Major Barbara

By Bernard Shaw

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Characters

Major Barbara
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Andrew Undershaft – Father of Barbara, Sarah and Stephen; estranged husband of Lady Britomart. A successful businessman and capitalist who has made millions by selling guns and canons in his munitions factory. He believes that peace can best be achieved through the manufacture of weapons and that poverty is the worst of all crimes.

Played by Dan Daily.

Lady Britomart/Mrs. Baines – Lady Britomart is the estranged wife of Andrew Undershaft; dominant and self-assured, a member of the upper class who understands the usefulness of money and the importance of social decorum.

Mrs. Baines is the General of the Salvation Army.

Played by Carol Schultz.

Barbara Undershaft (Major Barbara) – One of the Undershaft daughters. At first a major in the Salvation Army, intent upon saving souls by providing food and inspirational speeches. Is thrown into a moral dilemma when faced with her father's beliefs and success.

Played by Hannah Cabell.

Stephen Undershaft/Snobby Price – Stephen is Andrew Undershaft's son. His father is about to disinherit him from the family business. His mother wants him to take over the business; but he's really not interested in it.

Snobby Price is a struggling workman who comes to the Salvation Army to get a square meal.

Played by Alec Shaw.

Sarah Undershaft/Jenny Hill – Sarah is Undershaft's other daughter. Very much like her mother, Lady Britomart.

Jenny Hill is a Salvation Army worker.

Played by Becky Baumwoll.

Charles Lomax/Bill Walker – Charles is engaged to Sarah. A young man, who will be wealthy one day, when he comes into his inheritance.

Bill Walker is a ruffian who hates the Salvation Army.

Played by Cary Donaldson.

Adolphus Cusins – Barbara's fiancé, a professor of Greek language and literature. He joined the Salvation Army only because he is in love with Barbara.

Played by Richard Gallagher.

Rummy Mitchens/Lady Britomart's maid/Undershaft's secretary – Rummy comes to the Salvation Army pretending to be a bad person in order to avoid starvation.

Played by Roblin Leslie Brown.

Morrison/Peter Shirley/Bilton – Morrison is Lady Britomart's butler.

Peter Shirley is a desperate man who comes to the Salvation Army for help.

Bilton is the foreman at Undershaft's munitions factory.

Played by Bradford Cover.

Mog Habbijem and Todger Fairmile – These two characters never appear but are spoken about. Bill Walker comes to the Salvation Army looking for his girlfriend, Mog Habbijem. Todger Fairmile is an expert wrestler and strongman.

Setting

Three successive days in London in 1905. Act I begins at the Salvation Army shelter; moves into the home of Lady Britomart, and then back to the Salvation Army. Act II find us again at Lady Britomart's home; and then in the town created by Andrew Undershaft for his munitions factory and workers.

The Story

The story begins in the home of Lady Britomart Undershaft. Her son, Stephen, enters, and she announces that as he is now a grown man, Stephen must take charge of the family affairs, as neither of his two sisters are in a position to do so. Sarah has become engaged to someone who will receive an inheritance eventually, and Barbara has joined the Salvation Army and taken up with a Greek scholar, Adolphus Cusins. Lady Britomart can avoid the topic no longer; she must discuss their father, the military industrialist, Andrew Undershaft.

Many years ago Undershaft and his wife separated, because he said that he would never pass on the business to his own son. There was a tradition that the business must always be passed onto a 'foundling' (orphan), most likely born out of wedlock, who would be trained and re-named Andrew Undershaft. Of course, Lady Britomart couldn't stand this; but now finds that she needs money for her children's future. She has invited Andrew to visit this evening, with the intention of asking him for money. Barbara and Sarah and their respective fiancés are summoned and informed of her plans. Barbara decides that her father, after all, has a soul to be saved, and, as a Major in the Salvation Army, she will save him. But Undershaft believes that money and gunpowder are the things necessary to salvation; and he wants to win Barbara over to his side.

Shaw's plays are well known for their philosophical arguments. In fact, Shaw himself called *Major Barbara* "a discussion in three long acts." The play is also known for its unconventional attitudes about morality. Issues of wealth and poverty, business and religion, cynicism and idealism are seriously examined in the play. But it is also a comedy, designed to entertain people, while focusing on issues that are as important today as they were during Shaw's time. The play was an overwhelming success with the public when it was first presented, and remains so today.

Themes

Right and Wrong and Who Decides

The major theme is the conflict Barbara struggles with, the conflict between social and moral ethics, one realistic and the other idealistic. On the one hand, there is Mr. Undershaft, who looks at life realistically and believes that poverty is the real crime of life. He thinks that people must have money to take care of their basic human needs, and until those needs are met, they cannot have any intellectual or spiritual pursuits. In contrast are the moralists and idealists, like Major Barbara. They believe that if the poor are treated kindly and given charity, she can turn them into good people, saving their souls. Undershaft believes that such views are hypocritical, for he has lived a life of poverty and knows its pain. As a result, he makes certain that the workers in his factory are given a good life and rise above poverty. He knows that a hungry man cannot think of lofty ideas or worry about his soul. At the beginning of the play, Major Barbara feels that she can save the souls of the hungry and needy who come to the Salvation Army; she idealistically accepts all of the Army's teachings and tenets. During the course of the play, her father, Andrew Undershaft, makes her realize that her idealism must be tempered with reality.

Differences in Class

Another theme involves class differences. This is a time when the classes in England are beginning to blur. The aristocracy was becoming more reliant on the wealth of the business people. The business class gained respectability through their association with the nobility. The marriage of Lady Britomart (aristocracy) and Andrew Undershaft (business) epitomizes this. England is a world of class differences.

Power and Control

What does it mean to have power in the world? Does money give you power? Do your beliefs give you power? Who controls the world? What gives them that right? Are we all responsible for what goes on in the world?

Adolphus: I think all power is spiritual. You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too. Even mother's milk nourishes murderers as well as heroes. I want a democratic power strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good or else perish.

Discussion Questions

1. What if someone told you that they would completely fund all of your college education and give you a little money to live on besides? What would you do if you found out the money came from immoral sources – like selling drugs, or tobacco, or guns? Would you accept the money or not?

A) Even though the Salvation Army is against drinking, and sees drinking as the root of evil, is Mrs. Baines right to take the money from Bodger the whiskey-man to further the work of the Salvation Army? Should charities refuse or accept donations based on how the money was earned? Do you agree with Andrew Undershaft when he says, "All religious organizations exist by selling themselves to the rich."

B) Who do you think is right in the play? Is Undershaft right in believing that if the money is used for good, it doesn't matter where it comes from? Is the Salvation Army right in believing that if they give people food and shelter, they will reform? Can both views be right?

2. Our director, David Staller, has double-cast certain roles with the belief that, if a different set of life-experiences had happened, Stephen Undershaft, for example, could easily have been Snobby Price instead. Or Lady Britomart could have turned out to be Mrs. Baines (or even Rummy Michens) if the luck/chance of birth hadn't landed her firmly in her upper-class world. How would your life be different if you were born into different circumstances? What if you were born wealthy? Or born into abject poverty?

3. Do you think Lady Britomart is a good mother? Would her children call her a good mother?

4. Lady Britomart says that she treats her children as "companions and friends." Do you think parents should treat their children in this way? Why or why not?

5. Do you agree with Mr. Undershaft when he says, "Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honor, generosity and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness. Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people."?

Classroom Activities

Scene Exploration

Invite two volunteers to read the sample scene between Lady Britomart and her son, Stephen, aloud to the class. Discuss what the scene might reveal about each of their characters, and their relationship.

In pairs have the students rehearse and read the scene again, putting their own different set of circumstances on the scene; such as, Stephen has been out until three in the morning and his mother is angry with him; or he's about to marry a girl his mother hates; or Lady Britomart is a crime lord ordering about her flunky; or Lady Britomart is seriously ill. Or create your own circumstances!

Do the same for the other two sample scenes.

Exploring Moral Dilemmas

Create your own moral dilemmas and prepare a statement from each individual involved. Can be done as a whole class, or in small groups. Each group or individual has to prepare a statement supporting their decision. Defend your point of view to the entire class. Some possibilities:

A) You are an officer of a health insurance company. Your friend's child needs an operation and has health insurance with your company. Your company does not typically cover this procedure. You have the ability to somehow help your friend to lie about it and get the procedure covered. What would you do? Prepare a statement from everyone's perspective –your own, the child, the parent, the insurance company.

B) You are the parents of two children of about the same age. Your financial situation only allows you to help one of them out. How would you decide which one? What would you say to the other one? Prepare a statement for the parents and each child.

C) You are studying to be a doctor, which you know is your life's calling. You cannot obtain any scholarship or grant money because your family is wealthy. But your family is wealthy because the money comes from drug-dealing. What would you do? Provide all sides of the argument.

Snobby Price's School for Workers

Here are Snobby Price's rules for lower class workers:

1. Capitalists don't like workers who are too intelligent.

2. Workers drink alcohol because it's their only source of happiness.

3. Workers should do as little as they can at work. Workers should leave half their jobs undone so that other workers can also be employed.

4. Workers should follow the example of the capitalist bosses and take whatever they can lay their hands on.

Imagine that Snobby Price has started a training company for workers. Create a scene with Snobby and his friends teaching workers how to behave.

Sample Scenes

I - Lady Britomart and Stephen

Stephen: You sent for me, Mother. What's the matter?

Lady Britomart: Presently, Stephen. (She is busying herself with her lady's maid. He opens the periodical.) Don't begin to read, Stephen. I shall require all your attention.

Stephen: It was only while I was waiting …

Lady Britomart: Don't make excuses, Stephen. Bring me my cushion. Now. Sit down. (He fingers his tie.) Don't fiddle with your tie, Stephen. (He fingers his watch chain.) Now are you attending to me, Stephen? I am going to speak to you very seriously. I do wish you would let that watch-chain alone. Stephen: may I ask how soon you intend to realize that you are a grown-up man, and that I am only a woman?

Stephen: Only a … !

Lady Britomart: Don't repeat my words, Stephen. It is a most aggravating habit. Now listen: You must learn to face life seriously. I really cannot bear the whole burden of our family affairs any longer. You must advise me. You must assume the responsibility.

Stephen: I … ?!

Lady Britomart: You've been at Harrow. You've been at Cambridge. You've been to India and Japan. You must know a lot of things by now, of one kind or another; unless you have wasted your time most scandalously. Well, go on: advise me.

Stephen: (completely flummoxed) You know I have never interfered in the household decisions.

Lady Britomart: No: I should think not. I don't want you to order the dinner.

Stephen: I mean in our 'family affairs.'

Lady Britomart: Well, you must interfere now, for they are getting quite beyond me.

Stephen: But really, Mother, I know so little about them; and what I do know is so – painful – it is so impossible to mention – some things to you.

Lady Britomart: I suppose you mean your father.

II – Undershaft and Barbara

Undershaft: Are there any good men?

Barbara: No. Not one. There are neither good men nor scoundrels: there are just children of one Father; and the sooner they stop calling one another names the better. You needn't talk to me: I know them. I've had scores of them through my hands: scoundrels, criminals, philanthropists, missionaries, all sorts. They're all just the same sort of sinner; and there's the same salvation ready for them all.

Undershaft: May I ask have you ever saved a maker of cannons?

Barbara: No. Will you let me try?

Undershaft: Well, I will make a bargain with you. If I go to see you tomorrow in your Salvation Shelter, will you come the day after to see me in my cannon works?

Barbara: Take care. It may end in your giving up the cannons for the sake of the Salvation Army.

Undershaft: Are you sure it will not end in your giving up the Salvation Army for the sake of the cannons?

Barbara: I will take my chance of that.

Undershaft: And I will take my chance of the other. It's a deal, then. (They shake on it.) Where is your shelter?

Barbara: In West Ham. At the sign of the cross. Ask anybody in Canning Town. Where are your works?

Undershaft: In Perivale, St. Andrews. At the sign of the sword. Ask anybody in Europe.

III – Undershaft and Cusins

Undershaft: I fancy you guess something of what is in my mind, Mr. Cusins. (Cusins flourishes his drumsticks as if in the art of beating a lively rataplan, but makes no sound.) Exactly so. But suppose Barbara finds you out!

Cusins: You know, I am quite genuinely interested in the views of the Salvation Army. The fact is, I am a sort of collector of religions; and the curious thing is that I find I can believe them all. By the way, have you any religion?

Undershaft: Yes.

Cusins: Anything out of the common?

Undershaft: Only that there are two things necessary to Salvation.

Cusins: Baptism and …

Undershaft: No. Money and gunpowder.

Cusins: That is the general opinion of our governing classes. The novelty is in hearing any man confess it. Is there any place in your religion for honor, justice, truth, love, mercy and so forth?

Undershaft: Yes: they are the graces and luxuries of a rich, strong, and safe life.

Cusins: Suppose one is forced to choose between them and money or gunpowder?

Undershaft: Choose money and gunpowder; for without enough of both you cannot afford the others.

Cusins: Barbara won't stand that. You will have to choose between your religion and Barbara.

Undershaft: So will you, my friend. She will find out that that drum of yours is hollow.

Forms of Activism

PETER SHIRLEY - A character found outside the Salvation Army in *Major Barbara*:
"I'm not an old man. I'm only 46. I'm as good as ever I was. The grey patch come in my hair before I was thirty. All it wants is three pennorth o hair dye: am I to be turned on the streets to starve for it? Holy God! I've worked ten to twelve hours a day since I was thirteen, and paid my way all through; and now am I to be thrown into the gutter and my job given to a young man that can do it no better than me because I've black hair that goes white at the first change?"

The Industrial Revolution took a heavy toll on the British worker. Though social activists worked tirelessly to curtail child labor abuses and improve working conditions, it must have seemed like chipping away at a mountain. By the end of the 19th century many reformers had lost faith in capitalism as the surest way to guarantee the well-being of the British people—Shaw among them.

Like many others, Shaw sought a new political and social structure that would guarantee the rights of the working class. He found support for such ideas in the Fabian Society. It was an activist group was made up of men and women who supported the redistribution of wealth to all classes of society, denounced Britain's imperialistic wars abroad, and lobbied endlessly for labor reforms. But unlike many other politically active groups of the day, they weren't looking for a revolution. The group was (and is) committed to "evolutionary, not revolutionary" change, preferring gradual movement towards large economic goals. Members of the Fabian Society were instrumental in the founding of the Independent Labor Party in 1893 and the Parliamentary Labor Party in 1900. Through this party came the impetus for a British minimum wage and the British National Health Service.

The Salvation Army, founded by William and Catherine Booth, took a much more hands on approach. In the 19th century, middle and upper class men and women treated poverty as a moral rather than an economic ill. Because alcoholism, violence, and crime were so prevalent among the poorest parts of London, people assumed that it was this sort of behavior that led to poverty rather than poverty that led to these behaviors. In other words, if you were poor, it must be because of something you'd done wrong. The wealthy divided people into the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor—and the latter (criminals, prostitutes, alcoholics, etc) weren't worth helping

The Salvation Army rejected this idea.

William and Catherine Booth argued that no one could be expected to lead a morally upright life in the dirt, hunger, and degradation of extreme poverty. The poor must be fed and clothed before they could be brought to salvation. The Army purposely ministered only to the most "undeserving" of the lower classes. It was a powerful idea.

George Bernard Shaw was a very active reformer—and his action took the form of pamphlets, speeches, and masterful plays that challenged the societal norm. But though he disagreed with their religious beliefs, he was impressed by the momentum of the Salvation Army.

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."
G. B. Shaw

Silent film star Martha Mansfield sells doughnuts for $1 apiece on the streets of New York during a fundraiser for The Salvation Army

The Skeletons in the Salvation Army's Closet

Though the Salvation Army has become synonymous with their peaceful actions of helping the poor, in the late 1800s the Salvation Army was an actual army going so far as to participate in several battles against their arch nemesis The Skeletons. First formed in 1880, The Unconverted Salvation Army was comprised mostly of pub owners who were losing business because of the Salvation Army's stance on alcohol. As they convinced more people to abstain from alcohol, pub owners saw a considerable drop in business and decided to take action.

By 1881 The Unconventional Salvation Army saw significant growth in their numbers. Because of the pop up nature of these armies, they became known as the Skeleton Armies or, the Skeletons. They adopted the motto, "Blood and Thunder," in direct opposition to the Salvation Army's motto, "Blood and Faith." They also came up with the three 'B's' to make fun of their three "S's', which were, "Beef, Beer, and Bacca."

For the next three years, the Skeletons were involved in several skirmishes with the Salvation Army, with both parties enduring injuries and hardships. The two groups even went to trial which resulted in jail time for members of both organizations. This just furthered the rivalry.

It all came to a climactic battle in April 1884 when 4,000 Skeletons gathered in the town of Worthing to protest the objections the Salvation Army had with an alcohol shop. The Skeletons painted black tar on the entrance to Army's barracks. They also threw eggs filled with blue paint at the "Sally Army." General Booth of the Salvation Army ordered the members to stay inside the barracks until police

protection arrived. However, the Metropolitan Police decided it was not their jurisdiction and did not offer protection. General Booth then ordered Captain Ada Smith to continue her usual march on Sundays unprotected, regardless of whether or not the Skeletons were there.

The Skeletons eventually attacked with bricks and broken glass. The Salvation Army tried to march as usual but had to retreat to their barracks for safety. The Skeletons followed with torches. They tried to burn the barracks down but the Salvation Army's landlord came out with rifles to defend his property. He wounded several skeletons which eventually led them to stop.

After this conflict the Metropolitan Police were forced to take action against the skeletons, causing them to eventually die out. While they did occasional pop up throughout the years, by 1900, they were completely disbanded.

The Skeleton Army fights the Salvation Army in the streets, 1884

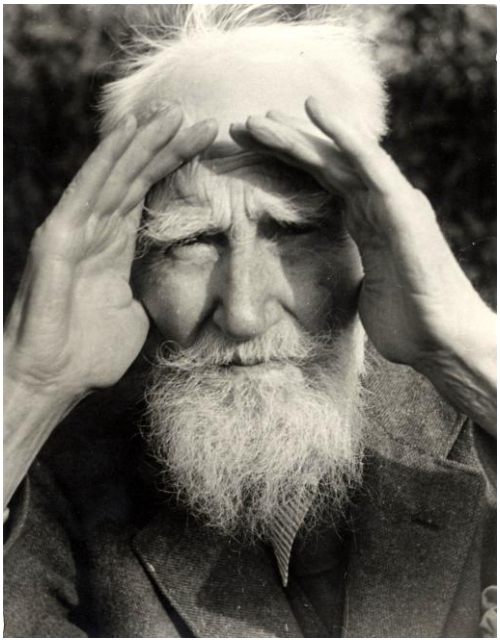
George Bernard Shaw: Taking Center Stage

In his late 30s, Shaw offered wise words to an aspiring young artist: "You must not think that because you only heard of me for the first time the other day or thereabouts that I got such reputation as I have cheaply. I came to London in 1876 and have been fighting for existence ever since. . . .In London all beginners are forty, with twenty years of obscure hard work behind them; and, believe me, those obscure twenty years are not the worst part of one's life."

George Bernard Shaw was thirty-eight when he launched his long and remarkable career as a playwright and dramatic critic. His life soon became a subject for public scrutiny and enjoyment: people sought his opinion on everything from politics to religion to dietary habits. But no one becomes an icon overnight. Shaw's success, his future development as an artist, and his relationship to his public developed out of his childhood experiences and the skills he cultivated as a young man, both as a writer and as a speaker.

He was born on July 26, 1856 in Dublin, Ireland into a household defined by what he called "shabby-genteel poverty." His father, George Carr Shaw, was a failed businessman but wildly successful alcoholic whose only lasting inheritance to his son was a loathing of hard liquor. A genial, unambitious man, George Shaw never succeeded at anything. His son had little tolerance for him, and spent years trying to distance himself even from his father's name, signing his letters "G.B.S" or "G. Bernard Shaw." When George Shaw died in 1885, his son did not attend the funeral.

Shaw grew up surrounded by musicians and their music. His mother, Bessie, had long since ceased to find any joy in her marriage (Shaw doubted she derived much happiness from her children either) and sought sanctuary in music. She studied piano with the composer George John Vandaleur Lee, who brought to the Shaw household an endless stream of fellow musicians and hopeful students. Young George, a neglected boy moving between an unreliable father and a distant mother, clung fast to the emotion and passion he heard in music, and this early exposure would shape his critical writing for years to come. Shakespeare, for example, was not to be admired as a thinker, or idealist, but as a composer of words. The beauty, Shaw insisted, lay in the *sound* and not the substance of Shakespeare's words. Music remained for Shaw the most sublime art form.

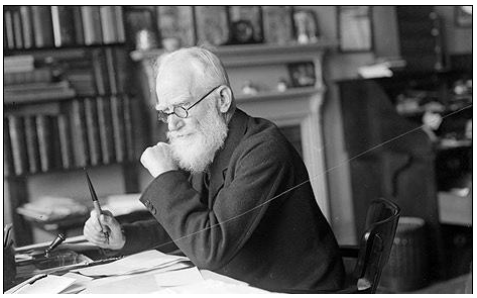


In the absence of a satisfactory home life, the boy Shaw spent endless hours in the Dublin museums, attended concerts, and read voraciously. (He particularly adored *The Arabian Knights* and had a remarkable knowledge of Dickens.) Eager to prove what books had taught him, he began to write, turning out a small literary journal with a friend when he was fourteen. But Shaw always maintained that the studies of his childhood nurtured his mind, never his emotions. He once described his early days to the actress Ellen Terry in grim tones: "a devil of a childhood, Ellen, rich only in dreams, frightful and loveless in realities."

When Shaw was seventeen, Bessie left her husband. The family's financial troubles had come to a head, and she emigrated to London with Shaw's older sisters. Shaw remained in Dublin for another three years working as a clerk until he too was ready for a change. In 1876 he left his father and joined his mother in the bustling life of London. He would call the city home for decades to come.

Shaw's first years in London were grueling. He had no money, no job, and no useful connections. He felt himself "handicapped by poverty, shyness, awkwardness and all the miseries of weak immaturity." But difficult as these years may have been, they were productive and filled with promise. Between 1876 and 1890, Shaw embarked on a self-constructed educational mission. He began to speak at various public meetings, on any and all subjects, developing his skills as an orator until he became a sought-after lecturer. He explored political philosophies, eventually embracing socialism and joining the newly founded Fabian Society, which agitated for social reform. He dabbled in music and art, and studied economics, politics, and literature. He also became a lifelong vegetarian. ("Animals," he declared, "are my friends . . . I don't eat my friends.")

And he *wrote*--no less than five pages a day, a routine he sustained almost to the end of his long life. It was not until the 1890s, with Shaw already well into his thirties, that he turned an appraising eye to the theatre.



Shaw sprang into action. "I turned my hand to playwriting when a great deal of talk about 'the New Drama' followed by the actual establishment of a 'New' theatre threatened to end in the humiliating discovery that the New Drama, in England at least, was a figment of the revolutionary imagination. I had rashly taken up the case, and rather than let it collapse, I manufactured the evidence." The result was *Widowers' Houses*, Shaw's first play. He followed it with *The Philanderer* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. The critics shrugged, dismissing the works as didactic and preachy—all head and no heart. Very well, said Shaw--and penned a comedy.

After the disappointing response to his first three plays, Shaw was utterly flummoxed by the very different reception that his third play received. "I had the curious experience of witnessing an apparently insane success…and of going before the curtain to tremendous applause, the only person in the theatre who knew that the whole affair was a ghastly failure." He had hoped that his exposure of romantic and heroic posturing in love and war would challenge, even anger the audience. Instead they reveled in the wit and humor of the piece, ignoring (or at least downplaying) the serious message behind the laughs. But the public's response, incomprehensible as it was, took his breath away. He liked being a hit—and wanted to do it again.

Between his first success in 1894 and his death, Shaw produced another forty-plus plays. Among the most famous are *Caesar and Cleopatra, Man and Superman, John Bull's Other Island*, *Major Barbara, Pygmalion*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Back to Methuselah*. He remained deeply involved in his political work—he served on the executive board of the Fabian Society for many years, watching as the small group grew and helped found a new political party (the British Labor Party). In the early part of the twentieth century, Shaw supported the women's suffrage movement and insisted on equal wages and political rights for women. Though he grew reclusive in his later years, he continued to write every day. He joked that "Few people think more than two or three times a year; I have made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week."

At his death in 1950, Shaw was one of the most recognizable men of his age. As a man whose first glimmer of success didn't appear until he was nearly forty, one wonders what the shift from obscurity to icon must have been like for him. Knowing Shaw, he was undoubtedly certain that everything had turned out exactly as it should. Nothing less than the center of the world stage would have been large enough for him. Not that he was immodest about his stature. "I dare not claim to be the best playwright in the English language" he once demurred; "I believe myself to be one of the best ten."

Shaw Quotes

Shaw most certainly had a way with words. Here are a handful of noteworthy Shaw quotes:

A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.

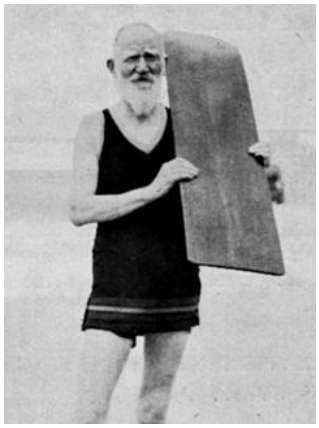
I learned long ago, never to wrestle with a pig. You get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it.

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

Youth is wasted on the young.

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.

Use your health, even to the point of wearing it out. That is what it is for. Spend all you have before you die; do not outlive yourself.



People who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it.

Make it a rule never to give a child a book you would not read yourself.

Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

There is no love sincerer than the love of food.

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances.

The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.

A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time. When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, The one I feed the most.

If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.

Better keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world.

All great truths begin as blasphemies.

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the aeroplane, the pessimist the parachute.

You use a glass mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul.