



I don't believe in circumstances.

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look

and then, make them.

and then, make them.

ONE DAY, GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Edited by Burçin Erol

IRISH WRITERS SERIES 6

One Day, George Bernard Shaw

Edited by Burçin Erol

Department of English Language and Literature
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3

**“I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the
[Superman]”: Quest for the Superman in
Bernard Shaw’s *Man and Superman* and *Back
to Methuselah***

Sıla Şenlen Güvenç

Drama of discussion can be defined as a dialectical drama of ideas, in which the main focus is on discussion and debate rather than on other essential elements of a play such as plot, action, or character. This type of drama promotes a “more philosophical level of thinking and a tendency toward a free and even fantastic form” (Morgan 34). One of the most distinguishing aspects of Shavian drama is his use of drama as a platform to discuss his ideas on society, politics, religion, education, philosophy, etc. in order to achieve social reform. As pointed out by Yüksel, Shaw challenges Victorian ‘mediocrity’ predominant in the arts as well as behaviour (Yüksel ‘Nükteli Söyleşim’den ‘Tartışma Komedisine’ 109). As a Fabian, he believed that all great drama should teach, which is emphasized in his preface to *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*: “fine art is the subtlest, the most seductive, the most effective instrument of moral propagandism in the world” (33), and his name was inseparably associated with the idea of the thesis play, or drama of discussion (Styan 54). Some critics go as far as claiming that Shaw’s plays are mere dialogues instead of plays due to the vast amount of discussion contained within his works, but to such complaints Shaw replied “Now it is quite true that my plays are all talk, just as Raphael’s

pictures are all paint, Michael Angelo's statues all marble, Beethoven's symphonies all noise" (qtd. in Vogt 24). This paper will deal with two of Shaw's discussion plays, mainly *Man and Superman* (1903) called a "comedy and philosophy", and to a lesser extent *Back to Methuselah* (1918-20) termed as "[a] Metabiological Pentateuch" in order to trace the playwright's understanding of the 'Superman' and linked concepts such as the 'Life Force' and 'Creative Evolution'.

The concept of 'Superman' is as old as the world, and has existed for hundreds of centuries. Humanity, not regarding man as the "crowning achievement of creation" has always lived with the thought that there are human beings who are much higher, stronger, more complex, miraculous, than ordinary man (Ouspensky 113). Ancient sayings and legends are full of different images of the Superman such as heroes of myths, fairy tales and epic songs, demi-gods, prophets, messiahs and saints of all religions. Even in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IX in which Satan persuades Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, forbidden to them, he seems to be referring to a higher being:

His worshippers; he [God] knows that in the day
Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Opened and cleared, **and ye shall be as Gods**, [*my emphasis*]
Knowing both Good and Evil as they know. (ll.705-709)

This is, of course, a direct invitation to disobey God, and to surpass themselves in order to become something higher. Since such beings have always existed, Ouspensky points out that Nietzsche's philosophy about the Superman is not novel:

It is only the opaque and sterilized thought of the last centuries of European culture which has lost touch with the idea of superman and put as its aim *man* as he is, as he always was and always will be. And in this comparatively short period of time, European thought has so thoroughly forgotten the idea of superman that, when Nietzsche threw out this idea to the West, it appeared new, original and unexpected. In reality this idea has existed from the very beginning of human thought known to us. (114)

Nevertheless, in modern thought the term 'Übermensch' or 'Overman' is popularly associated with Nietzsche's ideas expressed especially in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Nietzsche accepts the development Hypothesis as an explanation of the origin of species, but he does not consider man as the highest possible being which evolution could arrive at. Instead, for Nietzsche, "Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman" (5) and his ideal should be to surpass himself and reach Superman. In terms of the status of Superman, Zarathustra says "What is ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall Man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame" (3). But of course, there are no absolute values as 'good' or 'evil' for Nietzsche, but instead a war of moral principles between the morality of the powerful class called 'master-morality' and the subordinate class called 'slave-morality'. Nietzsche feared that the twentieth-century, defined by industrialization, nationalism and mass democracy, would be an age of slave morality, where the masses would follow anyone providing them with employment, security, and a cause. Thus, in order to avoid this, Zarathustra leaves his disciples at the end of the book to find their own truth¹.

Shaw's Superman is not Nietzsche's 'Superman', who is a god-man free of superego, but rather "a general raising of human character through the deliberate cultivation and endowment of democratic virtue without consideration of property or class" (Shaw qtd. in Bloom 6), or closer to "Plato's philosopher king"² as indicated by Grene in his article "Comedy and Dialectic" (61). Although Shaw's 'Superman' is also regarded as the product of evolution, it is not necessarily Darwinian Evolution. According to Shaw, animals / superior beings survive or evolve not by virtue of their physical force, but their superior intelligence and superior brain. It is in line with Bergson's theory of 'Creative Evolution', which suggests that evolution is motivated by 'élan vital', a basic force like gravity or electromagnetism, a vital impulse (Grene). Shaw then assimilated the Life Force to the Holy Ghost, which he associated with Hegel's 'Weltgeist' or 'World Mind' (Valency 186). As stated in his preface to *Back to Methuselah*, he believes that Creative Evolution is "unmistakeably the religion of the twentieth century" (57). For Shaw, as Yüksel expresses, life aims to further its own evolution by

¹Don Cupitt. "Sea of Faith 6" on Nietzsche and Wittgenstein.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzJudGxN3xE>

² See. Plato. *Republic*. Trans. G.M.A. Grube. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992.

overcoming the limitations of matter and by acquisition of new powers of the mind, which can be obtained through human will ("Defence of Intelligence" 126-7). This resembles Schopenhauer's 'Wille', except that "it is intelligent rather than blind" (Brustein qtd. in Yüksel "Defence of Intelligence" 127). And one of the important matters apparently changeable, according to Shaw, is the duration of individual life: "Weismann, a very clever and suggestive biologist who was unhappily stultified by Neo-Darwinism, pointed out that as certain living organisms, though they multiply by splitting into living halves, never die, death is neither natural nor inevitable" ("Preface" *Back to Methuselah* 14). As for Grene, "Shaw's Life Force may have been based on "Schopenhauer's *World Will*, but its positive evolutionary character was shaped by Samuel Butler, and its ultimate goal was the Nietzschean superman" (56). He points out that there is no direct connection between the idea of the Life Force as the motive power of sexual attraction, the duel of the sexes, and the concept of the Superman, and yet "Shaw welds them into a single ideological pattern" (63).

The first play, *Man and Superman* deals with the concept of Superman and the Life Force. It is composed of an Epistle Dedicatory, a 'frame' romantic comedy of manners in which Ann pursues Tanner, and a centre play -mutual dream of Tanner and Mendoza in the form of a dream symposium in Hell, which is generally staged separately. This is followed by *The Revolutionist's Handbook* written by Tanner "Member of the Idle Rich Class" -a guidebook to Shaw's philosophy discussed in the play. According to the *Handbook*, a revolutionist is someone who "desires to discard the existing social order and try another" (213). It is claimed that the cry for the Superman did not begin or will end with Nietzsche, underlining the vital question "what kind of person is this Superman to be?" (216). Although a clear definition is not made, Supermen are those who have helped Life in its struggle upwards:

Until there is an England in which every man is a Cromwell, a France in which every man is a Napoleon, a Rome in which every man is Caesar, a Germany in which every man is a Luther plus a Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the pyramid of Cheops. The production of such nations is the only real change possible to us. (224-5)

As indicated above, what is needed is not a 'Superman' but rather a "democracy of supermen" (228), which can only be realized by changing the nature of man. So the solution does not only lie in creating a 'Superman' leader, but in creating a new race of higher men, or 'Supermen'. Unless such a mass change takes place, the few supermen that appear will remain isolated:

[...] unless we are replaced by a more highly evolved animal –in short, by the Superman- the world must remain a den of dangerous animals among whom our few accidental supermen, our Shakespeares, Goethes, Shelleys, and their like, must live as precariously as lion tamers do, taking the humour of their situation, and the dignity of their superiority, as a set-off to the horrors of the one and the loneliness of the other. (242)

In comparison to a 'Sham Superman', who has gained power by living and obeying conventional rules, the real Superman will "snap his superfingers at all Man's present trumpery ideals of right, duty, honor, justice, religion, even decency, and accept moral obligations beyond present human endurance" (225). This is where Shaw and Nietzsche seem to differ and is probably why he considered Nietzsche as a devil's advocate of the modern type who rejected duty, morality, law and altruism.

In the frame of romantic comedy in *Man and Superman*, the unconventional intellectual Tanner -author of *The Revolutionist's Handbook*- and the conventional Ramsden become the joint guardians of Ann Whitefield after her father's death. Although Ann appears to be very obedient on the surface, even encouraging the conventional Octavius' love for her, she is an agent of the 'Life Force' in pursuit of Tanner, her prey, symbolizing the 'Superman'. The character of Tanner is generally considered to be a Shavian self-portrait. Although Shaw told one of the biographers, Hesketh Pearson, that Tanner was modelled on the British revolutionary socialist H. M. Hyndman, he did not object when "Granville Barker, in creating the role of Tanner, was made up in such a way as to give him a distinctly Shavian appearance, and in his late autobiographical writings he explicitly acknowledges the link between his 1901 self and the character of Tanner" (Gibbs 13). And the metaphysical quality of the sexual relationship between Tanner and Ann brings to mind "The Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes" in Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, but in Schopenhauer

it is "the will of the man which meets the intellect of the women, while in *Superman* it is the opposite, the woman exercises her own will and the life forces, and the man of intellect attempts to escape" (Greene 56). In this respect, Tanner continuously compares Ann to various predatory animals such as a "lioness", "tiger", "bear" and "boa-constrictor" (*Man and Superman* 60-79) while claiming that "No woman shall ever enslave me in that way (76). Thus, Tanner is shocked on finding out, from his intellectual chauffeur³, Straker, that he himself is Ann's 'marked' victim:

Tanner: Let me remind you that Voltaire said that what was too silly to be said could be sung.

Straker: It wasn't Voltaire: it was Bow Mar Shay.

Tanner: I stand corrected: Beaumarchais of course [...] Enry, why do you think that my friend [Octavius] has no chance with Miss Whitefield?

Straker: Cause she's after summon else.

Tanner: Bosh! Who else?

Straker: You

Tanner: Me!!! [...]

Tanner [*wildly appealing to the heavens*]: Then I- I am the bee, the spider, the marked down victim, the destined prey. (106-7)

Following this realization, Tanner escapes to Biskra with Straker, but falls to the trap set up by a group of bandits. After they all fall asleep, Tanner and Mendoza, leader of the bandits, have a mutual dream –composing the centre play- in which the philosophy of the play –the Life Force and the Superman- is discussed.

³ Tanner helplessly watches Straker, his chauffeur, fixing the car. Straker is an intellectual engineer educated at the Polytechnic, who takes great pride in his social class. On being asked to comment on Oxford University, Straker says "[t]hey teach you to be a gentleman there. In the Polytechnic they teach you to be an engineer or such like" (88). Furthermore, when Octavius indicates that he believes "most intensely in the dignity of labor", Straker mocks him: "That's because you never done any, Mr Robinson. My business is to do away with labor. Youll get more out of me and a machine than you will out of twenty laborers" (88-9). Tanner announces that Straker is the 'New Man'. Straker, who has been trained in the field of engineering has the potential to play an important role in the progress of civilization while the bourgeoisie is full of gentlemen who are not trained to work in any particular field.

In this act entitled "Juan in Hell" in the form of a symposium in Hell, the main characters in the frame play appear in different forms: Ann as Dona Ana, Mendoza as the Devil, Ramsden and Octavius as the Statue of Don Gonzalo, and Tanner as Shaw's Don Juan, who has "given up love in disgust after a career as a womanizer, and become an austere contemplative philosopher and social reformer" (49). As stated in the "Epistle Dedicatory" addressed to Arthur Bingham Walkley, dramatic critic for the *Times*, Shaw has chosen the character Don Juan because he considers him to be a rebel just like Superman:

Philosophically, Don Juan is a man who, though gifted enough to be exceptionally capable of distinguishing between good and evil, follows his own instincts without regard to the common, stature, or canon law; and therefore, whilst gaining the ardent sympathy of our rebellious instincts [...] finds himself in mortal conflict with existing institutions, and defends himself by fraud and force as unscrupulously as a farmer defends his crops by the same means against vermin. (10)

Shaw's Hell is not a typical hell where sinners suffer, it is instead an empty space with "Omnipresent nothing, No sky, no peaks, no light, no sound, no time, nor space, utter void" (123). In this Act, the Statue announces his decision to leave Heaven to become a permanent resident in Hell, and the Devil invites Juan to take the vacant place in Heaven. The dramatic question to be resolved is whether Juan will take the position in Heaven or not. Juan, defining Hell as the "home of the unreal and of the seekers for happiness" as opposed to Heaven "the home of the masters of reality, and earth "the home of the slaves of reality," is inclined to go to Heaven in order to help Life in its struggle upwards:

In the Heaven I seek, no other joy! [besides contemplation] But there is the work of helping Life in its struggle upward. Think of how it wastes and scatters itself, how it raises up obstacles to itself and destroys itself in its ignorance and blindness. It needs a brain, this irresistible force, lest in its ignorance it should resist itself. What a piece of work is man! Says the poet [Shakespeare]. Yes; but what a blunderer! Here is the highest miracle of organization yet attained by life, the most intensely alive thing that exists, the most

I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the [Superman]

conscious of all the organisms; and yet, how wretched
are his brains! (141)

The Devil argues that the power governing earth is not the power of Life but of Death, for man measures his strength by his destructiveness as inventor:

This marvellous force of Life of which you boast is a force of Death: man measures his strength by his destructiveness. What is his religion? An excuse for hating me. What is his law? An excuse for hanging you. What is his morality? Gentility! An excuse for consuming without producing. What is his art? An excuse for gloating over pictures of slaughter. What are his politics? Either the worship of a despot because a despot can kill, or parliamentary cock-fighting. [...] Man, the inventor of the rack, the stake, the gallows, the electric chair; of sword and gun and poison gas: above all, of justice, duty, patriotism, and all the other isms by which even those who are clever enough to be humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all the destroyers. (143)

Although Juan admits that Man has a tendency to violence, he advocates that the Life Force inspires man to surpass himself, with emphasis on intellect rather than physical strength by alluding to Lamarck's theory about developing new organs to survive:

Just as life, after ages of struggle, evolved that bodily organ the eye, so that the living organism could see where it was going [...] so it is evolving today a mind's eye that shall see, not the physical world, but the purpose of Life, and thereby enable the individual to work for that purpose. [...] Even as it is, only one sort of man has ever been happy, has ever been universally respected among all the conflicts of interests and illusions. (151)

Thus, Juan is in search for a different kind of man, not doctors, professors, politicians: "I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the philosophical man: who seeks in contemplation to discover the means of fulfilling that will, and in action to do that will by the so-discovered means" (151). This "philosophical man" is also Shaw's "Superman," defined by intellect rather than any physical trait:

Juan: [...] Were I not possessed with a purpose beyond my own I had better be a ploughman than a philosopher; for the ploughman lives as long as the philosopher, eats more, sleeps better, and rejoices in the wife of his bosom with less misgiving. This is because the philosopher is in the grip of the Life Force. This Life Force says to him 'I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain –a philosopher's brain- to grasp this knowledge for me as the husbandman's hand grasps the plough for me. And this' says the Life Force to the philosopher 'must thou strive to do for me until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to carry on the work. (169)

Following Don Juan's departure, the Statue asks the Devil what the "deuce" "the Superman" is (172), and the Devil replies "Oh, the latest fashion among the Life Force fanatics. Did you not meet in Heaven, among the new arrivals, that German Polish madman? what was his name? Nietzsche?" [...] It was he who raked up the Superman, who is as old as Prometheus" (172). Again, Shaw disassociates himself from Nietzsche's overman. And Dona Ana, representing the Life Force, follows Juan to Heaven in search of a father for the 'Superman' she wishes to conceive:

Ana: [...] where can I find the Superman?
The Devil: He is not yet created, Senora.
[...]
Ana. Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done.
I believe in the Life to Come. A father! A father for the
Superman!
Vanishes in the void. (173)

After the dream, the sleepers awake to the sound of a flat tire on the car containing Ann and the others. She has tracked Tanner down by the help of the Life Force and announces that he has asked to marry her. Tanner tries to escape but feels drawn to her: "The Life Force. I am in the grip of the Life Force" (207).

The second play dealing with Shaw's ideas concerning the 'Superman' and 'Creative Evolution' is *Back to Methuselah* made up

I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the [Superman]

of five parts: "In the Beginning," "The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas," "The Thing Happens," "Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman," and "As Far as Thought Can Reach." Shaw, who claimed that *Man and Superman* was "a dramatic parable of Creative Evolution" which had got lost in the brilliance of the comedy, indicated that *Back to Methuselah* deals with his legend of Creative Evolution without any "distractions and embellishments" (qtd in Dukore 110). Shaw attaches so much importance to this play that when in 1944, nineteen years after he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Oxford University Publishing asked him to select one of his works for publication as the 500th volume of its series of World Classics, he chose *Back to Methuselah*, which he considered his masterpiece⁴ (Valency 168). Furthermore, in the postscript to the play published in the Penguin edition, he ascribed its composition to a superior power: "An author is an instrument in the grip of Creative Evolution" declaring that this play was the latest effort of the Life Force to make itself intelligible, a supreme attempt of the vital spirit to achieve self-consciousness (307).

"Methuselah" in the title refers to, according to the Old Testament, a descendant of Adam believed to have lived to be 969 years old, the oldest in the Bible. In this respect, the play, based on the assumption that human life can be prolonged by a certain effort of the will, follows the evolution of man from Adam and Eve to the year 31, 920 AD. In this process, the same types recur generation after generation, and are possibly "the same souls in successive manifestations. The characters that manifest them -Cain, Burge, Lubin, Haslam among others" (Valency, 172). Through reoccurring characters, it shows the evolutionary rise of the mind and the corresponding decline of sex, equalizing the sexes toward full intellectual identity (Leary and Foster 106).

Láirrh, the 'Creative Will' or 'Élan Vital' has fragmented itself into male and female, Adam and Eve. In Part I, Adam and Eve are introduced to death when they see a dead fawn. The Serpent tells her that the only way to overcome death is by creating new life, the results of which are seen a few centuries later in Act II. The Life Force represented by Eve, woman the Creator, verses Cain, man the

⁴ This is interesting since *Back to Methuselah* was among Shaw's least successful plays on stage. The whole play produced in the Theatre Guild in New York NY in 1922, ran for nine weeks and lost \$20,000 and again lost £2500 in its first UK production on October 9, 1923 at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre (Valency 168).

destroyer. Cain aspires to be more than a “stupid old digger-Adam” and considers his murder of Abel as a move forward:

Cain: I am the first murderer: you are only the first man. [...] There is something higher than man. There is hero and superman.

Eve: Superman! You are no superman! you are Anti-man. (863)

Eve calls him “anti-man” because she recognizes that there is something higher than Adams and Cains, beyond diggers and fighters, who are the ‘Life-Bringers” contributing to Creative Evolution:

[...]my sons’ sons are not all diggers and fighters. [...] they tell beautiful lies in beautiful words. They can remember their dreams. They can dream without sleeping. They have not will enough to create instead of dreaming; but the serpent said that every dream could be willed into creation by those strong enough to believe in it. There are others who cut reeds of different lengths and blow through them, making lovely patterns of sound in the air; and some of them can weave the patterns together, sounding three reeds at the same time, and raising my soul to things for which I have no words. And others make little mammoths out of clay, or make faces appear on flat stones, and ask me to create women for them with such faces. I have watched those faces and willed; and then I have made a woman-child that has grown up quite like them. And others think of numbers without having to count their fingers, and watch the sky at night, and give names to the stars, and can foretell when the sun will be covered with a black saucepan lid. And there is Tubal, who made this wheel for me which has saved me so much labor. And there is Enoch, who walks on the hills, and hears the Voice continually, and has given up his will to do the will of the Voice, and has some of the Voice’s greatness. (868)

Here she is referring to musicians, painters, and sculptors etc., those aiming to become something ‘higher’ than ordinary man. While this first play presents man’s desire to return to a longer life, Part II “The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas”, applies this desire to scientific theory.

I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the [Superman]

In Part II, two rival politicians Burge and Lubin visit Franklyn Barnabas, who will stand for Parliament, each wanting him to join his own party. Haslam, who is in love with Franklyn's daughter Savvy is also there along with their parlourmaid. They discuss the incapacity of European and English politicians to govern, claiming that what they need is a couple of hundred years training and experience to become better leaders. This leads to Barnabas Brothers Franklyn -the theologian- and Conrad's -the Scientist- presentation of their metabiological gospel, combining the will of religion with the intellect of science. They propose an election motto "Back to Methuselah" to promote their only program: "the term of human life shall be extended to three hundred years" (869)⁵. According to the brothers, the average lifespan is not sufficient to learn how to govern such a complex civilization and thus, man can live for 300 years if he wills, and must in order to survive. Regarding Creative Evolution, and the Superman, Lubin, one of the two politicians, says "The Force behind evolution, call it what you will, is determined to solve the problem of civilization; and if it cannot do it through us, it will produce some more capable agents" (888). These capable agents he speaks of are supermen.

Part III "The Thing Happens" is a transition period, the year 2170 AD when the English government is run efficiently by 'coloured' people who, unlike the English, mature at 40. Burge-Lubin is President of the British Islands. Haslam and the parlourmaid from the previous Part have become longlivers destined to live 300 years, by willing to live in accordance with the Brother's theory published in 1924. Archbishop Haslam, is now 283 years old and having occupied the position of a President, a General in the past, has enough experience to become a good statesman. Similarly, the parlormaid is now Domestic Minister Mrs. Lutestring- now 274. Both being aware of their social duty, that is to create longlivers that can live long enough to save civilization, leave to breed a new race, in Mrs. Lutestring's words, to save the "white race" (907).

Part IV "Tragedy of the Elderly Gentleman" is set in the year 3000. Now, the Empire is dominated by longlivers and shortlivers

⁵It is obvious from his preface to *Methuselah* that Shaw himself wished a longer life. He expressed that although he is failing physically, his mind still feels capable of growth: "My soul goes marches on; and if the Life Force would give me a body as durable as my mind, and I knew better how to feed and lodge and dress and behave, I might begin a political career as junior civil servant and evolve into a capable Cabinet Minister in another hundred years or so (882).

have become a minority, who die of despair (called discouragement) that overtakes them when they remain too long among longlivers. Their prolonged life has created a new generation of statesmen speaking "with the experience of two and a half centuries of life" (917). The British Empire transferred its seat to the East (Baghdad), London has been destroyed, there are two parties the Conservative party and the Colonization party, and many shortliver races such as the Irish have perished. The final part entitled "As Far as Thought Can Reach" is set in AD 31, 920 the process of evolution is concluded in the garden where it all started. There are no shortlivers left, no heroes, no statesmen, no producers. Sex, politics, war, art, and all the other concepts are the preoccupation of children. The cycle of growth has accelerated, people are hatched fully grown from eggs. Now they want to take the immortal responsibility by becoming a pure spirit. When life becomes eternal, which imprisons us and forbids us to range through the stars, "man will become a vortex," which is neither water, gas, nor atoms but a power over these things. This is the final accomplishment that they desire for humanity.

In the discursive epilogue, the ghosts of Adam, Eve, Cain, the Serpent and Lilith regard the development of man. Eve is proud, declaring that "the clever ones" were always her favourite, the Serpent justified that the knowledge of good and evil has destroyed evil on earth. On the other hand, Cain is dissatisfied that the strong have slain one another while the weak "live forever" and Adam feels this evolution thing has been taken too far. They all vanish, leaving the stage to Lilith -the personification of the Life Force itself- to sum up the entire Pentateuch. She says:

[...] after passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from the matter, to the whirlpool in the pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in pure force...I am Lilith: I [...] compelled my enemy Matter, to obey a living soul. But in enslaving Life's enemy I made him Life's master. ...Of life only is there no end; and though unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearable desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. (962)

In conclusion, Shaw, convinced that mankind was not sufficient to create a better world in their present state, felt that real social change, advancement in social conditions could only be

I sing, not arms and the hero, but to the [Superman]

possible with the evolution of a superior race of men. This idea of the superman, who can save man from themselves, has never completely vanished in modern thought. Especially in the light of all current world politics, and man's inclination to violence, war, racism etc. it seems that everyone must "sing, not arms and the hero", but to the Superman!

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