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January 2001

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Recommended Citation

Julie A. Sparks. "Cavemen in Eden? Bernard Shaw and Mark Twain Offer Radical Revisions of Genesis"
SHAW: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies (2001): 107-132.

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Julie A. Sparks

CAVEMEN IN EDEN?
BERNARD SHAW AND
MARK TWAIN OFFER RADICAL
REVISIONS OF *GENESIS*

When the Kansas Board of Education startled mainstream America in the summer of 1999 by dropping Darwin's theory of evolution from the required state science curricula, the prospect of a new Scopes trial began to seem possible in the twenty-first century. This apparent resurgence of "Creation Science" has inspired fundamentalists with the hope of a return to Genesis as the official story of humanity's origin, even as Darwin's defenders redouble their efforts to keep evolution in the classrooms.¹ In 1923, two years before the original Scopes trial, Shaw depicted a similar ideological struggle between Genesis and evolution in *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas*, the second play of his "metabiological pentateuch," *Back to Methuselah*. In the play, a scheming Liberal politician exultantly describes his plan to pull in both conservative and nonconformist voters with an explanation of evolution that seems effortlessly to reconcile the religious and the scientific factions by treating their stories as essentially equivalent, as simply different ways of explaining the same facts: "You take your school children, your Bible class . . . into the museum. You shew the kids the Piltdown skull; and you say, 'That's Adam. That's Eve's husband.' You take the spectacled science student from the laboratory in Owens College; and when he asks you for a truly scientific history of Evolution, you put into his hand *The Pilgrim's Progress*."² Although it sounds like a silly, shallow subterfuge in the mouth of the politician, the effort to reconcile the scientific explanation of humanity's origin with the religious myth has provided an irresistible temptation ever since those disturbing fossils from prehistory were first unearthed, not only for public figures seeking to look both orthodox and modern, but also for writers seeking to understand and express the zeitgeist of their time.

Shaw himself appropriates and freely modifies the story of Eden, both in the lengthy preface and in the play cycle itself, to illustrate his favored Lamarckian version of evolution, which emphasizes the role of Will as the driving force of change, both in the individual and the species. By replacing a divine Creator with a creative force, called the Life Force, Shaw seeks to counter the depressingly mechanistic version of evolutionary theory that he calls “Neo-Darwinism,” which emphasizes the role of accidental mutation as the force for change in “circumstantial selection.” Similarly, by depicting Adam, Eve, and the first generations of their descendants as “cavemen,” Shaw challenges religious fundamentalists to accept the fact that the human soul, like the human body and human civilization, is on a developmental trajectory: nothing was created in its perfect, finished state in Eden.

Shaw’s use of the Eden motif may seem quaint and old-fashioned at the dawn of the twenty-first century, but the originality of his reinterpretation becomes more impressive when compared to similar attempts by his contemporaries who also tried to forge some sort of synthesis of Genesis and Darwin that would preserve a basically Judeo-Christian teleology while acknowledging the scientific discoveries which suggested that humankind did not spring fully formed from the fertile mud of Eden. Here I would like to discuss Shaw’s pentateuch in relation to some relevant works of one such writer—Mark Twain—who wrestled with this problem just as Shaw did, and who produced heretical visions of a post-Darwinian Eden that may have influenced Shaw’s work. Although neither Shaw nor Twain has ever been taken seriously as a popularizer of science or as a theologian, both were influential heresiarchs whose unorthodox revisions of the Genesis myth stake out opposing poles on the heresy spectrum. Although both took an iconoclastic view of conventional Christianity, and both incorporated elements of Darwinism into their versions of the ancient biblical creation story, the two writers arrive at radically different philosophical conclusions about human origins and destiny. Twain was a deist and a pessimistic “evolutionary determinist”; Shaw was a mystic and an optimistic Creative Evolutionist. Put another way, Twain, despite his eventual acceptance of modern evolutionary theory, conceived his versions of the Eden story when he still felt God to be a person, omnipotent but not benevolent, whereas Shaw wrote his “gospel of Creative Evolution” to show that God is an impersonal force, ultimately benevolent but as yet merely blind and infantile, struggling through the evolutionary method of trial and error to produce a race of omnipotent and omniscient beings. Although some of Shaw’s religious writings—and much of Twain’s—were considered too sacrilegious to be published in their own day, the continuing debate on the hard questions they tackled gives their debate currency today as more than simply a matter of intellectual history.

Twain's Early Influence on Shaw's Religious Attitudes

Shaw himself dates the influence of Twain's religious writing on his thinking from the late 1860s. In a speech about the relationship between religious convictions and political activism that he delivered to the Progressive League in 1909, Shaw reports that as a boy listening to his scandalous maternal uncle theorize that the so-called miracle of Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead was really "a put-up job," the young Shaw was delighted by his uncle's irreverence, and he preferred the uncle's theory to the two more proper ones offered by his uncle's pious guests. Furthermore, Shaw defends that preference in retrospect because

that was the natural and healthy side for a growing boy to take, because my maternal uncle's view appealed to the sense of humor, which is a very good thing and a very human thing, whereas the other two views—one appealing to our mere credulity and the other to mere scepticism—really did not appeal to anything at all that had any genuine religious value. . . . I think you will see that there was a certain promise of salvation in the fact that at that time one of the most popular writers on Bible subjects was Mark Twain, and Mark Twain mostly made fun of them.³

We can only guess which of those early works of Twain's Shaw might have read, but one passage from Twain's novel *Innocents Abroad* seems relevant. In reporting his response to his first visit to "Adam's tomb," Twain's mock rhapsodic tone is a daring parody of his more earnest contemporaries, such as William C. Prime, who had written *Tent Life in the Holy Land* a few years earlier. Twain's passage reads as follows:

The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far away from home, and friends, and all who cared for me, thus to discover the grave of a blood relation. True, a distant one, but still a relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depth, and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dead relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close to this volume here, for he will find little of his taste in my journeyings through the Holy Land. (from chapter 53)⁴

Another of Twain's whimsical early references to Adam might have planted an idea in Shaw's mind that influenced his own depiction of that "ancestor" in *Methuselah*. In 1883, Twain remarked in a speech to the Royal Literary and Scientific Society Dinner in Ottawa that to Adam "we owe the two things which are most precious—life, and death. Life, which the young, the hopeful, the undefeated hold above all wealth and honors; and death, the refuge, the solace, the best and kindest and most prized friend and benefactor of the erring, the forsaken, the old, and weary, and broken of heart, whose burdens be heavy upon them, and who would lie down and be at rest."⁵ Shaw's Adam expresses a similar enthusiasm for death as a blessed relief, and in *Methuselah* Shaw presents death as a useful evolutionary development for the species as a whole (though he differs from Twain in being able to imagine a far-future humanity that is strong enough to "accept the burden of immortality," but more on that later.)

Although it seems quite possible that Shaw might have encountered *Innocents Abroad* sometime between its initial publication in 1869 and the date of his religious speech quoted above (1906), it is tempting to think that through a paranormal process Twain called "mental telepathy,"⁶ he might have been influenced also by Twain's unpublished fictional treatment of biblical ideas and motifs that were even more relevant to *Methuselah*, as Twain worked on this material for nearly forty years, between the late 1860s and the last years of his life.⁷ In any case, the similarities offer further evidence that the two writers were thinking along the same lines, though they arrived at different positions. Two of the most relevant are passages from the diaries of Methuselah and Shem which, like Shaw's pentateuch, play with the idea of the extreme longevity of biblical characters and use the biblical canvas for "a wide-ranging satire of contemporary events."⁸ Baetzholt and McCullough report that these diary entries "are all that remain of a much larger project that Mark Twain conceived in the late 1860s" (91). The project is first mentioned in Twain's notebook in July of 1866, and by 1869 "his enthusiasm for the project led him to plan a full-length book," which Twain promised his publisher would be "a perfect lightning-striker when it is done" (91). One idea for the character of Methuselah that Twain considered was to show how his adoption of "scientific religion" would "weaken his traditional faith until he became 'a regular free-thinker'" (95).

Twain toyed with the idea of a satirical work based on the Flood for more than forty years, but he completed only a few chapters' worth, and in these fragments Twain pursues concerns more immediately relevant to Americans than to Irishmen, for example, the cruelty of slavery and the ongoing war against Native Americans. Nevertheless, some passages seem to presage concerns that Shaw would treat in much greater depth in *Methuselah*, particularly the exaggerated "generation gap" that could be

expected if extreme longevity were more common (either in the biblical past or the utopian future). For Shaw, this “gap” in understanding and sympathy between the generations demonstrated the prodigious increase in wisdom and moral development that could be hoped for in a “long-liver.” For Twain, the “generation gap” is emphasized merely for the fun of exaggerating the strife that already exists among generations of people with normal life spans. For example, Shem’s diary begins with a complaint that “Methuselah was as free with his criticisms as usual, and as voluble. And familiar. Which I and my brothers do not like; for we are past our hundredth year and married. He still calls me Shemmy, just as he did when I was a child of sixty. I am still but a youth, it is true, but youth has its feelings. . . . The way he acts, one would think there was no valuable commodity in this world but age, and that he possessed a monopoly of it” (107).

This lament is all the more ironic because Methuselah’s diary (written when he was in his sixties) had recorded a similar complaint of Methuselah’s elder, Jebel. “How tiresome these people be, soured and toothless and old, that go on living for no end, it seemeth, but to keep flinging in one’s face the over-rated marvels of an age that is forgot and that none regret but they themselves” (99). Although Twain makes these elders sound more like Swift’s Struldbrugs—enfeebled but not enlightened by age—than like Shaw’s superior, ageless Ancients, the strife between the generations is certainly a key theme in Shaw’s pentateuch.

Another early example of Twain’s satirical biblical writings that Shaw might have encountered was printed in 1879, eight years after *The Descent of Man* was published. Twain jokingly proposed to erect a public monument in Elmira, New York, to preserve his reputation from the encroachment of the Darwinians, and he was surprised to find such broad public support for the idea that he was pressured actually to send a petition to Congress. Writing about the incident later, Twain reported that

Mr. Darwin’s *Descent of Man* had been in print five or six years, and the storm of indignation raised by it was still raging in pulpits and periodicals. In tracing the genesis of the human race back to its sources, Mr. Darwin had left Adam out altogether. We had monkeys, and “missing links,” and plenty of other kinds of ancestors, but no Adam. . . . I said there seemed to be a likelihood that the world would discard Adam and accept the monkey, and that in the course of time Adam’s very name would be forgotten in the earth; therefore this calamity ought to be averted; a monument would accomplish this.⁹

Although Twain claims that his proposal “started as a joke,” the frequency with which Adam, Eve, and the Garden appear in his works would suggest

that, like the other pious citizens who signed his petition, Twain, too, might have felt some of anxiety—or at least distaste—about the possibility that the traditional story might be eclipsed with a less flattering version of humanity’s origins.

Twain’s Religious Quandary: A Skeptic’s Progress

In his book about Twain’s use of biblical themes and figures, Allison Ensor points out that throughout his career Twain returned continually to the story of Adam and Eve, and claims that “surely no other American author has ever thought and written so much about them.”¹⁰ Twain’s preoccupation with the idea of Eden is in a sense ironic, as he eventually comes to see the story as (according to Ensor) “patently absurd,” denouncing it in his *Reflections* as something so “malign and childish” that it “must have been invented in a pirate’s nursery.”¹¹ Nevertheless, one of the things that makes Twain’s treatments of biblical themes so interesting is that they reflect his vacillations of belief as he moved from the strict Calvinistic orthodoxy of his youth, through a deistic period after his encounter with Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason*, to a brief period of evangelical Christianity (when he was courting the devout Olivia Langdon, whom he married in 1870), to a final stage of pessimistic, post-Darwinian evolutionary determinism that overtook him in the last decades of his life.¹² As Sherwood Cummings explains in his book *Mark Twain and Science, Adventures of a Mind*, these four stages were neither distinct nor final: “Intellectually, Clemens progressed from one level to the next, but he could not really rid himself of certain ideas once held dear. The biblical story of creation and of Adam and Eve and Eden, for example, continued to engage him even though he came to accept the scientific explanation of geological and biological development. In his old age he could think just as easily in terms of the biblical account of creation as in terms of the scientific view” (16).

Cummings reports that when Twain was emerging from his brief (though sincere) evangelical phase around 1871, he studied the newly published *Descent of Man* with great attention, filling the margins with copious notes that included definitions for technical terms and examples from Twain’s own observations of animals that helped support Darwin’s conclusions. Twain expressed some of his early skepticism about the conclusions of paleontology with a delightfully witty pair of lectures, “A Brace of Brief Lectures on Science,” published in September and October 1871, and a satirical short story, “Some Learned Fables for Good Old Boys and Girls” (1875), but eventually he had to accept Darwin’s explanation of

human origins, at least at some level. Nevertheless, Cummings asserts that Twain accepted these new ideas only with reluctance, and his nostalgia for the older story of Eden repeatedly sent him back to Genesis for artistic material. Cummings concludes that although Twain

is not generally thought of as troubled by the popular debate about the origin of man, perhaps because he did not publicly join in it and because, as an iconoclast and an admirer of Robert Ingersoll, he would be expected to be on the side of evolution. But evidence can be assembled to indicate that at *one* level of his thinking, at any rate, he was classically troubled, even in his old age, over the choice between Genesis and Darwin. . . . his reactions to [Darwinian ideas] ranged from flippancy through sober uneasiness to resigned acceptance (32–33).

Part of Twain's inconsistent ideas of the Creation is due to his shifting concept of the Creator. In his book *Mark Twain: Rebel Pilgrim*, J. Harold Smith explains that Twain "rejects the Jehovah-God of the Bible and sets up his 'real' God of nature, but he never can divorce his thinking about God from the concept basic to his knowledge of the Bible and to the teachings common to the Christian doctrine. He relegates God to the position of remote unconcern with humanity, and yet he is crying out continually against what he considers God's merciless injustice."¹³ Smith represents this paradoxical view as "deistic evolutionary determinism": it is deistic in its conception of God as a "Great Machinist" who created the vast mechanism of the "cosmic phenomena" that make up our universe yet who "takes no personal and direct interest in the lives of men"; it is evolutionary in its acceptance of evolution "as the basic process undergirding the developmental stages of the sundry forms of life," and it is deterministic in its assumption that "in the primal atom were contained all the germinal elements that have established a causatively sequential pattern which inevitably determines the whole order of existence."¹⁴

Twain's *What is Man?* (1906), the strange, dogmatic little treatise phrased as a Socratic dialogue, is usually held to be the most definitive statement of this creed, but a more succinct expression of it can be found in an essay Twain wrote in the last year of his life. Here, again, Twain returns to the story of Adam and Eve to express his views of humanity's ultimate position in the grand scheme of things:

Necessarily the scene of the real turning-point of my life (and of yours) was the Garden of Eden. It was there that the first link was forged of the chain that was ultimately to lead to the emptying of me into the literary guild. Adam's *temperament* was the first com-

mand the Deity ever issued to a human being on this planet. And it was the only command Adam would *never* be able to disobey. It said, “Be weak, be water, be characterless, be cheaply persuadable.” The later command, to let the fruit alone, was certain to be disobeyed. Not by Adam himself, but by his *temperament*. . . . For the *temperament* is the man. . . . I can not help feeling disappointed in Adam and Eve. That is, in their temperaments. Not in them, poor helpless young creatures. . . . What I cannot help wishing is that Adam and Eve had been postponed, and Martin Luther and Joan of Arc put in their place. . . . By neither sugary persuasions nor by hell fire could Satan have beguiled *them* to eat the apple.¹⁵

There is a poignant *cri de coeur* between the lines of this apparently whimsical passage, but when Twain writes his version of the Genesis story for a public audience in an earlier period of his career, he manages to suggest the essential innocence of Adam and Eve without indicting God for punishing their inevitable Fall. But more on that below.

Shaw's Early Attempts to Reconcile Mysticism and Science

While Twain wrestled with his conflicting impulses toward a reverence for the faith of his fathers and a constitutional bent toward skepticism, Shaw, twenty-one years his junior, is famous for having easily shelved Genesis with the other lovely but mythical stories of previous generations and embraced Evolution as the modern creed. He reports bluntly in the beginning of the preface to *Methuselah* that by the late 1870s “I had discarded the religion of my forefathers” and taken to defending “modern thought and Darwin” against the thoughtless dogmatism of the previous generation (represented in one instance by a strictly conventional Protestant uncle and in another by Father Addis, a Catholic priest). However, closer examination of Shaw's religious writing during this period reveals that he felt some of the same anxiety over the transition from Genesis to *The Descent of Man* that Twain suffered. As Charles Berst points out in his excellent article about the development of Shaw's spiritual ideas, “In the Beginning: The Poetic Genesis of Shaw's God,” even in relating the Father Addis incident (wherein Shaw contrasts the “robust callousness” of his own declaration that he doesn't need to believe in a Maker with the priest's sincere anguish at the prospect of an empty Heaven), Shaw reveals his own ambivalence.¹⁶ Berst points out that although Shaw claims he was quite

ready to discard the “Jehovah-bogey” that the priest clung to, there is some of the priest’s longing for a deity in Shaw’s insistence (in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*) that “the world, our corner of the universe, did not look like a pure accident: it presented evidences of design in every direction. There was mind and purpose behind it” (Shaw xxxii; Berst 17).

To help explain this apparent ambivalence, Berst points to certain lines in a little-known, unfinished “Passion Play” that Shaw wrote during this period (1878), which expresses Shaw’s conflicting feelings about the old and the new conceptions: the Maker and the Life Force. In the play fragment, Shaw’s callous skepticism is expressed by a young Judas Iscariot, while his wistful, mystical sensibilities are expressed by a young Jesus. Berst concludes that Judas “exemplifies an argument of the mature Shaw when he privately admits that without Faith he is anchorless,” while “Jesus reflects Shaw in his limited belief and his recognition that ‘The God of Scripture is a gloomy tyrant.’” Furthermore, in his antipathy to Judas’s atheistic materialism “Jesus anticipates the older Shaw; like Shaw, he is repulsed by the mindlessness of such ideas as natural selection.” Berst claims that Jesus speaks for Shaw when he says, “I could not face / A stony blank of vegetable life / Preying upon itself”: so Jesus supposes “A grand, ineffable, benevolent Power” just as Shaw hypothesizes a Life Force.¹⁷ Of course, Shaw’s “Passion Play” was too heretical to be published when it was written (it was finally published in 1971). Nevertheless, it would have undoubtedly interested Mark Twain during this time, for Twain, too, was taking liberties with biblical characters in this period, working and reworking the manuscripts, and publishing what was acceptable while suppressing what was too sacrilegious. Among these works, the ones most relevant to Shaw’s *Methuselah* are set in a post-Darwinian Eden.

Twain’s Diaries of Adam and Eve

Twain’s first extended treatment of the Eden myth, “Extracts from Adam’s Diary,” was written in 1892 and revised for publication in *Harper’s Monthly* in April 1901, the same year that Shaw began working on what he later called his first gospel of Creative Evolution, *Man and Superman*.¹⁸ This early working out of Twain’s ideas about the Eden story is lighthearted and relatively conventional in its depiction of the Fall, though Twain introduces one prehistoric animal (the mastodon) into the Garden and dresses Adam and Eve in animal skins (like cavemen) almost immediately after the Fall. Twain does offer an interesting suggestion that contrasts with the conventional interpretation of Genesis while harmonizing with Shaw’s: in Twain’s Eden,

the animals seem to have been designed for a postlapsarian world (just as the humans in Shaw's Garden come equipped with a reproductive system), and Twain's Eve, like Shaw's, arrives at the conviction that the changes that are traditionally seen as penalties for the "Fall"—death, birth, work—are necessary elements of this plan, which justifies her eating the fruit to inaugurate the new epoch in human destiny. Furthermore, Twain's Adam, like Shaw's, is more conservative than his wife and argues with her to keep things as they are. As one critic points out, "She is rebellious, adventurous, and independent; he does not question authority. She is the innocent troublemaker. Her loving anarchism ruins his mindless, self-sufficient, authoritarian Eden—and saves him from it."¹⁹

In Twain's Eden, this conflict between the first couple arises when Eve notices that although the lions and tigers are living on grass and flowers, "the sort of teeth they wear would indicate that they were intended to eat each other." Similarly, the buzzard suffers from such indigestion on its diet of grass that Eve deduces that it was designed to eat something else, and she guesses that it is decayed flesh. Adam declares this theory to be foolish, because in order for these animals to eat flesh, they would have to kill, "and that would introduce what, as I understand it, is called 'death'; and death, as I have been told, has not yet entered the Garden."²⁰ Naturally enough, this argument continues over the question of eating the forbidden fruit. When the snake advises Eve to dare it, Adam tries to dissuade her. Although Adam doesn't deny that "the result will be a fine and noble education," he warns her that it would also bring death into the world. This strikes Eve as an advantage, as it will "save the sick buzzard, and furnish meat to the despondent lions and tigers" (11). Predictably, Eve proceeds with her plan, the animals turn carnivorous, and the human pair are exiled. Adam eats some of the fruit because food is not as plentiful outside the Garden and his hunger overcomes his principles. The pair resign themselves to wearing clothes and working for a living. The rest of the sketch is a comic account of the first parents' confusion over the first babies (which they don't recognize as human) and Adam's growing affection for Eve. Adam finally concludes that "it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her" (16). All things considered, it is a very optimistic (if sentimental) look at the first human family.

We have no way of knowing whether Shaw might have encountered Twain's first sketch of Eden when it appeared in *Harper's Magazine* in 1901, but it seems possible, since he had been aware of and admired the great American's work since his boyhood. In any case, it is tempting to think that Shaw might have been influenced by Twain's portrait of Eve in his conception of Ann Whitefield, who took shape in Shaw's imagination during this period. The idea of Eve as an assertive "New Woman" is even more prominent in Twain's next treatment of the Eden myth, "The Autobiog-

raphy of Eve" (written in 1901–2). One critic pointed out that Twain's Eve was conceived during "a time of revolutionary inquiry into gender roles," and that a model of the "New Woman" was "precisely the robust and joyously competent Eve that Mark Twain gives us."²¹ Nevertheless, this sketch continues in the sentimental vein of the first, providing more details about how Eve searches for and then woos Adam (displaying almost as much tenacity as Ann does in her pursuit of Tanner). However, in this version of Eden, the effects of Twain's study of Darwin are much more pronounced than in the earlier sketch, which seems to indicate that despite the light, humorous tone, this work demonstrates that Twain's view of humanity's origins and destiny were in transition from a conventional Judeo-Christian stance to a modern scientific one, which brings him more in harmony with Shaw's worldview. Speaking of this period in Twain's work, Cummings notes that "[i]n these late fantasies there is a playful attempt to reconcile the apprehensions of science and myth," and that Twain "appears to have embraced the implications of the new science with a vengeance."²²

One effect of Twain's scientific study during this period is that his second extended portrayal of Eden takes on a distinctly prehistoric appearance. The humans are modern enough, but the horse, for example, is very different from the one Adam rode on in his (earlier) diary. Here, Eve remarks that when the first pair of horses have a colt, it is puppy-sized, while the parents are "the size of a hound. Five-toed, they are, which does not seem the correct thing for a horse, but they do not seem to mind."²³ We also see mastodons, megatheriums, pterodactyls, ichthyosauruses, a brontosaurus, and a giant sloth. Including such beasts is not as radical a device as depicting Adam and Eve as Neanderthals would have been, but it does seem to be an attempt to accept some of the scientific evidence that was being used to challenge a simplistic, literal interpretation of Genesis. In his private notebook, Twain was more blunt and decisive on this point: "Geology. Paleontology. Destroyed Genesis."²⁴

A more significant effect of Twain's intensive study of Darwin, however, is that in this second portrait of the prototypical human pair, Twain presents scientific inquiry as a fundamental human trait—and a positive one. Contradicting the ancient warning against curiosity that is expressed in the Greek myth of Pandora and echoed in one traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation of Eve's "fatal flaw," Twain here celebrates Eve's intelligent, questing spirit. In this, Twain's unorthodox attitude harmonizes perfectly with Shaw's. In the preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Shaw refers to Eve's choice when he criticizes the excesses of scientists but celebrates the "divine force of curiosity":

I have always despised Adam because he had to be tempted by the woman, as she was by the serpent, before he could be induced to

pluck the apple from the tree of knowledge. I should have swallowed every apple on the tree the moment the owner's back was turned. When Gray said "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," he forgot that it is godlike to be wise; and since nobody wants bliss particularly, or could stand more than a very brief taste of it if it were attainable, and since everybody, by the deepest law of the Life Force, desires to be godlike, it is stupid, and indeed blasphemous and despairing, to hope that the thirst for knowledge will either diminish or consent to be subordinated to any other end whatsoever.²⁵

Although Twain did not go quite as far as Shaw on this question, the Adam and Eve he depicts in this version of the Eden story do seem to share Shaw's thirst for knowledge. We get a sense of Eve's fundamentally curious nature in the first line of her diary: "Who am I? What am I? Where am I?" (42). She returns continually to these questions during the first year of her life, when she explores her environment (outside the Garden), plays with the animals, and searches for her mate, whom she finally hunts down when she finds the happy valley of Eden after a long journey on the back of an elephant. In this version of the story, both Adam and Eve are devoted to the search for knowledge, though Eve seems the more intelligent and knowledgeable of the two. In describing this element of their life together, Eve sounds like a Shavian heroine in the strength of the "divine force of curiosity" that motivates her daily activities:

But studying, learning, inquiring into the cause and nature and purpose of everything we come across, were passions with us, and this research filled our days with brilliant and absorbing interest. Adam was by constitution and proclivity a scientist; I may fairly say I was the same, and we loved to call ourselves by that great name. Each was ambitious to beat the other in scientific discovery, and this incentive added a spur to our friendly rivalry, and effectively protected us against falling into idle and unprofitable ways and frivolous pleasure-seeking. (54)

Twain also depicts Eve as an amazingly learned paleontologist. Note that in this passage she resembles a Shavian heroine in her reaction to her first romantic disappointment: when Adam angrily repulses her first advances, she buries herself in her work (one thinks of Vivie Warren, for example):

I resolved I would absorb myself in work, and forget him. . . . I made a lot of fossils. . . . I wanted them for the Quaternary, but they were not good enough for that, and I was obliged, to my regret, to

set them back and stick them in the Primary, where of course they are apochryphal and foolish, and don't belong, and can't belong, and will give Science the blind staggers some day; but what am I to do? Waste them? . . . As inventions, some of them are not bad, I think. I have put up a hydrocephalous plantigrade with fused reptilian and molluscous characters and an evolutionary disposition toward feathers, which will attract attention in the more remote by and by when they find it. It may turn out a help in reconciling Science and the Scriptures, but the more I look at it the more I am persuaded that there will have to be considerable concessions on both sides before that happens. (50–51)

Other examples of this impossible prescience lends much humor to the piece, but some of the absurdity only points up the contrast between the youthful idealism and enthusiasm of the Edenic “scientists” and the tragic results (as traditionally read) of their curiosity. In this version of the story, however, Twain makes a very significant change: here (as in Shaw's Eden), the words “death” and “die” have no meaning for the humans; nor do “good” or “evil.” Thus, as the human pair contemplate the forbidden fruit and discuss with much perplexity the taboo that has been placed on it, the reader is forced to acknowledge the peril that they face because of their innocence and, by extension, the utter injustice of their eventual punishment. In their ignorance of the meaning of “death,” the inquisitive pair decide to make an experiment: they will find out what it is to die by eating the fruit and experiencing it directly. Fortunately, a new animal (a pterodactyl) blunders by and distracts them, so the curiosity that almost brings on the Fall, ironically, protects them (for a while) from disaster.

The echo of Darwin's ideas can be heard as the human pair pursues their reptilian/avian quarry: Eve calls the beast “a fascinating fiend and such a royal contribution to science” and declares her intent to “search out the secret of his birth, and determine how much of him is bird and how much is reptile, and see if he is a survival of the fittest” (58). In the final entry of the diary (year 15, and still no Fall), Eve describes the whole Edenic first family busily engaged in the activities of either scientific frauds or of cavemen: “Gladys helps her father engrave outline-elephants and mastodons on bone, and Abel helps him make flint knives and arrow-heads for the kitchen-middens. Cain is the cleverest of all. He is really an expert at making the simpler kinds of fossils, and will soon be taking most of that work off our hands, I think” (62). It is hard to tell here if Twain is once again mocking the paleontologists by pointing out an alternate interpretation of the artifacts they explain with such magisterial certainty, or tweaking the complacency of the religious fundamentalists by bringing dinosaurs and perhaps Cro Magnons into Eden while

neglecting to present the Fall as having any force in the development of the first human family.

Passage from Satan's Diary

However, Twain does finally write a version of the Fall—that incident which is so crucial to the traditional story of Genesis—and here we see a dramatic shift in tone from whimsical absurdity to tragedy. In depicting the Fall, Twain seems to express a resurgence of fundamentalist feeling (in the sense that only a theist can denounce the injustice of God) and a return to the more traditional pre-Darwin vision of Eden. In the brief but poignant “Passage from Satan’s Diary” (written in 1901–2 as part of the manuscript for “The Autobiography of Eve”), fossils and dinosaurs are forgotten, while the focus shifts to the efforts of a kindly and wise Satan to explain to Eve what dire consequences would follow if she were to eat the forbidden fruit and acquire a moral sense. As Twain demonstrated in Adam and Eve’s first discussion of the forbidden fruit (on that happier occasion when the pterodactyl interrupted before the fatal experiment was made), it is logically impossible for the couple to understand God’s prohibition until they violate it. They are caught in a cruel trap, for it is not until they acquire a moral sense—the sense to distinguish right from wrong—that they can make a moral judgement. They are also unable to understand the penalties for disobedience: pain, fear, and death. Satan finally summarizes the situation in terms that clarify both the pathos and the inevitability of the fatal transgression:

Poor ignorant things, the command to refrain had meant nothing to them, they were but children, and could not understand untried things and verbal abstractions which stood for matters outside of their little world and their narrow experience. Eve reached for the apple!—oh, farewell, Eden, and your sinless joys, come poverty and pain, hunger and cold and heartbreak, bereavement, tears and shame, envy, strife, malice and dishonor, age, weariness, remorse; then desperation and the prayer for the release of death, indifferent that the gates of hell yawn beyond it!

The pathos is increased when he describes the terrible effect of the transgression on Eve: “She was like one who wakens slowly and confusedly out of a sleep. . . . She moaned and muttered in her pain, and drooped her head, saying, ‘I am degraded—I have fallen, oh so low, and I shall never

rise again.’” Then the moral degradation is made manifest in her physical form: “her hundred years rose upon her, and faded the heaven of her eyes and the tints of her young flesh, and touched her hair with gray, and traced faint sprays of wrinkles about her mouth and eyes, and shrunk her form, and dulled the satin lustre of her skin.” At this tragic moment, though, Twain softens the blow with a romantic touch, showing that one precious thing has survived the Fall: a kind of love that can defy mortality:

All this the fair boy saw: then loyally and bravely he took the apple and tasted it, saying nothing.

The change came upon him also. Then he gathered boughs for both and clothed their nakedness, and they turned and went their way, hand in hand and bent with age, and so passed from sight.²⁶ (67)

This brief account of Satan’s is followed immediately by another passage from Eve’s diary, wherein she rails bitterly against the injustice of God’s trap: “If we had been given the Moral Sense first—ah, that would have been fairer, that would have been kinder: then we should be to blame if we disobeyed. But to say to us poor ignorant children words which we could not understand, and then punish us because we did not do as we were told—ah, how can that be justified?” Then she lists the many new torments the pair have discovered outside Eden. All that remains to be discovered is Death, which soon strikes down Abel. Just as Shaw’s Adam and Eve puzzle over the lifeless fawn at the opening of *In the Beginning*, Twain’s first parents try to understand why Abel won’t wake. When he is found struck down near his altar, Eve carefully tends him and watches over his “sleep” for a day and night before she finally thinks to ask “Oh, is it that long sleep—is it Death? And will he wake no more?” (69). By focusing on the grief of the first mother, rather than the guilt of the first murderer, Twain accentuates God’s cruelty rather than Cain’s. It is easy to see why this passage, along with Satan’s account of the Fall, remained unpublished during Twain’s lifetime.

Shaw on the Pulpit, Repairing Religion (1906)

When Twain’s “translations” of the diaries of Adam and Eve were published in book form by Harper’s (in 1904 and 1905, respectively), Shaw was busy working on religious themes as well. After finishing *Man and Superman*, his first “parable of Creative Evolution” in 1903, he wrote *John Bull’s Other Island* (1904), whose eloquent prophet, the earnest but occa-

sionally sardonic defrocked priest, Father Keegan, would have appealed to Twain.²⁷ The next year Shaw wrote *Major Barbara*, taking a hard look at the limits of institutionalized Christian charity to bring about a heaven on earth. In 1906, Shaw's ideas on religion were drawn together and presented in a series of public lectures on religious subjects, beginning with "The Religion of the British Empire," which was delivered at the City Temple on 22 November 1906. A slightly modified version of this speech, "Some Necessary Repairs to Religion," was presented two weeks later to the Christian Socialist Guild of Saint Matthew. In his book on Shaw's religious speeches, Warren Sylvester Smith explains these public addresses as a natural supplement to Shaw's work with the Fabian socialist reformers. "Although Shaw's overt devotion was to Fabian socialism," Smith explains, "[H]e realized that the basic issue of the time was religious, and he consciously developed a religion of his own, one to complement his socialism and furnish a higher reason for it."²⁸ This effort was necessary, Shaw believed, because at the time there existed "no established religion on the earth to-day in which an intelligent and educated man could believe. No such man could belong to the Church of England without very considerable reservations."²⁹ Neither speech has survived in its entirety, since Shaw never wrote out his speeches: though he prepared for them "meticulously" and wrote notes, he went to the platform without any sort of prompt. Nevertheless, Smith says that "the reporting of his major speeches was rarely handled casually. They were occasionally taken down stenographically, and when not, they were often reported with extreme faithfulness to detail and style" (xix).

In this form, the second of these speeches made its way into Twain's study. Albert Bigelow Paine, in a chapter of his biography called "Philosophy and Pessimism," reports Twain's reaction: "One morning he read aloud a lecture given in London by George Bernard Shaw on religion, commenting as he read. . . . At one place in the lecture Shaw had said: 'One of good sense can accept any creed today without reservation.' 'Certainly *not*,' commented Clemens; 'the reservation is that he is a dd fool to accept it at all.'³⁰ Despite this point of agreement, Twain seems dubious about Shaw's position, and his apparent approval sounds ironic as his comments continue: "This lecture is a frank breath of expression. There is no such thing as morality; it is not immoral for the tiger to eat the wolf, or the wolf to eat the cat . . . and so on down; that is their business. . . . It is not immoral for one nation to seize another man's property or life if he is strong enough and wants to take it. It is not immoral to create the human species—with or without ceremony; nature intended exactly these things."³¹ It is difficult from what remains of Shaw's actual words to see where Twain got his prompt for his remarks about tigers and bullies. However, a more relevant passage can be found in the preface to *Back to*

Methuselah, which Shaw claims to have founded on pieces of an unpublished lecture on Darwin that he gave to the Fabians in 1906. In this passage, Shaw explains how Creative Evolution can solve a theological conundrum that Twain (among others) found discouraging:

[T]he problem of evil yields very easily to Creative Evolution. If the driving power behind Evolution is omnipotent only in the sense that there seems no limit to its final achievement; and if it must meanwhile struggle with matter and circumstance by the method of trial and error, then the world must be full of its unsuccessful experiments. Christ may meet a tiger, or a High Priest arm-in-arm with a Roman Governor, and be the unfittest to survive under the circumstances. Mozart may have a genius that prevails against the Emperors and Archbishops, and a lung that succumbs to some obscure and noxious property of foul air. If all our calamities are either accidents or sincerely repented mistakes, there is no malice in the cruelty of nature and no Problem of Evil in the Victorian sense at all. (lviii)

Clearly Shaw believed that the gospel of Creative Evolution justified an optimistic outlook, and that this optimism would effect some of those “necessary repairs” that the established religions of the day required. In his speech about those repairs, Shaw cites two books as obstacles to establishing a credible religion: the Bible (because its myths are mistakenly treated as literal truth), and “Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, in which evolution, its great religious and philosophic side being ignored, became a materialistic and soul destroying conception of the universe” (82). Paine does not record Twain’s reaction to this statement, but it seems likely that Twain would agree at least with Shaw’s objection to the Bible (as interpreted literally). Whether or not Twain’s own soul had been “destroyed” by his eventual acceptance of evolutionary determinism is another question.

Shaw’s Vitalist Refutation: From In the Beginning to As Far as Thought Can Reach

It would be interesting to know if Shaw and Twain had a chance to discuss religious questions when they finally met in person in July 1907, when Twain came to England to accept an honorary Ph.D. from Oxford. Twain lunched with the Shaws and Archibald Henderson (biographer of both writers), and the two titans visited a session of parliament together.³² Later Shaw wrote his

guest a very friendly, flattering letter wherein he calls Twain a greater master of the English language than Thackeray (agreeing with William Morris's assessment on this) and asserting that "I am persuaded that future historians of America will find your works as indispensable to him as a French historian finds the political tracts of Voltaire."³³ Shaw also says he will visit Twain in America. Unfortunately, Twain died three years later, so the two writers never met again. Nevertheless, Shaw continued to wrestle with the philosophical and "metabiological" debate over humanity's genesis. Between 1918 and 1921, he wrote his own version of the Eden story that, like Twain's, reinterprets Genesis to accommodate Darwin's ideas, but unlike Twain, Shaw insists on reaffirming the primacy of human will—free will—to combat what he saw as the withering pessimism of the mechanists.

In writing this second "gospel" of Creative Evolution, Shaw didn't believe he was introducing anything new, merely making the spiritual dimension of the new scientific paradigm more apparent. In his preface he asserts that "Creative Evolution is already a religion, and indeed now unmistakably the religion of the twentieth century, newly arisen from the ashes of pseudo-Christianity, of mere skepticism, and of the soulless affirmations and blind negations of the Mechanists and Neo-Darwinians." Nevertheless, it was a religion that needed a prophet and an iconography because "it cannot become a popular religion until it has its legends, its parables, its miracles" (lxviii). Throughout the play and preface, Shaw continued to insist that the power of human Will is the crucial factor in human evolution, superseding the "accidental," mechanical process of natural selection. In the preface to the play, he explicitly contrasts this theory of development with the deterministic alternative: "According to the Neo-Darwinists, to the Mechanists, [there is] no hope whatever [for human improvement] because improvement can come only through some senseless accident which must, on the statistical average of accidents, be presently wiped out by some other equally senseless accident." Nevertheless, he continues,

this dismal creed does not discourage those who believe that the impulse that produces evolution is creative. They have observed the simple fact that the will to do anything can and does, at a certain pitch of intensity set up by conviction of its necessity, create and organize new tissue to do it with. . . . If the weight lifter, under the trivial stimulus of an athletic competition, can "put up a muscle," it seems reasonable to believe that an equally earnest and convinced philosopher could "put up a brain." Both are directions of vitality to a certain end. (xv–xvi)

In his *Bernard Shaw*, Eric Bentley points out that in Shaw's championing of Will over the "accident" of Natural Selection, Shaw joined forces not with

the religiously orthodox anti-Darwin faction, but with the Vitalists, who accepted the Lamarckian version of evolution. Although there is a scientific basis for this “religion,” Bentley explains that Vitalism inevitably transcends science, because “[i]f Vitalism were correct in claiming that in all life there was an x which was not present in dead matter, this x was of an order of reality which science could not touch.”³⁴ Bentley continues, “Shaw’s [Creative Evolution] is so purely an espousal of free will against determinism, of mind against materialism, above all of the x —the soul—against mechanism, that there is scarcely any need to follow him into specifically biological arguments.”³⁵ Yet Shaw did not reject the theories explaining the evolution of the body in favor of his own theory explaining the evolution of the soul (or spirit, or will—the ineffable “ x ”): he stressed the importance of both in understanding human prehistory and destiny. Shaw admits that “Natural Selection must have played an immense part in adapting life to our planet; but it is Creative Evolution that adapts the planet to our continual aspiration to greater knowledge and greater power.” As Bentley points out, “This is not the statement of one school of scientists arguing with another. It is the statement of a religionist arguing against scientism.”³⁶ In sum, then, the central tenet of Shaw’s “scientific religion” of Creative Evolution appears in the preface of his pentateuch and is illustrated throughout the play: a striving will alters the body (including the brain) in ways that bring a greater potential for power and knowledge, while a weak will causes a dwindling of forces in the body it inhabits. The principal theme in the play cycle, then, is that of a competitive struggle for survival among different types of people, with the greater vitality being the crucial advantage that identifies the fittest agents of the Life Force.

Like Twain, Shaw deals in religious imagery from Genesis to elucidate these ideas, but Shaw does so to make both a scientific point and a spiritual one. The “scientific” point is that human Will is the mechanism that drives our continuing evolution, not natural selection (which Shaw believed was too haphazard to be effective). The spiritual point is that there is no Original Sin that we must atone for, only a fatal “sinful” strain in our species that we must eradicate to survive: a strain contaminated with a tendency toward violence, laziness, and selfishness. These two themes are interwoven throughout the play in a complex pattern, but one key image that helps show how they are related is the image of the intellectually and morally superior “Coming Race,” which will vanquish the inferior human species as the Cro-Magnons vanquished the Neanderthals. As Twain does when depicting his post-Darwinian Eden, Shaw introduces imagery from paleontology into his revised origin story; however, Shaw’s caveman references are very subtle and must be teased out of the more overt biblical imagery while being seen in relation to those biblical metaphors, for the images of reli-

gious iconography support and help interpret the images of scientific doctrine. The spiritual theme is thus “made flesh,” and the scientific data is transmuted into myth.

The first radical departure in Shaw’s Eden is that death is already a feature of existence in the Garden, though it is not presented as a punishment, but simply as a mystery, like life itself. It is a limited calamity, though: the creatures do not age and die, as we do now, unless they will it, but all face the possibility of death by accident—a fatal lightning bolt, for instance. However, when they discover death and realize that they must eventually perish, Adam and Eve also realize the need to replace themselves so that the human race will not perish with them. Thus reproduction presents itself not as a result of Original Sin, but as a sacred duty. In accepting this responsibility, the first pair honor their Creator.

This leads to Shaw’s second radical departure from tradition: in his Creator there is no suggestion of a Jehovah, but instead we find a strong-willed goddess figure, Lillith, who creates the first two humans out of herself. Her story is narrated by the Serpent, who knew her. The serpent tells how she assured the survival of the human race by willing, striving, and finally creating a way to perpetuate the species, though she destroyed herself in the process.

She was alone, there was no man with her. She saw death as you saw it when the fawn fell; and she knew then that she must find out how to renew herself and cast the skin like me. She had a mighty will: she strove and strove and willed and willed for more moons than there are leaves on all the trees of the garden. Her pangs were terrible: her groans drove sleep from Eden. She said it must never be again: that it was too much for one. And when she cast the skin, lo! there was not one new Lilith but two: one like herself, the other like Adam. You were the one: Adam was the other. (7)

Although a small spark of Lilith’s aspiring spirit flickers in Adam, it is continually smothered by fear and inertia. He does confess to Eve that he is oppressed by “the horror of having to be with myself forever,” and that he wants “to be different; to be better; to begin again and again; to shed myself as a snake sheds its skin” (3). However, he is afraid of what may come when death makes life uncertain, and the prospect of birth makes the future uncertain. Although he recoils instinctively from the idea of the human race dying out, he longs to die himself, for, he says, “I am not strong enough to bear eternity” (11). From images of renewal (the snake shedding its skin) he moves to images of death “If only the care of this terrible garden may pass on to some other gardener! If only the sentinel set by the Voice can be relieved! If only the rest and sleep that enable me to bear it

from day to day could grow after many days into an eternal rest, an eternal sleep, then I could face my days, however long they may last" (10–11). This seems like a natural enough lament, but it shows a weak strain: Adam broods on this because he is self-absorbed, while Eve remains vital and optimistic because she directs her attention outward: she takes care of the absent-minded Adam and thinks with rapture of the generations to come. Adam thinks of the potential progeny first as a potential threat, then as an excuse for abdication of his responsibilities as steward of the Garden. Here he is prompted (tempted) by the Serpent. When Adam complains, "I am tired of pulling these things [thistles] up to keep the garden pleasant for us forever," the serpent says seductively, "They do not grow very fast. They will not overrun the whole garden for a long time: not until you have laid down your burden and gone to sleep for ever. Why should you trouble yourself? Let the new Adams clear a place for themselves" (11). It represents the beginning of a long slide into human apathy and irresponsibility.

The Serpent tells him that the only antidote to fear is hope, which consists in knowing that the future may be better than the past, but Adam is not consoled: "Fear is stronger in me than hope. I must have certainty." He takes the Serpent's advice to conquer uncertainty (even at the price of destroying hope) by "binding the future" with a vow to die on a particular day and love no one but Eve until then. Both the Serpent and Eve embrace uncertainty and life, for they are more vital characters. The conflict between the vital, hopeful, forward-looking, aspiring spirit and the sluggish, fearful, conservative, backward-looking spirit is starkly revealed at the end of the act:

"I make no vows," says the Serpent. "If I bind the future I bind my will. If I bind my will I strangle creation."

Eve says, "Creation must not be strangled. I tell you I will create, though I tear myself to pieces in the act."

Adam counters: "Be silent, both of you. I will bind the future. I will be delivered from fear. [To Eve] We have made our vows; if you must create, you shall create within the bounds of those vows. You shall not listen to that snake any more." And at this point Adam commits the first act that links him to the caveman: "Come," he says peremptorily to Eve, and then the stage directions say "he seizes her by the hair to drag her away." (16)

The old married couple we see in the next act of the play have risen above the brutality this last line suggests, establishing a roughly egalitarian relationship, but it is a far less sentimental, less romantic portrait than Twain's.

Although the next three plays of the cycle follow humanity out of the Garden and into the distant future, Shaw returns to the image of Eden in the last play of the cycle to show how the striving, willful spirit of Lillith will triumph over the less vital strain of humanity represented by Adam and

his first son, Cain. This conclusion also illustrates the triumph of the Vitalist position over the materialist, and of the idea of free will over determinism. To weave all of these philosophical strands together, Shaw combines classical, biblical, and scientific imagery into a complex pattern. These disparate elements come together in the climactic scene wherein the willful offspring of Lillith, “Ancients” who have reclaimed the limited immortality of Adam and Eve, encounter two mechanical automatons created by one of their scientists, a latter-day Pygmalion. The scientist creates the robots as models of “prehistoric humans”—us—to demonstrate his mechanistic philosophy.

These “automatons” of Pygmalion’s provide a useful object lesson for the youthful immortals, for they demonstrate the “prehistoric” vestiges that remain in themselves—both physically and emotionally—before they have matured, just as our own bodies and (as we believe) our psyches contain vestiges of the Neanderthal, or at least the Cro-Magnon. The youths are as discouraged by this resemblance as we are by evidence of our own vestigial savagery, and just as we ought to be discouraged by the parody of contemporary follies and vices (particularly the cardinal sin—pride) that we see in this depiction of Pygmalion’s “prehistoric” automatons. When the pair of them (another kind of Adam and Eve) are exhibited for the crowd of fascinated spectators, they put on absurd airs, believing themselves superior to their super-evolved creator. “We are part of a cosmic system. Free will is an illusion. We are the children of Cause and Effect. We are the Unalterable, the Irresistible, the Irresponsible, the Inevitable: in a word, the Determinist,” declares the male figure (221). The female is similarly arrogant. She demands respect from the crowd because they (the young Ancients) are only “things hatched from eggs by the brainless sun and the blind fire,” whereas she and her mate (“the king of kings and queen of queens”), “are not accidents of the egg: they are thought-out and hand-made to receive the sacred Life Force,” and thus she asserts that “[t]he actions of the king are caused and therefore determined, from the beginning of the world to the end; and the actions of the queen are likewise . . . logical and predetermined and inevitable (221).

The formal cadence of their rhetoric, taken together with their artificial manufacture, might incline us to read these automata as mere fantasy creatures, toys of the immortals, but Shaw takes pains to complicate the metaphor so that we can see their manufacture as analogous to the biblical Creation (Pygmalion actually quotes the relevant passage from Genesis) while also reading them as a criticism for a type of modern humanity he deplores: the irresponsible type who lack the vitality to exercise their free will. When one of the immortals asks the male figure for his opinion of the world, it responds, “I have not seen my newspaper today.” The female

figure concurs, "How can you expect my husband to know what to think of you if you give him his breakfast without his paper?" Pygmalion, their designer, agrees with their determinist stance. He reports that the creatures "have all the reflexes" of the immortals, and thus "can respond to every stimulus," but when asked whether they can do anything original, he says, "No. But then, you know, I do not admit that any of us can do anything really original" (220). Pygmalion is presented as a nice enough fellow, though pedantic and dogmatic about his materialism, but his creatures are repellent—not only vain, arrogant, and stupid, but violent and mendacious. Nevertheless, Shaw introduces them briefly only that we might be impressed (by contrast) with how far humanity has advanced by the time the representatives of its latest evolutionary stage reach that second Eden. It is a relief when the horrible dolls, after their brief strut upon the stage, die and are swept away, leaving only the more positive type of humanity to inherit the earth. The final word goes to Lilith, who delivers a ringing tribute to the Life Force which concludes: "Of Life only is there no end; and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. And for what may be beyond, the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond" (245).

This exultant, willful speech harmonizes with one of Shaw's own last statements celebrating the Life Force. In the autobiographical essay "What is My Religious Faith?", written just a year before his death, Shaw declares that the sort of mechanistic, deterministic materialism espoused by Pygmalion and his robots—a compound of "a negative atheism plus a science beyond the reaches of [the average person's] brains" may eventually wipe out civilization, "not for the first time." In fact, Shaw continues, "It may even make an end of mankind, as it has already made an end of the diplodocus and the dinosaur, mammoth and mastodon. Creative Evolution can replace us; but meanwhile we must work for our survival and development as if we were Creation's last word. Defeatism is the wretchedest of policies."³⁷

It seems significant that in this essay Shaw also mentions Mark Twain. Shaw distances himself first from those who believe in personal immortality by declaring that belief to be based on cowardice, quoting Twain's assertion that "[t]he average man is a coward" (124). However, Shaw quickly distances himself from Twain's determinism by declaring, "I do not accept even the most unquestioned sequence of Cause and Effect. It is the other way about with me. Bar pure accident, it is the aim, the purpose, the intended effect, that produces its so-called cause" (125). This he relates to his religion and its scientific basis by distinguishing his kind of vitalism from the materialistic kind:

If I call myself a Vitalist I shall be classed as a Materialist by the scientists who admit the existence of a life force but conceive it as purely mechanical like steam or electricity.

If I call myself simply an Evolutionist I shall be listed as a Darwinian. Yet if I repudiate Darwin it will be assumed that I attach no importance to the part played in human destiny by Natural Selection and by Reason; for the popular imagination works only in extremes: soot or whitewash, Right or Left, white or black. I am neither white nor black, but classical grey . . . (125)

Like Twain, then, Shaw returned to this question of whether human destiny was predetermined or subject to our free will even as he approached the solemn portals of his own death.

Conclusion

It should not seem surprising, considering their shared status as witty iconoclasts, that Twain and Shaw should have been friends, but their philosophical differences are more striking than their similarities, for although each created a radical revision of Genesis that contradicted the traditional Judeo-Christian interpretation of the Creation and the Fall, those revisions were philosophically antithetical to each other. Twain came to espouse a strictly mechanistic, deterministic view of evolution (and by extension, of human destiny), while Shaw considered this view to be anathema to his hopeful, vitalist religion of Creative Evolution. Considering that the two men arrived at antithetical positions on the question of humanity's creation, purpose and destiny, it may seem odd that they held for each other such profound respect and cordial affection, but such was the case. If one could imagine so un-Shavian a fate for Shaw as an eternity in heaven to discuss religious matters with his friend the Mississippi river pilot, their conversation would certainly be worth hearing.

Notes

1. Last summer, the *New York Times* reported on the efforts of Berkeley's National Center for Science Education, a small nonprofit organization of teachers and scientists that offers information and advice to those who want to keep Darwin in the nation's classrooms. See "In

Schools Across the Land, a Group Mounts Counterattacks on 'Creation Science,'" 29 August 1999, p. 12.

2. Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 75.

3. *The Religious Speeches of Bernard Shaw*, ed. Warren Sylvester Smith (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1963), p. 23.

4. The quote from Twain and the comparison to Prime were first noted by Everett Emerson's *Mark Twain, A Literary Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 61.

5. *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, & Essays, 1852-1890* (New York: Library Classics of the U.S., 1992), p. 846.

6. The best-known statement of the relationship between Twain and Shaw is Twain's unfinished essay, "Mental Telepathy?" wherein the American humorist records an odd literary coincidence, or, as Twain would have it, a sort of unconscious, clairvoyant transference of ideas between himself and Shaw which resulted in Shaw's writing a short story that resembled one of Twain's in both content and style. See Rodelle Weintraub's article "'Mental Telegraphy?': Mark Twain on G.B.S.," *Shaw Review* 17, no. 9 (May 1974): 68-77.

7. Some of this material was published in 1962, in *Letters from the Earth*, ed. Bernard De Voto (New York: Harper, 1949). More manuscript fragments and notes were published in 1995 in *Mark Twain on the Bible*, ed. Howard G. Baetzhold and Joseph B. McCullough (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

8. *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, p. 94.

9. From "A Monument to Adam" (1906), in *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*, ed. and intro. Charles Neider (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963) p. 333.

10. *Mark Twain and the Bible* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 44.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

12. Sherwood Cummings, *Mark Twain and Science: Adventures of a Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University State Press, 1988).

13. *Mark Twain: Rebel Pilgrim* (New York: Heath Cote, 1973), p. 165.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

15. "The Turning Point in My Life," in *Great Short Works of Mark Twain*, ed. and intro. Justin Kaplan (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 230.

16. *The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 1 (1981): 5-41.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

18. Baetzhold and McCullough report that an earlier version of *Adam's Diaries* was published in *The Niagara Book*, a miscellaneous collection of items about Niagara intended to promote the new tourist site. This campaign was launched by Irving S. Underhill, son of an old friend of Twain's from Buffalo.

19. Ursula K. Le Guin, introduction, *The Diaries of Adam and Eve* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. xxxix.

20. Mark Twain, *Extracts from Adam's Diary*, is reprinted in *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, p. 10.

21. *Ibid.*, p. xxxvii.

22. *Mark Twain and Science*, p. 32.

23. *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, p. 43.

24. *Mark Twain and Science*, p. 34.

25. *Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962) 1:30-31. In another part of this preface, written in 1911, a year after Twain's death, Shaw refers to Twain as a notable antivivisectionist.

26. *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, p. 67.

27. Shaw later paraphrased Keegan to Twain in a letter, saying "'Telling the truth's the

funniest joke in the world,' a truth you helped teach me." *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1898–1910*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972), p. 697.

28. *The Religious Speeches of Bernard Shaw*, p. xv.

29. From "Some Necessary Repairs to Religion," as reported in *The London Times*, 30 November 1906. Reprinted in *The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* 1 (1981), p. 17.

30. *Mark Twain: A Biography* (New York: Gabriel Wells, 1923), p. 1335.

31. *Ibid.*

32. An unidentified correspondent who had also visited parliament in July 1907 described the incident, in a letter to *New York Times*, dated 19 April 1933, as follows: "Both gaunt frames elegantly togged in white flannels, both ascetic faces set in a bush of floppy white hair; only then Shaw's was still streaked with enough red to look washed-out-sandy. And there in the front row they lolled—sentient, alert, sublime as gods. As the drone of inanities from the pit below wafted up to them they too began to fidget. First they nudged each other. Next they chuckled. Then their pallid faces flushed. Presently, like toy balloon, their cheeks puffed out with tight-lipped laughter. And then they exploded and sat there quaking with uncontrollable, silent merriment." Reprinted in *Shaw: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. A. M. Gibbs (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990), p. 207.

33. *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1898–1910*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972), p. 697.

34. *Bernard Shaw: 1856–1950* (New York: Vail-Ballou, 1947), p. 60.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Sixteen Self Sketches* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1949), p. 128.