

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

II.1. Theories Used in the Analysis

In the previous chapter the writer has stated that the problem of the study is to find out the reason behind the employment of Christianity in Shaw's plays. The problem, of course, can be solved in some ways according to what point of view we treat it. By mimetic theory we can start by asking whether such thing has any relationship with the society at the time the plays are produced, or pragmatic theory by which we can ask whether such things has any relationship with the effort to arise any effects on the readers of the plays, or expressive theory wich will relate the problem with the author of the plays. Yet, the writer decides to neglect the previous two theories as she finds out that the expressive theory is the best way to solve the problem. Concerning this theory Abrams wrote as follows:

Poetry is overflow, utterance, or projection of the thought and feelings of the poet; or else (in the chief variant formulation) poetry is defined in terms of the imaginative procces which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts, and feelings of the poet.

This way of thinking, in which the artist himself becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged, I shall call the expressive theory of art.

(1971: 22)

This theory will lead us to the source where these fourplays firstly begin, that is the author himself.

Concerning this matter Abrams explains as follows:

The paramount cause of poetry is not, as in Aristotle, a formal cause, determined primarily by the human action and qualities imitated; nor as in neo-classic criticism, a final cause, the effect intended upon the audience; but instead an efficient cause - the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression, or the compulsion of the 'creative' imagination which, like God the creator, has intended source of motion.

(1971: 22)

Thus, accordingly we can say that a literary work is simply an expression of an author. Anything in it is to be treated in relation with its author; just like what Rene

Wellek and Austin Warren write in their book:

The most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author; and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best-established methods of literary study.

(1948: 67)

The assumption that a literary work is an expression of an author is a first important step which guide us to study Shaw. Because as an expression of an author and a created world created by a creator a literary work surely represents the feelings and thoughts of its creator. In his book, Abrams writes clearly about this matter:

A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. The primary source and subject matter of a poem, therefore, are the attributes and actions of the poet's own mind; or if aspects of the external world, then these only as they are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind.

(1971: 22)

Now, all the writer has to do is to study these particular four plays of Shaw to find the reason.

The first step taken to find the answer of the problem is to know Shaw's opinion on Christianity. Concerning this matter, first the writer should analyze the plays to find Shaw's thoughts. On this behalf, the writer applies Philosophical Approach based on Hermeneutics Theory which was proposed by Friedrich Schleiermacher:

The basic problem that hermeneutics confront is that while the word of a text written in the past such as the Bible remain constant, the context that produced those words no longer exist. Schleiermacher argued that the purpose of hermeneutics was to reconstruct the original context so that the word of the text could be properly understood.

(Newton, 1989: 103)

The writer thinks that this approach will be suitable to work together with the expressive theory as both are complemented each other. While the expressive theory guides us to understand that a literary work is a world created by an author -and therefore, views the problem of the study in relation with its author and demands an

answer which is based on the explanation of the author himself- this approach will help us to recognize Shaw's thoughts in these plays by giving us a means to dig, find and then understand them properly. Yet, we have to keep remember that this approach stresses its role on the activity of understanding the thoughts properly. In doing so, the approach reconstructs the original context of the play so that we know the basic idea of Shaw when he wrote the play. Of course, in that basic idea we can include his opinion on Christianity and the reason of why he employed Christianity in his plays.

To reconstruct the original context -especially in relation with the problem of the study- we need to know information at least about two things: Shaw's religious background and also the background of the society at the time these four plays were produced. On this behalf, the writer applies Biographical Approach to back up the first approach. Wellek and Warren wrote as follows about this approach:

The most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author; and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best-established methods of literary study. Biography can be judged in relation to the light it throws on the actual production of poetry; but we can, of course, defend it and justify it as a study of the man of genius, of his moral, intellectual, and emotional development which has its own intrinsic interest; and finally, we can think of

biography as affording materials for a systematic study of the psychology of the poet and of the poetic process.

(1948: 67)

[For this reason the writer includes also a brief sketch of Shaw at the end of this chapter]

Like what has been mentioned in Chapter I, the writer emphasizes her effort in trying to find the reason of the employment of Christianity by doing character and setting analyses. The writer believes that both elements are the best way to deliver an author's thoughts. In the case of these four plays, the writer finds out that both elements play a very important role in the plays. Therefore, she decides to analyze them to find the answer of the problem of the study. Concerning this matter, the writer applies the Objective Theory which was proposed by Abrams as follows:

... the 'objective orientation', which on principal regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyze it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being.

(1971: 26)

Besides that, to back up the theory the writer also applies the Objective Approach based on the theory itself which stresses itself on the elements of characterization and setting. The theory and approach will work together to help and guide the writer analyzing and understanding the

two elements properly.

II.2. Sketch of the Author

When George Bernard Shaw died in 1950, Nehru of India said:

"Shaw was not only one of the greatest figures of the age but one who influenced the thoughts of vast numbers of human beings during two generations."

(Adam, 1966: 11)

In the history of our world, Shaw is really a distinct character. Like Shakespeare, his name was adapted to add a new adjective to the English Language. "Shavian" is defined by the Oxford dictionary as "Characteristic of Bernard Shaw" (Adam, 1966: 12).

II.2.1. Shaw's Childhood

Shaw was born in 1856 in Dublin, into what he called the downstart class which meant a family going down in the world but clinging desperately to its social position (Adam, 1966: 13). The Shaws came from the lower reaches of the Protestant hierarchy which ran Ireland. His father was a minor civil servant, later an unsuccessful corn merchant. His mother was the daughter of a country gentleman. She married because it was the only way of getting away from home and found out, on her honeymoon,

that her husband was a confirmed drunkard. When Shaw was sixteen, his mother ran away and went to live in London.

His mother gave him a love and understanding of music which lasted all his life. Her household was chiefly remarkable for fecklessness, self-indulgence and petty snobbery. But, it had an natural kindness and gentleness, a careless good-nature which is perhaps only possible in an Irish home (Adam. 1966: 14). Shaw discovered that his father was a drunkard when:

"I was about as tall as his boots. The wrench from my childish faith in my father, as perfect and onmiscient, to the discovery that he was a hypocrite and a dipsomaniac was so sudden and violent that it must have left its mark on me."

(Adam, 1966: 14)

But also, he was a kind and likeable man. He had a passion for comic anti-climax which Shaw inherited and loved to include in the plays.

Shaw went to a succession of cheap schools and left at fifteen. His family couldn't afford to send him to the university. He got a job in a land-agent's office at £ 18 a year. At twenty he decided to leave Ireland and join his mother in London, because he thought he deserved a better life.

II.2.2. Shaw's Career

In London he lived with his mother and sister in a semi-detached house of the Brompton Road. Shaw did odd jobs but spent his energy on learning to be a writer. He was poor and shabby and very shy. Before he could bring himself anywhere he went to the British Museum and studied a book of etiquette. Soon, he became the master of speech.

He went to listen to Henry George speak on Land Nationalization and from there to the Museum to study Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. This was a turning-point in his life. It converted him to Socialism, provided him with a mission and made him a revolutionary writer.

In 1885, when Shaw was twenty-nine, he met William Archer, a dramatic critic. They became friends, and Archer arranged for Shaw to work as a critic. Archer introduced him to the works of Henrik Ibsen, the revolutionary Norwegian dramatist. This was the second turning-point in Shaw's life.

He experimented with play-writing in the Ibsen manner himself. In 1892 his first play *Widower's Houses* was produced. His second play was turned down by all London managers and his third, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, an

exposure of prostitution, was turned down by the censor.

Then, he had begun to write comedies, "pleasant plays" and to listen to the actor-managers who dominated the theatre at that time. Shaw gave them what they asked, but in his own way - using Ibsen's realism about social problems but doing it with laughter instead of Scandinavian gloom. He introduced intellectual debate into his stories. Shaw also revised the idea of including a long preface, explaining what the play was about, in the published version.

When Shaw wrote *Man and Superman* about his own idea of creative evolution he became the idol of young English intellectuals. *Pygmalion* finally established him as the most popular playwright in the country. Then came his masterpiece *Saint Joan*. It was first produced in New York in 1923, then in London in 1924. It ran for 244 performances, has been regularly revived since, admired by Catholics, Protestants, and Atheists alike. Shaw wrote about sixty plays.

II.2.3. Shaw's Religious Aspect

Shaw's religious training supplied all the ingredients most likely to produce a fully-fledged atheist (Adam,

1966: 21). His parents supported their church entirely for the sake of social status. His religious instruction consisted of learning text by heart and being forced to sit through a long dull service without ever feeling personally involved. He always spent the time wishing they would sing something out of an opera instead of hymns. His nursemaid told him to say 'cold' prayers otherwise God would not hear. His uncle told him that the raising of Lazarus was arranged beforehand by Lazarus and Jesus. At twelve years old Shaw became an atheist.

In the same moment that he denied the existence of God he became conscious of what he called 'moral passion' in himself. In later life he looked back and decided that it was lucky for him that he had been made to realize the absurdity of the established religion so early because it had driven him to search for a real religion. The search was not finished when he died.

Shaw was born at a time when the conventional church was tightening up its formulas against the attacks on accepted beliefs - not only Darwinism but the various rebel sects of the nineteenth century. He died before the churches began to reform their doctrines, a hundred years later. Shaw was mostly bitterly attacked in his lifetime for what he said about the Church and Christianity. But the