

Vitalism in Man and Superman and Women in Love

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Abstract

This article is an examination into the concepts of will, marriage and male-female relationship in G. B. Shaw's Man and Superman and D. H. Lawrence's Women in Love. The article starts with the discussion of the concept of will in both the works and moves on to discuss the works in the light of eugenics, vitalism and further analyze them under the framework of marriage and the male-female relationship. The article concludes that the two works are similar in certain aspects like being influenced by Schopenhauer's concept of will but they still remain ways apart on other grounds like in their concept of the birth of a superman.

Keywords: Superman, Will, Vitalism, Shaw, Lawrence

Introduction

“A well-known zoologist remarks that before certain papers had elucidated vitalism, he had had a personal meaning for the word, but after, he did not know at all what vitalism means.”

AO Lovejoy (Lovejoy, as cited in Jennings, 1913)

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson (2022) conceptualizes a non-mechanistic picture of life:

Must we then give up fathoming the depths of life? Must we keep to that mechanistic idea of it which the understanding will always give us—an idea necessarily artificial and symbolical, since it makes the total activity of life shrink to the form of a certain human activity which is only a partial and local manifestation of life, a result or by-product of the vital process? We should have to do so, indeed, if life had employed all the psychical potentialities it possesses in producing pure understandings—that is to say, in making geometricians. But the line of evolution that ends in man is not the only one. On other paths, divergent from it, other forms of consciousness have been developed, which have not been able to free themselves from external constraints or to regain control over themselves, as the human intellect has done, but which, none the less, also express something that is immanent and essential in the evolutionary movement. (p. xii)

In *Man and Superman* and *Women in Love* the authors G B Shaw and D H Lawrence try to explore the “divergent paths” of human consciousness through their characters which the “mechanistic idea” of life can never explain. An in-depth study of the works reveals that the study of human consciousness can be extremely subjective, and as in case of all subjective studies the result maybe

different even if the researchers share a common worldview. The strong willed characters in the works of both the authors resist ‘shrinking’ their lives to certain human activity, but the ways in which they try to explore life to its fullest is not just different but at times even contrary. This paper will try to examine how the authors have treated the non-mechanistic aspect of human life, namely, Will, marriage and the male-female relationship in their seminal works *Man and Superman* and *Women in Love*.

Discussion

The Will

As Eric Bentley (2022) explains, Shaw’s philosophy of the Life Force rests upon Schopenhauer’s idea of Will. Like Schopenhauer, Shaw perceived Will as “the main driving force of human existence” (p. 33). However, while Schopenhauer was terrified by the sheer force of the Will, Shaw remained inspired. He compared Will to the Christian concept of soul and this formed the ground for the philosophy of what he calls the Life Force. Interestingly enough, D H Lawrence’s worldview was equally informed by Schopenhauer’s Will. When he first read Schopenhauer as a young boy he was looking for a “philosophy that would liberate him from ‘the mind-forged manacles’ of provincialism, puritanism, and his mother’s middle-class morality” (Schneider, 1983, p. 1). In Schopenhauer he found a respected philosopher who had to offer all that he idealized. However, while Shaw developed his own version of the Will named the Life Force; Lawrence was lost “determining exactly what is that the Will wills” (Schneider, 1983, p. 2).

Shaw was never precise about his philosophy of the Life Force. However, whatever thin framework he laid down for his philosophy of Creative Evolution was in *Man and Superman*. As Carl Henry Mills (1970) argues, *Man and Superman* was written with two precise objectives: “the development of superior human intelligence and the eugenic breeding of a super-race of “supermen” (p. 48). The idea of the superman is incorporated in the main characters John Tanner and Ann Whitefield. They are both strong willed characters, whose individual Wills strive to find the right partner for the breeding of the super race. Shaw seems incurably optimistic in his belief of the superman. Tanner says that “the proof of the Superman will be in the living; we shall find out how to produce him by the old method of trial and error, and not by waiting for a completely convincing prescription of his ingredient” (Shaw, 2022, para. 3). By glorifying of the old method of trial and error and *not* prescribing an ingredient, Shaw seems to be hinting once again at the limitation of the mechanistic idea and the celebration of the Life Force.

As mentioned above, Shaw incorporates the idea of the superman in the main characters John

Tanner and Ann Whitefield. When he introduces the character of Tanner he describes him in these grandiose terms:

He (Tanner) has still some of the slimness of youth; but youthfulness is not the effect he aims at: his frock coat would befit a prime minister; and a certain high chested carriage of the shoulders, a lofty pose of the head, and the Olympian majesty with which a mane, or rather a huge wisp, of hazel colored hair is thrown back from an imposing brow, suggest Jupiter rather than Apollo. (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 36)

Tanner is the personification of the superman. He is described as an imposing young man whose Will aims high and who could help in developing the race of the superhuman. Tanner's personality is in contrast with that of Octavius whose:

pretty little moustache, the frank clear eyes, the wholesome bloom and the youthful complexion, the well brushed glossy hair, not curly, but of fine texture and good dark color, the arch of good nature in the eyebrows, the erect forehead and neatly pointed chin, all announce the man who will love and suffer later on. (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 32)

In light of Shaw's commitment to his ideal of the Life Force and his desire for the breeding of the race of super humans, Octavius's tender description forebodes that "Octavius will love and suffer" because he is not ideal to continue the race of the super humans. Shaw believed that better breeding is only possible if both the partners have the same kind of strong Will (J. Bentley, 1968, p. 26). Because of this it is clear after the description of Ann as "one of the vital geniuses" that to whatever extent Octavius may yen for her, she is not meant to for him, or in Shaw's term the Life Force doesn't deem Octavius suitable for her (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 42). This is because even though an individual has a will of his own, but in the end the individual will must strive for the perfection of the universal Will. This is why even though Tanner believes that Ann has "absolutely no conscience—only hypocrisy" but still he admits that "there is some sort of fascination" about her (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 55). His individual will may well resist her temptation, but Tanner is oblivious to the fact that his individual *will* will strive for the perfection of the universal Will.

Tanner does not have any intention to get married to Ann. He keeps on rejecting Ann's proposal of marriage in a childish adamancy:

Tanner: I will not marry you. I will not marry you.

Ann: Oh, you will, you will.

Tanner: I tell you, no, no, no.

Ann: I tell you, yes, yes, yes.

Tanner: No. Ann: Yes. Before it is too late for repentance. Yes. (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 174) (J. Bentley, 1968)

Tanner is depicted as an idealistic revolutionary who does not understand things in practical terms.

He does not understand that he should sacrifice his individuality for the service of the society. It would have been a total waste for someone as strong willed as Ann to be paired with the simpleton Octavius. As Joseph Bentley (1968) explains, within the logic of the play Tanner has to get married to Ann because his “marriage is ... a sacrifice of individuality in the service of future history, the genetic march toward the Superman” (p. 26).

Tanner’s acceptance of marriage has connections with the dream sequence which features the character of Don Juan. Shaw makes an unusual comparison between hell and heaven to unmarried life and married life respectively. Unlike the popular notion, Shaw posits hell as a place of eternal sensual pleasure, a dream like state which does not have an ending. On the other hand, heaven is dull and boring but it is real and “dedicated to the search of truth” (J. Bentley, 1968, p. 27). Similarly, unmarried life may have its sensual pleasures but it does not contribute for the breeding of the superman. Even though marriage brings all his happiness and pleasures to an end, but Life Force dictates one to get into it.

The play of the Life Force is also visible between Octavius’s sister Violet and her husband Hector. Violet is well aware of the fact that if she and Hector get disowned by his father then life would be difficult for them both. She is very unlike her brother Octavius who has childish notions of living by love alone. Violet is strong willed in the sense that she is ready to face all the humiliation of being “pregnant” with the husband “missing” because she does not want to let go of Hector’s possible inheritance. Her conversation with Hector’s father very much explains her strong mindset:

MALONE. Possibly not. Then he does without me: that’s all. I daresay you are prepared for that. When a young lady writes to a young man to come to her quick, quick, quick, money seems nothing and love seems everything.

VIOLET. [*sharply*] I beg your pardon, Mr Malone: I do not think anything so foolish. Hector must have money. (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 154)

However, she does this not out of greed but from the understanding that in absence of financial security marital relation might fall apart. When Hector refuses his father’s financial help, Violet rushes to accept it. Even though Hector does not have the strong will that Violet has, his family wealth makes up for the deficits in his personality thus urging the Life Force to pair him with the strong willed violet.

In *Women in Love* Lawrence, like Shaw, significantly reworks Schopenhauer’s concept of the Will.

Lawrence was definitely not happy with the mechanistic role of science, especially Darwin's idea of evolution which emphasized random selection and diminished the role of the free Will. He perceived literature as an escape from the mechanistic worldview to the worldview in which he believed that human beings seek for more than mere survival. Lawrence (2011) describes the artist Loerke in the following terms:

He was a sculptor, and she wanted to hear his view of his art. And his figure attracted her. There was the look of a little wastrel about him, that intrigued her, and an old man's look, that interested her, and then, beside this, an uncanny singleness, a quality of being by himself, not in contact with anybody else, that marked out an artist to her (p. 419).

This idea of singleness in an artist is not only what differentiates them from the rest, but also what makes them shun the overly mechanistic view of life. An artist has the will to be single, escape the control of reason, and find meaning without having association with any external objects. Most of the true artists spend their life for the fulfillment of this "uncanny" will.

Apart from the artist's will to freedom, *Women in Love* presents a whole gamut of different kinds of will: Gerald's and Hermione's dominating will, Gudrun's subversive will, and Birkin's and Ursula's balanced wills.

Gerald is always hungry to exercise his will on others. He has an insatiate desire in controlling. He wants to assert his will on all. In the chapter Coal-Dust, the way Gerald forcefully exhibits his will on a horse reveals the dark side of his will:

A sharpened look came on Gerald's face. He bit himself down on the mare like a keen edge biting home, and FORCED her round. She roared as she breathed, her nostrils were two wide, hot holes, her mouth was apart, her eyes frenzied. It was a repulsive sight. But he held on her unrelaxed, with an almost mechanical relentlessness, keen as a sword pressing in to her. Both man and horse were sweating with violence. Yet he seemed calm as a ray of cold sunshine. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 107)

It is quite interesting to note that even though both Gerald and his horse were "sweating with violence"; Gerald was still calm "as a ray of cold sunshine." This foreshadows the kind of relation Gerald might have with Gudrun. However, Gerald fails to realize that Gudrun's will is not the kind that would be tamed.

In contrast, Birkin's and Ursula's have a different understanding of wills. Birkin expects a different kind of relation with Ursula. Birkin says, "What I want is a strange conjunction with you ... not meeting and mingling—you are quite right—but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single

beings—as the stars balance each other” (Lawrence, 2021, p. 143). This desire to have a balance between two contending wills is key to understanding Lawrence’s idea of will. Schneider (1983) argues that for Lawrence there can be unity between male and women when the wills are humble, or when the will of one humble and other aggressive, but a unity can never be possible when both have assertive wills (p. 3). This is one reason why the relation between Gudrun and Gerald fails. They both have wills which are very assertive.

Eugenics and the Birth of the Superman

Shaw’s play *Man and Superman* is generally attributed for bringing Nietzsche’s idea of Superman into the English language. In *The Revolutionist’s Handbook* Shaw says that he borrowed Nietzsche’s term superman and Schopenhauer’s idea of will and formed his one unique philosophy called the Life Force (J. Bentley, 1968).

His superman, Shaw believed, would benefit others, not live solely for himself. The Shavian superman wants not to rule over others but to raise all humanity to his level. Only when all people are so evolved as to desire naturally to do what the Life Force intends, then that is utopia for Shaw. However, the problem with Shaw’s superman is that he never clearly defines him; on purpose he keeps his man of the future covered in mystery. Nevertheless, in *The Revolutionist’s Handbook* Shaw sketches a hazy image of his superman:

Neither is it of any use to ask for a Superman: you must furnish a specification of the sort of man you want. Unfortunately you do not know what sort of man you want. Some sort of goodlooking philosopher-athlete, with a handsome healthy woman for his mate, perhaps. (B. Shaw, 2022, para. 2)

It hints that his men are wise, practical, straightforward, strong and know the way the world works. His women efficiently manage both their households and their husbands. In light of this description of his ideal men and women, Tanner and Ann come as perfect specimen because in Shaw’s own term Tanner has “the Olympian majesty” about him and Ann is “a perfectly respectable, perfectly self-controlled woman, and looks it” (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 42).

Along with action, the superman should have deep thought too. Pondering on a serious issue is not an escape from reality into some metaphysical dimension of ideas, but the goal of the Life-Force itself. It is because Shaw believed that the superman will be less indulged in pleasures and be more interested in providing purpose to the seemingly purposeless world. As Don Juan beautifully puts it, “To be in hell is to drift; to be in heaven is to steer” (G. B. Shaw, 2022, 141).

The Shavian hero lives by a higher ethic unencumbered by traditional values and outdated moral codes. When Tanner learns that Violet is pregnant without being in matrimony, unlike all others he appreciates it:

Here is a woman whom we all supposed to be making bad water color sketches, practising Grieg and Brahms, gadding about to concerts and parties, wasting her life and her money. We suddenly learn that she has turned from these sillinesses to the fulfilment of her highest purpose and greatest function—to increase, multiply and replenish the earth. And instead of admiring her courage and rejoicing in her instinct; instead of crowning the completed womanhood and raising the triumphal strain of “Unto us a child is born: unto us a son is given,” here you are—you who have been as merry as Brigs in your mourning for the dead—all pulling long faces and looking as ashamed and disgraced as if the girl had committed the vilest of crimes. (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 50)

Tanner has a different moral not only because he readily accepts pregnancy out of wedlock but he deems the traditional female roles as silly. Moreover, John Tanner enjoys his reputation as a shameless anarchist, author of the “most blackguardly book that ever escaped burning,” partly because it draws attention to his progressive views and partly because he delights in exposing would-be liberal thinkers (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 34).

In *Man and Superman* Shaw prophesized the coming of the superman only when humans with strong wills understand the need to be one with the Life-Force. Shaw’s doctrine of the Life-Force, the god of his only religion, was his response to Darwin’s proposition of random selection. Darwin’s contribution to the theory of evolution, the hypothesis of natural selection, provided a means to explain away the apparent sense of purpose and direction behind the life process. In an act of faith Shaw rejected this view of a mindless universe, choosing to believe in an impersonal but creative will that directs the development of all living things toward higher forms. Thus he promoted the earlier theory developed by Lamarck of Creative Evolution in which organisms change because they *will* to change (J. Bentley, 1968, pp. 31-32). In *Man and Superman*, it is because Ann *wills* and Tanner’s *will* wills to contribute to the life force that they eventually decide to pair up.

Tanner understands that his individual will should cooperate fully with the Life-Force. Thus, in his handbook, Tanner promotes a government sponsored program of eugenic breeding to accelerate the grand experiment toward producing the superman. In a 1911 lecture delivered to The Heretics Society, Shaw argued that:

If we can drive into the heads of men the full consciousness of moral responsibility that comes to men with the knowledge that there never will be a God unless we make one – that we are the instruments through which that ideal is trying to make itself reality – we can work towards that ideal until we get to be supermen, and then super-supermen, and then a world of organisms who have achieved and realized God (Shaw, as cited in Childs, 2001, p. 7)

Shaw was, in this respect, as much committed to the idea of eugenic breeding as the character Tanner himself. However, what is interesting about all this is, Shaw supported eugenics because he believed in humanity.

Lawrence, like Shaw, also believed in the necessity of eugenics for the betterment of the society:

If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a military band playing softly, and a Cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out in the back streets and the main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt, and the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile me a weary thanks (Shaw, as cited in Childs, 2001, p. 11).

His obsession for the breeding of the superman was not less than Shaw's. However, Lawrence pairing of the strong willed people was a lot different than that of Shaw. In fact it was just the contrary. One reason for this was that while Shaw's idea was vaguely outlined Lawrence's idea was nebulous. Most of the time Lawrence was lost in making sense of what was the real intension of the will (Schneider, 1983, p. 7). At times, he believed that individual will is a manifestation of the universal will. In this sense, following one's own will strongly is one way to be near the universal will. He preached for a mystical union with the universal will (Green, 1977, p. 87).

In contrast to Shaw, Lawrence did not see the possible paring of two equally strong will characters. He believed that "the will of the man and the intellect of the woman are specially suitable to each other" (Shaw, as cited in Schneider, 1983, p. 3). Lawrence held the idea that the universal Will (Shaw's Life Force) "contrives (with a blind ingenuity) to ensure that in sexual attraction each partner will select a mate possessing the characteristics that he or she lacks" (Schneider, 1983, p. 7). In this regard Shaw and Lawrence stand apart. This explains why Gudrun and Gerald were never meant to be together. They were both too strong willed. They needed someone as a partner who would complement on what he or she lacks. This is in stark contrast with Shaw's model of pairing for the propagation of the superman.

Marriage and Man-Woman Relationship

The idea of Life Force contains within itself Shaw's views on marriage and male female relationships. Shaw emphasizes on the maternal aspect of womanhood. Woman for him is the incarnation of the female principle at work in the universe. Shaw believed that the basic purpose of male female relationship should be for the breeding of the superman. Shaw believes that "the pretence that women do not take the initiative is part of the farce" (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 14). He maintains that "the whole world is strewn with snares, traps, gins and pitfalls for the capture of men by women. Give women the vote, and in five years there will be a crushing tax on bachelors" (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 14). Women are cunning because they can trap men. However, they are acting the cunning way laying out traps for man only to complete the urge of the Life Force. Shaw's idea that women celebrate marriage only for the sake of procreation throws the idea of romantic love away.

Shaw expresses his idea about women through his mouthpiece Tanner. In the very beginning of the play, Tanner tells Octavius, "Vitality in a Woman is the blind fury of creation...Because they have a purpose which is not their own purpose but that of the whole universe, a man is nothing to them but an instrument of that purpose" (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 47).

Besides, even in the play it is Ann who takes initiative to pair up with Tanner and the way Violet gets immediately pregnant after getting married with Henry suggests that she married not out of love but because she deemed it would be good for the Life Force.

But Shaw's is not only unimpressed by romantic love, he is also unimpressed by marriage. Shaw believed that having children and caring for them is the only reason why Life Force supports this institution. Don Juan says:

The Life Force respects marriage only because marriage is a contrivance of its own to secure the greatest number of children and the closest care of them. For honor, chastity and all the rest of your moral figments it cares not a rap. Marriage is the most licentious of human institutions (G. B. Shaw, 2022, p. 131).

For this reason it is completely wrong for two people to be bound together just because they might have sexual attraction. Moreover, the fact that marriage is binding, makes men and women, who know that they will have to spend the rest of their lives together, choose their mates for trivial reasons—affection, respect or self-interest rather than for serving the Will of the Life Force. For this reason Shaw created strong female characters who would decide for the purpose of the Life Force than for their personal likings.

Thus it is not surprising that in *Man and Superman*, the female characters are stronger than the male counterparts especially because of their knack for understanding the unstated principles of the Life Force. Ann persuades Tanner to get married with her, and it is Violet who accepts the financial support of her father in law.

Even though the female characters in Lawrence's *Women in Love* are not clearly superior to their male counterparts but they are definitely more complex than Ann and Violet.

In *Women in Love*, Gudrun and Ursula are women from working class family who wants to use their marriage as a means up climbing up the social ladder. At the beginning of the novel Gudrun says to Ursula that marriage might get her "in a better position" (Lawrence, 2021, p. 3). They are from the small town of Willey Green. Even though Gudrun has spent some time in London and feels superior to many below her rank:

Now the two girls were going between some rows of dwellings, of the poorer sort. Women, their arms folded over their coarse aprons, standing gossiping at the end of their block, stared after the Brangwen sisters with that long, unwearying stare of aborigines; children called out names. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 8)

She is really not at home with people who are uncouth and a lot below her rank. But the sisters feel uncomfortable also because they feel as if they are below the rank of many in the town because of their working class background:

She had met Hermione twice, but they did not take to each other. It would be queer to meet again down here in the Midlands, where their social standing was so diverse, after they had known each other on terms of equality in the houses of sundry acquaintances in town. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 12)

In this sense the sisters feel somehow limited by their social class in Willey Green.

As mentioned before, the sisters want their marriage for a better position because they know there are Hermione(s) out there and they feel small when compared with them. In the very beginning of the novel the sisters have this discussion:

‘Ursula,’ said Gudrun, ‘don’t you REALLY WANT to get married?’ Ursula laid her embroidery in her lap and looked up. Her face was calm and considerate.

‘I don’t know,’ she replied. ‘It depends how you mean.’

Gudrun was slightly taken aback. She watched her sister for some moments.

‘Well,’ she said, ironically, ‘it usually means one thing!

But don’t you think anyhow, you’d be— she darkened slightly—’in a better position than you are in now’. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 3)

This brief talk between the sisters shows how they wish to get married to be in a better position. However, the position that they hint here is not only a financial one. It means a better position in totality: a position where they do not have to subdue their will all for their husband's sake. However, both of them understand that getting married is to sacrifice their free will forever. This is why Ursula says, "But really imagine it: imagine any man one knows, imagine him coming home to one every evening, and saying 'Hello,' and giving one a kiss." Gudrun agrees no less with her. So after a moment of pondering she says "'It's (Marriage) just impossible. The man makes it impossible'" (Lawrence, 2021, p. 5).

We see here that what bothers them about their vision of marriage is the family structure, and how they think life would be inside that structure. They describe the typical role of a current family structure---at home with children, waiting for the husband to come home. Implicit here is their resentment of a husband's bossy attitude toward his wife. The husband will exercise his *will* and the *will* of the wife remains subdued. The sisters doubt their own desire to accept that kind of identity. However, they both eventually fall in love with men of higher social positions than themselves. Luckily for Ursula Birkin believes in a balanced position for the will of both husband and wife but Gerald wants to exercise his will completely on Gudrun who is herself very strong willed. Birkin wanted:

to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single and clear and cool, yet balanced, polarised with her. The merging, the clutching, the mingling of love was become madly abhorrent to him. But it seemed to him, woman was always so horrible and clutching, she had such a lust for possession, a greed of self-importance in love. She wanted to have, to own, to control, to be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to Woman, the Great Mother of everything, out of whom proceeded everything and to whom everything must finally be rendered up. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 195)

Here, Birkin realizes the Life Force element in women. Everything came out from her. She is the source of everything. Birkin does not like this idea about women. Rather, he wants his female companion to be like himself. Birkin is afraid of a relationship the same way the sisters were. Because of this it was possible for Birkin and Ursula to develop a balanced relationship, because they both decided not to super prioritize their *wills*. Their relation was possible because they both tacitly agreed to put the assertion of their *wills* aside.

However, Gerald and Gudrun both have very strong *wills*, and neither is ready to surrender his/her *will* for the sake of the relationship. Unlike Shaw Ann, Gudrun decides to dump the strong willed macho Gerald and go for Loerke. This is because in Lawrence's worldview both strong willed

people can never make a good pair. However, when Gerald teams up with one the professor's daughter, there was a good pairing because she was submissive. Gerald was:

dancing again with the younger of the Professor's daughters, who was almost dying of virgin excitement, because she thought Gerald so handsome, so superb. He had her in his power, as if she were a palpitating bird, a fluttering, flushing, bewildered creature. And it made him smile, as she shrank convulsively between his hands, violently, when he must throw her into the air. At the end, she was so overcome with prostrate love for him, that

she could scarcely speak sensibly at all. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 408)

Similarly, Gudrun teaming up with the weaker willed Loerke was equally ideal too. Gudrun was attracted to Loerke even though he looked like a puny against the imposing Gerald. Lawrence says:

His (Loerke) figure interested her—the figure of a boy, almost a street arab. He made no attempt to conceal it. He always wore a simple loden suit, with knee breeches. His legs were thin, and he made no attempt to disguise the fact: which was of itself remarkable, in a German. And he never ingratiated himself anywhere, not in the slightest, but kept to himself, for all his apparent playfulness. (Lawrence, 2021, p. 419)

In all ways the women in *Women in Love* are more complex than the ones in *Man and Superman* especially in their selection of mates.

Conclusion

It would be true to say that both Shaw and Lawrence placed a great value on the importance of human life. They were both influenced by Schopenhauer's idea of will and believed in providing purpose and objective to human life. Besides, they were also against providing only the males a dominant role in any form of relationship. In fact, Shaw believed that women should have a clearly dominant role. Moreover, they both believed in a vital force in human life which the mechanistic cannot explain.

However, even after having all the similarities with regard to their vitalism, the authors and their treatment of vitalism in *Man and Superman* and *Women in Love* distinctly stand apart on one major ground. How and what pair would generate the superman? The authors seem to be giving contrary answers to this question, even though their sources for the understanding of vitalism are almost the same. This can be the result of only one cause i.e. the idea of vitalism itself is faulty. Even though we may hate to have a purposeless world, a world bereft of the Life Force, but it seems that we really have a purposeless existence and Shaw and Lawrence are just trying to make sense out of it referring to it as vitalism.

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