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Anti-Shavian Satire in *Heartbreak House*

"I feel chilly and grown old"—Browning

Bernard Shaw justified his making light of the sacred cows of his society by appearing to make light of himself as well. His literary persona, "that lunatic jester GBS," often poked fun at himself throughout prefaces and pamphlets. The plays also contain numerous passages of supposed self-mockery. Louis Dubedat, the artist-scoundrel in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, declares himself a disciple of Bernard Shaw, causing Sir Patrick Cullen, the author's actual spokesman in the play, to assume that Shaw must be a Methodist preacher. The critics in *Fanny's First Play* discourse at length on the failings of Shavian drama. Lord Summerhays in *Misalliance* obliquely refers to these shortcomings when he remarks that "democracy reads well; but it doesn't act well, like some people's plays." In case the audience does not catch the allusion, Tarleton remarks only one speech later: "Still, you know, the superman may come. The superman's an idea. I believe in ideas. Read Whatthis-name."¹ And far into the future people will still have difficulty getting the name right, Shaw coyly predicts, by having himself remembered as "Shoddy" in *Back to Methuselah* and as "Shavius" in *Far-Fetched Fables*. If we examine such instances carefully, however, we find that Shaw has in fact emerged unscathed from all the fun. No Shavian idea has actually been challenged, and it is those who misunderstand Shaw who are made to look ridiculous.

But in at least one play, *Heartbreak House*, written at the low point of Shaw's hopes during the dark days of World War I, he engages in very serious and very real self-criticism. His customary irony turns inward upon its author as well as outward upon the audience. *Heartbreak House* gives Shavian paradox an additional turn by applying Shaw's satire, in a profounder way than ever before, to his own doctrines. The play utilizes for satiric purposes elements of previous Shavian drama in much the same way that GBS had employed the conventions of the

nineteenth-century theatre. Shaw now caricatures as either impotent, ridiculous, or both, character types he had before viewed positively. The problems of contemporary society which he considers have changed little, but the paradoxical remedies he had once prescribed now seem as inadequate as the conventional ones. Eric Bentley has said of this play:

Heartbreak House might be called *The Nightmare of a Fabian*. All Shaw's themes are in it. You might learn from it his teachings on love, religion, education, politics. But you are unlikely to do so, not only because the treatment is so brief and allusive but because the play is not an argument in their favor. It is a demonstration that they are all being disregarded or defeated. It is a picture of failure.²

It is not so much that Shavianism is being defeated as that it has been tried and found wanting; for as Bentley himself remarks, "The characters in this play are readers of Bernard Shaw."

Indeed they are. When Mazzini Dunn describes the inhabitants of *Heartbreak House* as "rather a favorable specimen of what is best in our English culture" and adds, "You are very charming people, most advanced, unprejudiced, frank, humane, unconventional, democratic, free-thinking, and everything that is delightful to thoughtful people" (I, 590), we initially smile at still another example of his naive optimism. And yet Mazzini is basically correct. Conventional idealism does not plague Captain Shotover and the Hushabys. They in fact specialize in the particularly Shavian occupation of stripping away other people's ideals. (The ultra-conventional Mangan becomes so bewildered by their unrelenting candor that he tries literally to strip himself.) The action of the play occurs in what Francis Fergusson has called "the emancipated parlor,"³ the scene of many fruitful debates between Shavian realists and idealists. Moreover, the destroyers of ideals this time own the drawing room so that the realist, who usually invades the parlor as a disruptive outsider, is now operating on his home territory. The play therefore does portray the ascendancy of the unconventional, advanced Shavian. But the truth of Mazzini's observation paradoxically constitutes the profoundest tragedy, for these epitomes of progressive thought are nothing but a houseful of "heartbroken imbeciles." Something has gone horribly wrong with the Shavian parlor.

In the preface Shaw places the blame on "Cultured, leisured Europe before the war," those readers of Bergson, Butler, Granville-Barker, Wells, in addition to GBS, who abdicated social responsibility by letting culture and power drift apart. By drifting themselves, they have permitted Europe to drift with them into a catastrophic conflict.⁴ But this

topical explanation fails to account completely for the profound despair and the universal sense of failure which permeate the play. For *Heartbreak House* most closely reflects, in an inverse mirror, the themes of *Man and Superman* and *Major Barbara*, the two plays in which Shaw had displayed the greatest optimism concerning the improvement of the species through creative evolution and the union of vision and practical power.⁵

Most of the characters in *Heartbreak House* resemble ones who appear in those and other Shaw plays, but who in the previous works were about twenty years younger. Hesione Hushabye and Ariadne Utterword possess the power to fascinate men that Shaw gives to such vital women as Ann Whitefield and Gloria Clandon; but while Ann and Gloria are in their early twenties (even Candida was only thirty-three), the Shotover sisters have both passed forty. Hector Hushabye in various ways displays characteristics of Sergius Saranoff, Captain Brassbound, John Tanner, and Adolphus Cusins, all men in their thirties. His tales about his alter ego Marcus Darnley demand a dashing young adventurer as their hero. Yet Hector appears, surprisingly, as "a very handsome man of fifty" (I, 510). Randall Utterword, cut from the same cloth as such sentimental, overly romantic youths as Freddy Eynsford-Hill, Octavius Robinson, and Cholly Lomax, ought to be about twenty-five. However, Shaw informs us that he "has an engaging air of being young and unmarried, but on close inspection is found to be at least over forty" (I, 516). While the drawing room population generally includes one or two romantically involved young couples, these over-age gallants and coquettes with their flirtatious games only mock the serious sex play of their predecessors. Then there is Captain Shotover, who like Caesar or Andrew Undershaft represents the man of practical power and realistic outlook. But at eighty-eight, the Captain has at least thirty years on even these older Shavian heroes. With the exception of Ellie Dunn, the other characters similarly lack youth. Mangan is "about fifty-five" and Mazzini Dunn is "a little elderly man" of roughly the same age, since he and Mangan grew up together. Nurse Guinness cared for the Shotover sisters in their childhood and thus must be approaching seventy. Likewise, her erstwhile husband Billy Dunn is a veteran reprobate; he claims that a ten-year prison sentence "will see me out" because "I'm too old" (I, 555).

Not only are the characters old, but they talk incessantly of age. They often apply the adjectives "old" and "young" to themselves, other characters, or things. They refer to their own youth or childhood as long past and contrast it with their present advanced years. They constantly address Ellie as "young lady," "child," "girl," or with the diminutive

"Pettikins." Even those chronologically young seem old in spirit. In all, the play contains over one hundred references to age and the loss of youth. So Shotover laments: "Youth! beauty! novelty! They are badly wanted in this house. I am excessively old. Hesione is only moderately young. Her children are not youthful" (I, 497). The obsession with lost youth and the absence of the young becomes a pervasive symbol throughout the play. And it symbolizes, I believe, the death of an evolutionary future, just as the dream atmosphere, the other overriding image, signals the non-existence of any transcendent reality beneath the layers of illusion that the Heartbreakers strip away.⁶ In Shaw's previous plays creative evolution and the realistic vision became the goals for which satire cleared the way, goals which would in turn produce the world for which Larry Doyle longed in *John Bull's Other Island*, "where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal." Now, however, he turns his satire upon these concepts, for the Shavianism they represent no longer applies to a world which has no future and offers a present of unreal dreams (Heartbreak House) and brutal facts (Horseback Hall) which can never be reconciled.

The absence of youth functions on multiple symbolic levels, but all suggest a cessation of progress, growth, and life. In the topical allegory the absence of young people serves as a reminder of the absent young men at the front and the dead in the trenches. On a more general level, the recurrent images of age establish a mood, set the tone for a satiric universe, as do images of excrement and cannibalism for Swift. Here are middle-aged characters pretending to be young and by the disparity exposing themselves as the fools and knaves of traditional satire. Age further suggests death—Shotover's colloquies with Ellie stress the association. The world of *Heartbreak House* is one in which the forces of death have once and for all obliterated the Life Force. It seems almost as if Darwin has been right all along, and Shaw is repudiating as a fable the purposive universe he had envisioned. Even if such a purpose did once exist, the ever-widening gap between vision and power in man has now dissipated it. In this respect the increased ages of the Shavian type characters indicate that time has invalidated Shaw's *Weltanschauung*, put it a generation out of date.

Shotover's insight past illusion into the essence of things, once of positive value, now reveals to his children only a nihilistic void from which they recoil into new romantic dreams or hard-headed pragmatism. The Heartbreakers cling to their idle games because only the games, meaningless as they are, can stave off the realization of utter nothingness. Thus Hesione tells Ellie: "But I warn you that when I am

neither coaxing and kissing nor laughing, I am just wondering how much longer I can stand living in this cruel, damnable world" (I, 546). When Hector drops his romance-spinning pose, he becomes the despairing prophet who calls for the heavens to fall and crush, for the eradication of man. After Ellie's heart breaks, she too sees into this void, as her "There seems to be nothing real in the world except my father and Shakespeare" speech reveals. Even Shotover, who alone has kept his gaze into the abyss unwavering, feels the urge to dream growing irresistible. He can fight the dreams only with rum, in itself an evasion of reality.

Those who acknowledge the void but cannot long bear to face it take refuge in games and dreams. Others, like Ariadne, conclude that a vision which finds life a meaningless chaos cannot be a true vision. They therefore reassume all the conventions of respectability which the realist has penetrated. Social reality may not be transcendent, but it is at least solid. The Hushabye children have also gone this route, as Hector reports: "Our children are like that. They spend their holidays in the houses of their respectable schoolfellows" (I, 522). Ariadne claims that the atmosphere of Heartbreak House, full of "notions that might have been very well for pagan philosophers of fifty," robs children of their youth; she asserts "respectability" as an effective antidote. But if Shaw here denies a vital force at the heart of reality, he will certainly not endow either evasion of that reality with a future. Stasis and death pervade both Horseback Hall and Heartbreak House. Mangan's chief governmental function involves the prevention of progress. He does very little, but quite expertly sabotages "the other fellow's" efforts to get something done. Hastings Utterword, the wooden yet enterprising numskull, rules through sixteen-hour days of endlessly repetitive paper work, interrupted by periodic beatings of natives with bamboo rods. The respectable power structure hardly makes it worthwhile for Shotover to design lifeboats, yet it rewards him lavishly for death-dealing inventions.

While the rigid, deadening respectability of the Utterwords does not bind the Hushabeyes, their dreams no less sap vitality and deny progress. In fact, if Horseback Hall is characterized by stasis, Heartbreak House even further refutes evolution through its regressive tendencies. Age has not matured its inhabitants. They are older but not wiser; Shaw thus refutes the one positive connotation of aging. Their consciousnesses remain rooted in the past, so that the combined images of age and sleep which surround them suggest suspended animation, a Rip Van Winkle atmosphere. "We have been too long here. We do not live in this house: we haunt it," Hector laments (I, 589). Hector and Hesione found a mo-

ment of vitality during the "one real go" they had at being "frightfully in love with one another." The future, however, betrayed this Life Force union, for the Life Force evaporated and took with it their passion. And rather than becoming advances on the path to the superman, their children, the product of this passion, have retreated to Horseback Hall. Now divorced from any higher procreative purpose, the sexual fascination both Hushabyes still possess turns back upon itself. Each engages in constant flirtations, hoping in vain to recapture with someone else the reality they fleetingly enjoyed with one another. Under the spell of the house, visitors similarly regress. Both Mangan and Randall are reduced to childish tears; Hesione envisions Mangan at his christening, before he became "Boss" and was only "little Alf," and Ariadne "manages" her brother-in-law as she used to manage her children. This infantilism demonstrates that although aging prevails in Heartbreak House, its inhabitants will not face the changes wrought by time. Those who have aged outside its confines, marking a discontinuity between past and present, lose their identities. Ariadne may plead for recognition as "little Paddy Patkins," but since she is no longer the nineteen-year-old who ran away from home, no one knows her. She in vain insists that her father acknowledge the connection between that young girl and the dowager before him:

THE CAPTAIN . . . How can you be Ariadne? You are a middle-aged woman: well-preserved, madam, but no longer young.
 LADY UTTERWORD: But think of all the years and years I have been away, papa. I have had to grow old, like other people. (I, 496)

Conversely, if both these creatures deserve the label "Ariadne Shotover Utterword," then the Captain can just as easily suppose that the surname Dunn makes identical a villainous pirate and a man "not a bit like him," who has "respectability. A ladylike daughter. The language and appearance of a city missionary" (I, 520). Although he frequently plays the *iron*, as above, and relentlessly dwells upon the alterations the years have worked upon him, Shotover's reality too lies in reminiscences of his vigorous, heroic past. His present is empty and drugged with rum; the future offers only death.

Major Barbara and *Man and Superman* had postulated a bright evolutionary future. Now Shaw has transported the characters, who in those plays embodied the hope for the future, forward two or three decades into a world darker, not brighter than theirs. Their own subsequent lives as well as their children's, have resulted in a retreat rather than an advance in evolution. Dramatically recapitulating their failure, GB!

allows one young person, Ellie Dunn, to enter the present of Heartbreak House and confronts her with various Shavian alternatives which formerly promised to lead to a Messianic Age and now lead only to dead ends. Ellie's quest for a mate supplies the one coherent plot line in the otherwise diffuse structure of the play. Her search has three stages which correspond to the three levels of perception in the Shavian universe. "Marcus Darnley" represents romantic idealism, Mangan Philistinism and pragmatism, Shotover realism. However, while this progression previously resulted in a vision of higher and richer life, in *Heartbreak House* it reverses itself, culminating in "a flaming vision of total destruction."⁷ In addition, the men in Ellie's life come to symbolize various Shavian doctrines: creative evolution, the necessity of money, the power of seeing life without ideals. She, an exemplar of the younger generation, seeks to find in them "life with a blessing" as an alternative to the death-in-life around her. But the Shavian solutions have outlived their utility, and Ellie's attempts to preserve youth, life, and a future through them cannot succeed.

Even at the outset, Ellie only precariously retains her youthful spirit. When Hesione remarks, "Very nice of her to come and attract young people to the house for us," Mazzini replies, "I'm afraid Ellie is not interested in young men, Mrs. Hushabye. Her taste is on the graver, solider side" (I, 501). She thinks him an "old brute" for saying so, but the elder Dunn understands his daughter better than does Hesione, in whose romantic mind Ellie has become a substitute for the children who deserted her home in favor of respectability. Ellie does in fact resemble the Hushabye children, but the resemblance extends to her willingness to abandon reality-seeking for grave, solid security; for in many ways the history of the Dunn household has paralleled that of Heartbreak House. Both teem with progressive ideas, Mazzini's specifically political—and suspiciously Fabian—rather than generally Bohemian. Like Hector and Hesione, he and his wife had a real go: "You see, I have been in love really: the sort of love that only happens once. (Softly) That's why Ellie is such a lovely girl" (I, 543). But it has all come to heartbreak and poverty, which Ellie would marry "a perfect hog of a millionaire" to escape, just as Ariadne married the numskull Utterword: "She said she'd marry anybody to get away from this house." Ellie's infatuation with Marcus Darnley has, however, interceded to forestall her defection to Horseback Hall. It seems a last chance for Ellie to have her own real go, to give the Life Force marriage another opportunity to fulfill the claims made for it in *Man and Superman*. Therefore, when she learns the truth about Marcus, she not only abandons idealism, but renounces

irrevocably the hopes for creative evolution through eugenic breeding. She declares that Hesione has stolen her babies and vows never to marry a young man.

This decision inverts a consistent Shavian pattern in which disparity of ages signals incompatibility in love. To Cleopatra, Caesar is always the "old gentleman." She contrasts him with the "many young kings with round strong arms" she needs to satisfy her desires. Caesar supports her choice and promises to send her the young Mark Antony. Bluntschli (*Arms and the Man*) feels, at thirty-four, that he is not "the sort of fellow a young girl falls in love with." Only when he learns that Raina is not seventeen, as he had supposed, but twenty-three does he ask her to marry him. Hypatia Tarleton (*Misalliance*) taunts Lord Summerhays because he once dared propose to her, a girl young enough to be his granddaughter. When Higgins offers either to adopt Eliza Doolittle or to marry her off to Pickering, she retorts, "I wouldn't marry you if you asked me, and you're nearer my age than what he is." When Ridgeon (*The Doctor's Dilemma*) confesses his love to Jennifer Dubedat, she replies incredulously, "In lo- You! an elderly man!" Candida, after giving Marchbanks his walking papers, bids him repeat the two famous sentences: "When I am thirty, she will be forty-five. When I am sixty, she will be seventy-five." Only once does Shaw portray a May-December union, and not without qualification. The twenty-year gap in age between Anthony Anderson and his wife Judith is the object of much pointed discussion in *The Devil's Disciple*, and Judith almost instantly finds herself attracted to the younger Dick Dudgeon. Shaw compensates for Anderson's age, however, by describing Judith as "more than twenty years younger than her husband though she will never be as young as he in vitality" (III, 281). Besides possessing youthful vigor, Anderson also exchanges roles with Dick, metaphorically assuming the identity of the younger man.

Although it might be possible to argue in each individual case above that the scruples about age are presented ironically, the recurrence of the scruples indicates that Shaw is serious about them. Certainly he often claims that the marriage institution should be retained solely because at the present time it provides the most efficient and economical way to insure proper care for offspring. He insists that the Life Force therefore within this institution must pair young, vital people who will produce superior children.⁸ Indeed, the Heartbreakers initially object to Ellie's marrying Mangan on the grounds that he is too old for her. Hesione repeatedly urges that she find a young man to love. Even Shotover warns the captain of industry: "You're going to marry Dunn's

daughter. Don't. You're too old" (I, 514). When Ellie admits that she is seeing Marcus, Hesione immediately hopes for a match between the girl and a vital young man. Yet like everything else in Heartbreak House, these hopes have no substance. Marcus has no real youth—Hector is fifty—and the deeds which attest to his vitality are illusory. The Hushabyes already symbolize the failure of the Life Force marriage in the older generation; that Ellie should conceive her one grand passion, not for a member of her own generation, but for a failed rerun of her father's simply nails the lid down permanently on the superman. Through the Marcus Darnley affair Shaw satirizes and discards his belief in an evolutionary future.

The affair also kills whatever youthful spirit Ellie's upbringing has left her. Now neither "nice" nor a "girl," as she had been under the spell of romance, she turns to the solid, material comforts of pragmatic success. If the evolutionary future has failed, Ellie will at least provide for her personal future. If she cannot have love and the promise of children, she will have money. Again the Shavian solution will not suffice. As her attachment to Hector ridicules the doctrine of Don Juan, so the proposed marriage to Mangan mocks the gospel of St. Andrew Undershaft. Ellie spouts the themes of *Major Barbara* as she tries to persuade Shotover that "the soul is the body and the body the soul." But now this does not wash. Body and soul, like power and vision, have grown so far apart that it is impossible to preserve both. To join with worldly power and success irrevocably damns the soul, for all such unions eventually result in the spirit selling itself to the flesh. "All I can tell you is that, old-fashioned or new-fashioned, if you sell yourself, you deal your soul a blow that all the books and pictures and concerts and scenery in the world won't heal," Captain Shotover replies (I, 565).

If Hector travesties John Tanner, then Mangan travesties Andrew Undershaft. The captain of industry has Undershaft's reputation without any of his character; he knows nothing about the factory, fears his workmen, ruins them for his own benefit, and does not even himself control the vast financial resources attached to his name. The works may mystically possess Undershaft, but Mangan's syndicate quite literally owns him. He is much more an aging Tom Broadbent than a visionary capitalist. Shaw has transferred all Undershaft's vision (plus his association with munitions) to Shotover, but they avail the Captain little. He is still practically impotent and living from hand to mouth. And moreover, the money his inventions bring has no blessing, for Shaw now is renouncing one of his oldest positives, the virtue of having money. "Give me deeper darkness. Money is not made in the light," Shotover

exclaims. To keep his family solvent, he has been forced into compromise after compromise with the powers of darkness, so that his pretended sale of himself to the Devil in Zanzibar has virtually become real.

Finally, then, Ellie must choose between selling her soul to save her body, or sacrificing her own physical future for spiritual salvation. Stripped of both romantic and pragmatic illusions, she selects the soul over the body and accordingly chooses Shotover as her "spiritual husband and second father." By marrying him she in essence unites herself with the Shavian realistic vision, a vision now stripped of any pretense to present power or future realization. Shotover is, among other things, certainly an avatar of Shaw. Like GBS he discomferts people by making witty but apparently paradoxical statements about them, statements which actually convey a higher truth. But Shavianism, once vigorous and purposeful, now appears as enervated and obsolete. If Ellie has married spiritual truth, she has also allied herself with physical death. The Captain at eighty-eight is almost out of the world. One is tempted to agree with Mangan for once when he complains: "He told me *I* was too old; and him a mummy." Shotover cannot help to perpetuate Ellie's body by giving her children or by leaving her money and social prestige. Indeed, the destruction of physical existence obsesses him, from his search for the seventh degree of concentration to his final solution of "dynamite to blow up the human race if it goes too far."

And in Act III it at last goes too far. The omnipresent death which has implicitly suffused the play's universe now becomes brilliantly and noisily explicit. Exploding bombs demolish the rectory, kill the two burglars, and herald the entrance of World War I, which has hovered in the wings throughout *Heartbreak House*. Ellie's radiant absorption in the falling bombs marks the true consummation of her marriage and supports the view that she has in fact wed herself to death. Yet she has made the only possible choice. For all its satire of Shaw's optimism, the play reaffirms the essential strength of the realist vision. If nothing but death lies at the heart of reality, it is nevertheless commendable to see death clearly and see it whole.

Heartbreak House still asserts the fundamental core of Shavianism while rejecting the quasi-utopian outcome Shaw often predicted as consequent upon man following his will and sharpening his vision. It takes basically an existentialist position,⁹ one that had in fact occurred in earlier plays, although GBS had previously claimed that if enough men made their own wills the sole criterion of conduct, a new society would be reborn. As he writes in "The Perfect Wagnerite": "The most in-

evitable dramatic conception then of the nineteenth century is that of a perfectly naive hero upsetting religion, law and order in all directions, and establishing in their place the unfettered action of Humanity doing exactly what it likes, and producing order instead of confusion thereby because it likes to do what is necessary for the good of the race."¹⁰ Lavinia in *Androcles and the Lion* remains true to her faith when her rational belief in the Christian "stories" has evaporated because something in her inmost nature refuses to let her recant, even as it had prevented her from touching a mouse she had tamed. Likewise Dick Dudgeon is prepared to sacrifice himself for Anthony Anderson solely because it would go against the law of his being to take his head out of a noose by putting another man's into it. Yet Shaw gives both these personal choices evolutionary implications. Lavinia strives for the coming of "the God who is not yet," and Dick declares on the gallows, "My life for the world's future." But in this play the choices can have only private significance. To face death and nothingness serves simply to revitalize, by assertion, the existential will. "The judgment has come," the Captain declares. "Courage will not save you; but it will shew that your souls are still alive" (I, 596). Despite what Ellie says, she has achieved not life with a blessing, but death with a blessing. Even before the bombs begin falling, she has cast off any expectations from life:

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Heartbreak? Are you one of those who are so sufficient to themselves that they are only happy when they are stripped of everything, even hope?

ELLIE . . . It seems so; for I feel now as if there was nothing I could not do, because I want nothing.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. That's the only real strength. That's genius. That's better than rum. (I, 569)

That genius is the genius of Bernard Shaw, *sans* rhetoric, half-truths, lunatic poses, and philosophical fancy footwork. And it remains valid even in the elderly, despairing universe of Shaw's broken dreams in *Heartbreak House*.

GBS did not, to be sure, remain in this Slough of Despond. By the time he writes the preface to the play in 1919, he is already emphasizing the topical allegory over the more generalized implications of the play. According to this preface, *Heartbreak House* does not portray a cosmic catastrophe from which there is no escape. Shaw describes the play as merely an analysis of the causes leading up to a specific disaster, the War, with the implied corollary that by listening to GBS society can avoid a repetition. Then in 1921, with a full, if rather desperate, return

to optimism, Shaw produced his Metabiological Pentateuch, *Back to Methuselah*. This mammoth work can be seen as in part a conscious repudiation of the despair and self-criticism of *Heartbreak House*. The future has returned with a vengeance—all 30,000 years of it—and also creative evolution. However, Shaw does not so easily put aside the insights into the abyss he reveals in *Heartbreak House*. Creative evolution may be back, but the superman through eugenic breeding is finished. (The only subsequent time he treats this concept, in *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*, it proves a dismal failure.) Yet he does make a virtue of the facts which seem so disturbing in the prior play, just as he had made a virtue out of the malevolent Will he picked up from Schopenhauer. Thus in his Metabiological Pentateuch he simply turns the pervasive age of *Heartbreak House* into an asset: longevity becomes the key to evolutionary progress. Through his Ancients he redeems the youth-deserted world by creating beings who are in the prime of life at Shotover's age and who have at last attained the seventh degree of concentration.

NOTES

1. *Bernard Shaw: Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), IV, 132. All quotations from Shaw's plays are from the six volumes of this edition. Subsequent references will be indicated in the text by volume and page number.
2. *Bernard Shaw 1856-1950* (New York: New Directions, 1957), p. 140.
3. *The Idea of a Theater* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1949), p. 182.
4. In the Shavian vocabulary drifting indicates almost a state of sin. The ship of state metaphor in *Heartbreak House* uses the drifting vs. navigation dichotomy several times. Shaw states the concept most succinctly however in *Man and Superman*: "To be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer."
5. Cyrus Hoy, in "Shaw's Tragicomic Irony: From 'Man and Superman' to 'Heartbreak House'," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, 47 (1971), 56-78, notes several ironic parallels between these plays and *Heartbreak House*, but he does not analyze the latter as a structured satire on them; nor does he relate the irony to the age old imagery. John Weightman's brief essay, "The Mystery of Heartbreak House," *Encounter*, 44 (May, 1975), 39-41, also provides a general view of the ironic relation between this play and Shaw's earlier works.
6. Previous critical explanations of the old age imagery do not seem satisfactory to me. F.P.W. McDowell claims in "Technique, Symbol, and Theme in *Heartbreak House*," *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 340 that "all the characters in the play . . . have, to offset their present esoteric propensities, an authenticity conferred by manifold realistic experience in the past." McDowell thus misses the whole point: that the realistic experience is irretrievably in the past. Richard Hornby merely observes that the young men—and young actors—are at the front ("The Symbolic Action of *Heartbreak House*," *Drama Survey*, 7 (1968), 7). Margery Morgan says that the proliferation of older men indicates an Electra complex in Ellie (*The Shavian Playground* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 214). Hoy and Charles Berst (*Bernard Shaw and the Art of Drama* (Urbana: U. of Illinois Press, 1974)) mention the middle-aged world of the play without offering interpretations. For discussion of the sleep and dream imagery, see Hornby and Berst.
7. *The Theatre of Revolt* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), p. 226.

8. In *Misalliance* the effete Bentley Summerhays is offered as a warning to older couples on the result of having children late in life. Obviously Shaw believes that young vital parents produce superior children and that more mature parents produce weak offspring.
9. For existentialist readings of the play, see Brustein and the chapter on "proto-existentialism" in Bernard Dukore's *Bernard Shaw, Playwright: Aspects of Shavian Drama* (Columbia, Mo.: U. of Missouri Press, 1973).
10. *Major Critical Essays* (London: Constable, 1930), p. 287.