

The Amphitheatre and Ann's Theatre: The Hell Scene and Theatricality in *Man and Superman*

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Synopsis: Although George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1903) is one of his most important dramatic works, it has seldom been staged. This is because, in terms of content and direction, there are technical issues that make it difficult to stage. In particular, Act Three features a dream in Hell, where four dead characters hold a lengthy philosophical symposium, has been considered independent of the main plot of John Tanner and Ann Whitefield. Tanner's dream emphatically asserts its theatricality by the scenery, the amphitheatre in the Spanish desert where Tanner dozes off. The scene's geography, which has not received adequate attention, indicates the significance of the dream as a theatre for the protagonist's destiny with Ann. At the same time, it suggests that the whole plot stands out as a play by Ann, to which Tanner is a "subject." The comedy thus succeeds in expressing the playwright's philosophy of the Superman through the play-within-a-play and metatheatre.

Introduction

Hell in the third act of *Man and Superman: A Comedy and a Philosophy* (1903) by George Bernard Shaw turns into a philosophical symposium, as the subtitle of the play suggests, and this intermediate part is responsible for the difficulties associated with the staging of the play. The scene, called "the Hell scene" or "Don Juan in Hell," has been cut out of performances of the whole play, and even performed separately; however, the interlude by itself has attracted considerable attention, not only from stage managers and actors, but also from critics, provoking a range of multi-layered examinations. Among them, the perennial concern is to compare it within the European literary convention of the

Don Juan legend with the archetype created by Tirso de Molina and its variations in adaptations by other authors and music composers.¹ In addition to these genealogical analyses, criticism has also benefited from psychoanalysis in broad terms, for example of the dream sequence of John Tanner.² Others have examined the role of the scene within the whole play: Harold Bloom passes a nasty, outspoken criticism of Shaw in contrast to his preference for Oscar Wilde as a comic playwright, although his assessment of the Hell scene is moderate, and helpful, quoting Eric Bentley:

“Take away the episode in hell, and Shaw has written an anti-intellectual comedy.” I would go a touch further and say: “Take away the episode in hell, and Shaw has written a very unfunny comedy.” Though it can be directed and acted effectively, most of the play singularly lacks wit; its paradoxes are sadly obvious. (8)

Contrastingly, Lionel Abel views the scene as “a complete play in itself” (181) and agrees that the whole play ought to be staged without it (211). In addition, J. L. Styan indicates the scene’s incompatibility with the other parts and its failure as a play-within-a-play (351), as Shaw himself later acknowledged. Still, this confusing style and the status of the dream sequence seem to indicate the playwright’s manner of expression, that is, his idea of theatre. It is now worth considering again its signification in relation to the main act involving John Tanner and Ann Whitefield, after such variegated interpretations have been considered. For this purpose, this paper will first focus on the *mise en scène* of the Hell scene, the amphitheatre in particular, to re-evaluate the scene’s theatricality and analyse two types of audiences in and outside of this masterpiece by Shaw. It will conclude with an examination of the dramatic mechanism of the whole play, including the Hell scene in light of Tanner and Ann.

1. From the Amphitheatre to the World Theatre

Before the symposium by the four dead characters in Hell begins, Shaw drastically transforms the stage setting twice: first, from the tranquil “*carriage drive in the park of a country house near Richmond*” (585) of Act Two, to the forlorn Spanish wasteland at the beginning of Act Three. Among the analyses mentioned above, one aspect which has not been suitably examined but which should catch the eyes of the audience when the play is performed on stage is “*one of the mountain amphitheatres of the Sierra*” (613). The denotative meaning of “amphitheatre” in this act is a natural hollow surrounded by rising slopes, which is familiar to the district. The term originally referred to a type of Greek and Roman theatre; whether or not one knows this type of theatre, the word *amphitheatre* can easily evoke its root connection with theatre in one's mind. Blundering into brigands, John Tanner and his chauffeur Henry Straker decide to seat themselves around the fire on the slope in the hollow and sleep there by Mendoza, the leader of the brigands. Thus, this locale connotes that the dream is a sort of drama and its primary spectator is the dreamer, Tanner.

The dream is first presented as “*omnipresent nothing*” with “[n]o sky, no peaks, no light, no sound, no time nor space, utter void” (631), which is the second transformation brought about when the Spanish wilderness is fast asleep. Then, lighting changes to create, in the pallor of each character, a colour effect which seems to be arranged so as to characterise the four *dramatis personae* of the Hell scene. Quoting Shaw's letter to Charles Ricketts, the stage designer, Margery M. Morgan notes that the scene's costumes are influenced by *commedia dell'arte*, and that its lighting is influenced by nineteenth-century pantomime (103). On the other hand, Styan sees in this setting another connection between Shaw and contemporary theatrical circles:

At this time Shaw had a liking for simple and abstract design (Gordon Craig's work was becoming known, and *The Art of the Theatre* was published in 1905) and admired the bare platform of William Poel's Elizabethan revivals. (350)

Shaw must have known Craig personally since this actor-stage designer was the son of Ellen Terry, with whom Shaw continued to exchange intimate letters over the years without meeting in person. Unfortunately, Shaw and Craig later came to a quarrel when Shaw's romantic relationship with Ellen Terry became public. Craig gave more value to actors' physical movement over their words, and eventually established Über-marionette using symbolic gestures (Lyons 260–63). In this plain stage of Shaw's *Hell*, the audience are encouraged to concentrate on the words voiced by the characters, as a result of scraping off almost all the stage decoration. Through changing the scenery from the city to nature and then to the void, the stage, step by step, reduces dramatic art to a minimum and transforms from a drama of "seeing" to one of "hearing." Styan denies its theatricality, but these directorial features indicate the dream sequence as a play-within-a-play presented to the primary spectator, Tanner, and the secondary one, the audience of the whole play.

The inner play, however, does not have a plot in the usual sense. The spectators watch three men and one woman, who are all dead, talking mainly about how each individual can behave in their afterlife, choosing their locus from Heaven or Hell. This can be called the theatre of ideas, or "contemplation," which the protagonist of the *Hell* scene, Don Juan, appreciates. What the four ghosts discuss also has something to do with theatre. During the debate on the subverted categorisations of Heaven, Earth, and Hell, Don Juan "picture[s]" the world with the imagery of theatre:

In Heaven, as I picture it, dear lady, you live and work in stead of

playing and pretending. You face things as they are *If the play still goes on here [Hell] and on earth, and all the world is a stage, Heaven is at least behind the scenes*. But Heaven cannot be described by metaphor. (651, italics mine)

In order to elucidate the true state of Hell, Earth, and Heaven, Juan takes up the well-known metaphor of *theatrum mundi*, obviously quoted from Jaques's line (2.7.139) in *As You Like It*; this clichéd citation is also effective in Don Juan's speculations on these three spheres.⁴ In Don Juan's hands, S-Earth is epitomised as "a nursery in which men and women *play at being* heroes and heroines, saints and sinners" (650, italics mine). Each person is obliged to "play" a role not of, but rather in mere imitation of heroism in strict accordance with social norms as their script, which control the causes of social fears, and whose end is the romantic union of a hero and heroine. Thus, Don Juan also describes S-Earth as "the home of the slaves of reality" (650), where not only there are the miscellaneous social norms to be read and remembered for playing, but also playing itself is one of the norms. Their heroic accomplishments are, it is anticipated, only recognised when they are called into "Heaven," that is the Shavian Hell; however, even in S-Hell, it can be achieved only in their illusory talk of bodiless love. Through a lifetime of playing, Doña Ana, who, lately deceased, has just arrived at S-Hell, "ha[s] had quite enough of reality on earth" (650). Among Shaw's three types of people discussed in his essay, "Ideals and Idealists," namely "Philistines," "idealists," and "realists" (47–53), she is yet one of the "idealists," who, being aware of social reality and its contradictions, have neither the will nor the courage to take any action for social improvement. Ana converts to a Shavian "realist" who takes action to improve human society, but this occurs just before the end of the Hell scene. On the platform of Earth in the Shavian theatre, "all the men and women [are] merely players" (AYL 2.7.140), obsessively busy at playing each role aiming at hero and heroine in accordance with the

threatening reality that they themselves have produced and imposed for the fulfilment of their romantic, unrealistic ideals which is ironically to be failed on S-Earth, that is, the world.

The purpose of this world stage, in Don Juan's view, is to entertain the two kinds of audiences; firstly, confronting the front stage, a group of people are, as Don Juan cynically describes it, "sitting for all eternity at the first act of a fashionable play, before the *complications* begin" (682, *italics mine*). These spectators are merely enjoying the strenuous representation of an idealistic, and thus romantic plot, being quite comfortable on their seats: they are, in Shaw's categorisation, the "Philistines" in S-Hell who simply do not recognise contradictions or problems in the social conventions surrounding them. What they can tolerate, however, is only the *exposition* of the play. The epithet "fashionable play" indicates Shaw's sarcasm towards a certain type of theatre with a massive stage set, gorgeous stage effects, and a predictable, artificial plot written to a formula, namely the melodrama, which was highly popular in the West End at that time. They are attention-grabbing, responding to the latest "fashion" of the time, a formula played out in S-Hell when Ana is restored to her youth. In a sense, this type of theatre, with its straightforward, light-hearted plot, serves to adorn reality through the development of the play in the process of exposition, complication, climax, and denouement. This kind of theatre derived from the French well-made play is the ideal "mask" of reality according to the Shavian philistine-idealist-realist theory. Shaw never entirely disowned the role of form and, in his view, it had always to enliven the plot. In the "Epistle Dedicatory" of *Man and Superman*, he describes his dramatic principle as follows: "He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none: he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him" (527). In fact, Shaw appropriates melodrama for his dramatic creation, but it is, without exception, not an end but a means to evoking an unexpectedly harsh response from his audience that is

intended as an epiphany of the Shavian philosophy. In Shaw's dramatic sense, those "fashionable" theatres are insubstantial, going no further than the traditional "exposition": they are indeed the never-ending performances.

On the other hand, there is another kind of eye, which is unexpectedly and voyeuristically cast on such an inexhaustible play on the stage from "behind the scenes," that is from the backstage of S-Heaven. Presented with the same stage reality, they have a completely different prospect from the other one in the auditorium; this hidden audience, as "realists" in Shaw's categorisation, never let their eyes wander from the stage, including when the actors' backs are turned and the unstageable offstage, and are critical and severe in its judgments. Moreover, they have an unobstructed view of the auditorium, where, without noticing that they are also the object of seeing, the other audience are laughing, crying, or, as Shaw once wrote in the preface for *Plays Pleasant*, "in the melting mood" (381), which the playwright had designs on not mere laughing by his comedy, although the reverse—in other words, for the audience to see backstage—is impossible. In a sense, like the stage-manager or the playwright, the hidden audience behind the stage can see far more than what is entertaining the primary audience at the front. This sweeping view, from backstage S-Heaven through S-Earth of the stage to S-Hell of the auditorium, is possible when the spheres are situated on the same level in space and time. The stories of Heaven and Hell have been simultaneously spatially and narratively engendered by Dante and Milton, but are now turned upside down by the subversive intimations of these canonical texts. Don Juan's antagonist, the Devil, confides:

Where you now see reform, progress, fulfilment of upward tendency, continual ascent by Man on the stepping stones of his dead selves to higher things, you will see nothing but an infinite comedy of illusion. You will discover the profound truth of the saying of my

friend Koheleth, that there is nothing new under the sun. Vanitas vanitatum— (683)

Even if one attempts to jump up higher into space, there is nothing but emptiness, as the whole cosmic theatre is on the same plane. Thus, both in a playhouse and the world, three kinds of people coexist and are sorted out according to their attitudes. However, the differences between spheres are not very solid or unclimbable.

Morgan opines that Shaw's Hell interlude owes a debt to the tradition of the Elizabethan masque (102–03), and that Shaw was familiar with the idea of “dream” in the Renaissance Christian world, which infuses Shakespeare's works (106). From the above analysis, the Shavian *entr'acte* appears to attempt to put the idea of “the theatre of the world” into practice, suggesting the playwright's enduring interest in the Bard. Thus, it is important to consider the construction of the amphitheatre in relation to Shakespearean theatre in the context of Shavian dramaturgy. Frances A. Yates offers a fresh insight on the physical structure of theatres in the Elizabethan era as designed for a literal representation of the cosmos. Citing Leone Battista Alberti, an Italian architect of the Renaissance, Yates also clarifies the distinctions between three types of ancient theatre, the circus, theatre, and amphitheatre, and the latter two's structural relation: the circus was a place for “driving Races in Chariots with two or four Horses” by “the noble Youth,” the theatre, shaped like “a waning moon,” was “designed for the Use of the Poets, Comick, Tragick, and the like,” while the amphitheatre, whose shape is that of “two half-theatres put together,” was designed for beast baiting (119–20). The word “amphitheatre” etymologically implies a stage with seats “on both sides.” In Shaw's imagination, the shape of the “amphitheatre” is not circular but a “*horse-shoe*” (613). Yates points out a typical misunderstanding of the types of theatres in Elizabethan London: “[T]here was certainly a confusion, or assimilation, of amphitheatre with theatre” (163). Thus, Shaw's

amphitheatre might be the fruit of this confusion, as it is similar to the physical structures of Elizabethan theatres, with the backstage situated right behind the apron stage. The above imagery of the theatre of life can work, allowing multiple gazes upon itself, when the auditorium, the stage, and the backstage are located one behind another as in Renaissance theatres. The stage is the arena where two kinds of eyes are turned: one from the front auditorium and one behind the scenes. On the other hand, the type of stage with a proscenium arch theatre allows only a unilateral stare from the direction of the auditorium. Tanner and Mendoza—as well as Straker, although it is not clear if the chauffeur has the same dream—sleep, placing themselves in a corner of the amphitheatre. The specific *mise en scène* defines both the form and the recipient of the dialogic dream as play and spectator. Relying on the theatrical culture of Elizabethan times, by its setting and discussion of metatheatre, the dream insistently asserts itself as a play-within-a-play, implying, through a dramatic character's experience, the idea of *theatrum mundi*.

2. John Tanner's Role as a Principal-cum-Spectator in Ann's Theatre

John Tanner and Don Juan both love to talk about their own credos, and what they have in common are not only physiognomical traits but also philosophical ones. Both of them lament the “hellish” state of human society, and view institutionalised marriage as one of its chief causes. Hence, Tanner's dream is a sort of representation adapted by his own recent publication, *Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion*. What is more satisfying to him is the way the dream-play develops. In the last act of *Man and Superman*, Tanner is taught by Ann, while during the first two acts, Tanner is the teacher, especially for Ann (Wisenthal 37). Between them, in the dream scene of Act Three his living image succeeds in enlightening an “idealist” woman. However,

Tanner does not have any directorial power in this inner dream-play. For one thing, before Tanner drops off to sleep, Mendoza addresses meaningful, if ominous, remarks to him:

MENDOZA [*shaking his head*] The Sierra is no better than Bloomsbury when once the novelty has worn off. Besides, theses mountains make you dream of women—of women with magnificent hair.

TANNER. Of Louisa, in short. They will not make me dream of women, my friend; I am heartwhole.

MENDOZA. Do not boast until morning, sir. This is a strange country for dreams. (629, my underlines)

In spite of Tanner's confidence, Mendoza's prophetic warning soon becomes true. Moreover, at the very end of the play, Tanner declares that he is "one of the principals" (732). The warning and the confession should be examined in studying the role and validity of the dream sequence as a play-within-a-play in light of the whole play.

Returning to the amphitheatre in Act Three, it is apparent that the surrounding area is important. When they step into the brigands' safe house, Tanner and Straker are driving through the Sierra Nevada. In Spanish, Sierra Nevada means "a white mountain range," and thus this mountainous land has an apparent association with Ann *Whitefield*. In addition to this nominal implication, the confusing description of "*the horse-shoe*" makes it a symbol of a woman's uterus. Far from running away from her, Tanner in fact penetrates deep into Ann without knowing it. He feels bewildered and jeopardised because he has been informed by Straker that he is Ann's real prey. Tanner is driven into the inner sanctum of Ann and given an opportunity to rest and, like a baby preparing for the world, stores up his energy with a dream which seems agreeable to him. It is agreeable since, as discussed above, Doña Ana, transforming into a 27-year-old, appears as a mirror image of Ann,

and in the end gains the strength of will to give birth to the Superman, the paragon of the "realists," rather than merely a follower of the Superman. Peter Gahan states that "[t]he dream play, set in one of those peculiarly postmortal places, Hell, is occasioned by Donna Ana's death" (11). Tanner, in a sense, resurrects through the simulative experience of the death-dream.

Tanner's dream and reality appear to form a continuum as even after the dream, the smell of death lingers. When Tanner basks in the aftermath of such a fantastic and satisfactory dream with Mendoza, they are interrupted by a sudden shot, which is caused by Ann and party chasing Tanner. Although he is still muddled, upon hearing the deathly sound of gunfire, he is literally brought back to earth from the dream of S-Hell, and realises where he is. The audience, as well as Tanner, reflect upon Doña Ana's journey and whether she can reach a father of the Superman, not necessarily Don Juan. Such contemplation is abruptly stopped by a shot, but the sequel to the dream is carried over to the outer play of Tanner and Ann. On seeing Ann, Tanner exclaims, "Caught!" (692). He is extricated by Ann and brought back into the main plot from the seemingly independent dream sequence. Then, the entire party, including the brigands, quickly leave the desert, as if implying that such a dull place is of no use anymore, and arrive at a more lively tourist spot, Granada, in Act Four. This final act is situated in a cosy garden in a villa overlooking the Alhambra. Seeing "*a flower garden with a circular basin and fountain in the centre, surrounded by geometrical flower beds, gravel paths, and clipped yew trees in the genteelest order*" (696) in the space around a villa, one cannot help experiencing warmth and safety, especially after sojourning at the abandoned hollow and the "*utter void*" (631) of S-Hell. In fact, "garden" itself has great importance as leads the audience to recall the Garden of Eden.⁵ The environment is ready to carry on after the inner dream-play, and this felicitous atmosphere, a stark contrast to that of the previous act, feeds into the audience's expectation of a happy ending

to the play, namely the marriage between Tanner and Ann. However, we cannot act hastily. In contradiction to the notion of a blissful paradise, “clipped yew trees” can be found in the Shavian garden cited above. According to Ad de Vries, yew has appeared as a symbol of death in literary conventions such as those of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (513). There is also a chain of association at work, from “clipped,” to mutilation, onto death. This act with cutting instruments, such as scissors or shears, reminds “reaping,” a biblical symbol of Last Judgment, and metonymically suggests Father Time. In addition, the stage directions detail the obliqueness of the villa: “*If we stand on the lawn at the foot of the garden and look uphill, our horizon is the stone balustrade of a flagged platform on the edge of infinite space at the top of the hill*” (696). The garden is located on the slope of a hill, not at the top. After all, the Garden is not exactly the highest seat which God occupies for Himself, but the enclosure where the progenitorial couple of Adam and Eve are permitted to live but subsequently banished as a result of eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge. It is the Alhambra, not a Christian palace but a pagan one, which is situated on the summit of another hill in front of the setting of the last act. Furthermore, Tanner, Ann, and their friends are not allowed to enter the Moorish palace because of its unexpected closure for the afternoon. Tanner and Ann are unable to find a Christian heaven, and shut out of the pagan palace on the top of the hill. For the moment, they have to be content with the garden located halfway up the hill on their way to their heaven. Considering that Tanner and Don Juan share their idea of social evolution as discussed before, the end of the Hell scene is supposed to be S-Heaven, where Don Juan heads for the purpose of contemplation. On the other hand, the play closes in the garden, where Tanner, newly engaged to Ann, gives his last long speech, referring to his plan for their wedding in England. They will soon “descend” from the garden on the hillside down to London. When the curtain falls, the play ends in the way that Ann wishes, not Tanner. The protagonist of

Man and Superman is without doubt John Tanner, but it seems that the play proceeds, not from Tanner's point of view, but from another person's, that is, Ann's own.

Ann's drama is well under way when she appears on the stage for the first time. One characteristic is "her habit of giving people nicknames" (554). She has named people around her as she wants them to appear since she "christened him [Ramsden] so [Granny] when [she] first learned to speak" (551). Octavius Robinson is called "Ricky-ticky-tavy" and Tanner, "Don Juan." This habit worries her own mother, Mrs. Whitefield, and terrifies Tanner, as "[they]'re beaten—smashed—nonentitized" (555). Once the original names are removed from those men, they become empty of existence. They are then cast in a new role in accordance with each nickname coined by Ann. With "Granny" Ann takes Ramsden for a grumbling grandmother, reversing and threatening his gender role, and she does not intend to withdraw the pet name even after he accepts joint guardianship with Tanner. The rhythmical and rhyming "Ricky-ticky-tavy" suggests that her relationship with Octavius is not serious but just fun. As for Tanner, Ann links him to Don Juan before the dream-play in Hell. This convinces the audience of the inevitability of the course of events as Tanner, forced to run away from Ann, strays into the region closely related to her, and dreams of Don Juan and Doña Ana. One may remember the part of Genesis where God gives Adam the exclusive right to name other creatures, including Eve formed out of Adam's rib (*King James Version*, Gen. 2.19–23). Tanner also calls Ann by various names, among which "a boa constrictor" (543) is the most sensational. Octavius and Ramsden do not like this name, while Ann does not mind it and rather enjoys it by throwing her boa and then her own arms around Tanner's neck. In contrast to Ann's successful naming, which compels the named to accept the naming and its role, Tanner's proves a failure and even benefits Ann, resulting in such indecent behaviour. In Shaw's work, the privilege of naming is granted to Ann or, more likely, Ann monopolises the privilege; she

appears a possessive quasi-god who undergoes her own dramatic creation while the Christian God is absent, substituted by the Alhambra.

Thus characterised with names, people are expected to act out each role. To be a guardian means to “play” a parental role of looking after the ward, and Tanner, together with Ramsden, is obliged to “act” such a part for Ann’s sake. In order to legally appoint Tanner as her guardian in her father’s will, Ann manoeuvred things behind the scenes by talking to her father when he was still alive. She started to write her scenario in her mind and play it out long before Tanner finally notices he is incorporated into her plot and says, “The will is yours then! The trap was laid from the beginning” (728). As a matter of fact, Tanner’s devotion to “act” for Ann dates back to their school days. They made a compact to “have no secrets from one another” (568), and to perform the duty, Tanner kept “doing all sorts of mischievous things simply to have something to tell you [Ann] about” (568), while Ann hoped for “something really *heroic*” (568, *italics mine*). Tanner sought to behave like a “hero” to live up to Ann’s expectations, and Ann reveals to Tanner that he was a ham actor: “[B]ut the things you did were never a bit like the things I wanted you to do. They often gave me great uneasiness” (569). When “only a boy” (569), Tanner might have misread the role of not his own, but Ann’s script, and failed to study how to play. It is not he who has been taking the lead in the affair. On the contrary, Ann surreptitiously worked to prevent what she was unhappy with: it is Ann who ruined Tanner’s love affair with a girl named Rachel, Ann’s friend, because, after such a long time, Ann now confesses, “It was my duty to stop her misconduct” (570). The misconduct is disadvantageous both for Rachel and for Ann herself, and hence, as a director of the Tanner-Ann relationship, she must have aligned the course of action with her own self-interest.

As her conduct towards Tanner and Rachel suggests, Ann has more knowledge concerning Tanner than he is aware, even if he does not tell

her everything. Her boa displays that she has been already enticed to eat from the forbidden tree, like her predecessor Eve, who both the Bible (Gen. 3.6) and Milton (IX: 780–81) describe as having done so before Adam. Ann decides whom she works on by disclosing or hiding her knowledge at her pleasure and according to circumstances. She overlooks even the subplot of Violet Robinson and Hector Malone. Only Ann has been informed of their secret marriage, but she does not tell anybody that she has learned of it. This silence is a wise choice because she would otherwise run the risk of being blamed for not revealing the secret earlier. She keeps up appearances as a maiden lady who needs a guardian. Owing her pretence of ignorance, other characters, mainly Tanner and Ramsden, discuss this delicate matter in order to arrive at a solution. Inferring from his limited knowledge, Tanner innocently declares that he “[is] altogether on [Violet’s] side” (581) and grants his blessing. By the end of Act One, the audience recognise that this man who has lately published his own book does not see the whole picture and that he has been given a cold reception by others, especially women. Only by Ann’s silence is it revealed that Tanner is not the one who has an authoritative influence on the other characters. Instead, like a director, Ann makes other people speak and act, whereas she stays silent and observes the situation, so that her original “designs” (576) on Tanner may be performed. One scene in particular, in the last act, implies the theatricality in *Man and Superman*. When Ann and Tanner return disappointed from the Alhambra, they discover a conflict between Violet, Hector, and the senior Mr. Malone regarding the young couple. Ann decides not to interrupt them, unlike Tanner, who inadvertently comes between the quarrelling father and son and acts as a peacemaker:

Ann and Octavius, lingering near the gate, exchange an astonished glance, and discreetly withdraw up the steps to the garden, where they can enjoy the disturbance without intruding.

(707)

Taking up a higher position than the quarrellers, she remains the backstage audience with knowledge and utters nothing in her friend's defence. It is not until Violet wins Mr. Malone's understanding of her without Tanner's help and with her own intelligence that Ann finally joins her company. According to John A. Bertolini, *Man and Superman* proceeds with duologues and ensembles, one after the other (40), and Ann mainly has duologues with Tanner, apart from a short one with Octavius in Act Four. She has as ready a tongue with Tanner, but seems not to be involved actively in the ensembles and abstains from them by keeping silent, excusing herself, or even swooning.

Just before the curtain falls, Tanner gives his final speech, which resembles an epilogue by "one of the principals" (732). He makes cynical comments on what has happened so far and also utters his prospects of the life awaiting Ann and himself. This quasi-epilogue is directed to two types of audience members, the ones who are sitting back in the auditorium, and the Shavian "idealists" like Ramsden, whom Tanner actually calls "only a spectator" (732). However, he cannot finish the concluding speech:

TANNER . . . The wedding will take place three days after our return to England, by special licence, at the office of the district superintendent registrar, in the presence of my solicitor and his clerk, who, like his clients, will be in ordinary walking dress—

VIOLET [*with intense conviction*] You are a brute, Jack.

ANN [*looking at him with fond pride and caressing his arm*] Never mind her, dear. Go on talking.

TANNER. Talking!

Universal laughter. (732–33)

Tanner is not allowed to mark the finale of the play: first, Violet

interrupts his action before he completes his address, and then Ann follows her with more shocking remarks, "Go on talking," as if to disdain what he has been saying. Ann Whitefield has a discretionary power by which she can decide how and when to end, though temporally, their play. She has been leading the party, and it is predictable that she will continue to do so, to disentangle the complications regarding her family and friends: her insight is worthy of another name, "a regular Sherlock Holmes" (692).

Although there is no doubt that these women's interposition beclouds Tanner's prospects, the end of the play is not as tragic and wretched as Tanner might consider it to be. Filled with laughter, it predicts some hope for the Superman. Don Juan reiterates his calling of contemplation in S-Heaven, and this word "contemplation" is related to the theatre. "Contemplation" is etymologically derived from the Latin word meaning "observation," whose stem is "a holy place where one's fortune might be told"; thus, the stage is the place for *vita contemplativa*. In fact, although Don Juan desires S-Heaven as a place where he can contemplate on Life, it is apparent that he has already been practicing his contemplation in S-Hell; since the three spheres are even, it suggests that one can pursue one's contemplation anywhere one likes. As with the symposium and its four discussants, all the participants in the three divisions in Don Juan's imagery of theatre become necessary constituents of the theatre of the world; they react differently to reality, as laid-back onlookers in Hell-auditorium, as diligent slaves in Earth-front stage, and as rigorous contemplators in Heaven-backstage. When Tanner, going through the theatre of contemplation in S-Hell and the action near S-Heaven, returns to where he comes from, it depends on him, along with Ann, whether the world will become the place of contemplation.

Conclusion

As soon as the third act opens, the spectators of *Man and Superman* are surprised at the large-scale scenic shift with an amphitheatre, but it is not mere stage décor to entertain the audience, but a symbolic image of the bridge, like the one constructed by the Devil, connecting Earthly London, Hellish Sierra Nevada, and Heavenly Granada. Supposing that Tanner did not have a philosophical dream in Hell, his decision to marry Ann in the last act would be more dramatic but, at the same time, too abrupt for the audience to understand his motivations. The tragic nature of his marriage might also stand out, and the end of the play might lack hope for the Superman. Fredric Berg points out Shaw's tact in dealing with the idea of the unity of time, as the play appears to keep the unity from mid-morning (Act One), noon (Act Two), and early afternoon (Act Four), though, in fact, each act happens on a different day: that is, "the unity of time is an illusion" (Innes 154). Berg regards the evening at Act Three as "out of sequence" (Innes 154), but this overnight happening can work as a knot between the acts. When one examines the dream sequence with the consequences of Act Four, the visionary plot where Don Juan teaches Doña Ana also has educational meaning for the dreamer. Ana's following-after allows Tanner to make proper preparations for Ann's stalking on his heels. This sequence within the play reinforces the idea of *theatrum mundi*: events in the world are reflected on the stage, and *vice versa*. Tanner's flight from Ann, discontinued by detention and sleep with a dream, is resumed by Don Juan and Ana in this dream and finally succeeds in Ann catching up to Tanner. The reality/world and the dream/theatre imitate each other to create a unity.

The audience of *Man and Superman*, who witness this theatrical reality involving a philosophical dream nested in the outer comedy, are likely to undergo the experience as Tanner does. Tanner and Ann spend

the dramatic time of a few days, during which the events, carefully directed by and for Ann, happen bewilderingly to Tanner; this time is precisely dream-like. The drama closes, proposing that Tanner and Ann are leaving the place remote in distance and atmosphere from their daily life in foggy London. Likewise, the audience will step out of the theatre of such an illusory drama composed of a variety of dramatic genres and techniques, and head for home in reality. In their mind, they might wonder if Tanner can pursue his calling, as his so-called ancestor Don Juan is supposed to do in S-Heaven. This is the question the whole play poses to each spectator watching the play in the theatre, who is, at the same time, the actor in his or her own life. Tanner's dream experience equals the spectators' dramatic experience as a reflection of their earthly life.

Beatrice Webb, Shaw's close friend through the Fabian Society, reacted to *Man and Superman* by saying that Shaw had "found his form" (qtd. in Wisenthal 23). The play astonishes its audience and makes them worry, sympathise, and laugh through Shaw's diverse and subversive schemes; these schemes include comedy, philosophy, dream, play-within-a-play, parodic allusions to the literary canon, *commedia dell'arte*, pantomime, epilogue, elaborate stage sets both of the drawing room and outdoor scenes, and the plain stage of nowhere. The play is satisfying as a piece of entertainment; moreover, the technical orchestration of such an illusionary play infuses it with the philosophical message. At the centre of the play, the audience encounter the playwright's embryonic idea of the Superman through the play-within-a-play of contemplation, and recognise it more assuredly when each one of them see in the theatre one character experience—as a spectator and actor—a drama of the Superman which is taught by way of metadrama. *Man and Superman* achieved a method of representation through the brave concoction of dramatic conventions and, by doing so, articulates the significance of theatre and the playwright's philosophy.

Notes

¹ Robert J. Blanch views the Shavian Don Juan as an “anti-Don Juan” because of its introverted personality (158–63); Jean-Claude Amalric specifies three characteristic inversions of its prototype, namely the mythic, religious and moral (103–14); and, according to Carl Henry Mills, Shaw’s Juan is resurrected as a modern hero who assumes a new “raison d’être” of human evolution (216–25).

² Daniel J. Leary seeks to analyse the Hell as Tanner’s unconscious from a Freudian perspective (58–78). Peter Gahan attempts at two readings—the first, a Derridean reading of the Hell as “the home of the presence, the home of ideals and the spoken world,” anticipating writing (26–28), and the second, a Lacanian interpretation that defines the space as the Imaginary from which Juan searches for the Symbolic (196–97). Daniel Dervin applies an alternative psychoanalytical interpretation to explain the interrelationship between the outer part centred on Tanner and the inner one dedicated to Don Juan, which is possible when the latter part can be seen as an invasion of Tanner’s life by the heroine of the outer play, namely Ann Whitefield (261–62). Likewise, Sally Peters Vogt divides the entire play into two, a notional, mythic deep structure of the third act and a romantic-comic surface one combining the other three acts (Bloom 105–23). Like Vogt, J. L. Wisenthal notes that in this hierarchal structure, the revelation about Hell, Earth, and Heaven offered in the subterranean space underlies the comic part in the surface space in the development of the plot (Bloom 107, Wisenthal 24) so that the visionary Hell should not be completely independent from what is happening on Earth.

³ All further citations of *Man and Superman* are followed by page numbers in parentheses. Shaw’s writing is quoted exactly as it appears in the original text, as it is important for the playwright to spell each word according to the pronunciation idiosyncratic to the speaker; elsewhere, I will be consistent with the British English spelling.

⁴ Shaw’s concept of Hell, Earth, and Heaven is subversive, and thus confusing. Therefore, for the purpose of clarifying the discussion, this paper refers to Shaw’s depictions as S-Hell, S-Earth, and S-Heaven.

⁵ For the analogical examination of Tanner and Ann with Adam and Eve, see Yumiko Isobe, “Clothes as Performance: The Possibility of a Superman in *Man and Superman*,” *Kansai English Studies* 4 (2010), pp.17–32.

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