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sin uppfattning på vissa punkter. Vad gäller stilanalysens möjligheter prövas dessa på Diwandiktningen på annat håll i denna årsskrift.

Till sist kvarstår efter studiet av Bengt Landgrens avhandling känslan av respekt för en allvarligt syftande och högt kompetent forskare som visserligen inte förnyat sin vetenskaps arbetsmetoder men väl tillvaratagit det bästa i en gammal litteraturhistorisk tradition och tillämpat det på nytt och väsentligt stoff. Han har därigenom lagt en fast grund till all vidare vetenskaplig utforskning av Gunnar Ekelöfs författarskap samtidigt som han berikat denna forskning med en rad definitiva och betydelsefulla resultat.

Staffan Bergsten

Ishrat Lindblad: *Creative Evolution and Shaw's Dramatic Art with Special Reference to MAN AND SUPERMAN and BACK TO METHUS-ELAH*. Uppsala University 1971.

Ishrat Lindblad's doctoral dissertation *Creative Evolution and Shaw's Dramatic Art* is the second thesis to be written on a literary theme in the English Department of Uppsala University for the new-style doctorate. The dissertation was publicly examined on April 23rd, 1971. The present writer acted as faculty opponent.

As may be inferred from its title, the subject of the thesis is Shaw's evolutionary theory and its importance for his practice as a playwright. The book is divided into two parts, Part One: "Shavian Background" (pp. 1-36) and Part Two: "Creative Evolution" (pp. 37-119). The first chapter gives some glimpses of the childhood influences on Shaw, and touches on his early admiration for Ibsen and his equally early interest in socialism—his first plays are mainly concerned with social evils such as prostitution and exploitation of the poor. An attempt is also made to draw a line of division between the rather arrogant public image of G. B. S., a legendary fiction created by himself, and the real George Bernard Shaw, a shy, reserved person.

The second chapter discusses Shaw's contributions to dramatic theory. If John Gassner, one of Shaw's critics, is right, it was Shaw himself who contributed the concept "drama of ideas" to dramatic theory (p. 11). Shaw also pointed out that in *A Doll's House*<sup>1</sup> discussion is "one of the innovations of the drama of ideas" (p. 11). Shaw himself made use of discussion in a somewhat similar way for example in *Getting Married*, yet "it is hardly fair to the complexity of Shaw's plays", Mrs Lindblad states, "to describe

them as discussion dramas where nothing happens" (p. 12). Since Shaw did actually to some extent experiment in *Man and Superman* and *Back to Meibuselab*—the two plays singled out for special treatment in the thesis—an analysis of the dramatic structure of these plays would have given added interest to the thesis. Can Act III of *Man and Superman* really be removed with impunity? What dramatic purpose, if any, have the prefaces? And since there are "discrepancies between Shaw's theory and his practice as a dramatist" (p. 12), what can be said in this respect about the two plays? These are some of the questions one would have liked to have an answer to.

Mrs Lindblad discusses two other important aspects of Shaw's drama, "the objective presentation of both points of view" (p. 13), that is Shaw's refusal to take sides with his characters, which has undoubtedly given rise to widely different interpretations of them, and "the conflict of ideals" which arises when an unconventional protagonist rebels against accepted ideals cherished not only by other characters in the play but also by the audience. Ideas about socialism, religion or evolution are brought in "to make a direct onslaught on Victorian ideals, particularly those of family life and sexual morality" (p. 15). Is this perhaps why the Violet-Hector Malone subplot is so conventionally drawn in *Man and Superman*?

Ishrat Lindblad shares the opinion of other critics (e.g. Eric Bentley, Martin Meisel, David Mayer) that the technique of Shaw's plays owes much to traditional forms such as "melodrama, pantomime, and comedy of manners" (p. 18). In fact, in stressing these aspects of Shavian drama the author sometimes—quite unintentionally I am sure—gives the reader the impression that Shaw took more than he gave. Greater stress on the struggle he put up against the decadence of the late nineteenth-century theatre in London would have eliminated this effect.

Chapter III presents a balanced summary of critical opinions on Shaw. Strangely enough, there is so far no "final analysis of the nature of his achievement as a playwright" (p. 23). Ishrat Lindblad sets out to prove that Shaw's belief in creative evolution—a theory not fully explored by any of his former critics—gives his plays an underlying unity. (Since Brecht was one of the very first to point out—in a brief article in 1926—that a theory of evolu-

<sup>1</sup> The correct title in English, not *The Doll's House* as given by I. Lindblad.

tion is central for Shaw, the author could perhaps as a matter of general interest have given a reference to the English translation of Brecht's article published in *Modern Drama*,<sup>2</sup> (Sept. 1959), 184-186.)

In Chapter IV the intricacies of Shaw's evolutionary theory are tackled. The various strands of nineteenth-century thought that went into the making of Shaw's philosophy are dis-entangled.

The embryo of Shaw's philosophic creed is to be found in his atheism. His article "The Perfect Wagnerite" (1895) contains one of his earliest definitions of an impulse in nature upon which creative evolution depends. Shaw called this impulse the "Life Force" (other terms used by him are "the force of life" and "evolutionary appetite"). In Shaw's philosophy, Thought is the original as well as the final form of life. The first evolutionary step was taken when thought entered matter. The Life Force is active, always experimenting with new forms, bringing about change and evolution. Since the Life Force is aiming at philosophers' brains, the importance of the intellect as the means of obtaining knowledge is stressed in Shaw's philosophy. Changes brought about by the Life Force are unpredictable: mankind may even prove to be a mistake. The will to achieve something can, however, bring about its own purpose, for example longevity, as in *Back to Methuselah*, which was intended by Shaw to be "the Bible of Creative Evolution". Shaw rejected Charles Darwin's hypothesis that the species had developed by means of natural selection and the survival of the fittest because this explanation eliminated purpose and design from the evolutionary process. Yet if there are purpose and design, there ought to be no mistakes, but Shaw has an explanation of this also—evil is explained as the result of unintentional mistakes made by the Life Force, which proceeds by the method of trial and error. In the vitalist philosophers such as Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), Samuel Butler (1833-1902) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) Shaw sought justification for his specific brand of creative evolution (pp. 42-43). In his belief in the power of the will to bring about physical and mental modifications Shaw is closest to the vitalists but also influenced by Schopenhauer, Mrs Lindblad claims. (One might have expected to find some reference to William God-

win in the thesis.) Like Lamarck Shaw attributes the origin of evolutionary change to the longing within organisms to adapt to their environment. It might be added that the problem of death is not really dealt with except superficially in Shaw's philosophy: in *Back to Methuselah* the people living for a couple of centuries hide their long life by pretending to have been drowned, and the Ancients meet with their lethal accident, whereas ordinary people die of discouragement.

The question of heredity and the possibility of breeding a super-race are of central significance: in Shavian drama there are often marriages, Mrs Lindblad claims, between a person of unusual intellectual ability and one of remarkable strength. It is sometimes suggested that such marriages, which are brought about by the Life Force, aim at preserving the best in mankind and that they should produce a Superman. Shaw sometimes advocated the idea of a Superman, sometimes denied it, but in any case he did not have in mind "a privileged despotic superman as the saviour of society" (p. 54). C. H. Mills, one of Shaw's numerous critics, has advanced a theory that Shaw's superman is a synthesis of ideas taken from Ibsen, Wagner, Carlyle and Nietzsche. Ishrat Lindblad subscribes to this theory but at the same time she thinks that Shaw did not commit himself to a definite picture of the superman. (One would have liked to hear more about the super-gorillas of *Far-Fetched Fables*. Those atavistic monsters could hardly be taken as anything but a scathing satire by the 93-year-old Shaw on the whole idea of a super-race.)

Shaw's theory of creative evolution also extended to society and morality. Social and moral evolution takes place parallel to the evolution of the species. Since evolution means change, society must evolve. Changes are brought about by exceptional human beings. The interaction between the individual and his environment is a recurring pattern in Shavian drama. Certain of Shaw's heroes and heroines respond to the call of the Life Force, which often manifests itself at moments of crisis. People are finally drawn together as if by an outside force.

The Life Force has two definite purposes, one biological enacted by woman, the other intellectual enacted by man (or sometimes by that rare species, the "unwomanly woman").

Consequently the fourth chapter, which is thematic, is mainly taken up with a depiction of the mother-woman, the duel of sex, and marriage. According to Mrs Lindblad, Shaw makes an onslaught on the prevalent Victorian

<sup>2</sup> "Ovation for Shaw". (Translated by Gerhard H. W. Zuther.) Originally published in *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 25 July, 1926.

ideal of the "womanly woman" at the same time as he puts that ideal to effective use by making the womanly woman the basis of his own special type of mother-woman. Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman* is the most vivid example of the way in which Shaw uses the unscrupulous and predatory, but charming, mother-woman to dramatize the Life Force's efforts to preserve, generate and improve the species. The female principle is equated with instinctive behaviour and the male principle with rational behaviour. This difference results in the duel of sex, the duel between the pursuer and the pursued. In the conflict between the sexes woman is pursuing and predatory, man is the fugitive, the prey who wants to escape, although the Life Force impels him to surrender to the mother-woman, who wants a father for her children. On the other hand Mrs Lindblad states that she has not found any convincing portrayal of a mother in Shaw's plays. (Perhaps this is due to the fact that Shaw describes the conflict between the sexes, not really the state of motherhood itself.) Nevertheless Shaw himself wrote in a letter to Ellen Terry, who wanted him to write a mother-play, that he had already written *Candida*, "the Mother Play", a masterpiece which he could not repeat.

The general vagueness of the concept of the Superman indicates that Shaw did not ultimately give woman the primary role as the agent of evolution, Ishrat Lindblad claims. On the other hand Shaw assigns two roles to woman, one biological, one intellectual, the former enacted by the mother-woman, the second by the new woman, the "unwomanly woman", who is equated with the male realist and endowed with "qualities of leadership, rationality, clear-sightedness, unconventionality, and dedication to the philosophic purposes of the Life Force" (p. 84). Saint Joan is "the outstanding example" (p. 84) of this type of woman in Shavian drama. A closer examination of Saint Joan and her role in Shaw's philosophical system would be well worth while.

In the final chapter, which is chronological, the Shavian hero, the man of genius, is pictured as the philosophical agent of the Life Force. Mrs Lindblad argues that the same basic type, a man of exceptional realistic vision, whether he be called realist, puritan, diabolonian, vitalist, artist-philosopher, artist-prophet, or given some other label, is portrayed by Shaw as the intellectual agent of the Life Force. It is "by virtue of his superior intellect" (p. 87) that he fulfils his purpose of serving the Life Force. The Shavian protagonist is easily re-

cognizable because of his special qualities: he "shuns romantic illusion, values intellectual powers over all others, is unconventional and unafraid and is prepared to devote all his energies to obeying the dictates of the Life Force as he perceives them" (p. 91).

Mrs Lindblad shows in her thesis that the creation of the Tanner-Don Juan character is foreshadowed in earlier plays. The chief part of the fifth chapter is taken up with a discussion of characters in *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah*, but characters in plays previous to and after these two plays are also dealt with. Thus a cross-section of Shaw's picture gallery of types and characters that can at all qualify as agents of the Life Force is given. It is only in his dream life as Don Juan that Tanner himself can be said to live up to the true Shavian ideal. It seems in fact that Don Juan is the only male character fully to qualify as a perfect spokesman of Shaw's religion. Sometimes the Shavian protagonist is only a potential realist, sometimes a false realist who even turns out to be an idealist, the worst sort according to Shaw since he obstructs evolution. Perhaps the ambivalence of Shaw's characterisation is due to the fact that, unlike *Man and Superman*, *Back to Methuselah*, and *Saint Joan*, the majority of his plays were not written with the express purpose of dramatizing evolutionary theories?

In *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw's "metabiological pentateuch", "there is an emphasis on the way in which intellect and will are the two characteristics that the Life Force requires to help it, and which may prevent mankind from utter disaster" (p. 103). The duel of sex loses its significance in *Back to Methuselah*. The 700-year-old He and She Ancients are superior to all kinds of humanity that preceded them, and though they are bisexual, sex has no function in their life. The figure of Lilith on the other hand has the biological life-giving function of woman, but she is not human—she is the incarnation of the Life Force waiting to see what mankind may achieve.

Ishrat Lindblad has, I think, shown that the theory of creative evolution was a powerful force in Shaw's drama affecting the shaping of types and characters as well as the choice of a central situation.

It remains for me to say a few words on some of the pronouncements made in the thesis on Bergson, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Mrs Lindblad begins cautiously by stating that "Shaw's indebtedness to Bergson is difficult to determine, as he uses the term "Life Force" as early as *Man and Superman* (1901-1903),

four years before Bergson published *L'Évolution Créatrice* in French (1907), and eight years before its translation into English. However, once he made the acquaintance of Bergson's philosophy, he freely acknowledged his agreement with and debt to him" (p. 44). Are we to deduce from this that Shaw knew nothing about Bergson's philosophy until the appearance of *L'Évolution Créatrice* (for Shaw read French easily)? Yet there are many channels through which Shaw could have learnt about Bergson's theories before 1907. Not only did Bergson spend long periods in England; he was a famous professor, whose doctoral thesis *Les Données Immédiates* (1889) was epoch-making and contained in embryo most of the theories developed in his later works. *Matière et Mémoire* was published in 1896, *Le Rire* in 1900, *Le Rêve* in 1901, and a great many of his lectures were published in learned journals. He had many outstanding pupils. Proust was a promoter of Bergson's philosophy. It is true that Shaw's term "Life Force" precedes Bergson's *élan vital*, but this is no proof in itself, for Bergson's terminology is more complex than Shaw's. Certainly Bergson used the term *force vitale* before coining his famous *élan vital*. His belief in a vital force of the soul was expressed years before the publication of *L'Évolution Créatrice*, which is nevertheless his most influential work. *Force*, or *power*, was a word used by many philosophers before Bergson. Moreover it was used by scientists as well. The famous French naturalist Georges Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707-1788) speaks of *une force primitive* existing within organisms as the generating power in nature. In his Preface to *Back to Methuselah* Shaw acknowledges his debt to Buffon (a name which is missing in Mrs Lindblad's thesis). Apart from everything

else it may even have been Nietzsche's terminology that inspired Shaw's term, for in the Nietzsche passage in Act III of *Man and Superman* Nietzsche is called "a confirmed Life Force worshipper".<sup>3</sup> Yet perhaps after all "Life Force" is Shaw's own personal contribution to evolutionary terminology.

Mrs Lindblad does not say anything of the first appearance of the term "creative evolution" in Shaw, that is when he added the adjective to the noun. It might however be stated with some certainty that it was not until after the publication of *L'Évolution Créatrice* that Shaw—at least in his terminology—distinguished between "creative evolution" and evolution. This brings us to Darwin and the question of *when* Shaw rejected Darwin's theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Mrs Lindblad has only barely touched upon this problem in her thesis (p. 42).

As for the Shaw-Nietzsche relationship it does not seem to me to be satisfactorily dealt with. Mrs Lindblad quotes three passages<sup>4</sup> from Shaw (p. 55) which seem to prove that Shaw—apart from borrowing the "word Superman (Übermensch)"—was too critical of Nietzsche to have been much influenced by him. Even if we may take Shaw at his word that he had not read Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* in 1891, this would prove only that he was uninfluenced by Nietzsche when writing *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. He could have read about Nietzsche at least as early as 1892 when a review of the German edition of the philosopher's work was published in *La Revue Blanche*.<sup>5</sup> He must certainly have known of Henri's article "Nietzsche et Georges Brandes", published in *Mercure de France*, 10 (1894), 70-76, a journal which Shaw read. By 1895 at the latest he must have been thoroughly familiar with Nietzsche's theories, for in that year he reviewed (and Shaw was a professional reviewer) Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1894) in a long essay published for *Tucker's Magazine*, an essay reprinted in a revised form under the title "The Sanity of Art" in *Major Critical Essays*.<sup>6</sup> One of the numerous writers held up as degenerate by Nordau was Nietzsche, yet Shaw had no sympathy for Nordau's "message to the world" that "all our characteristically modern works of art are symptoms of disease in the artists".<sup>7</sup> Shaw's criticism was based on other grounds. Apart from a review of Nietzsche in 1896,<sup>8</sup> Shaw also reviewed the English translations of *A Genealogy of Morals*, *and Poems*, and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in 1899.<sup>9</sup>

The quotations given by Ishrat Lindblad (p.

<sup>3</sup> G. B. Shaw, *Man and Superman* (Penguin), p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs Lindblad's first quotation should begin, "... just as it is assumed ..."

<sup>5</sup> Albert Henri, "Les Oeuvres complètes de Nietzsche", *La Revue Blanche*, 7 (1894), 449-452.

<sup>6</sup> Constable, London, 1948 [1932] pp. 291-332.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>8</sup> "Nietzsche in English", *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, II, Constable, London, 1948 [1932], pp. 92-98.

<sup>9</sup> "Giving the Devil his Due", *Pen Portraits and Reviews*, Constable, London, 1949 [1932], pp. 217-220.

55) convey the impression that Shaw always spoke disparagingly of Nietzsche. In fact, he seems to have been both repelled and attracted by him, but he definitely felt, as he stated, "on common ground with Nietzsche" in the latter's "criticism of morality and idealism" which "is essentially that demonstrated in my book [*The Quintessence of Ibsenism*] as at the bottom of Ibsen's plays".<sup>1</sup> Later in the same review he writes: "*Schopenhauer and Nietzsche belong as inevitably to the critic's library* [my italics] as Goethe and Wagner".<sup>2</sup> His attitude towards Nietzsche is not static. He seems to become more and more critical of him, particularly after having been charged with sharing Nietzsche's conception of the Superman when after all he had his own as expressed for example in "The Revolutionist's Handbook": "Until there is an England in which every man is a Cromwell, a France in which every man is a Napoleon, a Rome in which every man is a Caesar, a Germany in which every man is a Luther plus a Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the pyramid of Cheops." One might perhaps add "until every man in Ireland, or in the world, is a Shaw".

The problems involved in an investigation of Shaw's evolutionary theories as expounded in his drama are numerous, and Ishrat Lindblad has written a stimulating book. Sometimes as in the incredibly complicated sentence relating to Schopenhauer, Ibsen, Shaw and the will (p. 47, ll. 11-17) she has packed so much into one sentence that it becomes all but incomprehensible. However this is an exception, for on the whole she writes well and is to be congratulated on a good piece of work which can be taken as a starting point for further research.

*Birgit Bramsbäck*

Peter Cassirer: *Deskriptiv stilistik. En begrepps- och metoddiskussion*. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Nordistica Gothoburgensia 4. Gbg 1970.

Peter Cassirer: *Stilen i Hjalmar Söderbergs »Historietter»*. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Nordistica Gothoburgensia 5. Gbg 1970.

Peter Cassirers båda ovannämnda arbeten hänger nära samman med varandra. Det förra utgjorde i en stencilrad version underlag vid författarens disputation för filosofie doktorsexamen våren 1970. I inledningen där anger han som sitt ursprungliga syfte »att beskriva stilen i Hjalmar Söderbergs Historietter» (7). Emel-

lertid kom därmed problematiken i själva stilbegreppet att aktualiseras — till den grad att diskussionen av detta begrepp växte ut till en särskild bok. *Deskriptiv stilistik* är alltså att betrakta som en starkt utvidgad principiell och metodisk introduktion till *Stilen i Hjalmar Söderbergs »Historietter»*.

Situationen förefaller ganska typisk för stilforskningens till synes kroniska svårighet: att definiera och avgränsa begreppet stil. Nyligen har en forskare i USA, Bennison Gray, i ett arbete med den löftesrika titeln *Style. The Problem and Its Solution* (Mouton. The Hague, Paris 1969) gått ända därefter att hon resolut kastar det litterära stilbegreppet överbord som irrelevant och överflödigt. Detta begrepp sägs inom sin sfär ha spelat och alltjämt spela samma roll som den hypotetiska substansen eter inom den klassiska fysiken. Och liksom eter till sist år 1881 experimentellt kunde visas sakna existens (109), står nu enligt Gray det flertusenåriga begreppet stil i tur att röna samma öde. Det finns här ingen möjlighet att dröja vid hennes energiska argumentering. Men den är en utmaning som knappast kommer att kunna nonchaleras av dem som framdeles önskar tala om stil och kalla sig stilforskare.

Så radikal som Bennison Gray är givetvis inte Peter Cassirer; ifall han hade varit det skulle hans böcker ha burit andra titlar. *Deskriptiv stilistik* utgör på det hela taget en vederhäftig kritisk genomgång av en rad väsentliga problemställningar inom den aktuella stilforskningen. Denna diskussion har sin allmänna bakgrund i den definition av stil som författaren presenterar redan i sin inledning: »Stil skulle således beteckna ett förhållande mellan de aspekter på (eller sidor av, eller konstitutiva element i) en text som kan betecknas som innehåll och form» (8). Det ligger inget överraskande i denna definition; den torde kunna accepteras av praktiskt taget alla moderna stilforskare. Som Cassirer själv påpekar finns den snarlikt formulerad i en uppsats av Heymann Steinthal redan 1866: »Während also die Grammatik die Sprache an sich betrachtet, als reine Form /.../: hat die Stylllehre dieselbe in ihrer Anwendung zum Gegenstand, insofern es sich fragt, wie diese Form den Inhalt darstellt» (73). Denna tes om stil som relationen mellan form och innehåll — och följaktligen om stilistiken som ett studium av denna relation — kan synas självklart riktig som teoretisk utgångspunkt. Det visar sig emellertid att den

<sup>1</sup> *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, II, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.