English society a bane to progress. Similarities of philosophical ideas in Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw

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ENGLISH SOCIETY: A BANE TO PROGRESS

Similarities

of

Philosophical Ideas

in

SAMUEL BUTLER AND GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

by

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Writing in the early 1920s about George Bernard Shaw and his works, J. S. Collis says:

The days of the annotator with his Notes and Appendix are not far off; and the stage will at last be reached when it will be considered safe to set, examinations on Mr. Shaw's remarks about examinations.1

The recent flood of material concerning G. B. S. and his works is evidence that the days of the annotator have been reached. Much of this biographical and critical material was occasioned by the death of Mr. Shaw. Shaw would probably say that the reverse is true—that the works occasioned his death—but it is to be hoped that he would not have been speaking seriously. It is also to be hoped that the latter stage that Mr. Collis speaks of will never be reached.

Mr. Collis warns that Shaw, since he has reached the stage of the annotator, may be in danger of losing the little influence he has. Nevertheless, Mr. Collis, himself an annotator, admits that annotation is necessary. Shaw, too, admits that interpretation and understanding of his works are difficult. He says, "Evolution as a philosophy and physiology of the will is a mystical process, which can be apprehended only by a trained, apt, and comprehensive thinker."2 And he warns his readers that they cannot

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1. J. S. Collis, Shaw, p. 27.
get accustomed to his habits of mind quickly and easily:

...Please do not think you can take in the work of my lifetime at one reading. You must make it your practice to read all my works at least twice over every year for ten years or so.

However, since the millennium which Shaw advocates has not as yet been reached, most people have neither the time nor the desire to read all of Shaw's works twice a year for ten years. Therefore, the annotator, the biographer, the critic, and the interpreter have a function—that of mediating between an author and those readers who have not become accustomed to his habits of mind.

George Bernard Shaw, like Samuel Butler, is often inconsistent, paradoxical, and contradictory. Both Shaw and Butler use language symbolically, reverse truisms for effect, and use the same word in opposite senses. Shaw and Butler are often praised without understanding, or are simply ignored—and perhaps vaguely agreed with—because they are not understood. G. K. Chesterton asserts, "Most people either say that they agree with Bernard Shaw or that they do not understand him. I am the only person who understands him, and I do not agree with him." Understanding, praise, and—for some people—agreement, are possible.

3. George Bernard Shaw, as quoted by Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw, p. 220.

Shaw lamented the fact that he had become a Classic, that he was praised without understanding—often without reading. Butler lamented the fact that he was ignored. Being ignored and being praised without understanding are poor substitutes for a little understanding without praise. It is hoped that the following "annotation" will contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw. "In that hope I withdraw and ring up the curtain."5

D. J. H.

5. George Bernard Shaw, Back to Methuselah, preface, p. xc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  So Small An Acquaintance.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Memory, Life, and God</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III From Church of England to Creative Evolution</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Means and Extremes</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V  Progress or the Illusion of Progress?</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI An Outstretched Hand</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to point out the similarity of the ideas of George Bernard Shaw to the ideas of Samuel Butler. This similarity is evident both in the basic philosophical beliefs of the two writers and in their theories concerning certain social institutions. A secondary aim of the study is to show that the ideas of each author concerning these social institutions resulted from the basic philosophical idea believed in by each author.

Most of the authors who have written about George Bernard Shaw and his work have pointed out that he is "indebted" to Samuel Butler for many of his ideas and for certain aspects of his method. However, to my knowledge, no exhaustive study of Shaw's relationship to Butler has been made. Often authors make statements concerning Shaw's indebtedness to Butler, or accept Shaw's own statements concerning that indebtedness without elaborating on them or pointing out the places of similarity. C. E. M. Joad has made extensive studies of each author, but he has written about them individually, with the result that his comments on the relationship of the two are incidental to his main purpose. It is hoped that this study, by showing the affinity of ideas in the two authors, will
contribute to the understanding and appreciation of both, thereby making their ideas more effective. It is the personal feeling of the writer that Samuel Butler, known almost exclusively for his novel, *The Way of All Flesh*, has been unduly neglected. In *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited*, Butler has presented many ideas, commonly thought to be original in Shaw, in a form that is very nearly as interesting and readable as are Shaw's plays. That Shaw felt much the same way will be shown in the body of the study. I think it is obvious, then, that an incidental aim of this study is a restatement of Butler's importance as an author of the nineteenth century.

In approaching the problem of the relationship between Shaw and Butler, I have begun with the most obvious aspects: their personal contacts; their correspondence; and Shaw's praise of, and statements of indebtedness to, Samuel Butler. These have all been discussed in Chapter I. I have organized the remainder of the thesis on the assumption that each author's basic philosophical idea and each author's ideas concerning social institutions should be treated in separate sections. Furthermore, I have assumed that placing the ideas of each author in juxtaposition will make the similarity and affinity more obvious and understandable. Because Butler is earlier chronologically, I have discussed his basic philosophical idea first, and
followed it by a discussion of Shaw's basic philosophical idea. The next chapter is concerned with Butler's theories concerning institutions and how they resulted from his basic philosophical idea. It is followed by a chapter considering Shaw in the same manner. The final chapter is a summary of the results of the study.

Both primary and secondary sources have been used in preparing this study. As a general rule, secondary sources have been used for background material and primary sources for materials on the philosophical ideas themselves. Information on Darwin's theory of evolution, Lamarck's theory of evolution, and Weismann's germ-cell theory has been obtained almost entirely from secondary sources. Secondary sources have also been of inestimable aid in interpreting and clarifying difficult points in the primary sources. In every case where secondary sources have been used for actual material, credit is given in a footnote. All secondary sources used for clarification and interpretation purposes, as well as for background materials, are listed in the bibliography. Material on the personal relationship of Butler and Shaw, and on the philosophical and metaphysical implications of the Darwinian theory, is from both primary and secondary sources. All other materials are from primary sources.

Both Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw were
profuse writers; it is impossible for me to consider all their writings in a work of this scope. Therefore, I have selected materials peculiarly appropriate to the study. Samuel Butler wrote four complete volumes and several essays on his theory of Creative Evolution. A series of essays, "The Deadlock in Darwinism," is the source I have used, because it contains the most concise statement of the theory. The four volumes are concerned as much with proving the theory as with stating it. Since I am not here concerned with proof, I have used only the statement of the theory found in the essays. Butler's novel, The Way of All Flesh, and his "story-books," Erewhon and Erewhon Revisited, contain most of his ideas on English institutions. All three works have been considered in this study.

All of Shaw's favorite themes can be found in three plays: Man and Superman, Back to Methuselah, and Heartbreak House. Man and Superman and Back to Methuselah express Shaw's theory of Creative Evolution; in addition, these plays present many of Shaw's theories of society. Heartbreak House is a summary expression of what is wrong with English society. Therefore, I have selected these three plays as the principal sources for George Bernard Shaw's ideas. Other sources have been mentioned, and sometimes quoted, but most of the material I have used is
from these three plays.

It is evident, then, that the following study is not exhaustive. Only to the extent that it is more complete than any previous work done on the problem, and only to the extent that it makes some contribution to an understanding of the two authors, is it successful.
CHAPTER I

SO SMALL AN ACQUAINTANCE

Although there is evidence that George Bernard Shaw and Samuel Butler knew each other personally, the sources available do not indicate when Butler and Shaw first met. Hesketh Pearson conjectures that Butler and Shaw probably first rubbed shoulders in the reading room of the British Museum. He says, however, that they did not become acquainted until later. The first evidence of an actual meeting of the two men is in a story told to Hesketh Pearson. Shaw explains that he was a member of the West Central Branch of the Fabian Society but that he never attended the meetings. He continues:

Then one day my eye lit on the announcement that Samuel Butler was going to lecture to the Branch on the Odyssey, the feminine authorship of which he was then bent on proving. ...Butler addressed the largest gathering the Branch had ever been able to muster... and...went home satisfied and rather gratified.1

Butler's concern with the Odyssey began in 1892. In 1897 he wrote The Authoress of the Odyssey. Between these dates, he did considerable lecturing on the Odyssey and the woman who he thought wrote it. Therefore, it was probably during this five-year period that Shaw heard Butler's lecture to the West Central Branch of the Fabian Society.

1. George Bernard Shaw, as quoted in Hesketh Pearson, G.B.S., A Full Length Portrait, pp. 84-85.
One surmises from Shaw's comments on the lecture that this was the first time that he had seen Butler.

The biographies of Shaw and Butler mention no further contact between the two authors, until Samuel Butler wrote a letter to Shaw concerning Erewhon Revisited:

22 March 1901—Longmans have had the MS. nearly a month and will not publish it even at my expense... If you can recommend me to a man in whom I can have reasonable confidence and who will have the like in me I shall hold myself much your debtor. At any rate, I will try him.

Again I ask your pardon for troubling you so seriously on so small an acquaintance.

This letter indicates that Butler and Shaw had seen little of each other after the meeting of the Fabian Society.

Nevertheless, in spite of "so small an acquaintance," Shaw answered promptly, on March 24th. In his answer he gives his opinion of Longman for refusing the book, and continues:

But I should think you could have any of the younger publishers for the asking, or without it, if they knew that you were open to an offer.

My own publisher is a young villain named Grant Richards who has no scruples of any kind. You had better let me show him to you on approval. If you will come to lunch with us at 1:30 say, on Wednesday or Thursday, I will invite Grant Richards, too. ...My wife is a good Erewhonian, and likes Handel; you won't find her in any way disagreeable. And 10 Adelphi Terrace is within easy reach.

I shall, of course, say nothing to Richards except that he will meet an eminent author, so that he will come as a palpitating fisherman. Publishing a

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sequel to Erwhon is an absolutely safe financial operation, as a sale sufficient to cover expenditure is certain. And as a young publisher would be glad to take you on at a loss for the sake of getting you on his list of authors, I shall be extremely surprised if you find the slightest difficulty so long as you avoid your own contemporaries, who are naturally all Buononcinists, so to speak.

Let me have a line to Adelphi Terrace to say which day you'll come, so that I may write to Richards.

I have started reading your MS. instead of doing my work. So far I am surprised to find that so confounded a rascal as your original hero did not become a pious millionaire; otherwise he is as interesting as ever. More of this when I finish him.

It is evident that although Butler had never been at the Shaw home, both G.B.S. and Mrs. Shaw were interested in him and his work. Shaw had confidence that any publisher would be wise to get this "eminently" author, this portrayer of "interesting" characters, on his list. Furthermore, Shaw was sure of the financial success of Erwhon Revisited, and was therefore willing to use his influence with his own publisher in getting the work published.

Although no account of the lunch is available, it must have been a success because Grant Richards published Erwhon Revisited shortly afterward, and he and Samuel Butler were friends from then until Butler's death.

Butler's friendship with George Bernard Shaw continued also until Butler's death on June 18, 1902. In later letters

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Butler mentions lunching with Shaw on at least two other occasions:

24 Jan. 1902

... I lunched with Bernard Shaw to-day (by accidental coincidence) ... The Shaws were most gracious and enthusiastic about the Erewhons. 4

4 Feb. 1902

I am to lunch at the Shaws' tomorrow and have said I will eat vegetarian. ... By the way, Shaw said that he regarded my chapter on the Rights of Vegetables as a direct attack upon himself—but he was not serious.

I may get some pabulum at Shaw's tomorrow, or again at the Morses' where I dine on Thursday. If I do it shall be duly chronicled. 5

Shaw's continued interest in Samuel Butler and his works is evidenced by his attendance at the Erewhon dinners, begun in 1908 and continued for several years. Shaw did not attend the first Erewhon dinner, but Henry Festing Jones leaves the following record of the second, held in 1909:

On July 15th we had the second Erewhon dinner at Paganini's, that date being fixed to suit the convenience of Mr. George Bernard Shaw. 6

The third Erewhon dinner was held on July 14th, 1910. Jones describes it:

[A speech was made] by Bernard Shaw, who reminded us


5. Ibid., II, pp. 373-374.

that Butler laid great stress upon the importance of money; poverty was a crime; that he also laid great stress on the importance of luck, to be unlucky was a crime. The real reason (he said) why Butler was unknown during his lifetime was that he was always showing wherein accepted people were wrong, so that they were afraid of openly approving of him lest he should turn and rend them. Butler, he said, would not play at being a lion, and these dinners were only possible because he could not be present in person and tell us wherein we were wrong to hold them.

The seventh and last Krehwon dinner was held in 1914. Both Shaw and Mrs. Shaw were present.

Shaw not only spoke before a dinner audience about the importance of Butler’s ideas, but also admitted, in the preface to Major Barbara, personal indebtedness to Butler for many of his own ideas. Shaw writes:

It drives one almost to despair of English literature when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as Butler’s posthumous Way of All Flesh making so little impression that when, some years later, I produce plays in which Butler’s extraordinarily fresh, free, and future-piercing suggestions have an obvious share, I am met with nothing but vague cacklings about Ibsen and Nietzsche, and am only too thankful that they are not about Alfred de Musset and Georges Sand. Really, the English do not deserve to have great men.

In addition to his admission of having borrowed ideas from Samuel Butler, Shaw often admonishes his readers to turn to Butler for a correct view of English life and for a proper approach to certain philosophical problems. In the previous quotation, Shaw calls Butler’s Way of All

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7. Ibid., II, p. 420.
Flesh an "extraordinary study of English life" and describes his suggestions as "fresh, free, and future-piercing." In the preface entitled Imprisonment Shaw again calls our attention to Butler's ideas:

We should diligently read Samuel Butler's Erewhon, and accustom ourselves to regard crime as pathological, and the criminal as an invalid, curable or incurable.

For the "intelligent heathen" who wishes to study what Christianity is in contemporary England, Shaw suggests The Way of All Flesh:

Christianity as a specific doctrine was slain with Jesus, suddenly and utterly. He was hardly cold in his grave, or high in his heaven (as you please), before the apostles dragged the tradition of him down to a level of the thing it has remained ever since. And that thing the intelligent heathen may study, if they would be instructed in it by modern books, in Samuel Butler's novel, The Way of All Flesh.

But these are the superficial aspects of the relationship between Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw. Actually, there is a much greater affinity of ideas in the two men than these simple statements of indebtedness indicate. In order to see and understand this affinity we must first examine Samuel Butler's basic philosophic concepts and his ideas on evolution.

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CHAPTER II

MEMORY, LIFE, AND GOD

The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin, published in 1859, and the research that went into it, established beyond doubt the fact of evolution, that is, the fact that changes and development have occurred in all species of organic life. However, even though evolution was established as a fact, there remained an unanswered question—a question that is still unanswered: "What is the cause of the variations, changes, and developments that are evident in the process of evolution?" This is the question in which Samuel Butler, and subsequently, Bernard Shaw became interested.

When Butler began his writings on evolution there were two main theories concerning the cause of variation: that of Charles Darwin, or more accurately, that of the neo-Darwinians,¹ led by Russel Wallace; and that of Lamarck, a French naturalist. Charles Darwin believed that the variations were due to chance. These chance variations caused certain species to be better adapted to their environments than other species. The species best adapted to the environ-

¹. The neo-Darwinians differ from Darwin in that they concentrate exclusively on Circumstantial Selection as the explanation of all transformations and adaptations, whereas Darwin said only that it was the principal method of evolution.
ment survived and produced offspring; the remainder were eliminated. Lamarck believed that the variations were caused chiefly by environment. Species, if they were to survive, were compelled to change when the environment changed. Those which did change and adapt themselves to the environment survived, produced offspring, and transmitted to their offspring those variations which had allowed them to survive; those which were incapable of adapting themselves to the environment became extinct. The variations necessitated by change in environment led, Lamarck thought, to the development of new organs and to the passing away of old ones. Changes in environment led to new wants; new wants led to new habits; new habits led to the development of new organs. Thus Lamarck emphasized use and disuse as the cause of variations. The Lamarck theory is often stated thus: "Creatures grow new organisms because they want to."

Technically, neither of these theories allows for the intervention of the mind into the process of evolution. Both theories, chance and environment, dispense with design and purpose. The Lamarckian theory lends itself more readily to the idea of design or purpose, but with him mind is not a part of the basic theory. Even though the creatures grow new organs because they want to, they want to only because the environment has changed. The variation
is an automatic response. If the response is automatic, why, then, do not all species change when the environment changes? Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw said that some species change because they desire to do so, and some do not change, because they do not will it. Butler was one of the first to question the generally accepted implications of Charles Darwin's theories of the survival of the fittest. He said that the implications of the natural selection theory amounted to the elimination of mind, design, and will from the universe. He clung to the Lamarckian theory because it at least left the road open for the exercise of design and purpose.

Butler was deeply concerned about the neo-Darwinian theory and its general acceptance. He wrote four books to disprove the theory. They were: *Life and Habit* (1876), *Evolution Old and New* (1879), *Unconscious Memory* (1880), and *Luck or Cunning* (1887). In addition, he wrote many articles on the subject, three of which are published under the title "The Deadlock in Darwinism." Since I am not concerned here with the truth or falsity of the theory, but am interested only in what the theory is, I have used "The Deadlock in Darwinism" as the principal source of material; it contains the most concise statement of the theory.

Lamarck's theory requires the belief that acquired
characteristics can be and are inherited. Darwin admitted that acquired characteristics were sometimes inherited but still maintained that chance was the principal cause of variation. It was on this point that Butler disagreed with Darwin, and, as a consequence, entered into a controversy which continues to the present. In "The Deadlock in Darwinism," he discusses several cases in which scars, the results of mutilations, had been transmitted. As a result of his examination of the cases, he reached this conclusion:

If the mere anxiety connected with an ill-healing wound inflicted on but one generation is sometimes found to have so impressed the germ-cells that they hand down its scars to offspring, how much more shall not anxieties that have directed action of all kinds from birth till death, not in one generation only but in a longer series of generations than the mind can realise to itself, modify, and indeed control, the organisation of every species?

The same general acceptance of the idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics is evident in The Way of All Flesh. Overton, the narrator who is often a thinly-disguised Butler, says:

As I watched him a fly trying to walk across the surface of hot coffee I fancied that so supreme a moment of difficulty and danger might leave him an

2. Acquired characteristics as used here refers to all characteristics not innate in the organism, that is, all characteristics which are acquired after birth. Once acquired characteristics are passed on to offspring, they are no longer acquired, they are inherent.

increase of moral and physical power which might even descend in some measure to his offspring.\textsuperscript{4}

Scarcity of evidence and Weismann’s theory of germ-plasm were the principal objections to these theories on transmissibility of acquired characteristics. Lack of conclusive evidence as an objection was dismissed by Butler because his opponents could produce no evidence in disproof of his theory. Furthermore, Darwin had hedged somewhat by saying that acquired characteristics were "sometimes" inherited.

Weismann’s theory, however, if correct, was conclusive proof that Butler was wrong. Let us, therefore, consider the theory, which is perhaps best stated in Butler’s words:

Professor Weismann’s theory is, that at every new birth a part of the substance which proceeds from parents and which goes to form the new embryo is not used up in forming the new animal, but remains apart to generate the germ-cells—or perhaps I should say "germ-plasm"—which the new animal itself will in due course issue. Professor Weismann says, "The germ-cells are no longer looked upon as the product of the parent’s body, at least as far as their essential part—the specific germ-plasm is concerned."

Butler could not disprove the theory to Weismann’s satisfaction. However, Butler did produce what he himself considered ample evidence to establish his own theory and, as a result, to disprove Weismann’s. Darwin was impressed by


the evidence and was forced to admit that mutilations (Butler's principal proof) were sometimes inherited; Weismann staunchly refused to concede the point. Nevertheless, Weismann was finally forced to admit that the germ-plasm "may" be somewhat affected and changed by forces outside itself and inside the organism in which it resided. This was the loophole that Butler was waiting for. He re-insisted upon his original proposition and carried it even further, saying that parents' habits, involving the use and disuse of special organs, have an effect on offspring:

...Offspring can be, and not very infrequently is, affected by occurrences that have produced a deep impression on the parent organism—the effect produced on the offspring being such as leaves no doubt that it is to be connected with the impression produced on the parent. Having thus established the general proposition, I will proceed to the more particular one—that habits, involving use and disuse of special organs, with the modifications of structure thereby engendered, produce also an effect upon offspring, which, though seldom perceptible as regards structure in a single, or even in several generations, is nevertheless capable of being accumulated in successive generations till it amounts to specific and generic difference.

Butler was now pursuing his theory of "purposive" evolution—the theory that Shaw later accepted. Butler believed that an organism could acquire certain characteristics if it desired and willed them. He further believed that these acquired characteristics could be inherited.
To these ideas he added a theory of memory, heredity, and habit that involved three things: personal identity between parents and offspring, unconscious memory on the part of the offspring of things it did while identified with its parents, and the identification of this unconscious memory with habit. This theory was reinforced by the studies of Dr. Ewald Hering, a Prague physiologist. An understanding of this theory is necessary if we are to understand Samuel Butler’s final theory on creative evolution. Therefore, let us examine it by analyzing the three aspects of the theory.

Butler maintained that there is genuine personal identity between parents and their offspring, or between a man and his ancestors. He first emphasizes the physical continuity that exists between parents and offspring and points out that this continuity is obviously necessary for heredity to take place. He quotes Erasmus Darwin to clarify and substantiate his theory:

"Owing to the imperfection of language the offspring is termed a new animal, but is in truth a branch or elongation of the parent, since a part of the embryon animal is, or was, a part of the parent, and therefore, in strict language, cannot be said to be entirely new at the time of its production; and therefore it may retain some of the habits of the parent system."

Physical continuity between parents and offspring exists, since the offspring is an elongation of the parent. Ac-
According to Butler's theory, this physical continuity leads logically to sameness of personality, or personal identity. He continues:

Those who accept evolution insist on unbroken physical continuity between the earliest known life and ourselves, so that we both are and are not personally identical with the unicellular organism from which we have descended in the course of many millions of years, exactly in the same way as an octogenarian both is and is not personally identical with the microscopic impregnate ovum from which he grew up.

The first, then, and most important element of heredity is that there should be unbroken continuity, and hence sameness of personality, between parents and offspring.

Butler reaches the conclusion that the germ-plasm of any one generation is as physically identical with the germ-plasm of its predecessor as any two things can be. If this theory is accepted, similarity in behavior between parents and offspring is a much more obvious and pronounced fact than variation. Continuity in evolution is evident. Offspring behave like their parents because they are identical to their parents, and remember what they did when they were their parents. At this point Butler's theory again clashed with that of Weismann. The Lamarckians, including Butler, believed that the germ-plasm, when on the point of repeating its developmental process, takes

cognizance of things that happened to it since it had last developed itself, and remembers them. Weismann and his followers said that the germ-plasm takes no cognizance of anything that has happened to it since the last occasion of its development. The cognizance theory was necessary to Butler, however, so he accepted it and identified heredity and memory. He declares:

We have seen that it is a first requirement of heredity that there shall be physical continuity between parents and offspring. This holds good with memory. ...The offspring therefore, being one and the same person with its progenitors until it quits them, can be held to remember what happened to them within, of course, the limitations to which all memory is subject, as much as the progenitors can remember what happened earlier to themselves.10

Butler states the same idea in slightly different words in *The Way of All Flesh*:

Accidents which happen to a man before he is born, in the person of his ancestors, will, if he remembers them at all, leave an indelible impression on him; they will have moulded his character so that, do what he will, it is hardly possible for him to escape their consequences... Accidents which occur for the first time, and belong to the period since a man's last birth, are not, as a general rule, so permanent in their effects, though of course they may sometime be so.11

The oftener an action is repeated by an organism, the more unconscious that action becomes. The new organism does things because it remembers having done those things


in the person of its ancestors. An embryo develops, because, with the return of its old environment and the presence of old associations, it remembers what it should do and how it should develop next. The embryo passes through many stages because it remembers having passed through these stages before—"Embryo minds, like embryo bodies, pass through many strange metamorphoses before they adopt their final shape."12 After frequent repetition, the memory becomes unconscious, and the action becomes a habit.

It is an axiom as regards action acquired after birth, that we never do them automatically save as the result of long practice; the stages in the case of any acquired facility, the inception of which we have been able to watch, have invariably been from a nothingness of ignorant impotence to a little somethingness of highly self-conscious, arduous performance, and thence to the un-self-consciousness of easy mastery. ...If, then, wherever we can trace the development of automatism we find it to have taken this course, is it not most reasonable to infer that it has taken the same even when it has risen in regions that are beyond our ken?13

Butler concludes his theory by listing six characteristics which are common to both memory and heredity and nine phenomena which are explicable only if heredity and memory are identified. First, the development of embryos and of habits proceeds in an established order; this explains the orderly normal progress of evolution. Secondly,

12. Ibid., p. 256.

we remember best our latest performances of any given kind, so our present actions resemble these latest performances. We remember slightly our earlier actions and performances, and sometimes revert to them. Butler feels that these facts explain atavism and the resumption of feral characteristics, and our resemblance to our closer relatives. Thirdly, slightly new elements introduced into a method vary it beneficially, but new elements that are too foreign cannot be fused with the old. This factor explains the benefit of an occasional cross, and the usual sterility of hybrids. Fourthly, repeated impressions fix a method firmly and it becomes ingrained in us; sometimes a profound and prolonged single impression returns with sudden force and continues to return at intervals. The unconsciousness with which bodily development and physiological functions proceed, and the occasional inheritance of mutilations, are explicable in light of this factor. Fifthly, since heredity and memory are the same, no animal develops important new structures after the age at which its species begins to continue its race—to reproduce, because there is no continuous memory for it to fall back upon after that time; the animal continues for a while on its own impetus, and eventually decays through failure of any memory to tell it what to do. This factor explains the fact the puberty indicates the approach of maturity, and the phenomena of middle life and
old age. Lastly, Butler reasons that those organisms which take the longest to reach maturity should be the longest-lived, for they have received the most benefit of memory. Longevity is explained by this factor.\textsuperscript{14}

Butler's final position, then, is: we grow our limbs and have our instincts because we remember growing these limbs and having these instincts when we were our ancestors. Each organism adds an almost inappreciable amount of experience to the store of memory. Thus we have formed habits which we seldom, but sometimes, break. Variations, the accumulation of which results in species, will be recognized as due to the desires and wills of the organisms. Thus Butler, and subsequently Shaw, went beyond Lamarck, and put mind back into the universe. Eventually, species developed the power of willing or desiring a change without previous change in the universe. They could change simply because they desired to change.

Joad, in his book \textit{Samuel Butler}, summarizes the principal philosophical and metaphysical implications of Butler's biological theory. Most of these philosophical and metaphysical ideas were in the last of Butler's books on evolution, \textit{Luck and Cunning}. According to Mr. Joad, Butler said that life is that property of matter whereby

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 332-337.
it can remember. It arose and developed from some thing or
things not living at all which had grown up in a manner
similar to that by which man has developed from the amoeba.
But Butler also says that he can conceive of no matter that
is not able to remember something, and thereby destroys the
distinction between organic and inorganic. If no such dis­
tinction exists, what is death? It is the breaking up of
an association of living organisms.15

What is God? Mr. Joad, answering according to Butler's
theories, indicates that

God is everywhere and is everything. He is nothing
more nor less than life. He is therefore, identified
with me; and also with you. We are, moreover, identi­
fied with each other, I being by Butler's law of
identity simply a new edition of the primordial cell
of life, and you by the same law being another edition
of the same cell. But a man is his ancestors; there­
fore, since our ancestors are one, you and I are one.
And as I am ultimately one with my protoplasmic an­
cestors, and you with yours, so are we both, in virtue
of our participation in life, one with God. Thus God
is the sum total of all that is life.16

Thus, if all life were eliminated from the universe there
would be no God. But since there is no inorganic matter in
the universe there would be no universe either.

It is evident that Samuel Butler is serious, when he
says in Erewhon Revisited that:

1. God is the baseless basis of all thoughts,
   things, and deeds.

15. C. E. M. Joad, Samuel Butler, pp. 48-49.
16. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
2. So that those who say that there is a God, lie, unless they also mean that there is no God; and those who say that there is no God, lie, unless they also mean that there is a God.

3. It is very true to say that man is made after the likeness of God; and yet it is very untrue to say this.

4. God lives and moves in every atom throughout the universe. Therefore it is wrong to think of Him as 'Him' and 'He', save as by the clutching of a drowning man at a straw.

5. God is God to us only so long as we cannot see him. When we are near to seeing him He vanishes, and we behold Nature in His stead.

6. We approach Him most nearly when we think of Him as our expression for Man's highest conception, of goodness, wisdom, and power. But we cannot rise to Him above the level of our own highest selves.

7. We remove ourselves most far from Him when we invest him with human form and attributes.

8. My father the sun, the earth, the moon, and all planets that roll round my father, are to God but as a single cell in our bodies to ourselves.

9. He is as much above my father, as my father is above men and women.

10. The universe is instinct with the mind of God. The mind of God is in all that has mind throughout all worlds. There is no God but the Universe, and man, in this world is his prophet.

11. God's conscious life, nascent, so far as this world is concerned, in the infusoria, adolescent in the higher mammals, approaches maturity on this earth in man. All these living beings are members one of another, and of God.

12. Therefore, as man cannot live without God in the world, so neither can God live in this world without mankind.

13. If we speak ill of God in our ignorance it
may be forgiven us; but if we speak ill of His Holy Spirit dwelling in good men and women it may not be forgiven us.\(^7\)

Numbers six and eleven indicate that life in man is approaching God. This idea of an evolving God is the basic philosophic idea in George Bernard Shaw. An examination of Shaw's philosophic concepts will show that Shaw discarded early conventional religious beliefs and turned to a philosophy which was based on the theories of Samuel Butler.

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CHAPTER III

FROM CHURCH OF ENGLAND TO CREATIVE EVOLUTION

George Bernard Shaw was, by infant baptism, a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church but says that he could not "believe more than two tenets of its creed, and these only in an entirely unconventional sense."¹ "...As I grew up," he tells us, "I found that I had to choose between Evolution and Genesis."² He could not accept the religion of the Church of England; writing about himself in the eighteen seventies, he says, "I had discarded the religion of my forefathers."³

The anthropomorphic, vindictive, capricious God of the Church of England did not appeal to Bernard Shaw. He could not accept a God that was "an almighty fiend, with a petty character and unlimited power, spiteful, cruel, jealous, vindictive, and physically violent."⁴

In 1562 the Church, in convocation in London "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishment of consent touching true religion," proclaimed in their first utterance, and as an


². George Bernard Shaw, Back to Methuselah, preface, p. xx.

³. Ibid., p. ix.

⁴. Ibid., p. xxxix.
Article of Religion, that God is "without body, parts, or passions," or, as we say an Elan Vital or Life Force. Unfortunately neither parents, parsons, nor pedagogues could be induced to adopt that article."

"Parents, parsons, and pedagogues" clung to a God who, far from "being without body, parts, or passions, was composed of nothing else, and of very evil passions too."6

These people held that pain and poverty, cruelty and suffering, deformity and misfortune were part of God's bounty. Shaw could not accept this idea of God, which he says was imposed upon the First Article. It was this idol that Shaw, like many other advanced free-thinkers of his day, challenged; he offered to give this God an opportunity to prove his existence by striking him dead within five minutes.

But it was not the social vices of this God that brought him low; it was the capriciousness with which he acted. It was an intolerable conception of God to the scientist:

What made it scientifically intolerable was that it was ready at a moment's notice to upset the whole order of the universe on the most trumpery provocation, whether by stopping the sun in the valley of Ajalon or sending an atheist home dead on a shutter (the shutter was indispensable because it marked the utter unpreparedness of the atheist, who unable to save himself by a deathbed repentance, was subsequently roasted through all eternity in blazing brimstone).7

5. Ibid., p. xxxix.
7. Ibid., p. xxxix.
The scientists, as well as the atheists, challenged the anthropomorphic God of the Church of England. But the scientists, unlike the atheists, felt that everything must be accounted for; atheism accounted for nothing. Charles Darwin rescued the scientists from this Almighty Fiend, and still accounted for life. The great naturalist's Origin of Species showed that the development and survival of life on earth could be explained without the help or hindrance of any god. Darwin pointed out that only those animals which are adapted to the environment survive—the giraffe that is lucky enough to have the longest neck gets the best food, becomes the strongest, secures the strongest and tallest mate, and produces offspring which survive. Only the forms of life which suit the earth are sustained. The process—blind, automatic, accidental—needs no god to make it work. Circumstantial, or Natural, Selection got rid of the Almighty Fiend, the unscientific God.

Shaw tells us that Darwin was greeted with wild rejoicing, "a sort of scientific mafficking." But he also warns that we do not realize all that the Darwinian theory involves. Samuel Butler was the first to point out that this doctrine of Natural Selection was unacceptable, that it made our development a matter of freakish chance and mechanical law, that it had "banished mind from the universe."

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Everyone else, however, was "going to the devil with the utmost cheerfulness. Everyone who had mind to change, changed it." Shaw declares that all the intellectuals "rushed down a steep place" to the "brink of the bottomless pit." The full significance of the Darwinian theory had not dawned upon them. The full realization of the theory made it as unacceptable as the anthropomorphic God to Butler and, subsequently, to Shaw. As Butler had reacted, so does Shaw:

...When its whole significance dawns on you, your heart sinks into a heap of sand within you. There is a hideous fatalism about it, a ghastly and damnable reduction of beauty and intelligence, of strength and purpose, of honor and aspiration, to such casually picturesque changes as an avalanche may make in a mountain landscape, or a railway accident in a human figure. To call this Natural Selection is a blasphemy, possible to many for whom Nature is nothing but a casual aggregation of inert and dead matter, but eternally impossible to the spirits and souls of the righteous. If it be no blasphemy, but a truth of science, then the stars of heaven, the showers and dew, the winter and summer, the fire and heat, the mountains and hills, may no longer be called to exalt the Lord with us by praise; their work is to modify all things by blindly starving and murdering everything that is not lucky enough to survive in the universal struggle for hogwash.

As Shaw could not accept the doctrine of the Church of England as his philosophy, he could not accept the philosophy of the neo-Darwinians. (He, unlike Butler,

9. Ibid., p. xlvii.
10. Ibid., pp. xliii-xlivii.
was careful to distinguish between Charles Darwin and the neo-Darwinians; he finally reached the conclusion that Darwin was not really a Darwinian at all because the process he discovered was advanced only as a method of evolution, not as the method.) But Shaw had decided that he must choose between evolution and Genesis. Was there no escaping the horns of this dilemma? Must Shaw be impaled by an anthropomorphic, cruel God, with a vindictive purpose and a capricious will? Was this worse than being impaled by no God, with no purpose, and no will? Was there no alternative? For Shaw, as for Butler, there was.

Shaw had seen that there is evidence of design in the universe. He says:

It was easy to throw the bogey into the dust-bin; but none the less the world, our corner of the universe, did not look like a pure accident; it presented evidences of design in every direction. There was mind and purpose behind it.1

Yet to admit this purpose seemed to involve letting the bogey come back—calling in Satan to cast out Satan. But Shaw does not believe that belief in design necessitates belief in the bogey—the God with body, parts, and passions. He does not believe that the admission of an effect—in this case, the evidence of purpose or design is an effect—necessitates the admission of a cause. The problem was,

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1. Ibid., p. xxxvii.
for Shaw, not a cause and effect problem. He says:

Nobody [among those in search of a first cause] thought of saying that the ultimate problems of existence, being clearly insoluble and even unthinkable on causation lines, could not be a causation problem.12

For Shaw, the effect was really the cause; he placed no faith whatsoever in the cause and effect sequence accepted by science.

I do not accept even the almost unquestioned sequence of Cause and Effect. It is the other way about with me. Bar pure accident, it is the aim, the purpose, the intended effect, that produces its so-called cause. If I shoot my neighbor it is not the fault of the gun and its trigger, nor is the rope the cause of my execution. Both are the effects of my intention to murder and the jury's sense of justice.13

The purpose, aim, intended effect have produced all the evidences that we call effects. Life, then, is really not an effect; it is a cause produced by the purpose of the universe. The purpose behind the universe has the power to create life, but does not have the power to attain itself, to become fact instead of idea. The purpose is, as Shaw expresses it in one place, "a whirlpool in pure force" that seeks to become "a whirlpool in pure intelligence."14 This is a philosophy of will, of the Life Force, of Creative

12. Ibid., p. xxxvi.


Evolution.

This creed of Shaw's insists that there is a spiritual power--the element which Butler demanded--in the universe. Life is the "satisfaction of a passion in us of which we can give no account whatsoever."15 Later Shaw calls this passion the Life Force (after Bergson's elan vital). Of its origin we know nothing. This force is neither all-powerful nor all-knowing, but strives, through its own creations, to become both. Since the Life Force follows an evolutionary process in its development of the purpose, it proceeds by trial and error. Man is the latest trial, and may be an error, but he is not a base accident of nature, as Darwin and his followers say he is. Thus Shaw finds that there is an alternative--Butler's alternative; he need not accept either the bogey or the Darwinian theory of Natural Selection.

Evolution, as an idea, is as old as, or older than, Aristotle. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, evolution, with the help of the microscope, became established as scientific fact. Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, had said that the world was evolved, not created. The How was established; the Why remained unanswered. Shaw feels that Lamarck found the answer to the Why; he says:

Lamarck, whilst making many ingenious suggestions as

to the reaction of external causes on life and habit, such as changes of climate, food supply, geological upheavals and so forth, really held as his fundamental proposition that living organisms changed because they wanted to. As he stated it, the great factor in Evolution is use and disuse.16

Shaw reduces Lamarck's explanation of the Why to a simple statement. Living organisms changed because they wanted to; the giraffe had grown his neck by willing it. Thus, for Lamarck, and for neo-Lamarckians like Butler and Shaw, where there was life there was will. Lamarck had left man his soul; Darwin had not. Darwin had acted homeopathically upon Butler, and Shaw followed in Butler's footsteps.

The first dramatization of Creative Evolution is in Shaw's Man and Superman. The essence of Shaw's philosophy appears in the third act, Don Juan in Hell. In Act III Shaw presents Don Juan as a philosophic man. This act, the dream in Hell, was usually omitted in stage productions, however, and was largely ignored by the general public.

In the other three acts of the play, Shaw presents woman as the life force incarnate. Woman is "the pursuer and contriver, man the pursued and disposed of."17 The Don Juan, Tanner, "is the quarry instead of the huntsman."18 Yet,

17. George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman, Epistle Dedicatory, p. 496.
18. Ibid., p. 497.
...he is a true Don Juan, with a sense of reality that disables convention, defying to the last the fate which finally overtakes him. The woman's need of him to enable her to carry on Nature's most urgent work, does not prevail against him until his resistance gathers her energy to a climax at which she dares to throw away her customary exploitations of the conventional affectionate and dutiful poses, and claim him by natural right for a purpose that far transcends their mortal personal purposes.19

The Life Force will have its way, however, and Tanner succumbs to Ann, portrayed by Shaw as Everywoman. "Man is Woman's contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest in the most economical way,"20 and must succumb to the laws of Nature.

Although the three acts discussed in the previous paragraph were immensely successful, the fourth act, which is a statement of Shaw's religion, was almost completely ignored. Shaw writes, in 1920:

...In 1901, I took the legend of Don Juan in its Mozartian form and made it a dramatic parable of Creative Evolution. But being then at the height of my invention and comedic talent, I decorated it too brilliantly and lavishly. I surrounded it with a comedy of which it formed only one act, and that act was so completely episodical (it was a dream which did not affect the action of the piece) that the comedy could be detached and played by itself... The effect was so vertiginous, apparently, that nobody noticed the new religion in the centre of the intellectual whirlpool.21

19. Ibid., p. 497.
This act presents Shaw's ideas on an imperfect God—a driving force behind all evolutionary processes.

...Life is a force which has made innumerable experiments in organizing itself; ...the mammoth and the man, the mouse and the megatherium, the flies and the fleas and the fathers of the Church, are all more or less successful attempts to build up that raw force into higher and higher individuals, the ideal individual being omnipotent, omniscient, infallible, and withal completely, unilludely self-conscious: in short, a god...22

It is "the force that ever strives to attain greater power of contemplating itself."23 Toward this end the Life Force has created organs of power and intelligence; it began with the amoeba and has got as far as man.24 Men are the instruments and agents of the Life Force—which is God in the process of creating himself. It is the duty of man to help achieve God, to help create God. Don Juan declares:

...I sing, not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world, in invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means. Cf all other sorts of men I declare myself tired. They are tedious failures.25

23. Ibid., p. 617.
24. Notice as far as. Shaw warns us that we can be scrapped and a new experiment tried if we do not prove adequate: "The power that produced Man when the monkey was not up to the mark can produce a higher creature than Man if Man does not come up to the mark." Back to Methuselah, preface, p. xvii.
And he continues:

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding. These are really an expression of Shaw's philosophy. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" Shaw states:

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. And also the only real tragedy in life is the being used by personally minded men for purposes which you recognize to be base. All the rest is at worst mere misfortune or morality: this alone is misery, slavery, hell on earth...27

With *Back to Methuselah* Shaw felt that he filled his natural function as an artist—he became "an iconographer of the religion of his time." He presented in it a "Bible for Creative Evolution," "a metaphysical Pentateuch."

It is an expansion of the idea of Creative Evolution presented in *Man and Superman*. The recipe for the improvement of civilization is, in *Back to Methuselah*, longevity, rather than eugenic breeding as it was in *Man and Superman*. Shaw feels that the duration of life is changeable at will:

26. Ibid., p. 641.

27. Ibid., Epistle Dedicatory, p. 511.
If we desire to live longer, and will to live longer, we can live longer. All that is necessary to make man extend his present span is that he be convinced of the necessity "of at least outliving his taste for golf and cigars." Shaw asserts in this play that man must live longer if civilization is to be saved. Increased longevity might make men more serious and responsible by making them more farsighted. For Shaw it is, at least, a stone that we have left unturned, and that may be worth turning. Back to Methuselah is a demonstration of the process. In the final act of the play, which takes place thirty thousand years hence, the Ancients achieve an immortality limited only by the possibility and probability of a fatal accident. Their aim is to become immortal, to overcome subjection to death, to get rid of their bodies. The She-Ancient says, "The day will come when there will be no people, only thought." This is their aim, their purpose. Each of the ancients wishes to be a spirit, a "vortex freed from matter... a whirlpool in pure intelligence." But we must remember that, for Shaw, thought is a passion like any other passion. It is the evolving passion, the satisfaction of which will be ecstasy. In the final act of Back to


Methuselah answers the charge that he leads a miserable existence with "Infant: one moment of the ecstasy of life as we live it would strike you dead." But we must remember, too, that Shaw champions activity and impulse. It is not only "contemplation to discover the inner will of the world" but "invention to discover the means of fulfilling that will" that Shaw champions. As Eric Bentley states:

The paradox expressed in the Vitalist plays is that what Shaw accepts in the place of ideas—namely, impulse, activity, and the like—itself leads to thought, to ideas.

The end, as expressed in Back to Methuselah, is certainly pure intellect. But had Shaw really decided that pure intellect was the end of life? Even Lilith, who came before Adam and Eve, seems not to know. In her summary of the evolutionary process so far, which is worth quoting for the pure poetry, she reviews the history of man and looks into the future:

They [men] have redeemed themselves from their vile-ness, and turned away from their sins. Best of all, they are still not satisfied; the impulse I gave them in that day when I sundered myself in twain and launched Man and Woman on the earth still urges them; after passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in

30. Ibid., p. 208.

31. Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw, p. 58.
pure force. And though all that they have done seems but the first hour of the infinite work of creation, yet I will not supersede them until they have forded this last stream that lies between flesh and spirit, and disentangled their life from the matter that has always mocked it. I can wait: waiting and patience mean nothing to the eternal... Of Life only is there no end; and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. And for what may be beyond, the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond.32

Will man be superseded after he has forded the last stream, after he has disentangled life from matter? Does Lilith know what is beyond? Does Shaw know? If the eyesight of Lilith is too short for what is beyond, is it likely that Shaw could see beyond? Had Shaw decided the ultimate end and purpose of existence, or was life still "the satisfaction of a passion in us of which we can give no account whatsoever"? For Shaw, it was enough that there is a beyond. He says, when asked the meaning of the "world-comedy":

It is this thoughtless demand for a meaning that produces the comedy... You expect me to prate about the Absolute, about Reality, about The First Cause, and to answer the universal Why. When I see these words in print the book goes into the basket. Good morning.33

No better summary of the guiding philosophy of Shaw's


My dear Count Tolstoy:

...You will see that my theology and my explanation of the existence of evil is expressed roughly by Blanco. To me God does not yet exist; but there is a creative force constantly struggling to evolve an executive organ of godlike knowledge and power; that is, to achieve omnipotence and omniscience; and every man and woman born is a fresh attempt to achieve this object.

The current theory that God already exists in perfection involves the belief that God deliberately created something lower than Himself when He might just as easily have created something equally perfect. This is a horrible belief: it could only have arisen among people whose notion of greatness is to be surrounded by inferior beings—like a Russian nobleman—and to enjoy the sense of superiority to them.

To my mind, unless we conceive God as engaged in a continual struggle to surpass himself—as striving at every birth to make a better man than before—we are conceiving nothing better than an omnipotent snob.

Also, we are compelled by the theory of God's already achieved perfection to make Him a devil as well as a god, because of the existence of evil. The god of love, if omnipotent and omniscient, must be the god of cancer and epilepsy as well. The great English poet William Blake concludes his poem "The Tiger" with the question: Did he who made the lamb make thee?

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54. Compare this letter with Samuel Butler's statements on God in Erewhon Revisited, quoted at the end of Chapter II.
Whoever admits that anything living is evil must either believe that God is malignantly capable of creating evil, or else believe that God has made many mistakes in his attempts to make a perfect being. But if you believe, as I do, and as Blanco Posnet finally guesses, that the orion bacillus was an early attempt to create a higher being than anything achieved before that time, and that the only way to remedy the mistake was to create a still higher being, part of whose work must be the destruction of that bacillus, the existence of evil ceases to present any problem; and we come to understand that we are here to help God, to do his work, to remedy his old errors, to strive toward Godhead ourselves.

I put all this very roughly and hastily; but you will have no trouble in making out my meaning. It is all in Man and Superman; but expressed in another way—not in the way that an uneducated man can understand. You say that my manner in that book was not serious enough—that I make people laugh in my most earnest moments. But why should I not? Why should humor and laughter be excommunicated? Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any the less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one.

Yours sincerely,

G. Bernard Shaw

Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw, then, reacted against both the conventional theology of the late nineteenth century and the materialistic amorality of the Neo-Darwinians. The theories of society advanced by the two men are a result of this reaction.

35. George Bernard Shaw, as quoted in Archibald Henderson, Bernard Shaw, Layboy and Prophet, pp. 524-530.
CHAPTER IV

MEANS AND EXTREMES

The neo-Darwinian theory reduced the universe to a complicated mechanism in which nature proceeds as a huge machine proceeds. All actions in nature are the result of automatic interactions of its various parts. To this mechanistic, materialistic view of the universe, all the major sciences contributed: biology, physics, astronomy, and geology all helped "prove," for the materialists, this philosophic view of the universe. Finally, mind too was subdued by the materialists to the requirements of the mechanistic hypothesis. Mr. Joad points out that the materialists finally concluded that "...causation proceeds always from the physical to the mental, and there can be no mental event without a preceding physical event."¹ In such a philosophy mind loses its creative powers and becomes merely reflective.

Its function is that of a mirror to reflect or register occurrences in the brain; it has no power to initiate anything which is not in the brain, and nothing can appear in it which is not also appearing in the brain. It is, in short, simply the brain's awareness of itself.²

The chain of causation is therefore complete—without

¹ C. N. M. Joad, Samuel Butler, pp. 67-68.
² Ibid., p. 68.
mind, design, or will entering at any point. Life is not
the important thing. As Joad states:

Life, then, was regarded not as the one significant
thing in the Universe in terms of which we are to
interpret the rest, but as an incidental product
thrown up in the course of evolution, a mere eddy
in the primaeval slime, a fortuitous development of
matter, by means of which matter had by a fluke be­
come conscious of itself... In every direction the
material and the brutal underlay and conditioned the
vital and the spiritual; matter everywhere determined
mind; mind nowhere determined matter. 3

This belief in scientific and materialistic determin­
ism could not be accepted by Butler or Shaw, because it is
a view which reflects against man's natural belief in the
significance of life and of human life in particular.
Their argument became one of free will against determi­
ism, of mind against matter. Butler, and later Shaw, would
not accept the attitude of science--the attitude that be­
lieves something only when it has been scientifically
proved. On the contrary, they were forerunners of the
twentieth century biologists, Professors Thomson and Geddes,
whom Joad quotes as saying:

...We cannot but think that the secret of variability
lies yet deeper, in the very nature of the living or­
ganism itself. It has been a proteus from the first;
changefulness is its most abiding quality; in short,
the essence of the creature is its innate creativeness. 4

These words could have been said by Butler, a predecessor of

3. Ibid., pp. 69-70.
4. Ibid., p. 62.
the professors, or by Shaw, their contemporary. Both Butler
and Shaw would have been pleased with the optimism of such a
tory. They could not accept the philosophy of the ma-
terialists because it was a defeatist philosophy. It was
not a philosophy they could live by, a philosophy they
could really believe. By admitting "innate creativeness,"
their contemporaries. Both Butler
mind, purpose, or the Life Force, the Vitalist could ex-
plain variation; the materialist had no explanation except
chance—which is hardly an explanation. The Vitalist could
answer the question "Why does evolution continue?" The ma-
terialist could not. Butler and Shaw asserted their belief
in the ability of mind to determine and control matter.
They were on the side of the vitalists, and based their
theories of society and institutions on this basic philo-
sophic concept.

Samuel Butler was not a scientist; his science was
chiefly organized common sense. Because he was not, the
men of science refused to consider, or else rejected, his
views. This rejection of ideas led Butler to a hatred of
scientific professionalism and authoritarianism that is
evident in most of his work. Movement from this point to
a general hatred of professionalism or authoritarianism is
natural. Butler made this movement, but there is a more
substantial basis for his hatred of all authoritarianism.
Butler distrusted systems, principles and absolutes; he
believed in relativity in all things: truth, virtue, morality, and action. He had not been satisfied with the Christian religion as he knew it. He could not believe in its supernatural elements, and disagreed with many of the moral principles and with the dogma of the church. He felt that the church sacrificed people, or individuals, to principles. Neither could he believe in the neo-pantheistic theory, which was at best an amoral theory that was based on purely scientific principles and ignored philosophical implications. Again, he objected to the complete belief in reason and logic. Butler has Ernest Haefflin reach the conclusion:

that no system which should be perfectly upon all fours was possible, inasmuch as no one could get behind Bishop Berkeley, and therefore no absolutely incontrovertible first premise could ever be laid.

This realization that no system could be attained satisfies Haefflin it satisfies Butler.

If there is no perfect system by which we can live and judge life, how then can we know how to live? How do people know what is good and what is bad, what is virtuous and what is sinful? By the results, answers Butler; and in answering that he is a pragmatist. He concedes, however, that his criterion of truth—"i.e., that truth is what commands itself to the great majority of sensible and successes—

— E. A. Cecil Butler, The Key of All Truth, p. 257.
ful people"—is not infallible. How are we to know the exceptions? Butler replies that there is a "rough and ready, rule-of-thumb test of truth" but that there is also a residue of cases in which decision is difficult—"so difficult that a man had better follow his instinct than attempt to decide them by any process of reasoning." Thus instinct becomes the ultimate court of appeal. And what is instinct? "It is a mode of faith in the evidence of things not actually seen." It is for Butler a biological factor. We are fulfilling the intentions of life as they are revealed to us through a faculty developed in us in past ages—the Life Force. Those who live most successfully are those whose instincts guide them most truly.

We cannot follow rules in life, because of the inconstancy of results. What may contribute to a man's happiness nine times, may contribute to his unhappiness the tenth. Therefore, we must not trust principles governing good and bad, unless they, too, are inconstant and relative. Man must follow his instinct:

"Virtue" springs from man's experience concerning his own well being... The world has long ago settled that morality and virtue are what bring men peace at the last... We are all of a mind about the main

6. Ibid., p. 305.
8. Ibid., p. 306.
opinion that virtue is what tends to happiness, and vice what ends in sorrow, [But] we are not so unanimous about details—that is to say as to whether any given course, such, we will say, as smoking, has a tendency to happiness or the reverse. 9

The standards by which man measures the results of following his instincts are personal standards:

He who takes the highest and most self-respecting view of his own welfare which it is in his power to conceive, and adheres to it in spite of conventionality, is a Christian whether he knows it and calls himself one, or whether he does not. 10

But these standards are also social standards which consider the majority: "Right...is what seems right to the majority of sensible, well-to-do people..." 11 Conformity, therefore, is at times advisable. The majority usually know what is good for them and when they do know it is wise to follow the majority. Among the Erewhonians, the goddess Ydgrun ("Conformity until absolutely intolerable is a law of Ydgrun." 12) is really the only goddess that is worshipped. Higgs, the narrator of the story, says of this goddess, whose name is a corruption of "Grundy":

...She was a beneficent and useful deity, who did not care how much she was denied so long as she was obeyed and feared, and who kept hundreds of thousands in those paths which make life tolerably happy, who would never have been kept there otherwise, and over

9. Ibid., p. 89.
10. Ibid., p. 320.
11. Ibid., p. 304.
whom a higher and more spiritual ideal would have no power.  

Conformity, then, is often the best means of attaining the aim of life, which is, for Butler, "promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number." This aim, which is sound Utilitarianism, is attained by most men, and in most circumstances through "pleasure--tangible material prosperity in this world..."

Butler's biological studies and his studies of the Bible concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ led him to this conclusion that happiness and pleasure were the ends toward which each person should strive. He concluded from his studies that there was no afterlife except one of vicarious existence, and that, therefore, one should make the most of this life, this world. In Erewhon Revisited there is a chapter entitled "President Gargoyle's Pamphlet 'On the Physics of Vicarious Existence.'" This chapter probably contains Butler's own views on immortality. Dr. Gargoyle begins by showing that no hard and fast line between life and death exists:

"Life...lies not in bodily organs, but in the power to use them, and in the use that is made of them--that is to say, in the work they do..." Those," he

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15. Ibid., p. 165.
argued, "who make the life of a man reside within his body, are like one who should mistake the carpenter's tool-box for the carpenter." 16

Thus a man does not die when the body dies, but remains alive in the works of that body. He continues to influence other lives; he lives vicariously.

...Many live but a short time when the breath is out of them. Few seeds germinate as compared with those that rot or are eaten and most of this world's denizens are little more than still-born as regards the larger life, while none are immortal to the end of time...*17

It is evident that no man is truly immortal, and that most men die soon after the body dies—yea, that many men are never really alive. The present life, is, for most men the import nt life. Professor Carlyle concludes:

...The end of time is not worth considering; not a few live as many centuries as either they or we need think about, and surely the world, so far as we can guess its object, was made rather to be enjoyed than to last. [Italics mine.] 'Come and go' pervades all things of which we have knowledge, and if there was any provision made, it seems to have been for a short life and a merry one, with enough chance of extension beyond the grave to be worth trying for, rather than for the perpetuity even of the best and noblest. 18

This is Butler's conclusion too.

For Samuel Butler then the guiding philosophy of life is a philosophy of relativity, of Pragmatism, of Utilitari-

17. Ibid., p. 436.
18. Ibid., p. 436.
anism, and of Epicureanism. It is a philosophy of instinct as opposed to a philosophy of absolutes. It preaches Laodiceanism in morals and in religion. His theories originated, or at least, were reinforced by his biological studies. His studies showed him that no hard and fast lines exist in the nature of things. Mind and matter shade into each other; so do life and death. A man lives vicariously after his body is dead—in his work and in his influence upon others. His works, his actions, in this life become important. If we make action subservient to thought, as Butler thought the scientists and other professionals did, we are misusing thought. We must avoid the extreme, the logical, the absolute, because the strict application of logic to life reduces it to an absurdity. We must avoid extremes of truthfulness, "...because...extremes meet, and extreme truth will be mixed with extreme falsehood."

We must follow convenience and expediency. We must admit that the internal and the external—the subject and the object—in life are one—when we find this convenient. We must separate them when we find separation convenient. This is illogical but

...extremes are alone logical, and they are always absurd, the mean is alone practicable and it is always illogical. It is faith and not logic which is the supreme arbiter... Take any fact, and reason

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19. Ibid., p. 457.
upon it to the bitter end and it will ere long lead to this as the only refuge from some palpable folly. 20

We must follow the illogical mean because it is "better than the sheer absurdity of an extreme." 21

Butler's ideas on English society and his chief criticisms of English conventions result from his distrust of absolutes, and from his belief in the mean. He felt that English society was founded upon absolutes set up by professionals—by clergymen, by parents, by schoolmasters and professors, by writers and by artists. He attacked almost any idea that had been established for long. He preceded Shaw as England’s professional crank. He attacked professionalists because their growth had been stunted by their belief in absolutes—absolutes which they clung to only because they were paid for clinging.

Clergymen, according to Butler, are among the worst offenders; they are arch professionals:

A clergyman...can hardly ever allow himself to look facts fairly in the face. It is his profession to support one side; it is impossible, therefore, for him to make an unbiased examination of the other. 22

They cannot afford to look at both sides of a question because they are paid advocates of the church. They are

"...expected to be a kind of human Sunday." They must not do things which are venial in week-day classes, because they are paid for "leading a stricter life than other people." The clergymen in Brehon, the Musical Bank cashiers, are not so frank as the other Brehonians, because they cannot afford to be, and because their minds are atrophied. Ernest's father in The Way of All Flesh is a clergymen.

It was his profession to know how to shut his eyes to things that were inconvenient--no clergyman could keep his benefice for a month if he could not do this; besides he had allowed himself for so many years to say things he ought not to have said, and not to say the things he ought to have said, that he was little likely to see anything that he thought it more convenient not to see unless he was made to do so.

Ernest, in spite of his theological training at Cambridge, finally discovers that the stories concerning the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ are false. His reaction is that "...he would probably have seen it years ago if he had not been hoodwinked by people who were paid for hoodwinking him." He wonders why Dean Alford, who had made the New Testament his speciality, could not see what was so obvious to him. "Could it be for any other

23. Loc. cit.
25. Ibid., pp. 207-208.
26. Ibid., p. 302.
reason than that he did not want to see it, and if so was he not a traitor to the cause of truth?" Ernest finally has to agree with the conclusion of Mr. Shaw, the tinker in The Way of All Flesh, who said that "he who was so willing and able to prove that what was not was, would be equally able and willing to make a case for thinking that what was not was, if it suited his purpose." And why didn't clever people develop this argument? "The answer is easy: they did not develop it for the same reason that a hen had never developed webbed feet—that is to say, because they did not want to do so..."

From criticism of clergymen to criticism of the church is an easy step—a step which Butler certainly took. Since Butler could not believe in the supernatural elements of the Christian religion he could not believe in the dogma of the church. In The Way of All Flesh, Ernest, who is in this instance Butler, discovers the falsity of the doctrine of the resurrection, and begins to question the truth of the teaching of the church.

"Why," he exclaimed,... "they put a gipsy or fortune-teller into prison for getting money out of silly people who think they have supernatural power; why should they not put a clergyman in prison for pre-
tending that he can absolve sins, or turn bread and wine into the flesh and blood of One who died two thousand years ago? What," he asked himself, "could be more pure 'hanky-panky' than that a bishop could lay his hands upon a young man and pretend to convey to him the spiritual power to work this miracle?"30

Other obvious satire is Ernest's baptism in water from the River Jordan. Christina, Ernest's mother, decides that it is surely a miracle that the water from the Jordan is there to be used at Ernest's baptism. She reflects:

It was idle to say that this was not a miracle. No miracle was effected without means of some kind; the difference between the faithful and the unbeliever consisted in the very fact that the former could see a miracle where the latter could not.31

The views of Dryer, the senior curate under whom Ernest serves, are a satire on the arguments between the Church of Rome and the English High Church.

Erewhon Revisited is almost entirely a bitter satire upon the Christian religion. Upon Mr. Higgs', the hero's, return to Erewhon, he finds that the Erewhonians have changed their calendar so that it begins with the date of his departure. They have made him a god---actually a Christ. They preserve relics of his ascent to the sun. They call him the Sunchild, the new religion, Sunchildism. Although Higgs actually escaped in a balloon, the story has it that he ascended in a chariot drawn by six white horses. There

30. Ibid., p. 306.
31. Ibid., p. 97.
is some doubt among the people as to whether or not there were horses and a chariot. But one Erewhonian answers this argument:

"But there must have been horses, for, as you of course know, they have lately found some droppings from one of them, which have been miraculously preserved and they are going to show them next Sunday in a gold reliquary."

The new temple which the Erewhonians have built to the Sunchild is to be dedicated shortly after Mr. Higgs' return. The dedication ceremonies are a satire on the Christian church ceremonies and festivals. Mr. Higgs finds the Erewhonians selling Dedication trousers, Dedication bread, and Dedication souvenirs. Religious books on Sunchildism are plentiful, the Sayings of the Sunchild being the most popular.

Mr. Higgs, the god, discovers upon his return that he is the father of an illegitimate son by Yram, an Erewhonian. Yram explains the situation to her son:

Higgs cast some miraculous spell upon me before he left, whereby my son should be in some measure his as well as the Mayor's. Yram is married to the Mayor. It was this miraculous spell that caused you to be born two months too soon, and we called you by Higgs's first name as though to show that we took that view of the matter ourselves.

A more bitter satire on the immaculate conception would be difficult to find.

33. Ibid., p. 416.
Mr. Higgs finally reveals himself to a few select Erewhonians who doubt some of the stories of Sunchildism. The discussion which follows parallels closely the arguments against Christianity. But those who know the Erewhonians decide that Sunchildism must remain in spite of its untruth; the Erewhonians must have a faith in something. Their constant hope is for the second coming of the Sunchile.

The chapters "Rights of Animals" and "Rights of Vegetables" are satire upon the Victorian puritanical abstention and upon fasting. These chapters are also satire on the philosophers who insist upon pursuing all things to their logical conclusion. Butler invents a prophet who prohibits the eating of flesh, because the killing of man is wrong and there is no difference between a human and an animal organism, since they have both developed from a uni-cellular organism. A second philosopher carries this reasoning further and decides that vegetables too should be included. He, Butler suggests, wished to force the Erewhonians to use their common sense, and so reduced the argument to an absurdity. Butler, in effect, tells us that in religion, too, we must follow a golden mean for

...it matters little what profession, whether of religion or irreligion, a man may make, provided only he follows it out with charitable inconsistency, and without insisting on it to the better end. It is in the uncompromisingness with which
dogma is held and not in the dogma or want of dogma that the danger lies.\textsuperscript{34}

Butler's attacks on logic and reason are evident in his attacks upon education, professors, and schoolmasters. The chapter "The Colleges of Unreason" in Erewhon is a direct attack upon English educational systems. The main feature of the Erewhonian system of education is the study of "hypothetics." The Erewhonians argue thus:

...To teach a boy merely the nature of the things which exist in the world around him, and about which he will have to be conversant during his whole life, would be giving him but a narrow and shallow conception of the universe, which it is urged might contain all manner of things which are not now to be found therein. ...To imagine a set of utterly strange and impossible contingencies, and require the youths to give intelligent answers to the questions that arise therefrom, is reckoned the fittest conceivable way of preparing them for the actual conduct of their affairs in after life.\textsuperscript{35}

Thus they are taught a hypothetical language, a language...

...which was originally composed at a time when the country was in a very different state of civilisation to what it is at present, a state which has long since disappeared and been superseded.\textsuperscript{36}

The narrator's reaction to the teaching of this language is probably Butler's reaction: that it was a "...wanton waste of good human energy..."\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{35} Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 207.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 207.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp. 207-208.
The same reaction to classical education is expressed by the narrator in *The Way of All Flesh*:

...The writer of the Odyssey...assuredly hit the right nail on the head when he epitomized his typical wise man as knowing "the ways and farings of many men." What culture is comparable to this? What a lie, what a sickly, debilitating debauch did not Ernest's school and university career seem to him, in comparison with his life in prison and as a tailor in Blackfriars. 88

In another instance, he points out that we neglect many things in education by trying to teach too much about certain matters. He continued:

I know it is the fashion to say that young people must find out things for themselves, and so they probably would if they had fair play to the extent of not having obstacles put in their way. But they seldom have fair play; as a general rule they meet with foul play, and foul play from those who live by selling them stones made into a great variety of shapes and sizes so as to form a tolerable imitation of bread. 89

He continues his diatribe against education by saying that Latin and Greek "are great humbugs; the more people know of them the more odious they generally are." 90 He declares that a clergyman's education was "an attempt, not so much to keep him in blinkers as to gouge his eyes out altogether"; 91 that universities are "the worst teachers in

89. Ibid., p. 345.
90. Ibid., p. 141.
91. Ibid., p. 290.
the world"; and that public school educations cost...children the power of earning their living easily rather than helped them toward it, and ensured their being at the mercy of their father for years after they had come to an age when they should be independent.43

It astonished Butler to see what sacrifices the parents would make in order to render the children as nearly useless as possible; and it was hard to say whether the old suffered most from the expense which they were thus put to, or the young from being deliberately swindled in some of the most important branches of human inquiry, and directed into false channels or left to drift in the great majority of cases.44

Butler's tirade against educational systems is furthered in his attacks upon schoolmasters and professors. Dr. Skinner, the headmaster of the school at Roughborough in The Way of All Flesh, is portrayed vividly and satirically. Butler begins the tirade by portraying Skinner as not desiring any supper. The headmaster soon relents and says, "Stay—I may presently take a glass of cold water—and a small piece of bread and butter."45 The small piece of bread and butter amounted to "a good plate of oysters, a scallop shell of minced veal nicely browned, some apple tart, and a hunk of bread and cheese"46 topped off with

44. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 195.
46. Ibid., p. 122.
hot gin and water. Dr. Skinner, a theologian, had a great reputation for his "Meditations upon the Epistle and Character of St. Jude"; his words were not to be taken lightly, but must be searched for a "deeper and more hidden meaning." 47

Those who searched for this even in his lightest utterances would not be without their reward. They would find that "bread and butter" was Skinnerese for oyster-patties and apple tart, and "gin-hot" the true translation of water. 48

Butler, having portrayed Skinner in a mildly satirical manner over a space of two pages, then breaks into a tirade against his kind:

Could it be expected to enter into the herd of such a man as this that in reality he was making his money by corrupting youth; that it was his paid profession to make the worse a pear the better reason in the eyes of those who were too young and inexperienced to be able to find him out; that he kept out of sight of those whom he professed to teach material points of the argument, for the production of which they had a right to rely upon the honour of anyone who made professions of sincerity; that he was a passionate, half-turkey-cock, half gander of a man whose sallow, bilious face and hobble-gobble voice could scare the timid, but who would take to his heels readily enough if he were met firmly; that his "Meditations on St. Jude," such as they were, were cribbed without acknowledgement, and would have been beneath contempt if so many people did not believe them to have been written honestly? 49

Butler is seldom as bitter in his attacks as he is in

47. Ibid., p. 122.
48. Ibid., p. 123.
49. Ibid., pp. 123-124.
his description of Dr. Skinner. Usually his descriptions are milder and more humorous; the attacks upon professors in Erewhon will illustrate this. The professors of Unreason are described as rarely expressing an opinion:

If they cannot wriggle out of expressing an opinion of some sort, they will commonly retail those of some one who has already written upon the subject, and conclude by saying that though they quite admit that there is an element of truth in what the writer has said, there are many points on which they are unable to agree with him.50

The narrator was never able to determine what those points were, however, and concludes that these professors have "the fear-of-giving-themselves-away disease,"51 which was fatal to anyone who caught it.

After a few years atrophy of the opinions invariably supervened, and the sufferer became stone dead to everything except the more superficial aspects of those material objects with which he came most in contact.52

Butler's comments on how one gets a professorship in Erewhon are interesting satire on exams and commencements. One guest at a dinner party where the subject is discussed says:

The question the candidates had to answer was, whether it was wiser during a long stay at a hotel to tip the servants pretty early, or to wait till the stay was ended.53

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51. Ibid., p. 219.
52. Loc. cit.
53. Ibid., p. 403.
Another guest says that this is not true, and describes the activities:

There was the usual crowd, and the people cheered Professor after Professor, as he stood before them in the great Bridgeford theatre and satisfied them that a lump of butter which had been put into his mouth would not melt in it.54

The solution to the problems of education that Butler presents is in the chapter "Deformatories," in Erewhon Revisited. This chapter is a restatement of his belief in practical education. At the deformatories the students are taught to distrust reason and logic, to avoid extremes and to experience problems they will face in life—problems concerning thievery, deception, and lying. They are taught to lie, to steal, and to deceive so that they will not fall as easy prey to those who try to treat them in a like manner. This is, of course, Butler's thesis concerning education reduced, by him, to absurdity for ironic reasons.

One more educator must be mentioned: Miss La Prime, a lady president of a college for girls, renowned for her primer on the "Art of Man-killing." Butler's comment is:

...Ill-natured people had been heard to say that she had killed all her own admirers so effectually that not one of them had ever lived to marry her.55

54. Ibid., p. 404.

55. Ibid., p. 397.
With this comment, let us turn to Butler's satire on marriage, the family system, and particularly, parents and children.

Butler attacks all aspects of family relationships—beginning with the courtship that results in a family. He constantly satirizes the popular notion that men are the pursuers and women the pursued. In most examples of courtship in Butler's books it is of course man who is pursued by woman. Miss La Prime is a good example. The idea pops up again and again in The Way of All Flesh, beginning on the first page. Ernest's great-grandfather was married to a woman "who had insisted on being married to Mr. Pontifex when he was young and too good-natured to say nay to any woman who wooed him."56 Ernest's father, Theobald Pontifex, went to Crampsford, a few miles from Cambridge, shortly after his university career. There he was an assistant to Mr. Allaby, the curate, who had several eligible daughters. "The next morning saw Theobald in his rooms coaching a pupil, and the Miss Allabys in the eldest Miss Allaby's bedroom playing at cards, with Theobald for the stakes."57 The narrator of Erewhon, too, finds himself the victim of

57. Ibid., p. 46.
pursuit and wooing by a woman. He says, "Zulora, whether she was in love with me or not, was bent on marrying me..." Luckily, he escapes, and marries Zulora's sister, Arowhena; however, he finds it necessary to abduct Arowhena and take her back to England to make marriage possible.

From courtship, Butler turns to attacks on marriage and the family system. Butler finds that a man's friendships are

...like his will, invalidated by marriage—but they are also no less invalidated by the marriage of his friends. The rift in friendship which invariably makes its appearance on the marriage of either of the parties to it was fast widening, as it no less invariably does, into the great gulf which is fixed between the married and the unmarried...

He further describes the question of marriage and family relations as the "'question of the day'" and "'a hornet's nest indeed.'" Butler has Mr. Overton, the narrator of The Way of All Flesh, say that the family is a "survival of the principle which is more logically embodied in the compound animal--and the compound animal is a form of life which has been found incompatible with high development." He suggests that the family, like the compound animal, should be confined to the lower and less progressive races, because there "is no inherent love for the family system

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58. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 156.
60. Ibid., p. 110.
on the part of nature herself."\textsuperscript{61} Overton says:

Poll the forms of life and you will find it in a
ridiculously small minority. The fishes know it
not, and they get along quite nicely. The ants and
the bees, who far outnumber man, sting their father
to death as a matter of course, and are given to the
atrocious mutilation of nine-tenths of the offspring
committed to their charge, yet where shall we find
communities more universally respected.\textsuperscript{62}

Although Butler has Mr. Overton suggest the abolition of
the family it is doubtful if Butler really wished to
abolish it; rather, he wished to reform it by teaching
parents more common sense. In another passage Butler has
Mr. Overton, an incarnation of Butler himself, describe
how a father (specifically, Ernest's father) should behave
toward a son:

It was not much that was wanted. To make no mysteries
where Nature has made none, to bring his conscience
under something like reasonable control, to give
Ernest his head a little more, to ask fewer questions,
and to give him pocket money with a desire that it
should be spent upon menus plaisirs...

"Call that not much indeed," laughed Ernest, as
I read him what I have just written. "Why it is the
whole duty of a father, but it is the mystery-making
which is the worst evil.\textsuperscript{63}

Butler's ideal of a father is probably presented in the
Mayor in Erewhon Revisited; the Mayor is a stepfather to
George, the illegitimate son of Mr. Higgs.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Loc. cit.}
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Loc. cit.}
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 208.
Satire on the family is evident in Butler's earliest writing. From the chapter "The World of the Unborn" in Erewhon is derived the handling of the problems of parenthood in The Way of All Flesh. Butler is being ironical when he says in Erewhon that "relations between children and parents in that country are less happy than in Europe."64 He suggests that relations between parents and children could be improved in Erewhon (and, of course, in Europe) if parents were merely to remember how they felt when they were young, and actually to behave towards their children as they would have had their own parents behave towards themselves.65

In this chapter Butler also suggests the idea that the unborn pester married couples until they are allowed to be born—the unborn wish a separate identity from their parents. Thus, as it is expressed by Ernest in his novel, "'A man first quarrels with his father about three-quarters of a year before he is born. It is then he insists on setting up a separate establishment..." Ernest advises that, when this has been agreed to and the separate establishment has been set up, "'The more complete the separation for ever after the better for both.'"66

64. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 191.

65. Ibid., p. 192.

Butler's ideals of family life did not exist in his own family relations, however, and they do not exist in Ernest's family relations. For this reason Butler has many bitter and ironical things to say about English family life. Butler says that children must remember that they had a good deal of fun in the person of their parents and must not complain if they have a hangover from this fun:

If they have forgotten the fun now, that is no more than people do who have a headache after having been tipsy overnight. The man with a headache does not pretend to be a different person from the man who got drunk, and claim that it is his self of the preceding night and not his self of this morning who should be punished; no more should offspring complain of the headache which it has earned when in the person of its parents, for the continuation of identity, though not so immediately apparent, is just as real in one case as in the other. 67

The irony that is evident in this passage is sustained by Butler for several pages. He ends with Overton giving advice to parents—in the same ironical vein:

To parents who wish to lead a quiet life I would say: Tell your children that they are very naughty—much naughtier than most children. Point to the young people of some acquaintances as models of perfection and impress your own children with a deep sense of their own inferiority. You carry so many more guns than they do that they cannot fight you. This is called moral influence, and it will enable you to bounce them as much as you please. They think you know and they will not have yet caught you lying often enough to suspect that you are not the unworldly and scrupulously truthful person which you represent yourself to be; nor yet will they know how great a coward you are, nor how soon you will run away, if

67. Ibid., p. 25.
they fight you with persistency and judgement. You keep the dice and throw them both for your children and yourself. Load them then, for you can easily manage to stop your children from examining them. Tell them how singularly indulgent you are; insist on the incalculable benefit you conferred upon them, firstly in bringing them into the world at all, but more particularly in bringing them into it as your own children rather than anyone else's. Say that you have their highest interests at stake whenever you are out of temper and wish to make yourself unpleasant by way of balm to your soul. Harp much upon these bright interests. Feed them spiritually upon such brimstone and treacle as the late Bishop of Winchester's Sunday stories. You hold all the trump cards, or if you do not you can filch them; if you play them with anything like judgement you will find yourselves heads of happy, united, God-fearing families, even as did my old friend Mr. Pontifex. True, your children will probably find out all about it some day, but not until too late to be of much service to them or inconvenience to yourself.

Ernest was particularly unfortunate according to Butler. Not only did he have parents, he had a clergyman for a father. Clergymen's households are, says Ernest, "generally unhappy...because the clergyman is so much at home or close about the house."69 A clergyman's children are "the most defenceless things he can reach, and it is on them in nine cases out of ten that he will relieve his mind."70 Parents are professionals; so are clergymen. Combine the two and you have professionals of the deepest dye. Of Theobald and his wife, Christina, Butler

68. Ibid., pp. 28-29.
69. Ibid., p. 109.
70. Ibid., p. 116.
Their servants, their parishoners must be fortunate *ipso facto* that they were theirs. There was no road to happiness here or hereafter, but the road that they had *themselves* travelled, no good people who did not think as they did upon every subject, and no reasonable person who had wants the gratification of which would be inconvenient to them—Theobald and Christina.

This was how it came to pass that their children were white and puny; they were suffering from homesickness. They were starving, through being over-crammed with the wrong things... There are two classes of people in this world, those who sin, and those who are sinned against; if a man must belong to either he had better belong to the first than to the second.

Ernest was a victim of this professionalism. Finally, his desire for a total break with his parents developed into a passion.

'There are orphanages,' he exclaimed to himself, 'for children who have lost their parents—oh! why, why, why, are there no harbours of refuge for grown men who have not yet lost them?'

"Money is at the bottom of all this to a great extent," is Butler's explanation, in Erewhon, for the difficulties in families. "If the parents would put their children in the way of earning a competence earlier than they do, the children would soon become self-supporting and independent." In *The Way of All Flesh* he continues

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71. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
72. Ibid., p. 320.
73. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 194.
74. Loc. cit.
this theme. He speaks constantly of parents' "will-shaking" and their threats to cut their children off without a cent. Of Ernest's father, Butler says, "At other times when not quite well he would have them in for the fun of shaking his will at them." Thus in Butler's criticisms of the family system we find another of Butler's favorite themes: the importance of money for happiness.

We have seen that the best guide to happiness is the imitation of the prosperous, sensible, well-to-do. "Goodness is naught unless it tends toward old age and sufficiency of means." Butler quotes the psalmist, "'The righteous shall not lack anything that is good,'" and concludes that he who lacks anything that is good is not righteous. He therefore decides that old Mr. Pontifex, a successful publisher, was righteous enough for practical purposes. Tangible, material prosperity in this world is a safe test of virtue for Butler. He never forgets the importance of money. In the words of Ernest he says:

"Will being a gentleman...bring me money at the last, and will anything bring me as much peace at the last, as money will? They say that those who have riches enter hardly into the kingdom of Heaven. By Jove, they do; they are like Struldbrugs; they live and live and live and are happy for many a long year after

75. Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh, p. 27.

76. Ibid., p. 88.
they would have entered into the kingdom of Heaven if they had been poor..."77

When Ernest learned in prison that Pryer has lost most of his money, he was terribly shocked but his ignorance of the world prevented him from seeing the full extent of the mischief...that money losses are the hardest to bear of any by those who are old enough to comprehend them. 78

Through misteraching, Ernest does not know how great his loss is.

In Erewhon and Erewhon Revisited we are constantly reminded of the importance of money. The Erewhonians consider poverty a crime; they pay homage to men with a great deal of money.

...If a man has made a fortune of over £20,000 a year they exempt him from all taxation, considering him as a work of art, and too precious to be meddled with; they say, "How very much he must have done for society before society could have been prevailed upon to give him so much money..."79

And again: "'Money,' they say, 'is the symbol of duty, it is the sacrament of having done for mankind that which mankind wanted.'"80 In Erewhon Revisited, we find that it is not only possible to serve both God and Mammon—an idea also expressed in The Way of All Flesh—but that it is

77. Ibid., p. 395.
78. Ibid., p. 312.
80. Loc. cit.
man's duty to serve both:

"He said, 'Cursed be they that say, 'Thou shalt not serve God and Mammon,' for it is the whole duty of man to know how to adjust the conflicting claims of these two deities.'"

We must serve both, for no man can serve God well and truly who does not serve Mammon a little also; and no man can serve Mammon effectively unless he serve God largely at the same time.

Because Butler feels that both God and Mammon should be served he advocates the addition of a school of speculation to the university at Cambridge.

Many of Butler's own problems were concerned with money. This perhaps led to his ideas on its importance. However, his whole philosophic theory concerning happiness insists upon the importance of money. "Material, tangible, prosperity in this world" are of utmost importance to virtue and happiness.

Butler's portrait of ideal man is presented, at the end of The Way of All Flesh, by Ernest:

That a man should have been bred well and breed others well; that his figure, head, hands, feet, voice, manner and clothes should carry conviction upon this point, so that no one can look at him without seeing that he has some of good stock and is likely to throw good stock himself, this is the desiderandum. And the same with a woman. The greatest number of these well-bred men and women, this is the highest good; towards this all government, all social conventions, all art, literature

and science should directly or indirectly tend. Holy men and holy women are those who keep this unconsciously in view at all times whether of work or pastime. 82

Butler wanted more men like Towneley in The Way of All Flesh and George in Erewhon Revisited. Towneley has learned the art of living in the person of his ancestors. Ernest soliloquizes:

...The people like Towneley are the only ones who know anything that is worth knowing, and like that of course I can never be. But to make Towneleys possible there must be hewers of wood and drawers of water—men in fact through whom conscious knowledge must pass before it can reach those who can apply it gracefully and instinctively as the Towneleys can. I am a hewer of wood, but if I accept a position frankly and do not set up to be a Towneley, it does not matter. 83

Here is Butler's biological process at work. Towneley has learned to live correctly, gracefully, and instinctively. It has become a habit—"natural," and "instinctive."

Ernest has not attained that position on the ladder of evolution. He has not, partly because of the institutions of which he is a victim. These institutions are a bane to Progress—toward the Superman, the man who knows instinctively how to live.

Social institutions and conventions are, therefore, the victims of most of Butler's serious satire. For Shaw,

83. Ibid., p. 358.
too, institutions built on conventional philosophic systems and on science are retarding progress.
CHAPTER V

PROGRESS OR THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS?

George Bernard Shaw, like Samuel Butler, could not accept the attitude of scientism—the attitude of the neo-Darwinians. The preface to Back to Methuselah is an argument against scientism, and a statement of religious faith. The Neo-Darwinians, by "banishing mind from the universe," had completely immobilized man as a moral agent; they had not replaced the moral code of the Christian faith—they had simply done away with it. The new departure in scientific doctrine commonly associated with the name of Charles Darwin was a reaction against what Shaw calls a "barbarous pseudo-evangelical teleology intolerably obstructive to all scientific progress." Shaw could not accept the teleology which neo-Darwinism reacted against; neither could he accept the philosophy produced by the reaction. For Shaw, as for Butler, the philosophies were equally undesirable:

For half a century before the war civilization had been going to the devil very precipitately under the influence of a pseudo-science as disastrous as the blackest Calvinism.


2. Ibid., p. 454.
"Pseudo-evangelical teleology" had been replaced by "pseudo-science." Naturalists and physicists assured the world, in the name of science, that predestination is the governing factor in human life: human beings are produced by their environment, and their good deeds and sins are only a series of chemical and mechanical reactions over which they have no control. Religion had been miserably debased by the churches, but

...it did at least still proclaim that our relation to one another was that of a fellowship in which we were all equal and members one of another before the judgment-seat of our common father.3 Darwinism, on the other hand, proclaimed "that our true relation is that of competitors and combatants in a struggle for mere survival." This claim led to the conclusion that all acts of pity and fellowship were vain attempts to lessen the struggle and preserve varieties which Nature planned to weed out. The neo-Darwinian philosophy produced seekers after power over others and after power over material possessions. Self-survival is the keynote of the Darwinian system. Neo-Darwinism is particularly bad when it is applied to politics. Shaw declares:

4. Ibid., p. liv.
Neo-Darwinism in politics had produced a European catastrophe of a magnitude so appalling, and a scope so unpredictable, that as I write these lines in 1920, it is still far from certain whether our civilization will survive it.5

This philosophy, accepted by many people who were tired of the anthropomorphic God, was

determined, richly subsidized, politically organized attempt to persuade the human race that all progress, all prosperity, all salvation, individual and social, depend on an unrestrained conflict for food and money, on the suppression and elimination of the weak by the strong, on free Trade, free Contract, free Competition, Natural Liberty, Laisser-faire.6

The results of the two philosophies were equally bad. Materialism entered into Darwinian reaction against Bible fetishism. Between the two of them religion was knocked to pieces.

...Where there had been a god, a cause, a faith that the universe was ordered however inexplicable by us its order might be, and therefore a sense of moral responsibility as part of that order, there was now an utter void.7

And without a religion, man is doomed. Civilization can be saved only by "the driving force of an unde-luded popular consent."8 This popular consent will be impossible until statesmen can appeal to people in terms

5. Ibid., p. xi.
6. Ibid., pp. lxiii-lxiv.
7. Ibid., p. lxv.
8. Ibid., p. lxv.
of a common religion. But we must not jump back into the frying-pan of an anthropomorphic monster because the Darwinian fire makes us feel hotter than ever. We must find a new religion—Creative Evolution.

Unfortunately, though, "...the earnest people get drawn off the track of evolution by the illusion of progress." They are victims of an imposed morality, and an imposed teaching. Institutions based on Darwinism and on pseudo-Christian ideals had produced, in Europe, an upper, ruling class consisting of two kinds of people: the residents of Heartbreak House, and the residents of Horseback Hall. Heartbreak House is the residence of the cultured, leisured classes of Europe; Horseback Hall is the residence of those classes of people who devote nine-tenths of their time to horses, and divide the other tenth between churchgoing and electioneering. All the powers of the world were in the hands of the residents of Horseback Hall, because the members of Heartbreak House had no desire in life except to "realize their favorite fictions and poems." In short, "power and culture were in separate compartments." The results were disastrous:


...Our utter enervation and futilization in that overheated drawing-room atmosphere was delivering the world over to the control of ignorant and soulless cunning and energy, with the frightful consequences which have now overtaken it.  

Unfortunately, the residents of Heartbreak House and Horseback Hall were duped by false doctrine, and as a consequence, became indifferent and neglectful. Society was basing its institutions on a scientific theory that produced a moral vacuum, soon filled with "sex and with all sorts of refined pleasures" or with a love of money for its own sake. The world became a place in which people pursue only their own happiness—a happiness of the kind described by Don Juan as characteristic of the residents of Hell.

Only in Captain Shotover, the man of mind, is there any hope. He is seeking a means by which wisdom and power can be united; he is seeking "the seventh degree of concentration." But he never finds it; he must seek consolation in rum. But the captain has lived. Speaking to Ellie, he says, "At your age, I looked for hardship, danger, horror, and death, that I might feel the life in me more intensely." He has had aspirations, but men like Mangan, symbolic of commercialism, indus-

12. Ibid., p. 449.
13. Ibid., p. 450.
trialism, big business, and finance, and Hector, symbolic of those cultured men who can find no suitable outlet for their brains and waste their energies in philandering, are crushing these aspirations. "The knowledge that these people are there to render all our aspirations barren prevents us having the aspirations." There seems to be no hope—unless it is the threat of disaster. Hector becomes a symbol of activity when disaster strikes. Mangan is destroyed, and Ellie has chosen to face the world—Captain Shotover's choice, and Shaw's choice.

All of Shaw's teachings concerning love, religion, education, and children are disregarded by the residents of the two houses. Revolution is on the shelf of Heartbreak House, but it remains there—in the volumes of Blake, Butler, Scott Haldane, Meredith, and Hardy. Instead of effecting the ideals advanced by these writers, people are clinging to ideals taught by their traditional and scientific education. Samuel Butler had reacted against these ideals and so does Shaw.

In place of the kind of education that Captain Shotover gives Ellie Dunn, the English choose the education of Eton, Harrow, Cambridge, and Oxford. What most people call education and culture

...is for the most part nothing but the substitution

15. Ibid., p. 527.
of reading for experience, of literature for life, of the obsolete fictitious for the contemporary real...16

And since it is nothing more than this, it

...destroys, by supplantation, every mind that is not strong enough to see through the imposture and to use the great Masters of Arts as what they really are and no more: that is, patentees of highly questionable methods of thinking, and manufacturers of highly questionable, and for the majority but half valid representations of life.17

Current university education arises from the fact that "a fool's brain digests philosophy into folly, science into superstition, and art into paeanry."18 And what is worse, "every fool believes what his teachers tell him, and calls his credulity science or morality as confidently as his father called it divine revelation."19 For Bernard Shaw, "activity is the only road to knowledge";20 it therefore does not surprise us when it says, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches."21 Shaw feels that we must be wary of education because false knowledge is more dangerous than ignorance. Education, he asserts, is not received

17. Loc. cit.
20. Loc. cit.
in the schools. The "education of a gentleman" as we know it, according to Shaw, is completed

...when a man teaches something he does not know to somebody else who has no aptitude for it, and gives him a certificate for proficiency.  

For Shaw the "educated" man is a greater nuisance than the uneducated one:

...Indeed it is the inefficiency and sham of the educational side of our schools (to which, except under compulsion, children would not be sent by their parents at all if they did not act as prisons in which the immature are kept from worrying the mature) that save us from being dashed on the rocks of false doctrine instead of drifting down the midstream of mere ignorance.

The normal student is corrupted beyond redemption by the public schools, except in technical fields. Here the instruction is honest and efficient. Having been carefully blinded and corrupted as to the nature of the society based on materialistic profiteering, the public schoolboy

...learns to shoot and ride and keep fit with all the assistance and guidance that can be procured for him by the most anxiously sincere desire that he may do these things well, and if possible superlatively well.

The result is the kind of society described in Heartbreak House, the kind of society where

22. Loc. cit.
24. Ibid., p. xvi.
...powers of destruction that could hardly without uneasiness be entrusted to infinite wisdom and infinite benevolence are placed in the hands of romantic schoolboy patriots who, however generous by nature, are by education ignoramuses, dupes, snobs, and sportsmen to whom fighting is a religion and killing an accomplishment; whilst political power, useless under such circumstances except to militarist imperialists in chronic terror of invasion and subjugation, pompous tuft-hunting fools, commercial adventurers to whom the organization by the nation of its own industrial services would mean checkmate, financial parasites on the money market, and stupid people who cling to the status quo merely because they are used to it, is obtained by heredity, by simple purchase, by keeping newspapers and pretending that they are organs of public opinion, by the wiles of seductive women, and by prostituting ambitious talent to the service of profiteers, who call the tune because, having secured all the spare plunder, they alone can afford to pay the piper.25

This is what education is doing for England. Because the English schools "teach the morality of feudalism corrupted by commercialism," Shaw criticizes them.

But the schools are not the only teachers in England. Parents, too, try to teach the child, to mold his character. But, says Shaw, "The vilest abortionist is he who attempts to mould a child's character..."26 for "the unconscious self is the real genius."27 Parents are chiefly a nuisance to children and children a nuisance to parents. Shaw declares that the natural term of the affection of


the human animal for its offspring is six years. After that, children would be better off without parents and vice-versa. But in English society, parents exist, and parents often beat children. Therefore, Shaw instructs parents in the proper method:

If you strike a child, take care that you strike it in anger, even at the risk of maiming it for life. A blow in cold blood neither can nor should be forgiven.

If you beat children for pleasure, avow your object frankly, and play the game according to the rules, as a foxhunter does; and you will do comparatively little harm. No foxhunter is such a cad as to pretend that he hunts the fox to teach it not to steal chickens, or that he suffers more acutely than the fox at the death. Remember that even in child-beating there is the sportsman's way and the cad's way.28

It is evident that Shaw questions parents' ability to teach children anything—especially by beating. Shaw agreed with Butler in the belief that parents, instead of teaching children, often cause suffering to them by their own follies. "Thus were the firstborn of Heartbreak House smitten; and the young, the innocent, the hopeful expiated the folly and worthlessness of their elders."29

Satire upon the relationship between parents and

28. Ibid., p. 736.
children is only one aspect of Shaw's criticism of the family system. His attacks upon marriage are even more bitter than his attacks upon parents. Marriage today has become an institution that has almost forgotten its original purpose—the perpetuation of the species. Because marriage has become so corrupted with irrelevancies it is, in the words of Don Juan, "the most licentious of human institutions." Furthermore,

...the confusions of marriage with morality has done more to destroy the conscience of the human race than any other single error...Marriage is a mantrap baited with simulated accomplishments and delusive idealizations. Marriage as we know it is directly opposed to the Life Force. It sets up ideals that are in opposition to the betterment of the human race through offspring. The accidental function of marriage—which, says Shaw, is "the gratification of the amoristic sentiment of mankind"—is now possible through the device of artificial sterilization. Shaw fears that the day will come when the essential function of marriage will be neglected. But before that day comes, the reaction will begin:

The great central purpose of breeding the race: ay,
breeding it to heights now deemed superhuman: that purpose which is now hidden in a mephitic cloud of love and romance and prudery and fastidiousness, will break through into clear sunlight as a purpose no longer to be confused with the gratification of personal fancies, the impossible realization of boys' and girls' dreams of bliss, or the need of older people for companionship or money. The plain spoken marriage services of the vernacular Churches will no longer be abbreviated and half suppressed as indecent. The sober decency, earnestness, and authority of their declaration of the real purpose of marriage will be honored and accepted, whilst their romantic vowings and pledgings and until-death-do-us-partings and the like will be expunged as unbearable frivolities.

Don Juan, who is, in Shaw's play, the Life Force incarnate, made proposals to ladies for the furtherance of the purposes of the Life Force. The answer he received was always the same:

The lady would say that she would countenance my advances, provided they were honorable. On inquiring what that proviso meant, I found that it meant that I proposed to get possession of her property if she had any, or to undertake her support for life if she had not; that I desired her continual companionship, counsel, and conversation to the end of my days, and would take a most solemn oath to be always enraptured by them: above all, that I would turn my back on all other women for ever for her sake. I did not object to these conditions because they were exorbitant and inhuman: it was their extraordinary irrelevance that prostrated me. I invariably replied with perfect frankness that I had never dreamt of any of these things; that unless the lady's character and intellect were equal or superior to my own her conversation must degrade and her counsel mislead me; that her constant companionship might, for all I knew, become intolerably tedious to me; that I could not answer for my feelings for a week in advance, much less to the end of my life; that to cut

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me off from all natural and unconstrained intercourse with half of my fellow creatures would narrow and warp me if I submitted to it, and, if not, would bring me under the curse of clandestinity; that, finally, my proposals to her were wholly unconnected with any of these matters, and were the outcome of a perfectly simple impulse of my manhood towards her womanhood. 54

For Shaw, as for Don Juan, the irrelevancies are prostrating—and worthy of attack.

Marriage, "popular because it combines the maximum of temptation with the maximum of opportunity," 35 delays the advent of the Superman as effectually as property does. Property delays the Superman by cutting humanity into small cliques and limiting selection of a mate to a person within one's own clique. The alternative—

Not only should every person be nourished and trained as a possible parent, but there should be no possibility of such an obstacle to natural selection as the objection of a countess to a navvy or of a duke to a charwoman. Equality is essential to good breeding; and equality, as all economists know, is incompatible with property. 36

Here Shaw brings in another of his favorite themes—the common ownership of property. Property is a hindrance to the mating of people who might breed a Superman; therefore, it, as well as marriage as we know it, must be done away

34. Ibid., pp. 638-639.


36. Ibid., p. 694.
with. Mating of couples must not consider property, money, congeniality, interests, tastes, or temperaments. It must consider only the offspring of the marriage.

In conjugation two complementary persons may supply one another's deficiencies: in the domestic partnership of marriage they only feel them and suffer from them.37

In Back to Methuselah we find that the long-livers have practiced marriage only in their youth. One says, "You do not make vows until death when death is three hundred years off."38 Two of them, Mrs. Lutestring and the Archbishop, decide to marry (or at least to reproduce) when their duty becomes apparent. The conversation—a proposal, if you will—is interesting:

Mrs. Lutestring: Mr. Archbishop, if the white race is to be saved, our destiny is apparent.

The Archbishop: Yes, our duty is pretty clear.

Mrs. Lutestring: Have you time to come home with me and discuss the matter?

The Archbishop: With pleasure.39

It is evident that the conjugation is purely a business arrangement.

Captain Shotover, in Heartbreak House, has the true object of marriage in mind. He says:

37. Ibid., p. 605.
38. George Bernard Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 113.
39. Ibid., p. 127.
I built a house for my daughter, and opened the doors thereof,
That men might come for their choosing, and their better spring from their love...40

But he has failed, for one of his daughters married a liar, the other a numskull. He becomes disillusioned about marriage, and replies, when a young lady asks him if she should marry a rich man, "One rock is as good as another to be wrecked on." This is, no doubt, Shaw's final word upon marriage.

Marriage as an institution has, to a very great extent, been perpetrated and perpetuated by the church—and this is a point of departure into Shaw's criticism of the church. It is because the church is guilty of perpetuation of institutions that have outlived their usefulness—if they ever had any—that Shaw criticizes it. Marriage is only one of the many institutions that the church has upheld and maintained as necessary to proper morality. We are the victims of a morality which is not really moral at all.

Much of Shaw's criticism of the church has already been pointed out. He simply could not accept an anthropomorphic, fiendish God of the kind that the churches of England worshipped. He was fully convinced that, in the words of Captain Shotover, "The Church is one the rocks,

breaking up.\textsuperscript{41} And through Captain Shotover he prophesied that the churches will break up unless they head for "God's open sea,"\textsuperscript{42} which is, of course, Creative Evolution. Shaw warned: "Beware of the man whose god is in the skies."\textsuperscript{43} For him, belief in an evolving god was the only true religion.

Shaw's Creative Evolution is not a question of a new religion; it is rather a

...redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible, though they are the stock-in-trade of all the Churches and all the Schools.\textsuperscript{44}

As in Butler, it is the temporalities and legends of the conventional faith that Shaw attacks. The church expects everyone to believe in its dogma. It expects one to believe

...that the world was made in the year 4004 B.C.; that damnation means an eternity of blazing brimstone; that the Immaculate Conception means that sex is sinful and that Christ was parthenogenetically brought forth by a virgin descended in like manner from a line of virgins right back to Eve; that the trinity is an anthropomorphic monster with three heads which are yet only one head; that in Rome the bread and wine on the altar become flesh and blood,
and in England, in a still more mystical manner, they do and they do not; that the Bible is an infallible complete guide to conduct; that we may lie and cheat and murder and then wash ourselves innocent in the blood of the lamb on Sunday at the cost of a credo and a penny in the plate... 45

The insistence of the church on the truth of these things makes belief impossible. Legend, parable, and drama have a place in the church, but they should not be substituted for the dogma, the history, and the religion itself. They are the natural vehicles for dogma, but "the test of dogma is its universality." 46 Therefore when a church claims, as its dogma, legends and parables that only a limited sectarian group can believe, it is headed for the rocks. The church is in danger, but science is not, because science does not insist upon belief in legends for belief in the facts of science:

...No student of science has yet been taught that specific gravity consists in the belief that Archimedes jumped out of his bath and ran naked through the streets of Syracuse shouting Eureka, Eureka, or that the law of inverse squares must be discarded if anyone can prove that Newton was never in an orchard in his life. 47

But there are many things that science cannot answer at present, and we must not suspend belief in everything while we wait for science to answer questions for us.

45. Ibid., p. lxxvi.
46. Ibid., p. lxxvii.
47. Ibid., p. lxxx.
Science, by destroying our deity, destroyed religion, morality, laws, lessons, poems, and prayers founded on that deity. We must not make a god of science, but we must have a scientific god. That god is the evolving god— the Life Force. As long as our churches do not teach us about this god, but insist upon the resurrection and the life, they are hindering progress, hindering belief in the real god—a truly moral and scientific God. Therefore, says Shaw, we must not make the mistakes that so many soldiers did in the last war. They failed to recognize that the church was

a place where frivolous women paraded in their best clothes; where stories of improper females like Potiphar’s wife, and erotic poetry like the Song of Songs, were read aloud; where the sensuous and sentimental music of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Gounod, and Brahms was more popular than severe music by greater composers; where the prettiest sort of pretty pictures of pretty saints assailed the imagination and senses through stained-glass windows; and where sculpture and architecture came to the help of painting.\textsuperscript{48}

Shaw attacks the church in an attempt to show what it really is.

Neither should we make the mistake of thinking, as the old-fashioned people think “that you can have a soul without money.”\textsuperscript{49} We must realize that religion is not

\textsuperscript{48} George Bernard Shaw, \textit{Heartbreak House}, preface, p. 482.

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 564.
for the poor only. We must realize that "a soul is a very expensive thing to keep; much more so than a motor car."50 We must realize that money is essential to the development of the evolving god. It is necessary for eugenic breeding. It is only the inequality of ownership of money and property that hinder the evolutionary process. Not only is the driving force behind evolution a will-to-live, but "to live, as Christ said long before, more abundantly."51 And abundance in spiritual life often depends upon abundance in material life. Money is important to the Life Force.

From Shaw's belief that equality is necessary for the purposes of the life force comes his criticisms of a capitalistic society. Mangan, the commercial baron in Heartbreak House, is destroyed because he does not know how to use his money. It destroys him because he has more than he can use wisely. It destroys him because he has exploited men and made them poor to get the money for which he has no use. He has created poverty by becoming rich. And Shaw, echoing Butler, tells us that poverty is one of canonical vices.

But the reader must turn to Major Barbara and the

50. Loc. cit.

51. George Bernard Shaw, Back to Methuselah, preface, p. xxxii.
political plays for a fuller explanation of Shaw's theory on money. It is presented only incidentally in the three plays with which we are here concerned. Nevertheless, Shaw's agreement with Butler on theories of money is evident even in this incidental treatment. Shaw was more concerned with politics and economics, however, than Butler ever was, so it is probable that he arrived at his conclusions about economics as a result of his political studies rather than as a result of his studies of Butler. However, Butler's ideas on Creative Evolution convinced Shaw of the necessity of his political conclusions.

In addition to being convinced of his political ideas by Butler's teachings on evolution, Shaw was convinced of many other things. He, like Butler, was convinced that many English institutions—marriage, the family, the schools, and the church—are preventing, or at least retarding, progress toward the godhead. These institutions, by insisting on false doctrines, are teaching men to destroy themselves rather than to live. As long as they continue to teach this doctrine, they will be, and should be the victims of criticism. It is evident that for Shaw, as well as for Butler, they are victims.
CHAPTER VI

AN OUTSTRETCHED HAND

When for a long black moment Darwinism, shaking the throne of God, seemed to open up before men the dark void of chaos, there stretched across the void one steady unshaking hand. It was Butler's. Shaw, searching for God in the intellectual blackness, grasped it: and it saved him.

Maurice Colbourne, The Real Bernard Shaw.

It has been shown how Samuel Butler reacted against the Darwinism that was monopolizing scientific and philosophic thought in the late nineteenth century. George Bernard Shaw was soon convinced that Butler was right in saying that Darwinism had banished mind from the universe. Neither Butler nor Shaw could accept the orthodox theology of the Christian church any more than they could accept the moral and metaphysical implications of scientism. Therefore, both turned to Lamarck as a source of enlightenment; they found in Lamarck a basis for a philosophy of life by which they could live. Each developed this basis into a philosophy which Shaw eventually called Creative Evolution.

Underlying the philosophies of both Butler and Shaw there is the belief in purpose, design, mind, and will. Each felt that life was an evolutionary process by which men tried to attain the purpose of life.
Shaw that purpose is living the best way we know how--living instinctively. Butler says that life is being possessed of memory; memory teaches us how to live. It is constantly developing, through evolution, new organisms which help us to remember more—to reach God, who is "Man's highest conception of goodness, wisdom, and power."¹ But God can be attained only through the evolution of man. "...We cannot rise to Him above the level of our own highest selves."² For Butler, man must become a higher being himself before God will exist as a higher being. Man is the agency through which God works to attain himself—to attain the purpose of life.

For Shaw as well as Butler life is a force in us driving us toward omnipotence and omniscience. It is constantly striving for greater organization, greater consciousness, greater means by which to contemplate and achieve the inner will of the world; it is constantly striving to become God. Through evolution, man has developed an organ by which to contemplate; man can, also through evolution, eventually know instinctively those things which are difficult for him to know now. He will know the inner will of the world and will have the power of attaining that will—he, in short,

¹. Samuel Butler, Erewhon Revisited, p. 489.
². Loc. cit.
will have achieved God. But that is in the beyond—so far in the beyond, in fact, that man as we know him cannot contemplate it. We are agencies in reaching the purpose of life. The true joy that we get from life is the realization that we are being used by this mighty purpose.

As mystics, Shaw and Butler were of one mind. They both believed in an evolving God—a God which could be reached by Creative Evolution. As practical philosophers, they are also of a mind. Both believed in the pragmatic test of life. The test of the superman is in the living. The test of what is right and wrong in life is what the right or wrong produces. We do not know exactly what we wish the superman to be—only by his works will we know him. We cannot know him until we have achieved him: often we must rely on instinct—our accumulated memories—to tell us what we ought to do to achieve him.

This life, not one after death, is the important life in the philosophies of both Butler and Shaw. For Butler, the only immortality was one of vicarious existence. Man lives for a time, after his body dies, in his works and in his influence upon others. But he never really dies at all. Death is merely the breaking up of an association of living organisms. The organization dies but the organisms continue to live. In George Bernard Shaw's works we learn that life is eternal in the sense that it constantly renews
its youth "in the battalions of the future."\textsuperscript{3} Death is the renewal of life. A man is saved when he has done the most with his present life—when he has helped achieve God. It is evident that Butler and Shaw believed in an immortality—not of Samuel Butler and George Bernard Shaw—but of life and its purpose. Destruction of life is impossible; only the association of living organisms can be destroyed.

And how is man to know whether or not he is contributing to the ultimate purpose of life? His instinct will tell him. This life is simply the satisfaction of a passion in us. Man will know when that passion is satisfied. Butler says he will know because he will be happy:

"Virtue springs from man's experience concerning his own well being."\textsuperscript{4} Shaw says that man will know through contemplation, which will eventually become instinctive.

But man is not letting his instinct and contemplation tell him the proper way to live. He is the victim of imposed morality, imposed principles of life, and provable and logical scientific facts. Man has come to rely upon facts to such an extent that he is incapable of metaphysical truth. The perpetuation of these principles, and the

\textsuperscript{3} George Bernard Shaw, \textit{Back to Methuselah}, preface, p. 221.

\textsuperscript{4} Samuel Butler, \textit{The Way of All Flesh}, p. 89.
sacrifice of people to these principles is the practice and daily work of the church, the school, and the family home. Until these institutions learn to teach metaphysical truth and the importance of instinct and the unconscious, they leave themselves open for attack. And Butler and Shaw do attack them because they do not teach a proper laodiceanism in life.

All teaching must be carried on with a charitable inconsistency. Parents, schools, and churches must teach relativity in all things. Parents must allow the unconscious self to develop, must "make no mysteries where Nature has made none," and must help children to become independent. Schools must teach students to think rather than accept absolutes and principles; they must teach students to live, to face life, to follow their instinct, and to distrust absolutes and principles. Churches must teach true religion instead of dogma, legend, and parable. Belief in God must not be dependent upon belief in superstition and imposed "truths." Institutions must teach that "the golden rule is that there are no golden rules."

Both Shaw and Butler are concerned with the struggle between human vitality and an artificial system of morality,


between the moralist and the natural historian, between conscience and conformity, between instinct and convention. They are on the side of human vitality, the natural historian, conscience and instinct; they attack the perpetrators and perpetuators of the opposite point of view.

Butler and Shaw are Victorian rebels imbued with a philosophy of life, a great deal of curiosity, and an interest in scientific inquiry. They are rebels because they cannot believe in a society that is founded upon a philosophy based either upon scientific, provable fact, or ridiculous, unreasonable legend and parable. They could not believe in English society, for it was a bane to evolutionary progress, the only real progress of which man is capable.
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