



Dynamism of 'Life Force' In The Life of A Man

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life force, superman, power of brain, purpose of life

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ABSTRACT Bernard Shaw through his plays and particularly through *Man And Superman* has shown that Life is and inscrutable mystery and in the process of evolution in number of creations were tried from one angle or another to evaluate the significance of this great force, but none of them was found capable of looking beyond life, because it is such an enormous infinity. Superman does not depend on the physical bulk and the span of years. could not enjoy and understand Life because it had no purposes. So to enjoy Life one has to be combined mind (brain) to understand something which is the only gift to men by nature or God. Again only aesthetic beauty is incapable of recognizing the true purpose of Life. So he is of the opinion that apart from ugliness or beauty one must possess intellect to enjoy life to the fullest.

It is by virtue of this Gift (Brain) that man has become 'Superman' and has conquered not only birds, animals and other species of the world but also time and space. It is the power of brain that in the present century (The twentieth century as well as the 21st century) that man's power of thinking has taught him to work for his own good without depending on God.

For a complete man one has to take the help of Life Force. Here Shaw wants to make clear that the physical eye can only see the physical beauty or the significance of physical gains, but the student of Life Force has an inward eye with which he tries to fulfill the higher purposes of Life. No art or person will be helpful in giving the attainment of the purposeful life. Music politics, painting etc can only make man better artist but they cannot fulfill the purpose of Life.

Bernard Shaw gives the example of Don Juan who puts it, "in her soul the artist saw all the emotion of the poem." (Margery 380) Don Juan is not correct in his judgment. He mistakes his own partner, his own species, for perfection in all senses of his purpose proved fatal for him in the extreme. He is staring of his own weakness. The woman thinks him as cheap person and at-last he is slave of woman. He is passionate man and he becomes the worshipper and women the worshipped. His emotions, his sentiments, his music his paintings were all exploited to please and satisfy her as he was blinded by the illusion that she loved him. He is again at mistake and tries to satisfy his helper whom he mistook for divinity. Thus his blind efforts do not help him and he is thrown away from the "nobler, higher and real purpose of Life"

In this context the words of Tanner in *Man and Superman* are most important, he tells Octavius who is the love-born poet:

For mark you, Tavy, the artist's work is to show us ourselves as are really are. Our minds are nothing but this knowledge of ourselves; and he who adds a jot to such knowledge create new mind as surely as any woman creates new man. In the rage of that creation he is as ruthless as the woman, as dangerous to her as she to Rim, and horrible fascinating. (Margery 341)

The dramatist has his full faith that "Life" is not all music or poetry or a source of pleasure. In *Man and Superman* he through Ramsden says to Octavius that 'Life' is not all music or poetry or "all plays and poems", (Margery 373) it is something else. Moreover 'Life' is not a bed of roses but 'Life is a bed of thorns and a person coming out of the difficulties of life is like an iron which is sent into the fire to become steel. Shaw, hence, wants to say that 'Life' after constant slips and advances, after many trials and errors, arrive at mankind which is no doubt its latest creation, but by no means final. Thus outward beauty, strength or gigantic do not help man to be 'Superman'. His mental superiority is more important than his physical beauty or strength.

It is on point of intellect alone that man has raised above all his ancestors and imposed himself on all other creature of the world. The Don Juan of **Man and Superman** is a votary of brain power. He has the capacity to enjoy and understand Life. In the play the Devil observes wittily that man has misused his mental gift to a lamentable extent. He is of the notion that "in the art of death" (Margery 376) man has gone ahead even of Nature Plague, pestilence and famine, distractive machines and his ever-developing reason to evolve new forms of death and destruction bear testimony to the fact that man has measured his might by his destructive capacity. Bernard Shaw is against the invention of machines because it has made man inaction and lazy.

Bernard Shaw in the play appreciates Don Juan's doctrine of 'brain power'. He discards Devil's argument of physical power. To Ann's view that destruction can only destroy, Tanner points out very significantly that ".....construction cumbers the ground with institutions made by busy bodies. Destruction clears it and gives us breathing space and liberty... One should not confuse construction and destruction with creation and murder. They are quite different. I adore creation and abhor murder...." (Margery 346)

In the play Tanner is the mouthpiece of the dramatist. Here Tanner has the optimistic views of Shelley. He believes in the fruits of sincere duty. Like the romantic poet Shelley Tanner's optimism consists in the succession of winters by springs.

"If brain is misdirected the consequences are destructive, hostility and belligerency, if it is utilized for a creation purpose, the fruit is likely to be the attainment of the desired goal. A hand that kills hundreds is also one that protects thousands. Moreover, fighting as they do, mankind have a universal purpose that can be executed by no other means than fighting." (Karan 84)

Don Juan sharply replies to the arguments of Devil that Man is destructive because he does not want to be called a coward, and only when an idea is put into his head that he will direct his brain to a creative purpose and will fight as boldly and heroically for this as he does for the destructive purpose only in his utter ignorance of the better.

Bernard Shaw through the mouth of his protagonist, Don Juan, says that only a "philosophic man" (Karan 379) with his contemplation to discover the inner will of the world and to look through 'Life' is the fittest person to advance the goal of Life. It is the man who is in the grip of the "Life Force" Don Juan expresses his platonic views. Plato in his book *The Republic* describes of art as an illusion. He compares in the book the artist with God. Both are craftsmen, creating one essential "Form of Bed. It is ultimate nature of things. In the same way the carpenter makes a particular bed. But his representation stands at third remove from reality.

Bernard Shaw says that Plato does not provide for the artist the first place. He gives more importance to the philosopher and gives the place of honour to the philosophers with the right philosophic training. In this connection, he points out:

that there would never be a perfect state or society or individual until some enhance compelled this minority of uncorrupted philosophers, now called useless, to take a hand in politics, willy-nilly, and compelled society to listen to them, or else until providence inspired some of our present rulers and King, or their sons, with a genuine love of true philosophy; and also that until society is controlled by philosophers there will be no end to the travellers of status or individuals and no realization in practice of the institutions we have described in theory. (Plato 264)

Shaw gives more importance to philosophic thinking for a better life than more physical existence based on pleasure hunting. A self-conscious man will learn about his dormant capabilities which, when he finds out by means of thinking, he will utilize to great advantage.

Bernard Shaw quotes the example of a donkey that has little power of thinking and is, therefore mercilessly loaded with heavy bags. He says that in history we can get numerous instances to prove that mind had/has always conquered the body.

The playwright thinks that "Superman" will be the product of profound intellectual power, and will dwell permanently in thought as far as possible. In a sense the "Superman" will be a great 'Soul' or 'Mahatma' (Laurence 349). In other plays like *Back to Methusalem* Shaw has elaborately illustrated his idea of brain as the most important of the divine gifts to mankind. Brain is the lust gift to man by God.

In his play *Man and Superman* Bernard Shaw has reassured his protagonist, Don Juan, with a new angle. He gave him a new *raison d'être* far more satisfying than more sensuous indulgence. Mr. Mill has observed Don Juan's

character as a Superman in the following words:

Shaw's Don Juan is not a complete transformation, nor an anti- Don Juan, nor a hero simply because he escapes from woman. On the contrary, to Shaw's Don Juan is an extension of the traditional Don Juan. (Carl 224)

The theory of Bernard Shaw about Man and Superman is based on the reformatory views of legends and philosophies of many earlier writers like Tirso de Molina, Moliere, Mozart, and Goethe. Traditional comedy has meant love between a young man and young woman who have to face some opposition in the beginning, mainly from the paternal side and are finally reconciled to marriage precisely the same situation has been presented in his most philosophical play *Man and Superman* too. In the play Shaw has put a number of father figures in the beginning, such as Ann's dead father, Ramsden, Malone Senior etc. We find an echo of the Victorian method when the play opens with the reading of the deceased Mr. White field's will. The "Will" instruct that Ramsden and Tanner are jointly appointed as Ann's guardians. But there is a great contrast in the character of Ramsden and Tanner. The former is conservative guardian while the latter is a progressive guardian. Again the reader of Shaw finds the playwrights familiar iconoclastic situation. There are two potential candidates, Tanner and Octavius to marry Ann. Shaw presents here two rivals, having each a potent cause to marry Ann. But in the interest of the comedy, one has to be rejected. The paternalistic vote of Ramsden and the deceased father's will favour Octavius as the rightful partner of Ann. This is an ordinary happening in the life of characters and up to this point there is an echo of the traditional comedy. The sub-plot also has the same comic situation. Hector Malone and Violet have a secret low-affair. They do not want to subject themselves to Malone Senior's opposition; Malone wants Hector to marry into the English aristocracy. But here also his paternal opposition is overcome by Violet's commonsense. This shows Shaw's anti-capitalistic views.

Thus Bernard Shaw is successful in assessing Dynamism of 'Life Force' in the life of man. A man can evaluate himself only through a power brain. If one has no "Life Power" he is sure to be doomed because without decisive instincts, one has only a hard instinct and, therefore, no self-respect. Such a man can never be a contemplative man and can achieve anything if he simply blindly imitates without using the power of his brain.

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