

Chapter 3

The Prehistory of the Superman : the Novels

" A novelist has one novel,his own."

Robert Lowell, *Ford Madox Ford*

The novels were the harvest of Shaw's generally lonely years in London from 1879 to 1884 . It is almost customary to look for autobiographical elements in an auother's early works . In Shaw's case the tendency is more pronounced, especially because in these works one can easily trace many elements of his personal life. In *Immaturity* , written in 1879,one can easily see the correspondence between Smith , the shy young clerk ,and the diffident Shaw who just spent years in Dublin as a junior clerk in a landagent's office ; between Smith's resignation as a clerk and Shaw's giving up of the job under similar circumstances ; between Smith's shyness with Harriet and Shaw's with May Morris. As one reads this novel along with the ones that follow, one is immediately struck by the fact that *Immaturity* is the least Shavian of his novels. In every subsequent work except *Cashel Byron's Profession*,Shaw makes personal statements through his fiction inasmuch as his works are related to his effort to compensate though veiled self-apotheosis for his isolation and loneliness . In a way the later novels are

slanted statements, whereas *Immaturity* presents a straight panoramic view. Smith is a starry-eyed youth who, without resorting to a mask of either superiority or indifference, reveals himself as a gawky outsider eager to be accepted and willing to forge human bonds with all and sundry, scanning everything about him with curiosity, walking into the lives of a whole range of men and women, acting and reacting, changing them in the process and being changed by them. No part of his humanity has yet been frozen by that touch of unreality which is imparted to a number of Shavian characters as they surrender their human sympathies to their creator's notion of the superman.

In spite of his pretensions to scholarship, Smith is, apart from Cashel Byron, the least cerebral among the heroes of Shaw's novels. It is his refreshing normalcy that sets him apart from people like Conolly and Trefusis. Many years later this must have been evident to Shaw, who wrote :

There must be a certain quality of youth in it which I could not now recapture and which may even have charm as well as weakness and absurdity ... Also, there will be nothing of the voice of the public speaker in it : the voice that rings through so much of my later work. Not until *Immaturity* was finished, late in 1879, did I for the first time rise to my feet in a little debating club called the Zetetical Society, to make, in a condition of heartbreaking nervousness, my first

assault on an audience.¹

Perhaps this deficiency was not as much of a disadvantage as Shaw thought. The public speaker must thrive by effacing the half tones of private conversation, by inventing for himself a pose and living up to it, by resorting, through exaggeration and distortion, to half-truths and even untruths. The face of a public speaker often ossifies into a mask, and the absence of the mask is the most remarkable thing about Shaw's first novel. Shaw remarked that as a novelist he had not yet achieved "a clear comprehension of life in the light of an intelligible theory"² and thought that the absence of such a theory had handicapped him as a novelist. However, readers are apt to feel that the absence of a Shavian theory does not impoverish the novel but makes it refreshingly different from at least three of the novels that follow.

Immaturity is loosely constructed. Everything and everyone that Smith comes across is recorded with the enthusiastic attitude of an aficionado. Shaw achieves something like negative capability as he accommodates un-Shavian views in the novel. For instance, the preacher John Davis is ridiculous as far as his theology is concerned, and yet his attempt to overcome his loneliness through the love of women, though it is couched in the same ridiculous language, seems less despicable than similar attempts by Trefusis's wife in *An Unsocial Socialist*, or by

Julia Craven in *The Philanderer* or even by Octavius in *Man and Superman*. About his infatuation for Harriet Davis says :

I went mad over her. No man even loved like what I did, Mr Smith. Then as you read in the novel books and such could not love like earnest men, as I could. I was practised to throw my whole heart and soul into a thing when once I felt it. Other men had their souls to think of; but I hadnt. Mine was saved ; and I well knew it. I knew I was doing God's will when I fell in love. It's ordained in the Bible that we should. I didnt obey the Bible by halves, Mr Smith.³

What the reader acquainted with *Three Plays for Puritans* will find surprising is that the author is capable of sympathising with Davis's passion. In his later years Shaw shows an unusual sense of dialectic by being fair to contrary points of view — we have to remember *Major Barbara* and *Saint Joan* — but he rarely tries, as he does here, to get under the skin of a ridiculous character like Davis. In the later novels this expansiveness, this spontaneous sympathy with suffering inspite of the stupidity of the sufferer, this Chekhovian mixture of the comic and the pathetic give way to a flippant imperviousness to pain.

Shaw's subsequent uneasiness with this novel is understandable because a gulf separates *Immaturity* from the rest of his works: there is a greater difference between his

first novel and *An Unsocial Socialist* than between the latter and *Back to Methuselah*. Unlike the heroes of the subsequent plays and novels neither Robert Smith nor Cyril Scott has grown too big for the world around him. Smith is charmed by the Alhambra, Scott is cut to the quick by Lady Geraldine's coldness and Harriet's criticism. Both the characters fall in love and both would think — Scott actually says he does — the attitude of the Shavian Vessey cynical. In the novel we have a glimpse of the face of the young Shaw behind his mask as we encounter an anxious Smith reflecting on his meeting with Harriet: "Why should she not have been glad to see me? How stupidly I torment myself by supposing that the commonest human feelings are suspended when I am in question."⁴

Perhaps it is not without significance that in his later work, such observations come not from the stellar characters but from persons rejected by Shaw's heroes — from Conolly's wife, from Julia, from Cleopatra, and from Judith Anderson. These unfortunate characters learn to reconcile themselves to the suspension of "the commonest human feelings".

In the preface Shaw remarks that he was a complete outsider when he wrote *Immaturity*. Yet Smith and Scott are not outsiders in the sense that Edward Conolly, Owen Jack and Sidney Trefusis are outsiders. Smith and Scott are outsiders because of their circumstances, not by choice.

Each has the makings of an insider, if by an insider one means a person happily adjusted to society. Isabella is the only person with whom Smith behaves in a Shavian manner. It is by no means typical of his response to society in general. He has more than common respect for Isabella's father, reserves respectful admiration for Harriet and is charmed by the Alhambra. The insouciance of the dancer—the passion flower—overwhelms him. Not he but the painter Scott shows some independence of society. When Harriet has the misgiving that society may scoff at him for marrying a lowly dress-maker, Scott declares that he can afford to have society on his own terms. If we presume that Shaw split his self-image into two—into Smith and Scott—we are led to the conclusion that the fascination of the great London world for a callow youth far outweighed any possible contempt for it. It is because of this that the characters seem so convincing.

There is a fluidity in the narrative as the lens through which the characters are viewed shifts from moment to moment—mild caricature, the result of looking at people through Smith's prejudice, is offset by shifting the lens and looking at incidents through an insider's point of view.

In the preface to the novel Shaw hints with a touch of embarrassment that through Smith he has revealed his natural self: "At the time of which I am writing, however,

I had not yet learnt to act, nor come to understand that my natural character was impossible on the great stage of London".⁵

Curiously enough the deep strangeness which made Shaw, according to himself, a sojourner on the planet rather than its native is not to be found in the first novel. He says that he "had to become an actor and create for [himself] a fantastic personality fit and apt for dealing with men."⁶ It is possible that the strangeness itself was a subsequent mask that Shaw wore until the mask became the face. A similar hypothesis is hinted by a startling observation in the preface in which the well-known Shavian relation between life and art is reversed⁷ :

Even when I was a good boy I was so only theatrically, because, as actors say, I saw myself in the character ; and this occurred very seldom, my taste running so strongly on stage villains and stage demons (I painted the white-washed wall in my bedroom in Dalkey with watercolor frescos of Mephistopheles) that I must have actually bewitched myself; for when Nature completed my countenance in 1880 or thereabouts (I had only the tenderest sprouting of hair on my face until I was 24) I found myself equipped with the upgrowing moustache and eyebrows, and the sarcastic nostrils of the operatic fiend whose airs (by Gunod) I had sung as a child, and whose attitudes had affected

my boyhood. Later on, as the generations moved past me, I saw the fantasies of actors and painters come to life as living men and women and began to perceive that imaginative fiction is to life what the sketch is to the picture or the conception to the statue. The world is full of ugly little men who were taken to the theatre to see the Yellow Dwarf or Rumpelstiltskin when they were children ; and we shall soon have women in all directions with the features of Movie Vamps because in childhood they were taken to picture palaces and inspired with an ambition to be Serpents of Nile.⁸

This is one of the rare instances in which one finds Shaw speaking like his antithesis Oscar Wilde that life copies art.⁹ But this is in keeping with his admission in the preface that he found his natural character impossible on the London stage and had, therefore, to invent a mask. In a flash of inspiration Shaw grasped the fact that if art generally imitates life, life too sometimes reciprocates by following art. Here we are concerned not with the general validity of the statement but with its applicability to Shaw's own life. The imitation of art did not stop with his childhood, for what one witnesses in the novels is the exact replication of the process through which " the fantasies of actors and painters come to life as living men and women ."

Shaw admits that when *Immaturity* was written he had not yet learnt the art of acting. Smith is Shaw's unmasked self

but the art of acting—— the art of devising an appropriate mask—— is not an art of deception, it is the art of creating a new self. In the preface Shaw compares himself with the hero of *Cool as a Cucumber*, a farce in which a hopelessly shy young man is transformed into an insufferably insolent person. What the hero achieves is an escape from a restrictive role into one affording greater manoeuvrability. The transformation of Smith into Trefusis, a transformation that takes place over a span of five novels, is not less dramatic than the change in *Cool as a Cucumber*, or the change in Shaw's physique brought about by his fascination for Gunod. *The Irrational Knot* marks the beginning of that dramatic transformation as the shy Smith makes way for the monstrously confident Conolly.

II

Edward Conolly, the hero of *The Irrational Knot*, is an electrical engineer. In 1897 Shaw worked for the Edison Telephone Company. No doubt he drew upon his experience in creating the hero of his second novel. Conolly meets Marian Lind, they are attracted to each other and marry, but soon after marriage they discover that they have no compatibility. Conolly's coldness draws his wife away from him into the arms of Sholto Douglas, her rejected admirer, but if Conolly is cold and insensitive, Douglas is vain and mean. Thus the bond between him and Marian is no more

rational than the knot of marriage between Marian and Conolly. So the two separate after their elopement, which takes them to America, with Marian carrying the child of Douglas. In this novel all forms of cohabitation come a cropper, with the elopement faring as badly as the marriage. One would expect Shaw, a proclaimed rebel and heretic, to attack hollow institutions that are unsupported by natural affection, but the alliance between Marmaduke and Susanna belies that expectation. The two love each other and are sufficiently strong to cling to each other without the prop of marriage. Yet the two fall out and Susanna goes steeply downhill owing to her drunkenness and is left by Marmaduke to die in America as a wreck, and Marmaduke marries the brainless Constance. Shaw made tall claims for the novel, calling it "a fiction of the first order" because "the morality is original and not ready-made."¹⁰ It is on the basis of this original morality that Shaw claimed that the novel had been "an early attempt on the part of the Life Force to write *A Doll's House* in English"¹¹ long before the name of Ibsen was known to him.

There is some confusion in maintaining that Marian's views are "hopelessly second hand"¹² and in insisting in the same breath that she is the Nora of Shaw's version of *A Doll's House*. The "original morality" may look a little shop-worn to readers familiar with Shaw's later works, but at the time when it was written, the novel must have been

mildly shocking even to the reader acquainted with the unorthodoxy of George Eliot or the hard-nosed cynicism of Thackeray, since it presents nothing short of a complete inversion of popular values. The reader is invited to see the world mainly through the eyes of Conolly and Elinor, and even though the two differ on a number of subjects they agree as outsiders that the world of the insiders is damned. Nothing escapes the broad sweep of condemnation—— not the family, nor the Church, nor the aristocracy . The frequent diatribe against parents, with which the readers of *Cashel Byron's profession* , *The Devil's Disciple*, *Man and Superman* , *Misalliance* and *Too True to be Good* are so familiar, begins with *The Irrational Knot*. Elinor considers sadism as an essential feature of parenthood. When accused of cynicism by Marian she retorts: " What is the use of straining after an amiable view of things, Marian, when a cynical view is most likely to be a true one ?"¹³

What is noteworthy is that as the novel develops and we have a more comprehensive view of the characters and events we are forced to agree with her judgement even though we may feel that the same judgement could have been expressed in less blistering terms. Much of the harshness is the result of Nelly's uncompromising truthfulness : "If amiability consists in maintaining that black is white, it is a quality which anyone can acquire at the expense of telling a lie and sticking to it,"¹⁴

Both her harshness and her truthfulness become Sybilline when set against the backdrop of the Countess's amiability. The latter takes an amiable view of things by refusing to break off her daughter's marriage with Marmaduke even after learning that he is living with another woman. She gives a demonstration of the same amiable view of things in rebuking her son for pointing out such unamiable truths. She knows that "such things are recognized though of course they are not spoken of. No lady would with common decency pretend to know that such connexions are possible."¹⁵

In a world where the Church is represented by Lind, the aristocracy by the Countess and lady-like decency by Constance, Elinor finds positive values in the fallen woman, Susanna :

I don't pity Marmaduke one bit : if the whole family cut him he will deserve it richly ; but I do sympathise with him. Can you wonder at his preference ? When we went to see that woman last June, I envied her. There she was, clever, independent, successful, holding her own in the world, fascinating a crowd of people, whilst we poor respectable nonentities sat pretending to despise her- as if we were not waiting until some man in want of female slave should offer us our board and privilege of his lordly name with "Misses" before it for our lifelong services. ¹⁶

Nelly's revolt against society is more thoroughgoing than that of any other character in the novel except Conolly : she explodes Marian's delusions about family life by reminding her that she was welcome to be happy as long as she did nothing but that which had the approval of her father. She knows that for a woman with brains and self-respect the journey from the father's house to the husband's is a movement from the frying pan to the fire. Determined not to submit to that sanctified prostitution, marriage, she insists: " I would rather die than sell myself for ever to a man ..."¹⁷

Her revolt assumes almost Swiftian proportions when she tells Marian that the average person is more insufferable than a felon because one is allowed to shoot the latter but not the former.

The similarity between Nelly and her creator goes deeper than the proximity between their general attitudes towards society : their approach to reality seems to have been moulded by the same kind of parental influence and the same kind of education. We have seen that deep down in his soul the trauma of Shaw's childhood left as much bitterness as Nelly's. Being unable to vent that bitterness in similar terms in his own person , he chose a number of novels and plays from the *Irrational Knot* and *Cashel Byron's Profession* to *Misalliance* and *Too True to be Good* that stun us by the intensity of the animosity existing between parents and

children .

Elinor expresses the author's nihilism ; through her Shaw articulates his own revolt and denial. The world is simply monstrous in Elinor's eyes, the only person she can partially identify with is Susanna, who lives virtually outside the pale of society.

The Irish lad who was an outsider both in his own country and in England, who was shut out of his mother's love and father's protection, who was filled with bitter shame at the antics of a drunkard of a father and assailed with doubts as to the legitimacy of his own birth could not have been more amiably disposed towards the world than Nelly because as a young man he was not treated less harshly than Nelly by the world and was no less sensitive to pain. In fact Nelly is Shaw in skirts, or at least a very significant part of him that he could not reveal to the world without fictional disguise.

If Shaw expressed an aspect of his own rebellion through Elinor, he chose Conolly to articulate the other aspect. A man from the New World, Conolly is the natural aristocrat and the antithesis to the decadence of the artificial aristocracy created by the English class system. The gentlemen of the world have closed the doors of society on the face of this proletarian and workman. He, and not any of the characters of *Immaturity*, is the outsider Shaw spoke of in the preface to his first novel. But Conolly is an

outsider who is determined to break into society even at the cost of breaking society in the process.

As an outsider Shaw finds a suitable character in him to represent an important part of himself. The symbolic nature of Conolly's alienation blends completely with literal facts, because even literally Conolly is an outsider. He is an Irish American determined, like his Irish creator, to conquer England. Conolly is the sum total of the different aspects of revolt articulated through the other characters of the novel. Susanna and Marmaduke revolt against society's notion of propriety, Elinor revolts against the superstition that affection and consanguinity are closely related, even Marian revolts against the sacredness of marriage. Conolly represents, on the other hand, more than any particular aspect of revolt : he symbolises the negation of almost every norm of society. The basis of his revolt is the faith in the supremacy of reason, a faith that teaches him to despise almost everything in life because he believes that the world — and this includes social organisations as well as individual impulses — is monstrously irrational. Marian says about him :

I envy him sometimes myself. What would you give to be never without a purpose, to regard life as a succession of objects each to be accomplished by so many days' work ... to study love, family affection and friendship as a doctor studies breathing or digestion ; to look on

disinterestedness as either weakness or hypocrisy, and in death as a mere transfer of your social function to some member of the next generation ? ¹⁸

In the preface to his first novel Shaw regrets that the author of *Immaturity* was not yet a philosopher. In the second novel he more than compensates for the deficiency of the first, for Conolly is not content to be a philosopher, he uses his philosophy with devastating effect. His attitude to common expressions of affection is embodied in such statements as : " Arm to arm is such an inconvenient and ridiculous mode of locomotion ...Our present mode of proceeding would be inexcusable if I were a traction-engine and you my tender." ¹⁹

Conolly's impact on the other characters is nothing short of shattering. He is the type of superman that sucks life out of men and women around him in order to flourish, and does so unconsciously. Not aware of the impact of his superiority, he is like the huge banyan tree in the shadow of which no plant can live. There is one remarkable passage in the novel that reveals how common human feelings wilt in his presence. His impersonal observations on his wife had withered Marian so completely that she could never sing in his presence. The following passage describes how a party broke up as Conolly, who had gone out, returned home :

As [Marian] sang the last strain, the click of

the latch-key was heard from without. Instantly she rose ; closed the pianoforte softly; and sat down at some distance from it. Her action was reflected by a change in their behaviour. They remembered that they were not at home, and became more or less uneasily self-conscious. Elinor was the least disturbed. Conolly's first glance on entering was at the piano ; he next went in search of his wife.

" Ah ! " he said surprised. " I thought somebody was singing. "

" Oh dear , no ! " said Elinor, " You must be mistaken. "

" Perhaps so, " he said smiling. " But I have been listening carefully at the window for ten minutes ; and I certainly dreamt that I heard " Auld Robin Gray. " ²⁰

Perhaps no other passage in the novel explains the extent of Conolly's alienation from life and society. He might as well have been a man from a different planet, as every aspect of his life seems outlandish to the ordinary man. Having made reason his guiding principle, he sees nothing odd in encouraging other men to make love to his wife. When Marian asks him whether he likes other men to be in love with her, he replies : " Yes it makes the house pleasant for them ; it makes them attentive to you ; and it gives you great power for good " ²¹

Shaw's subsequent disapproval of the novel and its hero on the ground that they represent the soul-killing principle of rationalism ²² is thoroughly misleading as we shall see

later that Conolly is an unerring anticipation of the Shavian heroes who come into the world after their author has jettisoned his faith in the sovereignty of reason.

Conolly's confidence in his own superiority makes him act with godlike detachment. He changes himself from a person to an intellectual principle and confronts others, including his wife, not as a human being but as disembodied intelligence. As he plays to perfection the role of the disinterested spectator vis-à-vis things that vitally affect him and his wife he pushes her towards the inane and unscrupulous Sholto Douglas. His impersonality stretches to the point where he can show disinterested concern for Douglas catching cold after he has violated the sanctity of Conolly's marriage ; his commitment to his intellectual preoccupations makes his work at Glasgow more valuable to him than his wife ; his fidelity to a rational code of conduct makes him recoil from his wife's embrace when she wishes to cling to him during the greatest crisis of her life. Overall, Edward Conolly resembles the Ancients of *Back to Methuselah* much more than he resembles any living man in the actual world.

In Conolly Shaw mixes his craving for the superman with a modicum of satire directed at his own self. Shaw's attitude towards the superman has always been ambivalent, more ambivalent in the novels than in the plays of his last years. Comparing Conolly with Smith we realize

that the conception of the former was a mode of compensation for the pathetic shyness of the young Dubliner on the great London stage. Shaw himself gives us the clue to the transformation of Smith into Conolly :

In my boyhood I saw Charles Matthews act in a farce called *Cool as a Cucumber*. The hero was a young man just returned from a tour of the world, upon which he had been sent to cure him of an apparently hopeless bashfulness ; and the fun lay in the cure having overshot the mark and transformed him into a monster of outrageous impudence. I am not sure that something of the kind did not happen to me, for when my imposture was at last accomplished and I daily pulled the threads of the puppet who represented me in the public press, the applause that greeted it was not unlike that which Matthews drew in *Cool as a Cucumber*.²³

One has to amend Shaw's remarks a little to understand the relationship between *Immaturity* and *The Irrational Knot*. Conolly is not a puppet on strings, both he and Smith lay hidden in Shaw's soul before being created, and however incompatible they may seem, they are the two faces of the same man ——— Smith is the author's naked self, his bridge to common humanity , and Conolly is the wounded man trying to forget the bitter memories by adopting the posture of superhuman indifference towards the world. Since Shaw's

self-dramatisation succeeds in changing the natural self into a fantastic figure, he can still maintain the necessary distance from his mask by offsetting Conolly's extremism with touches of human sanity. One such touch comes from Marian as she reproves Conolly for his apparent cynicism :

People do fall in love, fortunately for them. It may be injudicious ; and it may turn out badly ; but it fills up life in a way that all the barren philosophy and cynicism on earth cannot. Do you think I would not rather have to regret a lost love than to repine because I had been too cautious to love at all ? I verily believe that the disappointments of love warm the heart more than the triumphs of insensibility.²⁴

She almost annihilates her husband's wisdom with one blasting sentence : "How much irreparable mischief, I wonder, did we do ourselves by letting our little wisdoms stifle all our big instincts."²⁵

Applying the Shawian categories formulated in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* one may call Conolly a Realist and Marian an Idealist.²⁶ In this the two correspond roughly to Don Juan and the Devil in *Man and Superman*, but Shaw's attitude towards the characters is more ambivalent in the novel than in the play. In *Man and Superman* he can reconcile the philosophy to the comedy by constructing the comedy with average men and women, persons solidly entrenched in

humanity with all its ridiculousness and vulgarity, and accommodating the philosophy in a dream. The superhumanity of Juan does not therefore jar on the nerves of the audience ; but because of adopting the realistic mode in the novel, Shaw is not able to work out a resolution of his conflicting impulses. The impression that one gets is that of the author's schizophrenia : the alternate castigation and glorification of the main character owing to the indecisiveness of the author.²⁷

The Irrational Knot depicts a world in which comedy is not possible. In *Immaturity* people are of various shades, one can isolate some characters without isolating all and without denying the world. Symptomatic of the difference between the two novels are the two endings. In *Immaturity* Scott's baby grows up, and we have the assurance that Smith will grow up one day : change leads to ripeness. In *The Irrational Knot* Conolly's marriage is fruitless. Elinor, the other Shavian persona, rejects her sexual role in choosing the career of a novelist. Society is uniformly banal, all relations end in sterility and at the end of the novel the reader is left guessing whether the hero is superhuman or subhuman. Every significant force in the novel is centrifugal and life is shown to be a junkyard. Marian's blasting criticism of Conolly shows that Shaw was probably aware that there is little to choose between his rationalist hero and the irrational and inane Sholto Douglas, but his

subjective need to articulate his own angst was so great that his hero is led to despise almost the entire world. As a result, a half-formed grotesque figure remains suspended in the air, above the rough and tumble of life, an unconvincing philosopher, an insufferable person, a complete automaton. Shaw indeed resembled the hero of *Cool as a Cucumber* in overshooting his mark.

III

Written in 1881, *Love Among the Artists*, Shaw's third novel, takes up the problem of reconciling man's social life with the pursuit of art. All the major characters in the novel realize the difficulty in their own lives, each making a sacrifice according to his or her temperament in order to achieve one or the other. Owen Jack is a composer, Adrian Herbert and Mary Sutherland are painters, Aurelie Szczimplica a pianist and Madge Brailsford an actress.

From the beginning Shaw tries to make his hero an anathema to those whose notions of beauty and art hinge on prettiness. His description of Jack is of a piece with his attack on sentimental romance. Thus Jack is made physically repulsive. He is "a short, thick-chested young man, in an old creased frock coat...pitted by small pox", and "thick in the palm, with short fingers and nails bitten to the quick."²⁸ As Herbert says, "Nature does not seem to have formed Mr Jack for the pursuit of fine art."²⁹

Shaw contrasts the true artist intent on mastering

reality with the dilettante using art as an excuse for an escape into unreality. As a representative of the latter type, Adrian Herbert chooses as his subject the legend of the Lady of Shalott. As the contrary type of artist, Jack cannot but despise such art : " A sudden setting of his mouth and derisive twinkle in his eye, showed that he found something half ludicrous, half contemptible in his work..."³⁰ The choice of these two types is not accidental in Shaw : the recurrent contrast between the artist and the respectable dilettante, between the rebel and the conventional man, between the outsider and the insider, between the happily adjusted and the contemptuously critical form one of the main patterns of his art.³¹

The two artistic types show the corresponding differences as individuals : Herbert, unsure, hobbling in self-esteem, needs to lean on Mary Sutherland. He says to her : " Has it occurred to you that if by accident... your sympathies come to be diverted from me, I should lose the only person whose belief in me has helped me to believe in myself ? How utterly desolate I should be !" ³² Jack, on the other hand, considers his proposal to Mary a folly. The two genuine artists in the novel, he and Aurelie, are totally self-sufficient, and to each of them love is a distraction, the lover or the beloved an unworthy rival of art, an impediment to further development. Jack says to Mary : "Henceforth I shall devote myself to the only mistress I am

fitted for, Music. She has not many such masters."³³ Likewise Aurelie says to Adrian : "I think you are very injudicious to care so much for love . To me it is the most stupid thing in the world. I prefer music " ³⁴

In the novel we learn much more about the artists than about their art. At the end of the novel we know much more about Jack's attitude to life and to men than about his art. The focal point of the author's attention is the attitude of the characters— even the aesthetic attitudes are reflections of social attitudes. Paradoxically, the hero, who wants to replace the passion for shamming with the passion for truth, and insists, through his revolt against tyranny of all forms, on the intimate relation between life and art ends up in a defensive posture by withdrawing from life and love in the name of art. The reader is thus forced into the conclusion that in Jack and Aurelie Shaw is studying Conolly and Elinor in a different set of circumstances; the differences between the heroes, owing to the difference in their vocations, are less significant than their similarity, and in this they are prompted by their author. In spite of the difference in their behaviour Conolly and Jack have an important underlying similarity— self-absorption and egoism.

Jack is ill-mannered, highly temperamental, uncaring about the impression he creates in others .A man of great energy, he is overbearing and even haughty, always managing

to convey the impression of suppressed violence. All that is a far cry from Conolly's suave self-possession but this difference is less important than the similarity in their motivation : both are driven by a scorn for the laws of society. Jack says to Madge's father : "I am as well versed in the usages of the world as you , and I have sworn not to comply with them when they demand a tacit tolerance of oppression. The laws of society, sir, are designed to make the world easy for cowards and liars." 35

If the novel gives a sketchy account of Jack's art and a detailed account of his nature it is because after completing *The Irrational Knot* Shaw had to find a different plot for the same theme that was racking his brains : the theme of revolt.

Adrian Herbert is the perfect bourgeois, the artist with unimpeachable manners. If Owen Jack is the perfect outsider, Adrian is the perfect insider: in his art, in his manners, in his love, in his absence of passion, in his regard for propriety, he is the incarnation of respectability. Not unexpectedly, he commits Jack to the Index expurgatorius. Jack is to him merely an execrable musician : he swears never to mention him again.

The title of the novel is slightly misleading because love is plainly held in contempt by Jack and Aurelie, the two people who are the only true artists in this novel. Since we learn much more about what the artist does outside

the world of art than what he or she does inside it, what we witness in the novel is the gradual alienation of the genuine artist from the world.

That Jack's perception of the world carries the endorsement of the author becomes clear when Mary Sutherland, the most sympathetic character in the novel, repeats Jack's feelings on a different chord and exclaims that the " world is not fit for any honest woman to live in " and that it has some base construction to put on every effort to be just and tell the truth. "36

Lady Geraldine's remark that the world does not tolerate heroism on the foundation of weakness is a minor amendment because Mary's bitterness springs from experience while Lady Geraldine's optimism is *a priori*.

The two persons endowed with genius view life and art in a remarkably similar manner and harden their hearts similarly to the lures of life. In spite of possessing a high civic sense that leads her to nurse an injured and drunken youth, Aurelie is, quite unconsciously, heartless to her mother and her husband. Her mother finds her " an ingrate, a heart of marble".³⁷ Aurelie is temperamental and unforgiving and soon discovers that her marriage was a mistake : "What madness possessed me, an artist to marry ? Did I not know that it is ever the end of an artist's career ? "38

After Shaw's discovery of the philosopher in himself, that is, after *Immaturity*, all the heroes and heroines of

his novels with the exception of Cashel Byron and Lydia Carew see love as a sign of weakness. To lose one's heart to someone else is to be weak. After honest self-analysis Aurelie says to Adrian Herbert, her husband: "I cannot love. I can feel it in the music—— in the romance —— in the poetry ; but in real life —— it is impossible."³⁹

The only escape for these people from their claustrophobic egoism is their work. Aurelie unwittingly admits to Charlie that her heart is barren :

In my infancy I named a star after every one whom I liked. Only very particular persons were given a place in Charles Wain. It was the great chariot of honor ; and in the end I found no one worthy of it but my doll and myself. Behold how I am poetic ! I was a silly child ; for I forgot to give my mother a star —— I forgot all my family. When my mother found that out one day, she said I had no heart and , indeed I fear I have none.⁴⁰

In Shaw the genius has to be heartless. Thus Jack almost repeats Aurelie's words : " ...it is marriage that kills the heart and keeps it dead. Better starve the heart than overfeed it. Better still to feed it only on fine food, like music "⁴¹

Edward Conolly, the leading character of *The Irrational Knot* makes a brief appearance in the novel. His veiled

references to his own life seem to indicate a dilemma shared by Shaw himself. Conolly says to Mary Sutherland :

You want a man that is not Passion's slave. I hope you may never get him. He would make an excellent God, but a most unpleasant man, and an unbearable husband. What would you be to a wholly self-sufficient man ? Affection would be a superfluity with which you would be ashamed to trouble him.⁴²

These words are in keeping with Conolly's self-composure and his intellectual objectivity which enables him to understand other people's view points. But it is not real self-criticism. All that Conolly implies is that he should not have married, as he is too strong for marriage. Thus, Conolly merely complements Aurelie's views. Aurelie believes that it is only the weak who are capable of loving, Conolly adds that it is only the weak who need and get love :

But I know that [Marian] ceased to love him, whilst around her thousands of wives are clinging fondly to husbands who bullied and beat them, to fools, savages, drunkards, knaves, Passion's slaves of many patterns, but all weak enough to need caresses and forgiveness occasionally.⁴³

Yet in the process of running down love Conolly quite unwittingly makes a confession that is also a significant

pointer to the source of Shaw's emerging superman. Conolly admits that he made a virtue of necessity, since the hard crust of his soul, his self-centredness, was at the beginning merely an adjustment to his circumstances for survival :

This lady met a man [i.e. Conolly] who had learned to stand alone in the world—a hard lesson, but one that is relentlessly forced on every sensitive but unlovable boy who has his own way to make, and who knows that outside himself, there is no God to help him .⁴⁴

Such sane insight into their source of inspiration was not always to be granted to the supermen who followed Conolly, for the Life Force frequently stood between Shaw's heroes and honest introspection. However, every Shavian hero learns to stand alone. His supermen are connected to one another by their loneliness and self-sufficiency.

It is useful in this connexion to judge Jack in the light of Shaw's philosophy. Jack is not a Wagnerite or a Shavian artist because he finds salvation in art instead of life. This is because at the time of writing the novel Shaw was not yet a socialist.⁴⁵ In his later years Shaw would find Jack's views heretical as he himself would move closer to the view of Julius Caesar and the Ancients (of *Back to Methuselah*) who consider the art of living the only art worth cultivating.⁴⁶ For Jack art becomes a substitute for

life and the romance that is rebuffed in life blossoms in art.

Except in *Prometheus Unbound* there is no hint that Owen Jack is anything but a pattern designer, a type of musician Shaw loathed in later years. A la Oscar Wilde Jack seeks fulfilment in art and shuns life: "Where do you suppose I get the supplies of my music? And what passion there is in that! — what fire — what disregard of conventionality! In the music, you understand: not in my everyday life!"⁴⁷

He is, according to himself, a very romantic person, but has not been able — nor does he care to — put the romance into practice. It is all used up by his art: "Yes: my art is enough for me, more than I have time and energy for occasionally."⁴⁸

Interestingly, though philosophically Owen Jack is at the other pole of the Don Juan of *Man and Superman*, their attitude to men and to the world is the same, only the argument to support that attitude makes a complete turn-around. In the novel life is repudiated because it interferes with the genius's commitment to art. In the plays, most notably in *Man and Superman*, love becomes a synonym for besotted concupiscence, and the hero must renounce love because he must correctly discern the direction of life's movement, for life, as it moves upwards, outgrows both love and art. The artist philosopher must therefore be prepared to discard art.⁴⁹ Thus the

self-centredness, the insularity and the alienation of the Shavian hero antedates the philosophical construction that is superimposed on them. Perhaps the greatest importance of a minor work like *Love Among the Artists* lies in the fact that it provides a context within which plays like *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah* can be understood. Once the plays are judged in this context their meaning changes dramatically.

IV

After the failure of his first three novels Shaw decided to try his hand at a popular mode of entertainment and he very nearly succeeded. Serialised in *Today*, a socialist magazine, it was well-received and its success encouraged Henry Hyde Champion, its printer, to bring out a shilling edition of the novel. The *Saturday Review* declared it the novel of the age. The reception of his work sired a *bon mot* from its author, who quipped many years later: "I never think of *Cashel Byron's Profession* without a shudder at the narrowness of my escape from becoming a successful novelist at the age of twenty-six."⁵⁰

The first impression that the novel gives is that Shaw is in a holiday mood. The oppressive seriousness of his early novels, the grappling with the author's personal problem of identification and alienation, the use of masks to objectify a personal crisis, the strong autobiographical

element — all these seem to be absent to such an extent that critics generally see *Cashel Byron's Profession* as the odd man out in an otherwise neatly patterned series of novels. Woodbridge seems to voice the majority opinion in remarking that " there is no autobiographical element in the story. "51

Superficially there could not be two persons more different from each other than Shaw and Cashel Byron. The only trait they appeared to share was an interest in boxing.⁵² Shaw himself said in a note :

Twenty years ago a poet friend of mine, who, like all poets, delighted in combats, insisted on my sharing his interest in pugilism, and took me about to all the boxing competitions of the day. I was nothing loth ; for my own share of original sin apart, anyone with a sense of comedy must find the arts of self defence delightful (for a time) through their pedantry, their quackery, and their action and reaction between amateur romantic illusion and professional eye to business .⁵³

The writer who would later discover in thought a passion far more strong than sexual passion creates a hero whose genius lies in a highly developed physical prowess , for Cashel is a man who can act only instinctively. When Lydia asks Mrs Skene, the ex-champion's wife : " Does Mr Byron ever think ?", the old lady answers emphatically. " Never. There

isnt a more cheerful lad in existence, miss." ⁵⁴

Lydia, however, does enough thinking for two; she is one of the most well-read persons in all Europe, manages her estate better than any professional manager and has her wits about her not only in literary matters but also in "non-feminine" subjects like politics and government. The existence of such a mammoth brain in a woman was mildly disheartening to romantics like William Morris, but even a brilliant critic like Irvine chose, in his revulsion, to gloss over the basic difference between her and the hero of *The Irrational Knot* and complained that Shaw "allowed that superlogical electrical inventor Conolly, after nearly ruining one story, to don petticoats and scramble into the principal role of another." ⁵⁵

Shaw himself has contributed his share of the misunderstanding by remarking :

I must admit that, for a man of Morris's turn, [Lydia's] intellectual perfections are rather too obviously machine-made. If Babbage's calculator is ever finished, I believe it will be found quite possible, by putting an extra wheel or two in, to extend its use to the manufacture of heroines of the Lydia Carew type...At the same time it must be distinctly understood that this is no disparagement to her. There is nothing one gets so tired of in fiction as what is called 'flesh and blood' . ⁵⁶

One is well advised to trust one's own reading more than such isolated remarks by Shaw because as his letters testify, Shaw was notoriously changeable in his responses to his own works, but more important than this is the characteristic Shavian method of outdoing his critics in adverse remarks on his novels as a defensive strategy. Robert Hogan points out that Shaw was not sincere in his denunciation of his novels. He believes that Shaw's defensiveness about them stemmed from the unmitigated failure of these works with publishers and readers.⁵⁷

In transferring to Lydia such traditional male attributes as erudition, managerial skill and an unusual degree of political intelligence, Shaw not only demonstrates his freedom from male chauvinism, he also makes Lydia the fore-runner — though on a much slighter scale and in a lighter vein — of characters as different from one another as Vivie Warren, Candida, Kittie Warren and Lady Cicely. It is true that she is too tightly packed with virtues and inclines towards abstraction, and it is possible to argue that Shaw errs in his sense of proportion, but considering the fact that *Cashel Byron's Profession* borders on extravaganza and hence sets Shaw free to disregard the norms of realism, the blemish, if at all it is a blemish, is a minor one. The comic action of the novel thrives on a pattern of behaviour rather than on a full development of character, and in the overall comic pattern Lydia is the

foil to the principal subject of Shaw's study— the genius of Cashel Byron.

At this period of his career Shaw was so morbidly autobiographical that he needed a stroke of luck to chance upon Cashel Byron. That luck was granted by his decision to relax his seriousness a little and to turn the focus outwards on some recognizably different kind of being. Even the treatment was dramatically different, for Shaw turned from novels of morbid introspection to a potboiler. His conscience was forever uneasy about it:

In novel-writing there are two trustworthy dodges for capturing the public. One is to slaughter a child and pathosticate over its deathbed over a whole chapter. The other is to describe either a fight or a murder. There is a fight in Cashel Byron's Profession ; that profession is itself fighting ; and here lay the whole schoolboy secret of the book's little vogue. I had the old grievance of the author : people will admire him for the feats that any fool can achieve, and bear malice against him for boring them with better work. Besides, my conscience was not quite clear in the matter. In spite of all my pains to present the prizefighter and his pursuits without any romantic glamour the only effect of such descriptions ... is to make people want to see something of the sort and take steps accordingly. This

tendency of the book was repugnant to me ; if prizefighting were a sleeping dog, I should certainly let it lie, inspite of the American editions. 58

In "Mr Bernard Shaw's Works of Fiction Reviewed by Himself" he is even more forthrightly self-critical in snatching away the rag of moral pretension from himself and in observing that the reader will not be deceived into believing that his relish for blood is the result of his sympathy for the virtuous underdog. He confesses with disarming frankness that he wrote the novel out of a fondness for savagery and his readers relished it for the same reason.

Shaw's consistent disapproval of the novel and his uneasiness about it lend a ring of sincerity to his much-publicised sense of relief at the narrow escape from success to which *Cashel Byron's Profession* nearly catapulted him. His misgivings were not entirely unjustified, for *Cashel Byron's Profession* is like a cocktail with no distinctive flavour. Shaw was trying to make a single novel do duty for a few distinctly different ones : having decided to take a day off he was trying to turn his holiday to profit by making the novel a penny-catcher, hence the long rope to public taste ; partly in deference to the moral tone of the magazine in which it was published and partly because he found the moral bias congenial, he was trying to give the novel a coat of socialism ; probably he even toyed with the

idea of laying out the plot in the manner of an allegory, for the hero's profession could easily be made into a symbol of man's struggle in an alien and often hostile world. Over and above these distinct aims was an attempt to weave into an ironic comedy the contrast between the glorious image of prizefighting and the reality of its unheroic, crude commercialism.

This is not to say that different objectives cannot be realised in a single work ; most great works and many of Shaw's own plays lend themselves to different levels of interpretation. The problem with *Cashel Byron's Profession* is that the different lines of interpretation come into one another's way. The difficulty is increased by the fact that Shaw generally planks his works on a sound theoretical scaffolding. The novel, however, cannot be seen both as socialistic and symbolic, because they involve two mutually incompatible outlooks on the central event—the fight. Shaw's equation of Cashel Byron with Mrs Warren hangs together incongruously with the savagery of his imagination that savours pugilism with frank delight. This makes the novel resemble a merry-go-round in which one approach is followed by another in quick succession, without any of them working itself out with the requisite thoroughness.

Both its brilliance and its fragmentary approach was noted by R.L. Stevenson when he declared that it was a mixture of one part of Charles Reade, one part of badly

assimilated Henry James, half a part of Disraeli, one part and a half of "struggling, overlaid, original talent" and one part of "blooming gaseous folly."⁵⁹ Surely Stevenson's discovery in the novel of "gifts of insane chivalry" was at least as valid as Shaw's hindsight that found in it a vicious world of prostitution. As a matter of fact inspite of Gene Tunney's adverse comments ⁶⁰ and Shaw's occasional anti-romantic touches— Shaw insists that prizefighting does not require courage and makes Cashel afraid of burglars and large dogs —Cashel is the towering figure in the novel. Shaw's attempt to pin him down to his background is so half-hearted that the comparison with Mrs Warren sounds merely like a joke. As the figure of Cashel Byron becomes bigger and bigger , the background becomes more and more obscure until it is wiped out by his shadow, so that the final impact of the novel depends very little on the social background. Contrary to Shaw's pretensions regarding the relationship between the characters and their social background, the name of the hero could be changed from Cashel Byron to, say, George Foreman without making much difference and the scene shifted from Victorian England, where Cashel wins his fights only to enrich a loafer like Lord Worthington, to present-day America where a boxer lines his own pocket and fights because he loves to win and does not find getting rich an unpleasant experience.

Such a shift in focus brought about by the discrepancy

between Shaw's avowed purpose and his actual interest permits Cashel to break loose from the author's tight leash and throb with a life of his own. Escaping the constant scan of his creator Cashel chooses to be guided by his own vitality that offers him an alternative mode of life. He is the first of the many Shavian variations of the Siegfried figure, the first of Shaw's Protestant heroes in applying the doctrine of grace to genius and in believing in its unconscious, almost gratuitous, nature :

Now nothing can be what you might call artistically done, if it's done with an effort. If a thing cannot be done light and easy, steady and certain, let it not be done at all. Sounds strange, doesn't it ? But I'll tell you a strange thing. The more effort you make, the less effect you produce. A would-be artist is no artist at all... But in all professions any work that shows signs of labour, straining, yearning — an effort of any kind, is work beyond the man's strength that does it, and therefore not well done. ⁶¹

Had detractors like Gene Tunney not confused Cashel's folksy idiom with stupidity they would not have found the attraction of Cashel's vitalism for Lydia unconvincing. The nature of Cashel's genius suddenly dawns on Lydia as she stumbles by sheer chance upon a few lines of her father's favourite poem : " What would I give for a heart of flesh to

warm me through / Instead of this heart of stone ice-cold whatever I do !/ Hard and cold and small, of all hearts the worst of all."

These lines constituted her father's comments on his own cloistered life. Lydia, who has so far been modelling her own life on her father's, is startled into a new realization :

If such doubt as that haunted by father, it will haunt me, unless I settle what is to be my heart's business now and for ever. If it be possible for a child of mine to escape this curse, it must inherit its immunity from its father, and not from me —— from the man of impulse who never thinks, and not from the rationalizing woman, who cannot help thinking. Be it so.⁶²

It is tempting to seize upon Lydia's conversion as a vindication of Shaw's remark to the Abbess of Stanbrock that he was through with rationalism by the time he had finished *The Irrational Knot* but the significance of the conversion lies deeper for it implies a kind of confession by Shaw himself. Quick to locate the autobiographical element in the novel Dietrich comments :

In the other novels he had fixed the autobiographical element mostly upon a single male person, but in this novel he experiments with a dialectic. Besides being

themselves, the hero and the heroine are the body and mind of Bernard Shaw, as the young man was working out their relationship.⁶³

When Lydia feels sick " of the morbid introspection and ignorant self-consciousness of poets, novelists and the like "⁶⁴ she, and through her Shaw himself, directs the revulsion close to home. She knows that there can be a union, or at least a compromise, between intellect and intuition but intuition cannot unite with an ice-cold heart that shrinks and hardens and ultimately becomes a heart of stone. The difference between the life that Lydia rejects and the life she embraces is not merely the difference between her father's life and Cashel's, it is also the difference between Cashel's life and those of other Shavian heroes. What she rejects is more fundamental than the domination of intellect, for she rejects not only her cloistered intellectual life but also the spirit of Owen Jack and Sidney Trefusis besides, obviously, that of Conolly. Her rejection of 'morbid introspection' is an attempt by her creator to turn away from his own egoism which he found sickening. Unlike Lydia Shaw failed to break away permanently from the sickly self-consciousness that demanded the sacrifice of his animal spirits but *Cashel Byron's Profession* revealed for the first time that Shaw was not a dyed-in-the-wool Shavian, for the naked man in him attempted from time to time to peel off the mask of the

philosopher.

Cashel Byron is the rare Shavian hero who submits to love instead of conducting its chemical analysis to discover that it is a convenient term for a biological impulse accompanied by hormonal secretions. Being under no compulsion to be a superman he accepts his humanity for what it is worth.

It was possible for Shaw to introduce a severe internal criticism of his own tendency through *Cashel Byron's Profession* principally because unlike some other heroes of Shaw's novels, Cashel was not created as a Shavian persona. He was smuggled through, so to say, by taking advantage of the relaxation of the internal vigil. The perfect example of natural genius in the Shavian portrait-gallery, Cashel exposes the uncertain ground on which the other kind—the principal kind—of superman stands. In *Cashel* Shaw got more than he bargained for .

It was almost certain from the moment Cashel sprang into fictional existence that a hero of Cashel's kind would leave no successor, since such an event would threaten Shaw's sense of security. The man who had created Conolly and Jack was not going to disown them so easily. Cashel was allowed to be himself because he could dodge the censor's blue pencil. This he did rather successfully as neither the author nor the critics spotted this subversive act. They were content to talk in terms of complementarity.

The death of Lydia's father becomes a potent symbol since her father's way, embodied in the Shavian Lydia, had to die before she entered a new life. But such a thing was unlikely to happen again, because as an artist Shaw was what Keats had said about Wordsworth— an egotist sublime. "The morbid introspection...of poets, novelists, and their like" was his fate and the novel to follow would be a kind of recantation, for Sidney Trefusis is the antithesis of Cashel Byron.

v

An Unsocial Socialist was apparently the result of Shaw's conversion to Marxism. In his earlier novels his heroes had fired broadsides against society even before Shaw found his vantage ground of positive belief. In the second novel, Conolly could at least pretend that his opposition to society was the opposition of rationalism to unreason, but Conolly was very tentative in his faith, it never took the shape of a full-blown religion. Besides, Shaw's ambivalence towards Conolly indicated that he himself seemed far from convinced that Conolly was a sufficiently formidable receptacle of the author's impulses against society. In *Love Among the Artists* the inappropriateness of the protagonist as a Shavian war-horse was even more apparent because Jack forced Shaw into an embarrassing volte-face by changing the ground of opposition completely : the hero was

not in the service of life but of pure art and the ground between life and art was very unsatisfactorily mediated. In fact the conjunction of Conolly and Jack gives away the secret that the posture of opposition precedes any convincing basis of opposition.⁶⁵ Marxism stepped into the breach and Shaw at last found a comprehensive doctrine aimed at the destruction of existing social systems. What is more important is the fact that the doctrine could successfully externalise Shaw's subjective needs since it claimed to be a philosophy based on materialism and it propounded what it called Scientific Socialism : by siding with Marxism Shaw could side with necessity, with the inexorable laws governing society. Understandably, Shaw was fertile ground for a strong anti-establishment religion.

Shaw confessed that until September, 1882 , he "had been chiefly interested, as an atheist, in the conflict between science and religion".⁶⁶ It was Henry George who switched him over to economics, but from George he swiftly proceeded to Marx :

Marx was a revelation. His abstract economics, I discovered later, were wrong, but he rent the veil. He opened my eyes to the facts of history and civilization, gave me an entirely fresh conception of the universe, provided me with a purpose and a mission in life.⁶⁷

There is little doubt that when he began to write the novel in 1883, Shaw needed a mission, for he must have felt the hollowness of criticism that was merely negative. At that time he was ready — too ready, in fact — for a conversion. The antecedent circumstances would prompt one to infer that the intensity of the conversion was not necessarily proportional to the merit of the cause.

Ostensibly, the novel was intended to be " a gigantic grapple with the whole social problem." ⁶⁸ Sidney Trefusis, the son of a rich industrialist, marries Henrietta, the daughter of a rich capitalist. At Cambridge Trefusis begins to question the truth propagated by his teachers, becomes a Marxist and abandons his wife ; disguises himself as a labourer and takes up a cottage near Alton College. There he meets Agatha Wylie and her friends and briefly flirts with them. The disguised Trefusis persuades the Principal of the college to let him work on the tennis court. Incidentally Mr Jansenius, Henrietta's father , is Agatha's local guardian. He is summoned by the Principal to take Agatha away for breach of discipline. Hetty, who accompanies her father, recognises Trefusis in his strange disguise and Trefusis flees the place with her and takes her home, but he himself does not give up his cottage, nor the habit of flirting with the girls. Unaware of his actual identity, Agatha writes to Hetty about the affair. An infuriated Hetty braves the cold and rushes to her husband to demand an

explanation. He placates her and sends her home, where she dies shortly. On learning the news of his wife's death, Trefusis goes to London and bursts out against doctors and against the contrasting ways in which the rich and the poor die and admits that he is glad at his wife's death because it has set him free. He now pursues the career of a labour leader, preaches Marxism to capitalists and converts them with his silver-tongued oratory. Meanwhile a number of years have passed, and he meets Agatha again, gets engaged to her and marries Gertrude, who is in love with him, off to Erskine, a minor poet. The book comes to an abrupt end as Shaw admits to "breaking down in sheer ignorance and incapacity."⁶⁹

The novel was originally called *The Heartless Man*.⁷⁰ The title was ironical because Trefusis's apparent heartlessness is sought to be portrayed as vastly superior to the kindheartedness of the average bourgeois. Shaw later claimed that Trefusis anticipated Lenin, who was one of Shaw's heroes.⁷¹ By conventional standards Trefusis is not merely heartless but pathologically so and Henderson understandably calls the novel "a brutal burlesque, full of mad irresponsibility and cheap levity."⁷²

Owen Jack is temperamental and the rationality of Conolly is almost inhuman, but self-willed as they are, they are not a patch on Trefusis, who pretends that he is leaving his wife for his work. He says to Henrietta: "When you are

with me I can do nothing but make love to you. You bewitch me. When I escape from you for a moment it is only to groan remorsefully over the hours you have tempted me to waste and the energy you have futilized."⁷³

Though Shaw declared that he found Conolly insufferable even before he had finished *The Irrational Knot*,⁷⁴ Trefusis is a more insufferable avatar of Conolly. The latter's lack of regard for common human feelings forced his wife to leave him. Trefusis carries Conolly's behaviour to its logical limit : he abandons his wife on the plea that he is distracted by her presence. This underlying similarity between two such dissimilar men — Conolly being the portrait of the prophet as a thinking machine and Trefusis the portrait of a prophet as a clown — forces the attentive reader to suspect that Shaw is unconsciously revealing himself through his fiction, that his puritanic distrust of ordinariness has a harsh negative side that needs to be assuaged through radical denial. Though it will be gross oversimplification to overlook Shaw's ironical method and to equate Trefusis with Shaw, there is little doubt that overriding all Shavian ambiguities is the author's need to identify substantially with a brain child who is also the first prophet of a positive religion. Thus Shaw says :

The hero is remarkable because, without losing his pre-eminence as hero, he not only violates every canon

of propriety, like Tom Jones or Des Grieux, but every canon of sentiment as well. In an age when the average man's character is rotted at the core by the lust to be a true gentleman, the moral value of such an example as Trefusis is incalculable.⁷⁵

One problem that Shaw may have had while writing the novel was the problem of blending two different roles — the role of the clown and that of the sullen prophet. It is as a doomsday prophet that Trefusis faces society and in portraying him Shaw drew only on that part of Marx that resembled the Old Testament prophets. Yet the plot at Shaw's disposal was too trivial for such a grim project. Besides, in his fourth novel Shaw had drawn on his resource of humour with very satisfactory results. He must have realized that clowning could absorb some of the shock waves that the prophet would generate. By making the work double-faced and ambiguous the author could prevent its falling apart from the staggering discrepancy between cause and effect.

Even in its present form the novel has attracted the laughter of critics at the "ponderous economic edifice [erected] on a foundation of whipped cream."⁷⁶ As if anticipating the charge that his behaviour is not congruous with the objective situation, Trefusis reminds the readers that he is fully aware of it, but instead of being the slave of social norms he has decided to be the master. He is the privileged clown : privileged to write his own script and

act it out, privileged to laugh the laws of nature out of court : " With my egoism, my charlatantry, my tongue and my habit of having my own way, I am fit for no calling but that of saviour of mankind — just of the sort they like."⁷⁷

The charlatantry of an unemployed saviour of mankind does not square with Shaw's image of Lenin or the young writer's self-image. But while Trefusis likes to pose as a saviour he himself is not free from the suspicion that he is a destroyer. The sight of happy and carefree women-skating on the pond fills him with disgust and he blurts out to himself : " They remind me of Henrietta in a hundred ways. Would I laugh, now, if the whole sheet of ice were to burst into little bits under them ? "⁷⁸ He flinches with a shock from his thoughts as he adds with almost touching piety :

Make a note that wishes for the destruction of the human race, however rational and sincere are contrary to nature... Besides, what a precious fool I should be if I were working at an international association of creatures only fit for destruction !⁷⁹

Yet, the contrition is no less curious than the wish. He half admits that the death-wish for the human race is sincere and rational. What holds him back is the knowledge that it is against nature. The man who wishes to save mankind is evidently not on the same wavelength as nature.

Smilash's mummery could have been dismissed as the inability of a callow novelist to summon a neat plot resulting in the cramming of the novel with improbable and often irrelevant incidents in which the various activities of the hero fly in the face of plain common sense, had it not been for the fact that Trefusis is fully aware that his antics are an insult to people who tread the straight and narrow path of virtue. His rage against the existing world provokes Trefusis to construct a parallel world in which the actual one is parodied without any constraint of dignity.

The farce that Trefusis enacts is savage in intention and execution. All social reformers wish to change existing systems, but unlike most of them he is not even prepared to recognize the basic dignity of such systems — the dignity of existence. The grotesque and illogical manner of his antics — the manner in which he switches from vulgar dialect to the accent of the gentleman, his irresponsible lies, his improbable disguise — is calculated to give away his show in minutes even to the most gullible of persons, and it cannot be seriously argued that these are adopted to pass him off as Smilash ; had that been the case then Trefusis would have been no more than an idiot. His provocative brazenness is actually his challenge to the world, his eloquent comment on its code of conduct. By purposely derecognizing each one of the world's canons through his rudimentary and ill-acted drama, Trefusis

symbolically annihilates the world.

Even Marxism is in a sense parodied. He mouths Marx in and out of season and makes the symbolic violence of his action the midwife of his bizarre revolution. The first person to be annihilated by this exterminating angel in the disguise of a buffoon is his wife. He has no qualms in offering Hettie "lover-like speeches and compliments" when he has made up his mind to abandon her. Hettie "felt that he intended to get rid of her, and he knew that it was useless to try to hide that design from her."⁸⁰

There are few scenes in Shaw that can match the heartlessness of Trefusis's behaviour towards his wife. When he learns from Jansenius's telegram that Henrietta is dangerously ill he shows unmatched callousness as he folds the paper methodically and slips it into his pocket "as if quite done with it"⁸¹ Then he indulges in elaborate and fanciful speech patterns. The irony is unmistakable. Not shaken in the least, he breaks into artificial expansiveness and fancifully compares his heart to the skating rink. In the carriage he resorts to the comfort of the foot-warmer. Since he is undisturbed by anxiety and apprehension, the journey to London seems to him short. These reactions should be seen in their proper background. Henrietta's long train journey undertaken in the bitter cold weather when she learnt that her husband had been flirting with her cousin after having forsaken her caused her death. Without the

indelnicacy of soiling his hands with such a grimy substance as blood, Trefusis manages to kill his wife. It is an instance of clean, non-violent murder.

After Henrietta's death Trefusis can rationalise it by taking a macroscopic view that enables him to mock his father-in-law's grief :

Jansenius can bear death and misery with perfect fortitude when it is on a large scale and hidden in a back slum. But when it breaks into his own house , and attacks his property — he is just the man to lose his head and quarrel with me for keeping mine.⁸²

It is in passages like this that the suspicion that Shaw is making use of Marx to serve his own ends is hard to suppress. Trefusis's criticism of his father-in-law is perfectly just but completely out of place. Marx is used by him as a dodge to distract the attention of the reader from a grave deficiency in himself. And this diversionary tactic is something about which Shaw is ambivalent since his heroes find convenient alibi — Conolly finds it in rationality, Jack in art and Trefusis in socialism — for actions that are less than human.

Tefusis is the exterminating angel in the novel because it is clear that in a less pronounced form his feelings towards Henrietta resemble those of the Judgment Day angel operating from the background and wiping out man after man

in *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*.⁸³ To make him almost as thoroughgoing, Shaw makes Trefusis accept his wife's death as a desirable incident :

This is a fraud of which I have never even dreamed ...Tears and no sorrow ! Here I am crying ! growing(sic) maudlin ! Whilst I am glad that she is gone and I free. I have the mechanism of grief in me somewhere ; it begins to turn at sight of her, though I have no sorrow; just as she used to start the mechanism of passion when I had no love....I hope the mechanism of grief will flag and stop in its spinning as soon as the other used to .It is stopping already, I think. What a mockery ! Whilst it lasts I suppose I am really sorry. And yet,would I restore her to life if I could ? Perhaps so; I am therefore thankful that I cannot.⁸⁴

Inspite of his high mission the self-appointed saviour of mankind finds the average human being unredeemable.The mason who lost his job for working on Henrietta's tombstone and had to be supported financially by Trefusis saves sufficiently to become an employer only to start exploiting other workmen.He finally leaves the Association.⁸⁵ In him we have a cameo of Shaw's Everyman. Predictably, therefore, a member of the group that Trefusis leads to protest against the encroachment of the people's right to thoroughfare by Sir Charles Branden turns coat and speaks of his duty to Sir

Charles. The ordinary man in Shaw's works, even at such an early date, is the cause of his despair. Trefusis sharply turns on the renegade and calls him a cur. When the man objects Trefusis shoots back :

I am a rich man— one of your masters, and privileged to call you what I please. You are a grovelling famine-broken slave. Now go and seek redress against me from the law. I can buy law enough to ruin you for less money than it would cost me to shoot deer in Scotland or vermin here. ^{B6}

The invective is curiously double-edged. If it delineates accurately the relationship between the exploiter and the exploited in a grossly inegalitarian society, it also snidely turns Marx upside down in justifying the relationship, for Trefusis firmly believes that "slaves must be driven, and this fellow is a slave to the marrow."^{B7} This is how Shaw's hero generally feels towards the very people he wishes to save. Trefusis himself gives a poor account of his flock to Sir Charles and Erskine :

This is the balance sheet of an attempt I made some years ago to carry out the ideas of an International Association of labourers— commonly known as the International— or union of all workmen throughout the world in defence of the interests of labour. You see the result. Expenditure, four thousand five hundred

pounds. Subscriptions received from working men twenty-two pounds seven and ten pence halfpenny - The British workmen showed their ...[gratitude] by accusing me of making a good thing out of the Association for my own pocket, and by mobbing and stoning me twice. ⁸⁸

It is in passages like this that one realizes how inauthentic Shaw's Marxism was. In his hands it became a convenient stick to beat society with. Whereas the proletariat was to Marx the pivot of radical social change, to Shaw it was a despicable entity. He alternated between wishing its extermination and its transformation. ⁸⁹ Sidney Trefusis's urge to save these people springs more from the lure of the role of the saviour than the conviction that they need to be saved. His half-suppressed wish to wipe out the whole lot breaks out into the open in the form of an ill-masked hostility towards the very people whose cause he, as a socialist, is ostensibly championing. After all "slaves must be driven" is not a far cry from "curs must be shot", especially when the "slave" has already been addressed as a cur. Thus Trefusis's target-practice at Sallust House becomes a very obvious and crude example of symbolic execution : people made of marble stand in for actual men. Their "execution", apart from being Trefusis's war against tradition (in breaking statues he literally becomes an iconoclast), seems to be the reply to his own despair : "all rotten to the bone, oh, civilisation ! civilisation !

civilisation !" ⁹⁰

What Trefusis is opposed to is not this or that aspect of society, but the whole of society . This world, he says, has been made to suit his father, the symbol of exploitative capitalism :

Looking round at our buildings, our statues, our pictures, our newspapers, our domestic interiors, our books, our vehicles, our morals, our manners, our statutes, and our religion, I see his hand everywhere, for they were all made or modified to please him. ⁹¹

In his total rejection of the values of society Trefusis resembles not only the other heroes of Shaw's novels, but Shaw himself. A few years after he had finished the novel, Shaw wrote :

I fully admit and vehemently urge that the state at present is simply a huge machine for robbing and slave-driving the poor by brute force. You may... think that the policeman at the corner is the guardian of law and order. But the primary function of the policeman ...is that you do not lie down to sleep in this country without paying an idler for the privilege...Your soldier, ostensibly heroic and patriotic defender of his country, is really an unfortunate man driven by destitution to offer himself as food for powder for the sake of regular ration, shelter and clothing...And his

primary function is to come to the rescue of the policeman when the latter is overpowered...Every institution, as Bakounine saw, religious, political, financial, judicial so on, is corrupted by the fact that the men in it either belong to the propertied class themselves or must sell themselves to it in order to live.⁹²

One is led to suspect that the gross imperfection of the world came as a boon to Trefusis and to Shaw for it is highly probable that if the particular situations were wholly different, Trefusis would have to think of an entirely new set of sitting ducks.⁹³

The comprehensive hostility to civilization is probably related to the narcissism of the protagonist as well as that of the author. The strain of narcissism is quite strong in most major characters in Shaw's novels : one has only to remember that Aurelie does not find anyone worth loving except herself and her doll, Jack makes his art an extension of his own life and a substitute for the world outside him and reverses the direction of his affection by drawing it back into himself through the enclosed world of art, Conolly's self-esteem prevents him from loving anyone else. Narcissism is a feature not only of Shaw's fictional characters, but also of himself. As Daniel Dervin has pointed out:

...Shavian narcissism is the opposite of Keat's (sic) negative capability, which enters emphatically into the objective world ; it is also antithetical to the strategy of great modern writers who, as Stephen Spender has pointed out, suffer the modern world to work on them forging their sensibilities. Shaw went to work on the world. He drew everything into himself.⁹⁴

Trefusis— like Conolly, Jack and Aurelie— is so enamoured of himself that he cannot find anything valuable or lovable outside himself . But Shaw's narcissism is a secondary phenomenon, an attempt to erase the memory of withheld love by questioning the value of love. It is useful to remember that Conolly was speaking also for his creator when he said that the unlovable child had to be totally self-sufficient. Since in reality it is born of anxiety, such narcissism needs to be reassured by an exaggerated display of strength. Being afraid to love, Trefusis seeks reassurance in power. Thus he uses Sir Charles and Erskine to further his political aims, uses Henrietta to satisfy his momentary fancy, uses Agatha to test the strength of his will, uses Jane's silliness as a diversion, uses Gertrude to teach her a lesson in manners. Quite characteristically, when he learns that Gertrude loves him he makes her marry Erskine, and himself marries Agatha when he is satisfied that she does not love him.⁹⁵

The intimate kinship between Trefusis and Shaw is

established most clearly in a letter of Alice Lockett. At the time of writing *An Unsocial Socialist* Shaw was having an *affaire de coeur* with Alice. The two quarrelled incessantly and the affair came to an abrupt end. Alice accused Shaw of paining her and deriving pleasure from such behaviour, but she was sharp enough to grasp the fact that such behaviour stemmed from weakness and said that "in spite of your cleverness I cannot help despising you."⁹⁶ In other words Alice accused Shaw of behaving exactly like Trefusis. In fact Agatha Wylie echoes Alice when she says to Trefusis : "you have a habit of bullying women who are weak enough to fear you."⁹⁷

Trefusis savours the pleasure of holding sway over a weakling like Henrietta, but if his creator's behaviour occasionally matched his own, at other times it was close to that of Henrietta herself. "Am I a dancing bear or a learned pig," he asked indignantly, "that I should be insulted thus ?"⁹⁸ In another letter Shaw raved like Trefusis's wife : "I will be your slave no longer : you used me vilely when we met before, and you disappointed me horribly tonight."⁹⁹

In the novel Trefusis utters the familiar rhetoric of the Shavian superman. After leaving Henrietta, he writes to her :

I am afraid that I cannot give you satisfactory and intelligible reasons for this step. You are a beautiful and luxurious creature : life is to you full and

complete only when it is a carnival of love. My case is just the reverse... Before a caress has had time to cool, a strenuous revulsion seizes me; I long to return to my old lonely ascetic hermit life; to my dry book.⁹. Love cannot keep possession of me : all my strongest powers rise up against it and will not endure it. 100

Years later the same words acquire a religious overtone. The Life Force teaches Juan that in hell " there is nothing but love and beauty."¹⁰¹ However, this meaning changes completely in the context of Shaw's letter to Alice , " There is nothing human and real that is not pleased by the affection even of a dog or slave, much less of an equal."¹⁰²

The gap between Shaw's sincere attitude to love and Trefusis's heartless tomfoolery is bridged by Shaw's letter to Alice : " If I had your heart, I know I should break it, and yet I wish I had it. Is not this monstrous ? "¹⁰³

On the whole Shaw's letters to Alice, written at a time when he was writing the novel, are more successful than the novel in revealing the connection between his narcissism and his sadism, between superhumanity and inhumanity. But while the link can be reestablished in the novel with the help of Shaw's letters, it becomes overlaid with religious terminology in the plays. The reader who comes to the novel through Shaw's plays finds in Trefusis the makings of a true servant of the Life Force, the reader who arrives to the novel through the life of the author sees in him an actor

trying to build up the role of the prophet on a foundation of weakness.¹⁰⁴

An *Unsocial Socialist* may be a slight work of art, but it is an invaluable guide to the plays, because it brings together the major themes of a number of Shaw's most important plays and reveals the true relationship between these themes in a manner the plays themselves cannot reveal as they tend to hide these relationships behind a screen of philosophy. We shall see that plays as different from one another as *The Philanderer*, *Candida*, *Man and Superman*, *Pygmalion*, *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* and parts of *Back to Methuselah* are built on the material of *An Unsocial Socialist*. In various degrees these plays deal with the themes of love and withdrawal, narcissism and attachment to a person other than one's own self, the sadistic pleasure of the hero or the heroine in paining the person who is in love with him or her and the internal criticism of such sadism, the messianic hostility to ordinary human experience and the human challenge to such messianism .

Quite early in his career Shaw discovered through Agatha Wylie that the clown reserves his vision of despair for his private self, hiding it diligently from the rest of the world:

Agatha, prompt to ridicule sentimentality in her companions, and gifted with the infectious spirit of farce, secretly turned for imaginative luxury to

visions of despair and death and often endured the mortification of the successful clown who believes, whilst the public roar with laughter at him, that he was born a tragedian. There was much in her nature, she felt, that did not find expression in her popular representation of the soldier in the chimney. 105

This unexpected flash of light, the inclusion of the definite article to make the reference applicable not only to Agatha but to all clowns —including the one who conceived Agatha and Trefusis —illuminates for a moment the heart of the Shavian darkness. For there was much in Trefusis— and Shaw— that did not find expression in *An Unsocial Socialist*. The art of the greater clown, being richer in texture and more intricate in design than Agatha's, did not have to be split into two parts— the extravaganza of the soldier in the chimney and the author's private despair. He could fuse the two split visions. A second look at the soldier emerging from Shaw's chimney would reveal a scarred and inscrutable face .

Chapter 3 : Notes and References

1. *Immaturity*. pp. xxxix-xl.
2. *Ibid.*, p. xliv.
3. *Ibid* , p. 128.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
5. *Ibid* .,p. xliv.
6. *Ibid.*, p. xliii.
7. This topic is taken up for detailed discussion in the concluding section of my study.
8. *Immaturity*. p. xx.
9. For an identical view on the relationship between art and reality see Oscar Wilde," The Decay of Lying ",*The Works of Oscar Wilde*, pp. 825-843.
10. *The Irrational Knot*, p.xvi.
11. *Ibid.*, p.xix.
12. *Ibid.*, p.xviii.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p.70.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.
17. *Ibid.*, p.95.
18. *Ibid.*, p.189.
19. *Ibid.*, p.194.
20. *Ibid.*, p.230.

21. Ibid., p. 234.
22. Shaw wrote to Dame Laurentia McLachlan : " I exhausted rationalism when I got to the end of my second novel at the age of 24, and should have come to a dead stop if I had not proceeded to purely mystical assumptions." *Collected Letters*, vol. III, p. 896.
23. *Immaturity*, pp. xliii — xliv.
24. *The Irrational Knot*, p. 252.
25. Ibid., p. 253.
26. *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* is taken up for discussion in the last chapter.
27. When Shaw later criticized Conolly's ethos he overlooked the fact that Conolly comes to the same conclusion about life with the help of reason as Juan does with his religious passion. The clue is given in a passage , deleted from the Standard Edition , in which Conolly speaks of himself as a philosopher and points to the irreconciliability between the lover and the philosopher, thus anticipating Juan. See *Selected Novels of G. Bernard Shaw*. p. 317.
28. *Love Among the Artists*, p. 4.
29. Ibid., p. 8.
30. Ibid., p. 17.
31. Elsie B.Adams's *Bernard Shaw and the Aesthetes* is the most exhaustive study of Shaw's aesthetics. The relationship between art and rebellion in Shaw is taken up for discussion

in the concluding chapter.

32. Ibid., p. 20.

33. Ibid., p. 201.

34. Ibid., p. 279.

35. Ibid., p. 46.

36. Ibid., p. 179.

37. Ibid., p. 285. This combination of egoism and high civic sense becomes, as we shall see, the hallmark of Shaw's superman. Even Aurelie's hidden animosity towards her mother is a common Shavian feature. It is significant that in four of the five novels of an author still in his twenties, an age when the experiences of boyhood were still fresh in his memory, parents and children are linked to each other by a feeling which is close to hatred. In *The Irrational Knot* it is Elinor who expresses the feeling, in *Love Among the Artists* it is left to Aurelie's mother to betray her emotion, in *Cashel Byron's Profession* both mother and son reveal their feelings though perhaps Cashel is a little more liberal in doing so. In *An Unsocial Socialist* Trefusis frankly sees his father as a scoundrel. Shaw's own childhood, discussed in the previous chapter, undoubtedly played an important part in shaping the responses of the characters of his novels. I believe that the hostility of Shaw's characters to their environment is to a large extent the spillover of Shaw's animosity against his parents. His distrust of society was largely a displacement of his

attitude to the primary symbols of authority in his life.

38. *Love Among the Artists*, p. 206.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

45. His conversion to socialism came about in 1882 after he had listened to Henry George and read Karl Marx. See Hesketh Pearson, *Bernard Shaw : His Life and Personality*, p. 68.

46. In his more mature years Shaw's attitude to art was unambiguously Puritanical. In every major critical pronouncement Shaw insisted that the justification of art lay in its impact on life. The Epistle Dedicatory of *Man and Superman* is fairly representative of his views. The topic has been taken up separately in the last chapter and hence detailed discussion has been avoided here.

47. *Love Among the Artists*, p. 328.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

49. The rejection of art by the Life Force constitutes the theme of "As Far as Thought Can Reach", the last part of *Back to Methuselah*.

50. *Cashel Byron's Profession*, p. v.

51. Homer Woodbridge, *George Bernard Shaw, Creative Artist*, p. 15.

52. Irvine says that besides retaining a lifelong interest in boxing Shaw was in his time "a very passable boxer". William Irvine, *The Universe of G.B.S.*, p. 30.
53. *Cashel Byron's Profession*, p. 241.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
55. Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
56. "Mr Bernard Shaw's Works of Fiction Reviewed by Himself", *Novel Review* 33 (1892) : 238.
57. Robert Hogan. "The Novels of Bernard Shaw", *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920* 8 (1965) : 63-114.
58. *Cashel Byron's Profession*, p. xi.
59. *Ibid.*, p. xix.
60. Gene Tunney, the champion boxer, declined the offer to play Cashel Byron on the screen because according to him Shaw "understands neither the temperament nor the psychology of the professional boxer, with the result that Byron is made to appear no more than a blundering vulgarian. He scarcely is a character to excite the admiration of anyone and that the girl in the book, reared in an atmosphere of culture and refinement, should fall in love with a man whose only appeal was a magnificent body, is absurd." Quoted by Arthur Zeiger, "Introduction," *Selected Novels of G. Bernard Shaw*, p. ix.
61. *Cashel Byron's Profession*, pp. 91-92.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
63. R.F. Dietrich, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young*

Superman, p. 152. I disagree with Dietrich's view that Shaw was working at a union of the two modes represented by the hero and the heroine. In *Cashel Byron's Profession* there is no such union unless the domination of one by the other is described as union.

64. *Cashel Byron's Profession*, p. 221.

65. In his study of Shaw's non-dramatic prose Richard Ohmann reaches similar conclusions. Ohmann concentrates on Shaw's prose-style, not on his handling of themes in his novels and plays. The study of Shaw's fiction, however, bears out his conclusion that Shaw thinks himself besieged by enemies and displays symptoms of paranoia. See Richard Ohmann, *Shaw: the style and the Man*. p. 82, p. 164.

66. Hesketh Pearson, *Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality*, p. 68.

67. Ibid.

68. Archibald Henderson, *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century*, p. 106.

69. Ibid., p.107.

70. R.F. Rattray, *Bernard Shaw: a Chronicle* p. 45.

71. Blanche Patch, *Thirty years with G. B. S.*, p. 175.

72. Henderson, op. Cit., p. 107.

73. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 77.

74. "Mr Bernard Shaw's Works of Fiction Reviewed by Himself". *Novel Review* 33 (1892) : 239.

75. Stanley Weintraub (ed.), *Shaw: an Autobiography*

1056-1078, p. 100.

76. Stanley Weintraub, "Introduction" , *An Unfinished Novel* , p. 12.

77. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 104.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

83. I have tried to show in the following chapters that Shaw's attitude to the victims of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin cannot be understood if it is seen as the result of his ignorance of the real nature of these regimes. Just as his attitude to love in plays such as *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah* can be understood better if we go behind his philosophy of Creative Evolution to the works that precede the philosophy, so his response to Hitler or Stalin can be understood only if we pay sufficient attention to the fact that Trefusis was an important part of Shaw to the end of his life .

84. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 128.

85. Though an admirer of Tolstoy Shaw never had the Russian's faith in the common man. He wrote : "In England, at least, one cannot help believing that if Tolstoy were reincarnated as a peasant he would find that the proletarian morality in which he has so much faith is

nothing but the morality of his own class, modified, mostly for the worse, by ignorance, drudgery, insufficient food, and bad sanitary conditions of all kinds." *Pen Portraits and Reviews*, pp. 256-57.

86. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 148.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 206 It was not Trefusis but Shaw who said that adult suffrage kills democracy. *Everydody's Political Whast's What ?*, p. 40.

89. In 1928 Shaw wrote : "For my part I hate the poor and look forward to their extermination." *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, p. 456. In the following chapters I have shown that such remarks became more frequent in Shaw's old age.

90. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 180.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

92. *The Impossibilities of Anarchism*, pp. 24-25.

93. R.F. Dietrich, normally a reliable critic, is completely off the mark when he remarks that Trefusis is religiously motivated by Karl Marx and his blend of common sense and good humour qualifies his revolutionary zeal just enough to avoid fanaticism." R.F. Dietrich, *The Portrait of the Artist as a young Superman*, p. 152. o

From time to time Trefusis questions his own motives, but such honesty does not qualify his opposition to the world, it only makes him more conscious of his role as an

actor. He obviously relishes, as his relationship with his wife and the other girls shows, the art of histrionics.

94. Daniel Dervin, *Bernard Shaw : a Psychological Study*, p. 73.

95. Interestingly, in *The Philanderer* Grace Tranfield behaves exactly like Trefusis when she refuses to marry Charteris because she loves him . In *You Never can Tell* Gloria is filled with shame when it becomes clear to her that she is in love with Valentine . At the end of *Candida* we learn that the secret of Candida's success as a wife is that she does not love her husband.

96. *Collected Letters*, vol. I, p. 66.

97. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 221.

98. *Collected Letters*, vol. I, p. 72.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

100. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

101. CP II, p. 663.

102. *Collected Letters*, vol. I, p. 66.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

104. Though the main characters in Shaw's novels are Shavian masks Trefusis is unique because he represents not a particular aspect of Shaw's life like Smith, Conolly or Jack, but the author's act of self-definition through fiction. While the other characters are more or less identified with their roles, Trefusis stands outside the various roles he plays. In this he is more of an actor than

a character. As is obvious from his sarcastic comments on his own charlatantry, he suffers occasionally from bad faith and is entitled to say, as Shaw said himself, that his roles are "about as real as a pantomime ostrich:" *Pen Portraits and reviews*, p. 73. Shaw himself realises that as an actor Trefusis overplays his part because in Chapter XVII the author tries to play down Trefusis's culpability by saying that he was insincere in love because he could not bring himself to believe that he could inspire love in women. This, I think, is not only Trefusis's confession but also Shaw's for it reveals the truth that Shaw's narcissism is intimately connected with his anxiety and sense of insecurity, as Trefusis is certainly not the only or the last Shavian hero to reject love out of fear.

105. *An Unsocial Socialist*, p. 44.