CARLYLE and SHAW:

A Comparison Based on

PAST and PRESENT and MAJOR BARBARA

Romanticism is the endeavour, in face of growing factual obstacles, to achieve, to retain, or to justify that illusioned view of the universe and of human life which is produced by an imaginative fusion of the familiar and the strange, the known and the unknown, the real and the ideal, the finite and the infinite, the material and spiritual, the natural and the supernatural.

Fairchild,

The Romantic Quest,

Page 251.
INTRODUCTION

This thesis has the twofold purpose of revealing, within its limits, the way in which the streams of rationalism and romanticism flow together in the works of Carlyle and of Shaw, and of indicating that Shaw was not only similar to Carlyle in many of his attitudes, but owed the latter a debt of gratitude for providing the basis, in Past and Present, of Major Barbara.

Chapter one of the thesis is concerned with outlining, in general terms, why Shaw belongs primarily to the nineteenth century and to romanticism, and I use Carlyle as a yard-stick for comparison.

Succeeding chapters are concerned with a direct comparison between Carlyle's Past and Present and Shaw's Major Barbara, but will refer the reader constantly to the idea that the central area of common significance in the two authors is the peculiar marrying of romantic outlook to rational argument.

In the final chapter, on "Captains of Industry," I offer, apropos the names of one of Carlyle's, and one of Shaw's, characters, what seems to me complete proof of Shaw's indebtedness to Carlyle.
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CHAPTER 1

THE MARRIAGE OF ROMANTICISM AND RATIONALISM

A pertinent similarity existed between the present and immediate past of both Carlyle and Shaw. This similar historical context was to produce, in each man, a vigorous reaction to the age in which he lived, and also to the recent past.

Carlyle, the most volcanically vociferous representative in English literature of that school of European thinkers who saw the dangers that had emanated from the Newtonian science, and its offspring in the social and political world, the Enlightenment, declared vigorously against mechanism, not in the sense of industrialisation, which was also heralded by the Enlightenment, but as it presented itself as the world-view of the philosophes and their followers. Just as the Reformation of the sixteenth century had provided the initial challenge to the medieval view of hierarchy, and the initial impetus to modern democracy, so did the science of the Enlightenment, with its mechanical view of the universe (Newton) and its mechanical explanation of human psychology (Locke) cast doubts on the basic truth of religion, and reinforce the claims of those who questioned monarchy by divine - or any - right, as a valid form of government. This world-view, positing as it did an original prime mover who, having set the universe in motion no longer evidenced any interest in it, and proclaiming, as Rousseau did, that any government must be by contract between governed and governor, seemed to many to
threaten the whole structure of orderly existence. That their fears were justified the French Revolution seemed to prove, and the reaction that had its roots in the 'sensibility' and 'nature cults' of Germany in the late eighteenth century put out some rather unexpected branches in the romanticism of the nineteenth. For romanticism had seemed to be on the side of revolution at the turn of the century; witness Burns and Wordsworth. But in its very essence romanticism could not stay on the side of what appeared to be anarchy; and France, from 1799 to 1805 wore very much the mask of anarchy to those who lived under the more firmly settled crowns of contemporary Europe.

Romanticism is not, of course, a label that should be so loosely applied as I have so far seemed to do, and it behoves me to define the sense in which I here use the term, and the kind of romantic of whom I am thinking. Firstly then, I judge a man as a romantic who puts high value on the individual human being; who sees the human soul in its personal striving for a relationship with the rest of the natural world (including other human beings) as central to any discussion of human affairs. Secondly, I consider it necessary to the genuine romantic that he has a world view that is essentially religious, though not perhaps in the usual understanding of the term. In this respect, as I will hope to show, my romantic will either see his God as immanent in nature (i.e. pantheism) or as immanent in man (i.e. evolutionary humanism). Thirdly, and as a direct consequence of the above, the
romantic will be one who will always appear to be revolutionary in matters political and social, in as much as he will be arguing for individualism; but on the other hand he will retain deeply ingrained elements of conservatism or reaction, since absolute individualism must lead to political and social anarchy, and thus to a negation of any quasi-religious principle implying order in the universe and/or the world of human intercourse. Fourthly, such a man will evidence pessimism, or disillusionment, with the present state coupled with an intuitive optimism with regard to the future.

Carlyle is, after Wordsworth, one of the truest romantics in these terms. He condemns the mechanism of the eighteenth century in the roundest terms, preaches a kind of socialism that appears to put a high value on both the individual and on human relationships, detests the government of his day and age, and teaches that man's one hope lies in following the 'law of Nature' under the guidance of a Great - or rather the Greatest Possible - Individual. Yet in all his writings he fails to put forward a great contemporary worthy of following - Sir Robert Peel is a doubtful candidate for the position - and ends his life claiming that those who have long lionized him have never heeded him. Individualism, pantheism, rebellious conservatism, pessimistic disillusion are all present, and in his long continued insistence on teaching and preaching, an implicit belief in man's ultimate teachability.

But Carlyle had good reason to be disillusioned, if we stand for a moment in his place. The hated tenets of democracy, which
he had long fulminated against, had made slow but steady progress, sinking the greater individual into the undifferentiated mass of humanity, and leaving the great duty of government to the decision of the ballot box. Could anything be more mechanical; less in keeping with the 'law of nature'? Charles Darwin, in his *Origin of the Species* had routed pantheism even more effectively than the 'higher criticism' had damaged the 'evidence' for Christianity. That the *Origin of the Species* had also cast further doubt on the validity of the Bible as a true and accurate account of the world's history was small comfort to a man who saw another, more fiercely efficient, science arising to add its voice to the mechanistic view of life he had so long fought. His reaction to T.H. Huxley's dictum "In the beginning was hydrogen" was symptomatic: "any man who spoke thus in my presence I would request to be silent - No more of that stuff to me!"

Had he but known it, Carlyle might have been able to lessen his sorrow in the knowledge that another romantic, more polished in the use of rhetorical techniques than himself, was preparing to take up the baton. That man was George Bernard Shaw, who was to parallel Carlyle's battles for a new order against the old in a way almost uncanny, if once the resemblances of historical setting, the two men's origins and early life, their choice of vehicle, and the roughly similar world-view are noticed.

Shaw, like Carlyle, appears at first glance to be a socialist and a democrat. His Fabian affiliations and his political writings
point largely in this direction. It comes as something of a shock to realize that, superimposed on his socialism, and sapping his democracy, there is an authoritarian creed no whit less severe in its ultimate ramifications than Carlyle's.

Having seen that constitutional and representative democracy had continued to flourish during (and after) Carlyle's lifetime, and noted the impetus given to a materialistic or mechanistic view of life by the young sciences, especially geology, paleontology and biology, we must remember that, in the field of politics there was much room for social complaint. Democracy, as Carlyle had foreseen, was no "Morrison's Pill", as long as laissez faire economics were allowed to reign. Here then was Shaw's whipping horse for socialistic purposes: his chance to show as the champion of the common individual man in relation to others. But Shaw, like Carlyle, was conscious of at least one individual who stood out from (in the phrase both Carlyle and Shaw borrowed from Edmond Burke) "the level of the swinish multitude;" that man himself. This is, of course, the more common mark of romantic individualism which so far I have avoided. But it does play a part in the thought and writing of both these men. Both of them, conscious of their own superiority to the common run of mankind - and their judgement was, surely, a just one - both, I suggest, still suffered from such a sense of inferiority as to have to generalise this self - consciousness into a cult of hero - worship.

Further, Shaw, who in his teens had cast overboard the lukewarm Christianity of his childhood as useless supercargo, found himself unable to go along with the kind of materialistic, mechanistic
science that pretentiously tried to take the place of religion.

Again like Carlyle, he was too basically moral, too staunchly puritan, in his outlook. But such an attitude to life demands a sheet - anchor outside the self. It demands a faith. Pantheism had been, Shaw perceived, justly discredited. Evolution had to be accepted, on the still accumulating evidence, as a fact of life. Need one therefore accept the mechanistic view of natural selection? The answer was provided, in essence by Lamarck, in more philosophic detail by Samuel Butler. If one accepted that 'natural selection' was merely a chapter of accidents - yes. But not if one supposed - and it is a valid hypothesis - that every living creature can exert, however consciously or subconsciously - some sort of will towards survival. For Shaw as for Butler, and later for Bergson, this became the basic tenet of religious faith: that evolution was itself creative: that there was a 'Life Force' immanent in each creature of every species, and that each succeeded to the degree it was able to bring will to bear on its environment. That so eminent a scientist as Julian Huxley supports this view in principle, and especially in relation to man, shows how far the idea is from being defeated or discredited today.

Even so, Shaw died as did Carlyle, a pessimistic and disillusioned man, echoing Carlyle's sentence, as Eric Bentley points out:

"They call me a great man now, but not one believes what I have told them," said Carlyle, and Shaw: "I have produced no permanent impression because nobody has ever believed me."

1. Religion Without Revelation, passim.
Again the requirements for romanticism have been fulfilled: Individualism, Creative Evolution as a religious belief, revolutionary conservatism, and personal disillusion accompanied by a life-long insistence that things can be better if only men will it so.

While it is of the utmost importance, then, to recognize the essential romanticism that permeates the thought and writing of these two men, one must also give due weight to the historical influences of their times, which made them not mere reactionaries but contemporary spokesmen and even 'prophets'. Carlyle, for example, detested France, the enlightenment and the philosophes, but in his essay on Voltaire he praises him for "having given the death - stab to modern superstition," and adds that religion itself does not die because of this:

"a little straw burnt may hide the stars of the sky; but the stars are there, and will reappear."1

Shaw, for all his detestation of second generation Darwinian biology, is always ready to concede the possibilities inherent in modern science:

"Psycho-analysis - is not all quackery and pornography and might conceivably cure a case of Sadism as it might cure any of the phobias. And psychoanalysis is a mere fancy compared to the knowledge we now pretend to concerning the function of our glands and their effect on our character and conduct."2

The point is that both these men have imbibed large doses of rationalism from the very areas of thought against which they seem to be in reaction. One of the most fundamental qualities they have in common is that streak of deep intellectual honesty which, having heard


and weighed the evidences against the beliefs in which they had been reared, forced them to renounce those beliefs. Like many apostate intellectuals, they could never afterwards quite forgive either the religion into which they had been born, nor the proponents of their apostasy.

From this state of mind springs one of the major talking points of their several critics: the quasi-religious vocabulary employed by both Shaw and Carlyle, which, (as Grierson puts it when discussing Carlyle's comment on Cromwell's cruel sack of Drogheda) tempts us to ask of the one as of the other:

"Are you yourself really justifying the action, or are you taking refuge from a decision in a cloud of words that would have one meaning for your mother and another for yourself?"  

'A cloud of words' is an excellent phrase to describe much of Carlyle's writing, as On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History, much of Sartor Resartus and Past and Present, the Latter - Day Pamphlets, or the commentary in Cromwell and Frederick the Great testify. We could apply it equally to parts of Shaw's Major Barbara, Man and Superman and many more of the plays and prefaces. But there are Carlyle's Essays, and long passages in Past and Present and Sartor Resartus, where there is no ambiguity, just as there are Shaw plays, prefaces and essays, which in point of intellectual honesty and clarity would have left the philosophes of the eighteenth century and the scientists of the nineteenth distinctly in the shade. For Carlyle and Shaw learned a double lesson from the men who robbed them of Christian faith: they learned the power of the physical.

What has been called the 'dichotomy of Carlyle's thought' or the 'eternal paradox of Shaw's writing' rests almost entirely on this knowledge. Neither the 'dichotomy' nor the 'paradox' existed for these writers. That they exist for many critics is because of the critics' failure to take due account of all the influences, personal and historical, which formed the two men and their work, and their failure to realize that literature that is polemical can never be treated entirely at face value; it must be read in relation to the subject against which it is directed, and set against the whole outlook of its author.

With regard to this special aspect of Shaw's and Carlyle's writings, i.e. the propensity to use the word God and other terminology from the Christian religion, we must recognize that the intention of both writers is to use such language in an allegorical sense, immediately conveying their meaning to their respective audiences through symbols and phrases which have been in the language and mind of the people for over a thousand years. Given the wider and less educated audience of the nineteenth and twentieth, there is no great difference between this mode of address and that adopted by eighteenth century writers who employed classical names and symbols for the same kind of purpose to a more restricted audience. To quibble about such a practice on the grounds that the device is confusing and even misleading to the genuine Christian is at once to deprive the polemician of his legitimate weapons - the ambiguity of
language and the right to use the relativity of truth - and to fail to realize that for people like Carlyle and Shaw, Christianity stood in the same relationship to them, as say, the religions of Greece and Rome stood to Dryden or Pope.

Implicit in the critical indignation that such use of religious terminology has called down on Carlyle and Shaw is the plea that it is insincere. Once again, this is pleading from the Christian pulpit. Surely no-one could really doubt the religious sincerity of Barbara Undershaw, or Joan? Barbara's "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is heartfelt enough: so is Joan's "How long, 0 Lord, how long, will it be before the earth is ready to receive Thy saints?"
The fact that we know Shaw is putting a different personal meaning on the words 'God', 'Lord' and 'Saints' is quite beside the point. It does not in the least alter the total message of either play.

Carlyle's understanding of what he is doing is made clear in his lecture on Odin where he says, after denying the pagan religion was entirely an allegory:

"The Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory, and a beautiful, just and serious one; but consider whether Bunyan's allegory could have preceded the faith it symbolises! The faith had to be there, standing believed by everybody, of which the Allegory could then become the shadow. The Allegory (he goes on) is the product of certainty, not the producer of it; in Bunyan's or in any other case. For Paganism, therefore, we have still to enquire, Whence came that scientific certainty, the parent of such a bewildered heap of allegories, errors and confusions?"

Apart from the fact that Carlyle is always more kind to Christianity than to other religions (he did grow up in it after all)
there is no ambiguity here. Bunyan's allegory grows out of the certainty, to Bunyan, of Christianity. Pagan allegories grew out of the certainty, to them, of paganism. And Carlyle's symbolic use of religious language grows out of his certainty that there is a "vital" Force which dwells in him," that this is "man's spiritual nature,"

"that what we call imagination, fancy, understanding and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other.... that what we call the moral quality of a man, what is it but another side of the one vital Force whereby he is and works?"

Surely this is a foreshadowing of the "Vital Force" of Butler and of Shaw, and of Bergson's "Eman Vital"? It is the placing of emphasis on the intuitive in man, and the assertion of the god within him - and it is part of the mystique of Romanticism. We come closer to an understanding of Carlyle's position here by referring to Sartor Resartus.

"....... There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness! Was it not to preach-forth this same Higher that sages and martyrs, the Poet and the Priest, in all times, have spoken and suffered; bearing testimony, through life and through death, of the Godlike that is in Man, and how in the Godlike only has he Strength and Freedom? ........ Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved ........"

But lest we should be blinded by Christian glasses to the import of the phrase: "in all times," and forget Carlyle's eclectic choice of religious "heroes", we should also read a little further:

"Cease, my much respected Herr von Voltaire....... shut thy sweet voice; for the task appointed thee seems finished. Sufficiently hast thou demonstrated the proposition ....... That the Mythus of the Christian Religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth........ But what next? Wilt thou help us to embody the divine Spirit of the Religion in a new Mythus, ....... that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live? What ! thou hast no faculty of that kind? Only a torch for burning, no hammer for building? Take our thanks, then, and thyself away."

Here, in the space of two short pages, we come close to winnowing the corn from the chaff of Carlyle's attitude to religion: his insistence on a primary, intuitive religiosity that is within each individual, yet which transcends him; his belief that Christianity, in its miraculous elements, has been proven inadequate to the present age, and his insistence that a new "mythus" must be raised up to provide for the spiritual force in man, to incorporate the best facets of older religions.

Shaw, with nearly a century more of history behind him, and seventy years of personal experience, phrases the argument more coolly in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, but the essentials are the same:

"...... There is no question of a new religion, but rather of redistilling the eternal spirit of religion and thus extricating it from the sludgy residue of temporalities and legends that are making belief impossible ........."

"It is the adulteration of religion by the romance of miracles and paradises and torture chambers that makes it reel at the impact of every advance in science, instead of being clarified by it."

"Our statesmen must get religion by hook or by crook; and as we are committed to Adult Suffrage it must be capable of vulgarisation."

"...... common irreligion will destroy civilization unless it is countered by common religion."

Or if 1924 seems a little late for Carlylean influence, we can go to
the Plays Pleasant Preface of 1898 where Shaw says "there is only
one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it."\(^1\)

That Shaw considered Carlyle one of a small group of writers who
should be read on matters religious and political is obvious from
the passage in the Intelligent Woman's Guide, where he says:

".... A socialist state will not allow its children to be
taught that polygamy, slaughter of prisoners of war, and blood
sacrifices including human sacrifices, are divinely appointed
institutions; and this means that it will not allow the Bible
to be introduced in school otherwise than as a collection of old
chronicles, poems, oracles and political fulminations, on the
same footing as the travels of Marco Polo, Goethe's Faust,
Carlyle's Past and Present and Sartor Resartus, and Ruskin's
Ethics of the Dust."\(^2\)

And if the compliment seems somewhat backhanded, we should note
that what Shaw intends is that the Bible should be compared to these
other books, for political and ethical validity, and that Carlyle rates
two volumes to the others' one.

Desmond MacCarthy, certainly the most astute critic of Shaw
I have read, sums up Shaw's religious philosophy with brilliant
compactness when he says: "He is an evolutionary pantheist, with
pronounced Manichean tendencies."\(^3\) The brilliance of the analysis
surely lies in the perception that Shaw's religion is a compound of
the nineteenth and twentieth century attitudes to nature and to science,

1. Prefaces, p. 728


3. Shaw, Desmond MacCarthy, p. 140 MacGibbon & Kee,
with an eternal sense of good and evil informed by what might be paradoxically called intuitive rationalism. Carlyle would have called the pantheism "Natural Super-naturalism" - as he did in Sartor Resartus; he would have greeted the fully formulated philosophy of Creative Evolution as the perfect answer to Darwinian mechanism, and his constant insistence that man could, by obeying the laws of nature, oust evil from the world at least makes it plausible that he would have agreed with a Manichean element. For both these men, evil is caused on the social plane by those who would eat, but not work; on the religious plane by those who refuse to believe in anything beyond their own appetites and senses; on the political plane by those who would rule without the innate gift of greatness, or who serve such. In a word and for all departments of life, by the "shams" who usurp from the "true" and ignore or conceal the "facts", the "laws of nature."

Their common use of religious language, then, has several causes not hard to discover. It is a part of their cultural backgrounds, it is easier to employ than manufacturing a new religious vocabulary (though Shaw, of course, attempts this in part) and it serves a rather devious polemical purpose in that, in the context of each writer's work, it causes uneasiness to both the religious and the sceptical reader. Finally, the use of the established religious language allows both Shaw and Carlyle to give rein to, and gain from their audience, an emotional response which is religious, even if not Christian.

This, in the strictest sense, is a mark of romantic literature.
In very large part such literature aims at the deep emotions of the human heart, in contradistinction to that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That both Carlyle and Shaw avoided the usual treatment of love between man and woman seems to me to have clouded the issue, and the reasons for this are somewhat unclear. It seems likely that Carlyle was himself impotent, and certain that Shaw was at least not normally sexed, if one can go by his account of that area of his life in *Sixteen Self SkETCHES* But however this may be, we should be careful to draw the distinction that Shaw did not draw, between sentimentality and romanticism - terms which he uses interchangeably - and realize that with both these men we are dealing with romantics armed with the weapons of rationalism. In Carlyle's case, this is easier to perceive than in Shaw's, but it is no less true in Shaw's. The warp and weft of all Shaw's apparently rational and intellectual argument is romantic idealism, as it is in Carlyle's, and as much as any other single cause, this is the one that leaves the reader perplexed as to the true import of what each has to say.

As MacCarthy puts it, Shaw often seems to bristle with ideas, yet we can get no clear idea of a central, unifying theme. This is not, as Mr MacCarthy's own criticism shows, because there is no unifying theme, so much as that it is not the one we expect to find.

2. In the chapter on his sex life levelled at Frank Harris.
3. op. cit.,
Again, the reason is that always we go to Shaw in the naive belief that we are dealing with an arch-rationalist to whose ideas in dialogue (or elsewhere) we must pay the closest intellectual attention. Then, to our amazement (sometimes we are even piqued) we find that somehow it is our emotional being that has been influenced. The reason for this, I suggest, is that very often Shaw's apparently rational dialogue is informed with the same emotional fervour that is always present in Carlyle, but except where it really suits Shaw's purpose - St. Joan's and Barbara's speeches already quoted are cases in point - he tends to keep the emotion submerged so that it forms an undercurrent. And often he uses - even abuses - the Shakespearean device of comic relief precisely in order that the audience does not become too emotionally involved - before Shaw wants them to be.

That Shaw was himself aware of the tension that often existed between the "chaos of clear ideas" in his plays, (the phrase is again MacCarthy's) and the underlying transcendental philosophy, is shown in the preface to Major Barbara where, after discussing his views on poverty Shaw says:

"Once take your eyes from the ends of the earth and fix them on this truth just under your nose, and Andrew Undershaft's views (on money) will not perplex you in the least. Unless indeed his constant sense that he is only the instrument of a Will or Life Force which uses him for purposes wider than his own may puzzle you. If so, that is because you are walking in artificial Darwinian darkness, or in mere stupidity. All genuinely religious people have that consciousness. To them, Undershaft the Mystic will be quite intelligible ............"

"Taking our eyes from the ends of the earth" means forgetting the "slave morality of Christianity", that lauds poverty and promises paradisal rewards. "Fixing our eyes on this truth just under our noses"
would appear to mean agreeing with an essentially Ricardian view of
economic distribution. Instead we find ourselves being invited to
lift our eyes again, not to the ends of the earth, but to some
elemental and transcendental force, creative in nature, that is the
anti-thesis of mechanistic evolutionary ideas and which 'uses' materialistic
economics to subserve its own supranatural ends.
Shaw himself, in conversation with Hesketh Pearson, admitted that

"Shavian plots are ...... like Shakespeare's, - all stolen from other writers, ........"

but, as I endeavoured to show in the opening chapter of this thesis, his debt to Carlyle is not confined to the dramatization of the core of Past and Present.

In Carlyle, I submit, Shaw found an author who had similar literary aspirations, similar political and religious ideals, and most important, had discovered a technique of writing that could not fail to score with the reading public.

Quite simply, the technique was to choose a handful of the most controversial subjects of the day, take a view of them that was, at first glance, savagely at variance with accepted opinion, and then, at regular intervals, to hammer that view home.

Shaw recognised this technique in himself and in Carlyle in almost the same terms. Of Carlyle he wrote, with typical and outrageous exaggeration (the outrageousness, it always seems to me, makes Shaw's exaggerations more bearable)

"In this country, Carlyle, with his vein of peasant inspiration, apprehended the sort of greatness that places the true hero of history so far beyond the mere preux chevalier. 

........ This one ray of perception became Carlyle's whole stock."

in-trade; and it sufficed to make a literary master of him. In due time, when *Carlyle* is dead, come I, and dramatise the *by-this-time familiar distinction in Arms and the Man*.

Of himself, Shaw wrote to N.C. Duffin that he agreed that he (Shaw) was "only a preacher with four or five texts which would be dull if he were not a bit of an artist."

The point that I want to make here is that Shaw is part of a line of writers in English, of which Bunyan and Carlyle are the two other great exponents.

For these men Reform was an urgent necessity. And I would suggest that the great difference between others and, to confine myself to the nineteenth century, Carlyle and Shaw, is that the latter two base their cris des œuvres on moral grounds rather than religious, philosophical, political, social or aesthetic presumptions. This is not, I hasten to say, to exclude moral considerations from the concern of other Victorians, nor yet to exclude the other bases for attacking contemporary problems from the concerns of Carlyle and Shaw. It is simply a matter of which comes first, and the resulting literature, in every case, distinguishes an author as either what I will call a "puritan" or a "non-puritan."

1. Prefaces, Bernard Shaw, P. 752. (emphasis mine)
2. Author of The Quintessence of Bernard Shaw
A typical passage from the preface of *Major Barbara* may make my point more clearly, instancing as it does the similarity of his choice of subject to Carlyle's, the difference between what Shaw actually says and what he seems to say, the moral slant of his argument, and the extent to which he diverges from Carlyle on a similar theme.

Discussing contemporary penal law, Shaw writes:

"And here my disagreement with the Salvation Army, and with all propagandists of the Cross (which I loathe as I loathe all gibbets) becomes deep indeed. Forgiveness, absolution, atonement, are figments: punishment is only a pretence of cancelling one crime with another; and you can no more have forgiveness without vindictiveness than you can have a cure without a disease. You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable or pardonable."

Citing the case of Bill Walker, who assaults Jenny Hill in the play and then finds that he cannot salve his conscience either by himself being assaulted or by fining himself, Shaw remarks that Bill finds *Major Barbara*, as executor for the Salvation Army, "As inexorable as fact itself." For the Army

"will not tolerate a redeemed ruffian; it leaves him no means of salvation except ceasing to be a ruffian. In doing this, the Salvation Army instinctively grasps the central truth of Christianity and discards its central superstition: that central truth being the vanity of revenge and punishment, and that central superstition the salvation of the world by the gibbet."

Later (page 38-39) Shaw applies the lesson derived from his parable (and in using that word I draw attention to his and Carlyle's

tendency to use the parable form to point a moral) to society as a whole. The present penal system, we are given to understand, should be abolished, but, in its place we are offered this grim alternative:

"It would be far more sensible to put up with [criminals'] vices, as we put up with their illnesses, until they give more trouble than they are worth, at which point we should, with many apologies place them in the lethal chamber and get rid of them. We shall never have real moral responsibility until everyone knows that his deeds are irrevocable, and that his life depends on his usefulness."

In such passages the reader becomes aware of how inextricably entwined are Shaw's moral and his socio-political ideas. The same sentiment, expressed by a doctrinaire socialist with only logical and material fish to fry, comes up as "he who does not work, does not eat." The end may well be the same: the idler may be liquidated. But the premises leading to that end seem to me very different.

Those who have read Carlyle's pamphlet on "Model Prisons" will find very similar sentiments expressed there. Carlyle, too, objects to "the" waste of the life of honest men in watching or restraining dishonest ones," and labours the point that a ruffian is a ruffian. His claim,

"Understand too that except upon a basis of even such rigour, inexorable as that of Destiny or Doom, there is no true pity possible," when discussing the effect of capital punishment, exactly chimes Shaw's choice of words in discussing Bill Walker's case. Both men

2. see Shaw, op. cit., p. 38.
agree that it is more important to concentrate attention on those elements of society that are likely to turn to crime, if not materially helped, than to use punitive measures for reform, though Carlyle is markedly more conservative in his opinions in the essay cited than is Shaw. Carlyle sums up his attitude, thus, after defining the criminal as an enemy of the universe:

"The one method clearly is: That, after fair trial, you dissolve partnership with him; send him, in the name of Heaven, whither he is striving all this while, and have done with him. For there is immense work, and of a far hopefuller sort, to be done elsewhere."¹

The extent to which Carlyle and Shaw differ on this question is typical of their difference throughout. Where Carlyle hates heartily by instinct, Shaw dislikes intensely from what he would have us believe was a rational basis. Ultimately, however, it is no more than the difference between the thrusting of an evildoer into a peat-bog, and the thrusting of one into a lethal chamber: a difference, that is to say, in the time of writing; in the influences upon their respective minds. For the kind of reform of the penal code against which Carlyle sets himself in 'Model Prisons' had established itself and gained increasing impetus over the intervening half-century, and had strengthened its position by annexing to itself, in addition to the religious arguments mentioned by Carlyle, such new scientific and medical evidence as supported the movement.

A complete study of this subject would require a comparative analysis of Carlyle's pamphlet, and Shaw's preface "Imprisonment."

1. *Latter Day Pamphlets*, (emphasis mine)
to Sidney and Beatrice Webb's book, *English Local Government*. This I do not intend to undertake but would draw the interested reader's attention to the similarity of argument in both essays, in regard to the points dealt with, and Shaw's use of the same historical and religious names and events, as, for example, Robespierre and the French Revolution, Cromwell and Ireland, the story of Cain, John Howard's investigations of English prisons, and not least, the basing of each essay on personal visits to 'model' prisons which are described in the same terms. As a matter of passing interest, we may note that Carlyle, in this essay, uses Joan's cry, "How long, O Lord, How long?" to vent his feelings.

Shaw's essay is, in effect, both an answer to, and an extension of Carlyle's, going further because Shaw, as usual, sees deeper. It is, of course, because he sees deeper that Shaw cannot agree with Carlyle that "where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, brute-mindedness \ldots \ldots \ldots were it with mere dungeons, gibbets and crosses, attack it, I say \ldots \ldots." ¹

Shaw "loathes the Cross, as he loathes all gibbets" because his knowledge is much greater than is Carlyle's, not because, his rational element is notably more pronounced. Let the doubting reader recall the motto that opens this thesis, and recall the inscription that Shaw would have placed over the first prison he saw: ²

1. *Past and Present*, Bk. 111, ch. xii, p. 194.
"All have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God."

In spite of the divergences, when we compare such passages and such essays as I have done above, it is easy to perceive the similarities, not only of tone and intention, but even in anecdote and phraseology of Carlyle and Shaw. That the latter was aware of his place in a tradition of writers, this extract from the preface to Major Barbara clearly shows.

"My object here is ...... simply to make our theatre critics ashamed of their habit of treating Britain as an intellectual void, and assuming that every philosophical idea, every historic theory, every criticism of our moral, religious and juridical institutions, must necessarily be either a foreign import, or else a fantastic sally........ totally unrelated to the existing body of thought. I urge them to remember that this body of thought is the slowest of growths and the rarest of blossomings, and that if there be such a thing on the philosophic plane as a matter of course, it is that no individual can make more than a minute contribution to it." |

Something of Shaw's sense of the slow growth of ideas may be conveyed to us if we turn to chapters eleven and twelve of Book three, Past and Present. In the first of these, Carlyle has a number of sayings that might well have been Shaw's own mottoes, as anyone conversant with his views or work will agree. For example,

"Work...... is in communication with Nature." or,
"Know thy work and do it," or,
".......... a man perfects himself by working."

Again, Shaw the vitalist could hardly fail to be impressed with such prescient lines as:

1. op. cit., pp. 208-209.
This is not, of course, to say that Butler was not a major influence on Shaw in this area. What I am suggesting is that Carlyle adumbrates so many of the ideas later expounded separately and in more detail by several men who intervened between Carlyle and Shaw, and that the reuniting of these ideas again in Shaw's work suggests that closer examination of the two together might be instructive.
Neither Shaw nor Carlyle was a systematic thinker. Each saw life clearly, but also he saw it whole, in the sense that religion, social phenomena, political problems, and the role of the individual, are seen and treated not as the neatly interlocking pieces of a rigorously ratiocinated system of philosophy, but as the various and interrelated faces of moving, growing and vital life. Consequently the edges of their thoughts blur or overlap and any attempt to separate them is apt to leave an impression of system and clarity which, however applicable to a Herbert Spencer or a Bertrand Russell, is not so to a Shaw or a Carlyle.

In general terms, we can draw attention to the fact that, in Past and Present, Carlyle is at pains to show that although the ancient religion has long since ceased to be viable, the vital elements of spiritual certainty and wonder that informed it are in no way vitiated by the need to set aside the peripheral myths and external rituals made untenable by modern scholarship and sophistication: that although the ancient belief in the divinity of kings and the inherent superiority of an hereditary aristocracy may be outworn, there was a valuable element of truth in both, since, in Carlyle's view, persons of undoubted moral or intellectual superiority would not only make better legislators, but preserve a bond of human
relationship between governor and governed, sadly lacking in nineteenth century democracy: that although the 'brass-collared churl' of the feudal landowner was inevitably and rightly of the past, he enjoyed a reciprocal relationship as between master and man, which the 'cash nexus' had destroyed.

Shaw, in Major Barbara, covers similar ground. By utilizing Cusins's Dionysian creed along with Undershaw's 'material mysticism', he points to the timelessness and validity of the religious instinct while condemning certain peripheral aspects of current Christianity as evidenced in the Salvation Army. By comparing Lady Britomart's archaic feudalism and Stephen's sentimental democracy with Andrew Undershaw's socialistic autocracy, he shows the validity of genuine authority and true leadership. By contrasting the treatment received, by Snobby Price and Peter Shirley, to that received by Undershaw's workers, and then by having Undershaw admit the faults of his own men in their material utopia, Shaw not only condemns the usual deficiencies of the 'cash-nexus' under laissez faire economics, but also points out its inevitable shortcomings in ideal conditions.

Viewed thus, it is not difficult to see the general similarity of thought in the two works, and we will see many of the resemblances of detail. One very important difference of emphasis should, however, be noted before we progress further, since at first glance, it may appear as an absolute reversal, by Shaw, of Carlyle's opinion, which in fact it is not.

I speak of money and its treatment, in Past and Present and Major
Barbara. A casual reading of the former leaves the reader with the general impression that Carlyle completely detests money, while Shaw's play might lead one to the conclusion that Shaw is obsessed with the importance of money. One has, however, only to consider that the fundamental cause, in Carlyle's view, of Abbot Hugo's failure, and of Abbot Samson's success, is their respective inability and aptitude in the handling of St. Edmundsbury's finance; and in Shaw's case, that Barbara is not won over to Undershaft's materialism as such, but only to a more realistic attitude to material considerations.

In either case, it is a matter of relative, not absolute, value, that our authors are subjecting to scrutiny. The difference in emphasis arises from the fact that Carlyle has chosen to attack English institutions from the material angle, and to work toward the spiritual, while Shaw has chosen to attack sentimental religiosity posing as, and even believing itself to be, a truly spiritual entity, and to work back towards the material.

Carlyle's method is less susceptible of misunderstanding, but, when added to his characteristically emphatic and rhetorical style, still brought down such criticisms as Bertrand Russell's, which, noting that the romantics' distaste for the industrial spoliation of the countryside, and the vulgarisation of middle-class taste, forced them into a quasi-alliance with the proletariat, runs:

"Engels praised Carlyle, not perceiving that what Carlyle desired was not the emancipation of wage-earners, but their
subjection to the kind of masters they had had in the Middle Ages." ¹

Neither Engels nor Russell was quite right; but Engels was more so. Carlyle was in no doubt as to how completely the past was past.

On the other hand, Shaw's method of employing a devil's advocate of such power as Undershaft is especially dangerous in the drama, where Undershaft has escaped Shaw to some extent and tends to overshadow Barbara and Gusins, instead of forming an intended balance with them. The result has been a general tendency for critics to believe that Shaw is in complete agreement with Undershaft. If this were so, the view of Eric Bentley ² and of Desmond MacCarthy ³ that Major Barbara is a great religious play - and I agree with that view - would be nonsensical.

1. History of Western Philosophy, - Bertrand Russell, p. 754.
2. Bernard Shaw, - Eric Bentley.
Readers of Carlyle’s Past and Present will recall that the work
is divided into four books, under the heads "Proem," "The Ancient
Monk," "The Modern Worker" and "Horoscope."

The "Proem" is a discussion in brief of the themes of the book,
in three parts. The first three chapters are an expose of the
contemporary state of English society as Carlyle saw it, the fourth a
sadly satirical commentary on then current attempts to ameliorate social
injustices and the last two chapters, "Aristocracy of Talent" and
"Hero-Worship" are thumbnail sketches of Carlyle’s own propositions
for setting to rights the ship of State.

The "Ancient Monk" sets up before the reader a twelfth century
monastic community as a microcosm of society in which bad government
and an unhappy society are exampled under Abbot Hugo’s reign, and
good government under Abbot Samson’s. Methods of election, problems
of practical administration, the place of religion in human life are
here discussed, with the purpose of comparing the old to the new ways
of life.

"The Modern Worker" separates, in the third book, the various
phenomena of nineteenth century society: industrialism, materialism,
the titular and moneyed aristocracies of the day, the type of the
contemporary industrialist and politician, conditions of work,
government, and religion.

Book IV, "Horoscope," as its title suggests, is an attempt on Carlyle's part to propound the means by which a 'good society' might be achieved. By means of direct comparison with the past, as discussed in Book Two, and direct slating of contemporary conditions, Carlyle proceeds to isolate the hopeful aspects of the human situation: ambition and altruism, perseverance, the undoubted presence of leadership and genius waiting to be tapped, and the ability of man to learn from others to improve the social, political and religious life of the individual and the nation.

Shaw's Major Barbara, written in three acts, also breaks into four sections.

Act One introduces us to the main characters of the play, and sets the stage for the struggle that will ensue between Shaw's type of the saint, Barbara, and his devil's advocate, Andrew Undershaft. Additionally, it sketches in one side of the social spectrum, the upper class side, and introduces the question of religion in the three forms put forward in the play: the established Church of England, the Salvation Army, and that to which both Cusins and Undershaft lean in their several ways, namely vitalism.

Act Two presents an extension of the ideas set forward in Act One. The 'condition of England question' is advanced in relation to the workless and shiftless who have to make use of the Salvation Army shelter, the wages of the workers are compared to the incomes of the wealthy, a distinction is drawn between the two types of 'captains of
industry, Bodger and Undershaff, and the function of the Salvation Army is probed in such a way as to show that it cannot fulfil its religious duties except it first and last performs a social function; that of keeping the workers quiescent in spite of their maltreatment at the hands of their political and industrial masters.

In Act Three, which is divided into three scenes, there are in fact two clearly distinguishable parts. The first, embracing scenes one and two, counterparts Book Three of Past and Present (as Act Two is, in virtue of its religious nature, the counterpart of Book Two). In these first two scenes Undershaff, in his discussion with Stephen, shreds the existing political situation and the liberal mentality, and then, by showing the family, Cusins, and Lomax over the Perivale St. Andrews works, indicates what can and should be done on a material basis for the social betterment of the workers. The final scene, corresponding in essence to 'Horoscope' of Past and Present emphasises that these material advances are insufficient. For Cusins, this is the jumping off point for greater political advances. For Barbara, it is the place where she can concentrate on the work of saving souls that are not at the mercy of starved stomachs. This final scene, then, is given over to showing that once realism, in the form of beneficent materialism, has achieved all it can, then is the time that idealism can be allowed its head.

That such a correspondence of part to part, in the two works, should not be pressed too closely, goes without saying. The very
difference between book and dramatic form allows Carlyle to be much more discursive and repetitive, and forces Shaw to be more allusive and concise.

In the first instance, then, we may note that Carlyle, seeing about him a highly industrialized and agriculturally flourishing England, complains that the country is "Full of wealth .... yet dying of inanition."¹ To him it seems inconceivable that with such obvious wealth abounding there should be so many unemployed. They are, he says,

"In work-houses, pleasantly so named, because work cannot be done in them. Twelve hundred thousand workers in England alone, their cunning right hand lamed, lying idle in their sorrowful bosom ........ In the eyes and brows of these men hung the gloomiest expression, not of anger, but of grief and shame and manifold inarticulate distress and weariness........"²

The equivalent of a work-house at the time Shaw wrote *Major Barbara* was the dismal and sparsely furnished Salvation Army soup kitchen, where the "bread of charity [sickened] in the stumick" of the like of Peter Shirley, who epitomizes the 'grief, shame, distress and weariness' noted by Carlyle. Shaw and his workers are, naturally, much more knowledgeable over the commercial and economic causes of their plight than Carlyle and his workers. That is the reason for the anger that Shirley can display toward Undershaft, and the cynicism of Snobby Price. But the physical results of unemployment are the same in both cases, just as the Army shelters equate in function the work-houses.

2. ibid.
As Barbara says, when Cousins grimaces at having to appeal for help through the newspapers;

"...... it must be done. The starvation this winter is beating us. Everybody is unemployed."

or Mrs Daines to Undershaft:

"Let me tell you there would have been rioting this winter in London but for us."

Peter Shirley is, we may take it, a cypher for thousands like him, just as the shelter is a symbol for many others.

When Carlyle goes on to develop his sketch of the 'condition of England question,' he says of the country's 'plethoric wealth':

"We might ask, Which of us has it enriched? We can spend thousands where we once spent hundreds; but can purchase nothing good with them. In Poor and Rich, instead of noble thrift and plenty, there is idle luxury alternating with mean scarcity and inability. We have sumptuous garnitures for our life, but have forgotten to live in the middle of them."

The butts for the verbal archery are what Carlyle calls the Master Worker and the Game-preserving Aristocracy, by which we are to understand two classes who gained their wealth by the exploitation of the resources of the land and workers, but who allowed their wealth to serve selfish ends only. Shaw also draws us a picture of the English aristocracy, actually in the person of Lady Britomart, vicariously in the person of her father, Lord Stevenage. We get something of Shaw's

3. *Past and Present*, Bk. 1, Ch. 1, p. 5.
distaste for these people in the irony of Lady Britomart's comment to Stephen (Act One, Page forty five) when she says:

"You know how poor my father is: he has barely seven thousand a year now; and really, if he were not the Earl of Stevenage, he would have to give up society. He can do nothing for us."

When we recall Snobby Price's "Thirty-eight bob a week, when he can get it," we can easily see the distinction between 'idle luxury' and 'mean scarcity.'

Another of Shaw's indirect portraits is that of Bodger, the whisky magnate. This 'captain of industry' has raised himself to a baronetcy, surrounded himself with the 'sumptuous garnitures' of Carlyle, and in Act Two is trying (there being nothing else materially to be gained by his wealth) to 'purchase something good with it': namely the salvation of his soul.

Indeed, as we trace our tortuous way through Past and Present or hurry from mansion to soup-kitchen and thence to arms-factory in Major Barbara, we find that one of the major themes the books share in common is, that neither the stomach nor the soul of a man or nation may be neglected: that the material and the spiritual are one life, and if severed, the result is individual or national disaster.

When Carlyle, discussing the Manchester Insurrection talks of:

"A million hungry operative men who rose up, came all out into the streets and stood there,"

1. Past and Present, Bk. 1, Ch. iii, p. 15.
it is obvious that his sympathies lie with these men, who do nothing more militant because they do not know "who [they are] that cause these wrongs," nor] who..... will honestly make effort to redress them."

He is sure, however, that in such times,

"..... insurrection ..... is a most sad necessity; and governors who wait for that to instruct them are surely getting into the fatalist courses."

Carlyle is equally certain that had the mob been able to recognise its enemy it would have defied "Woolwich grapeshot" (and should we here pass over the fact that Stephen Undershaft was nicknamed the 'Woolwich Infant,' and that Shaw refers to the Duke of Argyle's favourite passage in history - Carlyle's reference to Napoleon's "whiff of grapeshot" instead of standing to be sabred by the Country Yeomanry.

Carlyle's indignation here, toward the soldiers, is matched by Shaw's colossal and reiterated contempt for capitalism's use of police, and soldiers if necessary, to ensure that the code by which many of the wealthy lived was not emulated by the poor.

Mrs. Baines recalls, in Act Two of Major Barbara, the year 1886,

"..... when you rich men hardened your hearts against the poor. They broke the windows of your clubs in Pall Hall.
Undershaft: (gleaming with approval of their method) And the Mansion House Fund went up next day from thirty-thousand pounds to seventy-nine thousand.
Mrs. Baines: ............... Come here, Price........... Do you remember the window breaking?

1. Past and Present, Bk. i, Ch. iii, p. 15.
2. The French Revolution, Bk.ii, Ch. vii p. 272
Price: My ole father thought it was the revolution, massa.'"\n
Shaw's mob, somewhat more sophisticated, recognizes its 'disease' and the cause of it, and consequently knows how to wring at least a measure of relief from those who exploit them while it suits their purposes, and ignore them otherwise. Another point here is that Shaw, an exponent in his political writings of the Fabian-Webb platform of "the inevitability of gradualness," follows Carlyle, in *Major Barbara*, in proposing revolt as a likely method of success in gaining social justice.

Both authors see revolution, in the works under discussion, not as the irresponsible action of a rabble, but as the inevitable social culmination of mis-government and class-selfishness.

In *Past and Present*, Carlyle goes to some lengths to show the moderation of the Manchester mob, pointing out that they merely ask "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work," and that this is no more than to require to be treated as any working animal: to be given sufficient food and shelter so that they may continue to work. He therefore assumes that:

"Governors and Governing Classes that can articulate and utter, in any measure, that the law of Past and Justice is, may calculate that here is a Governed Class who will listen."2

2. *Past and Present*, Ch. 11, p. 17.
Similarly, Shaw in Major Barbara makes Snobby Price say, as a summary of what has gone before,

"In a proper state of society I am sober, industrious and honest: in Rome, so to speak, I do as the Romans do."

Bearing Bill Walker's sovereign in mind, we may doubt Price's honesty under any circumstances, but again Peter Shirley may be cited as the perfect representative of the docile worker who asks only 'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work.'

"Holy God!" (he exclaims) "I've worked ten to twelve hours a day since I was thirteen, and paid my way all through".....

and the comparison to the 'working animal' is framed in typical Shavian fashion, when Barbara asks Shirley if he is 'steady.'

"Shirley: Teetotaller. Never out of a job before. Good worker, and sent to the knackers like an old horse."2

Carlyle, boggling at the reality before him of mass unemployment in a land of apparent plenty, concludes that

"The human brain, looking at these sleek English horses, refuses to believe the impossibility [of finding due wages for men able and willing to work] ..........."

and returning to his threat of revolution rumbles,

"Clear the ways soon, lest worse befall."

Before passing we can note that if Carlyle's transcendentalism can be traced to German sources, and Goethe in particular, his socialism may owe much to Auguste Comte's Positivism, itself a vitalist and

1. op. cit. p. 274.
romantic doctrine, and there is room for some comparison between this form of social doctrine and the Fabianism that decried Marx's view of history, his argument of the division between the classes, and his theory of value.

The various features that link Carlyle's and Shaw's socialism are also the things that differentiate Fabian and Marxist socialism, as Eric Bentley perceives when he says:

"Shaw is a Victorian socialist. Aside from the Webbs his political teachers were Henry George, Karl Marx, Stanley Jevons, and Edward Bellamy. They at least are the giants. If we were to watch Shaw learning a fact here, acquiring an attitude there, \( \ldots \) we would have to list a score of other Victorian Socialists \( \ldots \). In so far as Shawian socialism goes back beyond the Fabians I would say it is neither in the French, 'Utopian' line nor the German 'scientific' line nor the Russian 'anarchist' line but in the British 'aristocratic' line. Behind Shaw is Ruskin, and behind Ruskin is Carlyle." \(^3\)

I have no quarrel with Mr. Bentley's general thesis in this passage, or in his chapter on Shaw's 'political economy', except to suggest that he gives an impression of Shaw darting magpie like among a multitude of Victorian authors and pamphleteers to compound a patchwork socialist philosophy of his own. Admittedly Shaw gives us some licence for assuming as much. In the preface to \textit{Major Barbara} he mentions all the names that Mr. Bentley calls on, and more besides. But to accept such a hypothesis is to ignore the fact that Shaw's socialism is essentially a combination of Jevons's economics and


3. \textit{Bernard Shaw}, Bentley, p. 32.
Carlyle's ethics. Ruskin may have taught Shaw that there are only three ways of procuring wealth—begging, working, and stealing—and that capitalism condemns many to beg by allowing a few to steal," but "the corollary—that a good social order is one in which everyone works—a cornerstone of Shavianism, is equally a cornerstone of Carlylean ethics with his "work is the only true religion."

Carlyle, moreover, is like Shaw in that he aligns himself with no particular class. They are equally contemptuous of the proletariat and the hereditary aristocracy as regards their respective political capacity, and it is here, basically, that they differ from the Marxist line. Neither of our authors believes in a division of interests on class lines, but rather on lines of talent and mental constitution—of character, one might say. It is this distinction that Carlyle makes between a 'valet' world led by 'quacks' and a 'true' world led by 'heroes', and that Shaw makes explicitly in the prefaces and implicitly in his plays.

Again, if Ruskin "believed in some such hierarchy as Shaw was to advocate (though [Ruskin] was not so sure it could not be hereditary)", Carlyle, with his insistence on an Aristocracy of Talent tentatively based on the "captains of industry," proposes a similar governing hierarchy and gives no indication that it should be hereditary.

When Carlyle says: "Given a world of Knaves it is impossible to produce an Honesty from their united action!" he merely forestalls Shaw

1. Bernard Shaw, Bentley, p. 33.
by half a century in the latter's railings against the inefficacy of parliamentary democracy. When Carlyle, after stressing the need for 'soul' in political action says:

"Then we shall discern, not one thing but .......... a whole endless host of things that can be done. Do the first of these; do it; the second .......... third and three thousandth will then have began to be possible for us;"

He is putting forward the Fabian policy of the infiltration of socialist policy by little and little via existing constitutional means, akin to Webb's "inevitability of gradualness."

Carlyle thinks that an aristocracy of talent is the 'one healing remedy' for good government. Like Shaw, he too perceives the difficulties of sorting out just who qualifies to be included in such an aristocracy. But of one thing he is sure:

"That it will not be got sifted, like wheat out of chaff, from the Twenty Seven Million British subjects: that any Ballot - box, Reform Bill, or other Political Machine, with Force of Public Opinion never so active on it, is unlikely to perform said process of sifting." ¹

Shaw, in the synopsis of contents to the Intelligent Woman's Guide, puts it thus:

[ "Democracy's ] real object is to establish a genuine aristocracy. To do this we must first ascertain which are the aristocrats; and it is here that popular voting fails. Mrs. Everybody votes for Mrs. Somebody only to discover that she has elected Mrs. Noisy Nobody."²

Carlyle, a little later, says that what he means by an Aristocracy of Talent is "Government of the Wisest," while Shaw explains his

¹ Past and Present, p. 51
² op. cit., p.
aristocracy as "government by the best qualified." The difference between the two definitions goes far towards summing up the difference between the two men. Shaw's has that slightly more rational edge which betokens his specifically political and economic training as a Fabian socialist. Carlyle's is that of the lay commentator.

In the opening sentences of Carlyle's chapter on 'Hero-worship,' he agonizes that England has at one and the same time missed realizing such a utopian state while increasing her need of it. Categorically, he denies the efficacy of capitalist economics - 'Laissez-faire, Supply = and = Demand and Cash = Payment for the sole nexus.'

The flood-tide of words that follows, stripped of its emotive images and resounding quasi-religious symbols, reduces to a few bare observations, the first being that men, of their very nature, require a deeper bond between them than any that can be supplied by economic 'laws' or political machinery. Carlyle expresses this sentiment in terms directly comparable to those uttered by Barbara and Undershaft in Shaw's play.

"Alas,[I] think that man has a soul in him, different from the stomach in any sense of this word; that if said soul be asphyxiated, and lie quietly forgotten, the man and his affairs are in a bad way."  

Barbara, returning from an 'experience meeting' at which collections were made to defray the cost of the Salvation Army's charitable work says (Act Two, Page Ninety):

"I am getting at last to think more of the collection.

1. Past and Present, Ch. vi, P. 32.
2. Past and Present, Bk. 1, Ch. iv, P.
[the equivalent of 'stomach'] than of the people's souls....."

and again, (Act III, Pages 139-140) distinguishing between her own,

and her mother's reasons for wanting Undershaw's township, she states,

"..... it was really all the human souls to be saved: not

weak souls in starved bodies, sobbing with gratitude for a scrap

of bread and treacle, but fullfed, quarrelsome, snobbish, upnish

creatures. That is where salvation is really wanted. My father

shall never throw it in my teeth again that my converts were

 bribed with bread."

Undershaw (Act III, Page 131) stated the case more trenchantly:

"It is cheap work converting starving men with a Bible in

one hand and a slice of bread in the other. Try your hand on my

men: their souls are hungry because their bodies are full."

Carlyle's next point is that when the 'asphyxied soul' of the nation

is awakened, political and industrial reforms will occur naturally. The

point is a moral one, and one that Shaw labours continually. It is also

the point at which we can draw an absolutely clear line of demarcation

between Marxist and Fabian socialism, and Benthamite as against

Carlylean liberalism. What both Carlyle and Shaw demand is that

each man become morally convinced of the need for social reform. Then

alone will he act 'heroically', that is unselfishly, and be immune to

'cant', to 'quackery', and to 'bribery' (the terms are Carlyle's, and

are occasionally used by Shaw) and recognize the people who will achieve

the desired result. We can see that this is a vitalistic approach:

neither mechanistic as was Bentham's nor deterministic, as was

Marx's. Carlyle and Shaw realize that society cannot be dealt with

as a unitary mass, unless one also admits that each individual is an important
"Thou and I, my friend, can, in the most flunky world, make, each one of us, one non-flunky, one hero; if we like; that will be two heroes to begin with. - Courage! even that is a whole world of heroes to end with, or what we poor Two can do in furtherance thereof!"

One does not have to lean too hard on this statement to see the likeness to the Fabian policy of infiltration by all possible means, especially of existing political parties, of their ideas: ideas backed by Webb-accumulated facts, but resting on a foundation of moral sense of justice, of an emotional sense of what is right, not on an historical theory of class war.

In Major Barbara, Shaw uses Undershaft to give effect to this idea. His rise to heroism is typical of his role as 'diabolus advocatus':

"I moralized and starved until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs; that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men". (Act Three, Page One hundred and thirty-one.)

By taking this step he has recognized the 'cant' and 'quackery' of the existing capitalist system for what it is:

"Come, Biddy! these tricks of the governing class are of no use with me,"

and he has realized that his mission is to "help the children of the common people to climb up beside [him]". Hence his generosity toward his family and his attitude - his real attitude, as distinct from the cynical one he puts forward verbally - in the managing of the munitions factory township.

"Reform," says Carlyle, "like Charity, Bobus, must begin at home. Once well at home, how will it radiate outwards, irrepressible, into all that we touch and handle, spreading in geometric ratio, far and wide, - doing good only, wheresoever it spreads, and not evil." 1

This is a perfect description of Undershaft's history. His own rise, and his manner (see 1. above) of expressing it, is the epitome of "charity beginning at home;" the successive and contagious 'outward radiation' is expressed in his benign behaviour toward his own children, his workers, and the poor who depend on the charity of the Salvation Army, in turn. Shaw has, of course, put a double twist on the tail of the statement. By making Undershaft a munitions manufacturer he has succeeded brilliantly in giving us the one type of industrialist who automatically strikes fear into the hearts of all morally minded men, because the evil they do is so obvious. The irony of such a man being held up as the herald of social advance is not only an expression of Shavian wit in its bitterer mood; it is also that such a one has the means to his hand, as Cusins sees, to

"... pull down governments, inaugurate new epochs, abolish old orders and set up new." 1

It is at this point that the Puritanism of our two authors conjoins with their transcendental romanticism to provide a political plan that might best be called theocratic socialism, in contradistinction to all other possible forms of socialism. And if this idea seems rather strange, consider the original structure of the Calvinist church and compare it to the proposals of Carlyle and Shaw. We find that their ideas, far

1. *Past and Present*. Ch. VI, p. 34.
from being new, are as ancient as primitive Christianity, as democratic as any democracy that has ever existed, and as honourable as any romantically minded and intelligent Englishman could wish. The only point at which Carlyle and Shaw part company with the liberal tradition of English politics is in their facing up to the reality that both Plato and Calvin faced: that the intelligent man, given equal or better moral values, is a better voter, and a better governor, than his less intelligent neighbour. They have got rid of the bribe of 'equality'.

Both Carlyle and Shaw propose a system of election and government that takes cognizance of what seem to be fairly obvious truths (which in modern western democracies are tacitly avoided) while at the same time trying to preserve the valuable elements of democracy. Both admit the fundamental equality as between one man and another that rests on the mere fact of the 'manness' of each. But each asserts that such attributes as intelligence, will, courage, administrative ability and moral probity are not distributed in equal proportions to all men, and that, according to the measure and number of these attributes, so should a man's sphere of influence be limited or enlarged in the social and political world.

In Past and Present, Carlyle gives dramatic force to his argument by balancing Abbot Hugo against Abbot Samson, and the Quaker industrialist against his less imaginative and more greedy rival. In Major Barbara, Shaw dramatizes the same kinds of situation by opposing Undershaft and Dodger and, in the first instance, Barbara against Mrs. Baines, but also the completely idealistic Barbara of the first two acts against the wiser Barbara of Act Three.
Undershaft we may compare directly to Abbot Samson, so long as we realize what should be obvious; that Undershaft does not represent a fullyfinished Shavian formula; that in part, at least, he is 'devil's advocate', while still remaining what Shaw terms him in the preface, the 'hero' of the play. For Undershaft represents only an evolutionary rung on the Shavian ladder of social reform. The existence of Cusins and Barbara, and their purpose in the play, makes this clear.
CHAPTER 5.

SOME WAYS OF CURING THE DISEASE

Like Samson's in *Past and Present*, Undershaft's primary function is comparative rather than absolute. There are obvious and large discrepancies between the more fully evolved Shavian formulæ of creative evolution, of social equality and of political socialism, and the views expressed by Undershaft on these matters do not represent Shaw's views even at the time of writing— at least not in total. For Shaw had already, in *Man and Superman*, shown his belief in creative evolution as a religious substitute for Christianity, and in his long association with the Fabian Society had often reiterated his social and political ideas.

Undershaft is sufficiently unusual in being a successful capitalist who has a religious sense which does not face him with moral and logical absurdities when measured against his day-to-day activities, who has a highly developed sense of social responsibility, and who admits frankly that, as a millionaire industrialist he is able to pressure the apparently democratic government of his country to suit his, as against common, ends, when necessary.

In similar fashion, Carlyle draws his portrait of Abbot Samson to show not only the discrepancies between the past and the present, but also to contrast a society in which sincerity of belief accords with action, social amelioration is granted to be a responsibility of government, and vested power is an admitted fact, with a society in
which anomalies exist as between religious belief and action, social responsibility is denied by those with the keys of wealth, and real, personal, power is concealed behind a facade of seeming democracy.

In discussing the 'Gospel of Mammonism' Carlyle poses the question as to whether the "Christian reader" has had any intimation of an 'Infinite':

".. did it not at any moment disclose itself to thee, indubitable, unnameable? Came it never, like the gleam of preter - natural eternal Oceans, like the voice of old Eternities far sounding through thy heart of hearts? .. The Infinite is more sure than any other fact. But only men can discern it; mere building beavers, spinning arachnids, much more the predatory vulturous and vulpine species, do not discern it well! -"

Throughout our comparison of Undershaft and Samson, we will see the twin strands of practicality and spiritual awareness. The above passage inevitably reminds us that Undershaft, surprisingly, has a 'sense of the Infinite'. He surprises Barbara so early as Act. One, when he intuitively states her own meaning by saying that her "Father - has a great many children and plenty of experience" shocks her with his enigmatic belief that he is part of an infinite 'will', and challenges her to use her religious certainty on his own men, whose 'souls are hungry because their bodies are full'.

Never is there any suggestion that his certainty is based on more tangible evidence (such as scripture) than Carlyle here puts forward.

1. Past and Present, Bk. 111, ch. ii, p. 139. et. seq.
and in the challenge to Barbara cited above, Undershaft is making a tacit admission that mammonism is not alone sufficient, although he, like Samson, regards it to be of primary importance. That 'primary', however, is a matter of chronology, not of hierarchy.

Shaw's juggling of Carlyle's ideas, although they remain in agreement on basic premises, may be seen if we compare their attitudes to 'success'. Carlyle asks:

"What is it that the modern English soul does, in very truth, dread infinitely, and contemplate with entire despair? What is his Hell.............. With hesitation, with astonishment, I pronounce it to be: The terror of "not succeeding" of not making money, fame, or some other figure in the world, chiefly of not making money! ..."

While Carlyle seems horrified at such an attitude, tracing to it the fundamental inhumanity of the competitive capitalist society, Shaw uses the same attitude as the bedrock of Undershaft's philosophy. And this provides the opposition between Shirley and Undershaft in Act Two, as well as the apparent opposition between the latter and Major Barbara. Whereas Carlyle, at this point, appears to be insisting that the first requirement in social organization is a sense of mutual responsibility, Undershaft insists that only when a satisfactory distribution of wealth has been achieved is it possible for such a moral sense to operate adequately. Such is the basis of his devil's advocacy: "money and gunpowder" first, then "honour, justice, truth, love,

1. Past and Present, Bk. 111, ch. ii, p. 140.
2. op. cit., p. 141.
mercy and so forth.  

 Carlyle does admit, however, that 'working mammonism' is greatly to be preferred to 'unworking dilettantism', and that a 'working aristocracy', even if industrial in its origin, is infinitely better than an 'unworking aristocracy' even if based on ownership of the land.

 Such oppositions as these are inferred throughout Major Barbara. Lady Britomart and her son Stephen, scions of the house of Stevenage, epitomise 'a Governing Class who do not govern'. Lomax is the very type of those young men who went 'gracefully idle in Mayfair', and of whom 'Sauerteig' complained that their 'poor fraction of sense has to be perked into some epigrammatic shape.' He is 'grimming inanity' personified.  

 Part of Shaw's purpose in the play is to draw attention to the great disparity between the very large amounts of settled income required for the wealthy to live in idleness (Stevenage's £7,000 a year, Lomax's £1,600, Barbara's £2,000), and the paltry 'thirtyeight bob a week, when I can get it,' that is quoted as the standard working wage.

 Undershaft, on the other hand, is written up in such a way as to demand respect, despite his great wealth, because he is of the world's workers. He assumes none of the pretensions of the landed aristocracy,

 2. see Past and Present, p. 144 - 145. passim.
except where obvious basis exists for doing so; that basis being always related to the fact that his wealth is the result of work done, and his demands never exceeding that he shall be "full-fed and free", and that he shall have the respect of every man.

Again, when Carlyle attacks the Utilitarian philosophy of hedonism thus:

"We construct our theory of human duties, not on any 'greatest - nobleness' principle, never so mistaken; no but on a 'greatest - happiness' principle. The word Soul with us, .......... seems to be synonymous with Stomach. We plead and speak, in our parliaments and elsewhere, not as from the soul, but from the stomach,"¹ Shaw equivocates.

Barbara, of course, represents Carlyle's point of view, and herself uses this same antithesis in speaking of her work in the Salvation Army.² Undershaft, while he eventually admits the validity of Barbara's view (Act 111, Pages 129 to 131) in part, is disposed to the Utilitarian outlook. For when Cusins, questioning his expediential philosophy, declaims:

"But whoe'er can know
As the long days go
That to live is happy, has found his heaven,"

Undershaft retorts that,

"if you wish to know as the long days go, that to live is happy you must first acquire money enough for a decent life, and power enough to be your own master."³

1. *Past and Present*, Bk. 111 ch. iv. p. 148. (Chapter title "Happy")
For the cynical Undershaf't understands and makes use of the principles of laissez faire economics and politics, even if he is always doing 'proper things and then giving improper reasons for doing them', as Lady Britomart puts it.¹

"We plead" writes Carlyle, "... for our own "interest," our own rents and trade-profits; we say, They are the interests of so many; there is such an intense desire in us for them..." ²

Undershaf't, underlining his political influence to Stephen, says:

"...... You will find out that trade requires certain measures when we have decided on those measures. When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need....." ³

When Carlyle proceeds to discuss the English as a nation, however, his opposition of types comes closer to that of Undershaf't and Cusins, and also reminds us of other Shaw plays (notably John Bull's Other Island) where a similar opposition of character types is portrayed.

"How one loves to see the burly figure of him, (the typical working Englishman) this thick skinned, seemingly opaque, perhaps sulkily, almost stupid Man of Practice, pitted against some light adroit Man of Theory, all equipped with clear logic, and able anywhere to give you why and wherefore. The adroit man of theory, so light of movement, clean of utterance, with his broad full-bent and quiver full of arrow arguments - surely he will strike down the game, transfix everywhere the heart of the matter; triumph everywhere as he proves that he shall and must do? To your astonishment, it turns out oftenest No. The cloudy browed, thick soled opaque Practicality, with no logic utterance, in silence mainly, with here and there a low grunt or growl, has in him what transcends all logic - utterance: a Congrularity with the Unuttered." ⁴

Shaw's physical description of Undershaft includes the burliness and the apparent simplicity of Carlyle's 'Practical Man'. He is 'stoutish', and has a 'capacious chest,' and 'engaging simplicity.' Though his speeches often seem to belie it, Undershaft is supposed to be 'watchful, deliberate, waiting and listening' in expression. As to his being 'sulky', Lady Britomart tells us that though he could be 'clever and unanswerable when he was defending nonsense' he was 'always awkward and sullen when he had to behave sensibly and decently.'

Carlyle's 'Man of Theory' fits Cusins even better. Our whole impression of the man from his opening lines is of 'light adroitness', quickness of mind and body, and the ability to conquer all with his intellect and verbal expertise. Yet from the moment he is pitted against Undershaft, we find he has met his match. And this is irritating because we feel that Undershaft has not got the logical edge on Cusins. It is rather that Undershaft always allows Cusins to hoist himself sky-high on his own petard: that Undershaft's rightness is a matter of intuition and practical experience combined which "transcends all logic-utterance."

As Carlyle continues:

"The Man of Theory twangs his full-bent bow: Nature's fact ought to fall stricken, but it does not: his logic arrow glances from it as from a scaly dragon, and, the obstinate fact keeps walking its way. How singular! At bottom, you will have to grapple closer, with the dragon; take it home to you, by real faculty, try whether you are stronger, or it is stronger. Close with it wrestle with it; sheer obstinate toughness of muscle; but much more what we call toughness of heart, which will mean persistence hopeful and even desperate, unsubduable patience, composed candid


2. op. cit., p. 250.
openness, cleanliness of mind: all this shall be 'strength' in
wrestling your dragon; the whole man's real strength is in his
work, we shall get the measure of him here. 1

I would suggest that this is a history in brief of the relationship
between Cusins and Undershaw in Major Barbara. Every time Cusins
'releases an arrow', Undershaw shows how the brute facts of social and
political existence deflect his aim. And his advice to Cusins is, that
instead of complaining that his logic 'ought' to alter the facts, he
should grapple with the physical realities of life. "Are you" he asks,

"going to spend the rest of your life saying ought, like the
rest of our moralists? Turn your oughts into shall, man. Come
and make explosives with me. Whatever can blow men up can blow
society up. The history of the world is the history of those
who had courage enough to embrace this truth....." 2

Indeed it would seem that Shaw, like Carlyle 'looks in the surly
face of Mr. Bull' "with a mixture of pity and laughter, yet also with
wonder and veneration," 3 for both spent most of their lives trying
to alter the race, a fact that would indicate that their frustrated
revilings were based on a sense that the effort was worth the energy
expended.

Apropos the relation of Cusins and Carlyle's 'Man of Theory',
it is also worth noting that Carlyle makes the comparison of England and
Rome as strong, silent nations, and writes:

"The old Romans also could not speak ............. not till the
world was theirs; and so many speaking Greeks' their logic-arrows

all spent, had been absorbed and abolished...."

Cusins, the professor of Greek and exponent of verbal logic, is literally absorbed into Undersholt's scheme of things, which fits neatly into Carlyle's continuation of the passage cited above:

"Great honour to him whose epic is a melodious hexameter Iliad but still greater honour, if his Epic be a mighty Empire slowly built together, a mighty series of heroic deeds, - a mighty conquest over Chaos..... Deeds are greater than words."

For it is obvious that Undersholt 'absorbs' Cusins because of the latter's qualities of vision and genius, and that Cusins allows himself to be absorbed because in so doing he envisages the possibility of building a new social empire which will "force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good." In fine, both men have as their goal a 'mighty conquest over chaos', and Cusins finally agrees with Undersholt, in dropping Greek and accepting his new task, that 'deeds are greater than words.'

If Carlyle's description of the 'Practical Man' differs materially from Shaw's portrayal of Undersholt, it is in the element of apparent stupidity and silence. Two reasons may be suggested for this. First, I would suggest that Shaw is not so naive as Carlyle on this point. He has a greater respect for the inherent worth of intellect and for the power of cogent speech. From this follows his use of the drama as
his didactic medium, and in turn, the use of drama virtually demands lucidity of expression in any character intended to be effective. Partly, too, the difference springs from innate differences of personality as between Carlyle and Shaw, the former being himself more ponderous, more dour, in thought and expression, the latter more 'light and adroit.'

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, it seems to me, makes a mistake when he sees Shaw's 'principal intellectual failings' as being 'to exaggerate the stupidity of mankind.' MacCarthy continues:

"No other writer, not even Carlyle or Tolstoi, appears so convinced that the mistakes and confusions of thought, of which men are guilty, are an absurd, glaring, staring set of elementary blunders."

The contradictions that arise in Shaw's work MacCarthy sees as springing:

"From the persuasion that he is writing for a world of fools, who are so dense and inert, that they can only be startled into attention; who, being incapable of keeping separate things distinct, are also incapable of being moved by anything but emphatic one-sided statement."

In presenting plays with such a complex of ideas and such scintillating dialogue as he does, Shaw pays an implicit compliment to the general intelligence of his audience. To treat 'the mistakes of thought' of which men are guilty as 'a set of elementary blunders' is no more than common debating technique, and the use of 'emphatic, one-sided statement,' is, as Mr. MacCarthy should have realized, the basis of party politics, and the most widely accepted method of making men think through problems to which they have not applied their

1. Shaw, Desmond MacCarthy, p. 17.
intelligence, regardless of their level of that commodity. Furthermore, as I have attempted to indicate throughout, and will do further, Shaw, in juxtaposing such characters as Barbara, Gussins and Undershaft, is not so much interested in 'keeping separate things distinct,' as in disclosing the actual relationship between things apparently unrelated, as anybody who has read the long preface on Darwinism in Back To Methuselah may testify. Finally, Mr. MacCarthy should know, as a very intelligent man, that not all men are as gifted as he, and that Shaw, in opposing characters such as Undershaft and Gussins, has recognized what Carlyle, Tolstoi, and indeed every other great teacher of mankind from Socrates, Confucius and Christ on, have recognized: that you cannot repeat the basic truisms and aphorisms of social behaviour too often, not because men are stupid, but because men are self-centred.

It is such a recognition that lies behind Carlyle's apparent applause of English conservatism. With due solemnity he praises the value of deep seated laws and customs, turning to the 'Radical Reformer' to admit that, though none can be regarded as final, yet there are some, accorded the status of 'morality, virtue, laws of God Himself,' which should be regarded as fixed. But then he intimates that some 'laws' (he cites the doctrine of divine right of kings) have 'grown diabolic-wrongs,' and been done away with, their upholders accounted the 'children of the Prince of Darkness', and claims that Truth and Justice are alone capable of being 'conserved,' and that the true conservative and true aristocrat

should be first to cut away the dead boughs in the living tree of society and its customs.

Undershaw makes shorter work of it than Carlyle, when he lectures Barbara on her loss of trust in the religion of the Salvation Army:

"... Well, you have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion... It doesn't fit the facts. Scrap it and get one that does fit. That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it won't scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions. What's the result? In machinery it does very well; but in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year. Don't persist in that folly...."

The comparison of these two passages leads me to comment on the solution to problems of social inequality and injustice preferred by both authors, which may be described as organic evolution.

We will see that Abbot Samson's likeness to Undershaw depends in large measure on the fact that both men are responsible for microcosmic societies which are obviously regarded by the two principals as ever-becoming utopias. This may, in itself, be regarded as significant, since almost all other utopists portray their communities as ideal and fixed, as being man's idea of heaven on earth.

Neither Carlyle nor Shaw suffer from this disability for two reasons. In the first place, having relinquished the idea of a personal God and a personal immortality, they are flung back onto the idea of regarding themselves as individual parts of a greater whole; the race.

The race itself thus becomes the more important unit, and the problem is, then, how it may be perfected. Here two factors come into play. For although the race is the sum of its parts (the individuals comprising it) and must perforce be perfected through those parts (which is regarded primarily, by both authors, as an evolutionary process) it is also more than the sum of its parts, being itself a manifestation of a vital and transcendent force, which absorbs all living things into one great 'stream of being,' and provides a continuum that at once embraces mortality and immortality, and rescues the race from being a lot of 'ants on a muchheap', 'fighting for hogwash.'

Creative, or vital, evolution is the result, since the concept of a continuing 'stream' provides each individual with a purpose for living himself, and a duty towards bettering the lot of the race, but the process by its very nature being forever vital and therefore becoming, is not perfectible in any absolute sense.

Desmond MacCarthy, astute as ever, makes the point in relation to Man and Superman, inviting the reader to note the contrast between Shaw's Heaven and his Hell (in the Don Juan in Hell interlude).

MacCarthy says:

"[Shaw's] Heaven is not the contemplation of what is perfect, but of something that is struggling to become so. It is a condition in which there is still peril, where, you 'face things as they are;"

1. see Shaw's Preface to Back to Methuselah, passim.
in short a 'community of saints' which is really a community of reformers."1

And let us observe here the extreme closeness of Carlyle's position to Shaw's: the claim that things are not as they should be; the need for constant effort and struggle for betterment; the need for 'facing things as they are'; the desire for a 'community of saints', and the final recognition that although a bettering of the human situation is both necessary and possible, perfection is not attainable; all these are points in common between the two.

To return to our inspection of the two works, we may further remark that the influence of the major protagonists, Samson and Undershaft, is seen as extending out into the wider, or macrocosmic, society, and that for as long as this continues, the process of evolutionary change is seen as taking place. If, however, a John Lackland usurps the crown and destroys the rule of 'Truth and Justice', blood will flow. If any man fails to give Undershaft his 'due heed and respect', he becomes marked for death! 2

As Carlyle proceeds, in Past and Present, he alternates his condemnation of contemporary society with suggestions of ways to deal with the 'condition of England problem', which, reduced to their simplest forms, amount to, first, a recognition that present social conditions are unfair to the majority and that it is possible willingly to change them, and second, a threat that if those responsible do not

1. Shaw, Desmond MacCarthy, p. 33.
2. see Act i 11, p. 324.
do so, they may expect social and political revolution to ensue.

"Urge not this noble silent People; rouse not the Berserkir rage that lies in them! Do you know their Cromwells, Hardens, their Pyns and Bradshaws? Men very peaceable, but men that can be made very terrible! Men who have a soul that despises death; to whom 'death' compared with falsehoods and injustices, is light.......

"When two million of one's brother-men sit in Workhouses, and five millions, as is insolently said, 'rejoice in potatoes,' there are various things that must be begun, let them end where they can."  

Similarly we find Undershaft 'gleams with approval' of the direct method adopted by the out-of-work men who marched through London and threw rocks through the windows of the Pall Mall clubs, and is contemptuous of the 'poor but honest' philosophy of Peter Shirley. And we find that Cusins's penultimate major speech is one which asserts his intention,

"..... to arm [the common people] against the lawyers, the doctors, the priests, the literary men, the professors, the artists, the politicians who, once in authority, are more disastrous and tyrannical than all the fools, rascals and impostors...........

In one of his peculiarly prophetic passages Carlyle concludes his chapter on 'The English,' by saying that;

"Giant Labour, truest emblem there is of God the World-Worker, noble labour, which is yet to be the King of this Earth, and sit on the highest throne, - staggering hitherto like a blind irrational giant, hardly allowed to have his common place on the street pavement; Idle Dilettantism, Dead-Sea Apian crying out, "Down with him; he is dangerous!"

Labour must become a seeing rational giant, with a soul in

the body of him, and take his place on the throne of things, - leaving his Maasonism, and several other adjunts, on the lower steps of said throne."

The last paragraph might well be the motto that Cusins intends to write up on the munitions factory wall - in Greek. Certainly Undershaft's intention in securing the services of Cusins seems to me to be aimed at enlightening the masses, and his intention in securing Barbara aimed at putting soul into his materialistically minded workers. And Cusins states categorically that it is his intention to arm the common man - to 'make giant labour king.'

Carlyle's chapter on "Over-Production" again leads us into both general and particular comparisons with Major Barbara. The old laissez-faire economics of boom and depression, glut and scarcity, over-production and under-employment are all implied factors in the second act of Major Barbara, just as they are expressed here in Past and Present. But where Shaw would have written at great length had he started in under such a heading, Carlyle quickly runs out of real ammunition, and regresses into hammering his recurring theme: that those who claim the right to govern are not those who should govern.

Again, this is one of the questions thrown up in the line-up of characters in Major Barbara: that is, in the actual social positions of the characters, there is an implicit questioning of who has the right to govern, as well as in the explicit treatment of the topic in

1. Past and Present, Bk 111, ch vi, p.
dialogue and preface.

Lady Britomart, as her name implies, is indeed a martial Britannia, of the race of rulers, with an established place in society in terms of wealth and caste. She represents the land-owning aristocracy of old, and to her falls the task of presenting their point of view. She rules — her household, children, husband, prospective sons-in-law — as to the manner born. She asserts the right of her class to govern the country, and to impose upon it the moral code upon which she was reared with certainty but without thought, and which she has, with equal lack of thought, instilled into her son Stephen.

Yet Shaw, with consummate skill, makes this apparently dominant figure one of comic pathos by his finely ironic sense of dramatic timing and the balance of his dialogue. For all her seeming strength of will, all her aristocratic assertiveness, her sense of caste, she is virtually ignored on every point of importance throughout the play.

Andrew Undershaft has left her ladyship because his ethic and sense of honour, based on an industrial tradition, has not only superseded her aristocratic amorality — the sense of the right to seize what she wants — but is in fact superior to it in the abstract, because ultimately, his is selfless.

Cusins, with academic suavity, easily shows the superiority of brains over 'breeding' in his conversations with Lady Britomart. Lomax is embarrassed without being in the least materially affected by
her crushing slights of his verbal idiosyncrasies, and to him is
given the task of stating a doctrine of realistic compromise, which,
unpalatable as its truth is to most of us, is anathema to Lady Britomart,
who has spent her life denying it vocally and living it in fact: namely

"where the carcase lies, there will the eagles be gathered."

Spoken thus, it offends her black and white sense - a child's
sense, as it is - of morality.

Sarah is bored in her acquiescence, and silent in her
disobedience, while Barbara, of course, goes on her own way not merely
in spite of, but almost because of, her mother.

Undershaft sums up her effectiveness near the end of the play
(page 333.) when he answers her violent response to the swing towards
Undershaft's side of the discussion:

"My dear; you are the incarnation of morality.
Your conscience is clear, and your duty done when you
have called everybody names."

In fine, Shaw makes it abundantly clear that the day and the values
of the traditional landed aristocracy are a thing to be quietly but
effectively put in their place - in the past - even if we may admire the
spirit that made the class what it was when it carried out its real
function.

Stephen and Lomax, as manifestations of fin de siècle young
men-about-town, are offered as another representation of the

governing classes. Neither works, and the implication throughout
is that neither ever will do any constructive work, yet both assume
an inherent superiority over those whom they take to be their inferiors
in class.

Lomax can easily enough be identified with the dilettantish "going-
gracefully-idle-in-Mayfair" set, but he is somehow more bearable than
Stephen, if only because he lacks the latter's priggishness. Lomax's
pretensions are really negligible. All he demands is that he be allowed
to eat without working, living upon 'the carcase' supplied by others —
his father, Undershaft, no matter whom. As Lady Britomart says:

"Charles Lomax's exertions are much more likely to decrease
his income than to increase it." 1

His candour in admitting to the 'rightness' of Undershaft's
moral 2 and political 3 arguments is that of a perspicacious eight year
old, and does nothing at all to advance the claims of his kind as born
leaders, despite his apparent disdain of Bilton's caution in the
dynamite shed. 4

Stephen is a more complex demonstration of the same phenomenon.
Serious by nature and not without character, he is yet completely lacking
in originality, vision, energy, or any of the prerequisites of leadership.

1. Major Barbara, Act i, p. 245.
2. op. cit., Act i, p. 262.
for which his father is seeking in a possible successor.

However, Stephen's ineffectiveness can be traced to his environment, since, when we meet him at what proves to be a catalytic point in his relationship with his mother, we find that Stephen has had all the 'dead branch Law and Custom' (to use Carlyle's phrase) of the conservative aristocracy inculcated in him throughout. Subjected to rigid domestic rule, to Harrow, Cambridge and travel, he had been fitted, in Undershaft's eyes, for nothing except perhaps journalism.

In Lady Britomart's opinion, however, this same upbringing has prepared him for, in fact along with his aristocratic lineage, demands for him, a commanding position in society. Lady Britomart claims that the Undershaft tradition should be broken now that Andrew has himself married into the 'governing class'—her class—and claims, both to Stephen and to Undershaft, that Stephen would be able to 'govern a great estate.'

Stephen, while doubting his ability to run a giant business concern, assumes as of right his ability to form part of the government of his country:

"I have no intention of becoming a man of business in any sense. I have no capacity for business and no taste for it. I intend to devote myself to politics." 4

1. Major Barbara, Act 1, pp. 246-248.
2. op. cit., Act 1, p. 248 - 249.
3. op. cit., Act 111, pp. 303-309.
His crime, in Shaw's eyes, is even worse than this, though,
For when Undershaft, relieved at Stephen's relinquishing of 'the
inheritance', tries to settle him in some useful occupation, Stephen
in turn decries 'trade,' literature, art, philosophy, the army, navy,
law, and, we are left with the impression that if he had not been
interrupted, journalism.

Additionally, in questioning the social amenities of Undershaft's
works, 2 Stephen declares himself as among that kind of conservative
who are suspicious of any change in the status quo, even when palpably
for the better.

When we recall Lady Britomart's emphasis on Stephen's aristocratic
forbears as an especial qualification for governing, it is not difficult
to align the whole case with Carlyle's rhetorical conclusion of the
way:

"To the Idler, again, never so gracefully going idle, coming
forward with never so many parchments, you will not hasten out;
..... You will say to him: 'Not welcome, O complex Anomaly;
would thou hast stayed out of doors, for who of mortals knows
what to do with thee? Thy parchments: yes, they are old, of
venerable yellowness.....................Be counselled, ascertain
if no work exist for thee on God's Earth........"

And when we find Carlyle continuing to say that,
"he who cannot work in this universe cannot get exist in it."
we may turn to Shaw's preface where we find the following passage,

enforcing the same sentiment in the terms I noted as peculiar to Carlyle

1. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 313.
2. op. cit., p. 319.
and Shaw, as distinct from utopian socialists.

"Nobody demands or expects the millennium. But there are
two things that must be set right, or we shall perish, like
Rome, of soul atrophy disguised as empire.

The first is, that the daily ceremony of dividing the
wealth of the country among its inhabitants shall be so conducted
that no crumb shall, save as a criminals ration, go to any
able-bodied adults who are not producing by their personal
exertions not only a full equivalent for what they take, but a
surplus sufficient to provide for their superannuation and pay
back the debt due for their nurture."¹

Now this leaves us with three other possible contenders for the
right to govern: Undershaft, Cusins and Barbara. These form a
"triumvirate of worth" and it is interesting to note that we may
abstract certain qualities from each of the members which find their
antitheses in the "triumvirate of unworth" - Lady Britomart, Stephen
and Lomax.

Undershaft may be regarded as "practical-visionary:" that is, he
is not merely practical but sees ahead sufficiently to realize the
advantages or disadvantages accruing to a given course of action.
In one sense this may be construed as being no more than expediential
foresight, and this is the case in his attitudes to Stephen and Cusins.
Lady Britomart, his antithesis, is certainly practical enough, but her
vision is clouded with conservative values which, if given effect,
would, as Undershaft foresees, wreck the industrial effectiveness
of his firm.

Barbara is "spiritual-visionary". Her concerns are with the highest
planes of human thought and endeavour, and her aims are of a

¹ Major Barbara, Preface, p. 239.
transcendental nature. Stephen, her 'opposite number', is as serious as she is, but his morality is entirely earth-bound, pre-conditioned by a dying religious outlook and a dying political viewpoint.

Cusins, the epitome of imaginative vision, is opposed to Lomax. Both are "light" but in how different senses!

Finally, when we compare the two groups one with the other, we find that none of the 'trio of unworth' has done or will do any work, while all of the 'trio of worth' does work of some kind. In other words, Lomax, Stephen and Lady Britomart are Carlyle's 'Unworking Aristocracy'; Undershaw, Barbara and Cusins are his 'Working Aristocracy'.

In the half-century that elapsed between the writing of Past and Present and Major Barbara the questions at issue in the former had resolved themselves to some extent. Shaw is not concerned with the agrarian aristocrats except, as I have intimated, to show them up as socially - and politically - atavistic.

What both Shaw and Carlyle are concerned with is a juster distribution of wealth from whatever source it may spring, and this has been the concern of socialists since - and before - John Ball preached from the text of the old lay, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" But each has an additional concern, over and above the just apportionment of 'wages due' on a socialist basis, in the relationship of master to man and man to man, which transcends the political, or even the social, aspirations of socialism.
Often one despairs of being able, with these two works, clearly to demarcate between the various spheres of thought, not so much because Carlyle and Shaw did not think of social problems, or religion, or politics, separately, but because they were incapable of discussing these things without introducing considerations of an imaginative or transcendental nature into the more prosaic areas. This need not surprise us. It is a common attribute of the social utterances of the romantics and their predecessors from Burns to Shelley. We need only remark that it is not a common feature of more pedestrian or more rational socialist writers, so that when we find Shaw and Carlyle mixing political-mystical cocktails, we recognize what kind of literary party we are attending.

In some passages, then, we must of necessity expect to find an inextricable conjunction of social, political and transcendental ideas, and much of what follows is in this category. As for example in chapter One of Book Four, where Carlyle conjoins temporal and spiritual governance thus:

"Aristocracy and Priesthood, a Governing Class and a Teaching Class: these two, sometimes separate, and endeavouring to harmonise themselves, sometimes conjoined and the King a Pontiff-King: - there did no society exist without these two vital elements."

The introduction of the idea of a teaching class in conjunction with a religious and aristocratic class must lead us to think of Cusins, the third member of the triumvirate with Barbara and Undershaft.

Shaw's suggestion of this is set out in Major Barbara in Act. 11.
(page 87.), and the manner is interesting in the light of an earlier statement of Carlyle's.

In chapter Twelve of Book Three, he writes:

"As poet Dryden says, you do walk hand in hand with madness, all the way, — who is by no means pleasant company! — that you may extort new Wisdom out of it, as Eurydice from Tarterus. The higher the Wisdom, the closer was its neighbourhood and kindred with mere Insanity; literally so; — and thou wilt observe how highest Wisdom, struggling up in this world, has often times carried such tinctures and adhesions of Insanity still cleaving to it hither!

All works, each in their degree, are a making of Madness sane; — truly enough a religious operation ............."¹

Shaw, in his preface, has a passage directed at the aesthetic reformers of the nineteenth century. It closes

"'Cease to be slaves, in order that you may be cranks,' is not a very inspiring call to arms; nor is it really improved by substituting saints for cranks. Both terms denote men of genius; and the common man does not want to live the life of a man of genius."²

In the body of the play, during an exchange between Undershaft and Cusins, the resemblance to Carlyle's passage is even more marked, and draws the three 'heroes' together. Undershaft says that he will hand his torch to Barbara, that she will preach his gospel of "money and Gunpowder, Freedom and Power. Command of life and command of death."

Cusins ......... Of course you know that you are mad?
Undershaft ....... And you?
Cusins ......... Oh, mad as a hatter. You are welcome to my secret since I have discovered yours. But I am astonished. Can a madman make cannon?
Undershaft ......... Would anyone else than a madman make them? And now....... Can a sane man translate Euripides.

1. *Past and Present*, Bk. 111, ch. xii, p. 199
We may even point out the echo of Greek mythology from Carlyle's passage, closing with his reference to Eurydice which chimes with Undershaft's reference to Euripides.

Still on the subject of aristocracy, Carlyle pens these lines, strongly reminiscent of Undershaft's philosophy, as expressed throughout Act. 111.

"... the life of [feudal monarchs] was not a vulturous fighting; it was a valorous governing, to which occasionally fighting did, and alas must yet, superadd itself as an accident.... The fighting too was indispensable, for ascertaining who had the might over whom, the right over whom. By much hard fighting, as we once said, 'the unrealities, beaten into dust, flew gradually off,' and left the plain reality and fact, "Thou stronger than I; thou wiser than I; thou king, and subject I," in somewhat clearer condition."

And again, "'Violence,' 'war,' 'disorder': well, what is war, and death itself, to such perpetual life-in-death, and 'peace, peace where there is no peace'? Unless some Hero-worship in its new appropriate form can return, this world does not promise to be very habitable long,"

expresses Cusins's final position fairly closely. For when Barbara questions his desire to make a power "simple enough for common men to use, yet strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy

1. Major Barbara, Act 11, p. 287.

2. Past & Present, Bk. iv, Ch. i, pp. 234-5. (And of also Undershaft's speech to Cusins quoted on p. 58, above.

3. op. cit. p. 237.
to use its genius for the general good. 1 Cusins's reply is in effect a paraphrase of Carlyle's dictum that "the ideal must grow out of the real". He admits the existence of a higher (spiritual) power than that of violent physical force, but insists that complete mastery of the latter must precede the growth of the former. His use of the example of the conflict between the Greeks and Turks, taken in conjunction with his preceding speech on the state of political malaise in England, is an admission, as he himself sees, that "war and death itself" is preferable to "perpetual life-in-death, and 'peace, peace, where there is no peace."

The discussion in which Barbara and Cusins here find themselves involved is as old as Christianity. How far do the precepts of religion decide our actions in the secular world of affairs? Are the ethics of the church both ends and means, or one only of these? And, institutionally speaking, does the Church rule the State, where matters of morality impinge on secular affairs, or must she stand aside?

The discussion is not, of course, confined to Barbara and Cusins. Lady Britomart takes the position of the mediaeval papacy throughout, and her view is summarised in the appalling exaggeration of that position, "what does it matter whether things are true, if they are wrong." 2 Undershaw, who throughout assumes the argument of the feudal monarchs, that of expediency in secular affairs, sums up his

position by simply reversing the remark. What, he asks, does it 
that things be wrong, if they are true? Other characters take up 
various positions along the line between these two extremes. Sarah 
Lomax represent slightly different aspects of what, in his preface to 
the play, Shaw calls Butler's Laodiceanism, Sarah being somewhat more 
indifferent to the morality of either side than Lomax. Barbara and 
Cusins divagate also, not in terms of indifferentism, but because the 
consciences, while working toward the same ends, are diversely or: 
in their beginnings. Cusins is a political and social conscience 
Barbara's a religious and ethical one.

Carlyle makes parable from the conflict between Bishop Anselm 
and William Rufus to draw the same argument, and to come to the same 
conclusion as that in the play, extending his historical analogy to take 
in Thomas a Becket and Henry II, and finally the 'epic of industrialism; 
of 'Tools and the Man.' That conclusion, offered from the separate but 
complementary viewpoints of Cusins and Barbara in the penultimate 
scene of Major Barbara, is put with rare succinctness by Carlyle in this 
passage. the follows a denial that men can claim absolute knowledge 
of what the future holds:

"To shape the whole future is not our problem; but only to 
shape faithfully a small part of it, according to rules already known."

And we must not fail to note that it is in connection with modern 
industrialism that Carlyle makes this remark, after which comes two 
'prophecies'. First of these is that the 'Industrial Ages' will have

1. Past and Present, BK IV, p. 240. (of quote 1, first sentence 
p. 71, and the relevance of the remark to the concepts of creative 
evolution and the Fabian doctrine of the 'inevitability of gradualness.')
to become more 'organic'—that is, more in keeping with the 'laws
nature'—or will fail to get themselves 'organized'. Second, we are
told that,

"there will again be a King of Israel; a system of Order
and Government; and every man shall, in some measure, see himself
constrained to do that which is right in the King's eyes. This is
we may call a sure element of the Future; for this too is of the
Eternal;—this too is of the Present, though hidden from most;
and without it no fibre of the Past ever was. An actual new Some
Industrial Aristocracy, real not imaginary Aristocracy, is
indispensable and indubitable for us."

In a comparative treatment of Past and Present and Major Barby
this is surely interesting: the emphasis on organization of industrial
society along morally dictated lines, the systematisation and ordering
of industrial government under an absolute master, the blindness of
most of the characters to the fact and the need for such a system, and
the growth of an aristocracy of industrial government in the persons of
Barbara and Gusins, are all obvious common ground. What follows is as
interesting, or more so.

Carlyle reiterates that 'the new epic is.....not Arms and the Man,
but Tools and the Man!', after which suggestive remark he turns to consider
the relationship between men—a passage Bertrand Russell has not, I
fear, read. For here Carlyle recognizes the irrevocable fact of
contemporary democracy and the effect it has had on social relationships,
in creating the myth of social and political equality. He asserts that

2. See my p. 123 for further comment.
3. see my page.
this is a bad thing, inasmuch as it conceals true differences of w. ...,
and substitutes false ones, but is constrained to remark that

"no man is, or henceforth will be, the brass-collar
thrall of any man; you will have to bind him by other, far nobler
and cunninger methods."  

Far from being upset by the changing social status of the common
people, Carlyle is here concerned with showing in what ways society will
be improved by the common man having "scope as wide as his faculties
now are." Free, he will be more useful; trained to the fulness of
his abilities, he will build cities. What does concern Carlyle is
that this new and free common man may be ably led by the best of his
fellows, and he sees this as the slow and laborious work of years or
centuries: a work of evolutionary kind.

The first point here is that much of Major Barbara is devoted to
discussing the problem of leadership of the common people, and the
relationship of leader and led. Undershaft wants Barbara and Cusins
because they with their qualities, and he with his, are capable of pulling
up the children of the common poor to their higher level of
civilization. Part of Barbara's function in the play is to show in just
what single way all men are in fact equal, and in so doing to infer
in what ways they are not. Bodger and his kind, by repute, and Stephen,
are representative of different kinds of conservatism whose effects are
to repress the common people, while opposite them are placed characters
such as Snobby Price, Bill Walker and Peter Shirley, who severally show why the common people stay at their own level and do not rise socially or financially.

Then we are reminded that Undershaft puts in large letters round the dome of his William Morris Labour chapel the famous dictum "no man is good enough to be another man's master", which is not far as "no man is, or henceforth will be, the brass collar thrall of any man." The question that arises is whether Shaw was reminded of Morris's words by reading Carlyle's? And whether this is true or not, we should at least note, at this point, that one very good reason for Shaw's using *Past and Present* as the basis for *Major Barbara* is that the former incorporates so many of the dicta of Shaw's other Victorian mentors, in the one place.
CHAPTER 6.
THE MILITARY METAPHOR

In Past and Present as in Major Barbara, "the value of par---

as an institution is called in question in similar terms.

"The notion (writes Carlyle)" that a man's liberty consists
in giving his vote at the election hustings and saying, 'Behold,
now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our
National Palaver; will not all the Gods be good to me? is one
of the pleasantest."

Undershaft's scornful reply to Stephen runs:

"Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you,
sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop, can govern Undershaft
and Lazarus?"

But Carlyle suggests that one cannot despair of governments, if
only because there exists that impossiblest of things, a regular army:

"... got together to kill other men when you bid them."

He is interested that, among the chaos of other wrecked and ancient
institutions, "this oldest Fighting Institution is still so young,"

and, after claiming that the institutions of law and established religion
are to all intents dead or ineffective, writes:

"But he of the red coat..... is a success and no failure!
... He is a fact and not a shadow......... Catapult has
given place to cannon, pike has given place to musket, iron mail
shirt to coat of red; cloth, saltpetre rope match to percussion cap;

1. Past and Present, BK 111, ch xiii, p. 211.
equips, circumstances have all changed, and again change but the human battle engine in the inside of any or each of these, ready still to do battle, stands there six feet in standard s.

Strange, interesting, and yet most mournful to reflect on.

Three considerations arise from this, and following passages too lengthy to transcribe, which are counterparted in Major Barbara.

They are the analogy as between military organization and government, the ancient and continuing need for men to fight, and an appeal that the recognition of governments and of mankind generally for order—ruthless order—in matters military, be extended for purposes of general welfare.

In Major Barbara, these matters are necessarily treated in an attenuated or allusive way, the theme of organization, both as between munitions factory and government, and as a means to social welfare, receiving the fullest treatment. Undershaft derogates existing government, and then takes his family and their escorts to see how the thing should be done, and they assure us that in fact it is done.

The past/present nature of militarism is dealt with in terms of the Undershaft addition which, we are told, stems from the time of James the First. If Shaw does not lead us right back to pikes and mail-shirts, it is because his eight generations are sufficient. One could rather say that he picks up where Carlyle leaves off— at cannons, namely, and completes the picture with airships and with submarines.

1. Major Barbara, Bk IV, ch. iii, p. 251 et seq.
Carlyle's plea for an army "of ninety thousand strong ....

........ action and battle against Human Starvation, against Chaos, Necessity, Stupidity, and our real 'natural enemies' (as distinct from the French) is given, it would seem, more concrete expression in the social amenities of Perivale St. Andrews and the expressed desires of Cousins at the close of the play, but we will find Carlyle delineating almost item by item, just these things a little later. Before we "...." with this, one fleeting reference is worth noting.

Shaw often seems to delight in making the exaggerated point that the police and soldiery are there, in England at least, to ensure that the poor do not perpetrate in their own manner the crimes of theft and immorality that the wealthy have (because they control the law) licensed themselves to commit. And he says, repeatedly, that this is possible only because these forces are organized, and the poor are not. In Act III, of Major Barbara, he has Undershaft submit that if "six hundred and seventy fools [are let] loose in the streets, three policemen can scatter them."¹

The context is that Undershaft is decrying government, which is what Carlyle's chapter starts out to deal with, and Carlyle, having produced his analogy between government and army, concludes by remarking that

"Forty soldiers, I am told, will disperse the largest Spitalfields mob: forty to ten thousand, that is the proportion between drilled and undrilled..........." ²

1. Major Barbara, p. 331.

In *Past and Present*, only eight pages separate that remark from the mention of the then number of members in the House of Commons—six hundred and fifty-eight. And as a matter of interest, one would have to split a policeman to differentiate the ratio as between Carlyle's figures for mob dispersal, and Shaw's.

To return with Carlyle to the problems of allying aristocracy and democracy, we must remind the reader that it is at this point that Carlyle describes the (to him) ideal factory and its environment.

Perhaps Shaw, reading the following passage from *Past and Present*, remembered back to the beautiful setting of old St. Edmundsbury, and retouched it for his play.

"The legislature, even as it now is, could order all dingy manufacturing towns to cease from their soot and darkness; to let in the blessed sunlight, the blue of heaven, and become clear and clean; to burn their coal-smoke, namely, and make flame of it. Baths, free air, a wholesome temperature, ceilings twenty feet high, might be ordained by Act of Parliament, in all establishments licensed as mills.............."

"Every toiling Manchester, its smoke and soot all burnt, ought it not .......... to have a hundred acres or so of free greenfield, with trees on it, conquered, for its little children to disport in; for its all-conquering workers to take a breath of twilight air in ? .......... And to what-so-ever 'vested interests,' or suchlike, stood up gainsaying merely, "I shall lose profits," — the willing Legislature would answer, "Yes, but my sons and daughters will gain health, and life, and a soul."!

Only when Carlyle, in his relative naivety, insists that "we cannot have prosperous Cotton-Trades at the expense of keeping the Devil a partner in them," does Shaw add the satirical twist to the

vision. Like Machiavelli, the much maligned author of *The Prince*, Shaw insists that even the devil may have his place! But notice the proximity of the idyllic industrial unit, in Carlyle's narrative, to the passages on the effectiveness of military organization. Nothing, one suspects, could have delighted Shaw more than to have had the suggestion of balancing the armies of destruction against the Salvation Army, which is implicit here, since Carlyle not only means the army and factory improvement in, so to speak, the one breath, insists on the moral reasons for the latter, viz., that the

"willing Legislature would say ....... but my sons and daughters will gain health, and life, and a soul."¹

One further topic of general interest arises from Carlyle's chapter, 'The One Institution'. Toward the close of it, Carlyle refers again to the innate conservatism of the English and their legislature, and applauds the conservative and traditional principle. But he again makes the obvious point that there are times when the habit of merely altering old coats to suit new fashions no longer satisfies the needs of a particular age or epoch: that occasionally 'new epochs do actually come,'² and that when such an hour strikes, radical changes - 'new clothes' in the terms of *Sartor Resartus* - are absolutely necessary. Again, there is an implicit echo of this argument throughout Major Barbara.

We have had to notice the traditional nature of Undershaft's business several times, and it is a somewhat puzzling liaison that El has forced upon Undershaft in marrying him to a woman so basically conservative as Lady Britomart, unless we recognize both the 'Life For argument and Shaw's fundamental interest in social order.

By its very nature, Undershaft's business is one that moves forward in precisely the manner Carlyle ascribed to social and political life in England. Weapons (as Undershaft himself tells us in describing the works) undergo slow modifications until a new military epoch demands the radical alteration of all earlier tactical ideas, and a new range of weapons (such as airships and submarines - or long-range supersonic bombers and polaris missiles) demands a complete re-gearing of the works. And if the munitions maker fails to comprehend this, he, like Carlyle's government will find:

"Fate there, half unveiling herself in the gloom of the future, [remember the priestess in Back to Methuselah ] with horgibbet-words, her steel whips waiting to see whether it is 'possible'." 1

Undershaft, for all his pride in the tradition of which he is a part, is fully aware of the demands of the time. He objects to Stephen as his successor on the grounds that, though Stephen would be able to learn the office routine, he would not understand the business, which would go on by its own momentum until the real Undershaft - probably an Italian or a German - would invent a new method and cut him out. 2

1. Past and Present, BK IV, ch. iii, p. 255.

And Undershaft admits to loving only his bravest enemy as

"the man who keeps [him] up to the mark."¹

In both instances - Carlyle's and Shaw's - there is evidenced the peculiar concern for England to which both our Celtic authors give near constant expression, under cover of severe castigation and apocalyptic warnings.

I have previously agreed with Mr. MacCarthy that there is a
Manichean element in Shaw's 'theology', and to do so is to disagree
with C.E.M. Joad who declares that Shaw never faces the problem of
evil. Shaw's view is implicit in his concept of God (the Life-Force)
as a part, albeit the supreme part, of an evolving universe. He is
a God who makes mistakes, a God of trial and error. Ultimately he
omnipotent, but never is he omniscient, and in this way Shaw rides him
of the illogicality of the Hebraic-Christian doctrine of a God who is
all-powerful, all-knowing, always-present, and who is also entirely
benevolent. Shaw's doctrine, explicitly stated in Lilith's speech in
Back to Methuselah, is also given emphatic expression by Barbara:

"Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work he had
to create us to do because it cannot be done except by living
men and women. When I die, let him be in my debt, not I in his;
and let me forgive him as becomes a woman of my rank." 3

The reversals of Christian teaching are abundantly clear. God,
like the rest of nature, is subject to conditions imposed by the contradictory
elements of matter and life (spirit). When he makes a mistake in the
evolutionary programme, the result is evil, and his creatures, by the
exercise of their individual wills, in conjunction with, or in opposition
to his supreme will, either perpetuate or correct the evil. In either
case the fault is his, but in the latter it is for God to ask pardon
from the saintly man or woman (the distinction of 'rank' of which
Barbara speaks) and not the reverse.

1. See my page 19.
2. Shaw and Society, p. 155.
Carlyle is by no means so explicit, nor so easy to follow on ___ question. Both, however, are equally clear on two points: that it useless to expect 'God' to clear up the mess without human aid, and though it is for men to shoulder the burdens of social amelioration and political justice, their energies will be ill-spent if they do not first have that moral probity that results from working in the conviction that one's actions are in accord with what Carlyle called the 'law or nature' or the 'eternal verities', and what Shaw called 'the Ld.

Earlier, (Page 51) I claimed that in their 'theocratic-socialism' both men owe a debt to the Puritan tradition. Nobody who has read Carlyle's Cromwell is likely to deny this. And the Puritan influence is to be seen in the pulpit rhetoric that rolls its didactic way from page to page of all Carlyle's writing, from the relatively benign examination of English society in Past and Present to the damnatory comminations of the Latter Day Pamphlets and Shooting Niagara. It is a similar, but more sophisticated Puritanism that informs both the matter and manner of Shaw's work, and it is the Calvinistic predilection for supporting spiritual  with the realities of life that, at first sight, obscures the romanticism of Shaw.

As he says himself, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to Man and Superman (Page 150).

"...... my conscience is the genuine pulpit article: it

1. Prefaces.
annoys me to see people comfortable when they ought to be uncomfortable; and I insist on making them think in order to bring them to conviction of sin."

This is followed (Page 164) by a passage in which Shaw makes one of his iterated views that while the surface realities of human behaviour may give the appearance of substantial difference, as between one era and another, the basic controversy in ideas is the same, i.e., the conflict between right and wrong, good and evil, better and worse.

"It may seem a long step from Bunyan to Nietzsche; but the difference between their conclusions is merely formal. Nothing is new in these matters except their novelties: for instance it is a novelty to call Justification by Faith "Wille", and Justification by Works "Vorstellung."

Let us note the references to 'conscience', to 'pulpit oratory', to 'sin', in the first passage quoted above, and remark that the 'ought' Shaw uses there has moral, not rational, connotations, while the reference to Bunyan in the second passage, by no means a lone one, gives a clear indication of one of the traditions to which Shaw belongs in our literature.

Similarly, in Three Plays For Puritans, Shaw asserts his concern with moral problems, and in the preface to those plays makes plain the relationship between what he calls 'Diabolian Ethics' and 'Puritanism'. His explanations here make Shaw's ethical rectitude seem saintly alongside the conventional morality of late-nineteenth and twentieth century society. Very often we will find, with Carlyle too, but especially with Shaw, that what has sometimes been called their diabolism is not a matter of declaring that there is good in what is
palpably evil, but rather an exercise in exposing the evil that abounds in what is conventionally held to be good.

For example, Carlyle attacks the 1660 Settlement\(^1\) on the grounds that it was in fact a proclamation of government without God; "with only a decent pretence of God," and that this Act spelled the death of "earnest Puritanism", while inaugurating two centuries of "decent Formalism." Since that time, Carlyle maintained, only two things had been seen as politically necessary: "to suppress all noise and disturbance", and to "be careful that supplies - not fail."

"Religion," he complains, "Christian Church, Moral Duty; the fact that man had a soul at all; that in man's life there was any eternal truth or justice at all - has been as good as quietly left out of sight...."

Such a state of affairs, he maintains, has led directly to the soulless materialism, abetted by the established churches, which will, if not checked, lead to bloody revolution.

Waxing sarcastic some chapters later, Carlyle returns to the subject of contemporary religion and its failure to serve its proper moral function in society, because of the churches' political sycophany:

"Fancy a man ...... recommending his fellow men to believe in God, that so Chartism might abate, and the Manchester operatives be got to spin peaceably!"\(^3\)

2. Ibid.
and again, after dire threats as to the results of such abortive

"I will as soon think of making Galaxies ........ to gui ;
little herring vessels by, as of preaching religion that the
Constable may continue possible."  

In his preface to Major Barbara, Shaw asks if it is not because
the poor have seen through the hypocrisy of the established churches
that they have become cynical.

"They know" writes Shaw, "that the large subscriptions
which help to support the [Salvation] Army are endowments, not
of religion, but of the wicked doctrine of docility in povert
and humility under oppression."  

In other words, it is part of the churches' function to "suppress
all noise and disturbance" and "ensure that supplies do not fail."

Following up this part of his argument in precisely the same way
as Carlyle, Shaw claims that such realizations on the part of the poor
lead them to the

"most agonizing doubts of the soul, the doubt whether their
true salvation must not come from their most abhorrent passions
............."

and that in allowing such a mood to arise in the people,

"........ we produce violent and sanguinary revolutions such
as t' is now in progress (1906) in Russia, and the one which
Capitalism in England and America is daily and diligently
provoking."  

As Shaw proceeds to outline just how the Church must co-operate
with the State to ensure its continued existence, we may clearly see how,

like Carlyle, he uses rational argument to score moral points, which themselves rest firmly on a transcendental philosophy, and how cleverly such commonly used and emotive terms as "soul," and "salvation," are woven into a text which pretends to be expository argument, but which, in fact, is often as rhetorical and subjective as the argument will bear.

There are two passages in Major Barbara where Shaw gives even more direct expression to Carlyle's "arguments" cited above.

Undershaft, in argument with Cusins, declares:

"All religions exist by selling themselves to the rich.

Cusins ............... Not the Army. That is the church of the poor.
Undershaft ............ All the more reason for buying it.
Cusins ................ I don't think you quite know what the Army does for the poor.
Undershaft ............ Oh yes! I do. It draws their teeth. That is enough for me as a man of business.
Cusins ................ Nonsense! It makes them sober.
Undershaft ............ I prefer sober workmen - The profits are larger.
Cusins ................ honest -
Undershaft ............. Honest workmen are the most economical.
Cusins ................ attached to their homes -
Undershaft ............. So much the better: they will put up with anything sooner than change their shop.
Cusins ................ - happy -
Undershaft ............. An invaluable safeguard against revolution.
Cusins ................ - unselfish -
Undershaft ............. Indifferent to their own interests, which suits me exactly -
Cusins ................ - with their thoughts on heavenly things -
Undershaft ............. And not on Trade Unionism or Socialism. Excellent.

Secondly, when Mrs. Baines asks Undershaft to "help her get & the people" (sic) she refers to Snobby Price:

"You see how we take the anger and bitterness against you out of their hearts, Mr. Undershaft,"

he replies:

"It is certainly most convenient and gratifying to all large employers of labour, Mrs. Baines."

While we would be foolish to ignore the fact that Marx, with his famous comment on religion's opiate effect on the people, intervene between Carlyle and Shaw, we can hardly gloss over the point by point relationship of the latter's arguments which are not, like Marx's, aimed at religion as such, but at formalized religion which has, in Carlyle's eyes as in Shaw's, failed in its primary functions of preaching and acting social Christianity, by backing the plutocratic government of the times.

CHAPTER 8.
THE IDEAL AND THE REAL

But to turn to Carlyle's St. Edmundsbury, we will remember that Edmund himself is lauded in much the same terms, and for much the same reasons as all Carlyle's 'heroes'. With sardonic humour we are told that if Edmund had not reconciled contradictory facts (i.e. his ownership of the land and the claims of Hengest and Horsa, primarily) he would have been no 'saint' but a mere 'sinner', but that there is no record of his rigorously collecting rents, preserving game or otherwise following the pursuits of the modern English aristocracy.

We must mark not only his 'facing of the facts' but also that Edmund was the founder, by virtue of proclaiming his right to contest evil and false government in the persons of Hengest and Horsa, of a tradition. So was the first Undershäf't who, we are told, wrote up in his workshop, in the reign of James I:

"If God gave the Hand, let not Man withhold the sword."

Abbot Samson is only one of a long line of Abbots who have continued to build up the monastery of St. Edmund, and he himself adds to buildings and builds a new shrine for Edmund's body.

Undershäf't, one of a continuing line, adds to the amenities of his industrial township and builds - 'a William Morris Labour Church'!

If there are these undoubted similarities, there are also similarities with an ironic difference. Carlyle, a man who had many denigratory things to say about Jews, but who himself had a Jewish secretary, makes capital of the race's usurious reputation in Past and Present.
Indeed, Abbot Hugo’s failure to deal with the money lenders, and
Samson’s hard-won success over them, is made the first line of comparison
between these two men, and we are asked to see how hard-headed and
practical Samson is; how necessary as Carlyle puts it "that the Ideal
always has to grow in the real."

Shaw, on the other hand, by making Lazarus, a Jew, the partner
of Andrew Undershaw has united "Christendom and Judea." Lazarus is
drawn, vicariously, as:

"a gentle, romantic Jew who cares for nothing but string
quartets and stalls at fashionable theatres. He will be blamed
for [Cusins's] rapacity in money matters, poor fellow! as he
has hither to been blamed for [Undershaw's]."

Such matters, interesting as a link between the two works, are
yet peripheral to the central themes of the respective authors.

Of greater interest is the following passage from Book 11, chapter iv.,
of Past and Present.

"Religion is not a diseased self-introspection, an agonising
inquiry: [to religious men] their duties are clear .......... Religion lies over them like an atmosphere and life-element,
which is not spoken of. Is not serene or complete religion the
highest aspect of human nature; as serene cant; or complete
no-religion, is the lowest and miserablest? Between which
two, all manner of earnest Methodism, introspections, agonising
inquiries never so morbid, shall play their respective parts,
not without approbation."

The idea that religion should be an intuitively felt aura from
without, and also form the 'highest aspect of human nature' closely

2. Past and Present, p. 58.
approximates Shaw's view of the matter. We even have the phrase
'life-element' which is very close to Shaw's 'life-force.' Both agree
that life without 'religion' - that is, a life lived on an entirely
material basis - is no life at all, and both agree that serious attempts
at achieving the religious life are to be preferred to 'no-religion'.
We may go further. Methodism, used by Carlyle to signify 'enthusiastic'
non-conformist churches, is probably as close an approach to the
enthusiasm in religion which marked the early Salvation Army as existed
in Carlyle's time. Shaw never fully withdraws his approbation of the
Salvationists in Major Barbara: he merely indicates the weakness of
their position. Furthermore, the moral crux of the play is given over
to the 'introspections, and agonising inquiries' of Barbara in particular
and, to a slightly lesser extent Cusins, who, faced with the truth that
"the Ideal always has to grow in the Real" find themselves not so
clear as to 'their duties' for a time. And Cusin's Dionysian religion
provides a link with the historical past comparable to the monastery.

There is also the analogy of religious experience. In such
criticism as I have read on Major Barbara, the point has not been
clearly made that what Barbara loses is not her religious faith or belief,
but a suitable means of expressing that faith in accord with her own
conscience. The difference is an important one and, as we shall see,
is relevant to our comparison.

Abbot Hugo, we will recall, was entirely adequate as regards his
religious duties. As Carlyle puts it:
"Not that our worthy old Dominus Abbas was inattentive to the divine offices, or to the maintenance of a devout spirit in us or himself."¹

The same could be said for the Salvation Army. But, as Barbara relates, it is difficult to concentrate on men's souls when they are starving in body, and she is thus ripe for suborning by Undershaft when she discovers that the Salvation Army will accept money from questionable sources and on questionable terms.

Precisely the same kind of situation developed at St. Edmundsbury under Abbot Hugo:

"His one worldly care was to raise ready money; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. And how he raised it: From usurious insatiable Jews...."²

Substitute "their" for the opening "his", and replace 'insatiable Jews' with "wicked whisky manufacturers and munitions makers," and the sentence would stand perfectly for the position in which Major Barbara and Mrs. Baines find themselves. For Hugo, it is that or letting the monastery fall into ruin - or so he thinks. For Barbara and Mrs. Baines, it is that or close the shelters. Hugo, in desperation, retires 'to his warm flannels'; Barbara, made of sterner stuff, retires from the 'army' altogether. And her 'retirement' though it lasts only a day, is in a sense the period of interlude represented in Carlyle's book by chapters v to vii of Book ii, for at the end of Carlyle's interlude there emerges Abbot Samson, with his

2. ibid.
eminently practical and hard-headed approach to the business of running
a monastery, and at the end of Barbara's, there is Undershaft, who
points out that she is overdramatizing her position, and that all she
need do is shift her institutional allegiance from the religion she
has found will not, on her terms, work, to one that will. Again, the
one that will work is based on material practicality, provided by
Undershaft, and just as in the monastery, political and spiritual
aspirations are seen as being possible superstructures that can
be raised only on the firm foundations of a good social order.

In Major Barbara, Undershaft has laid the foundations for such
an order, but the 'levelling-up' process is not yet general, and it
is Caspar's political socialism, and Barbara's religious communism,
working on the base of, and at the same time modifying, Undershaft's
version of what Shaw called State Capitalism, that Shaw offers as the
ultimate solution in this play.

Similarly, Abbot Samson's reign starts off in rigorously practical
fashion, then involves him in an ever-widening orbit of political interests,
until his final, crowning act, is portrayed as the paying of homage to
his patron, St. Edmund.

Again in chapter Four of Book Two, Past and Present, one of the
main concerns of Major Barbara is brought forward. Speaking as if
through the mouth of Jocelin, the narrating monk, Carlyle draws a
distinction between the recent 'religions of doubt,' and the certainties
of the ancient catholic faith. When we remember Carlyle's contempt for
Roman Catholicism we may find it difficult to understand how he could
defend its rituals, which testified

"that this Earthly Life and its riches and possessions,
and good and evil hap are not intrinsically a reality at all,
but are a shadow of realities eternal, infinite; that this
Time-world, as an air-image, fearfully emblematic, plays and
flickers in the grand still mirror of Eternity; and Man's little
Life has Duties that are great........ and go up to Heaven, and
down to Hell."¹

Carlyle very quickly shows that his sympathy lies not with the
particular type of Christianity but with an attitude of mind which did
not reduce "all human dues and reciprocities ............ into one great
due of cash payment,"² with a way of life that was organic rather
than what he calls 'galvanic,' when speaking of 'Mammonism,' and with
the belief "that soul is indispensable."³

Carlyle's words are indicative of relating material and spiritual
values, and not of utterly condemning one while lauding the other. Just
as Shaw sets out to relate the materialism of Undershaft to the spiritualism
of Barbara, with the Salvation Army thrown between them as both bridge
and abyss, so Carlyle sets the monastic life against the materialistic,
and finally asks for a combination of attitudes.

We might remember that Undershaft himself never claims for wealth
any intrinsic merits. It is because money can provide an assured

2. ibid.
3. ibid.
place for "honour, justice, truth, love [and] mercy," and because it can save his children and his workers from the 'seven deadly sins' of "food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children," all of them the harbingers of poverty to those without money, that Undershaft places such value on it.

Samson, like Undershaft, is a leader who believes in action rather than prayer. When John Lackland usurps the throne, Samson leads his own troops against him (Page 101) in person. Undershaft maintains that poverty and slavery, which have stood up for centuries to 'preaching and leading articles,' will not stand up to his machine guns. In both Major Barbara and Past and Present there is a continuous pressing of the view that Right must prevail even if through Might; a view that has often, been misconstrued as the diabolonian ethic of 'might is right.'

This question, one of the largest and most consistent in both books, leads to long discussions on the subjects of conscience and duty, and especially in Major Barbara throws into relief the conflict between the various threads of belief and behaviour in conventional society.

Carlyle grasps the essence of the problem in the following passage, itself a moralizing on the fate of Henry of Essex, the

cowardly standard - bearer turned monk.

"Thus does the Conscience of man project itself athwart whatsoever of knowledge and surprise, of imagination, understanding, faculty, acquirement, or natural disposition he has in him; and like light through coloured glass, paint strange pictures . . . . Truly, this same 'sense of the Infinite nature of Duty' is the central part of all with us; a ray as of Eternity and Immortality, immured in dusky, many coloured time, and its deaths and births. Your 'coloured glass' varies so much from century to century; and in certain money - making, game - preserving centuries, it gets so terribly opaque............. One day it will again cease to opaque,............. painting no pictures more for us, but only the everlasting azure itself............"

The long dialogue between Cusins and Barbara which virtually closes Shaw's play may be seen as a dramatic portrayal of just this idea. Cusins's decision to accept Undershaft's proposal is an example of his conscience projecting itself over his knowledge of contemporary society and history, his poetic imagination and understanding of human life and human power, and his intellectual faculties and acquirements. His conscience, or 'sense of the infinite nature of duty,' which has been the real crux between himself and Undershaft, as distinct from the 'cash nexus' which required a mere page of badinage to settle, at last bridges the 'natural disposition' in him to cachew the materials of war, for, as 'light through coloured glass, painting strange pictures,' his conscience finally convinces him that the ends of eternity will best be served by his acceptance of Undershaft's challenge.

1. Past and Present, BK 11, ch. xiv, p. 106.
to use the weapons of war to 'make war on war', and to level all men socially.

Cusins's sense of hope and fulfilment in accepting the dictates of his sense of duty despite the difficulties of the choice in a 'money making century,' where moral choice is clouded by so many, apparently contradictory, considerations, is matched by Barbara's transport of spiritual fervour which practically echoes Carlyle's optimism. The opacity of life's problems, (as set forth by Carlyle) has made Barbara's, and Cusins's choice difficult, but once the 'ray of light' has come through 'the coloured glass,' all becomes clear, and apparent opposites are seen to bend in the one, inevitable, direction. Cusins asks,

"Then the way of life lies through the factory of death?"

To which Barbara replies,

"Yes, through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God, through the unveiling of an external light in the Valley of the Shadow." ⁵

In short, the opacity gives way to the 'everlasting Azure', in Carlyle's terms. And we note that Barbara, Shaw's type of the saint, finds her fulfilment in standing to the colours of direct action, a not insignificant point when we remember that Carlyle's story contains at least three separate references to standard bearers and standards, one immediately preceding the passage quoted above from Past and Present.

As Carlyle proceeds with the exposition of his paragon, Samson, he apparently becomes aware of the great stress he has laid on the


2. compare Carlyle's "-------- duties that -------- go up to Heaven and down to Hell" see my page 105.
abbot's worldly abilities, and proceeds to show the relation these
bear to the man's spiritual outlook:

"No-one will accuse our Lord Abbot of wanting worldly
wisdom. A skilful man; full of cunning insight, lively interests;
always discerning the road to his object, by it circuit, be it
short - cut, and victoriously travelling forward thereon. Nay
rather it might seem, as if he had his eye all but exclusively
directed on terrestrial matters, and was much too secular for a
devout man. But this too, was right. For it is in the world
that a man, devout or other, has his life to lead, his work
waiting to be done." 1

This is a good description of the surface Undershaft, with his
apparent worldliness, his interest in all things around him, his 'cunning
insight' into the only way to win Barbara to his point of view, his
habit of personal victory, and his obvious belief that it is the
here and now that matter.

But when Carlyle continues to describe Samson as,

"All along a busy working man, as all men are bound to be,
his religion, his worship was like his daily bread to him; which
he did not take the trouble to talk about much; which he merely
ate at stated intervals and did his work upon," 2

that too is a good description of Undershaft: of the Undershaft
who "does not keep [his] morals and his business in water-tight
compartments," 3 of the Undershaft who sees religion as "the only
subject that capable people really care for," 4 of the Undershaft who
declares himself a mystic and works like a beaver, sustained by a
philosophy - or religion - which leaves others to "find their own

dreams" while he "looks after the drainage," metaphorically speaking, and thus "saves their souls." 1

Undershaft's enigmatic certitude that he is working as part of a will that is at once his own and exterior to him, is of the same order as Samson's certainty, which makes "all the Earth a mystic Temple for him!" 2 It is that same certainty that makes Undershaft so impatient of Barbara's expression of loss when her confidence in the Salvation Army is shattered, when she doubts her earlier beliefs.

Undershaft.................Come, come, my daughter! don't make too much of your little tinpot tragedy............

You have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion or what not. It doesn't fit the facts. We'll scrap it. Scrap it and get one that does fit..........." 3

Barbara.................I stood on the rock I thought eternal; ........ I was safe with an infinite wisdom watching me, an army marching to Salvation with me; and in a moment, at the stroke of your pen in a cheque book, I stood alone; and the heavens were empty. That was the first shock of the earthquake; I am waiting for the second.

Carlyle expresses the same irate contempt for Methodism,

"with its eye forever turned on its own navel; asking itself with torturing anxiety of hope and fear, 'Am I right, am I wrong? Shall I be saved? Shall I not be damned?'

'What is this, at bottom, but a new phasis of Egoism, stretched out to the Infinite; not always the heavenlier for its infinitude! Brother, so soon as possible, endeavour to rise above all that............" 4

The Methodist, and Barbara, are both advised to become

2. Past and Present, p. 112.
3. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 328 (my emphasis)
enlightened in the spiritual sphere by coming to grips with the realities of practical living.

Carlyle and Shaw are at one in this: that they demand a large measure of utilitarian progress as a result of their (or anyone's) romantic idealism. We are told (by Mr. Bentley, Mr. MacCarthy and Mr. Pearson) that theatre critics who saw the first performances of Major Barbara divided into two groups: those who regarded the play as outright blasphemy and an attack on all religion, and those who saw it as a triumphant assertion of the validity of religion. It may be possible to gain either of these impressions from a performance of the play, but once one has read the script, it seems impossible to me to escape the conclusion that Shaw actually condemns, in Marxian fashion, a religion that is a 'palliative of the people' — namely what he calls the 'cresstianity' of the Salvation Army, and lauds in its place the practical religion of Undershaft, which might well be called 'transcendental state capitalism.'

Carlyle gives us the antithesis thus:

"That certain human souls, living on this practical Earth, should think to save themselves and a ruined world by noisy theoretic demonstrations and laudations of the church, instead of some unnoisy, unconscious, but practical, total, heart-and-soul demonstration of a church: this we were to see How much profitabler when you can, like Abbot Samson, breathe; and go along your way! "

This Barbara is made to see. For although Shaw is obviously

sympathetic to certain aspects of the Salvation Army, as for example its joyousness and acceptance of all men as social equals, Shaw is at pains to point out that the apparent practicality of the Army, in its looking after the poor, has two distinct drawbacks. First, that the Army is at the mercy of the rich in its work of feeding the poor, and consequently, that the ostensible doctrine of social equality is actually impossible, and that the charity of the Army has the unfortunate ulterior function expressed by Barbara as the "bribe of bread".

Barbara turns from her "paradise of enthusiasm and prayer and soul-saving" when she learns that only Dodger and Undershaw make this possible: that it is in fact all a "noisy theoretic demonstration and laudation of the church". She turns to the work Undershaw has challenged her to: the salvation of the materially satisfied but spiritually atrophied.

Further evidence of the likeness of Samson and Undershaw comes before us at the opening of Book Two chapter sixteen of Past and Present.

"Abbot Samson," writes Carlyle, "built many useful, many pious edifices: humane dwellings, churches, church steeples, barns,.............. He built and endowed 'the Hospital of Bubwell;' built 'fit houses for the St. Edmondsbury schools.'

Of Undershaw's township we learn that there is a nursing home, there are libraries and schools, two Methodist churches (a 'Primitive and a

1. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 335.
sophisticated one\(^1\) and a William Morris Labour church,\(^2\) obviously of recent construction.

In both cases there is the same balance of attention between 'looking after the drainage', as Undershaft would call it, and providing for the spiritual element in man, in this eminently practical business of building with which both men concern themselves.

Undershaft's whole effort, during the play, is expended in procuring for 'the Undershaft inheritance,' successors who will forward the socialist and humanitarian work he has himself furthered. Cusins is necessary to him not only because he has the imaginative genius necessary to keep a gigantic business concern vital and efficient, but also, and mainly, because Cusins is an idealist who will 'dare to make war on war' with war. Cusins will, therefore, continue and extend the process of socialistic amelioration and 'levelling up' evidenced in Undershaft's township.

Barbara, on the other hand, is necessary to Undershaft because she has the same grasp upon life as he has himself. Her vision is transcendental, as is his, and if he has been able to provide places where his men may worship 'the will of which he is a part,' Barbara, we are led to believe, will be well qualified to teach those men, and their successors, talking "of the holiest and greatest things with them" and appeasing the hunger that is in their souls because their bodies are full.
Before we can arrive at such a conclusion, however, there are several very real bridges to be crossed. Carlyle and Shaw are certainly romantics. They are, as certainly, not sentimentalists.

Both recognize the terrible realities of life at most levels: poverty in the social sphere, corruption in the political world, the existence of 'sweating dens' in industry, of hypocrisy and sycophancy in religion, of shocking and senseless waste and carnage in war. And for each of them the answer to almost every problem is that a clearly defined and universally recognized moral code be agreed upon, based on an equally clear recognition of that slender equality that binds all men: their common humanity.

For both Shaw and Carlyle the difficulty was not in getting the basic idea across. One of the earliest romantics, Rousseau, had already done that so successfully as to very nearly ruin the idea for everyone else. What they needed was a sufficiently influential group within society who could see both the strengths and the weaknesses of the basic idea, and exploit both. And influence alone would be, both recognized, insufficient. Strength also would be required: intellectual, moral, even physical, strength might be needed to make up the genius required to give expression to the relationship under which all men must meet and have intercourse.
This specific, close relationship, is summed up in the two following extracts from Carlyle's chapter on "Working Aristocracy."

"The inventive genius of England is not a Beaver's, or a Spinner's, or a Spider's genius: it is a Men's genius, I hope, with a God over him."

and again:

"We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory and prosperity; The strangling band of famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have time to think ourselves, to repent and consider: wherein to struggle as for life in reforming our foul ways; in alleviating, instructing, regulating our people; seeking, as for life, that something like spiritual food be imparted them, some real governance and guidance be provided them! "

For this kind of progress Carlyle does not look to the landed aristocracy. Regretfully but nonetheless firmly, he turns his appealing gaze upon the 'hard working industrialists.' In them he sees the hope of the future, but he also sees that the sweat in their eyes blinds them to the plight of the poverty stricken; that as yet their materialism is unmitigated by any spiritual aspirations. And he turns to inspect an example of this kind: Plugson of Undershot.

It is much to be doubted I am the first to remark that there is something of an echo between Plugson, Bunns and Company of St. Dolly Undershot, and Undershaft and Lazarus of Perivale St Andrews. There is little of tangible likeness, yet the ring is there, and worth recording. Even more worthwhile is the following passage, where Carlyle, having reiterated his distrust of a purely fiscal relationship between men, goes on:

1. Past and Present, p. 179.
"For all human things do require to have an Ideal in them; to have some soul in them. . . . . And wonderful it is to see how the Ideal or soul, place it in what ugliest body you may, will irradiate said body with its own nobleness; will gradually, incessantly, mould, modify, new-form or re-form said ugliest body, and make it at last beautiful, and to a certain degree divine! Oh, if you could dethrone that Brute-God Mammon, and put a Spirit-god in his place! One way or other he will have to be dethroned."

Undershaft's ideal, expressed when he says to Cousins:

"We three must stand together above the common people; how else can we help their children to climb up beside us."

is placed by Shaw in the 'ugliest body' conceivable: an arms factory. And it has already 'irradiated the body' to the extent of providing an ideal material setting and existence for the workers there. The addition of Cusins's and Barbara's aspirations will, we are led to believe, 'mould, modify, reform and make more beautiful and to some extent divine' what Barbara has previously described as 'this dreadful place'.

The whole intention is to dethrone the 'brute-god mammon' and 'put a spirit-god in his place'.

But further yet, Carlyle proceeds:

"Fighting, for example, as I often say to myself, Fighting with steel murder-tools is surely a much uglier operation than Working, take it how you will. Yet even of fighting, in religious Abbot Samson's days, see what . . . . . had grown, - a 'glorious Chivalry,' much besung down to the present day, was that not one of the 'impossiblest' things. Under the sky is no uglier spectacle

1. Past and Present, BK. 111, ch x, p. 183.
than two men with clenched teeth, and hell-fire eyes, hacking one another's flesh; converting precious living bodies, and priceless living souls, into nameless masses of putrescence.

How did a Chivalry ever come out of that; how anything that was not hideous, scandalous, infernal? .........

"I remark ............. first, that the fighting itself was more or less with cause. Man is created to fight; he is perhaps best of all definable as a born soldier; his life 'a battle and march,' under the right General. It is forever indispensable for a man to fight; now with Necessity, with Barrenness, Scarcity, ............. now also with the hallucinations of [my] poor fellow men ............. which make him claim over me rights which are not his. All fighting, ............. is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest, or, in other words, the justest; - of rights which do in the long run, and forever will in this just Universe in the long run, mean Rights." 1

Here, if anywhere, is the source of Shaw's opposition of two types of fighting, and two kinds of force. Certainly Shaw, in his treatment of militarist philosophy, is always more devastatingly frank than is Carlyle.

But consider: Undershaft makes no bones about what his manufacture of arms means in terms of end results.

"Think of my business! think of the widows and orphans! the men and lads torn to pieces with shrapnel and poisoned with lyddite! the oceans of blood, not one drop of which is shed in a really just cause! the ravaged crops! the peaceful peasants forced, women and men, to till their fields under the fire of opposing armies on pain of starvation! .........." 2

And he refers to his works without a tremor as his "death and devastation factory." 3

That is to say, Undershaft recognizes completely that "fighting ....

   refer my page 106.)
is surely a much uglier operation than working." He also recognizes that
"man is created to fight................ sometimes with the
hallucinations........ of my poor fellow men which make him claim
rights over me which are not his". This recognition provides the moral
root of what Undershaft calls the 'true faith of an Armourer.'

"To give arms to all men who offer an honest price for
them, without respect of persons or principles: to aristocrat
and republican, to Nihilist and Tsar, to Capitalist and
Socialist....... to all sorts and conditions, all nationalities,
all faiths, all follies, all causes and allcrimes........"\(^1\)

All this may sound, if not actually immoral, then certainly
amoral, which may be worse. To treat it as such without further
inspection would, however, do less than justice to Carlyle or to Shaw.

Carlyle, as he clearly indicates in his treatment of history,
and in the last sentence of the quotation above from chapter ten, had
absolute faith in the proposition that, in the long run, might will
identify itself with right. Shaw, a little more sceptical than
Carlyle on this point perhaps, was yet tainted with the idea.

Some light is thrown on the matter if we subject the mottoes\(^2\)
Undershaft quotes to inspection:

"If God gave the hand, let not Man withhold the sword,"
is a paraphrase of 'man is created to fight,' as is,

"All have the right to fight; none have the right to judge,"

---

"To Man the Weapon: To Heaven the Victory," is an epigrammatic form of stating Carlyle's belief as I have quoted and expounded it above.

"Peace shall not prevail, save with a sword in her hand", is an inversion of the statement that "Might is Right": it simply posits that Right must have and be Might.

"Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done," is hardly more than a terse affirmative form of Carlyle's warning throughout Past and Present, that the forces of poverty and hunger will be constrained to violence if the forces of government do not alleviate their condition.

Shaw leaves it to Gusins and to Barbara to make the dreadful irony of all this somewhat more palatable. It is Gusins who takes over Carlyle's belief that Might can (used 'properly') be the handmaid of Right, and Barbara who offers the belief that, in the wake of material betterment, however achieved, the spiritual force she administers may succeed.

To speak of Barbara in this connection is to refer again to the long extract quoted above from Carlyle. Not only does he suggest that man must fight men, but also, indeed primarily, with "Necessity, Barrenness, Scarcity, Puddles, Bogs, tangled forests, unkempt cotton."

These things are on a par with the Poverty, the Hunger, the Drunkenness, Dissolution and Prostitution that the Salvation Army

1. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 337.
sets out to fight, and here Carlyle's phrase

"man is best of all definable as a born soldier; his life a 'battle and a march' under the right General"

strikes an echoing chord.

"It is a very significant thing" writes Shaw in the Preface to Major Barbara,1 "this instinctive choice of the military form of organization, this substitution of the drum for the organ, by the Salvation Army. Does it not suggest that the Salvationists divine that they must actually fight the devil instead of merely praying at him?"2

Carlyle has a similar passage, where he speaks of how religious communities spring up in every hamlet (even Undershaft's!) and where

"... a man stands there [to] speak of spiritual things to men."

Carlyle bemoans the fact that so often, such preachers have lost sight of the real point, and goes on,

"Could he but find the point again, take the old spectacles off his nose, and looking up discover almost in contact with him, what the real Satan, and soul devouring world devouring Devil, now is: Original Sin and suchlike are bad enough, I doubt not; but distilled Gin, dark ignorance, Stupidity 4........ what are they? Will he discover our new real Satan, whom he has to fight...........

The quotation above from Shaw continues:

"At present, it is true, they have not quite ascertained [the devil's] correct address. When they do, they may give a very rude shock to that sense of security which he has gained ...........

And if Carlyle's 'battle and march under the right general' has not yet been accounted for, we may cite this passage:

1. Major Barbara, p. 220.
2. Preface, Major Barbara, p. 220.
3. 4. 5. My emphases.
"..... rousing marches and impetuous dithyrambs rise to the heavens from people among whom the depressing noise called "sacred music" is a standing joke; a flag with Blood and Fire on it is unfurled, not in murderous rancour, but because fire is beautiful and blood a vital and splendid red; and transfigured men and women carry their gospel through a transfigured world, calling their leader General, themselves captains and brigadiers, and their whole body an Army"......

Certainly it seems almost incredible to find in Carlyle evidences for a religious organization that did not even exist in his time, and of course they can have been no more than suggestions to Shaw, who, before he wrote Major Barbara, was interested in the Salvation Army as a music critic, and had previously offered to write a one act play on the organization. But here we must not lose sight of the fact that, for all the religious significance of the play, the Salvation Army is being used in it, and sometimes abused, to point a half-dozen morals. And since those morals are essentially the same as those being expounded at great length in Past and Present, we may be excused for thinking that Shaw may have been influenced in his choice of religious organization by Carlyle's adumbrations of a 'new religion'.

For example, Carlyle has this to say:

"Nay, in Europe itself, in these newest times, have there not religious voices risen, - with a religion new and yet the oldest; entirely indisputable to all hearts of men?..... The old Secular or Practical world, so to speak, having gone up in fire, is not here the prophecy and dawn of a new Spiritual World, parent of far nobler, wider, new Practical Worlds." 3

1. Major Barbara, p. 222.
A new religion, which is yet the eternal religion, again the symbol of fire, and again the vision of new society dominated by soul: the vision of Cusins and Barbara. And again:

"Touches there are of a new Sphere-melody; audible once more, in the infinite jargoning discords and poor scrapmel-pipings of the thing called Literature; priceless there, as the voice of new Heavenly Psalms," 1

which is bound to have interested Shaw, whose eye would pause at any metaphor involving musical terms. We might note, too, the similar contrast both make as between the ineffectiveness of the old as against the new 'music'.

Carlyle, continuing to describe this new religion manifested in literature, says that it will disclose itself:

"not now as scorching Fire; the red smoky scorching Fire has purified itself into white sunny Light........"

Shaw was tied to Fire, of course, but Undershaft does make the comment that "[his] sort of fire purifies." 2

In the closing passage of Book Three (page 228) Carlyle writes one of those queerly prophetic passages which, with a word changed here or there, could be fitted into Shaw's description of the Salvation Army.

"....... we will march out of this-book with a rhythmio word of Goethe's on our lips........... To me, finding it devout yet wholly credible and veritable, full of piety yet free of cant; to me joyfully finding much in it, and joyfully missing

so much in it, this little snatch of music sounds like a stanza in the grand Road Song or Marching Song of our great Teutonic Kindred, wending-valliant and victorious, through the undiscovered deeps of time! He calls it Mason Lodge, not Psalms or Hymn.

Not only do I refer the reader to Shaw's statement above (p. 120) for a general comparison, but also to his preface to Major Barbara, where Shaw declares:

"Creeds must become intellectually honest. At present there is not a single credible established religion in the world. That is perhaps the most stupendous fact in the whole world situation."!

Finally, in what may be called 'the evidence for the Salvation Army in Past and Present,' we turn to the last paragraph of that work, to find this passage.

"Ploughers, Spinners, Builders, Prophets, Poets, Kings... all martyrs, and noble men, and gods, are of one grand host; immeasurable; marching ever forward since the beginnings of the world. The enormous, all conquering, flame-crowned host, noble every soldier of it; sacred and alone noble..."

Socialism, spirituality and militancy all gather again in the finale under the flaming banner, as they do in Shaw's play.

1. Major Barbara, preface, p. 241
CHAPTER 10

CRITERIA FOR GOVERNING

Chapter six of *Past and Present*, on Hero-worship, seems to me to carry much of the germ of *Major Barbara*, though the fuller development of the idea is spread throughout the whole book.

I have said that Shaw is a romantic who uses the weapons of rationalism to enforce his views; that he uses an apparently logical arrangement of facts in order to support ideas that are based on an emotional response to the human situation and the universe.

Thus his socialism, using Ricardian economics, based on Jevons's theory of value (as distinct from Marx's) and drawing on the vast array of factual data gathered and ordered by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, rests ultimately on no securer foundation than a detestation of, at one end of the social scale, a class of persons who are wealthy through no other merit than that of fortunate birth or successful rapacity, and at the other of a class who are poverty-stricken, generally speaking, because they lack both. Further, his attack on these two classes divides into two phases: the initial objection is on moral grounds -- the same ground in fact that led the first romantics to applaud the earlier phases of the French Revolution -- while the actual attack is two-pronged, showing the amorality of 'liberal' economics on the one hand, and the logical absurdities

1. See my page 19.
inherent in the almost universal assumption of worth, or its opposite, that attached to social classes whose status was determined almost entirely on the basis of wealth and the appurtenances (such as education) that wealth could buy.

Shaw hereby makes quite clear both the emotional grounds of his intense dislike of the aristocracy, which claimed by right of birth the power to govern, and of the plutocracy, whose attitude was summed up in the famous sentence "we own England; now let us govern it," and the principle of rational argument by which he sought to enforce his opinions on others. Like Carlyle, Shaw's objection went further. He maintained that neither class showed a proper attitude of responsibility to the nation as a whole, but only to their own respective classes, nor necessarily (Shaw claimed 'actually') did they have the administrative ability to carry out the functions of government.

Conversely, Shaw detests poverty because those at its mercy are adjudged as 'worthless' by those more successful or more fortunate, and even by themselves, in spite of the fact that many of the poor may be 'better' persons as regards ability and character, than those who asperse them. Shaw, unlike many of those who have argued the point with him as to whether poverty is itself a 'crime', had suffered considerably from its effects himself, and was aware of the social

1. of Lady Britomart.

2. Which is partly Undershaft's argument.
pressures that are exerted solely on the basis of economic status. For this reason it is very doubtful whether Shaw would have been affected (other than with amusement) by Desmond MacCarthy's objections to the philosophy of Shaw's views on poverty expressed in Major Barbara.

While Shaw as an artist is very much a philosopher, Shaw as a philosopher is very much an artist – or propagandist – and while he might agree with MacCarthy in the abstract that poverty is not itself a crime, but rather the cause of other crimes, Shaw would rather have the dramatic half-truth than the split-hair philosophic truth.

I say 'rather have' to emphasise my belief in the intuitive, non-rational jumping-off point of Shaw's arguments.

Elsewhere, in prefaces and political writing, Shaw makes it clear that he considers equality of income necessary, not simply because of the moral demands of 'fair-play', but because he takes violent exception to the assumption of merit attached to income. But in Major Barbara, if one concentrates on the text of the play and ignores the powerful polemics of the preface, one does not get this message.

Instead Shaw gives us a 'hero' who has been raised from poverty by entirely fortuitous means: Undershaft is an adopted foundling who succeeds to his foster-father's business as if he were the man's son. Now this may be a valid attack on the English system of primogeniture

1. Shaw, Desmond MacCarthy, pp. 50-55.
2. passim.
3. e.g. The Intelligent Woman's Guide, passim, but especially pp. 1-19.
which was, of course, anathema to Shaw, because it purports to show that
a starved East-ender of uncertain parentage can do anything that a
'silver-spoon' offspring can, given the opportunity. But I fail to see
how it can be read as an attack on capitalism — unless we are supposed
in the long run to regard Undershaft as an anti-hero.

This is, of course, the real answer. Undershaft is supposed to
show that the capitalists can be played at their own game by those who
like to 'face the facts as they are' and, with none of Peter Shirley's
sentimental conscience (it is not without significance, surely, that
Shirley is depicted as a rationalist) insist on getting a fair share
of this world's gear, so that they can afford the 'graces and luxuries
of a rich, strong and safe life,' namely, 'honour, justice, love,
mercy and so forth.' In other words, Undershaft proves, in Major
Barbara, what Samson proves in Past and Present; that given the
opportunity of position in a given society, the man of innate ability
will display his inherent merit, whereas if he is oppressed by any
hierarchical system, be it based on economic or monastic rule, that
chance cannot occur, nor the ability become apparent.

We can start to make sense of both Shaw and Carlyle only when we
realize that the heroism that they require, in this world they were so
eager to reform, is of a variety that starts at about the point where
the common man's idea of heroism finishes. For its full realization,

the Carlylean and Shavian heroism demands a whole world of 'heroes',
led by the most 'heroic' among them, and not by one man but a group —
the 'aristocracy of the wisest' — a meritocracy, to use a more modern
coining. As Carlyle has it:

"'Hero-worship' if you will .......... but first of all,
by being ourselves of heroic mind. A whole world of Heroes;
a world not of Flunckies, where no Hero King can reign."1

Or as Shaw, having associated himself with such diverse
company as Voltaire, Rousseau, Bentham, Marx, Mill, Dickens, Carlyle,
Ruskin, Butler, Morris, Kierpides, More, Montaigne, Moliere, Beaumarchais,
Swift, Goethe, Ibsen, Tolstoy and Jesus, says:

"The problem being to make heroes out of cowards, we paper
apostles and artist magicians have succeeded only in giving
cowards all the sensations of heroes whilst they tolerate every
abomination, accept every plunder, and submit to every oppression."2

The common utopian dream, which lies at the bottom of their socialist
preaching, is that every man may have the opportunity to be noble in
spirit, or at least have no excuse for either servile 'flunkeyism',
or pretentious ambition.

That neither has patience with parliamentary democracy as the
means of achieving such equality is not surprising in view of their
hatred of mechanical concepts, and there is no escaping from the fact
that the fully evolved parliamentary democracy is a vast machine, from

1. Past and Present, p. 34.
the processes of its elections to the workings of its bureaucratic departments.

Shaw, of course, was very much more aware of the inevitability of some such procedure than was Carlyle, but each shared a red-hot conviction that the best men were not on the cabinet benches, and each poured out thousands of words and spent many years attempting to drive home this point, and to evolve some method of placing 'the best' over 'the rest'.

The question that must therefore exercise the student comparing the two men is: what, or who, for Carlyle and Shaw, constituted 'the best'? The answer to that question again brings us face to face with the romantic and rational elements of these very eclectic thinkers, for wherever we turn for examples of the leader, the 'true hero,' in their respective works, we find that he may be described as a man whose head may be in the clouds, but whose feet are firmly on the ground.

Such an answer may sound suitably paradoxical for Shaw, who is probably one of the few men who has fully understood himself while concealing his true self so successfully from his public, and for Carlyle, who probably understood the mainsprings of his thought less than most, and it need not confuse those of us who, growing to maturity in the second quarter of this century, and blessed or cursed with romantic sensibilities (one hardly knows how to regard the trait) have through dire necessity been brought to face the tremendous responsibilities that man must shoulder in the real world.
A less emotional approach to understanding what our two principals mean by heroism is to be found in discovering what they regard as the opposite of a 'heroic' world. The answer, if we avoid the cynicism of stating that it is whatever they are confronted with, again involves us in paradox. Each objects to capitalist economics for reasons already shown: the obscuring of actual worth by the 'cash nexus', and fundamentally their personal experience that poverty limits human possibility, while wealth exalts it, in a way that may be described as "unnatural."

The 'cash nexus' was the result of industrialism, an offshoot of mercantilism, which was both parent and child of modern democracy: child in the sense that mercantilism arose with and gained its greatest impetus from the Protestant Reformation; parent in the sense that it was as much Charles I's infringement of mercantile freedoms (recall his ship taxes) that provoked the Cromwellian revolt of the seventeenth century, as political ones. Neither Shaw nor Carlyle evidence any sympathy with Charles, the last ruler of England claiming absolute monarchical rights over a feudal aristocracy and agrarian economy; both are complimentary - Carlyle effusively so - when dealing with Cromwell, who ushered in the very systems of government and economy they appear to deplore so much.

2. England Under the Stuarts: Trevelyan. G.M.
The reason for the paradox is the intervening stretch of history which, beginning with the Restoration of Charles II and closing with the constitutional settlement of George I, compromised both the old monarchy and aristocracy, and the republican 'rule of the saints' democracy of the interregnum. For the new political settlement gave rise, taken in conjunction with the steadily maturing Industrial Revolution, to every factor against which Shaw and Carlyle fulminated. The monarchy had become a puppet show with no power and little purpose other than to provide romantic pageantry for the people. Parliament, divided between the Whigs and Tories, represented not a democracy but an oligarchy with an Opposition: now the landed gentry, then the moneyed, jockeying for a better deal for their own class, which they euphemistically called "the nation". Meanwhile, the mass of the people, crushed between the millstones of agrarian enclosure acts and accelerating industrialism, became steadily greater in number, and increasingly at the mercy of economic conditions, which neither they nor their masters understood, and for which nobody was prepared to take responsibility, although those who could were prepared to take the vast profits available.

At this point in England's national drama, the script reads: enter Bentham, followed by Carlyle, Mill and Ruskin. And of course we could add many others to the list of what Shaw called 'paper apostles.' But the panaceas of hedonistic utilitarianism and liberalisation of the franchise seemed, in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century to be producing the illusion of political freedom at the price of
human dignity. Carlyle's opportunity had arrived, and Carlyle struck out savagely: at democracy because it seemed, before his eyes, to be failing in its proposed purposes; at the aristocrats because, like their French counterparts of the eighteenth century, they were using their powers to further only their own ends: at the people because they had shown themselves susceptible to corruption at elections, and incapable of choosing the best men for the great task of government.

In the 'forties only one thing seemed hopeful to Carlyle; namely the absolute determination to succeed that marked some industrialists. Perhaps these men, could they but have their determination married to a sense of social justice, might provide a new aristocracy - an 'aristocracy of talent' whose control over industrial England would assure them the support of a very large percentage of the new voters, and an aristocracy from among which some one, great men would surely rise to lead the nation forward according to the 'law of nature'.

By the time Shaw had been settled in London long enough to look around thoroughly, the 'captains of industry' had shown the since-dead Carlyle just what they could do. Most of them, if they wrote anything on their workshop walls, wrote "God helps him who helps himself, and the devil take the hindmost." Some, however, had taken Carlyle's advice and "[made their] Despotism just," and Shaw, in Major Barbara, depicts

1. Past and Present, p. 271.
one such in Andrew Undershaw, not as the ultimate goal to be achieved by society, but as a necessary step in social evolution. For, as Shaw rightly says, he stands on the shoulders of all the great social thinkers from Christ down to the 'eminent Victorians', and it is precisely his careful eclecticism that makes it so difficult to define the limits of what Bentley has called his Heroic Vitalism, and what MacCarthy and Joad see as his Voltairean rationalism, and to which they pin his economic socialism.

Shaw himself, however, was in no doubt about the clarity of his thinking. His platform apprenticeship in the cause of Fabian socialism, such plays as deal with the political scene (Major Barbara is one), The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism in 1928, all convey roughly the same message as the following extract from a reply to Joad in the New Statesman of July 1943.

"It is true that the England of Pecksniff's and Podsnap's has not become an England of Ruskins and Bernard Shaws. It is equally true, and far more deplorable, that government by adult suffrage has made democracy impossible: Now that the political ignorance of Everywoman has been added to the political ignorance of Everyman, and government is by Anybody chosen by Everybody, both Joad and I may be thankful that we are at the mercy of Mr. Winston Churchill rather than of Titus Oates or Horatio Bottomley, to say nothing of living scarecrows."

The following passage regrets Joad's own parliamentary candidature, because, Shaw claims "the proper political business of the philosopher" is to unmask "the sham of parliamentary democracy." He goes on:

"Our rulers must be chosen from the best panels of qualified people we can devise, and not picked up in the street like
In 1903, Shaw complained that the "aristocracy and plutocracy still furnished the figureheads of politics, but were now dependent on the votes of the promiscuously bred masses," that "we are now all under what Burke called "the hoofs of the swinish multitude,"
and that the aristocracy that Burke had defended "had its mind undertrained by silly schoolmasters and governesses, its character corrupted by gratuitous luxury, and its self-respect adulterated to complete spuriousness by flattery and flunkeyism."

I have chosen these two passages because they not only repeat the general complaints of Carlyle, but also use phrases and words that closely echo his - "shams of parliamentary democracy", "flattery and flunkeyism" - and it may not be without significance that the last passage quoted goes on:

"Our very peasants have something morally hardier in them that culminates occasionally in a Bunyan, a Burns, or a Carlyle."

Like Carlyle, then, Shaw denigrates what is going on in the England of his time. Attacking from an economic standpoint, he seems to decry the Victorians who had demanded "abstract conditions: justice, honour, a noble moral atmosphere, a mystic nexus to replace the cash nexus". But Shaw uses his knowledge of socialist economics to demonstrate the

1. Shaw, Joad, G.E. P. 142.
injustice of capitalism (in Widowers' Houses), the impossibility of
'honour and a noble moral atmosphere' under such a system in Mrs.
Warren's Profession and Major Barbara, and the necessity for a
'mystic nexus' to replace the cash nexus in Man and Superman, St. Joan,
Major Barbara and Back to Methuselah.
When we turn our attention to the works under consideration, Carlyle's second chapter, 'The Sphinx' may seem more reminiscent of Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* than of *Major Barbara*, but in all Shaw's 'great men' there are common factors which allow us to suppose that, had Undershaft been brought face to face with the Sphinx's question, he would have answered it in much the same terms as Caesar does. For the Sphinx, in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, as in *Past and Present*, is used as a symbol of the inscrutable in Nature. Both Carlyle and Shaw envisage the successful man as he who can, by a combination of intuition and realism recognize the ineluctable in life, and thereby know "what to do with each day and what wisely attempt to do." ¹

When Shaw's Caesar says to the Sphinx:

"I have found .......... no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's work or think my night's thought."

we recall Andrew Undershaft's 'apartness'. He owns no parents and will accept only the respect, not the love, of any man. No air is native to him, for he must sell weapons to men of every colour, creed and nation. And his success rests on the fact that no-one else can match his energy or his business acumen.

"Rome" says Caesar, "is a madman's dream", yet in it his place is as high as in the desert the Sphinx's is. So Undershaft claims to be "the government of England" while pronouncing England's political and social institutions to be absurd and its religion moribund. Caesar sees his "Reality" in the vastnesses of space and time represented by the Sphinx, an image,

"of the constant and immortal part of my life, silent and full of thoughts ......... For I am he of whose genius you are the symbol: part brute, part woman and part god—nothing of man in me at all."

Undershaft, too, gives hints of some sort of transcendentalism, proclaiming himself a 'mystic'. In fact, the distinguishing feature of Shaw's 'great men', expressed in Carlylean terms, is that by means of their intuitive faculty, they are able to distinguish between the "Inner True" and the "Outer Sham-true."

Of equal significance, even granting the general currency of the Sphinx legend, is the treatment that Carlyle and Shaw give it. Carlyle writes:

"Nature, like the Sphinx, is of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness." 2

Shaw, too, distinguishes the qualities of ruthless brutality, womanly loveliness and god-like mystery in the Sphinx as a symbol of Nature. And to ascertain that for him Nature is the equivalent of the Life-Force we need only refer to page 109 of his *Sixteen Self-Sketches* where, discussing his own genius, he says he flattered himself.

"That Nature, alias Providence, alias the Life-Force had given him in boyhood an excessive regard for self-preservation lest he should throw away his genius in some pugnacious adventure."

Self-preservation, for both men, necessitates a healthy regard for the brutality of life, coupled with an admiration of its beauty, which eschews all sentimentality and looks for inspiration to the mystic or transcendental. Shaw's use of the myth of Lilith is instructive here, if we recall her final speech in *Back to Methuselah*. Again we find the same qualities of ruthlessness, unsentimental female beauty and the god-like combined, just as they are given tangible form in his strongest female characters: Anne in *Man and Superman*, Barbara in *Major Barbara* and Joan in *St. Joan*. Anne, it is true, lacks the god-like in her own character, but she recognizes it at large, and gives its will expression through her own nature. In Barbara and Joan it would be better to call this quality 'saintliness', so long as we remember the Shavian connotations of the term as distinct from the Christian, for it is often difficult to distinguish the intense will of the individual from the 'supreme will' of an eternal entity.

Undershaft, at any rate, has learned the lesson of self-preservation and knows, as Caesar knows and Carlyle says of this
"Sphinx-Life,"

"Answer her question it is well with thee - Answer it not

\ldots... thou art her mangled victim, scattered on the precipices,
as a slave found treacherous, recreant, ought to be and must."

But this side of Carlyle's and Shaw's 'intuitive realism' is
to be applied only to men of capacity. With their purely human eye
they see that the common man must be protected from the ruthlessness
of life by those who 'understand'. This is the basis of their
humanitarian socialism, and the root of their anger towards those who
have usurped the responsible position of governors of the nation.
CHAPTER 12.

SAMSON AND UNDERSHAFT

It would be pleasant if we could say that there was a one-to-one correspondence of characters as between the two works, so that we could recognize Undershaft as a dramatic representation of, say, Samson. In fact, nothing quite so simple is the case, if only because Undershaft is a twentieth century industrialist, and Samson a twelfth century abbot.

Instead, we must take three characters from Past and Present and compound them to arrive at Undershaft.

From Samson he derives his combination of religiosity and practicality; from Plugson of Undershot the fierce determination to succeed and to rule, which is often alone recognized as the mark of the 'captain of industry', and from Carlyle's briefly mentioned Quaker come the more 'modern' amenities or industrial graces that Samson lacks because of his place in time, and which Plugson lacks because of his lack of imagination - an important feature.

But initially, we must compare Undershaft and Samson, for the latter is quite obviously the sturdy foundation upon which both the Carlylean and Shavian superstructures are erected.

Samson once introduced, it is worthwhile comparing the physical descriptions of the monk and munitions magnate.

Carlyle tells us that Samson is of:
"A taciturn nature, and distinguishes himself among these babbling ones.............. They call him 'Norfolk Barrister,' or litigious person; for indeed, being of grave taciturn ways, he is not universally a favourite; he has been in trouble more than once ............. A personable man of seven and forty, stout made, stands erect as a pillar; with bushy eyebrows, the eyes of him beaming into you in a really strange way; the face massive, the - hair - streaked with grey."  

Undershaft is drawn in Shaw's stage directions as,

"........ on the surface, a stoutish, easy-going elderly man, with kindly, patient manners, and an engaging simplicity of character. But he has a watchful, deliberate, waiting, listening face, and formidable reserves of power, both bodily and mental, in his capacious chest and long head. His gentleness is partly that of a strong man who has learnt by experience that his natural grip hurts ordinary people unless he handles them carefully, and partly the mellowness of age and success.......

Certain characteristics in common between the two men are at once evident. Neither is youthful at the time of the action in which they are involved. In fact, as Samson progresses through his years as Abbot he becomes ever more like the portrait of Undershaft, partly because, in Shaw's words, he has learnt by experience that his natural grip hurts ordinary people, partly because he mellowed with age and success.

Both are "litigious"; prepared to fight in a 'no holds barred' manner where they feel a principle is involved, or where the ends justify the means. Both are given similar physical characteristics typifying bodily and intellectual strength, and eyes which give them an immediate dominance over others. While both are capable of arousing enmity in others, each is endowed with sufficient character to command respect,
which they value more than the closer ties of friendship or love.

Further, one could say they are both foundlings, though in slightly different senses. Samson was dedicated in childhood to St. Edmund and left to the care of the monks, while Undershaft was an adopted foundling in the by now traditional succession of the Undershaft munitions works.

In view of Shaw's stated requirement for a 'devils advocate', Samson's dream, the cause of his being made a ward of St. Edmund, is interesting.

Samson explains the dream thus:

"Diabolus with outspread bat-wings shadowed forth the pleasures of the world, which were about to snatch and fly away with me, had not St. Edmund flung his arms round me, that is to say, made me a monk of his."

The result is that Samson becomes,

"a learned man, of devout grave nature; has studied at Paris, has taught at the town schools here,........"  

and in fact become a representative of a tradition which appears to be diametrically opposed to that represented by Undershaft.

For Undershaft prides himself on his own lack of education (page 259) and decries the effects of formal schooling in others (pages 308-9). If he is the ward or protégé of any saint, it is of Saint Barbara, the patroness of armourers (a fact not without significance in the naming of Shaw's heroine) and his vision (Act 111, p. 331) was one which impelled him to accept, indeed to fight for the possession of, 'the pleasures of the world', rather than to escape them by taking the
vow of poverty demanded by the monastic rule of St. Edmund.

Even so, it is in means, not ends, that Undershaft and Samson really differ, since the ultimate aim of both men, as Undershaft explains to Stephen (Act 111, p. 319), is to organise civilisation on principles of justice and right, doing away with or minimising what he calls "trouble and anxiety."

Samson is described by Carlyle as setting out for the election as 'general servant of the party' and returning 'riding high' as abbot, and finding himself raised from poverty ('yesterday a poor mendicant, allowed to possess not above two shillings, and without authority to bid a dog run for him') to wealth and power.

"...... This man today finds himself a Dominus Abbas, mitred Peer of Parliament, Lord of manor-houses, farms, manors and wide lands; a man with 'Fifty Knights under him,' and dependent, swiftly obedient multitudes of men."

The analogy to Undershaft is not difficult to see, though his dedication is of a different kind and his means of achieving position very different. From 'step-dancing for pennies, and even shillings occasionally, in the streets and bar-parlours,' to primary partner in the biggest munitions works in Europe, is a far cry. And having repudiated the 'vow of poverty', Undershaft becomes what Samson becomes:


"....... I moralised and starved until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs ............ I was a dangerous man until I had my will: now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person............"

Undershaft, too, is a kind of 'Dominus Abbas' whose men 'call him Dandy Andy and are proud of his being a cunning old rascal'. In a sense he is a 'mitred Peer of Parliament':

"....... I am the government of your country! I, and Lazarus ", he claims. 2 And in the munition works (the equivalent of the monastery itself) and its village, with its churches, libraries, schools, Town Hall, and nursing home (see pages 318-319 Major Barbara), he is the 'Lord of manor houses, farms, manors and wide lands'. His claim that "when other people want something to keep my dividends down you will call out the police and the military," means that he has the force of legal authority behind him represented by Samson's 'fifty knights', and in the hundreds of employees in his arms factory and its subsidiaries, are to be found the "dependent, swiftly obedient multitudes of men."

Nor is Carlyle's moral commentary upon Samson's changed status to be lightly passed over. By virtue of that change, he says,

"We shall now get the measure of [Samson] by a new scale of inches, considerably more rigorous than the former was. For if a noble soul is rendered tenfold beautiifer by victory and prosperity, ............... an ignoble one is rendered tenfold and hundredfold uglier, pitifuler." 3

1. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 330. (my emphasis)
2. op. cit., Act 111, p. 312.
3. Past and Present, BK 11, oh ix, p. 82.
Part of Shaw's reason for making Undershaft an arms magnate is to pre-condition us to see in him and his works - as his family are all prepared to - the ugliness of life. The paradox with which both they, and the reader, are presented, is that not only can Undershaft devise a philosophy that seems to answer our moral scruples, but the local and physical results of his work are, like Samson's, those of dedication to beauty, to health, to human well-being, as may be seen in the physical comparison of the monastery with the Undershaft factory.

"The Burg, Bury or 'Berry' as they call it, of St. Edmund is still a prosperous brisk Town," writes Carlyle, "beautifully diversifying with its clear brick houses, ancient clean streets, and twenty or fifteen thousand busy souls, the general grassy face of Suffolk; looking out right pleasantly from its hill slope, towards the rising sun; and on the eastern edge of it still runs, long, black and massive, a range of monastic ruins; into the wide internal spaces of which the stranger is admitted on payment of one shilling." 1

Shaw's stage direction for the second scene of Act II (see page 317 of Major Barbara) runs:

"Perivale St. Andrews lies between two Middlesex hills, half climbing the northern one. It is an almost smokeless town of white walls, roofs of green slates or red-tiles, tall trees, domes, campaniles, and slender chimney shafts, beautifully situated and beautiful in itself. The best view of it is obtained from the crest of a slope about half a mile to the east, where the high explosives are dealt with. The foundry lies hidden in the depths between, the tops of its chimneys sprouting like huge skittles into the middle distance. Across the crest runs an emplacement of concrete, with a firestep, and a parapet which suggests a fortification."

1. Past and Present, BK 11, ch ii, p. 45.
The settings of the since defunct monastery and the cannon foundry seem to me to have undeniable points in common, even apart from the general tenor of the description.

Carlyle's next point, social and political, also bears on Major Barbara. He asks if it is not strange that one raised from such obscurity and poverty should make such a good leader as Samson, especially when we consider that all the current hocus-pocus of electioneering was missing, for although some vestiges of democratic choice went to the abbot's making, it was much more a process of selection by a group of 'wise elders' than one of election that raised Samson to his position.

Such, of course, is the case with Undershaft. His selection, we gather from the hints dropped by him through the play, depended on the arbitrary rule that he be a foundling, which in some way, as I have suggested above, is equivalent to the monastic adoption of Samson, and to his own initiative and drive, comparable to that trait in Samson which gives him the reputation among the monks of being,

"ready oftenerst with some question, some suggestion, that has wisdom in it. [For] though a servant of servants, his words all tell, it seems by his light mainly that we steer ourselves in this great dimness."

Like Samson, Undershaft may be described as a 'servant of servants', and both because of their absolute dedication to the

1. Past and Present, BK 11, oh ix, p. 82.
2. Past and Present, BK 11, oh viii, p. 75.
institutions and traditions in which they find themselves. Aside from their concern with the practical innovations each involves himself in, both realize that nepotism is no sure way to a successful monastery, or factory. Under pressure from Lady Britomart, Undershaft states the rule by which he is governed, and with which he agrees:

"... the Undershaft tradition disinherits [Stephen]. It would be dishonest of me to leave the cannon foundry to my son." 1

while Carlyle relates of Samson that he showed

"no extraordinary favour to the monks who had been his familiars of old; did not promote them to office........ unless they chanced to be fit men! Whence great discontent among certain of these......." 2

However, it may be significant that Carlyle acknowledges that some of Samson's monks, called his 'kindred', were given positions in Samson's own household, for Undershaft, desperate to find a loophole in his tradition, suggests to Lady Britomart that if she wants to keep the factory 'in the family' she find a foundling and marry him to Barbara, so that Barbara, a 'fit person', would effectively carry on, while the tradition was nominally honoured.

How all this suggests the limitation of personal power, largely self-imposed, because of a felt sense of responsibility to other people or to other forces, and in Samson's case, these are too obvious to require exposition. In Undershaft's case, however, they follow a

2. Past and Present, BK 11, oh , p. 90.
surprisingly similar pattern to that imposed by the Church at its very best. We see, in Undershaft's explanation to Stephen, that the former obviously feels a social obligation to his workers. We see immediately above that he owns allegiance to the cannon foundry as an institution with an inviolable tradition, similar to that of the Catholic church. And in a verbal duel with Cusins in Act 111, Undershaft admits the limits of his own power, and warns Cusins not to expect power for himself, since as Cusins perceives, Undershaft does not "drive this place; it drives [him]." And that which 'drives' both, as Undershaft insists, is a 'will of which [he] is a part.'

Undershaft's oblique reference to the Life-Force - that Shawian equivalent for Samson's God - leads us straight back to practical considerations however. For while Samson comments to Joselin that the latter,

"shares [his] good things, in food and drink, in riding and such-like, but little thinkest concerning the management of House and Family, the various and arduous businesses of Pastoral care which harass [him] and make [his] soul to sigh and be anxious," 2

Undershaft also has such 'various and arduous businesses' as require his metaphorical 'looking after the drainage,' and make it necessary for Undershaft to say that he will see Cusins at six o'clock of a morning, and that within the week he will be turning him out of his office for the good of his health; and both comments indicate that Undershaft will be present himself at the early and the 'late hour.'

1. see my page 153 2. Past and Present, BK 11, ch viii, p. 75.
Carlyle's claim on behalf of the twelfth century monastics is that, in selecting Samson as abbot, they showed their "reverence for Worth, [their] abhorrence of Unworth," (page 83) but when we try to isolate the criteria by which he is selected we find that the ability to preach in French, English and Latin, and other, what we would now call educational, qualifications, are really secondary to two, more arbitrary, considerations: that the new abbot "be one of ours,"¹ and that Samson has exerted a strong personal influence over his conpeers.

Shaw, always derogatory of the formal education he himself so largely lacked, makes much of both these points in Major Barbara.

Cusins impresses Undershaft not as a Greek scholar, but as a man of inspiration, a poet, who looks not at but behind received ideas. It is Cusins's declaration of the timeless values of religion² that constrains Undershaft to remark that Cusins, is 'a man after his own heart'. Cusins himself deprecates formal schooling by proclaiming that

"once in ten thousand times it happens that the school-boy is a born master of what they try to teach him. Greek has not destroyed my mind: it has nourished it." ³

Barbara appeals to Undershaft because, although she is affiliated to the Salvation Army, she is, in Cusins's words, "quite original in her religion," or, as Undershaft triumphantly expresses it, "her inspiration

1. Major Barbara, RK 11, ch. viii, passim.

2. "The business of the Salvation Army is to save, not to wrangle about the name of the pathfinder. Dionysos or another; what does it matter?" Act 11, p. 286.

comes from within herself." ¹

This is the triumvirate of worth, of genius, of inspiration, against which are measured the conventional figures of Lady Britomart, Sarah, Lomax and, most largely, Stephen Undershaft. For, as Andrew Undershaft avers, when telling his wife of the difficulty in finding a suitable foundling to succeed him, they are now all like Stephen; all have been

"Fastened on by schoolmasters; . . . . . . . . . crammed with second-hand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that [they are] fit for nothing but teaching." ²

Carlyle recites how barbarian tribes

"would gather in liveliest gaudeamus, and sing, and kindle bonfires, and wreath crowns of honour, and solemnly thank the gods that, in their tribe too, a Poet had shown himself." ³

The insistence on the value of inspiration apart, one might point out that the gathering, singing and symbol of flame is redolent of the Salvation Army, and that the wreath-crowns have a Dionysian ring, or might have to a playwright like Shaw. And when Carlyle goes on to elaborate

"Genius, poet: do we know what these words mean? An inspired soul once more vouchsafed us, direct from Nature's own great fire-heart, to see the Truth, and speak it, and do it," ⁴

we may recall Shaw's insistence on the poetic qualities of Cusins

3. Past and Present, BK 14, ch ix, p. 83.
4. Ibid.
and the inspiration of Undershaft and Barbara. Equally, when Carlyle proceeds to contrast such poets and geniuses to

"the dreary boundless element of hearsaying and canting, of twaddle and paltryonery, in which the bewildered earth, high perishing, has lost its way," 1

we might remember Shaw's comparison of his three positive figures against the cant of Lady Britomart, the twaddle of Esnas, and the paltryonery of Stephen's hearsay ideas, and recall that Casina refers to Undershaft as both a "poet" and a "great man".

Returning to his story, Carlyle mentions those problems of institutional poverty which were Samson's legacy from the old Abbey, a poverty brought about by the usury of the Jews.

Samson says Carlyle, must fight this poverty:

"Front this, Samson, thou alone art there to front it; it is thy task to front and fight this, and to die or kill it." 3

He remembers Undershaft's reaction to his state of poverty:

"..... I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs; that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men." 4

Undershaft is a mystic when he can afford to be, and the same applies to Samson, for Carlyle is every bit as hard-headed as Shaw, at need.

1. Past and Present, BK 11, ch ix, p. 83.
3. Past and Present, BK 11, ch ix, p. 84.
"One of the first Herculean labours Abbot Samson undertook, or the very first, was to institute a radical reform of his economics. It is the first labour of every governing man, from Pater familias to Dominus Rex. To get the rain thatched out from you is the preliminary of whatever farther, .........

...... you may mean to do." 1

The abbot, like Undershaft, is a servant of civilization, and regards his religious activities as only a part of his whole work. First of all, he is as Carlyle puts it,

"......... the missionary of order, ........ the servant not of the Devil and Chaos, but of God and the Universe."

Undershaft, answering Stephen's charge that he is spoiling his workers' characters, puts it thus:

"......... when you are organizing civilization you have to make up your mind whether trouble and anxiety are good things or not. If you decide that they are, then, I take it, you simply don't organize civilization; and there you are, with trouble and anxiety enough to make us all angels. But if you decide the other way, you may as well go through with it." 3

Both Samson and Undershaft 'go through with it'. The whole material complex of their separate institutions is rigorously ordered into sparkling efficiency, gradually given aesthetic qualities, and ultimately granted those 'graces and luxuries of a rich strong and safe life' which we are wont to put first in our ideals, but which we seldom achieve in reality.

1. Pass and Present, p. 88. (my emphasis)
2. ibid.
In that chapter on 'Plugs of Undershot' in *Past and Present*, we find Carlyle making the following distinction between two kinds of warrior.

> "And now let us remark how, in this baleful operation of fighting, a noble devout-hearted Chevalier will comport himself, and an ignoble godless Bucaneer and Chactaw Indian. Victory is the aim of each. But deep in the heart of the noble man it lies forever legible, that as an invisible just God made him, so will and must God's justice, and this only, were it never so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever."

Such an influence, Carlyle tells us, turns "the horror of battlefields and garments rolled in blood" into a "field of honour". "A battlefield too is great", since "considered well, it is a kind of quintessence of labour."

Here I should remind the reader that when Shaw was writing *Major Barbara*, the first, abortive, socialist revolution was in progress in Russia, and passages like the one quoted above (and they are liberally scattered through the latter part of *Past and Present*) in which there is the suggestion of social justice being achieved by militant means and under the auspices of some overseeing 'vital force', would have appealed to Shaw. Indeed, from the general tone of the play, it is easier to think that it was initially inspired by the Russian revolution rather than by the Salvation Army, considerable as the religious element of the play is.

Imagine, for example, the emotional effect of the following lines from the same passage in Carlyle, upon a socialist watching the struggle for emancipation in Russia:

"Labour distilled into its utmost concentration; the significance of years compressed into an hour. Here too thou shalt be strong, and not in muscle only, if thou wouldst prevail

........ thou shalt be strong of heart, noble of soul; thou shalt dread no pain or death, thou shalt not love ease or life; in rage, thou shalt remember mercy, justice; thou shalt be a Knight and not a Chaotaw, if thou wouldst prevail! It is the rule of all battles, against hallucinating fellow men, against unkempt cotton ......... which a man in this world has to fight."

Not only is there the suggestion of the rightness of social militancy, which Carlyle would not have intended in the sense I have suggested Shaw could interpret the passage, but also there is the recognition of the paradox of war which figures so largely in the debates between Barbara and Undershaw, Cusins and Undershaw, and in Act III, between Barbara and Cusins: namely, can war ever be morally justifiable? Carlyle simplifies the matter to his own satisfaction more readily than does Shaw, but both arrive at the same final conclusion.

And again, in the last sentence quoted from Carlyle, we have the allusion to a para-military kind of fighting which, in Shaw's work, finds its expression in the Salvation Army.

However interested Shaw may have been in utilizing Carlyle's work to further his own socialistic arguments, (and Shaw would hardly have needed to do this) he would not have lost sight of the pattern that,

at this point, begins more clearly to emerge from *Past and Present*. The pattern is consistently one of oppositions that, initially diametric, slowly merge towards relativity.

Thus we have Dilettantism versus Mammonism, Unworking Aristocracy versus Working Aristocracy, Labour and Reward, and Democracy against Aristocracy, as manifest antitheses. Then Carlyle, at first only here and there, but with increasing insistency, introduces spiritual values into whichever of the two evils he considers preferable. Mammonism, for all its blind materialism, is preferable to Dilettantism.

Very well. Send Dilettantism to the wall, and inject into this hard-working materialism some soul. Democracy, for all its faults, is with us, it appears, to stay. Adieu, therefore, landed Aristocracy. By dint of inculcating moral purpose into Democracy, we will make it achieve for us a new and better Aristocracy, based on worth and work. So the process goes on. Plugson the indomitable has his faults. But if he were to learn a lesson from his quaker colleague, he could become a Captain of Industry worthy of our support.

This is much the same ground plan as informs *Major Barbara*, and most important, it provides Shaw with the first prerequisite of good drama—conflict.

But before we proceed to subject the remainder of *Past and Present* to a detailed search for particular instances which support the general contention above, allow me to draw attention to another of the didactic anecdotes with which both authors scatter their prose.
Carlyle, having used such a colourful word as 'Bucanier', could hardly be expected to let it alone, and nor he does. Howel Davies, we are told:

"dyes the West Indian seas with blood, piles his decks with plunder" but though —

"the Bucanier strikes down a man, a hundred or a million men what profits it? He has one enemy never to be struck down; may two enemies; Bankind and the Maker of Men. On the great scale or the small, in fighting of men or difficulties, I will not embark my venture with Howel Davies; it is not a Bucanier, it is the Hero only that can gain victory, that can do more than seem to succeed. Unhappily, my indomitable friend Plugson of Undershot has, in great degree, forgotten these things. Plugson, who has indomitably spun cotton merely to gain thousands of pounds, I have to call as yet a Bucanier and a Chactaw, till there come something better from him...... He was a Captain of Industry, born member of the Ultimate genuine Aristocracy of this Universe, could he have known it! These thousand men that spun and toiled round him, they were a regiment whom he had enlisted, man by man; to make war on a very genuine enemy."

Plugson and his 'army' having 'made their dash at cotton', Plugson pays up on the cash nexus principle - a hundred thousand pounds for himself and three and sixpence daily for his employees and is castigated by Carlyle. "The entirely unjust Captain of Industry, say I; not Chevalier, but Bucanier! 'Commercial Law' does indeed acquit him; asks with wide eyes, what else?"

Shaw, in his preface to Major Barbara, also cracks down on 'Commercial Law', but his social vision is bitterer, his vein more realistic than Carlyle's. Still, the echo sounds clearly.

1. Past and Present, BK 111, ch x, p. 186.
2. Ibid.
"........ I might point to the sensational object lesson provided by our commercial millionaires today. They begin as brigands: merciless, unscrupulous, dealing out ruin and death and slavery to their competitors and their employees, and facing desperately the worst that their competitors can do to them. The history of the English factories (sic) the American Trusts, the exploitations of African gold, diamonds, ivory and rubber, outdoes in villainy the worst that has ever been imagined of the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. Captain Kidd would have marooned a modern Trust Magnate for conduct unworthy of a gentleman of fortune."¹

Carlyle's paragraph, for a complete comparison here, closes:

"........ Howel Davies asks, Was it not according to the strictest Bucanier Custom? Did I depart in any jot or tittle from the Laws of the Bucaniers?"²

Shaw concedes that the law deals with the unsuccessful commercial scoundrel mercilessly, but goes on:

"........ the successful scoundrel is dealt with very differently and very Christianly. He is not only forgiven: he is idolized, respected, made much of, all but worshipped. Society returns him good for evil in the most extravagant manner."³

The relationship of the industrial magnate to the buccaneer, the condemnation of a community that will countenance such anti-social capacity, the admittedly good potential, and condemned ferocity, of the 'brigand' captain of industry type, are features in common to both extracts.

But in Carlyle's next sentence we can actually see the seed of Shaw's central paradox in the play start to germinate.

"After All" Carlyle admits in surprising extenuation of Plugson's

1. Major Barbara, Preface, pp. 227-228. (my emphasis)
3. Major Barbara, Preface, p. 227
dastardly behavior,

"after all, money, as they say, is miraculous. Flugson wanted victory, as Chevaliers and Bucaniers, and all men alike do. He found money recognized, by the whole world with one assent, as the true symbol, exact equivalent and synonym of victory; - and here we have him, a grim - browed, indomitable Bucanier, coming home to us with a 'victory', which the whole world is ceasing to clap hands at."

Having given Shaw 'gunpowder', Carlyle here presents him with 'money', the two base points of the triangle which forms Undershafs religion. The apex, not hard to guess at, Carlyle also presents. He calls it 'soul'. Undershaft calls it 'a will of which he is a part'.

Shaw expresses it thus:

"In the millionaire Undershaft I have represented a man who has become intellectually and spiritually as well as practically conscious of the irresistible natural truth that the greatest of our evils, and the worst of our crimes is poverty..."

"The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilization. Money is the most important thing in the world."

The last sentence here is no more than a dramatic extension of 'money is miraculous' into the typical Shavian overstatement; one of the kind that so annoys Mr. MacCarthy. But, as is usual both in Shaw's drama and his prose, we find the overstatement mitigated a little further on.

1. _Past and Present_, BK 11, oh. x, p. 187.

2. see also BK 11, oh ii, where Carlyle quotes Iago's "Put money in your purse". Here if nowhere else, says Carlyle, 'is the human soul still in thorough earnest; sincere with a prophet's sincerity.'

3. _Major Barbara_, Preface, p. 209. (my emphasis)

4. _op. cit._, p. 215. (my emphasis)
"Not least of money's virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it dignifies noble people...."

This is intriguing, because it chimes so readily with Carlyle's comparison with the 'base' buccaneer and the 'noble' Chevalier, and agrees with his principle that for the former there can be no lasting victory or success; for the latter there can.¹

Shaw also goes on to agree with Carlyle's tenet that money is a blessing or a curse depending on the terms of its distribution, and his claim that the demand for money on reasonable terms

"is not complied with by giving four men three shillings a day each for ten to twelve hours drudgery and one man a thousand pounds for nothing", is directly comparable to Carlyle's indignant explosion at Plugson's seizure of the hundred thousand pounds and his payment at the rate of three shillings and sixpence.

At this point, it seems to me, the grains of circumstantial evidence have already tipped the scales to the side of certainty, so that when Carlyle concludes his chapter by claiming that the

"Organization of Labour... must be taken out of the hands of absurd windy persons, and put into the hands of wise, laborious, modest and valiant men")

and asks if in his "indomitable Plugson" there is not some hope, we can well imagine Shaw, typically eating or dressing in a standing

1. Past and Present, p. 185.
2. see Carlyle's pp. 187-188. passim.
3. Past and Present, BK 111, ch x.
position, with *Past and Present* open before him on a stack of other open books¹, curiously searching forward to find just in what manner Carlyle would resolve the dilemma and the paradox he had so far outlined.

While Carlyle insists that in order to have a better society you must first have a more religious one, Shaw pronounces, through Undershaft, that to have a religious society you must first have a materially better one. Each, however, agrees that ultimately it is necessary to have both, and that the one way of achieving such a happy state is by expending intelligent, inspired, conscious effort: that is, by work.

Carlyle suggests an Undershaft, a 'captain of industry', who will combine the elements of Mammon and God, in these terms:

"The vulgar est Plugson of a master-worker, who can command workers, and get work out of them, is already a considerable man. Blessed and thrice blessed symptoms I discern of master workers who are not vulgar men; who are nobles, and begin to feel that they must act as such, all speed to these, they are England's hope at present! But in this Plugson himself........... how much is there! Not without man's faculty, insight, courage, hard energy, is this rugged figure............. Think how it were, stoodst thou suddenly in his shoes! He has to command a thousand men. And not imaginary commanding; no, it is real, incessantly practical. The evil passions of so many men............. he has to vanquish ........... For these thousand men he has to provide raw material, machinery, arrangement, house-room; and ever at the week's end, wages by due sale........ for the paying of his regiment ......... He exclaims at present,

"Let me have elbow room, throat room and I will not fail! No, I will spin yet, and conquer like a giant: what sinews of war lie in me, untold resources towards the Conquest of this Planet, if instead of hanging me, you husband them and help me!"\(^2\)

One need hardly emphasise again the analogy of the military to the commercial enterprise, nor the essential practicality of the proposed exercise. One must, though, reiterate that in the preface to Major Barbara, Shaw makes a considerable point of the fact that the successful magnate is husbanded and helped, while the struggling and unsuccessful are treated with the severity of brigands.  

Carlyle concludes his chapter,

"... the proper epic of this world is not now 'Arms and the Man', how much less, 'Shirt-frills and the Man': no, it is now 'Tools and the Man': that henceforth to all time, is now our epic..."

It is a finely ironic touch on Shaw's part to have inverted this claim so neatly. In Major Barbara, be it noted, he takes the 'tools and the man' industrial situation, and turns it into a military one by making the factory one for manufacturing arms and munitions. In Arms and the Man, a play which, as I have indicated in an earlier quotation,\(^3\) may also owe its genesis in part to Carlyle, he takes the military situation of the Bulgaria-Turkish war, and, by using Bluntschli's commercial genius as a lever, virtually converts it into a 'tools and the man' play, reducing every sentiment-raddled chivalrous situation to an almost absurdly mundane level.

Carlyle, having given Shaw another hint of better to come, proceeds

1. Major Barbara. Preface, p. 227 and see my page 143, quotations 1 and 3.
2. Past and Present, p. 201.
3. See page 120.
to discuss democracy - that at any rate is what he heads his next chapter - and early on gives us, or Shaw, a hint for Barbara. Before the days of an idle aristocracy and a materialistic plutocracy, he maintains, the poor were not so badly off, for there was, failing a 'Law-ward' or Lord,

"always some pious Lady, ('Half-dig, Benefactress, 'Loaf-giveress', they say she is, - blessings on her beautiful heart!) ...... with mild mother-voice and hand to remember [their brotherhood] Some pious thoughtful Elder, what we now call 'Prester', Presbyter or 'Priest', was there to put all men in mind of it, in the name of the God who had made all."

Now did Shaw, we may fairly ask, conjoin these two, the pious and beautiful-hearted bread-giving lady, and the priest whose task it was to remind all men of their brotherhood (a constant theme of the Salvation Army and of Barbara) into our Major Barbara?

There follows a long passage in which, after noting that liberty is not so divine when it is 'liberty to die of starvation' (a sentiment with which Shaw heartily expressed his concurrence) Carlyle puts forth again his idea of an aristocracy of the 'wisest and best'. And then, just as he is beginning to rail against the then form of democracy, Carlyle provides Shaw with the name for his protagonist in Major Barbara. He writes,

"From the thunder of Napoleon battles, to the jabbering of Open Vestry in St. Mary Axe, all things announce Democracy."

2. Whose name means "loveliness": see Gusain's closing couplet, Act 11, p. 285.
3. Past and Present, p. 207. (my emphasis)
I have already remarked the proximate sound of the names Plugson of St Dolly Undershot and Undershaft of Perivale St Andrews.

It may be that Shaw was already thinking along the lines of such a name when he read the above quotation, for I quote from Mr. A. C. Ward's notes on the text of Major Barbara, where he comments on Undershaft's name:

"St Andrew Undershæft: the name of a church in St Mary Axe (near Leadenhall Street) in the City of London",

and suggest that the combination of this evidence, with the echo of 'Plugson of St Dolly Undershot', would really be carrying coincidence too far, especially in view of the industrial character of their works, and the linking of commercial, militant and mystical elements to each, by the two authors.

1. See my page 113.

2. Longmans Green edition - impression of 1960, p. 183. (my emphasis)
In the closing phase of *Past and Present*, Carlyle writes:

"The main substance of this immense problem of organizing labour, and first of all of managing the working classes, will it is very clear, have to be solved by those who stand practically in the middle of it; by those who themselves work and preside over work."¹

Stephen Undershaft is the first to give coherent expression to the effect of the munitions works on the visitors.

"I had no idea", he says, "of what it all meant: of the wonderful forethought, the power of organization, the administrative capacity, the financial genius, the colossal capital it all represents."²

"To be a noble master, among noble workers, will again be the first ambition with some few; to be a rich master only the second," Carlyle posits.³

Shaw, Undershaft, or both are somewhat inclined to reverse the order in their statements: 'wealth' first, 'nobility' second. But both are there.

Carlyle next sets out to awaken

"here and there a British man to know himself for a man and divine soul";

and to admonish first of all those 'Master Workers, Leaders of Industry',

"to whom the Heavenly Powers have lent power of any kind in this land."

Again one cannot stress too much Undershaft's expressed sense that he is just such a man: that he is one who, in his capacity as industrial magnate, expresses 'a will of which he is a part', and who recognizes that, far from his owning the industry in any absolute sense, it owns him, and that he administers it by the power that is vested in him.

This is made quite specific in his reply to Lady Britomart's insinuating claims that he should share his possession with her. Undershaft replies:

"It does not belong to me. I belong to it. It is the Undershaft inheritance,"

and again, to Cusins whoasserts his lack of power, Undershaft responds that he has

"None of [his] own, certainly."

I mentioned above, that Shaw reverses Carlyle's requisites for the 'good life', by placing money first and nobility second, and Shaw makes his reasons for such a reversal clear in the preface to Major Barbara (page 12) when commenting on the "aristocratic socialism" (as Bentley terms it) of the nineteenth century. The names Shaw uses in this passage are those of Ruskin, of Morris and of Kropotkin, but the phrases with which he conjures their attitudes are more reminiscent of Carlyle. For, says Shaw,

1. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 327.
2. op. cit., p. 321.
3. op. cit., p. 327.
"They even demand abstract conditions; justice, honour, a noble moral atmosphere, a mystic nexus to replace the cash nexus" and he concludes that the poor will reject such views, "always preferring five hundred pounds to five hundred shillings."

We can appreciate both the approximation to, and the divergence from Carlyle's view here, by comparing it with the following passage from Past and Present:

"...... It is my firm conviction that the "Hell of England" will cease to be that of 'not making money'; that we shall get a nobler Hell and a nobler Heaven! I anticipate light in the Human Chaos, glimmering, shining more and more; under manifold true signals from without that light shall shine. Our deity no longer being Mammon, — O Heavens, each man will then say to himself: 'Why such deadly haste to make money? I shall not go to Hell even if I do not make money! There is another Hell, I am told!'

A 'mystic nexus to replace the cash nexus' indeed! But Shaw — and Undershaft, do not discount the mystic nexus. They merely put it in its place. For Undershaft, to be poor is to live in a kind of Hell. Poverty is "the worst of crimes."

"All other crimes are virtue beside it: all the other dishonours are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight, sound, or smell of it."

But this does not mean that Mammon becomes the deity. On the contrary. The hell of poverty removed by needful money, Undershaft recognizes that material gains are by themselves, deadening to the soul, and invites Barbara to,

2. Major Barbara, Act 111, p. 329. (emphasis mine)
"Try her hand on his men, whose souls are hungry because their bodies are full."

As Carlyle continues his harangue to the industrial leaders of England, he again returns to his military imagery. They are "virtually the Captains of the World", and are asked to consider

"Are they born of other clay than the old Captains of Slaughter; doomed forever to be no Chivalry, but a mere gold-plated 'Doggery' Captains of Industry are the true Fighters, henceforth recognizable as the only true ones: Fighters against Chaos and Necessity; and lead on mankind in that great, and alone true, and universal warfare. This (Carlyle continues — and we may imagine Shaw's delighted reaction) is not playhouse poetry; it is sober fact."

Surely we can ask again if it is not inconceivable that Shaw has not seized on the latent irony of Carlyle's chosen metaphor, and exploited it to the last ounce. And that irony, the essence of Shaw's play, becomes even more heightened as Carlyle solemnly assures us that out of 'Buccaniers'

"whose supreme aim in fighting is that they may get the money came no chivalry, and never will! Out of such came only gore and wreck, infernal rage and misery; desperation in annihilation."

For Undershaft always balances his cynicism and his 'chivalry', his materialism and mysticism, with the skill of a juggler, praising the work of the Salvation Army, to which he has just contributed a princely five thousand pounds, because it keeps the poor 'in their place', and pointing out to Mrs Baines the colossal carnage for which he, as a

1. *Past and Present*, BK IV, Oh. iv, p. 261. (emphasis mine)
2. *ibid.*
3. *op. cit.*, p. 262. (emphasis mine)
munitions maker, is responsible, outlining the social amenities of his works to Barbara and Cusins, only to claim that the end result 'is a colossal profit, which comes to him', and generally showing that out of 'buccaneering', 'chivalry' can come, and that social amelioration at Perivale St Andrews, England, can be the result of social annihilation in Manchuria, the key to the irony being - money.

But to return to the previous quotation from Carlyle, (see quotation 2, page 168) we must point out again the embryonic resemblance here to the idealistic socialism of Undershaft (whose cynicism generally obscures the reality of his idealism) and more clearly, of Cusins. Undershaft clearly declares against 'chaos' to Stephen, and against 'necessity' to Cusins, in the famous speech on poverty, while Cusins, in his last speeches to Barbara on the reasons for his accepting Undershaft's proposal, declares himself a disciple of both Undershaft and Carlyle. Undershaft himself, for all his seeming cynicism, really does no more than what Carlyle ultimately suggests as a practical method of combining 'nobility' and materialism.

When we subject Carlyle's proposals to an over-all scrutiny we find him objecting to the ephemeral quality of relationships based solely on cash, declaring that

"love of men cannot be bought by cash-payment; and without love men cannot endure to be together." 3

We find him also pointing to the social anarchy and spiritual atrophy that is engendered by such transitory relationships, and asserting that only when men are "regimented" - by which he simply means 'organized' - and have some noble purpose transcending their own personal, material gain, is a 'good society' possible.

Around this simple, but perhaps profound, belief Carlyle builds his whole scorching condemnation of the present, and, using the analogy of medieval feudalism (the social epitome of the conjunction of the militant and spiritual in man, and the one social system hitherto devised which, at least in theory, rested on a basis of mutual responsibilities) points to a future society which, while taking full cognizance of the demands of its own time, will act on moral bases Carlyle believed to be eternal.

The 'love of men [that] cannot be bought by cash-payment', translated into these terms, becomes mutual loyalty and mutual respect as between the various members of Carlyle's projected social hierarchy.

"Your gallant battle hosts and work hosts, as the others in feudal times did, will need to be made loyalty yours; they must and will be regulated, methodically secured in their just share of conquest under you; joined with you in veritable brotherhood, sonhood, by quite other and deeper ties than those of temporary day's wages!"

Shaw also launches a biting attack on the 'cash-nexus' when, in Act 11, of Major Barbara, he indicates the gross unfairness of Peter Shirley's sacking, and has Snobby Price outline the reasons for his

1. Past and Present, BK IV, ch. iv, p. 263.
disloyalty to his employers, and for his own discharge.\footnote{1} Shaw also insists, throughout Act \textit{III}, that men must be organised, not only for the benefit of their employers, but for mutual benefit of master and worker. But Shaw draws a clear distinction between Carlyle’s loose handling of the word ‘love’, and what Carlyle really meant by that word: loyalty and respect. Undershaft’s men, as Cusins tells Stephen, “call him Dandy Andy and are proud of his being a cunning old rascal,”\footnote{2} which is a clear enough rendition of that grudging affection, based on respect, that points to a staunch loyalty of the ‘follow him anywhere’ variety. And Undershft himself brushes the deeper bond aside when Cusins offers it.

“Who wants your love man?........... I will have your due heed and respect, or I will kill you. But your love! Damn your impertinence!\footnote{3}”

It is almost as if Shaw has picked Carlyle’s arguments up one at a time, some to use, some to argue against, but leaving the audience in the dark as to the subject of the debate. We can, however, quite clearly see those points of resemblance I have noted, and remark both the direction in which they tend, and the qualities which they demand in common.

Carlyle, working from his analogy between feudalism and the society of the future, insists on the recognition of a social hierarchy based on ‘worth’, and of the value of tradition, throughout his argument.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Major Barbara}, Act \textit{I}, p. 267.
\item \textit{Major Barbara}, Act \textit{III}, p. 318.
\item \textit{op. cit.}, Act \textit{III}, p. 334.
\end{enumerate}
The aim of this argument is to produce a society whose accidents may - even must - change with time, but whose values will be permanent. Such is also the case with Shaw's argument. The means by which such a society is to be attained, Carlyle argues, is perseverance resting on a basis of moral certainty, and founded in a tradition. Such is the means set forth in *Major Barbara*. Both authors would agree that, 

"...... the task will be hard; but no noble task was ever easy. This task will wear away your lives, and the lives of your sons and grandsons: but for what purpose, if not for tasks like this, were lives given to men?"

The ideal of social permanence is given similar expression in both works. Carlyle tells the story, first, of Edmundsby, and in the closing chapters of *Past and Present* draws the comparison between two industrial concerns which again lands permanence of social contrast.

We learn that a 'practical manufacturing Quaker...... Friend Prudence

"keeps a thousand workmen; has striven in all ways to attach them to him; has provided conversational soirees; playgrounds, bands of music for the young ones; went even to 'the length of buying them a drum', all which has turned out to be an excellent investment."2

Apart from the fact that this is the kind of thing Undershaft has done at St Andrews, and that Undershaft himself learned to play the trombone in "the Undershaft Orchestral Society", and that Cousins chosen instrument is the drum, we also learn that Prudence's workers (like

Undershaft's) cause him no trouble and stay with him, unlike the execrable Blank, who pays wages according to supply-and-demand, and suffers like Price's employers) strikes, frettings and obstructions, pilfering, wasting and idling.

Lest these comparisons should seem too coincidental, we might further notice that Carlyle tentatively asks if, at some not far-distant stage of this 'Chivalry of Labour' your Master Worker may not find it possible, and needful, to grant his workers permanent interest in his enterprise and theirs? So that it become, in practical result, what in essential fact and justice it ever is, a joint enterprise; all men, from the Chief Master down to the lowest Overseer and Operative, economically as well as loyally concerned for it. 2

and that, if Undershaft has not gone quite so far as profit sharing, his "insurance fund, pension fund, building society and various applications of co-operation" come very close to it.

Carlyle also recognizes that an element of despotism must exist where men have authority over others, but makes the point that "man's freedom is indispensable". The problem then becomes one of reconciling the two factors: inevitable despotism with necessary freedom, and Carlyle's answer to that problem is a simple one.

"It is to make your Despotism just. Rigorous as Destiny; but just too, as Destiny and its Laws." 4

Undershaft, explaining to Cusins and Barbara the working of his

1. Past and Present, Bk IV, ch. v, p. 268, of. Major Barbara pp. 267, for Price's speech, 259, for reference to Undershaft and music.

2. Past and Present, Bk IV, ch. v, p. 271.


social hierarchy, says:

"the one thing Jones won't stand is any rebellion from the man under him." \(^1\)

and goes on to enlarge with cynical realism on the despotic element in his business. But the effect on the reader, when he has pieced all the details of description together, is that of justice, of fair-play, the results of moral purpose.

Here it is important to remember that Undershaft's cynicism is reserved for the observation of accomplished facts - it is not applied to intentions. Undershaft is cynical because his moral intentions often lead to quite different practical results from those presaged. He pays men according to their abilities and worth, and creates a snobbish caste system; provides for their material comforts, and realizes that they are suffering from spiritual atrophy, yet is still able to answer Stephen's doubts as to the worthwhileness of his philanthropy in moral - not expedient - terms.

"Well you see, my dear boy, when you are organizing civilisation you have to make up your mind whether trouble and anxiety are good things or not." \(^2\)

In fact, Undershaft gives dramatic expression to Carlyle's claim that 'no chaos can continue chaotic with a soul in it'.

2. op. cit., p. 319 (my emphasis)
"Besouled with earnest human nobleness, did not slaughter, violence and fine-eyed fury, grow into a chivalry; into a blessed loyalty of governor and governed,\footnote{1}

might well be Undershaft's interrogative creed, he himself the epitome of the statement that nobleness may be found in the Captains of Industry, and evidence that to such men,

"death is not a bugbear...... that life is already as earnest and awful, and beautiful and terrible, as death."\footnote{2}

For Undershaft, in his attitude, expresses this contention, just as Shaw expresses it in the preface to the play by saying that he does not regard a Salvationist as being saved,

"until he is ready to lie down cheerfully on the scrap heap, having paid scot and lot and something over, and let his eternal life pass on to renew its youth in the battalions of the future."\footnote{3} Carlyle might well have had Undershaft in mind when he declared,

"Not a May-game is this man's life; but a battle and a march, a warfare with principalities and powers."\footnote{4}

He is, as Lady Undershaft says, beyond the reach of the world of politics and law,\footnote{5} and again Carlyle has the apt sentence,

"Thou, Oh World, how wilt thou secure thyself against this man? Thou canst not hire him with thy guineas; nor by thy gibbets and law penalties restrain him. He eludes thee like a spirit."

For the essence of the 'armourer's faith' is that the product

2. \textit{op. cit.}, BK IV, ch. vii, passim.
may be bought, but the man may not, and Undershaft here joins himself to Cusins, the 'Man of Letters', who, himself joined to Barbara, "may become" as Carlyle puts it,

"a 'Chivalry', an actual instead of a virtual Priesthood, with result immeasurable............."1

To these men, and this woman, Shaw has set the task outlined by Carlyle, and given them the attributes and major beliefs held by Carlyle, as necessary to success in that task:

"To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuler, happier, - more blessed, less accursed! It is a work for a God. Sooty hell of mutiny and savagery and despair can, by man's energy, be made a kind of Heaven; cleaned of its soot ......... of its need to mutiny; the everlasting arch of Heaven's azure overspanning it too, and its cunning mechanisms and tall chimney steeples, as a birth of Heaven; God and all men looking on it well pleased."2

We might pause here to recall Cusins's description of the foundry, prior to seeing Perivale St Andrews, as "this Works Departm01.t of Hell," of Barbara's imagining it as being,

"a sort of pit where lost creatures with blackened faces stirred up smoky fires, and were driven and tormented by her father,"

and of the actual description of the foundry town as "almost smokeless", with its "slender chimney-shafts" against the arching sky, and Cusins's comment that only a cathedral is needed for it "to be a heavenly city

instead of a hellish one.\textsuperscript{1}

Undershaft has provided the material means, therefore, for Cusins and Barbara to make good Carlyle's final hope: the hope of a vast host of workers "marching ever forward since the beginning of the world."

"The enormous, all conquering, flame crowned Host, noble every soldier of it; sacred, and alone noble...."\textsuperscript{2}

is a fitting description of the vision of both Cusins and Barbara as they survey the possibilities of social and spiritual adventure ahead, and makes the closing scene of \textit{Major Barbara} as transcendental in quality as the closing passage of \textit{Past and Present}.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Major Barbara}, Act \textbf{III}, pp. 314, 317, 318.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Past and Present}, BK \textbf{IV}, ch. viii. p. 287.
In Book II, chapter v, page 158 of Past and Present, there occurs the phrase "children of the Prince of Darkness". Undershaft is referred to at least thrice (pages 304, 323, 338) as 'the Prince of Darkness', in Major Barbara, and Gains says of Barbara that her father was the 'Prince of Darkness'. For other references to Undershaft as representative of Evil, see page 316, Major Barbara, and note Gains's speeches, passim.

Past and Present, Book II, chapter iv, page 66. We learn that a certain monk, trying to slip a clandestine five shillings to his mother, slipped it to the floor, "and another had it". One recalls Bill Walker's throwing of the 'conscience sovereign' on to Gains's drum (Act 11, page 293, Major Barbara) whence it was neatly stolen by Snobby Price. (see page 295).

Note also that, like the Salvation Army shelter system, St Edmund's monastery had ............

"to receive all strangers in the Convent and lodge them gratis ........ our poor Cellarer however straitened."

Past and Present, Book IV, chapter , page 225. Carlyle writes:

"What worship, for example, is there not in washing! Perhaps one of the most moral things a man, in common cases, has it in his power to do. Strip thyself, go into the bath........ and there wash and be clean; thou wilt step out again a purer and a better man. This consciousness of perfect outer pureness, that to thy skin adheres no foreign speck of imperfection, how it radiates in on thee, with cunning symbolic influences, to thy very soul."
The passage is reminiscent of the exchange between Barbara and Bill Walker, when the former remarks (conjoining the ideas of outer and inner purity) that Todger Fairmile fell in love with Mog Habijam: "when he saw her with her soul saved, and her face clean, and her hair washed."

Bill: Wot'ud she wash it for, the carroty slat? It's red.
Barbara: It's quite lovely now, because she wears a new look in her eyes with it.

Note also Undershaft's rebuttal of Barbara's suggestion that despite the 'beautifully clean workshops, and respectable workmen, and model homes' (Act 111, page 328) the factory is a home of evil. He says:

"Cleanliness and respectability do not need justification."
Barbara: they justify themselves.

"If you read sociology for entertainment, you will find that the nineteenth century poets and prophets who denounced the wickedness of our Capitalism are much more exciting to read than the economists who worked out the theory of Socialism. Carlyle's Past and Present and Shooting Niagara, Ruskins Ethics of the Dust and Fors Clavigera ... are notable examples.

But I doubt whether nineteenth century writers can be as entertaining to you as they are to me, who spent the first forty-four years of my life in that benighted period."

GENERAL WORKS:

The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century English Poetry.

The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century.

The History of Western Philosophy.

The Story of Philosophy.
D.J. Fairchild, E. Benn, Lond., 1927.

The Romantic Quest.

PRIMARY WORKS:


*The History of Friedrich II of Prussia, sometimes called
Frederick the Great.

*Oliver Cromwell. Letters and speeches edited by Thomas Carlyle.

*Lectures on heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history.

Past and Present.¹

Sartor Resartus.
(And from the volumes (1 to 4) of miscellaneous essays.)

Model Prisons.

Shooting Niagara: and after?

* selected and random readings.

¹ page references to Past and Present throughout this thesis are
in the Everyman’s Library (no. 608) edition J.M. Dent and Sons,
Lond., 1960.


Plays:

The Apple Cart.

Arms and the Man.

Back to Methuselah.
Candida.
Caesar and Cleopatra.
The Doctor's Dilemma.
John Bull's Other Island.
Major Barbara.
Man and Superman.
The Man of Destiny.
Mrs Warren's Profession.
Saint Joan.
Widowers' Houses.

Books:

Sixteen Self Sketches. (edition of 1945)
Shaw Prefaces. George Bernard Shaw. Paul Hamlyn, Lond., 1965. (pagination is as in the Constable edition, but this collection has appended material.)

SECONDARY WORKS:

A. on Carlyle.

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Bernard Shaw, His Life and Personality, PEARSON, Hesketh, Collins, Lond. 1942.


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