative. The one divorced from the other is absolutely useless.

(IV)

The third part is presented in a humorous way. The year is 2170 AD. The people have just started living longer than before. But instead of attaining the highest degree of perfection people have become more and more mechanical and miserably dependent on machines even for their simplest day-to-day needs. Man depends more on switch-buttons than on anything. As a result, the service of a parlour-maid is not needed. This eventuality leads to the extinction of that particular labour class.

The President does not know anything about the Chief Secretary, nor does the Chief Secretary know anything about the Accountant General. Everybody has his personal, official and functional jurisdiction. Even for the explanation of a simple word like 'synthesis' the 

9. Part-II, p-887. contd...
President has to call the Chief Secretary. The Accountant General also similarly refuses to receive the visiting American in the Record Office, simply because it was outside his functional jurisdiction.

Despite their longevity, these people have failed to cultivate 'self-control', and other super-virtues. The President feels biological attractions towards the Negress, living two hundred miles off. He asks her to come to him physically, so that he might appease the fire of his biological hunger.

Their dependence on science and technology went beyond the desirable limit. This slavish dependence on technology eventually turns them into 'mere mechanical beings.' Mrs. Luthering used to drink alcohol regularly in order to get artificial happiness of mind. She has lost all hopes of life. This pessimistic attitude to life has many times brought her to the point of committing suicide; and it is heavy drink which saves her from that horrible act: "I had carefully arranged my little savings so that I could get drunk, as we call it, once a week; and my only pleasure was looking forward to that poor little debauch. That is what saved me from suicide." That means that mere material progress is not enough. It cannot offer

1. Rs. Luthering; Part-III, p-904.

contd...
man lasting peace. Man must learn to subordinate the
material life to his spiritual life.

(v)

In the fourth part (Act-I) of the play Shaw
deals with some imaginary people, living in the south
shore of Galway Bay in Ireland, in the year 3000 AD.
The people living in that part of the world have
considerably advanced in the Shavian sense of progress.
They have arrived at a stage of human progress, far
above the mundane and man-made social, political and
religious institutions like marriage, morality, elections,
regionalism and chauvinistic nationalism and so on.
Moreover, these people are above emotional love and
other emotional relationships.

These people are long-livers. Shaw very humorously
designs the ridiculous position of the short-
living elderly English Gentleman, whom he characterises
as a man with the moralities and ideas of the twentieth
century. The long-livers do not understand anything about
the English Gentleman's 'sentimental journey'. They do
not understand his nationalism, his sense of decency
and indecency, his moralities regarding marriage and
other problems arising thereof. The long-living woman
does not understand the meaning of the word 'decent'

contd...
used by the English Gentleman: "Decent? There is no such word in our language".

Similarly, the longliving woman does not understand the meaning of the word 'poverty', used by the English Gentleman. It is mainly because words like 'decency' and 'poverty' do not exist in a society where there is no existence of 'indecency' and the institutions like 'landlordism' or 'aristocracy'. But the longlivers have already crossed over those institutional barriers.

The longlivers of the second group (secondaries) do not even sleep. They have already conquered the biological urges. Biologically, they equate sleep with hunger and thirst.

Zoo, another longliving woman, does not find any meaning in the wishes of the elderly English Gentleman - "I wish to see the world". Zoo thinks, the world is too vast, and one can see a bit of it anywhere. What she wants is inward journey, i.e., understanding one's own self. In short, he stands for self-understanding and self-realization. Because, he is confirmed in his belief that the geographer and the naturalist know more of the sea than the fish. Zoo rightly

1. Zoo, part IV, p-915. contd...
remarks - "Nonsense! consciousness of a fact is not knowledge of it: if it were, the fish would know more of the sea than the geographers and the naturalists."²

Man knowing the facts is not real knowledge. Real knowledge is self-understanding and self-realization, as has been emphatically said in the Gita and the Upanisads. Shaw has expressed such ideas in his earlier play, *Man and Superman* very clearly. Man does not like what is real. That is why, Zoo says - "You love to throw dust in your own eyes."³ The cardinal cause behind this is the fact that man has not yet gone through the painful process of self-realization.

Man's wisdom lies in his consciousness of his responsibilities for the future. Self-realization offers man that consciousness. The long-livers have that consciousness to the highest possible degree, and hence their incompatibility with the short-livers. Zoo clearly states: "No, No, No, No. How often must I tell you that we are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibilities of our future."⁴

Shaw characterizes the long-livers with certain other attributes. For example, the long-livers hate destructiveness of any kind. The short-livers have shed

²Zoo, Part IV, p-919.
³Ibid, p-918.
⁴Ibid, p-921. contd....
seas of blood on religious grounds, which seem abomi-
nable to the long-livers, because the latter have re­
modelled their attitudes towards religion.

(VI)

The second act of the fourth part highlights
the extreme pride and helplessness of a distinguished
short-living warrior, Napoleon. Shaw never had any sym-
pathy with the warriors and war-mongers. Napoleon boast-
fully declares his greatness - "I am the Man of Destiny".
As a warrior he did not believe in the metaphysical
forces - "I do not believe in metaphysical forces". 1
This disbelief in the metaphysical forces and the lack
of this superconsciousness are the real causes that
prevented Napoleon from claiming real greatness.

The Oracle does not take Napoleon very seriously.
He does not give any heed to his words - "None of our old-
est and ablest men or women would dream of wasting their
time on you. You would die of discouragement in their
presence in less than three hours". 2 The Oracle treats
Napoleon as a perverted child. Interestingly enough,
Cain Adam's son Charles Napoleon, as he is named, gets
killed by the bullet of his own pistol. This is clearly
symbolic of the ultimate end of men's bellicosity. Shaw

2. Ibid.
3. The Oracle, Act-II, Part-IV, p-926. contd...
never prized the victory earned through bloodshed and violence. Although Shaw held a different attitude in the play, Major Barbara, which we have already discussed in the third chapter of this work. Like Napoleon, he also believed, "But the cost of victory is the demoralization," and it is mainly because victory in the battlefield leads to largescale killings, and to the sublimation of man's irrational instincts. As a matter of fact, Shaw always stood for the creative struggle of man.

(VII)

In the third act Shaw once again shows the moral and intellectual disparities between the longlivers on the one hand and the shortlivers on the other. The longlivers have already successfully transcended the ordinary limits of our mundane existence. The envoy realizes the problem confronting mankind: "Ahem! civilization has reached a crisis. We are at the parting of the ways.... On our right is the crater of the volcano and on our left the precipice. One false step, and we go down to annihilation dragging the whole human race with us." ¹

Shaw is conscious of this crisis of human civilization, and he wants every man to become conscious of the realities around him. Man must voluntarily will

¹ The Envoy, Act-III, Part-IV, p=935. contd...
his own salvation. Religion, he thinks, should open up man's inner eyes so that he can properly and objectively see himself, and earn the energy to distinguish the real from the unreal.

(VIII)

In part five Shaw highlights the tremendous scientific and technological development on the one hand, and people's partial spiritual progress on the other. The imaginary time is 31,920 A.D. The scientific advancement has made man create synthetic men like Ozymandias and Cleopatra by Martellus and Pygmalion. Although these synthetic men held all the physical passions, emotions and other normal behaviours, they did not become full men, because they did not have 'conscience'.

There has been tremendous evolutionary progress in man. Regarding reproduction man has become an oviparous rational animal. Minutes after the off-spring comes out of the shell he or she gets the maturity which we normally cannot get even at the age of twenty and thirty.

Some people like the Ancients have been able to overcome all the physical hurdles obstructing their spiritual progress. The Ancients have started living contd...
even without a rap of cloth in their bodies. Shaw always emphasised this freedom of man from the bondage of body and other artificial conventions and moralities we call religion. His powerful portrayal of the Ancients reinforces his stand in a consistent and coherent manner.

The Ancients have subordinated pleasures and cheap merrymakings to the cultivation of some higher consciousness, practically leading to their complete identification with truth divine. One of the Ancients expresses himself: "I danced when I was a boy like you (The Youth). Dancing is a very crude attempt to get into the rhythm of life. It would be painful to me to go back from that rhythm to your babyish gambols". 1

The Maiden also suddenly becomes conscious of a higher reality commanding her whole being. She has totally lost her sleep. She wants to do away with clothes in her body - "Clothes are a nuisance. I think I shall do without them some day, as the Ancients do". 2 This process of realization has come because of her mental maturity, come at a mature stage of her life. After a particular age she is moving from one stage of realization to another stage of higher and deeper realization: "bigger things are taking possession of me". 3

3. -Ibid- p-940. contd...
In short, she has started knowing herself. Knowing one's own self is the greatest of all realizations.

One of the He-Ancients thinks that a time will come when man will be able to live without a head, just as at present man lives without a tail. But, in the prehistoric ages man could not think of living without a tail: "Not now perhaps. But prehistoric men thought they could live without tails. I can live without a tail. Why should I not live without a head?" Shaw is highly optimistic of such an evolutionary progress of man; and the expectation of Shaw cannot be totally ignored. Further, reinforcing his idea the He-Ancient says that the moment man gets complete freedom from the prison of the body he will have absolute freedom and absolute power to move about beyond the limited space and beyond the limited time. "It imprisons us on this petty planet and forbids us to range through the stars." Shaw always firmly maintains the idea that the tyranny of the body sterilizes the creativity of the soul.

The speech of Lilith is important as it ends with a note of optimism for a brighter future, when man's chiefest enemy 'Matter' would be subordinated to the living soul - "It is enough that there is a beyond".

5. - bid-
6. Lilith, Part-V, p-962. contd....
Lilith sincerely wanted to defeat the supremacy of body over soul, but in practice she has found just the opposite - "But in enslaving Life's enemy (i.e. Matter) I made him Life's master; for that is the end of all slavery; and now I shall see the slave set free and the enemy reconciled, the whirlpool become all life and no matter". Such a wistful imagination of Lilith has practically come true, though not to the point of complete liquidation of matter, in the lives of the Ancients. Religion, Shaw thinks, should aim at paving the road to man's salvation from the prison of the body, by offering him superconsciousness and supersensitivity.

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