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Shaw's Plays in the Light of Theories of Comic Form:
An Increasing Linear Vision

by

Vivian Celia Casper

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INTRODUCTION

Not all of the extensive body of literary commentary on Shaw's plays makes the basic and common assumption which the famous adjective "Shavian" would imply, that from the beginning to the end of Shaw's dramatic career his general methods and aims are all of one piece. For example, evident to students of drama is the fact that Shaw writes in several dramatic genres. Martin Meisel admirably relates Shaw's orientation to the major nineteenth-century forms, and Meisel also feels that chronological development is recognizable in Shaw's canon. He shows how Shaw passed through three successive stages, "breakthroughs," with three resulting modes for the writing of his plays, Melodrama, Discussion, and Extravaganza, which paralleled the "changes in emphasis, from the arrangements and institutions of contemporary society, to the ideals and attitudes of the private imagination, to the evolutionary scripture and utopian vision of unrealized future societies."1

However, in pursuing the details of genre breakdown and development in Shaw's plays, Meisel consciously avoids considering the relationship of the plays to the characteristics of the largest category to which they belong, that of comedy itself. "At some point in the modern history
of English drama," Meisel writes, "the simple classical categories, Comedy, Tragedy, and Farce, and the useful Shakespearean categories, Comedy, Tragedy, and History [.] lost their convenience and inclusiveness."² It seems valid, though, to measure Shaw's plays against the basic patterns of comedy itself, since that is the prevailing mode which Shaw uses, in order to understand better his dramatic art. The fact that Shaw carried the principles of the three dramatic modes, Melodrama, Discussion, and Extravaganza, to new and important heights does not explain how he manipulated the strands of comic heritage. We may ask what is the result of the unique combination of Shaw's weltanschauung with archetypal comic form from the point of view of what happens to the latter. Shaw's replacement of the stale English theatrical fare of the nineteenth century with the fresh currents of an intellectually oriented theatrical revolution was likely to lead him also to experiment with comic form. Although Shaw makes frequent and witty satiric stabs in all his plays, he does not qualify for the designation of satirist primarily, because as a builder for the future, as an optimist with programs of world betterment, he does not stop with the nihilism of the satirist but projects from the ruins of his iconoclasm new and hopeful, if sometimes naive and pseudoscientific, possibilities for human society.³ He is thus naturally at home with
his choice of the comic form as dramatic expression, and his movement from conservative to a more liberal form of comedy is important.

A brief discussion of some characteristics of comic form is needed here in order to sketch ever so roughly the foundation we shall examine in assessing Shaw's dramatic house. Hardly the last word has been written on the subject of comic form. In fact, the aesthetic concern with comedy has but lately emerged from the hitherto exclusively psychological consideration of theories of laughter to become centered on the more objective formulations of patterns of plot structure. Probably the most concentrated and yet the fullest discussion of comic form appears in Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism in the chapter "Theory of Myths." Also, his "The Argument of Comedy," reprinted in Theories of Comedy, is brilliantly illuminating. Frye's delineation of the myth of comedy is divided into three parts: plot movement that is common to Greek New Comedy, the stock characters as determined by the function they perform in the plot, and the six phases of comic structure that exist between the poles of irony and romance. For most of the material here, and unless otherwise noted, I am heavily indebted to Professor Frye.

The basic movement of the comic plot is a transfer
of social power from one group to another with the new formation of strength and its attendant desirability at the end of the play hailed by a festive ritual such as a wedding or feast, the happy ending. Usually the society in power at the beginning of the play centers around a father or father-surrogate figure who has imposed or is living under a humorous or irrational law, a state of ritual bondage. The plot is concerned with the successful attempt of a younger group, centering around a hero, which replaces the older society of bondage with a fresh viewpoint that is more desirable in its trend toward reality, freedom, and greater inclusiveness. The movement is "from pistis to gnosis," from illusion to reality.

Two ways of developing this form are either to emphasize the "blocking" or humorous characters, the procedure usually followed in comic irony, satire, realism, and studies of manners; or to emphasize the process of changing society in its discovery and assumption of power, the characteristic method used in romantic comedy. Frye points out that only part of the complete myth of comedy is usually presented. The entire plot is analogous to the ternary form in music. In the complete cycle a golden age is interrupted by a humorous society. The usurping society then gives way to a social standard that recalls the first age of desirable order. The phase of this
three-part series that customarily appears on the comic stage is the process of restoring a society that approximates the first golden age. "Often there is a benevolent grandfather," Frye notes, "who overrules the action set up by the blocking humor and so links the first and third parts."6

Frye is somewhat tenuous in his belief that there is "a variety of comic structures between the extremes of irony and romance,"7 and the idea that there could be more than one basic plot tends to weaken the convincing forcefulness which one plot would have for critical application to drama. However, the recognition that possibly more than one kind of plot is to be found in comedy is helpful when certain comedies otherwise do not seem to fit the major form, a fact that could cause critics to feel mistakenly that some of Shaw's plays are formless. The first three phases which Frye recognizes are especially relevant for an analysis of Shaw's plays: the first and most ironic phase wherein a humorous society triumphs or remains in power (Widowers' Houses); the second phase in which the hero leaves a humorous society he cannot transform (Caesar and Cleopatra); and the third phase, the most common one, discussed above, wherein a humorous society is replaced by a younger group under the ruling principle of Eros (one level of most of Shaw's plays).
The characters of the comic plot consist of certain types that fulfill appropriate roles in the action of the play. Instead of the plot being determined by the psychological cause and effect of interacting characters, the opposite is what happens: a plot predetermined in its basic archetypal design requires and uses certain types of characters in order to achieve a desired movement that is demanded by one of the standard structures. Therefore, the usual happy endings are assured no matter what ingenious turn of events must occur in order to reverse a near catastrophe which Frye reluctantly calls "the point of ritual death."  

There are four basic types of comic characters: the eiron, alazon, buffoon, and rustic or churl. Frye calls the eiron a self-deprecator, one who does not reveal his strengths until a critical moment in the plot. The hero is an eiron, and his usually neutral character is important in the trend of the comic plot towards release from ritual bondage or humorous law. Because comic action proceeds towards freedom, it is necessary that the program of the emerging society remain as undefined as possible, definition being related to law, the opposite of freedom. Besides the hero and heroine, Frye recognizes two other eiron types: a benevolent figure who withdraws at the beginning of the action and returns to end the play, and
the tricky slave or servant whose cleverness aids the hero and who is descended from the vice of the morality plays. The eiron is opposed by the alazon, an impostor because he pretends to be more than he is and because as a blocking character he and his supporters are trying to prevent the new, freer society from taking its rightful place. "Central to the alazon group is the senex iratus or heavy father... with his rages and threats, his obsessions and gullibility." Finally, the function of the buffoon type is to increase the festive mood of the play while the churl, in opposition to the buffoon, is a refuser of festivity.

The only important attempt to relate Shaw's comedy of ideas to the concepts and terminology of Frye's formulations is the study made by Robert Speckhard. His contention is that Shaw combines the eiron and buffoon into a major force that not only defeats the alazon figure but converts him to the new group. In an analysis of Captain Brassbound's Conversion, for example, his point is that the movement of the play is the ironic reversal of Brassbound, the comic impostor, and Lady Cicely, the ironical buffoon.

Speckhard says that in addition to the employment of ironical buffoons Shaw used the figure of a polite eiron in the characters of Burgoyne (The Devil's Disciple),
Caesar (Caesar and Cleopatra), and King Magnus (The Apple Cart): "Like Socrates, the sharpness of their intelligence is made amusing by a show of civility." Speckhard believes that Shaw contributed the ironical rogue to the tradition of the eiron and the eiron-buffoon. The term "ironical rogue" takes its meaning from the fact that characters such as John Tanner (Man and Superman), Undertale (Major Barbara), and Dick Dudgeon (The Devil's Disciple) are thought to be wicked but ironically prove to have superior morality to that of their antagonists.

The basic design of plot in comedy, as discussed above, which informs the underlying assumption of Speckhard's formula, is based on a comic agon. The agon of comedy involves a single combination of eiron versus alazon in a fundamental movement "from pistis to gnosis," from illusion to reality. The complicated plots of modern comedies of manners, that is, those written from the period of the Renaissance on, together with their lack of invective and personal satire and their earnest effort to be realistic, place them usually in the category of New or Menandrine Comedy. Shaw has for the most part been identified with this type of comedy. However, Speckhard's interesting and convincing study compares Shavian comedy with Aristophanic Old Comedy in many important ways: the dramatic structure is that of an agon or
dramatized debate between an *eiron* and *alazon*; the satire not only expels the malign, but also the rejuvenation or rebirth that occurs puts emphasis on invoking the benign; in contrast to the reconciliation of Shakespearean and romantic comedy, which stresses understanding and compassion arising out of or comprehension and acceptance of human weakness, the reconciliation of classical Old Comedy emphasizes the exercise and celebration of human vitality. Speckhand's answer to the often-phrased charge that Shaw's characters are unreal (W. H. Auden says that they "would wreck the world in five minutes" if they set their excessive energies to "anything 'worthwhile'"\textsuperscript{13}) is that Shaw's characters, like those of Aristophanes, are interesting not in "how closely they resemble real characters, but how amusingly and cleverly they disconcert their comic antagonists."\textsuperscript{14} Speckhand's assessment of Shaw's contribution to comic drama is that his "unique enlargement of comedy was to make it extraordinarily expressive once more of collective faith and hope."\textsuperscript{15}

Shaw's concern for present and, in his later plays especially, for future time makes him hard to classify in the larger time structures that define the philosophical bases of comedy. There seem to be two opposing movements in comedy, cyclical and linear. Frye sees comedy as having a cyclical movement of birth, death,
and rebirth. Old Comedy is closer to ritual; "the reso-
lution of New Comedy seems to be a realistic foreshorten-
ing of a death-and-resurrection pattern, in which the
struggle and rebirth of a divine hero has shrunk into a
marriage, the freeing of a slave, and the triumph of a
young man over an older one." 16 According to Frye New
Comedy is "thus contained, so to speak, within the sym-
bolic structure of Old Comedy, which in its turn is con-
tained within the Christian conception of commedia." 17
If the Christian concept of commedia as seen in the
structure of the medieval mystery plays is a linear one
proceeding from the birth of Adam upward to the achieve-
ment of heaven by redeemed man, it is also a smaller part
of the larger cyclical Christian structure beginning with
the fall of Satan. Beyond Christian redemption there is
no progress. Heaven as perfection cannot be improved
upon.

Shaw's methods, especially as including the latter
phases of the cyclical pattern, seem to demonstrate a
closer relationship, most forcefully in the later plays,
to the less closely defined and therefore more inclusive
principles of classic comedy as set forth by James Feible-
man. In pointing out the difference between romantic
comedy and classic comedy, Feibleman seems to link romantic
comedy with the middle stage of Frye's ternary comic form:
"Romantic comedy points out that although passing actuals should have been better than they were, they were better than what has taken their place." On the other hand, Feibleman associates classic comedy not with primitivism and cyclical return but with the continuous progress of linear time: "The classic, . . . like all true rationalisms, is directed toward the future."\(^{18}\)

The other type of movement in comedy, as discussed by Feibleman, then, is the steady progression of linear events toward different, presumably better conditions from those existing. The movement is not gradual amelioration of life into a golden age, which might then be seen as a goal-oriented program with possibilities of definite boundaries. True linear movement implies an open-ended process with limitless possibilities. Feibleman says that comedy "consists in the indirect affirmation of the ideal logical order by means of the derogation of the limited orders of actuality."\(^{19}\) It is easy to understand why Shaw, outside the Christian tradition, could so enthusiastically embrace the idea of creative evolution, and make it his own religion, with its optimistic and limitless implications.

Albert Cook, whose *The Dark Voyage and the Golden Mean* contributes importantly to an understanding of the dual natures of comedy and tragedy, takes issue with Feibleman: "James Feibleman's book, *In Praise of Comedy*, repre-
sents comedy as satiric criticism of the present limited historical order and as campaign for the unlimited ideal logical order of the future. It is true that all comic drama is partly satire . . . but basically comedy is approval, not disapproval, of present society; it is conservative, not liberal, however much the socialist Feibleman would like it to be. It expels the intellectual and his futuristic programs. If comedians like Shaw are liberal, to that degree they are noncomedians. The liberal element in Shaw's dramas is the noncomic element."20

Certain types of comedy that Cook analyzes, such as that of Molière or Cervantes, lend themselves to the support of his opinion that comedy is conservative. However, the comedy that he chooses to discuss pits individual man and his humorous viewpoint unsuccessfully against a relatively saner social group. He sees Don Quixote's idealism as delusion, and certainly the Don's methods of righting the wrongs of the world are monstrously unreal. Cook argues: "To comedy, where social man lives as best he can in the mechanical struggle for survival, all idealism is folly, all individualism the unpardonable social sin."21 Shaw's comedies, however, as critics have pointed out, usually portray an éiron whose superior view of reality often succeeds in converting, liberating, or educating the humorous group surrounding him or her. Also, Shaw's vital individual
usually is socially committed whereas the mechanical social
group opposed to the eiron is individually selfish.

Cook's statement is further confusing in his implied
definition of comedy. As we see in his statements quoted
above, he seems to be considering comedy as a philosophi-
cal viewpoint. Even here he could be challenged. He sees
a wider difference between comedy and satire than Alvin
Kernan, who says that the two terms are often used inter-
changeably and that many critics regard satire as a darker
form of comedy. Conservatism implies system and defini-
tion, and perhaps ritual bondage, stability, at least, as
opposed to change. A quotation from Kernan is almost a
direct reply to Cook: "What finally counts [in comedy]
is the continuity of life, and if the individual and his
society serve that value, as they do in many forms of com-
edy, then they are championed; but if they hinder the con-
tinuity of life, then they are the enemies of the comic
spirit and their destruction is inevitable. [Some kinds
of] comedy--the typical commedia dell'arte type of farce,
for example-- . . . show all social forms, particularly
marriage, as hindrances to the life spirit." Kernan
goes on to say that "comedy envisions a world . . . which
works unsystematically, in which there is no traceable
chain of cause and effect. Furthermore, it is a world
which quite surprisingly moves men without their volition
toward their destiny." Shaw's idea of the Life Force, particularly as a theme in *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah*, demonstrates the validity of Kernan's analysis and Shaw's participation in the mainstream of this comic perspective.

Finally, the quotation from Cook concerning Shaw departs from the philosophical consideration of the nature of comedy expressed in his preceding sentences and seems to refer instead to what makes an audience laugh. He appears to say that Shaw as a socialist-polemicist is not funny. Cook would probably see Doolittle's reluctant conversion to conventional morality in *Pygmalion* as a case in point. However, this thesis will be confined to Shaw's comic form in the widest meaning of the term and the demonstration that his liberal philosophy joined with traditional forms to produce a unique kind of comedy.

With so many spheres of existence claimed as his province--personal, familial, social, political, religious, and historical--and many of these areas taken as themes in the same play, no formulation of a single, rigid structure or process of development can be demonstrated as all-inclusive for Shaw's works for the theater. Shaw's comedy, I think, has been so difficult to describe or define exactly partly because it changes from the more conser-
vative comic form that Frye describes to that more liberal and linear form set forth by Feibleman and Kernan. Each of these two forms implies a different kind of vision, and the development of Shaw as a dramatist may be seen in his changing use of comic form which parallels the changing nature of his optimistic perspective. His world vision is extended and deepened from the early comedies that recommend specific social solutions within the accepted social order seen from an enlightened viewpoint to those that depend for hope on the long view of things, on a faith in the working out in time of logical orders that will assume entirely new points of social reference. In the course of his career in the drama Shaw's tone deepens at three relatively obvious points, and different aspects of the comic plot come to the fore.

In this thesis I shall consider Shaw's plays in three chronological periods. *Arms and the Man*, *You Never Can Tell*, and *Caesar and Cleopatra* represent Shaw's typical viewpoint of the first period, which comprises the subject of the first chapter. The comedies of the first period are concerned primarily with problems that have, in some way or other, specific programs for solution. Although the issues are serious, the tone is basically light; and the form employed is that described by Frye of a movement away from a ritual bondage. *Eirons* and *alazons* are highly
personal, easily differentiated, and singly powerful. A basically cyclical movement provides the framework for the plays.

After the turn of the century Shaw's attitudes in the plays are more complex as shown in Man and Superman, Major Barbara, and Pygmalion, the subject of the second chapter. In Shaw's middle period the dialectic linear form predominates in conjunction with Shaw's shift to an increasing vagueness in his continuing, strongly optimistic stance. The dialectic increasingly blurs the identification of an eiron-alazon configuration. Values become relative and complementary, and the endings of the plays are often visionary.

The third chapter will examine the final period of Shaw's development as seen in Heartbreak House and Back to Methuselah. After the first World War, Shaw's optimism had to take new forms. The playwright had to affirm continually a belief in forward social movement that would somehow find an answer to man's predicament. In this period the previous definitions of eiron and alazon no longer apply, for the plays deal with the impossibility of a satisfactory society at any point in historical time. Shaw deals with existence in its widest scope, issues involving the survival of human society, and social problems for which no remedies presently, in Shaw's time or in our own, appear. The precedence of a successful eiron with
individual psychological validity gives way to broad strokes of limited human capability in the larger scheme of human evolutionary development. While the characters within the plays are individuals, they exist primarily as details, often symbolic, of Shaw's larger, ongoing ideas that sweep along the comic plot in ways that are often bewildering to those who do not see the implicit linear form there. This is not to imply that the final plays in Shaw's canon are his best. When their formal structure is understood, their importance in the narrow terms of this thesis lies not in the presence or absence of their dramatic excellence but in the place they hold in Shaw's changing use of comic form. Hopefully this study will contribute to a greater understanding of the changing concept of Shaw's comic hero and of the playwright's increasing preoccupation with linear movement in the comic form of his plays.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION


2 Ibid., p. 121.

3 Robert Speckhard calls the two processes of nihilism and reconstruction "expelling the malign" and "invoking the benign." He says that Shaw is an iconographer as well as an iconoclast ("Shaw and Aristophanes: A Study of the Eiron, Agon, Alazon, Doctor/Cook and Sacred Marriage in Shavian Comedy," Diss. Univ. of Michigan 1958, p. iv).


6 Ibid., p. 171.

7 Ibid., p. 177.

8 Ibid., p. 179.

9 Ibid., p. 172.


11 Ibid., p. 88.

12 Speckhard points out that both Shaw's and Aristophanes' comedies are based on the agon, a dramatized debate (Diss., p. iv).

14 Speckhard, Diss., p. 246.
15 Ibid., p. 252.
17 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 462.
21 Ibid., p. 146.
23 Ibid., pp. 194-95.
CHAPTER ONE: FIRST PERIOD

I. Arms and the Man

The exposure of the idea that war is romantic, the examination of the manners and morals peculiar to class strata and nationality, and the scrutiny of varying patterns of individual life postures are methods by which the characters in Arms and the Man are released from a ritual bondage that holds them enthralled in a false society. The major conflict which unites the several strands of the comic plot is that between illusion and its psychological charms for the human mind and the boredom of reality which people shun. In the Preface to the second volume of Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant Shaw unequivocally states his philosophic support of objective reality as the preferable human perspective. Romance is "the great heresy to be swept off from art and life,"\(^1\) says Shaw, who contrasts the "romantic morality of the critics and the natural morality of the plays" (III, 119). Furthermore, Shaw says that "idealism, which is only a flattering name for romance in politics and morals, is as obnoxious to me as romance in ethics or religion" (III, 120). To Shaw "the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous,
of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on
the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-
satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific
natural history" (III, 121).

In *Arms and the Man* the characters are bound by
illusion and must be freed to live real lives. Basically
the plot concerns the actions of Bluntschli the *eiron* who
frees Raina the heroine from the *alazon* Sergius. As we
shall see, though, the ritual bondage is self-imposed;
and the heroine and the *alazon* are in conflict within
themselves as well as with Bluntschli, who is an exter-
nal force. Raina and Sergius are under illusions that
make possible their betrothal, and Bluntschli must free
them from their psychological bondage to romance in order
to break the more formal bondage of the betrothal. The
romantic codes of military behavior and courtship rituals
that determine the actions of Raina and Sergius are linked
to a class-conscious society that exists on the false
values taken from the unreal world of cultured leisure.
Charles Berst says that "the genteel classes, adhering
to their codes, are linked to custom and illusion. Their
decline is inherent in the inefficiency of these illu-
sions, which are taken full advantage of by the *bourgeoisie*,
whose values and actions are based on practical experience
and skills."
The structure of events in *Arms and the Man* consists of a series of scenes in which romantic or idealistic expectations are successively presented and then undercut by real situations. The structural movement is from the bondage of illusion to the freedom of reality. For example, Catherine Petkoff reports the heroic performance of Sergius on his latest battlefield and thereby restores Raina's faltering faith in the romantic life as a superior alternative to actual life. The romantic recounting of Sergius' cavalry charge, which takes place in the eye of the imagination of a young and inexperienced girl, does not include the blood and gore of human suffering or the real feelings of the human participants. Immediately thereupon a live soldier fleeing from his pursuers presents himself to her realistic eye in the person of Bluntschli. During the verbal exchange between Raina and the intruding Bluntschli, Catherine's previous report of Sergius' heroic performance in battle is given a different perspective by Bluntschli, who witnessed the event in its mistaken consequences. Sergius had been accidentally successful because Bluntschli's side had been sent the wrong ammunition. The image of Sergius as a heroic soldier is quickly reduced to that of a lucky fool; and the conduct of actual war, reported by a recent participant, is put in realistic perspective.
Another example of a major contrast between the illusory and the real concerns the personal relationship of Sergius and Raina. The pose of their romantic bond of love is seen for what it is when Raina leaves the room and Sergius turns to the servant Louka out of real attraction. When Bluntschli returns to the Petkoff house at the end of the second act, we witness still another major blow to the idea of romance as a way of life. Catherine tells him that her husband and Sergius do not know of Bluntschli's having obtained sanctuary in Raina's room: "If they did, the consequences would be terrible. You are a foreigner: you did not feel our national animosities as we do. We still hate the Serbs: the effect of the peace on my husband has been to make him feel like a lion baulked of his prey. If he discovers our secret, he will never forgive me; and my daughter's life will hardly be safe" (III, 163). A few minutes later, however, instead of the anticipated terrible consequences, Catherine's rhetoric is undercut when Petkoff and Sergius welcome Bluntschli warmly as a friend who can help them with the practical problems of troop demobilization. In a parallel scene Raina warns Bluntschli that Sergius would kill him in a duel if he were to learn the circumstances under which she came to know Bluntschli. Sergius does in fact challenge Bluntschli to individual combat,
but the heroics of Sergius quickly give way to the common sense of Bluntschli. The whole idea of duelling is finally abandoned when the scene deepens into a realistic discussion of personal motives and frank exposure of past events and future intentions.

The false society of the Petkoffs and Sergius, which is formed both on superficial class distinctions and an imitation of the world of art, as opposed to the world of life, must be transformed by the end of the play into a society more in tune with the requirements of the reality that constitutes human existence. Printed poetry and romances, Italian opera, and a sense of theatrical pose and melodrama are the examples from the world of art that are specifically referred to in the play. Also, we encounter less defined allusions to romance put in general terms. The pervasive expressions of the characters' romantic longings begin with the curtain rising on the first act. In the stage description Shaw draws Raina as "a young lady, intensely conscious of the romantic beauty of the night, and of the fact that her own youth and beauty are part of it." She is "gazing at the snowy Balkans ... in her nightgown ... covered by a long mantle of furs" (III, 125). Her explanation to her mother for her preference of the cold night air to a warm bed is that "I wanted to be alone. The stars are so beautiful"
(III, 126). After Catherine reports the Bulgarian victory under Sergius' leadership, Raina rhapsodizes to Catherine on the contrast of the wonderful world of romance with the probable and dull world of reality. The words "heroic ideals," "dreams," "noble," "imagination," and "splendid" are set up against their opposites, "disillusion or humiliation or failure," "real life," "a poor figure," and "a prosaic little coward." Raina speaks of her fondness for reading Byron and Pushkin and her delight with the opera season at Bucharest. Her notion of the good life is "a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who can act its romance! What happiness! what unspeakable fulfilment!" (III, 127-128). Before going to bed, she selects a novel and "turns over the leaves dreamily" murmuring of Sergius, "My hero! my hero!" (III, 129).

Bluntschli intrudes the actuality of brutal warfare and life at its most elemental level, the struggle for survival, into Raina's attempt to make real her romantic image of life. He reports the battle earlier described by Catherine in a different tone and of course with a much different viewpoint. Bluntschli alludes to works of art in evoking his image of the performance of Sergius in battle, but his terms are not those of idolatry and hero worship. Bluntschli's images are pejorative references to false values from the world of romance in
art: Sergius "did it like an operatic tenor. A regular handsome fellow, with flashing eyes and lovely moustache, shouting his war-cry and charging like Don Quixote at the windmills. We did laugh" (III, 137). In the second act Sergius speaks to Raina of his own actions in chivalric terms. In contrast to Bluntschli's mocking use of romantic allusions, Sergius employs similar romantic terms to raise himself in Raina's esteem: "Dearest: all my deeds have been yours. You inspired me. I have gone through the war like a knight in a tournament with his lady looking down at him!" (III, 155). Raina equates civilization with going to the opera and owning a collection of books. She takes the romantic aesthetic as the sign of true culture. Bluntschli's gently ironic comment on Raina's announcement of her visit to Vienna is: "I saw at once that you knew the world" (III, 141). Raina in her passive moments calls attention to her daydreaming, novel-reading proclivities. As she is found on the balcony gazing at the stars at the beginning of the play, so as the third act opens, she is seen "reclining on the divan . . . gazing in a daydream out at the Balkan landscape, with a neglected novel in her lap" (III, 168). She is so engrossed in her "picturesque reverie" (III, 170) that she fails to follow the outcome over the wagering whether Petkoff's coat is in the blue closet even when the outcome in her favor
promises the gift of an Arab steed. In her active moments Raina displays a talent that shows she has paid attention at theatrical events. Bluntschli characterizes her dramatic poses as charming but unreal: "When you strike that noble attitude and speak in that thrilling voice, I admire you; but I find it impossible to believe a single word you say" (III, 174). In the second act when she enters on cue to meet her fiancé returned from the war, her father says: "Pretty, isn't it? She always appears at the right moment." Catherine answers: "Yes; she listens for it. It is an abominable habit" (III, 152).

In the play the attitudes of the characters toward books represent both an anti-intellectual point of view, which sees in them a world divorced from reality, and an enlightened point of view, which regards them as a source of real inspiration. Nicola, who stands for practical values in the world of the play, identifies, out of self-interest in the presence of Sergius, Louka's interest in books as a bad thing; for reading, he says, gives her ideas that are inappropriate to the role of servant that she has been assigned in life. However, Louka inverts the importance books have for the dominant society in the play. The class-conscious Petkoffs see their "library," "a single fixed shelf stocked with old paper covered novels, broken backed, coffee stained,
torn and thumbed; and a couple of little hanging shelves
with a few gift books on them" (III, 168), as a symbol of
refinement and high social position. In contrast, Louka
finds in the books justification for her desires to behave
as she feels, not as her social superiors deem she must act.
Truth to her belongs to all who dare behave in accordance
with their real desires, and her wish is to rise socially.

Both Sergius and Raina, who are members of the gen-
teel class, are in the grip of a false bondage that is
their betrothal. The bond of engagement between them
depends upon that which is false in their society, class
status and romantic ideals. Raina reluctantly agreed
to the engagement only after a long courtship because
she doubted whether Sergius would be the hero she imagined:
"I wondered whether all his heroic qualities and his sol-
diership might not prove mere imagination when he went
into real battle. I had an uneasy fear that he might cut
a poor figure there beside all those clever officers from
the Tsar's court" (III, 127), she confesses to her mother.
She feels neither deeply personal affection for him as
a man who is to be her husband nor fear for his safety
in dangerous situations but merely wants an idol to wor-
ship. In the stage directions Shaw describes her romantic
actions with the portrait of Sergius: "She goes to the
chest of drawers, and adores the portrait there with
feelings that are beyond all expression. She does not kiss it or press it to her breast, or shew it any mark of bodily affection; but she takes it in her hands and elevates it, like a priestess" (III, 129). In identifying Sergius as the foolish Don Quixote figure whom Bluntschli describes, Raina does not say that she loves him. She calls him "the gentleman—the patriot and hero—to whom I am betrothed" (III, 138). When Sergius returns to Raina from the war, their reunion is not characteristic of two people who feel genuine emotion for each other as they meet after a long period of anguished separation. The scene is a stilted one, formal, correct, and strained. She calls him "my hero," "my king," and "my lord"; and he calls her "my queen," "my lady and my saint" (III, 155). Sergius is relieved when she leaves the room, and he immediately tells Louka that "the higher love" is "very fatiguing . . . to keep up for any length of time" (III, 156).

As eiron, Bluntschli appears to Raina as the opposite of what she at first considers a hero. He enters her bedroom as a fugitive running away from a rout, dirty, bloody, tired, and without the proper introduction of a gentleman. She is "revolted" that his weapon is a revolver instead of the sword of a gentleman, "outraged in her most cherished ideals of manhood" that he carries with him on
the battlefield "sweets--like a schoolboy" (III, 135), and amazed that he is on the verge of crying because he is "as nervous as a mouse" (III, 136). Her initial judgment of him as a man and a soldier reflects the false standards of her society. Despite all external evidence to the contrary at this point in the play, she foolishly decides that Bluntschli is a gentleman merely because he refuses to take her hand without first washing his own.

The insubstantiality of class superiority based on superficial reasons is also satirized in the scene of Major Petkoff's return from the war. In the first act the romantic Raina had stressed to Bluntschli one of the criteria for high social rank: "Bulgarians of really good standing--people in our position--wash their hands nearly every day" (III, 142), and she had indicated the elevated Petkoff station in the community because of her father's rank in the military and the fact of his possessing the only library in Bulgaria. Major Petkoff, however, displays a more honest, if still snobbish, attitude toward one of the qualifications when in the second act he declares his contempt for the idea of cleanliness. He tells his wife, "Look at my father! he never had a bath in his life; and he lived to be ninety-eight, the healthiest man in Bulgaria. I dont mind a good wash
once a week to keep up my position; but once a day is carrying the thing to a ridiculous extreme" (III, 149). The indication of hygiene, then, rather than the fact of it, is what the social class of the Petkoffs demands. The superficial basis of class distinction is further displayed by the Petkoffs' concern that their manners be correct. The words "barbarian," "civilized people," and "refined people" appear in their conversation about such points of self-conscious behavior as shouting for their servants and hanging "washing to dry where visitors can see it" (III, 149).

In keeping with the definition of an eiron, one who does not reveal his powerful potential at first, Bluntschli's worth is not revealed to Raina during their first encounter. Not until she hears Sergius and her father discuss him does she begin to realize his value as a superior person on a realistic basis. Sergius calls him "every inch a soldier," "that consummate soldier" (III, 153), and recounts how Bluntschli outwitted them in practical matters. Sergius' admiration for Bluntschli, however, at first is modified by his snobbish attitude toward Bluntschli as "a commercial traveller in uniform. Bourgeois to his boots" (III, 153-154). However, in the third act Bluntschli again proves his suave superiority by drawing up the military orders which the incapable
Sergius merely signs, much to the latter's chagrin, and criticizing the bumbling Bulgarians: "What an army! They make cannons out of cherry trees; and the officers send for their wives to keep discipline!" (III, 172). Bluntschli easily sees through the false pose of Raina and emerges victorious from the scene in which he exposes the real relationship of Sergius and Louka. Finally, Bluntschli proves superior to Sergius in possessing material goods when Catherine questions his ability to support Raina in fashionable style. The constant example of Bluntschli as a perfectly self-controlled performer on the stage of life's unexpected demands provides a new definition of hero to the characters previously bound by the false ideals embodied in the swashbuckling poses of Sergius. Louka says to Sergius of Bluntschli, "A man worth ten of you" (III, 182). When Bluntschli exits at the end of the play, he is in total command of the dramatic situation, giving orders to the whole group. Sergius, the superseded "hero of the hour" (III, 126), expresses his admiration for Bluntschli, the example of enduring superiority: "What a man! Is he a man?" (III, 196).

The trend of the plot is away from a society bound by false class distinctions and romantic ideas to one whose power is based on practical ability and genuine
relationships. Sergio accepts Louka's challenge to marry her for love regardless of their class differences. When Catherine exclaims to him, "You are bound by your word to us," he replies, out of a newly gained sense of freedom from the tyranny of his old ideals, "Nothing binds me" (III, 192). Despite Nicola's status as servant in the Petkoff household, Bluntschli refuses to judge his release of Louka as his betrothed by the false alternatives offered by Sergio: "the finest heroism or the most crawling baseness." To Bluntschli "Nicola's the ablest man Ive met in Bulgaria" (III, 191). Bluntschli affirms the practical professionalism of himself and Nicola, which raises them above the romantic amateurishness of Sergio, who mistakenly judges Nicola in the false terms of romance and class distinction. To Petkoff's class-conscious question about his position in Switzerland, Bluntschli says: "My rank is the highest known in Switzerland: I am a free citizen" (III, 195). The two forthcoming marriages that combine couples from different social classes symbolize a social reconciliation that is more inclusive, freer, and more real than the falsely cohesive society previously in power. True power derives not from meaningless labels and empty emblems but from ability and courage.

Raina proves herself worthy of Bluntschli. She
cleverly outwits the soldiers in Act I when she hides him; she fools Petkoff and Sergius in Act II with the business of the chocolate cream soldier; and she joins Bluntschli in the stage maneuvers of keeping the photograph of herself from her father in Act III, all testimony to her powers of realistic behavior in spite of her romantic inclinations. In a brilliant analysis of *Arms and the Man* Charles Berst demonstrates how all the major characters have dual personalities and relate in a complex manner to the theme of romance versus realism.³ He points out that Raina is aware of her "noble attitude and the thrilling voice" (III, 174) before nurse, parents, and Sergius; that Sergius is tortured by "the half dozen Sergiuses" (III, 156) who fight for domination of his personality; and that Bluntschli disguises his "incurably romantic disposition" (III, 193), all demonstrating that the issues in *Arms and the Man* are not simple: "All life is a mixture of the romantic and the prosaic; what is important is that the prosaic temperament properly assimilate and control the romantic element."⁴ Since Bluntschli is best able to reinstate the realistic mode, which temporarily has been eclipsed by the usurping romantic domination, he emerges as the hero of the play.
II. You Never Can Tell

Because You Never Can Tell maintains the same basically light-hearted tone as that shown in Arms and the Man, and because the reconciliation of the plot takes place within the generally acceptable framework of the society of the play, it is a characteristic example of Shaw's early work. Just as the characters in Arms and the Man discard personal behavior based on false standards for that more in accord with real life, so the basic movement in You Never Can Tell displays a shift from characters in bondage to rigid, paralyzing ideas to a reconciliation that is relaxed enough to accommodate both the changing ways of human existence and the conflicting attitudes of members of the same generation. The characters who are temporarily separated by a ritual bondage make a cyclical return to each other, now with a sense of new freedom, within the established larger community.

In addition to pointing out the farcical characteristics of You Never Can Tell, the major scene set in a hotel with a comic, helpful waiter in attendance, the coincidental meeting of persons who would knowingly avoid each other in the situation presented, and a hero aiming for sexual conquest, Martin Meisel also indicates the more serious value of Shaw's play: "To note the farcical origins and associations of You Never Can Tell is by no means to deny the humanization of these
materials. In fact, the rationalization of character and action becomes all the more significant in the light of the play's irrational farcical antecedents."^5 However, Meisel's purpose is to demonstrate the relationship of the play to the genre of farce, and the "humanization of these materials" therefore needs fuller comment. The following discussion of the play will be concerned with the serious elements that give life to its farcical skeleton in order to assess further Shaw's attitude toward the human content of the play and his handling of comic form in the early period of his playwriting career.

_You Never Can Tell_ will be discussed here as an example of Shaw's early comedy for two reasons. First, there has been little previous critical comment on the play; second, _You Never Can Tell_ as an instance of the first period of Shaw's comedies provides an excellent example of the playwright's emphasis on problem-solving plots. The comic agon in _You Never Can Tell_ is between the unhappy consequences of rigid principles and the superiority of open-minded pragmatism in conducting the day-to-day affairs of living. The tone of the play results from the basic idea that in the general scheme of life ordinary problems have the lack of seriousness and the hopeful prognosis of a toothache, the subject with which the first act opens. In contrast to the early play, _You Never Can Tell_, Shaw begins a play of his late
period, Too True to be Good, with a scene of sickness involving an infectious microbe. The seeming greater seriousness of the illness in the sickroom with which Too True to be Good opens is indicative of the greater seriousness of the social problems in that play where Shaw's rare pessimism and lack of philosophic direction is perhaps most keenly expressed. Whereas the personal problems in You Never Can Tell are contained within the larger society assumed by the characters and the audience to be a workable one, the issues in Too True to be Good involve not only the health of individuals but their very survival in a society which is in the process of changing its basic premises.

Louis Coxe has pointed out the emblematic significance of the opening scene in the dentist's office of You Never Can Tell: "The scene not only gives us routine information but sets the tone: we have come here to have this nagging ache out, and if laughing gas will do it best, that's fine. But--extraction is the business in hand and we had better not forget it. Toothache is the human condition; as Bohun puts it, 'It's unwise to be born; it's unwise to be married; it's unwise to live; and it's wise to die.'" Coxe further points out that illusion rather than the human condition itself is in effect the toothache, that the dentists of the world,
the realists, are there to force people to rid themselves of sham perceptions, and that instead of suffering with an unreal code of conventional behavior, people must come to terms with their essential needs and desires.

There are two types of bondage in You Never Can Tell, the bondage of formal law and the self-imposed tyranny of philosophical and psychological stances. The comic plot of the play concerns the efforts of the characters to throw off these bonds in order to live freer, happier lives. Both legal and non-legal tyrannies are in existence before the time of the action of the play. The marriage of Mrs. Clandon and Mr. Crampton, which occurred a generation before the curtain rises, is the legal bond that causes the original difficulty. Of widely differing temperaments, the Cramptons were miserably incompatible in their marriage. Mrs. Clandon explains to her children the opposing kinds of home life that could not be reconciled in the household of her early married life:

... What have I always taught you? There are two sorts of family life, Phil; and your experience of human nature only extends, so far, to one of them. [Rhetorically] The sort you know is based on mutual respect, on recognition of the right of every member of the household to independence and privacy [her emphasis on "privacy" is intense] in their personal concerns. And because you have always enjoyed that, it seems such a matter of course to you that you don't value it. But [with biting acrimony] there is another sort of family
life: a life in which husbands open their wives' letters, and call on them to account for every farthing of their expenditure and every moment of their time; in which women do the same to their children; in which no room is private and no hour sacred; in which duty, obedience, affection, home, morality and religion are detestable tyrannies, and life is a vulgar round of punishments and lies, coercion and rebellion, jealousy, suspicion, recrimination—Oh! I cannot describe it to you: fortunately for you, you know nothing about it.

(VI, 627-628)

Although the legal bond of marriage is an external form of rule, it is chosen by the partners and is thus self-imposed. Not only are the man and wife responsible for the fact of the imposition of the bond; they are also accountable for the manner, and thus the failure or success, of its implementation. Crampton explains to his daughter Gloria the division of responsibility for the unsuccessful marriage between himself and his estranged wife: "She did me a great wrong in marrying me without really caring for me. But after that, the wrong was all on my side, I dare say" (VI, 700).

Because the formal marriage contract of the Cramptons is unacceptable, another type of tyranny results. In Crampton's "desperation, by occasionally drinking himself into a violent condition or seeking sympathy elsewhere" (VI, 693), he allows his wife to hold over him the power of making his behavior public if he tries
to keep her from taking their children away from him. This leads to another legal bond, a "deed of separation" with a "covenant" that the wife is "not to approach or molest him in any way" (VI, 691). When the long-separated family accidentally meets at the Marine Hotel and unwittingly causes consternation to the grumpy Crampton, a senex iratus alazon figure, he seeks in the third act of the play to determine if the covenant of the legal separation has been violated and to gain custody of the twins, Dolly and Philip. M'Comas states Crampton's claim to Mrs. Clandon: "Whether the behavior of your younger children amounts to a legal molestation is a question on which it may be necessary to take counsel's opinion. At all events, Mr. Crampton not only claims to have been molested; but he believes that he was brought here by a plot in which Mr. Valentine acted as your agent" (VI, 691).

Valentine as the romantic hero of the plot in effect does accomplish what Crampton accuses him of but not for the reasons Crampton attributes to him. As in the archetypal comic plot described by Frye, Valentine outwits the heroine's parents to win both the girl and her father's money. At first, Valentine is oppressed by Crampton, his landlord; but he outwits Crampton in a wager. By betting Crampton the amount of his rent that he can remove Crampton's injured tooth without causing him pain, Valentine
tricks the stubborn Crampton into submitting to extraction by gas. Later, in marrying Gloria, the penniless Valentine gains a legal settlement of money from Crampton in order to support the latter's daughter.

Valentine as a "Duellist of Sex" (VI, 721) also outwits Mrs. Clandon, Gloria's mother, in the matter of the way she has prepared Gloria to face life. Valentine is a metaphoric dentist who helps extract the internal tyranny that results from an unrealistic view of things; and Mrs. Clandon, like her husband, suffers from this complaint, perpetuating its tyranny onto the life of Gloria. Coxe's point that You Never Can Tell is concerned with "masters of reality," is directly related to the conflict that occurs in the play between abstract thought and impulsive feeling as dominating philosophies of living, on the one hand, and freer, pragmatic response to experience, on the other hand. The split in the behavior of the characters between acting on the basis of either somewhat dubious theoretic rationality only (Mrs. Clandon and Gloria) or acting solely according to an emotional and perhaps dangerously impulsive temper of the moment (Crampton and Gloria) occurs both between these characters and within the same individual.

The two wrong ways of conducting life and relationships, a form of internal bondage, result from two dif-
ferent modes of personality; and the Clandon-Crampton fam-
ily divides according to the opposing principles of unreal-
istic, abstract thought and impulsive feeling. One or the
other serves as the characters' basic personality trait
in determining how experience will be confronted and dealt
with in the ritually bound society of the play. Mrs.
Clandon, who attempts to act always according to abstract
reason, suffers from a false regulation of experience.
Because her actions are decided according to a prestruc-
tured view, which holds that certain responses should be
made by everyone in accordance with the way she wants
the world to be, she makes no response to a real situa-
tion but instead responds to a preconceived perception
of things. In this way Mrs. Clandon is a romantic rather
than a realist. Similarly, the impulsively emotional per-
donality of Crampton reacts not to stimuli before him but
out of a preconditioned way of responding that often has
only a superficial relationship to the situation at hand.
Mrs. Clandon and Crampton are examples of Northrop Frye's
statement about the characters who oppose the hero: they
are "people who are in some kind of mental bondage, who
are helplessly driven by ruling passions, neurotic com-
pulsions, social rituals, and selfishness[,] . . . people
who do not fully know what they are doing, who are slaves
to a predictable self-imposed pattern of behavior."8
St. John Ervine compares the romantic of Shaw with the idealist of Ibsen as "the enemy of the real." His analysis applies to the situation in *You Never Can Tell*: "The romantic and the idealist deceived themselves by their faith in a world which did not exist, and their indifference to the world that did."^9*

Mrs. Clandon is a type of New Woman, who ironically writes *Twentieth Century Treatises* and, as Dolly points out, sometimes violates them in emotional moments to "make the most of the nineteenth century while it lasts" (VI, 680). Mrs. Clandon is not completely rational though she would like to be. Shaw says of her in a stage description: "She belongs to the forefront of her own period (say 1860-80) in a jealously assertive attitude of character and intellect, and in being a woman of cultivated interests rather than passionately developed personal affections" (VI, 624). Despite her militant feminism and intellectual confidence, however, she is unable to handle emotionally the sudden inquiries of her children regarding their father. She rushes to her old friend M'Comas for advice and involves him in the marital dispute. Her principles of privacy, rationality, and independence later give way ironically to the ministrations of a complete stranger when Bohun is called in as a sort of *deux ex machina* to settle her family affairs. Mrs. Clandon is under the
tyranny of an outdated orientation to the philosophic and social issues of her youth. Her conversation with M'Comas reveals the nature of her outmoded philosophical stance. She, like her old fellow radical, has been left behind by the ongoing progress of thought. M'Comas says: "I'm indulged as an old fogey. I'm out of everything, because I've refused to bow the knee to socialism" (VI, 644), and he advises Mrs. Clandon in her direction of Gloria: "Be careful what you do: let her go her own way. We're old fashioned: the world thinks it has left us behind" (VI, 645). Mrs. Clandon has not developed intellectually with the passing years but remains imprisoned in a static mental set. She is unfit to guide Gloria, pre-figuring the accusation of Tanner in Man and Superman that Roebuck Ramsden is too outdated to have the sole custody of Ann. Therefore, Valentine is able to outwit Gloria in the game of courtship, the "duel of sex" (VI, 683), because Mrs. Clandon has only partially educated Gloria. As Valentine tells Mrs. Clandon: "I learnt how to circumvent the Women's Rights woman before I was twenty-three: it's all been found out long ago. You see, my methods are thoroughly modern" (VI, 684).

Crampton's self-tyranny and the cause of his irascibility toward others is due to his pattern of emotional response. His role is that of the senex iratus who rages,
threatens, and nourishes the injuries that were done him by his wife. His unthinking acceptance of the traditions of his upbringing blind him both to the new trends in behavior and to the unrealistic content of the old forms, which prescribe feeling and behavior not as they are but as they were once believed proper. Speckhard analyzes Crampton's position with insight: "Only reluctantly does [Crampton] give up his conceit that his children are beholden to him. Crampton must first learn to respect and even fear the force of his children. Before he can be rejuvenated he must abandon his arbitrary assumption of authority, be unburdened of his obsession that he is always right."10

Both parents are equally alazons, then, in that their fundamental differences of opinion and subsequent separation and their opposite contributions to Gloria's hereditary disposition have placed obstacles in the path of a natural courtship between Valentine and Gloria. Gloria supposedly is by nature "all passion" (VI, 624), but she has been reared by Mrs. Clandon to "discuss . . . coolly and rationally" (VI, 667), an unrealistic and impermanent trait that confuses her when confronting the instinctual and clever Valentine. The effects of the tyranny of both her parents' ritual bondage in conflict within her personality as she is faced with the love chase provide the main interest
in the plot. Mrs. Clandon finally realizes partially the painful dilemma of Gloria. She says to Valentine: "You must excuse us all. Women have to unlearn the false good manners of their slavery before they acquire the genuine good manners of their freedom" (VI, 716).

Crampton also undergoes somewhat of a change. He refuses to be a "spoil-sport" (VI, 714), relaxes enough to "indulge" (VI, 714) his younger children by attending the festive ball in costume, and is last seen chuckling "with senile glee" (VI, 721). Speckhard says that in You Never Can Tell "the salvation of the egoist" is carried further than the simple disillusionment of the Shavian egoist by the Shavian hero. "The gruff, hidebound Victorian father, Crampton, is visibly rejuvenated, so much so that he is dancing and capering as the play ends."11

Although the resolution of the plot includes a general relaxation of personal rigidity in which Mrs. Clandon, Crampton, and Gloria have been individually trapped, it paradoxically also includes the making of another bond, the forthcoming marriage of Valentine and Gloria. The love chase itself is described as a phenomenon that binds the free will of those caught in its meshes. Mrs. Clandon calls Valentine's courtship of Gloria "the trap in which he has caught you" (VI, 687). Valentine himself calls it an "enchantment" (VI, 673) and says that he and
Gloria are "helpless. As if Nature, after letting us belong to ourselves and do what we judged right and reasonable for all these years, were suddenly lifting her great hand to take us--her two little children--by the scruffs of our little necks, and use us, in spite of ourselves, for her own purposes, in her own way" (VI, 672-673), an anticipation of what Shaw calls the Life Force in *Man and Superman*. Although Valentine wins Gloria, Shaw describes him as "the defeated Duellist of Sex" (VI, 721). As the love of Gloria for Valentine frees her from the wrong-headed bondage imposed on her by her parents, at the same time it fastens new shackles on her and Valentine, who then desperately resists. Meisel sees the play as a conflict between sexual freedom and sexual bondage.  

Appropriately it is Bohun, a man of law, who is called in to reconcile the problems of the characters. Ironically he gives common-sense advice in the case of the legal dispute and legal advice in the matter of a possible financial misalliance between the lovers. To Crampton he says: "Your notion of going to law is all nonsense: your children will be of age before you can get the point decided. You can do nothing but make a friendly arrangement" (VI, 713). To Valentine he says: "Have a settlement" (VI, 720). William the waiter,
standing for "the abounding sufficiency and interest of the actual" (VI, 641), aids the hero Valentine in accepting his happy and yet sobering victory by advising him wisely that marriage "often turns out very comfortable, very enjoyable and happy" (VI, 721). The play demonstrates that external legal contracts and internal bonds of thinking may be closely related and unavoidable and that they must be pragmatically regulated in order to allow the greatest freedom for the individual. The issue that Shaw only raises in You Never Can Tell about the inevitable bonds of the Life Force, which transcend individual freedom, is dealt with specifically in Man and Superman. In the former play Shaw's emphasis is on present time and the romantic pursuit of Gloria by Valentine. Therefore, William is able to soothe the doubting lover by merely telling him that marriage often turns out well. In Man and Superman, however, Shaw's emphasis is on the future; and the Life Force is seen as a necessary bond with respect to the future, linear progress of the human race. Therefore, Don Juan-Tanner must undergo much more sophisticated convincing that marriage is acceptable; and in a sense the whole plot of Man and Superman is concerned with this argument. According to Frye, marriage at the end of the comic plot is symbolic of social reconciliation, which is a kind of moral norm expressing a temporary resting
point in the dynamism of a free society as opposed to the static imprisonment of the life spirit in a state of ritual bondage. His definition of "moral norm" does not include a specific morality but a "deliverance from moral bondage." ¹³ The plot of comedy demonstrates a movement towards greater freedom that replaces the constricting conflict of individuals or groups with a more harmonious community. Valentine's negative sensitivity to the bonds of marriage in You Never Can Tell is related to a special kind of comedy described by Kernan and quoted above in the Introduction, an insistence on complete freedom with a view that marriage itself is a hindrance to the life spirit and is thus to be avoided.
III. Caesar and Cleopatra

Unlike the other two plays discussed in this chapter, Shaw called Caesar and Cleopatra a "history" play. That designation if defined narrowly could make questionable a consideration of the play in terms of comic form since treatments of history in a sense stand outside the two major dramatic categories of comedy and tragedy. There seems to be a difference between history plays and chronicle plays, the latter type supposedly merging into comic or tragic modes. We would tend to support the last statement with respect to another play in Shaw's canon; for Saint Joan, called "a chronicle play," seems to appeal to our sense of the formal category of comedy much more easily than does Caesar and Cleopatra. Although the principal character dies in Saint Joan, the epilogue and its larger meaning of ideas working themselves out in time place the play in the category of comedy. We have a clearer feeling of agon in Saint Joan than in Caesar and Cleopatra, but the latter play can be called comedy for two reasons: first, because although deaths of minor characters occur in the course of the five acts, the overriding tone of the work is comic; second, the plot seems to conform to the second phase of comedy as described by Frye wherein the eiron does not transform
a humorous society but simply leaves it with its structure remaining as it was before. Caesar's superior morality proves insufficiently workable to impose itself on the society he enters; and the clash of his vision with those around him, both supporters and enemies, provides the comic agon of the play.

In the chronology of Shaw's plays, not until Man and Superman, which will be considered in the second chapter of this study, does Shaw project and emphasize a view of linear human progress. Up until this time the playwright either ignores the historical view of man and society or, as in Caesar and Cleopatra, makes the point that no real progress has been made in historical time because human nature generally has not changed. The view of history in Caesar and Cleopatra is cyclical, and Shaw uses Caesar as an historical figure both to present an historical perspective and to probe into the nature of his concept of a hero. The genre of "history" play that Shaw chooses is related importantly but somewhat ambiguously, as we shall see, to Shaw's developing comic form. The play is essentially a well-developed examination of Caesar as comic eiron, the reasons for his triumphs, his trials, and his eventual failure as seen in constant detail and at the same time in larger perspective.

The idea of cyclical movement is important in the char-
acterization within the play. In the Prologue the god Ra says to the audience: "Ye shall marvel, after your ignorant manner, that men twenty centuries ago were al-
ready just such as you, and spoke and lived as ye speak and live, no worse and no better, no wiser and no sillier" (III, 361). Since Shaw feels "that there is no reason to suppose that any Progress has taken place since their [Caesar's and Cleopatra's] time" (III, 475), he reminds the audience of the sameness of all times by startling them with examples of harmless, comic anachronism. The dandy Apollodorus steps out of the decadent 1890's to state his aesthetic creed: "My motto is Art for Art's sake" (III, 413). Fstatateeta in one of her constant and losing bids for power over Cleopatra accuses her, in annoyance, of new-fangled ideas: "You want to be what these Romans call a New Woman" (III, 438). Caesar delays his departure from Alexandria by stopping and "settling the Jewish question"¹⁶ (III, 464). At one of the most serious moments of the play Caesar himself refers ahead in time to Christ. In his fine moral perception of the true meaning of Pothinus' murder, he acknowledges his heroic position to Cleopatra: "If one man in all the world can be found, now or forever, to know that you did wrong, that man will have either to conquer the world as I have, or be crucified by it" (III, 456-457). Richard Ohmann
explains the phenomenon of Shaw's use of anachronism as an inverse part of what was to become a basic point in the philosophy of Creative Evolution: "One of the tenets of Creative Evolution is that the experience of the past is condensed in the living, and this notion of a symbiotic mental relationship between man and his ancestors is merely the inverse of Shaw's vision of history, which projects the experience of the living into the lives of the dead." ¹⁷

Ra's speech, quoted above, notwithstanding, Caesar is wiser and better than both the other characters in the play and perhaps the members of the audience whom Shaw probably hoped to educate. One of Shaw's ways of distinguishing the superior eiron Caesar from the other personages in the play is to associate him with a different scheme of time from that according to which the others live. Otto Reinert has pointed out that Caesar abides by an eternal conception of values whereas the others have no awareness of historical perspective. ¹⁸ The Sphinx and Christ, with whom Caesar associates himself, represent larger eternal values. The others know only the fevered pursuit of day to day pettiness.

Ra's speech in the Prologue establishes the idea of two conflicting principles of existence, which relate to the two concepts of time. The old ways, old Rome, are contrasted with the new ways, new Rome, with "men standing
perplexed between them" (III, 357). Old Rome is pre-Roman Empire, and "the gods pitied it and helped it and strengthened it and shielded it" (III, 358). New Rome was ushered in by Pompey, who used the old methods and aims and in effect created his version of the new Roman Empire by enlarging the scope, not the quality, of the old kind of Rome. The method of the soldier is fighting and killing, however; "the way of the soldier is the way of death" (III, 358), says Ra, "but the way of the gods is the way of life" (III, 358). There is another kind of new Rome, though, projected in the minds of the gods, a sort of new Jerusalem "in which any man with wit enough could become what he would" (III, 358). Caesar stands for life; and Ra claims him as being on the side of the gods because Caesar has a vision larger than personal pride, Pompeian conquest, and subjugation of others for the sake of pure power. Caesar's lack of despair, his courage when defeated by Pompey, brought the approval of the gods. Ra says, "the spirit of man is the will of the gods" (III, 359). Caesar's desire for a completely different world, his wish for linear progress, is stated at least twice. In Act III he reveals his dissatisfaction with the old world and a wish for change when the library of Alexandria is in flames:
Theodotus. What is burning there is the memory of mankind.

Caesar. A shameful memory. Let it burn.

Theodotus. Will you destroy the past?

Caesar. Ah, and build the future with its ruins.

(III, 407)

At the banquet in Act IV, Caesar talks further of linear progress when he tells Cleopatra of an imaginative search for the source of the Nile:

Shall we leave Rome behind us--Rome, that has achieved greatness only to learn how greatness destroys nations of men who are not great! Shall I make you a new kingdom, and build you a holy city there in the great unknown?

(III, 450)

Apollodorus links Caesar, the visionary builder of the future, with creative divinity for this "noble scheme" and thus gives him further god-like qualities: "Caesar is no longer merely the conquering soldier, but the creative poet-artist" (III, 451). However, Caesar never dwells on future schemes; and when he mentions them, they take on no more seriousness than a casually speculating aside during the performance of his daily responsibilities. He knows that he alone cannot bring lasting reform.

Reinert notes the importance of Ra as a character in Caesar and Cleopatra, saying that he represents the
eternal, "the divine dimension, measured against which human past, present, and future resolve themselves into a perpetuity of vicious pettiness." Reinert also points out that Caesar in pursuing the way of the gods seeks change but also that he is associated with the gods who represent eternal values. It is unclear whether or not we are to assume that there are two ways of life, the petty human flux, which leads nowhere in essential human improvement, on one level, and the gods' way of higher existence on the second level. If so, the aim of the gods is presumably to lift humanity if not up to their level then in a humanistic way up to the highest level man can achieve, "the new Rome, in which any man with wit enough could become what he would." The play seems to demonstrate this idea, that at certain times in human history a figure such as Caesar or Christ comes bringing an idea that is to lift man's existence; but not only does such a hero fail ultimately to transmit his vision effectively to others during his lifetime, but also the world slips back into the former lower reality after the hero's departure from the human scene. This view is, of course, a cyclical interpretation of history. However, Ra makes a statement near the end of the Prologue that implies a linear view not developed in the play but one that foreshadows the concept of creative
evolution, which Shaw develops in his later plays. Ra's statement further foreshadows Caesar's role to come in the play and also the spirit of his leavetaking from Egypt in the final scene: "And now I leave you; for ye are a dull folk, and instruction is wasted on you; and I had not spoken so much but that it is in the nature of a god to struggle for ever with the dust and the darkness, and to drag from them, by the force of his longing for the divine, more life and more light" (III, 361).

In this part of the speech the gods seem to be depicted not in an eternal static realm of their own apart from man but in a state characterized by continual becoming. Divinity is conceived of as a linear process. In the later plays this thrust toward the future becomes more imperative; for example, Lilith at the end of Back to Methuselah, Aubrey at the conclusion of Too True to be Good, and Prola in the last speeches of The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles all hearken back to Ra's remarks here. Heartbreak House, The Apple Cart, On the Rocks, and Geneva also stress this linear imperative by juxtaposing the moribund societies of these plays with a desperate need to make linear movement into a better future. But the plot of Caesar and Cleopatra, as stated before, demonstrates by Caesar's ultimate failure a cyclical view of historical process. Caesar leaves Egypt essentially
as he finds it, in the hands of "the way of death." The pendulum of historical time swings aside to allow him to enter the world of the play, seen in the "Alternative to the Prologue" to be totally without leadership; and after he departs for Rome in the last scene, it swings back again.

The comic agon of Caesar and Cleopatra, the opposition between the superior understanding and morality of Caesar and the inferior perception, spitefulness, and misguided will to power of the other characters, consists of a detailed examination of the two positions in the play. In his Notes to the play Shaw discusses his concept of Caesar as eiron. When he says, "I have been careful to attribute nothing but originality to him," Shaw means moral and perceptual originality. In his freedom from slavish devotion to the conventions of social and moral generalizations, Caesar possesses "an air of frankness, generosity, and magnanimity" (III, 478-479). He is "naturally great" (III, 479) because his every act is an act of self, his motivation arising not from the expectations and demands of others but from his own inner sense of values. Caesar's virtue is a part of his nature. Therefore he does not need to strive for goodness. As Cleopatra says of him, "His kindness is not for anything in me: it is in his own nature" (III, 439). Shaw further
says in the Notes to the play that the distinction between virtue and goodness not being understood is the cause of a lack of heroes in British drama. Goodness is an acquired veneer on a man's behavior, implying that man is naturally vicious and in need of the externally imposed goodness that comes with successful socialization. Shaw disclaims the idea of goodness in any of his heroes: "In this I follow the precedent of the ancient myths, which represent the hero as vanquishing his enemies not in fair fight, but with enchanted sword, superequine horse and magical invulnerability, the possession of which, from the vulgar moralistic point of view, robs his exploits of any merit whatever" (III, 479). By making the eiron not merely better in degree than other men as judged by a single human standard but superior because different in kind, Shaw sets him up as a figure with tragic overtones. The eiron can be successful to a certain extent in that different from and superior to others, he can lead them where he wants. Godlike, he embodies the potential of power in all of its manifestations. But the tragic possibilities lie in the fact that his powers of controlling his world are severely limited, often nullified, by the common humanity which surrounds him. His leadership is constantly threatened both by the limited ability of supporters to assist him
effectively and the fact of sheer numbers in the people who oppose him. Finally, his ultimate departure signals the defeat of his precariously established values because he has not been able to transmit them to a worthy successor. As an example of advanced human nature, Caesar anticipates the future race of Supermen whose breeding is discussed in *Man and Superman* and who are presented in *Back to Methuselah*.

*Caesar and Cleopatra* is a study of the impossibility of transferring value systems between two kinds of persons, a presentation of failure in educational experimentation principally between Caesar as the reluctant *eiron*-teacher of advanced human nature and Cleopatra, the *alazon*-pupil limited not by her youth, sex, or Egyptian nationality but by the inferior human nature which she shares with the Persians, Sicilians, and, to a great extent, all the Romans except Caesar. She is unable to reach Caesar's stature, a linear thrust towards the Superman, because she is of a lesser, undeveloped human nature. Caesar's soliloquy to the Sphinx which opens the first act is important in establishing his character. He identifies himself here with the Sphinx as inscrutable and also isolated, for the Sphinx is "an image of the constant and immortal part of my life, silent, full of thoughts, alone in the silver desert . . . part brute, part woman, and
part god--nothing of man" (III, 375). The playwright's prose description at the beginning of the first act and Caesar's address to the Sphinx contain similar contradictions with respect to the relationship of gods and men and cyclical versus linear historical movement as those mentioned previously with respect to Ra's speech in the Prologue. Shaw says of the Sphinx: "The upraised eyes of the image are distinguished looking straight forward and upward in infinite fearless vigil" (III, 374). This symbolic description of the divine power implies an ameliorative future. However, Caesar's remarks to the Sphinx in the symbolic desert suggest another interpretation:

In the little world yonder, Sphinx, my place is as high as yours in this great desert; only I wander, and you sit still; I conquer, and you endure; I work and wonder, you watch and wait; I look up and am dazzled, look down and am darkened, look round and am puzzled, whilst your eyes never turn from looking out--out of the world--to the lost region--the home from which we have strayed.

(III, 374)

The Sphinx may not stand for a linear line of movement, then, into the future but may be a static "eternal sentinel" (III, 375) that seems to bear witness to a past golden age or a standard of achievement that is but seldom added to in the accumulation of great moments in time. Yet Caesar also implies that there is divine con-
sultation or awareness going on with respect to human affairs when he says that he has seen the stars, "these starry lamps ... signalling great secrets" (III, 375) to the Sphinx below. Also, Caesar makes two references to possible direct divine intervention into the affairs of the human world. In Act II his larger vision of things than Rufio has prompts him to ask: "Might not the gods destroy the world if their only thought were to be at peace next year?" (III, 408). After his scorn of the principle of vengeance operating in those around him and resulting in the murder of Pothinus, Caesar says: "And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand" (III, 457). Later in his career Shaw equates Creative Evolution with the growth of the divine.21

While Caesar is above punishment, revenge, and judgment, Cleopatra as his pupil never overcomes her compulsion for vengeance, which she shares with the others in the play, who, except for Rufio, in providing a combined imperviousness to Caesar's examples and admonitions, form the alazon idea that cannot be overcome. The theme of vengeance is pervasive in the play, from an occasion of major importance, when Ptateetaeetua murders Pothinus in revenge for the latter's plotting against Cleopatra, to
the explicatory statements of the vengeance enacted by Cleopatra's father on his daughter for taking the throne from him, to a porter's vow to Apollodorus for a spoken insult: "I cannot quit this bale now to beat thee; but another day I will lie in wait for thee" (III, 421). Although Cleopatra learns some of Caesar's methods of handling other people, her limited nature precludes her acquiring his greatness of vision. She merely passes from ignorant girlhood—"child" is applied to her by Caesar even at the end of the play—to imperious womanhood. Eric Bentley says that "her growth, to use the metaphor of the play itself, is from a kitten to a cat. The proficiency she develops is precisely in the areas which Caesar keeps out of: revenge and erotic passion." Caesar's superior status with respect to Cleopatra is symbolized by his carrying her on his back in the sea at the end of the third act.

The continual gain and loss of power as it is passed from one petty tyrant to another in the play signifies the cyclical pattern in the society of lesser human nature. As eiron, Caesar represents either a stabilizing possibility for society on a high moral plane that comes seldom and cannot take firm hold or possibly an evolutionary thrust that is too advanced to succeed until the rest of the human race catches up. Caesar is able to control
his world only for a short time, and the cause of his ultimate downfall in Rome after the play ends and the crumbling of the Roman Empire in Egypt after his departure is his inability to transmit his genius to others. Although he lacks Caesar's moral originality and thus his agile ability to handle others, by the end of the play Rufio's "natural slaying" (III, 468) of Ftatateeta demonstrates that a small portion of Caesar's principles of leadership has been transferred to a member of the Roman group. A few of Caesar's successful principles, however, are no substitute for Caesar's completely original behavior that results from his great vision. When Rufio becomes governor, the undisguised hostility that passes between him and Cleopatra in the closing scene contrasts markedly with the genial chord struck between Cleopatra and the departing Caesar; for Rufio is primarily a soldier. Caesar introduces him in Act II as "my comrade in arms" (III, 390). The reconciliation at the end of the play takes place on the plane of lesser human nature. Cleopatra is somewhat comforted in the loss of Ftatateeta by the prospect of Antony's arrival in Egypt, a man unlike Caesar--"no god, but a man--one who can love and hate" (III, 439), in other words, a man whose lesser human nature resembles that of Cleopatra and the others. Caesar's way of the gods reverts
to the way of the soldier, for he is able to leave no forward-looking program that will presumably take effect. Although we are constantly aware of the significance of the vision which only Caesar has in the play, we know at the end that he has been unable to change the society he enters. The action of the play thus stresses a cyclical form of comedy, but Shaw's implicit point is that linear movement is imperative for society. Ra's statement in the Prologue sums up the cyclical movement that takes place in the play:

. . . how Caesar, seeking Pompey in Egypt, found Cleopatra; and how he received that present of a pickled cabbage that was once the head of Pompey; and what things happened between the old Caesar and the child queen before he left Egypt and battled his way back to Rome to be slain there as Pompey was slain, by men in whom the spirit of Pompey still lived.

(III, 361)

If the play itself corresponds to the phase of comedy in Frye's classification wherein a hero leaves a society he cannot transform, we must no more assume that Shaw has written a pessimistic play in this instance because he himself is pessimistic than in the case of Mrs. Warren's Profession, where there is no reconciliation at the end. Shaw's art is didactic, and we must remember the purpose of Shaw's comic genre, which is important for Shaw the
reformer. Tragedy makes the audience identify with the tragic view of its sufferers; but comedy, even in its more ironic phases, depends on the audience to supply a larger perspective. If we see in Shaw's play the tragic reality of Caesar's ultimate failure, we also realize his potential success if only his superior vision can be implemented. Charles Carpenter believes that *Caesar and Cleopatra* "is designed . . . for the purpose of inducing everyone to join the soldiers in shouting 'Hail, Caesar!' at the curtain."24 If this is so, then Shaw projects the affirmative last words of the play onto the audience in the hope that Ra's words will not prove true, that the spectators are not "a dull folk, and instruction is wasted."
NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1 Complete Plays with Prefaces (New York, 1963), III, 117. All quotations from the plays and Prefaces are taken from this edition and subsequently will be cited in my text by volume and page number.


3 Ibid., pp. 197-211.

4 Ibid., p. 211.


7 Ibid., p. 320.


11 Ibid., p. 177.

12 Meisel, p. 253.

13 Frye, p. 452.

14 William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, rev. and enl. by C. Hugh Holman (New York, 1960), pp. 86-87. Shaw probably should not be taken literally on his designation "history play." See the article cited in n. 18, below.
15 Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw (Norfolk, Conn., 1947), p. 160. Bentley says: "In his 'history plays' Shaw was not interested in the peculiar character of each period—Napoleonic, ancient, or medieval—but in indicating what has not changed. Seeing and hearing people much like ourselves (or better) the audience learns that no progress has been made during historical time."

16 Meisel comments on this "seeming anachronism": "The fact that Caesar, for example, did 'settle' the 'Jewish question' while in Alexandria simply reinforces Shaw's point: the relevance and immediacy to the present of his dramatized transactions from the past" (p. 373).

17 Shaw: the Style and the Man (Middletown, Conn., 1962), pp. 159-60.

18 Otto Reinert, "Old History and New; Anachronism in Caesar and Cleopatra, Modern Drama, 3 (1960), 41.

19 Ibid., p. 38.

20 Ibid., p. 41.

21 See, for ex., The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God.

22 Bentley, p. 113.

23 Daniel Leary also sees Caesar as an advanced thrust of the Life Force, but his discussion of the other characters as part of a moral dialectic in the play is unconvincing ("The Moral Dialectic in Caesar and Cleopatra," Shaw Review, 5 (1962), 42-53).

CHAPTER TWO: MIDDLE PERIOD

The middle period of Shaw's dramatic career, represented in this study by Man and Superman, Major Barbara, and Pygmalion, includes perhaps the finest examples of Shaw's works for the theatre. For the admirer of G.B.S. almost any of Shaw's plays is superior in wit, abundance of ideas, and exuberant style to that of any other writer of modern comedy. Yet even within Shaw's canon, the group of plays written from the turn of the century to the first World War, such works, besides the three mentioned above, as John Bull's Other Island, The Doctor's Dilemma, Getting Married, Misalliance, and Androcles and the Lion, are exceptionally brilliant in their range and complexity of subject matter. Within the context of this thesis these comedies represent the middle stage of Shaw's development as a comic dramatist.

In the first period of Shaw's playmaking, as shown in Chapter One of this study, archetypal comic structure, as delineated by Northrop Frye, is the dominating principle of the movement in the plots from a false or limiting society to the freer, successful, more inclusive society that usually emerges by the end of the play. The identity of the eiron and alazon figures is sharply defined, and the plays are dominated by a comic hero who is
able to improve his society or free himself from a ritual bondage by clarifying his own position in the surrounding social milieu. The comic heroes Bluntschli and Valentine are freer at the outset from the shackles that bind their opponents, and they prove their superiority by their success at the end of the comic plot. Shaw's attitude towards human potential in the early period is such that a single comic hero is able to enter a ritually bound society and improve its conditions for himself and usually for most of the others in the plot. Human society as it exists in these plays is malleable under the leadership of a single superior individual. The emphasis is on changing social attitudes, not social structure. Caesar and Cleopatra demonstrates the severe limitations of this view as applied to larger, linear social transformation, given the wide separation between the heroic qualities of a real hero and the lesser natures of general humankind. Caesar's success is incomplete and temporary, and he wonders if the gods may destroy man if he does not en masse change his antisocial ways. The idea established in Caesar and Cleopatra is that human nature must change in order to effect significantly linear social improvement, in order to avoid the cyclical return that is inevitable when society reverts to the control of lesser human beings.

In the middle period of Shaw's artistic development,
to be discussed in this chapter, Shaw projects a more definite linear view of history in accordance with his attitude that man must make social progress in order to provide better conditions for life. In this period Shaw still sees man as capable of lifting himself up into an increasingly better world, but even limited social transformation as seen in the plays is not possible through the efforts of a single individual or hero. Consequently, the eiron and alazon figures in the middle period are harder to identify. When the comic agon consists of a younger or wiser group throwing off the ritual bondage of an older or limited group and forming a more viable society, the eiron leader of the new, vital group and his alazon opponent of the old, mechanical group are relatively easy to recognize. We saw how the eiron Caesar, for example, is opposed and finally defeated by the static society around him which always returns to its inferior moral ways in the absence of Caesar. The lesser mortals in Caesar and Cleopatra, the alazons, stand in clear contrast to the superiority of the eiron Caesar. Similarly, Bluntschli as comic eiron is clearly superior to the alazon Sergius in Arms and the Man.

The structure of the second group of Shaw's plays to be considered here is usually analyzed in terms of dialectic movement. Because the dialectic principle is
a linear form wherein an idea is opposed or modified by another idea so that a third idea results from a synthesis, the strict configuration of the eiron-alazon opposition in comedy breaks down. The existence of value in the opposing positions of the dialectic movement destroys the concept of an alazon who must be defeated. Incompleteness of any view taken, rather, is the defect to be overcome when the synthesis is formed in dialectic. The middle plays, then, lack a single dominating comic hero. Instead, we see that by the end of these plays, two or three main characters share the responsibility for a future visionary society or a new kind of individual freedom that is formed from a synthesis of their respective positions. Daniel Leary recognizes that Shaw's dramatic structure does not adhere to a rigidly mechanical pattern of ideal dialectic. In his description and comparison of Shaw's and Teilhard's evolutionary dialectic views, he shows that Shaw modifies the mechanical dialectic process with another factor: "Neither Shaw nor Teilhard recognize absolute dialectic progression for they refuse to believe that it is merely the interplay of contradictions which causes the world to advance. Both men were in rebellion against the purely mechanical conception of material data which imagines matter as a geometrical point endowed with mass and subject to vector forces.
They held there was a law pulling life upward.  

This law for Shaw is the Life Force which is constantly pulling people together in order to advance society. In the plays of the middle period, therefore, the comic form consists of complementary points of view which move forward together in synthesis. Man and Superman specifically deals with the law of life that must have both Ann and Tanner. In Major Barbara the phenomenon of a will that attracts Barbara, Cusins, and Undershaft towards better plans for society is powerfully dramatized but less specifically defined. In Pygmalion the desire for self-improvement joins with the passion to better the condition of others, and we have Liza's transformation. Part of the conflict in this play results from Higgins' unawareness of the need to grow himself, and in this respect he embodies some of the qualities of an alazon despite his essentially heroic position that contributes towards the freeing of Liza from her bonds.
I. Man and Superman

The subtitle of Man and Superman, "A Comedy (and a Philosophy)," signals the juxtaposition of two forms within the play. On the one hand, the comedy is that plot which Frye describes as consisting of a younger group taking over the reins of power from an older group under the ruling aegis of Eros. Eric Bentley says, "The destiny that Ann and Tanner work out is precisely that of the lower biological comedy."² On the other hand, the philosophy places a perspective on the comedy and stresses that marriage is a form of synthesis whereby man maintains the means to evolutionary progression also. According to Martin Meisel's analysis, therefore, the love chase is given "philosophic and symbolic significance."³ Shaw takes a conventional subject for his plot and makes a play by analyzing this plot. In a sense the whole play is an examination of the traditional reconciliation, marriage, of biological comedy that celebrates both the end of the erotic plot and the beginning of the new society that is to form around the newly united couple. The courtship and marriage of Ann and Tanner and the announced union of Violet and Hector are finally seen as the necessary prelude to an ultimately linear development for man.
The traditional plot of the comedy is recognizable by the archetypal motifs that Frye describes. The terms of the deceased Whitefield's will is a means of ritual bondage which Ramsden, Tanner, Ann, and Octavius must circumvent to serve their individual, selfish ends. Determination of the terms of the will becomes a contest of the letter against the spirit of Whitefield's wishes so that the will itself, the legal and moral ritual bondage, is partially created by the individuals involved according to the particular selfish intentions of their respective human motives. The motives of the characters are complex. Ramsden initially refuses to serve with Tanner as joint guardian of Ann because Ramsden disapproves of Tanner's revolutionary ideas. Ramsden acts the part of the heavy father, a substitute for Ann's deceased father, the senex iratus who blusters and rants against Tanner, throwing the unread Revolutionist's Handbook "into the waste paper basket with such vehemence that Tanner recoils under the impression that it is being thrown at his head" (III, 527) and threatening to forbid Tanner the house. Like Mrs. Clandon in You Never Can Tell, Ramsden is an outdated radical. His liberalism is thirty years behind that of the advanced Tanner, and the generation gap between the two men takes on the familiar conflict of the young, who are eager for linear movement,
against the old, who feel threatened by a change in the status quo. Frederick P. W. McDowell believes that "in the ineffectual Roebuck Ramsden, with his pantheon of Cobden, Bright, Spencer, Huxley, Martineau, and George Eliot, Shaw was undoubtedly exposing the inadequacies of nineteenth-century rationalism." Ramsden's art gallery, however, also seems to symbolize his position in the avant-garde of a time past. When ideas become codified, like the cold sculpture and still likenesses, they are no longer viable to the constant linear growth which is characteristic of the human condition.

Tanner objects to his appointment as Ann's guardian because he does not want the responsibility for what he considers to be her irresponsible behavior. He gives to Ramsden and Octavius his estimation of Ann's untrustworthy insidiousness: "All she wants with me is to load up all her moral responsibilities on me, and do as she likes at the expense of my character. I can't control her; and she can compromise me as much as she likes. I might as well be her husband" (III, 525). Tanner is confused by a possible husband-father role which the will implicates while Ramsden fears Tanner's close association with Ann as a threat to her morals, placing Tanner in the position of suitor, which Ramsden, the substitute father figure for Ann, opposes in an effort to retain his own
power over her. If Ann looks to the younger man as a guardian, she places Tanner in the position of father, implying a conservative stance which would undermine his youthful, independent revolutionary style. As he argues in his final protests against marriage: "I shall change from a man with a future to a man with a past" (III, 680). Tanner's fear of becoming a captured husband is projected onto his concern that Octavius as the artist-man should be saved from deadly combat with Ann as the mother-woman. Tanner's wish is to avoid the static bondage of marriage in order to devote himself exclusively to his own linear development, his intellectual and social pursuits. The roles of either husband or father threaten his autonomy; for they require relationships, bondage, while Tanner insists on complete independence in order better to do his work of social reform. Tanner's difficulties with Whitefield's will ironically are partially his own doing; for concerning Ann's guardianship, he had advised Ann's father that "the proper thing was to combine the experience of an old hand with the vitality of a young one" (III, 525).

For devious reasons Ann wants Tanner to accept the role of being her guardian. Ostensibly she wants to fulfill the wishes of her father, who appointed Tanner at Ann's request, a fact unknown until late in the play; in
reality she wants the opportunity which a sanctioned relationship with Tanner will afford her of inducing a marriage between them. In seeking to create a romantic bond between herself and the cautiously distant Tanner, she must use the guardian-ward relationship in order to establish propinquity at the same time that she circumvents the non-erotic intention of the legal relationship.

Even Octavius, who is really unimportant in the comic agon, is caught up in the mesh which the net of the will throws upon the principal characters of Man and Superman. He cannot please Ramsden, respect Whitefield's written will, be a friend to Tanner, and place himself in the most advantageous position to court Ann all at the same time. In a sense, then, the ritual bondage of Whitefield's will upon the characters is self-imposed. Shaw takes this conventional plot device and endows it with psychological and social significance.

The business of Whitefield's will in the main plot is echoed in the subplot by Violet's and Hector's maneuvering to overcome the decree of old Malone, a conventional heavy father alazon, that Hector either marry a woman above or below him in the social hierarchy or be cut off from his inheritance. Alazon though he is with respect to his son and Violet, however, the elder Malone relates importantly to the linear idea of Man and Super-
man. His notion of "social profit" (III, 661), that of elevating a family unit within the traditional social hierarchy, is in the best interests of linear social progress, the ever-increasing human capability, the thrust towards superhuman nature, which is the basic idea of the play. Like Ann, Violet wages a successful battle to win both husband and fortune, an inversion of the usual pattern whereby the young man must win both the girl and her father's money. Shaw's use of the female as instigator in the erotic plots is allied to his presentation of the feminine creative energy as agent of the linear Life Force. This unconscious force wins its own way by bringing Violet and Hector together despite the conscious decree of a human father. Ironically, though, the idea of linear movement is central both to the workings of the Life Force and the motivations of the elder Malone.

Mendoza's predicament also mirrors the main plot by resulting from one kind of ritual bondage but then developing into another kind. The strict, Jewish sanitary code, which offends Louisa Straker, the object of Mendoza's love, is an instance of ritual bondage affecting the natural love chase. Meisel perceives the effect on Mendoza: "Shaw's point about the consciously picturesque and sentimental Mendoza is that his romantic love-affliction is driving him to waste, absurdly, his remarkable gifts of energy, intelligence, and
imagination in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada." Men-
doza's potentiality for significant linear movement is stifled by his inability to overcome or resolve effectively the bondage of romantic love that Tanner consciously avoids and then accepts with philosophic insight and resignation. The ineffective, social-leveling Mendoza ironically involves the elder Malone, determined to cause social advancement, in his schemes of brigandage.

The conflict of eiron and alazon in the main plot of Man and Superman is more complex than in the previous comedies discussed. Robert Speckhard says there is a double confrontation in Man and Superman: Tanner is the eiron to Ramsden's alazon, and Ann is the eiron who educates the alazon Tanner. Since the plot must end in marriage, the resisting Tanner is the logical alazon for the eiron Ann to overcome. As stated above, Ann must convert him from guardian to husband. Instead of the traditional rebellion of the young man and woman against an older father, exemplified by the Malone subplot, we have Tanner rebelling against himself, the rational, intellectual guardian-thinker against the sexually attracted lover. While he is awake, his speeches are verbose displays of wit and interesting ideas; but his judgment, except among the brigands, is always off the mark. For example, he mistakes Violet as a practitioner of free love, wrongly places Ann's romantic designs on Octavius instead of on him-
self, and underestimates Ann's independent behavior when he invites her, rhetorically, to take the automobile trip with him to Africa. While asleep and dreaming in the Sierra Nevadas, Don Juan, the alter-ego of Tanner, is the eiron figure of the assembly in hell. Fred Stockholder says that the purpose of the dream is to permit the consciousness of Tanner full expression, thus demonstrating the basis for the values in the play. 7

The third act of the play may not, as some commentators suggest, be detached without irreparable harm to Shaw's largest meaning. The dream sequence in hell is essential to a complete understanding of Man and Superman. It is also here that the dialectic of the play finds fullest expression for one of its movements. If the hell scene were omitted, Ann would be the eiron and Tanner the alazon in the comedy; and the necessary philosophic examination of the archetypal plot, the basic explanation of the play, would be lost. In the dream sequence Tanner becomes an eiron; and although as alazon he capitulates to Ann's strategems in the last act on non-intellectual terms, the important idea is established in the third act that each has an essential contribution to make in marital union. The philosophical strength of Tanner and the physical attraction of Ann, mind and body, are needed in conjunction both to perpetuate and to improve the
human race. In the last act Tanner carries over the increase in stature he attains in the hell scene so that he and Ann are more nearly equal in both conflict and complementary union.

Tanner is attracted to Ann throughout the play and consciously avoids giving her reason to think she is making progress with him. The explanation for his reluctant capitulation to her demand for marriage best comes from one of Don Juan's speeches in the hell scene where he describes his helpless attraction to woman. Following a detailed recounting of his sensations, both intellectual and sensory, he concludes: "My judgment was not to be corrupted: my brain still said No on every issue. And whilst I was in the act of framing my excuse to the lady, Life seized me and threw me into her arms as a sailor throws a scrap of fish into the mouth of a seabird." A few speeches later he adds: "I saw then how useless it is to attempt to impose conditions on the irresistible force of Life" (III, 632). Although Tanner as alazon in the comedy loses his freedom to Ann, the successful eiron, the weight of the philosophy of the play, so thoroughly discussed in the hell scene, seems to unite in dialectic the striving for mind which Tanner represents with the vital creative energy that is Ann's magnetism to form a marriage from which the Life Force "will make another
brain and another philosopher to carry on the work" (III, 646) of improving the human race. In the timelessness and spacelessness of the dream world Tanner frees himself from a false bondage to unreal expectations for himself.

Shaw's use of the dream scene in Man and Superman may be further clarified by Northrop Frye's analysis of Shakespeare's use of two worlds whereby perspective is gained by the juxtaposition. Frye says, "We spend our lives partly in a waking world we call normal and partly in a dream world which we create out of our own desires. Shakespeare endows both worlds with equal imaginative power, brings them opposite one another, and makes each world seem unreal when seen by the light of the other." 8 Tanner in this respect is superior to Ann because he is permitted the view and perspective of both worlds which the reconciliation of the play synthesizes. His understanding of the necessary sexual attraction between them is greater than hers, and he foreshadows a statement that Undershaft makes in Major Barbara when he says to Ann: "We do the world's will, not our own" (III, 680).

McDowell says that "structurally and thematically the Hell Scene is pivotal in the play, because it brings the representatives of radical intelligence and primordial energy, Jack Tanner and Ann Whitefield, closer together." 9 McDowell also justifies Shaw's use of the Malone subplot
by the discussion in hell. The Malones and the romantic Mendoza both use the sexual union for trivial, self-indulgent ends. However, the sexual experience, McDowell notes, can also be transcendent. Thus Shaw rejects romantic love as an agency of creative evolution, but places much faith in sex itself when the partners to the union realize its significance for the race.10

Ann rejects Octavius for many good reasons. His most prominent characteristic, however, damning him within the context of the play, is his romantic idealism. Ann knows that his simpering romantic love is no match for her vitalism. His repetition of the speech made by the Statue in the hell scene, "And when I am eighty, one white hair of the woman I love will make me tremble more than the thickest gold tress from the most beautiful young head" (III, 671), places him in the category of the inferior upholders of illusion and belief in cyclical historical movement. McDowell correctly points out: "To Ann, Tavy's declaration seems an echo from a former existence, which it is to some extent since the rituals of romance are, it would seem, eternally the same."11

Of all the ideas bandied around in the discussion in hell, the basic one involves two differing perspectives on historical process. The Devil is the advocate of cyclical movement while Don Juan supports the view that human movement
is linear and purposeful. The motto of hell written over the gate, "Leave every hope behind, ye who enter" (III, 610), omits future possibilities. Hope is directed toward future time. The Devil, who believes in the "splendid body" (III, 618), as opposed to the progress of mind, explains his views to Don Juan:

... all history is nothing but a record of the oscillations of the world between these two extremes. An epoch is but a swing of the pendulum; and each generation thinks the world is progressing because it is always moving. But when you are as old as I am; when you have a thousand times wearied of heaven, like myself and the Commander, and a thousand times wearied of hell, as you are wearied now, you will no longer imagine that every swing from heaven to hell is an emancipation, every swing from hell to heaven an evolution. Where you now see reform, progress, fulfilment of upward tendency, continual ascent by Man on the stepping stones of his dead selves to higher things, you will see nothing but an infinite comedy of illusion. You will discover the profound truth of the saying of my friend Koheleth, that there is nothing new under the sun. Vanitas vanitatum—

(III, 644-645)

Don Juan's reply to the cynical Devil is that even if the Life Force operates in biological cycles, the movement must have an ultimate purpose which the philosopher is to discover. The Life Force tells him that he must strive until he dies when it "will make another brain and another philosopher to carry on the work" (III, 646). Bodily life moves in cycles from birth to death, each
generation giving way to the next. But mind is a quality that can build on its predecessors. Don Juan realizes that the body of the human being enslaves him on earth, an idea that looks ahead to Back to Methuselah and Far-fetched Fables; but the bodiless existence of those in the hell of illusion does not mean freedom either. The absence of body in hell just makes it easier to maintain illusion without "hard facts to contradict you" (III, 617). Hell is a stationary mental set. Don Juan seeks instead "the work of helping Life in its struggle upward" (III, 618) and sees the means to do so in the achievement of greater capacity of mind. Tanner's wish is to "conceive something better than myself" (III, 641). In discovering the purpose of life he can then "work for that purpose instead of thwarting and baffling it by setting up shortsighted personal aims as at present." Only the thinking man "has ever been happy, has ever been universally respected among all the conflicts of interests and illusions" (III, 628). By remaining aloof from human entanglement, especially from the love bond between man and woman, Tanner at first believes he can best serve the interest of human reform. Later he understands that he must also participate in the creation of new mind to carry on his work. Creation of new mind is inseparable from creation of new body.
Straker, the self-conscious representative of the working class; old Malone, the Irish-American businessman interested in "social profit"; and Mendoza, the classless brigand, President of the League of the Sierra, former waiter at the Savoy, all form a variegated social backdrop against which the love chase of Ann and Tanner takes place. The central concern with their marriage in the play is symbolic of the central concern of all conditions of man, and Tanner in his intellectual seeking after the meaning and purpose of life wants to transcend the petty thinking of class-conscious people. He reprimands the English-American party for snobbishly insulting Mendoza, the "one man . . . capable of reasonable conversation" (III, 653). Stockholder says that "class division is subject to ridicule because class consciousness comes to be conceived of as ridiculous."12 The destiny of the human race as a whole is Tanner's main interest.

On one level of the play the reconciliation of the comic plot is the traditional happy ending. The play begins with the pall of Whitehead's death hanging heavily in Ramsden's study among the busts and other artistic artifacts of the past. It ends in a garden in the Spanish hills with an impending marriage. In the subplot Violet's story begins with the announcement of a pregnancy in counterpoint to Ann's story which ends with the
promise of new life.

On another level the reconciliation symbolizes the means by which transcendental, linear development of man must occur. The erotic principle of archetypal comedy prevails, but the action is given linear, philosophical significance. Speckhard says of Shaw's treatment of the erotic-philosophical theme: "The love and marriage of Jack and Ann is non-romantic. But . . . their story is a romance in the larger sense for what has Shaw done but celebrate and idealize their sexual union? Instead of idealizing the skin, the eyes, the hair, the breasts, and the personality of lovers (as romantic passion does), Shaw idealizes and celebrates the basic fact of Nature: sexual union. This is Nature's gift, the endless fountain of hope for the future of the race."\(^{13}\)

William Irvine says that the marriage of Ann and Tanner in *Man and Superman* "represents a Shavian compromise--at least of despair--with the status quo."\(^{14}\) and that within the play "social progress is an illusion; real progress can only be made by evolution."\(^{15}\) However, the fact that evolution is both kept in the distance of all but the third act and is postulated as something very slowly occurring and projected mainly for the future is characteristic of the middle stage of Shaw's playwriting career. At this point, as *Man and Superman* clearly
demonstrates, man, while yearning to be more, is not in
desperate need of change. He can wait out the slow
progress that occurs with each new generation. Shaw's
linear imperative increases markedly, however, in the
plays of the final period.

In *Man and Superman* the erotic comedy is perfectly
wedded to the idea of linear progress in thought and
social reform. The double form of the play, comedy and
philosophy, is not only reflected in the subtitle but
also indicated in the title of *Man and Superman*. The
play is both about man as he is now and as he hopes to be.
"Man" is the subject of the erotic plot; "Superman" is
the subject of the linear philosophy. As Whitman impor-
tantly notes: "It is most important to Shaw's view of
life that the 'superman' is not so much a final goal as
a description of a process--like the dialectic itself, a
process of becoming better, more 'real,' than what is."¹⁶
Critics are probably mistaken in referring to many of
Shaw's *eirons* as "supermen," for, with the exception of
Caesar and his superior moral vision, not until the cre-
ation of the longlivers in *Back to Methuselah* does Shaw
portray a being that is greater than the human species
we have known up until the present time. *Man and Super-
man*, typical of the plays of Shaw's middle period, demon-
strates the concept of the *eiron*, or hero, as a composite
view. In the evolutionary future of man, both male and female principles are essential. Both Ann and Tanner, then, are eirons.

If vital "Ann is Everywoman" (III, 507), then Tanner is everyman in his conflict between sexual and intellectual impulses. Carl Henry Mills explains how Shaw made a new kind of hero out of the Don Juan legend: "Shaw's Don Juan is not a hero in Man and Superman because he escapes from women, which neither John Tanner nor Don Juan do, as a matter of fact; he is a hero because his new raison d'être, serving the life force, is stronger than the desire to pursue women or be captured by them." The dialectic eirons, Ann and Tanner, are brought together in synthesis by a force bigger than both of them, by, as Leary says, "a law pulling life upward."
II. Major Barbara

In Major Barbara none of the positions held originally by the three eirons, Barbara, Undershaft, and Cusins, will serve the kind of society that will include them all. The movement of the play is toward a final merging of viewpoints into a synthesis that makes more complete their separately held and fragmentary views of social reality. There is no ultimate defeat for either Barbara or Undershaft in their battles with each other and with Cusins. As in Man and Superman, the reconciliation at the end of Major Barbara includes a marriage in the final dialectic synthesis that is symbolic of a reunion within the smaller social world of the play, Barbara's initially estranged family, and of the hope for a unified effort to serve the progress of man in the larger social world.

An important idea of Major Barbara is the issue of salvation. Charles Berst says the play "is a search for a new religion based on social fact as well as on altruistic idealism."19 The theme of salvation and religion involves both spiritual and social ideas, which are first impotently separate and then brought powerfully together in dialectic to form a visionary scheme for society, a plan for linear progress that in its material-spiritual
wholeness will be superior to the fragmentary and unsatisfactory attempts that presently exist in the world of the play. The conflict in the play consists of the battle of the characters, principally Barbara and Cusins, with Undershaft and with their own selves to overcome their bondage to incomplete values. Each of the three major characters, Barbara, Cusins, and Undershaft, is concerned with personal power only in as much as this power can be wielded over the social masses. The values in their respective positions differ, however; and the search for a new religion becomes a search for correct values.

Shaw gives the device of hereditary ritual bondage in *Major Barbara* a double edge. The disinherition of Stephen *per se* according to the Undershaft creed, which insists that the armament business be continued by a foundling, an instance of Shaw's burlesque of conventionally legal wills and also of farcical plots based on far-fetched legal requirements, is not the main issue in the play as it might be in a more conventional comedy. What engages our central interest is the paradox of this bondage and the freedom it ultimately brings, similar to the bondage of Whitefield's will and its consequences in *Man and Superman*. Undershaft's desire to uphold the traditional criterion for inheriting his business is juxta-
posed with the need to free the characters, including Undershaft, and society from other types of bondage. Out of the maintenance of the superficial bondage, the disinheritance of Stephen that causes the initial family separation, comes the smaller familial and the vision of larger social reconciliation. This paradox of larger social benefits arising from socially doubtful premises, or of turning available means into better ends, is an important theme of the play. The successful characters are those who have learned or will learn this fact. Before the action of the play begins, three people have mastered this knowledge, consciously or unconsciously and for varying purposes. First, Mrs. Baines of the Salvation Army accepts the paradox of making good out of evil. She takes money from both Bodger and Undershaft, money made from whisky and munitions, in order to support her work with the Salvation Army. As she explains: "The longer I live the more proof I see that there is an Infinite Goodness that turns everything to the work of salvation sooner or later. Who would have thought that any good could have come out of war and drink? And yet their profits are brought today to the feet of salvation to do its blessed work" (I, 400). Lady Britomart also disapproves of Undershaft's "religion of wrongness" (I, 349), but she wisely uses his money first to support her
family and then to provide financial settlements with which her children can marry comfortably. In the third act, when Barbara is at first "revolted" (I, 433) at the idea that Undershaft has already saved her soul by providing her with material comfort, he explains: "I fed you and clothed you and housed you. I took care that you should have money enough to live handsomely--more than enough; so that you could be wasteful, careless, generous. That saved your soul from the seven deadly sins" (I, 433).

Finally, Undershaft himself made a successful end from his impoverished beginning by overcoming the evil of his own poverty. As he tells his story to the family: "I said 'Thou shalt starve ere I starve'; and with that word I became free and great. I was a dangerous man until I had my will: now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person. That is the history of most self-made millionaires, I fancy. When it is the history of every Englishman we shall have an England worth living in" (I, 435). Although here Undershaft explains how he bettered his own condition according to the capitalistic ethic, his present position is but a stage in the linear progress of society. In *Everybody's Political What's What?* Shaw condemns Undershaft's early motto and advances a socialist ethic: "The thinkers and planners at long range
. . . soon find out that the worst species of vermin is the human sort whose motto is 'Thou shalt starve ere I starve' whilst their own is 'We must stop killing and robbing and eating one another or we shall all starve.'"21 The necessity for Undershaft's early selfish thinking is a result of the selfish capitalistic structure of society itself in its present stages of evolution, a society that permits relatively few millionaires and many who cannot support themselves. The dialectic of the play moves toward a vision that will include long-range thinking and planning to improve the bases and thus the conditions of society, to make "an England worth living in."

Barbara is bound initially by her incomplete view of social reality. This view basically involves, first, her narrow belief that salvation must be entirely spiritual and, second, her naive assumption that good and evil are separate entities. Joseph Frank perceives in his analysis of the Salvation Army as seen in Major Barbara that the Army is "both morally and theologically the noblest extant example of Christianity because it is the most joyous, energetic, and broadly evangelical of the Christian churches. But because, according to Shaw, it shows its religious lineage and present social context by preaching the acceptance of the earthly status quo, it fosters the prime sin of poverty, as well as the
closely related sins of humility and submission." 22

The Salvation Army may save the souls of those people mentioned whom we never see, Todger Fairmile and Mog Habbjam; but those who appear in the shelter in Act II are either unconverted or meet the requirements for Salvation Army welfare on false premises. Both Snobby and Rummy confess sins they have never committed in order to raise funds for the Army at experience meetings. Although Barbara discovers that Snobby steals Bill's money, she never learns about the false confessions. Of their behavior Don Austin notes: "Rummy and Snobby take advantage of Barbara and the Army by playing the game of salvation. . . . The length to which Snobby is prepared to go, in order to obtain free food and shelter, documents Undershaft's declaration of poverty as the greatest sin, and illustrates the degree to which Barbara is hoodwinked by her 'converts.'" 23

Barbara's illusion that good and evil are completely separate results in her refusal of Undershaft's offer of money to the Army with the words: "Two million millions would not be enough. There is bad blood on your hands; and nothing but good blood can cleanse them. Money is no use. Take it away" (I, 391). Here Barbara echoes Stephen's simplistic view of morality stated in Act I: "Right is right; and wrong is wrong; and if a man cannot
distinguish them properly, he is either a fool or a rascal: that's all" (I, 349). Although she later approves of Mrs. Baines's accepting Undershaft's check, saying to her, "You are saving the Army" (I, 402), Barbara cannot remain with the Army herself because her own illusions about its foundation and success have been routed. Instead she transfers her badge to Undershaft because he has bought the Army, and she believes that God has forsaken her. Barbara ironically does not understand the full meaning of her statement to Peter Shirley that God "fulfils himself in many ways" (I, 375). Undershaft thus wins Barbara away from the Salvation Army as a religion because she sees both that its power is impotent without the support of profits from "Drunkenness and Murder" (I, 403) and that its converts are not truly saved.

Undershaft's religion is more complex than Barbara's. It recognizes both good and evil but seeks to remain indifferent to such categorical valuation, taking only the power of material profits as its god. As Undershaft tells Barbara: "I am a Millionaire. That is my religion" (I, 380). For him "there are two things necessary to Salvation[,] . . . money and gunpowder" (I, 384); for with these two things he has amassed his private fortune, lifting himself up from the poverty of his orphaned childhood and maintaining immense personal and public control
according to the Andrew Undershaft heritage. As eiron he proves himself more powerful than his conventionally pious family, because his morality has supported them in fashionable style, not possible had he obeyed his wife's principles, and more powerful than Barbara's Salvation Army, because he buys it from underneath her to prove that his wealth is the foundation of whatever real salvation occurs in the world.

Charles Berst makes a convincing case for Undershaft as a diabolical figure in the play, in Cusins' words, a "Prince of Darkness" (I, 427). He says that Undershaft "is dramatically and allegorically powerful in his devil role because he is representative of social and political truth stripped of pretense and hypocrisy. He is a statement regarding the actual location of power in society, and of society's moral enslavement to that power."²⁴ As society must be improved, Undershaft as its representative must be superseded. What ultimately binds, and indeed blinds, Undershaft in the search for an all-inclusive social religion is his own limited vision. Whereas Barbara's exclusively spiritual religion will not serve because it is essentially inferior in power to that of Undershaft, the religion of Undershaft will not serve because its sole ethic of materialism does not include spiritual content or progress but only their base. In his
creed of powerful material values Undershaft cannot serve higher spiritual values directly. When Cusins raises "the moral question" (I, 430) of death and destruction being a part of the armaments business he may accept, Undershaft replies with purely business ethics that "the true faith of an Armorer" is "to give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles" (I, 430). The position of Undershaft, therefore, his religion, is no more acceptable to Barbara and Cusins than the Salvation Army proved to be. Berst says that many of Undershaft's principles are only half-truths. 25

Cusins' early religion in the play is somewhat vague. Essentially it consists of his attraction to vitalism, to life, to Dionysos. 26 Lady Britomart tells him in Act I: "I have a very strong suspicion that you went to the Salvation Army to worship Barbara and nothing else," a perception which he acknowledges: "Dont tell on me" (I, 364). He considers himself a "sincere Salvationist," however, because the Army is one "of joy, of love, of courage," in other words, of the energy of life as opposed to the death-bound "fear and remorse and despair of the old hell-ridden evangelical sects. . . . It takes the poor professor of Greek, the most artificial and self-suppressed 27 of human creatures, from his meal of
roots, and lets loose the rhapsodist in him, reveals the true worship of Dionysos to him" (I, 385). Of Barbara, Cusins says that "Dionysos and all the others are in herself. I adored what was divine in her, and was therefore a true worshipper" (I, 427). The verse he recites to Undershaft further underlines his allegiance to life, "the spirit of God" (I, 386); but Cusins at first, in contrast to Barbara and Undershaft, has neither personal power nor effective public goals of his own. As Barbara's future husband, he "can feed her by teaching Greek: that is about all" (I, 386). The incompleteness of Cusins' religion, therefore, is both its essentially private nature and its financial dependence on Undershaft.

To a certain extent Barbara, Undershaft, and Cusins act and react toward each other in the comic agon as individual combatants of characteristically Shavian skill. Cusins confesses his strategems for winning Barbara for his wife: "I thought she was a woman of the people, and that a marriage with a professor of Greek would be far beyond the wildest social ambitions of her rank. . . . When I learnt the horrible truth . . . that she was enormously rich; that her grandfather was an earl; that her father was the Prince of Darkness . . . and that I was only an adventurer trying to catch a rich wife, then I stooped to deceive her about my birth" (I, 427). Cusins
then proceeds to circumvent the qualifications which Undershafd's successor must meet. He proves that he can qualify for the status of foundling because his mother is the sister of his father's deceased first wife. He asserts that although he is an educated man, he has successfully resisted indoctrination in the schools. Finally, he bargains effectively for a salary much higher than Undershaf originally offers him. Undershaf outwits Barbara first by buying the Salvation Army in order to educate her to the reality of financial power and then by enlisting Cusins on his side. As he says to Cusins in Act II: "Barbara must belong to us, not to the Salvation Army" (I, 389). Cusins tells Barbara in Act III: "He convinced me that I have all my life been doing improper things for proper reasons" (I, 408). The final contest of the plot of Major Barbara pits Barbara and Cusins against each other and against Undershaf. When Undershaf offers Cusins the religion of "money and gunpowder," Cusins is faced with a choice between Barbara and the armaments business; and he articulates his fears: "But perhaps Barbara will not marry me if I make the wrong choice" (I, 439). On an archetypal level Cusins follows the comic plot outlined by Frye of a young man making a successful effort to "outwit an opponent," usually the father, and "possess the girl of his choice."
What happens on the intellectual level, however, is that Cusins and Barbara make their respective choices not in accepting Undershaft's religion but in affirming their own religions on a basis more real and with a new power unavailable to them before. All three characters, then, win the comic contest. Undershaft finds in Cusins a worthy successor for himself and replaces the illusions of Barbara's ineffective spiritual religion with a more comprehensive vision.

Although Barbara, Undershaft, and Cusins act and react toward each other in personal terms, in another sense they are small movements within the larger movement of historical time and the teleological "law pulling life upward." Each character has a personal stake in the outcome of the comic agon, but society itself in terms of social progress becomes the object of salvation in the play. In this light Barbara's impotent struggle with individual souls in the Salvation Army shelter must be replaced by a more comprehensive vision, which considers the physical as well as the spiritual concerns of the people.

In Act II Undershaft as a representative of plutocratic capitalism seems to be set in opposition to the social masses represented by the poor people in the shelter. As Snobby says to Rummy, "I'm fly enough to know
wots inside the law and wots outside it; and inside it I do as the capitalists do: pinch what I can lay me ands on. In a proper state of society I am sober, industrious and honest: in Rome, so to speak, I do as the Romans do" (I, 367). Peter Shirley lashes out directly at Undershaft: "Who made your millions for you? Me and my like. Whats kep us poor? Keepin you rich" (I, 380). However, Undershaft's creed of materialism belongs to his stage within the larger linear movement of time. He is thoroughly capitalistic in his moment of the historical process yet he seems to possess a socialistic vision, perhaps like that of Shaw's Fabian gradualism. He tells Cusins: "We three must stand together above the common people: how else can we help their children to climb up beside us?" (I, 389). Echoing John Tanner in Man and Superman, Undershaft describes his will as being only part of a larger will, a statement that leads Berst to believe that Undershaft is conscious that his own "power may be off-balanced by power, and the social structure may change." Berst concludes: "Thus he is a capitalist with Marxist vision, a devil in facing the world, but a mystic in realizing the potential of a deeper, self-conscious contact with reality."29

Just as Cusins is in love with the Dionysian principle in Barbara, he also is drawn toward the same prin-
ciple in Undershaft. As he tells Barbara, "Dionysos Undershaft has descended. I am possessed" (I, 401). But whereas his love for Barbara gives him little personal and no public power, the offer of Undershaft gives him the means he desires to work for life in the largest sense. He tells Barbara: "I want to make power for the world. . . . I have tried to make spiritual power by teaching Greek. But the world can never be really touched by a dead language and a dead civilization. The people must have power; and the people cannot have Greek. Now the power that is made here can be wielded by all men. . . . I love the common people. . . . I want a power simple enough for common men to use, yet strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good" (I, 442). Cusins enlarges his vital attraction to Barbara into a force for social betterment.

Barbara goes to Undershaft's factory to discover "some truth or other behind all this frightful irony" (I, 420). What she discovers is the complexity of reality: "There is no wicked side: life is all one" (I, 444). She learns that salvation cannot be achieved in purely spiritual terms. She will marry Cusins because he makes the right choice in accepting the means to help the common people. She says of him: "He has found me my place and my work" (I, 445). Salvation is of this world, the
working of good out of evil, moving ahead through linear
time. Cusins asks: "Then the way of life lies through
the factory of death?" and Barbara replies: "Yes, through
the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God" (I, 445).
Her diction relates directly to the linear dialectic move-
ment of the play.

In his analysis of the dialectic in *Major Barbara*,
Robert Whitman gives equal status to the three prin-
cipal characters of the play. Undershaft, he says, stands
for pure power:

But pure power creates a need for a direction
and purpose to which it can be put, and this,
by definition, because it is necessarily a
limitation, is its antithesis. This antithesis
is represented in the play by the Christian
idealism of Barbara and the humanistic idealism
of Cousins [sic], who possess an awareness of
purpose, in terms of human good, but have no
power to make their ideals a reality. In other
words, both the power and the idealism are in-
complete by themselves. The obvious synthesis
is achieved when the power is given a direction
and purpose beyond itself, that is, for human
improvement; or, to put it the other way around,
when idealism comes to grips with reality and
is willing to use power. "Society cannot be
saved until either the Professors of Greek take
to making gunpowder, or else the makers of gun-
powder become professors of Greek."30

The comic plot of *Major Barbara* substitutes consol-
idation of several positions for the victory and defeat
of an *eiron* over an *alazon*. As Berst points out, "Like
Barbara, Cusins is as much Undershaft's pupil and com-
plement as he is an antagonist."\(^31\) The real force that attracts and uses them all, that is superior to all three characters, is the vitality of life itself that works teleologically in time to bring about the betterment of society. According to James Feibleman, the present with its limited order of actuality is always inferior to the future with its promise of greater freedom. In this sense each of the three original positions of Barbara, Undershaft, and Cusins must give way to something better. Barbara Watson says: "Not two but three religions are present in this play: the Salvation Army's, Undershaft's, and Shaw's--Creative Evolution. It is the last of these that triumphs, even though it is not understood, scarcely mentioned, by any character in the play."\(^32\) According to Watson, "It is the Life Force that wants the marriage of Cusins and Barbara. It is also the Life Force that has led Undershaft to adopt his religion and his success--one and the same--for in the vital genius the Life Force runs powerfully towards its objects--and attracts others irresistibly."\(^33\) Recognizing the linear view of time and choosing to work both actively and realistically for the ideal logical order that is world betterment is the correct value established in synthesis by three eirons in the play. The play necessarily is open-ended. Although Cusins becomes Andrew Undershaft VIII, eventually his work
will be continued by Andrew Undershaft IX. Bernard Dukore stresses importantly that "no one person or principle, to Shaw, represents the final word in any sort of progress."
III. Pygmalion

Martin Meisel sees in Pygmalion "Shaw's serious concern with the nature of the barrier between the 'two nations' and with the real difference between a lady and a flower girl." In certain ways the dialectic of the plot synthesizes into a freedom from class distinctions altogether; and, apart from the issue of class, both Higgins and Liza have contributions to make in the dialectic movement, the linear process of human betterment. In the usual structure of dialectic, as seen in Man and Superman and Major Barbara, the two or more opposing positions are represented by two or more eirons whose incomplete individual values and power are fused into a union that is superior to the preceding, inferior separately considered positions. In the first three acts of Pygmalion the status of hero belongs overwhelmingly to Higgins, but in the last two acts Liza emerges as an eiron in her own right. She not only supersedes Higgins' original social plans for her; but she also demonstrates the value of acknowledging individual worth, the necessity that people appreciate each other personally, not because of artificial manners but because of the inherent dignity of the sensitive individual.

In the Preface to Pygmalion Shaw designates Higgins
the hero of the play because society needs his talents and interests in its linear progress: "The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play" (I, 191). As the hero of Pygmalion, Higgins transforms Liza from an ignorant, unaware flower girl, who is bound statically in the lower class by her speech patterns, into a woman who passes as a duchess. Much as his mythical predecessor Pygmalion created the statue Galatea, Higgins in a sense creates a new person in the metamorphosis of Liza. As he tells his mother: "You have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul" (I, 248). Critics have debated to what extent the basic similarity between the Pygmalion legend and Shaw's story extends to the issue of a love interest between Higgins and Liza. There is, it is true, more similarity in the two stories than the fact of basic transformation or metamorphosis; but the additional parallel between the ancient myth and Shaw's adaptation concerns only the original intentions of the Pygmalion figure and the ultimate result of the transformation of the Galatea figure. In the myth Pygmalion's original
intention is to create an ivory statue of a perfect woman. The unlooked-for conclusion is his falling in love with it and taking the figure as his wife after its surprising metamorphosis into a living woman. In the play Higgins' initial interest in Liza originates from a bet he makes with Pickering. In Covent Garden Higgins boasts to Pickering, whose identity as a colleague in phonetics is then unknown to him: "You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party" (I, 206). In the second act Higgins accepts Pickering's challenge to make good the boast: "Yes: in six months--in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue --I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything" (I, 215). The playthus begins with Higgins' intention to win his bet by proving his phonetic skills and then develops into the full, unexpected extent of Liza's change, which surprises Higgins and extends the play beyond his successful phonetic experiment. In his study Austin shows how Liza "undergoes a double metamorphosis" from flower girl into statue and then from mechanical lady into real woman.  

As an *eiron* Higgins is depicted as a superior being. In Covent Garden he completely mystifies the bystanders,
who take him for a fortuneteller when he effortlessly identifies their places of origin and shows his notebook of esoteric phonetic symbols. Later in his Wimpole Street laboratory he is shown giving Pickering a complete briefing on all the instruments of his profession. Even Pickering, "the author of Spoken Sanscrit" (I, 206), a highly respected phonetician himself, is amazed at the extent of Higgins' accomplishments and protests that Higgins has nearly exhausted him: "It's a fearful strain. I rather fancied myself because I can pronounce twenty-four distinct vowel sounds; but your hundred and thirty beat me" (I, 210). The energetic Higgins' genius emphasized here points up the tremendous challenge Liza meets when she supersedes his phonetic intentions for her. As comic hero, Higgins is able to outwit all his opponents for the first three acts. In Covent Garden he stuns the bystanders with his phonetic knowledge and quick retorts. Later in his mother's drawing room he recognizes the Eynsford Hill family and successfully passes off Liza on them without being recognized as the man in Covent Garden. In his laboratory he cleverly persuades Liza to undertake the experiment by appealing to her weakness for chocolates. Later he insures Doolittle's infrequent returns to ask him for more money by mentioning Doolittle's unwanted duty toward Liza and offering to enlist a clergymen to help him. By
mere association with Higgins, Doolittle is transformed from an irresponsible social outcast into a respectable and responsible citizen. Finally, Higgins wins his bet "hands down" (I, 253) by Liza's perfect performance at the garden party.

Higgins' success with Liza's transformation in the first three acts of the play involves freeing her from one sort of ritual bondage, her lower-class speech and ignorance, and paradoxically imprisoning her in another, Higgins' rather boorish domination. Also, his success in fooling others with Liza's performance is dependent upon their bondage to certain illusions; for the whole idea of fooling other people into thinking that Liza is a lady, the object of the bet between Higgins and Pickering, relies on the superficial qualifications that class-conscious people, the alazons in the play, see as indicative of high social status. Liza is basically the same person in Mrs. Higgins' drawing room as she is in Covent Garden. Although she is beautifully dressed and speaks with flawless pronunciation, her grammar and impropriety still bind her to her lower-class background. She fools the Eynsford Hill family, who exemplify the middle-class morality Liza seeks to be associated with, because the basis for their judgment of others is a superficial one: they do not expect to meet anyone "unacceptable" at Mrs.
Higgins' at home. Therefore, they do not judge Liza realistically or remember her from Covent Garden. Ironically by copying Liza's "new small talk" (I, 243), Clara inverts the idea of Liza's progress. Shaw burlesques his own plot when Liza and Clara seek to rise socially by learning each other's language. At first, then, Liza is bound by her lower-class speech, ignorance, and habits. Her wide-eyed description of the baptismal bath that she receives under the direction of Mrs. Pearce indicates the extent of the gap between lower and middle-class habits that must be bridged: "I tell you, it's easy to clean up here. Hot and cold water on tap, just as much as you like, there is. Woolly towels, there is; and a towel horse so hot, it burns your fingers. Soft brushes to scrub yourself, and a wooden bowl of soap smelling like primroses. Now I know why ladies is so clean. Washing's a treat for them. Wish they saw what it is for the like of me!" (I, 232).

Liza's judgment, like that of the Eynsford Hills, is based at first on illusions, on stereotyped notions of what constitutes class criteria. Austin points out the recurrent motif of Liza's preoccupation with riding in taxis as behavior emblematic of middle class status. The most famous example occurs when Freddy asks her if she will be walking across the park. Liza does not
realize that the infatuated Freddy desires the opportunity of her company. In self-defense of her newly gained and precariously held social position, she snobbishly disavows the idea of her walking anywhere with the famous line, "Walk! Not bloody likely" (I, 245), and states emphatically her intention of leaving in a taxi.

Higgins soon finds winning the bet uninteresting, and the wager becomes only one part of the complete comic plot. Shaw extends the play importantly beyond Liza's successful performance at the off-stage garden party. The play develops an issue more serious than whether or not Higgins' scientific ability can fool a group of people who are intellectually inferior to himself. At first Higgins accepts Pickering's bet as a source of eccentric amusement, a challenge that appeals both to his outrageous sense of humor and to his enormous phonetic skills. As he tells Pickering: "What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe" (I, 215). After the bet has been won, however, he and Pickering have an importantly ironic exchange of views concerning the experiment:
Pickering. Were you nervous at the garden party? I was. Eliza didn't seem a bit nervous.

Higgins. Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No: it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadn't backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore.

Pickering. Oh, come! the garden party was frightfully exciting. My heart began beating like anything.

Higgins. Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. The dinner was worse: sitting gorging there for over an hour, with nobody but a damned fool of a fashionable woman to talk to! I tell you, Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

Pickering. You've never been broken in properly to the social routine.

(I, 253-254)

While comic irony seems to lie in the fact that the unsocial Higgins is able to train Liza perfectly to enter the fashionable world of the middle class, we see Higgins as an asocial, rather than an unsocial, being because his natural milieu is his laboratory, the widest social world in a scientific sense, where he practices his profession.
Another conflict in the play, therefore, is between the purely scientific man, Higgins, and the social being, Liza. At first Liza's ambition is merely to learn enough to qualify her for a better status in life. Higgins' original concern is to win his bet. Later Liza's concern is with her sense of individual value, and Higgins' desire is to control his delightful creation. What begins as a simple, impersonal scheme for both characters becomes complicated as personal issues of Higgins' intellectual integrity and Liza's emotional sensitivity collide.

Throughout the play we see the fashionable social world as represented by the Eynsford Hills to be an artificial world which Liza as an artificial lady, later as an artificial duchess, is able to fool. Higgins neither likes nor performs well in this artificial world. He is unwelcome at his mother's at homes because of his total disregard for artificial manners. As he tells Liza in the fifth act: "The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another" (I, 274). What Higgins fails to realize, however, is that his real manner is often unnecessarily clumsy. In the stage directions Shaw describes
Higgins' physical movements in his mother's drawing room: "He goes to the divan, stumbling into the fender and over the fire-irons on his way; extricating himself with muttered imprecations; and finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it" (I, 242). In a similar way Higgins' social manners are also clumsy. He is not intentionally unfeeling towards others. Rather, in his basic respect for humanity he takes for granted his general good intentions towards others and expects others to know that he does. Meisel points out that Higgins is "so unaware of his own nature that he complains continually about the unreasonable views others take of him." Louis Crompton believes that "Higgins is in many ways a paradoxical being. He is at once a tyrannical bully and a charmer, an impish schoolboy and a flamboyant wooer of souls, a scientist with a wildly extravagant imagination and a man so blind to the nature of his own personality that he thinks of himself as timid, modest, and diffident."  

In the Preface to Pygmalion Shaw discusses Henry Sweet, the great English phonetician, who lacked "sweetness of character" (I, 191). Shaw says of him: "He was, I believe, not in the least an illnatured man: very much the opposite, I should say; but he would not suffer fools gladly" (I, 192). Professor Sweet, according to Shaw,
was denied proper recognition by Oxford because of his unsocial temperament. "I do not blame Oxford," Shaw explains, "because I think Oxford is quite right in demanding a certain social amenity from its nurslings (heaven knows it is not exorbitant in its requirements!)" (I, 194). Shaw denies that the personality of Henry Higgins is based entirely on that of Henry Sweet, but he does admit an influence: "Pygmalion Higgins is not a portrait of Sweet, to whom the adventure of Eliza Doolittle would have been impossible; still, as will be seen, there are touches of Sweet in the play. With Higgins' physique and temperament Sweet might have set the Thames on fire" (I, 193). The brusqueness of Higgins, however, his basic insensitivity to the feelings of others, makes for a type of ritual bondage in his domination of Liza against which she asserts her own strong will.

In the stage directions Shaw gives us his important idea that while Higgins is a superior figure, he is not without imperfection: "He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings" (I, 209-210). At first Liza is only an unformed object to him. When he instructs Mrs. Pearce how to clothe Liza until the arrival of her newly ordered garments, he brusquely
orders: "Wrap her up in brown paper til they come" (I, 215). He threatens to hit her with a broomstick if she does not "stop snivelling" (I, 214); he gives Mrs. Pearce permission to "wallop her" (I, 216); and he frightens her with punishment in the dustbin. When Pickering protests, "Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?" Higgins replies, "Oh no, I dont think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about" (I, 218). Higgins' blustering domination of Liza in the second act leads her to complain: "One would think you was my father." He acknowledges the substance of her statement with a further threat: "If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you" (I, 214). When Higgins pays Doolittle five pounds, in a way he becomes her substitute father, a senex iratus. Citing this payment in the last act, he refuses to return Liza to Doolittle, and later he offers to adopt her as his daughter. Higgins' combination of scientific genius and gruff father is shown in the clever substance but threatening tone of the fairy tale prospect that he describes to her in the second act when he tempts her to make possible his bet with Pickering:

Eliza: you are to live here for the next six months, learning how to speak beautifully, like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall
sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs. Pearce with a broomstick. At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully dressed. If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken by the police to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven-and-sixpence to start life with as a lady in a shop.

(I, 220)

This combination of Higgins' promise of magical transformation with threats of dire punishment is representative of Higgins' dual role as eiron and senex iratus. To her he is in one sense a fairy godfather, in another sense a fearful tyrant. Twice during the play she believes he will hit her. Liza answers Higgins' speech, quoted above, with her customary pluck, defending her sense of personal justice and her injured, sensitive feelings against Higgins' bullying. In the last two acts of the play, her sense of individual worth becomes as important as her social advancement.

If Higgins quickly tires of the business of creating an artificial duchess, he does not weary of Liza herself. Both Higgins and Pickering report enthusiastically to Mrs. Higgins Liza's genius, quick ear, imitative talent, and musical ability. However, Higgins' insensitive
omission during the course of his transforming Liza is his neglect of her feelings. At the end of the emotional fourth act, he merely mentions the value of his "regard and intimacy" (I, 259), but this weak compliment is lost amid his customary imprecations and namecalling. Harold Brooks calls the showdown after the garden party a "crucial situation" because Higgins denies Liza human value in failing to recognize her part in the experiment. 42 Because he is glad that the phony business is ended, she mistakenly believes that he is also through with her.

Liza does not accept Pickering's apologies for Higgins' gruff manner, "That's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it" (I, 269), and credits the beginning of her real education to self-respect engendered by Pickering's sensitive treatment of her as a human being. Although Higgins confesses to liking Liza, he refuses to treat her with more sensitivity than any other human being. In other words he will not change his ways. As Crompton perceives: "For Eliza the very essence of human relations is mutual 'caring,' for Higgins it is mutual improvement." 43 So Liza makes her decision: "If I can't have kindness, I'll have independence" (I, 279). Higgins frees her from lower-class bondage when he creates a new speech for her. Liza leaves the temporary plateau of artificial manners and progresses to the stage of
meaningful interpersonal relationship. Her own perception of personal justice and her sensitive feelings rebel against continued domination by Higgins, whose \textit{alazon} qualities are then emphasized. He has brought her to a certain point in her social and mental development, but then she supersedes his intentions in order to gain complete independence from him. Therefore, she is a component of the dialectic movement. Meisel believes that "the point of the ending is not Eliza's me but her casting loose, her achievement of indep \_e." \textsuperscript{44} Liza must be credited initially with the vital, independent spirit that enables her to leave home and retain her moral integrity while living the brutal life of a flower girl. How much Pickering's sensitive treatment of her actually contributes to her progress is uncertain. It seems clear, though, that the important dialectic destination of the play involves a combination of Higgins' scientific genius and freedom from snobbishness and Liza's highly sensitive individual integrity and ability to learn that combine in the gloriously free creature she becomes. The final scene depicts Liza and Higgins as equally matched participants in the Shavian battle of wit, complementing each other as dialectic \textit{eirons} in their vital strengths emanating from independence. Liza's emerging freedom is demonstrated throughout the play. Although
Higgins protests, as he exhorts Liza to return to his house, that he cannot change his nature and will not change his manners, he admits to her, nevertheless, that he too has grown under her influence: "I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully" (I, 275). Shaw believed that economic and social equality is fundamental to real human progress. The action of Pygmalion is a small step in the enormously ambitious program of linear social progress envisioned by Shaw.
NOTES

CHAPTER TWO


5 Meisel, p. 47.


9 McDowell, p. 260.

10 Ibid. As shown above, I, of course, do not believe that the elder Malone is "trivial" or "self-indulgent"; and Violet and Hector do not nullify, by not being conscious of it, the purpose of the Life Force, which is using them for ends greater than that of their personal happiness.

11 Ibid., p. 251.

12 Stockholder, p. 47.


15 Ibid., p. 211.


18 Leary, p. 18.

19 Charles A. Berst, "The Devil and Major Barbara," PMLA, 83 (1968), 79.

20 Although Mrs. Baines makes the best out of what she receives, Barbara Bellow Watson says that she suffers from "moral cowardice of the intellect" because she basically accepts the status quo and works within it ("Sainthood for Millionaires: Major Barbara," Modern Drama, 11 (1968), 229).


24 Berst, p. 76.


26 Richard Hornby discusses the idea that in Major Barbara the movement of the play is toward a union of Dionysian and Apollonian principles, emotion and reason ("Bernard Shaw's Dark Comedies," Diss. Tulane 1966, pp. 80-97).

27 Hornby says, "Part of the action of the play consists of the freeing of Cusins' Dionysian soul, much as
Undershaft's was freed when he said 'Thou shalt starve ere I starve'" (Diss., p. 81).

28 Frye, p. 450.

29 Berst, "The Devil," p. 77.

30 Whitman, pp. 76-77.

31 Berst, "The Devil," p. 78.


33 Ibid., pp. 227-28.


35 Meisel, p. 176.


37 Austin, p. 145.

38 Ibid., pp. 161-62.

39 Meisel, p. 69.

40 Louis Crompton, "Improving Pygmalion," Prairie Schooner, 41 (1967), 78-79.

41 Austin calls Higgins a senex and says that "the play concludes with a reconciliation that conforms to the comic pattern of the senex device. Liza establishes her independence of Higgins, and in doing so makes possible a reconciliation that is accomplished on her terms, the terms of youth" (Diss., p. 153).

42 Harold F. Brooks, "'Pygmalion' and 'When We Dead Awaken,'" Notes and Queries, NS 7 (1960), 469.

43 Crompton, p. 83.

44 Meisel, p. 177.
CHAPTER THREE: FINAL PERIOD

In terms of this study, which is examining the comic form Shaw used, some of the final plays display increasingly the linear comic form that is predominant in the plays of the middle period. When compared with the earlier plays, Shaw's last dramatic efforts sometimes receive negative critical pronouncements, perhaps because his basic premise, his sincerely fervid desire for linear human progress, the linear imperative, often replaces the brilliant surface wit which satisfies and entertains audiences of the earlier plays. In his valuable analysis of Shaw's famous style, Richard Ohmann has harsh words to say about the later plays: "In 'The Millionaireess,' 'Too True to be Good,' and 'The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles' event succeeds event with devil-may-care lack of logic, and remark follows remark with exaggerated Shavian caprice. Though the earlier plays manage to be convincing in spite of wild surface improbability, these later ones do not, and an important reason is that in them conversational continuity dips below the level of minimum plausibility." Katherine Haynes Gatch, also in writing of the later comedies of Shaw, says that "hope and belief gave Shaw his dramatic structure, but in the last plays fear and disgust created the tone; and where hope wavers,
the structure is weak."² Like Ohmann, she feels that "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles has no structure,"³ but she concludes that "in all Shaw's late plays the ironic relationship between the magnitude of the themes and the triviality of the treatment is calculated; the political extravaganzas are tragicomedies, concerned with the grotesque disproportion between the gigantic problems and the pygmies who deal with them."⁴

The definition of form becomes important when a work of art seems to lack clarity of intention, for often the meaning is directly relevant to the form. Some of the reasons for failure to appreciate or understand the later plays of Shaw are those which mistakenly presuppose genres or forms that are too narrow or inaccurately assigned. Alvin Kernan makes a statement that seems helpful when we encounter difficulty with Shavian genres: "We should not think that a genre designation is an airtight category which excludes all traces of other genres. Every great work has a tendency to become epic, comedy, tragedy, and satire; and the degree to which the author allows these tendencies to develop is a principal ingredient of the particular tone of his writing, a prime constituent of his unique style."⁵

If, then, his serious intent in the final plays eclipses the especially light-hearted, optimistic tone
of the earlier plays, Shaw is, it will be seen, nevertheless completely devoted to comic form as seen in its widest philosophical sense according to Feibleman, the hopeful search for continuing future logical orders to replace the present limited order of actuality. Not all of Shaw's later plays demonstrate to such an almost exclusive extent the linear line of movement that is seen in Back to Methuselah; but with their linear perspective and imperative, they reflect Shaw's belief that new ideas must always be considered and that the complex and serious issues facing society in the twentieth century and beyond are not amenable either to an individual hero who is able to unite or improve society under a specific program of salvation or to any particular dialectic solution.

In the following pages we shall examine Heartbreak House and Back to Methuselah for Shaw's handling of the movement of the comic plot. We shall see that in Heartbreak House only the unworkable society is presented. Man is temporarily caught between an outmoded world and a new order not yet fashioned. The lack of a sense of plot and the absence of successful social leaders are due partially to the incompleteness of Shaw's vision, a natural shortcoming of the serious realist of today. Shaw's major implicit statement, however, is twofold: first, the inadequacy of the social group in power is consciously recog-
nized by the responsible, although ritually bound, char-
acters; and second, the determination to press forward
that is inherent in the vital human condition optimisti-
cally points towards new and better orders of existence.
As in Heartbreak House, the same linear imperative, Shaw's
urgent message that society must move forward, juxtaposed
with a lack of forward movement in the plot by the ritu-
ally bound groups in power, may be seen also in such plays
as The Apple Cart, On the Rocks, Too True to be Good, and
Geneva. The focus in these final plays of the ideal comic
movement from bondage to freedom, then, is the often an-
guished but ever hopeful world of becoming. Although we
can trace Shaw's purposely prominent treatment of linear
movement in such later plays as The Simpleton of the Un-
expected Isles, Buoyant Billions, and Farfetched Fables,
this study will conclude with Shaw's dramatic masterpiece,
Back to Methuselah, because in this play his teleological
vision receives fullest development.
I. Heartbreak House

Although there is hope for a better society in Heartbreak House, the emphasis in this play is on a group of characters who either cannot or will not assume responsibility for moving society forward. Shaw holds his moribund group responsible for the deteriorating condition of the world in the pre-World War I period. Shaw says in the Preface to the play that Heartbreak House "is cultured, leisured Europe before the war" (I, 449). This play, a direct reflection of the worsening of world events, represents the point in Shaw's canon where a somber tone sets in. The playwright again, as earlier with Caesar and Cleopatra, offers his play as a warning to society. Caesar and Cleopatra, which has a cyclical structure, and Heartbreak House, which has almost no movement at all, are similar in their contrast to plays with obvious linear movement, such as Back to Methuselah and Farfetched Fables. The greater seriousness of Heartbreak House, the increase in somber tone as compared with that of Caesar and Cleopatra, results from the absence of an eiron such as Caesar, who teaches society how to move forward, even if the society within the world of the play is incapable of learning. The communication imparted to the audience of Heartbreak House, then, instead of being a demonstration, however
temporary, of linear movement, consists of a linear imperative.

Northrop Frye says that in *Heartbreak House* "the humorous society simply disintegrates without anything taking its place." The play thus illustrates the first and most ironic phase of comedy which Frye recognizes. In terms of Frye's formulation of the archetypal plot of comedy, the characters remain in a ritual bondage instead of being released by a single comic eiron, as seen in the most typical plays of Shaw's early period, or by a complement of eiron that complete each other's partial views of reality, as seen in Shaw's middle plays. In his "Notes for a Production of *Heartbreak House*" during a revival of the play for the 1959-60 New York season, director Harold Clurman points out that the emphasis of the play "is not on the plot but on character and atmosphere." This statement is an implicit recognition that the plot of release from ritual bondage is replaced in *Heartbreak House* by a study of the ritual bondage itself.

The ritual bondage presented in *Heartbreak House* is neither that of a single humor, such as the obsession with romance in *Arms and the Man* or the irritability and threats of the senex Crampton in *You Never Can Tell*, nor the illusions of incomplete views on a single theme, such as finding the best social religion in *Major Barbara*. In
Heartbreak House the ritual bondage exists in various pervasive forms that are brought together for exposure. As Martin Meisel describes the disparate tyrannies: "Into the house of Captain Shotover come Lady Utterword, the spokesman for Horseback Hall; Boss Mangan, the dubious representative of plutocracy; Mazzini Dunn, the child of nineteenth-century poetry and liberal idealism; and Billy Dunn, the thief. With the past embodied in Captain Shotover, the present in 'my daughters and their men living foolish lives of romance and sentiment and snobbery,' and the future in Ellie Dunn, 'you the younger generation, turning from their romance and sentiment and snobbery to money and comfort and hard common sense,' we are offered a social, intellectual, and temporal microcosm of England." In other words, the society in the world of the play is bound socially, intellectually, temporally, and politically. Heretofore in Shaw's plays we have seen that one type of force usually is powerful enough to counteract the ritual bondage of another: erotic love in You Never Can Tell, the energetic Life Force in Man and Superman and Major Barbara, and the will toward social and personal improvement in Pygmalion. In Heartbreak House the different types of bondage are so interlocked that only the actual occurrence of catastrophe may possibly be able to free the static society for continued movement. Eric Bentley attributes the binding forces in the play to two main
causes: "The aspirations of men are being crushed by the
great twin-sources of power (and ironically enough they
are the twin-sources of comedy): love and money." 9

Of the occupants of Heartbreak House only Captain
Shotover seems urgently aware of a need to struggle for a
means to save society. The difficulty of salvation seems
to arise from an inability to gain the necessary power and
then to put it into the hands of the right people. Two
kinds of people, those with power who are abusing it, and
those who are their victims, seem inseparably combined.
Somehow weakness and strength are often intertwined in the
same individual. Hesione, for example, says that "people
dont have their virtues and vices in sets: they have them
anyhow: all mixed" (I, 512). Captain Shotover and Hector
discuss this complicated problem in Act I. The two main
types of bondage they recognize are those of money and love,
symbolized by "Mangan's bristles" and "Randall's lovelocks"
(I, 526):

Captain Shotover. We must win powers of life
and death over them both. I
refuse to die until I have
invented the means.

Hector. Who are we that we should
judge them?

Captain Shotover. What are they that they should
judge us? Yet they do, unhesi-
titatingly. There is enmity
between our seed and their
seed. They know it and act on it, strangling our souls. They believe in themselves. When we believe in ourselves, we shall kill them.

Hector. It is the same seed. You forget that your pirate has a very nice daughter. Mangan's son may be a Plato; Randall's a Shelley. What was my father?

Captain Shotover. The damndest scoundrel I ever met.

Hector. Precisely. Well, dare you kill his innocent grandchildren?

Captain Shotover. They are mine also.

Hector. Just so. We are members one of another. I tell you I have often thought of this killing of human vermin. Many men have thought of it. Decent men are like Daniel in the lion's den: their survival is a miracle; and they do not always survive. We live among the Mangans and Randalls and Billie Dunns as they, poor devils, live among the disease germs and the doctors and the lawyers and the parsons and the restaurant chefs and the tradesmen and the servants and all the rest of the parasites and blackmailers.

(I, 526)

Shotover, therefore, questions in desperation: "Is there no thunder in heaven?" (I, 529) and takes upon himself the necessary responsibility of judging what should be done. Hector says that Shotover's dynamite is "to blow up the human race if it goes too far. [Shotover] is trying to
discover a psychic ray that will explode all the explosives at the will of a Mahatma" (I, 521). As a man of action Shotover opposes the moribund status quo. He questions Hector: "What then is to be done? Are we to be kept for ever in the mud by these hogs to whom the universe is nothing but a machine for greasing their bristles and filling their snouts?" (I, 525). Shotover advocates a linear movement in time, a striving for progress; but in his personal efforts to improve the world, he has been defeated. As he chants at the end of Act I:

I builded a house for my daughters, and opened the doors thereof,
That men might come for their choosing, and their betters spring from their love;
But one of them married a numskull [etc.]
(I, 530)

Shotover advocates the necessity of mind, of navigation to replace the present aimless drifting of society. Clurman points out that the people in Heartbreak House are content with dreams and pastimes and drifting. They do not strive for meaningful improvement. For Shaw, Frederick McDowell reminds us, the heroic involves "purposive action."

What the old captain wants is more mind for the universe. He tells Hector that muscle is no good; and in his desperate moods he tries to reach a new level of mental concentration, ironically and cynically to purge the world by destruction, if necessary, rather than allow it to destroy him.
In his hopeful moods, however, Shotover is the main character in the play to advocate linear movement, world improvement, which is the intellectual center of Heartbreak House. But Shotover is helplessly bound both by his many adversaries, represented by other characters in the play, and by his own superannuation. As he complains of his own aged impotence, "The last shot was fired years ago" (I, 593).

Mangan, who represents the capitalistic octopus, has tentacles which reach out and bind others in many ways. He confesses frankly to Ellie that he ruined her father "on purpose" (I, 532), obtaining money for Mazzini to start a business, then rescuing him from bankruptcy at an eventual profit for himself, and finally keeping Mazzini bound to him in grateful servitude. Because of his financial influence, Mangan is appointed to an important government post. In contrast to Shotover's idea that society must go forward in order to be saved, Mangan exposes the corruptness of himself and others in government when he boasts that he does what he can for selfish reasons to block any progress. He tells the people assembled in Heartbreak House:

Well, I don't know what you call achievements; but I've jolly well put a stop to the games of the other fellows in the other departments. Every man of them thought he was going to save
the country all by himself, and do me out of
the credit and out of my chance of a title. I
took good care that if they wouldn't let me do
it they shouldn't do it themselves either. I
may not know anything about my own machinery;
but I know how to stick a ramrod into the other
collow's. And now they all look the biggest
fools going.

(I, 582)

Thus Mangan joins his political fellows in thwarting the
salvation of society. He has no perspective upon the
outside world, just as he fails to see where he stands in
the inner world of the play. As Mangan laments, "I don't
quite understand my position here" (I, 515). D. C. Coleman
points out that the unprincipled Mangan himself is really
bound by others also, "an impecunious puppet in industry
and government controlled by a remote and impersonal syn-
dicate."¹² In the play he is bound by women, put liter-
ally into a trance by Ellie and made a fool of by his at-
traction to Hesione.

Hector and Randall are also in the ritual bondage of
fatal attraction to women. Randall is furthermore bound
by his idea of the stereotyped, unchanging English gentle-
man. Clurman says that "all his convictions have been
absorbed in this pose--which is his class pattern,"¹³ what
Randall himself calls "my notions of good form" (I, 571).
Out of jealousy Randall follows his sister-in-law, Lady
Utterword, everywhere. As she says, "He makes scenes all
over the place" (I, 572). He confesses to Hector: "I
have loved this demon all my life" (I, 574); and Hector tells him frankly the futility of the bondage Randall is in, challenging him at the same time to free himself: "You are under a spell, man. Old Shotover sold himself to the devil in Zanzibar. The devil gave him a black witch for a wife; and these two demon daughters are their mystical progeny. I am tied to Hesione's apron-string; but I'm her husband; and if I did go stark staring mad about her, at least we became man and wife. But why should you let yourself be dragged about and beaten by Ariadne as a toy donkey is dragged about and beaten by a child?" (I, 575-576). Bound by love, Randall exemplifies the "tragedy of a man who never achieves his heart's desire." 14

Hector's bondage to love is a greater loss to society than is that of Randall because Hector has the redeeming qualities of awareness of and concern for the larger world and his place in it. He is both a romantic fool and a frustrated hero. McDowell says that his name signifies a sleeping heroism, awakened to action in the two crises of the burglar in the house and the bombers overhead, and a mute reception of passion. Hector represents the "undirected heroism" of England's young men, says McDowell; and Shotover, as spokesman for action, brings out the best in him, 15 his worry about the world.

Despite Randall's mad jealousy, Hector defends the
helpless Randall against Ariadne, even though he suffers the weakness of being in bondage to women himself. We see Hector as the dashing fraud who infatuates Ellie with his skillful lady-killing and his stories of adventure. Although he resents his attractiveness to women, he continually dresses and acts the part they expect of him. As he says of his predicament to Hesione, "What am I to do? I can't fall in love; and I can't hurt a woman's feelings by telling her so when she falls in love with me. And as women are always falling in love with my moustache I get landed in all sorts of tedious and terrifying flirtations in which I'm not a bit in earnest" (I, 523-524). McDowell makes the point that Hector inveighs against the entanglements of women, yet he seeks to repeat the "confounded madness" (I, 524) he found with Hesione even though he is miserable in his attempts. Robert Reed says that Hector has "found the apotheosis of his ideal self" in Hesione and then stopped striving for meaningful success in the world. Since Hector is unable to extricate himself from the bondage of women, he calls for drastic means to end his misery in the ritually bound house. His answer to Hesione's question about the "splendid drumming in the sky" (I, 577), that it was "Heaven's threatening growl of disgust at us useless futile creatures," displays his awareness of the necessity to continue linear progress. "I
tell you," he goes on, "one of two things must happen.
Either out of that darkness some new creation will come
to supplant us as we have supplanted the animals, or the
heavens will fall in thunder and destroy us. . . . There
is no sense in us. We are useless, dangerous, and ought
to be abolished" (I, 578). When the bombing attack comes
at the end of the play, he does what he can to insure a
purge, but he is typically frustrated in his attempt to
be heroic. Instead of doing the work of the world, Hector
is interested mainly in escaping from its dullness. Crompton
sees in the romantic Hector a Sergius after twenty
years of marriage. 18 The ritual bondage he is in dooms
him to a perpetual round of boredom and the futile attempts
to alleviate it that turn back upon himself.

Hesione and Ariadne, the "demon" daughters of Shot-
over, are the great sources of female domination in Heart-
break House. McDowell believes that whereas the name
Hushabye indicates for Hector a "mute reception" of pas-
sion, "Hushabye" in Hesione's name indicates an "outpour-
ing of possessive passion." McDowell sees in Hesione "a
more disembodied incarnation of the Life Force than her
prototype, Ann Whitefield." 19 However, when sexual attrac-
tion is used not to further the human race but to stifle
it, the female role is destructive in its bondage of the
will of the male. Coleman justly calls Hesione "amoral
and selfish." Not only does she fail to see the real consequences of her domination over Hector in the personal world of their household, but she also is unaware of the concept of a society moving ahead in the larger sense. Domination, not freedom or progress, is her theme. Hector asks, "Is there any slavery on earth viler than this slavery of men to women?" (I, 575). Later, he participates in the following exchange with his wife:

Mrs. Hushabye. Oh, I say it matters very little which of you governs the country as long as we govern you.

Hector. We? Who is we, pray?

Mrs. Hushabye. The devil's granddaughters, dear. The lovely women.

Hector. [raising his hands as before] Fall, I say; and deliver us from the lures of Satan!

(I, 583-584)

Mangan, too, is a victim of both Hesione's "glad eye" (I, 550) and the patronizing "mothering tyranny" (I, 585) of Shotover's daughters. Ariadne, "the spokesman for Horseback Hall," is what McDowell calls "English hypocrisy at home and abroad" with her "pride, her overbearing nature, and her love of caste" that keeps others in bondage. Clurman notes that she is bound herself by her own demands for propriety, for social form. He points out that she is imprisoned by class convention and hungers for the freedom
to experience, to express her innermost desires. Of these characters discussed thus far, only Mangan is released from ritual bondage, ironically when he is killed in the gravel pit along with the burglar. This symbolic event in the play is a negative release for society because death, not a greater sense of vitality, removes certain constricting forces from the house. There is critical controversy about Ellie's status in the plot, both her significance and the extent of her release. McDowell believes that in her resourcefulness, resiliency, and intelligence she represents "English youth and womanhood at its best—by extension England at its best." However, McDowell also notes that although the play deals with her "adjustment to life," she is at the center of the play in only an incidental way. Crompton's contrasting critical position on Ellie's role is that her progress from romantic views to cynicism to discipleship under Shotover "constitutes the chief dramatic action of the play." Michael Mendelsohn, on the other hand, believes that she is disillusioned by Shotover as well as by Hector and Mangan. The problem with interpreting Ellie's role results, it seems, from the fact that she is released from a personal romantic bondage but is still bound by the moribund larger society. Comic release is usually both personal and social, and the ritual bondage
is replaced by some sort of new program, however vague in
definition. In *Heartbreak House* the society and its repre-
sentative individual members are not released; therefore,
Ellie's position at the end of the play is ambiguous.

At the beginning of the play Ellie is ritually bound
by the others in the interlocking mesh that is stifling
her freedom. She is bound by the financial failure of her
father, Mazzini Dunn, who in his gullibility, idealism,
and calm acceptance of things is in turn bound by Mangan
and all that he represents. Ellie is bound thus both in-
directly and directly by Mangan. When she feels she must
go through with her engagement to Mangan, despite her love
for Marcus Darnley, the alias of Hector Hushabye, she tells
Hesione: "I am bound in honor and gratitude" (I, 505).
Later the society that denies her eligibility in the mar-
riage market causes her to seek marriage with Mangan for
reasons of self-interest. Reed says that her ultimate re-
lease consists in her "discovery that she is a woman
totally devoid of self-interest and hence has the courage
to face any exigency of the future" while Clurman says
"she 'falls in love' . . . with life itself, in all its
danger in the person or symbol of Shotover." Ellie
learns to face reality instead of the unreal dream world
of her desires. She says to Shotover, "I used to dread
losing my dreams and having to fight and do things. But
that is all over for me: my dreams are dashed to pieces" (I, 568). The contrast of the static dream world, in which the characters are ritually bound, to the dynamic world of action, in which linear progress can occur, is important to an understanding of Heartbreak House. Richard Hornby analyzes the dominating motif of sleep in the play, a motif which begins with our first view of Ellie dozing in the Shotover house as she waits significantly for someone to notice her presence. According to Hornby, "the nation's leaders . . . live in a fantasy world of romantic love, play-acting, horses, books, alcohol, and small talk, while the real world is exploding around them. . . . It is to this upper class world of fantasy that Shaw refers when he describes the play as a 'fantasia.'" 32 While Shotover fights the immobilizing sleep which his advanced age induces, the "lazy and pleasure-loving" (I, 579) Randall remains statically fixed in his life's dream of possessing Ariadne; and Hector is caught between his useless desire for endless repetition of his happy moment with Hesione and his striving usefully to move forward. In his noble moments Hector yearns to become something better; and, like Caesar, he seems to want to burn the inferior past so that he may start anew. At the end of the play Ellie joins him in this wish of burning the useless house because she has learned to go beyond daydreams.
Her symbolic marriage to Shotover indicates her intention to leave romance and self-interest for active engagement in the real world, to take over where he leaves off. Shaw consistently attacks the romantic dreamer in his plays. For example, in Man and Superman when Ann rejects the unrealistic Octavius, she advises him to keep away from women "and only dream about them" (III, 673).

The "disjunctive, unpredictable entrance and exit" technique that McDowell says "produces a sense of conflict among the characters" also shows us by the shifting, complicated intrigues how bound up in many cross ways the society of Heartbreak House is. Thus Ellie's new personal freedom from romantic illusion is impotent because she must make an existence within the society that remains bound. Her calling for the catastrophe that can perhaps "lead to regeneration" is a desperate effort, much like Hector's recurrent call on the thunder in heaven, to bring about salvation in a society where no human hero appears to herald a new day.
II. **Back to Methuselah**

*Back to Methuselah* may be the best dramatic treatment of the comic form defined by James Feibleman: "A constant reminder of the existence of the logical order as the perfect goal of actuality, comedy continually insists upon the limitations of all experience and of all actuality."\(^{35}\) Three critics view the play as cyclical in form. Professor Gatch writes that Shaw presents a "cyclical concept of history."\(^{36}\) Daniel Leary and Richard Foster believe that "the rise and decline of matter and sex in this series of plays can be seen as a carefully graduated curve."\(^{37}\) This analysis will seek to show that the play is an example of linear comic form with the emphasis throughout on the process of becoming.

According to Leary and Foster the cycle in *Back to Methuselah* may be summarized as follows. In the first play we hear of Lilith, the single-sexed primal life force having willed the birth of two sexes, male and female, Adam and Eve. At first, Adam and Eve are immortal and uninvolved in reproduction. Then they choose mortality and sexual reproduction necessary to continue the human race. In the second play we see contemporary society, and in the third and fourth plays there are evolutionary modifications. Finally, in the last play the Ancients
have renounced sex; and "evolution has come full circle, for images of Adam and Eve return to the stage but seem to be reabsorbed into the spirit of Lilith."\textsuperscript{38}

The preceding view, however, is too simplified and belies the truly linear steps that the play makes. Back to Methuselah at every stage illustrates the dissatisfaction inherent in the existing order, which Feibleman says is at the core of comedy: "If it is only the limitations of actuality which prevent actuality from containing infinite value, those limitations should not be suffered. To justify the demand for their elimination, it is only necessary to point out that they are limitations."\textsuperscript{39} When portraying characteristics of his own society in Back to Methuselah, however, Shaw at first points out limitations in a benign tone and later employs the harsher methods of an earnest satirist.

In Back to Methuselah limitations, forms of ritual bondage, exist and continually are superseded. Adam cannot bear the burden of immortality because he is relatively undeveloped as a human being. He tells Eve, "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" (II, 5). When once the issue of accidental death is raised, other possibilities become available, such as other Adams, other Eves, and an
individual life span. The first human couple break one bond in order to find another. The burden of immortality gives way to the binding vow of marriage in the garden of Eden. Juxtaposed to the self-imposed bondage of Adam and Eve is the freedom of the Serpent, who, symbolic of the linear life force, refuses to submit to any bondage. The Serpent says: "Nothing is certain but uncertainty. If I bind the future I bind my will. If I bind my will I strangle creation" (II, 18). The rest of the "metabiological pentateuch" consists of a series of bonds in various forms constantly giving way to more freedom and human progress as man moves teleologically in time. The boundaries of actuality are constantly being pushed forward, and the plays do not end where they begin.

In Back to Methuselah the concept of a divine indwelling principle is a complex major theme. Adam, Eve, Cain, and the Serpent in the first play, "In the Beginning," have much to say about the relationship of will to internal and external voices in the garden of Eden; and the following plays of the series both discuss and demonstrate the principle of the divine working itself upward through Creative Evolution. In the first play, "In the Beginning," Eve tells of "Enoch, who walks on the hills, and hears the Voice continually, and has given up his will to do the will of the Voice, and has some of the Voice's greatness"
(II, 32). In the last play, "As Far as Thought Can Reach," the He-Ancient says: "I ceased to walk on the mountains; for I saw that the mountains were dead" (II, 251). Leary and Foster say that "this Enoch of the future needs no mountains, and has discovered that he is his own God." 40

In terms of the philosophy of linear comedy, old bonds of existence continually give way in the course of man's progress; and the human beings within each stage of evolution are aware of the limitations of the actuality which is their particular time and nature. Although Eve calls Cain "Anti-Man" (II, 24), the evil of destruction which Cain embodies is a problem of life that must be worked out in time. Paul Hummert convincingly traces Marxist principles through Back to Methuselah, and he makes a good case for Cain as "the father of Capitalism." 41 According to Hummert, Cain is an example of competitive acquisitiveness justifying itself with rhapsodic idealism. 42 He wants to make his wife not an equal partner but a slave, and his gifts to her of the furs of animals deprive the world of life. He wants to be not his brother's keeper but a master of men; and the exploitation of others for his own benefit is a capitalistic principle. As he tells Adam and Eve: "You neither of you know anything about life. You are simple country folk. You are the nurses and valets of the oxen and dogs and asses you
have tamed to work for you. I can raise you out of that. I have a plan. Why not tame men and women to work for us? Why not bring them up from childhood never to know any other lot, so that they may believe that we are gods, and that they are here only to make life glorious for us?" (II, 25). Although he thinks he has progressed beyond Adam, for he says to Adam, "I am a man: you are only a grown-up child" (II, 27-28), yet Cain realizes that he also is just a stage in the development of life: "There is something higher than man. There is hero and superman" (II, 24). In the last play, "As Far as Thought Can Reach," the ghost of Cain admits his limited, phased-out value: "There is no place for me on earth any longer. You cannot deny that mine was a splendid game while it lasted. But now! Out, out, brief candle!" (II, 260).

"The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," the only play of the five set in a drawing room, examines the limitations of contemporary society that stem from man's immaturity due to his short life span. The idea behind the linear thrust of this play is that the spirit of man, his longing for a better society, must be united with an extension of his individual physical life. Therefore, the gospel of the brothers is created by both a biologist and a former clergyman. It should be noted here that the linear progress in Shaw's plays is not a steady up-
ward movement without recession but rather that of an ascending spiral. Eiron such as Caesar and Joan (Saint Joan) carry the world forward, but the world slips back after them until it can, very slowly, catch up. In Back to Methuselah Shaw envisions a longer life span as a new answer to the problems of the infrequency of heroes and the inability of lesser human nature to carry on their reforms. Longer life and accompanying greater maturity should promote more steady linear progress to replace the too frequent cyclical returns within the overall linear movement. In Back to Methuselah Shaw mitigates the total reversal seen in Caesar and Cleopatra; in Back to Methuselah he emphasizes the linear movement of the ascending spiral by showing us its scope over a long period of time.

The necessity for a responsible linear vision set forth by the brothers is dramatized against the bondage of a selfish, short-sighted, static, or cyclical view of history expounded by the politicians, Burge and Lubin. Burge exposes the limitations of Lubin and then is later exposed by Conrad. Burge says to Lubin: "The great movement of mankind, the giant sweep of the ages, passes you by and leaves you standing." Lubin replies smugly, in language reminiscent of the Devil in Man and Superman: "It leaves me sitting, and quite comfortable, thank you. Go on sweeping. When you are tired of it, come back;
and you will find England where it was" (II, 59). Lubin represents a closed capitalistic society: "All this Trade Unionism and Socialism and so forth is founded on the ignorant delusion that wages and the production and distribution of wealth can be controlled by legislation or by any human action whatever. They obey fixed scientific laws, which have been ascertained and settled finally by the highest economic authorities" (II, 61). Lubin thus believes in the classical school of economics, which Shaw and the other Fabians had been battling for thirty-five years.

The class-conscious Burge, according to Hummert, also ultimately stands for the unprogressive existing order when he refuses to consider a marriage between his family and that of Conrad Barnabas. To Burge the question of such an alliance is not political. In his narrow views he resists the classless society that Shaw believed must accompany Creative Evolution. 43 Burge thinks in limited political terms, but the brothers' plan is "the program of the whole of civilization" (II, 67). Franklyn Barnabas puts the case for self-conscious progress: "Man is not God's last word: God can still create. If you cannot do His work He will produce some being who can" (II, 81). Leary and Foster explain the linear significance of the brothers' plan: "The Brothers Barnabas,
like the Serpent, are the voice of new possibilities. Conrad, the scientist, and Franklyn, the theologian, have combined to produce a new 'metabiological gospel.'" 44

In the last three plays of the series, "The Thing Happens," "Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman," and "As Far as Thought Can Reach," Shaw's technique for showing the progress of linear time, the continual unfolding of the logical destiny of society, is to portray the present limited order against a future order which has advanced beyond the limitations of the present. Increasingly there are scenes of almost pure satire as the present society is juxtaposed with freer and more advanced orders of actuality. Thus these plays illustrate Feibleman's analysis of the comic movement: "Comedy leads to dissatisfaction and the overthrow of all reigning theories and practices in favor of those less limited. It thus works against current customs and institutions; hence its inherently revolutionary nature. Actuality may contain value, so comedy seems to argue, but it is capable of containing more of value; and it is necessary to dissolve those things and events which have some value in order to procure others which have a greater amount." 45

In "The Thing Happens," we see three types of society: the inept English; the capable foreign, colored races, who do the actual work of governing; and the long-
livers approaching three-hundred years of age, who are the most superior of all. Hummert observes that in this play "a classless society has already been established." No one even knows what a "parlor-maid" is except the remembering longlivers. Mrs. Lutestring recalls the horrors of the old capitalistic system of her "immaturity," in actuality the society of Shaw's audience:

I saw that the little money I had laid up would not last, and that I must go out and work again. They had things called Old Age Pensions then: miserable pitances for worn-out old laborers to die on. I thought I should be found out if I went on drawing it too long. The horror of facing another lifetime of drudgery, of missing my hard-earned rest and losing my poor little savings, drove everything else out of my mind. You people nowadays can have no conception of the dread of poverty that hung over us then, or of the utter tiredness of forty years' unending overwork and striving to make a shilling do the work of a pound.

(II, 119-120)

Leary and Foster make the point that the Lutestring-Haslam union in its "utter passionlessness" is an evolutionary improvement. Shaw contrasts their knowledgeable efficiency and lack of self-interest with the impulsive and possibly dangerous passion between Burge-Lubin and the Negress Domestic Minister; Burge-Lubin gives up his desire to spend an afternoon with her because of his newly acquired, long-range perspective that is ironically turned to selfish account: "I will not face an eternity of
rheumatism for any woman that ever was born" (II, 135). Similarly Barnabas is depicted as both limited himself and a social menace in his desire to forestall progress. Leary and Foster believe he is "Cain-like in his primitive instinct to annihilate the longlivers, to annihilate life itself: 'What reason can you give for killing a snake?' he cries in [mistaken] justification; 'Nature tells you to do it.'"^48

In "Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman" the extended satire consists of the juxtaposition of present-day human nature, mores, language, and institutions with a more advanced order and human nature, the shortlivers against the longlivers. By contrast, the shortlivers appear foolishly immature. The Elderly Gentleman voices a belief in progress, but actually he is a romantic yearning for a past golden age. He speaks of "these degenerate days" (II, 153) and of his descent from "a race of heroes and poets" (II, 156). While he apotheosizes his concept of a hero, we see the epitome of the old type of hero in the Napoleonic Cain figure, who is satirically undercut and dispatched by the awesome power of the oracle. Margery Morgan aptly points out that the epic hero with his dream of martial glory dwindles to a farcical figure before the new order of rational law.\(^49\)

The Elderly Gentleman's belief in an external, ortho-
dox God, "my Creator" (II, 156), is equated with his class pride: "I am not an Agnostic: I am a gentleman" (II, 157). Hummert points out that "the classless society is still unintelligible to the Englishman in A.D. 3000." The class-conscious Elderly Gentleman appears foolish against the new order that Hummert calls Marxist internationalism. All the same, though, there is a gentleness in Shaw's portrait of the Elderly Gentleman, as opposed to the view of contemporary human beings presented in the automata of "As Far as Thought Can Reach." Leary and Foster explicate with fine insight the tragic tone in the Elderly Gentleman's consciousness of the process of becoming:

The Elderly Gentleman finally comes to realize that his life is important only as a fulfillment of something greater; and the most poignant aspect of this "tragedy" is that Shaw apparently identifies himself with the Elderly Gentleman and unflinchingly admits that his own class with its charm, its eloquence, its art, its Bernard Shaws, must be removed even as Heartbreak House must be blown up, to make room for a classless society even more fully dedicated to the idea of mankind's development.

Opposed to the theme of evolutionary progress, the traveling party of shortlivers with the Elderly Gentleman wants to retain the established order: the oracle is asked for the same answer given fifteen years earlier and designates the shortlivers fools for their short-sighted self-interest.
In "As Far as Thought Can Reach" Hummert notes that "not only are there no social classes, but among the ancients the difference between the sexes is almost indiscernible." There are two ways in this play in which Shaw presents the society of his day in juxtaposition with an advancing order of being. First, the Youths, in their relative immaturity resembling mature people of the twentieth century, are contrasted with the imposing maturity of the Ancients, who are capable of living and developing until they suffer a fatal accident. Morgan points out that the contrast of the Youths and Ancients also sets up the "antithesis between reason and the sensual soul." The latter gives way to the former as age increases.

Shaw's second method of contrasting two orders of existence, the old with the visionary, is by way of the creations of Pygmalion, the scientist, and Martellus, the sculptor, in a savage satire of Shaw's fellow man set against the superior nature of the future longlivers. Shaw goes further than merely portraying the Ancients as a more desirable product of the ideal logical order which works itself out in time. He exhibits human nature as we know it in harsh Swiftian terms. The "human couple" are called "machines" (II, 228), "artificial men" (II, 229), "primitive tribes" (II, 231), "all reflexes and nothing else," "automata" (II, 234), "devils" (II, 239), "loath-
some dolls" (II, 240), and "abominations" (II, 243).

The final bondage from which the Ancients are determined to free themselves is that of the body. Leary and Foster observe that the Ancients come to a similar problem of choice, how to avoid accidental death, as do Adam and Eve in the first play. Whereas Adam and Eve choose the creation of additional matter, more people, the Ancients seek to escape matter by losing their bodies. However, this similarity to the problem of death in "In the Beginning" does not justify a cyclical view of Back to Methuselah. The final striving of the Ancients is yet another rebellion against the limitations of their actuality; and their choice, which is different from that of Adam and Eve, is thus a further linear thrust.

In addition to the broad strokes of linear movement that Back to Methuselah makes from play to play, the theme of continual progress appears in smaller detail, most notably in the last play, "As Far as Thought Can Reach." We see the maiden Chloe leaving the other, less mature maidens and youths behind as she goes off by herself to fulfil her individual destiny. The Newly Born alters before us as she experiences and then overcomes the immature emotion of jealousy in her individual course of progress. Arjillax too shifts his maturing interests from beauty to wisdom in his choice of the Ancients as
inspiration for his sculpture. When Strephon resists change, the loss of his sweetheart Chloe to the inevitability of individual growth in time, he becomes a tragic figure. Morgan believes that "Strephon is the token of Shaw's compassion, in whom the pain of becoming is concentrated. With him is identified the process of 'heart-break' that transports men against their will from folly to wisdom, as it tears them from all attainable desires." The linear reach toward spirit freed from matter is an answer of sorts to the tragic potential of physical life. Yet Lilith predicts unending progress beyond this ken. The linear theme of the entire series of plays is carried out even in her last words: "It is enough that there is a beyond" (II, 262).

It seems logical to conclude this study of Shaw's comic form with Back to Methuselah, the great work to which Lawrence Langner pays the high tribute of saying that it "represents the most monumental intellectual accomplishment in play form in the history of the theatre." Shaw continued writing plays after this masterpiece, his longest effort; but in Back to Methuselah he most fully realizes his increasingly prominent use of linear comic form as he portrays in this series of five plays the historical
movement of man from the Garden of Eden to A.D. 31,920. The somewhat artificial periods into which this thesis is divided are not intended to separate Shaw's plays into rigid groups without any common characteristics. Instead, I have tried to trace a certain change in Shaw's use of comic form by choosing representative plays to demonstrate first, Shaw's use of a cyclical movement with definite eiron and alazon figures; next, his employment of dialectic linear movement with complementary eirons; and finally, his stressing the importance of man's need to progress with far less attention paid to the concept of individual heroes. Back to Methuselah gives us Shaw's most complete explanations and far-ranging vision of man's continual search for better orders of existence. Shaw's masterful use of this liberal, linear comic form as shown in the concluding discussion of this thesis represents a wide departure from the more conservative, or conventional, comic form we examined in Arms and the Man, his first play discussed here.
NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

1 Shaw: The Style and the Man (Middletown, Conn., 1962), p. 63.


3 Ibid., p. 145.

4 Ibid., pp. 146-47.

5 The Plot of Satire (New Haven, 1965), p. 221.


10 Clurman, p. 67.


13 Clurman, p. 65.


15 McDowell, p. 344.

16 Ibid., p. 354.

18 Crompton, p. 23.
19 McDowell, p. 344.
20 Coleman, p. 225.
21 McDowell, p. 345.
22 Clurman, p. 62.
23 McDowell, p. 346.
24 Ibid., p. 337.
25 Crompton, pp. 24-25.

27 Clurman, p. 64.
28 Coleman, p. 225.
30 Reed, p. 12.
31 Clurman, p. 61.
33 McDowell, p. 337.
34 Ibid., p. 352.
36 Gatch, p. 136.
Ibid.

Feibleman, p. 472.

Leary and Foster, p. 25.


Ibid., p. 12.


Leary and Foster, p. 18.

Feibleman, p. 472.


Leary and Foster, p. 19.

Ibid.

Margery M. Morgan, "'Back to Methuselah'" The Poet and the City," Essays and Studies, NS 13 (1960), 92-93.

Hummert, p. 15.

Ibid., p. 16.

Leary and Foster, p. 21.

Hummert, p. 16.

Morgan, p. 87.

Leary and Foster, p. 23.

Morgan, p. 94.

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