



**THE DRONE AND THE BEE: MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN G. B. SHAW'S MAN AND SUPERMAN**

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KUS: 983: 14072022

Manuscript submitted: July 14, 2022

Accepted: May 11, 2023

**Abstract**

In *Man and Superman*, which is subtitled *A Comedy and A Philosophy*, G. B. Shaw is basically concerned with the issue of the relationship between men and women. He portrays women as primarily endowed with vital reproductivity and men as endowed with potential intellectuality. Though in this philosophical comedy, he expounds to some length the doctrine of Life Force, he does not attempt to approach the issue in a purely philosophical manner. He contrasts men's intellectualism and romanticism and women's active vitality and practical immorality, and thus his women are motivated to desire men for marriage, and his men either harbour romantic illusions about women or engage in intellectual discussion about man-woman relationship before attempting to escape from the women who are pursuing them for marriage. In the prefatory note to the play, Shaw defends men's intellectual view of this relationship, and as the writer of this comedy, he represents women as if they are the queen bees guided by the Life Force, which forces them to mark out men as their mates and their subsequent victims. The playwright represents men as finally capitulating to such desires of women, though all for the sake of this Life Force, which is purposed to produce intellectually advanced supermen. Though Shaw uses this drone-bee relation as a motif to produce comical effects, with this he both highlights the man-woman relationship and makes it clear that this concept of the Life Force cannot be taken too seriously.

**Keywords:** Drama, comedy, Shaw, marriage, sex, intellect

**Introduction**

In his play *Man and Superman*, subtitled *A Comedy and A Philosophy*, G. B. Shaw uses a natural phenomenon of the bees to show how man and woman are attached to each other, and how their relationship works out in practical life. The playwright also uses the phenomenon to support his philosophy which asserts that there should be people who will be very practical and who will always use reason in order to solve various social problems. In nature, the queen bee pursues the drones, which are male, and is also pursued by them, for the sole purpose of mating, and the drone dies soon afterwards as a consequence of this mating. Cruel as it is, this is a strange natural phenomenon, and Shaw has used this in his comedy to highlight his views on man-woman relationship. And since this phenomenon is used in the play several times from the beginning to the end, this can be considered an important motif in the play, which helps the dramatist achieve his purposes of structural cohesion as well as thematic exposition.

This natural phenomenon of the drones and the bee Shaw uses after modifying it with his doctrine of Life Force or creative evolution, where he assumes that women are motivated by the basic concern of sexual union with men and that men are guided by the instinct to escape as long as they can. Shaw's Life Force doctrine not only explains the cruel but natural fact of instinctive sexual attraction but also envisages intellectually advanced human beings, whom he terms supermen. Whereas women for this mating purpose devise the best strategy to enter a marriage, for which they are determined, men either intellectualise or romanticise this relationship, and thus always try to escape from what they consider as enslavement by women. With his Life Force doctrine, Shaw not only represents the late Victorian men and women and their outlooks on love, sex, and marriage but also presents his idea of the supermen who are meant for the perfection of the human race. In so doing Shaw uses the drone-and-bee

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53808/KUS.2023.20.01.2227-ah>

motif to represent men and women; however, he never allows his readers to forget that what they are reading or seeing is a comedy.

### Discussion

G. B. Shaw in his play *Man and Superman* makes several references to the bees, which carry different significations, but most importantly he refers to the natural phenomenon that the drone dies after being pursued by the queen bee and after mating with her, as if it is the queen bee that has killed the drone after the purpose of reproduction is served. In the Epistle Dedicatory of the play, Shaw expresses his fear that the Englishman even with his "vital qualities" may not be saved from being "smoked out", and thus be deprived, by more intelligent beings, which is a phenomenon common to the bees (p. 17). However, Shaw is actually after both English men and women, who foolishly pursue money and husbands respectively. He argues that woman "must marry because the race must perish without her travail", and reminds us that "the force that carries women through all these perils and hardships, stops abashed before the primnesses of our behavior for young ladies" (p. 20). Shaw makes another reference to the bees to point out that English people work with instincts only, "not reasoning about the matter at all", which is why as a playwright he is for the intellectual supermen (p. 109). Though Shaw also refers to the spiders to point out that "the spider kills her mate", i.e., the female one kills the male one, "the destined prey", after the mating purpose is served, it is the bees which the playwright refers to more than the spiders (pp. 92, 107).

Shaw thus makes his protagonist Jack Tanner aware of the destiny of the drones who are pursued by the queen bees to mating and death, but his intention is to let the hero accept this reality for the sake of the birth of superman. In Act I, Tanner tells Octavius Robinson to read "Maeterlinck's book about the bee", and thinks that Octavius is "the pursued, the marked down quarry, the destined prey" of Ann Whitefield, the heroine of the play (pp. 90-91). Later in the same Act, Tanner warns Octavius that women can and should kill the worthless men and that they "would kill us as the spider kills her mate or as the bees kill the drone", a phenomenon when the drones, that do not mate with the queen bee and consequently die, are killed by the worker bees, which are female. However, when Tanner learns that it is he who is being pursued by Ann, he exclaims: "Then I – I am the bee, the spider, the marked down victim, the destined prey" (pp. 91, 107). With this motif of mating between the drones and the queen and the killing of the drones, Shaw illustrates how he handles the question of sexual union between men and women, its purpose as well as its consequence – the production of the supermen, but at the cost of men. Shaw's use of this drone-and-bee motif reflects the main aspect of his comic portrayal of man-woman relationship in the play.

Shaw's concept of the evolution of man and woman forms the basis of how man and woman are peculiarly related to each other. According to E. Bentley (1947, Chapter 2), Shaw exploits and restructures Darwin's theory of evolution, and in the Hell Scene, which is the subconscious deliberation of the characters in Act III of the drama, the playwright expounds his theory of creative evolution. Don Juan is the subconscious counterpart of John Tanner and the spokesman of the dramatist himself. Juan observes that "in the evolutionary process [woman] invented [man], differentiated him, created him in order to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce", and thus man is woman's creation so that man can be woman's "contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest in the most economical way" while the woman is "Nature's contrivance for perpetuating its highest achievement", the continuation and amelioration of mankind on earth (p. 147). However, Shaw is being critical of Darwin's theory, which can be seen in his description of Roebuck Ramsden, the elderly man of affluence, whose views were always opposite to Tanner's, despite the fact that Ramsden, born in 1839, was "an Evolutionist from the publication of the *Origin of Species*" in 1859, and "has always classed himself as an advanced thinker and fearlessly outspoken reformer" (pp. 41-42). Shaw in this play is "seeking to offer a radically different view of evolutionary theory, namely one that would rescue the claims of individual moral responsibility from the ethical chaos of Darwinian natural selection" (Griffith, 1993, p. 126).

The drone-bee relationship articulates the female pursuit of a male for mating purposes and his ultimate vanquishment after her reproductive goal is achieved and Shaw's Life Force doctrine parallels this drone-bee relationship; however, Shaw's doctrine rises above mere drone-bee relation with its higher purpose, the birth of a superman, who is powerful not due to his physical might but by virtue of his intellectual strength. Shaw's Life Force doctrine applies equally to the drones and the bees, or the spider and her mate, or the animal kingdom in general, but he has reserved it for humankind, for he seeks to see that an intellectual superman is born. In other words, while mankind cannot defy the power of nature, i.e., the natural instinct of sex, Shaw wants them to be intellectually

strong so that they can solve various social problems, one of them concerning the roles of men and women before and after marriage. Since marriage is a socially and religiously acceptable institution, Shaw has made his characters revolve around this question of marriage, and for this, he has chosen the Life Force doctrine which parallels the drone-bee relation but goes beyond the concept of supermen. Yet Shaw makes his male characters run away wildly in order to escape from this female pursuit which they consider as devastating, even with the prospect of marriage. This female pursuit of men continues till the end, and the comic effects arise through the male characters' frantic attempts to escape. And only in the Hell intermezzo of Act III does Shaw expound his Life Force theory through his subconscious spokesman Don Juan, and by doing so he deviates from the drone-bee relation and its catastrophic consequence for males and thereby adds to it a new, productive dimension with the prospect of the birth of supermen.

Moreover, in this Hell Scene or inner play of Act III, Shaw attaches to the Life Force a religious tone, as he makes his Don Juan think of returning or going to Heaven because "there is the work of helping Life in its struggle upward", which is joy enough for an intelligent man. Not only that, Dona Ana too has to utter: "I believe in the Life to Come. [Crying to the universe] A father! A father for the Superman!" (p.173). Shaw has never mentioned Darwin's name in the play itself, nor has he directly referred to the "evolutional process" but once or twice; yet it is to be deduced that in his conception, Nature has a creative design as well as a controlling power (p. 147). Yet the playwright has mentioned evolution not in the words of Jack Tanner, his protagonist, with whom he starts and ends the comedy, but in the words of Don Juan, who is but a subconscious character in a dream. G. W. Knight observes in this regard that Shaw's belief in the Life Force is characterized by an affirmation of "an optimistic recognition of its miraculous nature as it travails to create a greater humanity" (1962, p. 343).

However, this succinct theorization amply reflects the essence of the relationship between man and woman where a woman takes the active role in satisfying Nature's demand by utilizing man. Don Juan argues that both man and woman, the "helpless agents" of the "universal creative energy", attain manhood and womanhood not by love, as is said by most people, but by the birth of moral passion (p. 161). Jack Tanner contends that, "It is the birth of that passion that turns a child into a man", and that "the first duty of manhood and womanhood is a Declaration of Independence" so that the contemptible subjection of youth to age can be eliminated (pp. 73, 97). This self-contradictory affirmation and negation of morality in relation to attaining manhood and womanhood is neutralized in Tanner's statement that motherhood is a woman's "solemn initiation into womanhood", when the emphasis is laid on reproductivity in line with the philosophical core of the play (p. 82). Echoing Tanner's theory of creativity, which is based on men being victims to women for reproductive purposes, Juan maintains that a man and a woman have no bond between them but a possibility of that fecundity for the sake of which the Life Force has thrown the man and the woman into one another's arms.

The woman is thus depicted as the agent of Nature, i.e., the Life Force, in the continuation of creation. So, she is endowed with vitality, the latent strength for active creation, for which she is programmed to take the initiative, the active role. Tanner asserts that "Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation"; and in describing Ann Whitefield, the heroine of the play, Shaw comments, "Ann is one of the vital geniuses" (pp. 54, 60). Early in the play, Tanner admits that the "creative instinct" has led Ann to attach him to her, and later, he argues that because of this creative motive in women, "a man is nothing to them but an instrument of that purpose" (pp. 61, 70). So, Tanner flees from Ann ultimately to be caught by her when he will realize the necessity of transforming his knowledge into action and demonstrating an impression that his becoming a victim of the woman and the Life Force is somehow indispensable and inevitable. While this is the curve chiseled by Shaw in his formation of the Ann-Tanner relationship in the main plot, the Violet-Hector relationship of the sub-plot is also introduced early to reflect in practical light the protagonists' relationship. Tanner's approval of Violet's early activation in wedlock of her vitality to fructify Nature's will and to fulfill her own "highest purpose and greatest function – to increase, multiply and replenish the earth" has to be consolidated in his own alliance with Ann with a greater possibility (p. 64).

Though love is not made obvious in playing a great role in the Violet-Hector relationship, its importance is made manifest in the Ann-Tanner relationship. Tanner admits to Ann that their childish agreement of confidence was "an unconscious love compact" and asserts before Octavius, who is blindly and helplessly in love with Ann, that he himself is in love with Ann but is "neither the slave of love nor its dupe" (pp. 75, 91-92). Tanner's love for Ann

is professedly moral and subconsciously sexual as is evident in his harping on the sex instinct of women and men's attachment to them. Juan, however, negates love's importance in the relationship between men and women as he remembers his mundane amoral encounter with Dona Ana and reflects that "It was not love for Woman that delivered me into her hands: it was fatigue, exhaustion" (p. 165). Tanner on earth, i.e., in the waking state, however, has a comprehensive view of love as is expressed in his final protestation of love for Ann in which he says that he loves her because the "Life Force enchants" him (p. 205). Thus, it is sex that is emphasized more than love in the relationship between the male and the female characters of the play.

The relationship between a man and a woman, according to the play's philosophy, should be aimed at producing not mere children but supermen. A superman is, Juan explains, "the ideal individual" who is "omnipotent, omniscient, infallible, and withal completely and unilludedly self-conscious: in short, a god" (p. 149). Brain or intellect is the fundamental characteristic of a superman and this is the "darling object" of the Life Force (p. 150). "Life's incessant aspiration to the higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding" is destined to produce the superman, and the process is to be materialized in the sexual relationship between the vital woman and the "philosophic man" who is the "only one sort of man [who] has ever been happy, has ever been universally respected among all the conflicts of interests and illusions" (pp. 151, 165). Realizing that Juan's philosophy of the Life Force is not what she earlier termed as "libertine", Dona Ana selects him as the father of the superman she wants to give birth to and cries after him, "A father! a father for the Superman!" (pp. 161, 173). Man has become, according to Juan, "too imaginative and mentally vigorous to be content with mere self-reproduction" because his brain has become extraordinary as a result of the superfluous energy saved him by a woman from the straining labour of gestation (p. 148). Juan also admits that it is women who are responsible for his "astounding illumination" which is the correction of his intellectual reasoning, "I am; therefore I think" not "I think; therefore I am", so that he no longer remains a "foolish philosopher" which he was on earth (p. 154).

The relationship between the hero and the heroine, Jack Tanner and Ann Whitefield, and their subconscious counterparts, Don Juan and Dona Ana, is characterized by pursuance, and it is the women who pursue and it is the men who are pursued. The idea that a woman dangerously waylays and enmeshes her husband for fertility's sake was first formulated by Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche and first dramatized by August Strindberg, but this idea was made innocuous by Shaw who, as R. Brustein shows, adapts the Don Juan legend to the legend of Venus and Adonis, and thus, to prevent misgivings of Romanticism in the play's intellectual Victorian context, "adapts both legends to Shavianism, arguing that the whole comedy is played out for a higher purpose, the eventual evolution of the Superman through eugenic breeding" (1991, p. 214-215). And this higher purpose of "the Shavian Life Force is the means of freeing the intellect from its corporeal bonds, of defeating this dichotomy of body and brain" (Berg, 1998, p. 148), the result of which is the birth of supermen.

Both Juan and Tanner believe in the vitality of women, which impels women to pursue men so that Nature's purpose can be fulfilled. As Don Juan with his doctrine becomes able to convince Dona Ana of the "great central purpose of breeding the race: ay, breeding it to heights now deemed superhuman", Dona Ana in order to beget a superman pursues Don Juan who earlier on meeting her in hell protested, "I do not pursue you" and who now says, "I can find my own way to heaven, Ana; not yours", with which he means that she has to realize the need herself (pp. 129, 160, 170). Ann Whitefield, in cogent contrast with Dona Ana, does not pursue Jack Tanner for giving birth to children or supermen. Tanner's talking about Life Force has little significance to her; she comically says, "I don't understand in the least: it sounds like the Life Guards" (p. 203). She is interested not in Tanner's "moral passion" but in "the other one", the passion of love which is the basis of what Tanner has just termed as their "unconscious love compact" (p. 75). It is the male protagonists who are highly conscious of the purpose of Life Force and the greater potentiality of women in this regard and thus intellectualise about these, yet they fly from the female protagonists who must pursue men whether or not they themselves are conscious of the purpose of Life Force and their own vitality.

Ann Whitefield is not, according to R. Brustein, "the dominating, amoral and conscienceless *belle dame sans merci* of the Romantic agony, but rather the independent, intelligent, and well-mannered gentlewoman of the Victorian imagination" (1991, p. 214). She disposes of Ramsden and later of Octavius so that she can court Tanner with full liberty, and such conduct of hers does not conflict with Tanner's moral passion since it smacks not of her intention and since it is deliberately made to look natural. Though Juan's statement that "a woman seeking a husband is the most unscrupulous of all the beasts of prey" reflects Tanner's conviction, Ann is a practical woman

who knows the significance of what Tanner calls her “confounded hypocrisy”, and thus she says, “Women who are not hypocrites go about in rational dress and are insulted and ... then their husbands get dragged in too, and live in continual dread of fresh complications” (pp. 156, 200, 204-205).

Ann is considered to be one who “feels constrained by the mores of her time, by the passive, dependent role imposed on women then, to hide her will and purpose, and to use guile and trickery to achieve her goal” (McInerney, 2013, p. 194). However, Violet Robinson, Octavius’ sister, does not, unlike Ann, resort to hypocrisy; she only conceals her husband’s name since it is her husband’s desire. Shaw comments that “She is not a siren, like Ann” (p. 81). But Ann’s reason for hypocrisy is that she cannot express straightforwardly that she loves Tanner, not Octavius; she is timid and she argues that “All timid women are conventional: we must be conventional, Jack, or we are so cruelly, so vilely misunderstood” (p. 96). Her foreboding comes true even after her pursuit of Tanner to the “romantic reveries” in the Sierra of Spain (p. 155).

The other device Ann utilizes is her charm. Tanner himself experiences that strength of hers and realizes the necessity of Ann’s fascination for his meaningful existence as he admits that “there is a sort of fascination about you. ... I should miss you if I lost you” (p. 69). Yet he later blames her for “habitually and unscrupulously” using “her personal fascination to make men give her whatever she wants” (p. 199). Shaw comments in the stage direction that “some magnetism in her draws him to her, a broken man” (p. 202). But men also employ these techniques to win women. The statue of Don Gonzalo admits that he was a hypocrite on earth and that he had some romantic phrases he always used in seducing women. When in the final act Tanner indirectly praises Ann’s beauty and Ann demands to know why he tries to fascinate her if he does not want to marry her, Tanner replies, “I am in the grip of the Life Force” (p. 203). “Whatever his intellectual understanding of the Life Force may be, his embrace of Ann is a capitulation to the sexual attraction she exudes” (Dukore, 2009). Tanner, ultimately, has to succumb to his fate of the drone, being pursued and caught, if not vanquished.

Despite their knowledge of the necessity that human life is to be continued and improved to the superhuman level, both Tanner and Juan, who are Shaw’s conscious and subconscious representations respectively, fight against what they consider enslavement by women. They have their own reasons which are less practical than the purposes they are conscious of, and they have their eventual defeats too. It is the women who may be said to be “enslaving” men because on them is imposed the greater responsibility, and Tanner makes this point explicit in the question he poses to Octavius: “how can so feeble and transient a folly as a man’s selfish pleasure enslave a woman as the whole purpose of Nature embodied in a woman can enslave a man?” (p. 61). Tanner believed that Octavius was being pursued by Ann, and he told him so; yet when Tanner is set aright by Straker, he exclaims, “Then I – I am the bee, the spider, the marked down victim, the destined prey” (p. 107). Tanner has already accused Ann of fighting “harder than anybody against my emancipation”, his attainment of “self-consciousness” in the process of his becoming a man (pp. 76, 148). Tanner imagines that his servitude to Ann would relieve other husbands when they see the arrival of a new prisoner who will share their humiliation, the young men will scorn him as one who has sold out, and the women will consider him “merely somebody else’s property – and damaged goods at that” (p. 203).

Juan, on the other hand, refers to the legend of Don Juan’s sexual escapades, and since he is Shaw’s Don Juan, he observes that he has already bitterly experienced that the conquering women always regarded him as their property, and he argues that he became “famous for running away from” them only to escape “lifelong servitude” (pp. 153, 164). As Tanner relishes being “an enigma and a possibility” to the other women, so Juan fears that being cut off by a single woman from “all natural and unconstrained intercourse with half my fellow creatures would narrow and warp me” (pp. 162, 203). But defeat and servitude of such natures are depicted in the play as customary and inevitable, as Tanner observes that “men let themselves be hanged without a struggle”, and that he himself has a “frightful feeling that I shall let myself be married because it is the world’s will” (pp. 202-03). However, more than the “world’s will”, it is the Life Force which compels men to resign to such a fate, as Shaw’s comedy suggests. Juan admits that in his act of escape from a woman on earth, “Life seized me and threw me into her arms”, and Tanner realizes that he must love Ann because he is in the grip of the Life Force (p. 155). It is the Life Force which compels enlightened Dona Ana to chase Don Juan to heaven. Life Force cannot let men make the mistake of flying from women even though they have the knowledge of its sublime procreative function.

The importance of romance in the relationship between men and women is not overstressed in *Man and Superman*; in fact, it is depreciated time and again, which is understandable since Shaw has used the drone-bee

relation as well as his Life Force doctrine. Tanner no longer savours his childhood “romantic tomfoolery” with Rachel Rosetree and regards vitality and bravery as the greatest qualities a woman can have (pp. 71-72). Violet's caution to Hector that he can be romantic about love but in no way romantic about money only places money above love in her conjugal life. Tanner warns the lovelorn and poetic Mendoza, who has degenerated into a brigand because of his fruitless and unrequited love for Louisa Straker, that he is sacrificing his career to a monomania. Juan criticises the Devil for advocating for “love and beauty and the rest of [his] favourite boredoms” and equates “love and romance” with “prudery and fastidiousness”; he also prophesies before the Devil that the romantic delights of hell will fail to deceive men and women in materialising the birth of the supermen (pp. 149, 160).

Tanner, however, at last balances this sweeping devaluation of romanticism by affirming before the pessimistic Ann that he actually is enamoured of her and is also concerned about her beauty. Tanner's outlook on romance, however feebly it is expressed, is important since it is meant by Shaw to mature into the birth of a superman. On the other hand, the artist is a romantic man and always worships woman and seeks inspiration in her; thus, Octavius admits that only Ann can imbue him with inspiration indispensable for his composition. But it is the women who want from men “the worship of woman, of motherhood, of the family, of the hearth” (p. 148). So Ann tells Octavius that marriage must not be let to “disillusion” him and that his ideal of her “divinity” must remain impregnable and sanctified (p. 193). Tanner has early in the play drawn comparison between the “artist man” and the “mother woman” in their “treacherous and remorseless” struggle for success and the contrast between them where the “true artist” is a “half vivisector, half vampire” to the woman (pp. 61-62). Octavius' relationship with Ann is severely constrained because he is not an artist of this type and because, as Ann discloses before him, he is “very foolish about women” (p. 195). Ann selects Tanner because he has practical eloquence and “self-consciousness and self-understanding”, which are the prerequisites of a man for a nubile woman and which can produce an intellectual superman (pp. 150, 165). Ann rejects Octavius, who “sees nothing in nature but romantic scenery for love duets”, because the “poetic temperament”, standing for all artistic temperaments, is only “an old maid's temperament” (p. 204). Ann's is not an all-out rejection of the artist, yet her rejection of the artist in favour of the practical man, the philosopher, is important because she is to give birth to an intellectual superman, though she does not know it or is not yet ready to voice her support for it. Her choice depends on Shaw's Life Force doctrine, and thus she is guided by the instinct of the queen bee.

Even with his Life Force doctrine and the drone-bee chase, Shaw wanted to show a “freer and more varied comradeship between men and women, romantic and otherwise” and “more complex, intellectually challenging relationships”; furthermore, as a late Victorian dramatist, he had a question in mind: “in a more egalitarian, more honest, less restrictive society, what might marriage look like?” (Christian, 2020, p. 8). Shaw's concern about marriage is more important than his Life Force doctrine, for which he has imported the idea of the drone-bee relation; yet he is entangled in showing how this female pursuit of male works out, not in how marriage takes place or is consummated or how it impacts married people's lives. In *Man and Superman* marriage in its legal sense is not the only culmination of the relationship between a man and a woman. The characters are cogently different in their views about marriage and this difference in their views is interrelated with the difference in their attitudes towards the morality and purpose of marriage. Octavius does not credit Tanner's and Ann's caution that marriage will desiccate him of the artist's zeal and inspiration because of marriage's hard-hitting realities; so he persists in his love for Ann. Hector Malone believes that marriage ennobles a man and in reality, he induces his father to shirk his vindictive attitude towards the English aristocracy as he manifests his manhood and resolves to earn for his family with his own labour. Dona Ana in hell protests that “marriage peoples the world and debauchery does not”, and she is vindicated by her marriage with Ottavio, which produces no fewer than twelve children (p. 158). Don Juan strongly differs from Dona Ana, whose “transports of virtuous indignation” caused mortal troubles to one of his love adventures when he was a “dastardly seducer”; thus he considers marriage to be “the most licentious of human institutions”, a belief which emphasises that Life Force does not rely solely on marriage for sexual relationship and reproduction of supermen (pp. 156, 164).

Since female pursuit of the male is important, whether one wants a superman or not, marriage is not indispensable to Shaw, and thus his male protagonists have a liberal attitude towards marriage. Jack Tanner's outlook on marriage and morality almost completely corresponds to Don Juan's, but Tanner is baffled in the practical life where he attempts to apply it. Juan presents women's insistence on “honourable” conditions for sex, which include marital property settlements, financial support, lifelong companionship, and most importantly perpetual monogamy; these conditions which he declares to be “exorbitant and inhuman” are entirely irrelevant to

his plain desire to receive and give sexual gratification (p. 162). Tanner's idea that "not being legally married matters not" is practically disqualified by Violet to whom it was intended as a buttress (p. 82). Tanner's appreciation of the supposed extra-marital love of Hector, "mere marriage laws are not morality", is shattered by Hector's revelation that he is the husband of Violet (p. 188). However, Tanner's ideological support for the "weeping Magdalen and an innocent child branded with her shame" significantly reflects Juan's philosophical prophecy that a day will come when morality will not be a detrimental obstacle to the procreative relationship between men and women (p. 68).

Thus, Bernard Shaw advances a proposal of eugenics discussed in the play's prefatory epistle and in Tanner's "Handbook", where sexual relationship is considered impersonal and marriage not indispensable. According to A. Silver, Shaw thought that in "his self-appointed role as artist-philosopher and master of reality" he himself made a "blunder" in getting married and was facing at that time his wife Charlotte's arguments for "avoiding coitus", "the most telling" of which was her "fear of pregnancy"; thus, the playwright, "socially conscious even in his sexual fantasies, or allowing himself to indulge them only on condition that he will not find them too obviously pleasurable, envisions [in the play] ways of solving his present matrimonial difficulties" (1982, pp. 155-58). Likewise, Tanner who has considered marriage an "apostasy", "violation of my manhood", and a "shameful surrender", ultimately submits to the Life Force embodied in Ann and so renounces "the romantic possibilities of an unknown future for the cares of a household and a family" (Shaw, 1946, pp. 203, 208).

If Shaw's female characters like Ann Whitefield and Dona Ana as well as Violet Robinson are practical-minded, intelligent, and assertive, his male characters like Jack Tanner and Don Juan have some blemishes. But most importantly, all these male and female characters are equally strong-willed, resolute, and intelligent. And thus, if any Life Force is working behind them to produce supermen, both men and women possess almost an equal share. "Femaleness is subordinate to those integral characteristics of Superman, which are in turn subordinate to the universal will of the Life Force" (Zabrowski & Kirschmann, 2006). The drone is ultimately the mate and the victim of the bee as a result of the Life Force.

The consequences of such marriages are, however, delineated as ambivalent. Juan's contention that "sensible people make the best of one another" in wedlock reflects Tanner's anxiety, who believes that a "woman's business [is] to get married as soon as possible and a man's to keep unmarried as long as he can", and who prefers to be a slave of his wife rather than be a brutal husband with "a poker and a pair of hobnailed boots" (pp. 91, 157). But Tanner finally seems to be assured by Ann that his happiness in marriage will compensate for his "freedom and honour and self" despite her fear of some personal unhappiness and possible death (p. 205). However, Tanner's failure to discern their happiness in their final decision of marriage is inundated under the "Universal laughter", which prognosticates a happy and successful union between the hero and the heroine, and shows the dramatist's tact in using the drone-and-bee motif for comedic purpose as well as his sense of when and how to deviate from it (p. 209).

However, in his play subtitled *A Comedy and A Philosophy*, Shaw does not give the idea of this Life Force a truly philosophical look; he never forgets that this is a comedy which he is writing. All the comic effects of his play depend upon the different motivations, dialogues, and actions which proceed from his women's ceaseless pursuit of men, whether Life Force compels women to produce supermen or simply forces them to mate with their male "victims". Moreover, and interestingly enough, it is the Devil who first gives the label of "Life Force" to Juan's philosophy of man's higher purposes for which he is destined; and with ready wit, Juan admits that "the Life Force is stupid", though not "so stupid as the forces of Death and Degeneration" because "Life wins" somehow (p. 148). And it is only after this dream scene in Hell that Tanner first uses the term, and when he learns that he has been tracked out by Ann in Granada, he just exclaims: "The Life Force! I am lost" (p. 175). Moreover, in the prefatory Epistle Dedicatory, Shaw observes: "Philosophically, Don Juan ... follows his own instincts", and whenever he "finds himself in mortal conflict with existing institutions", he "defends himself by fraud and farce as unscrupulously as a farmer defends his crops by the same means against vermin" (p. 10). Furthermore, Shaw himself calls Juan's customary pursuit of women a "tragi-comic love chase of the man by the woman" (p. 18). And with all these comedic illustrations of the doctrine of the Life Force, the playwright shows the relationship between man and woman to be one between the drone and the bee, where the male partner's fear of being annihilated in sexual union is only to augment the play's comical effects.

### Conclusion

In *Man and Superman* G. B. Shaw has used the drone-and-bee motif successfully and produced comic effects; his male characters show their fear of sexual union to the end of the play whereas his female characters pursue them ceaselessly and finally become victorious, whether for their enlightened progeny or not. The female protagonists are depicted as demonstrating the power and purpose of the Life Force, of which they are the primary and active agents though all of them do not emphatically pertain to any such view. Shaw ultimately reconciles the vitality of women and men's conscious knowledge of this for a meaningful and reciprocal relationship that shows optimistic signs of culmination even in marriage, and for this the relationship is intellectualised and different questions of morality are introduced and discussed.

As a dramatist, Shaw has exploited the drone-and-bee motif to the end of the play in order to enhance its comic effects, but he has used the idea of a superman to deviate from the crudity of the drone-bee relation as well as to add another dimension to it. Thus, in his play *Man and Superman*, which he has also termed *A Comedy and A Philosophy*, Shaw is both philosophising about the relationship between man and woman and providing as much comedy as he can by using the drone-and-bee motif and modifying it for a higher purpose.

### Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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