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### **Abstract**

*G.B. Shaw had great interest in women, so, he, very exclusively thrust his full strength in providing them a better place than men in society. Being an image breaker, he broke the old conventions wherein men were called 'hunting' men. He developed a very remarkable term the 'hunting' women in an innovative style as "the huntress". Shaw used the first time the word 'huntress' in the stage direction of *The Philanderer*, and thereafter he used the epithet in his Preface to *Man and Superman*.*

*Shaw found the hunting impulse in great measure in women and observed that only a woman can fulfill the requirements of Life-Force by giving birth to a Superman. Keeping this in view Shaw made his women more super, powerful and intelligent so that they could hunt a man if the need so arose. They would seek a husband to visualize the greatest experience of mating, creating and shaping life. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the concept of Shaw's insight and towards women and Shavian philosophy.*

### **Keywords**

*Huntress, Creative- Evolution theory, Feminine attitude, suitable man, Shavian philosophy.*

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## Introduction

Shaw discarded the Victorian belief that a man proposes a woman for marriage. He replaced it saying that a woman persuades her chosen one to fulfill the purpose of Life-Force. *Man and Superman* present the true picture of the hunting woman described by Tanner (as Don Juan):

The lady who had been happy and idle enough before, became anxious, preoccupied with me, always intriguing, conspiring, pursuing, watching, waiting bent wholly on making sure of her prey: I being the prey, you understand.

Shaw has very intellectually presented the hunting women in his plays – *The Philanderer*, *Man and Superman*, *Misalliance*, *Village Wooing* and *The Millionaires*. *Man and Superman* explain this very instinct very clearly. The woman is determined to hunt the man and the man shows initially his resistance not to be trapped by a woman. However, they realize that an irresistible latent force is employing them as instruments of fulfilling a mission entrusted to them by Nature. Octavius who is in love with Ann Whitefield is told by Tanner:

Fool: It is you who are the pursued, the marked down quarry, the destined prey, you need not sit looking longingly at the bait through the wires of the trap: the door is open and will remain so until it shuts behind you forever.

Tanner further elucidates the purpose of a woman's life to Octavius, when he says:

Why man, what other work has she in life but to get a husband? It is a woman's business to get married as soon as possible, and a man's to keep unmarried as long as he can.

Shaw was familiar with the tolerating power of women and valued her more courageously than a soldier. It is a fact that she takes the risk of her life in bearing the child. No doubt, a woman proves to be a preserver of life and a race generator. Shaw placed women higher than men and formed the Creative- Evolution theory. He discarded the Darwin's theory of Evolution which is different from that of Shaw.

Shaw regarded a woman's chasing instinct as religiously significant and found the fervor of ancient phallic worshippers. Shaw does not approve of the popular belief that regards this impulse as immodest or sex-obsessed, rather they are the holy pilgrims, instead of what H.C. Duffin disparagingly called a 'Spider Female'. The business of the spider or the relation between the spider and the fly has been hinted at in Sydney Grundy's play, *A Pair of Spectacles* written in 1890. Here is a dialogue between Mr. and Mrs. Goldfinch: "Goldfinch: The Spider is hospitable. His web is always open to the fly. / Mrs. Goldfinch: what a comparison.

### **Woman as Huntress**

G.B. Shaw could not remain untouched in dramatizing the role of spider-fly relationships or the hunting role of women in his plays. Shaw's huntress pursues the man to fulfill, nature's purpose entrusted to women. Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman*, Blanche Sartorius in *Widower's House*, Julia Craven in *The Philanderer*, Gloria Clandon in *You Never Can Tell*, and Hypatia Tarleton in *Misalliance* play the role of the huntresses.

Ann Whitefield is really the hunting woman in *Man and Superman*. She truly signifies the meaning of force. She is obstinate, choosy and beautiful and never hesitates in adopting various means of enticing the man. Just to achieve her purpose she can lose even conscience and can become vicious. Her chief intention is to displace the men who are merely "feverish, selfish, little clod of ailments and grievances." In this play she is presented as "Nature's contrivance for perpetuating its achievement."

Shaw's woman characters are totally feminine in their attitude and Ann is called Everywoman by Shaw. Before "Shaw dramatized 'huntress', they were already present in other plays. But they were different in their attitude. Shakespeare's Rosalind is also called a huntress but she is different from Shaw's huntresses. Rosalind shows the call of nature whereas Ann shows the warmth of spontaneity. It is because Shaw's ways are austere and Shakespeare's poetic. Shaw has presented them as sexually impassionate for which they are called 'sexless dolls'. Their minds are broad and sound and as said they exercise reason in their actions. However, they are rebellious-minded. They are never frivolous "Flappers". Shaw has scorned uncultivated sex life, and so are his women who do not smash the meaning of force.

Critics have criticized Shaw for the love scenes devoid of warmth, they appear unnatural. This is due to the austerity. Ann Whitefield has austere and Shavian concept of love. She is constant and strong like an elephant. She throws her arms around Jack Tanner's neck in an immodest way but her latent force is to complete the meaning of Life-Force. Jack Tanner shouts for the firmness of Ann Whitefield:

The Life Force enchants me: I have the whole world in my arms when I clasp you, but I am fighting for my freedom, for my honor, for myself, one and invisible.

Ann was very happy after getting victory over Tanner in entrapping him but Tanner was not happy after being caught. He speaks it last:

What we have both done this afternoon is to renounce happiness, renounce freedom, renounce tranquillity, and above all renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future for the cares of a house of a household and a family.

Blanche Sartorius in *Widower's House* Julia Craven in *The Philanderer* and Gloria Clandon in *You Never Can Tell* play active roles throughout the plays. But Ann Whitefield plays the passive role in *Man and Superman* in the beginning. At the very outset, Ann appears to be very passive. In the beginning she is dependent on her parents. She leaves all the decisions of life to them saying, "My mamma wishes to", or "Papa likes" or "My father's wishes are sacred to me." But John Tanner understands the wishes of Ann i.e. to fulfill the demands of Nature which is Life-Force. Tanner says, "Vitality in a woman is a blind fury of creation." Tanner also knew that she was a woman and a woman concealed her intention until she trapped a man. She was not happy by trapping a man but by fulfilling the Nature's contrivance, to beget a Superman. Don Juan in the Hell scene confesses:

Sexually, woman is Nature's contrivance for perpetuating its highest achievement. Sexually man is a woman's contrivance for fulfilling Nature's behest most economically. She knows by instinct that far back in the evolutionary process she invented him, differentiated him, and created him to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce.

Ann is quite intelligent and her sole aim is to breed a Superman. Ann believed that women in the past were bound by social conditions and in the future they would be so. Their way of entrapping the man would be understood as unfair. So she is determined to fulfill her wish to beget a Superman. Thus, she denied going with the devil or Don Juan to heaven till she had accomplished her duty as ordained by Nature. Shaw felt that man "must be born again and born different – and must be born better", Ann asks:

Ann	:	Tell me where can I find the Superman
The Devil	:	He is not yet created, Senora.
The Statue	:	And never will be, probably, Let us proceed; and red fire will make me sneeze (They descend)
Ann	:	Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done (crossing herself devoutly) I believe in the life to come, (crying to the universe) A father! A Father for the Superman!

Winston remarks that Shaw's cunning and attractive woman disguises her strength as 'womanly defencelessness' and so simple men are 'duped' by such women. But the women of Shaw never feel repentant because her happiness is

superior to any other pleasure and Ann's happiness lies in her purpose that is mentioned in the last colloquy, "A Father, Father for the Superman." Shaw's assumption is aptly suggests that only a woman like Ann can raise life's higher level of consciousness and can suitably create a suitable man. In the words of Morgan:

The play *Man and Superman* whilst destructive of the time-worm and faded figure of the modes heroine progressed beyond Mr. Shaw's earlier work in embodying a very definite philosophy of love.

Ann's assertion that Tanner is a suitable man to hunt proves high. Despite efforts to escape, Tanner is unable to free himself from the clutches of Ann. Finally Ann becomes a Winning Woman. Her victorious tone looks in her statement when Violet calls Tanner a 'brute'. She spreads her arms and speaks, "Never mind her, dear, go on talking". Tanner feels ridiculed by audiences when in the nervousness he slowly utters, "Talking", he feels as if he has been befooled'. Shaw accepted the truth that every woman is not like Ann, but by and large, she acts and behaves like a common woman. It is admitted that Ann is Everywoman. Even though she can behave in an immodest manner, and fulfil her purpose ultimately, she is always successful. This joylessness is also portrayed by Shaw in his plays *Major Barbara* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Ann too appears genius in pursuing her motive in life: "Vitality is as common as humanity; but, like humanity, it sometimes rises to genius; and Ann is one of the vital geniuses." Thus Ann proves here to be a fair huntress like Diana.

Lady Cicely, a leading lady, a boss woman is also a huntress and she resembles Ann in many ways but she is impassionate to marry a man. Her moral is higher than that of Ann. She is Shaw's the most admirable and adorable woman with motherly features. It appears that she is modeled after Ellen Terry who was the beloved of Shaw, an Ideal Lady of Shaw. Lady Cicely exposed the romantic mind of Shaw.

Lady Cicely is polite to the core. She is sympathetic and benevolent even for the sinners too. In the first scene she looks impartial and benevolent when she is told that the natives are dangerous. She answers, 'Why' has any explorer been shooting them?" This view of Lady Cicely expresses that she believes that nobody can harm you if you are not violent. She is endowed with all Shavian qualities and she possesses womanhood, which can be depicted in these lines:

**Lady Cicely:** The important thing, Captain Brassbound is that we should have as few men as possible, because men give such a lot of trouble when traveling, and then they must have good lungs and not be always catching cold. Above all, their clothes must be of good wearing material. Otherwise, I shall be nursing and stitching and mending all the way; and it will be trouble enough, I assure you, to keep them washed and fed without that.

- Brassbound : (Haughtily) My men, madam, are not children in the nursery.
- Lady Cicely : (with answerable conviction) Captain Brassbound: All men are children in the nursery.

Lady Cicely is the mouthpiece of Shaw. He once wrote to Ellan Terry:

. . . No man ever does anything for a woman's sake: from our birth to our death we are women's babies, always wanting something from them, never giving them anything except something to keep for us.<sup>12</sup>

Lady Cicely has the skill of managing people like a teacher technique of a nursery school. She is a courageous lady or the Ideal Woman. Her boldness can be seen in Act II, when a man is wounded. She ties him up "like a blooming or spittle nass." To appreciate correctly the role of Lady Cicely, it is necessary to remember that the play *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* was written in 1899, when every British mind was preoccupied with Africa and the English imperialism. Only in 1897, the Afridi Revolt was ruthlessly suppressed and then came the Boer War. The savage methods adopted by the military power of the 'civilized' British government to discharge 'The Whiteman's burden' clearly disgusted Shaw. The compassionate and liberal attitude of Lady Cicely, according to him, is probably the only remedy for the bloody wars that occasionally smirched the beautiful face of this planet. When the whole country rejoiced over the triumph of brute force in Africa, Shaw presented a fundamentally different point of view. He wanted to show that law and order could be maintained without resorting to violence and the countries could be governed not with tyranny, but sheerly through the simple moral superiority of women.

### **Conclusion**

Shaw had a strong belief that only a woman can fulfill the needs of Life-Force by giving birth to a Superman and that women exhibit a strong hunting instinct. Shaw gave his ladies greater strength, intelligence, and power to prepare them to hunt males if the situation called for it. To visualize the best possible experience of mating, bearing, and forming life, they would look for a husband.

The portrayal of Shaw's hunting women in his plays, *Man and Superman*, *Misalliance*, *Village Wooing*, and *The Millionaires*, has been depicted in a very intelligent manner. This impulse is very thoroughly explained in *Man and Superman*. The male initially expresses his aversion to being captured by a woman, but the woman is determined to pursue him. But they come to understand that they are being used by an unstoppable hidden power to carry out a task that Nature has given them and thus the strengthened women of Shaw played a greater role as huntresses.

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