

The Saint and the Sinner In
George Bernard Shaw
The Devil's Disciple
A Character Study

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Abstract:

The main objective of the research is to analyse the four major Puritan characters in the play; and to show to what extent each character stands for an idea or an attitude.

These four characters are supposed to represent what the audience expects according to the conventional dramatic characterization of melodrama. However what the audience comes to see at the end of the play, especially the characters of Anderson, the puritan Parson and Richard, the 'devil's disciple' is something more amazing, that is related to the Shavian style of inversion.

Through the analyses of the characters, the research discusses some essential themes and conceptions considering the Puritan

community. Among these themes and concepts are; strictness and moderation, hypocrisy and sincerity, intolerance and tolerance, hatred and love evil and good...etc.

The research comes to conclusion that religious strictness usually results into anti-religious thinking and conduct. That religion calls for virtue and righteousness, love and tolerance, peace and security, goodness and charity; and that natural goodness is to be found in all human being. But it is usually destroyed by the ill-treatment in the family or the society. However, when 'the hour of trial' comes to man, natural goodness arouses to do marvelous deeds.

Key Words : 1)The Puritans
2) Shavian Melodrama

الملخص :

النفاق والإخلاص، التسامح وعدم التسامح، الحب والكراهية، الخير والشر... الخ.

ويصل البحث الى النتيجة بأن التزمت الديني غالباً ما يؤدي إلى فكر وسلوك مضاد للدين.

والدعوة إلى الدين بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة هي أنجع السبل إلى تحقيق الأهداف المرجوة على مستوى الدنيا والدين. إن الإنسان بطبيعته خير، وإن الخيرية الفطرية مغروسة في كل إنسان، غير أنها غالباً ما تتعرض للإفساد والتشوية بسبب المعاملة السيئة سواء في الأسرة أو المجتمع بشكل عام.

ومع ذلك فإذا حانت ساعة الاختبار الحقيقي تبرز هذه الخيرية الفطرية في أبهى وأجل سماتها، وتعمل من جلائل الأعمال وأفضلها ما يبهر الانسان ويدهشه.

إن الهدف الأساسي للبحث هو تقديم دراسة تحليلية لأربع شخصيات رئيسية من المجتمع البيوريتاني (التطهري) في مسرحية (جورج برنادشو) تابع الشيطان، ومن ثم مناقشة الفكرة أو الموقف الذي تمثله كل شخصية.

ويفترض في هذه الشخصيات الأربع أن تمثل ما يتوقعه المشاهد بناء على البناء الدرامي التقليدي لمسرحية الميلودراما غير أن المشاهد (أو القارئ) يكتشف في نهاية المسرحية وبالذات في شخصيتي (أنتوني أندرسون) القس البيوريتاني و(ريتشارد دادجون) تابع الشيطان، أمراً مغايراً جداً لما يمكن ان يتوقعه يرتبط بأسلوب (برناردشو) في كتابة الميلودراما.

ومن خلال تحليل الشخصيات الأربع يناقش البحث بعض الأفكار والمفاهيم المرتبطة بالمجتمع البيوريتاني.. ومن هذه الأفكار والمفاهيم: التزمت والوسطية،

1) The Puritans

A group of extreme Protestant who broke away from the Church of England in the sixteenth century; they thought that the doctrines and structure of the church needed reform and that the Church of England had become a product of political struggles and man-made doctrines.

They believed that the Bible was God's true law; and that it provided a complete plan for living, and through that they attempted to 'purify' the Church and their own living.

Many Puritans left England in the seventeenth century to live in America, where they sought to found a holy community in New England. Puritanism remained the dominant cultural force in that area in the nineteenth century.

2) Shavian Melodrama

Melodrama in general is characterized by a simple, powerful story with a strong moral tone. It depends on the traditional characters of a hero and a villain. It also depends on the device of poetic justice where the villain is always defeated in the final scene. Sometimes this type of drama is provided with additional entertainment of song, dance or music.

Shavian melodrama is completely different from the conventional melodrama in the sense that Shaw's characters are more complex than in a traditional melodrama. The portions between good and bad, hero and villain are very thin. Shaw's melodrama is not only to entertain his audience but more than that to express his social and political points of view. Shaw inverts the accepted social traditions and situations upside down in order to introduce new concepts and perspectives; and to warn the audience about the dangers of falling into sentimental passion and empty conventionality.

The Playwright and the Play

I- Bernard Shaw: The Intellect and Dramatist

Shaw was born in Dublin in 1856; he left Dublin to live in London when he was twenty years old. He began his literary career as a critic of plays in the Saturday Review.

Shaw joined the Fabian Society in 1884 to meet his social and political views on the life of that period. This society was of remarkable influence on him to establish him as a social and political activist and reformer. A.C. Ward states that since his boyhood (1958:107)

“Shaw had abandoned the Christian religion as it was practised by the churches, which he believed had strayed far from the teachings of Christ. But though he would not call himself a Christian, many of his strongest convictions and most of his personal conduct were those of a religious man”.

Though he had achieved a great fame as a dramatist; it had been observed by some critics that Bernard Shaw did not care much about himself as a dramatist but more as a social reformer. He was the writer who (Harry T. More: 1972:1)

“consistently sought political and intellectual preeminence rather than artist fame”.

In his first collection **The Plays Unpleasant** Shaw (A.R.Jones:1962:60)

“attacks poverty and slums, sexual morals, and hypocrisy, and the three plays are sustained by the force of his moral indignation and by the debate between the various attitudes”.

According to Waldo Clark (1976:100) Shaw's plays

“are all intensely didactic and moral in intention. He sought from the beginning to expose the hypocrisy, stupidity and conventionality of our way of life and he did so in play after play with a rich wit and lively sense of comedy.”

Before writing plays, Shaw began to write novels, where he wrote five unsuccessful novels, including **An Unsocial Socialist** (1887).

The performance of **Widowers' Houses** (1892) was Shaw's first attempt to write plays. The play deals with a social theme about the evils of London slums. However, his first successful plays were **Arms and the Man** (1894), **Candida** (1897) and **The Devil's Disciple** (1897).

Shaw was influenced by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen; in spite of his admiration of Ibsen's intellectual and artistic gifts, Shaw has his own distinguished and gifted style of writing drama. He (**Barnard: 1984:178**)

"brought to his own plays a wit, an exhibitionism, an argumentativeness and a tendency to farce that gave them a very different flavour from the Norwegian master's."

in addition to that A.R.Jones argues that (**1962:66**)

"Shaw's social and artistic attitudes are closer to Dickens than to Ibsen."

Robert Barnard also speaks about Shaw's drama and its notable attention towards social problems of his time ; especially in his early plays stating that Shaw (**1984:180**)

"pronounces, confidently, on everything under the sun; he castigates hypocrisy, obscurantism and the entrenched interests that prevent the betterment of society; he offers common-sense advice on everything from drains to breast-feeding"

One of the important aims of many of Shaw's plays is to shock his audience with new points of view expressed with much wit; and several of his plays emphasize (**Thornley and Roberts: 1984:166**)

"his theory of the 'Life Force', the power that drives people to value life as a great gift and fight for a better world, and that leads women, in particular, to want to have children so that life can be continued in them."

This 'Life Force' argues Harry T. Moor though it (**1972:3**)

"has both human and cosmic aspects, its main function is the improvement of man's moral and intellectual values".

Shaw's drama also aims at discussing public issues that touch the lives of a large number of people. His plays usually deal with social abuses and evils of his time and (A.C Ward: 1958:109)

"It is often said that the characters in his plays are merely mouthpieces for Shaw's personal opinions, but this cannot be true, because in each of his plays the different characters put forward opinions which conflict with each other, and Shaw leaves the reader (or the spectator in the theatre) to decide which is right."

In his essay 'The Comedy of Ideas' R.C. Churchill confirms the fact that (A Guide to English Literature: The Modern Age:1961:221)

"Shaw was to become the leading platform debater, as well as the leading dramatist of ideas, of the twentieth century."

Regarding his enormous contribution to the intellectual British drama of his age, Bernard Shaw stands as one of the great pillars in the history of British drama. He is considered by many critics (Ward:1958:111)

"second only to Shakespeare among all the British playwrights".

II- The Play: The Devil's Disciple

The play was first performed in New York on October the 1st. 1897. It was Shaw's first commercial success where he quitted his job as a drama critic; and to dedicate himself entirely to write plays. Two years later the play had brief run in London and in the next year it toured England. It was not until 1907 the play became a success in England.

The Devil's Disciple is one of the three entitled 'Plays for Puritans'; the other two plays are: **Captain Brassbound's Conversion** (1900) and **Caesar and Cleopatra** (1907). In these three plays (Srinivas:2014:160)

"Shaw attacks puritanical rigidity and narrowness of thought and outlook as well as the conceptual stereotypes underlying middle class morality."

Srinivas argues that each of the three plays (2014:161)

“is distinguished by the quality of magnanimity. Dudgeon’s heroic altruism, Caesar’s clemency, Lady Cicely’s inspired diplomacy- all affirm the possibility of transcending the petty motivation and limitations of ordinary human nature.”

The Devil’s Disciple is considered by many critics as remarkable continuation to the British drama of its period. A.C.Ward in his **“Introduction”** to the play summarizes the essential points of its significance. One of these main points is its purpose as a play **“for Puritans”** where the play (1958:116)

“raised a mirror in which Puritans might see themselves: see themselves as Bernard Shaw saw them, even if not as the majority of them were in fact [...] certain unadmirable qualities of puritanical religionists are clearly mirrored-their soul –destroying intolerance, their blinding spiritual arrogance, their rejection of the Creator’s gifts of beauty and joy. It is this particular kind of Puritanism that is exposed in the Devil’s Disciple.”

Bernard Shaw is known for creating topsy-turvy situations, inverting the usual view of things and characters in order to introduce new perspectives. He takes our stereotypical expectations and turns them on their heads. Richard (Dick) who is taken as the ‘*devil’s disciple*’ in his rigorous Puritan community finds his true vocation as a preacher in the church. Reverend Anderson, the man of the gospel and peace, finds his true vocation as a man of action and war. Judith, the Parson’s wife, the delicate sentimentalist, falls in love with the ‘*devil’s disciple*’ whom she announced as her hateful foe. The play, thus, raises the question: who is really the saint and who is really the sinner in this strict community of Puritans?!!

In this play Shaw takes all of the essential elements of conventional melodrama, and the notion of the ‘romantic hero’ in the character of Richard Dudgeon and turns them inside out.

The play stands as an example of unmotivated self-sacrifice of a man whose rigorous Puritan community has accused him as a ‘*devil’s disciple*’; to prove that he is more Puritan than the others; and also to

recall the example of Jesus Christ in his heroic altruism and self-sacrifice '*for the world's future*'.

Plot Summary :

The play opens with Mrs. Dudgeon in her farm house on the outskirts of the town of Websterbridge in New Hampshire, just before the dawn in the year 1777. It is the year (1958:23)

"in which the passions roused by the breaking off of the American colonies from England"

Mrs. Dudgeon is waiting in front of the fire all the night for news about her husband, Timothy Dudgeon. Essie, a young girl, sixteen or seventeen years old, is found asleep on the couch. She is the illegitimate child of Uncle Peter Dudgeon, who has just been hung by the British troops as a rebel in the American Revolution. Christy, Mrs. Dudgeon's second son of about twenty two years, enters to report that his father has also died.

Parson Anthony Anderson arrives to inform Mrs. Dudgeon that her dead husband made a new will just before his death. He also informs her that her elder son, Richard (Dick) attended the execution of his Uncle Peter; and will be present at the reading of the will later that morning. Parson Anderson leaves to give Mrs. Dudgeon time to prepare her home for the visitors.

Judith, the Parson's wife, arrives unexpectedly to help Mrs. Dudgeon. She addresses Essie how to be a good Puritan girl; and how to behave at the meeting of reading the will.

The members of the family arrive with Parson Anderson and Mr. Hawkins, the family lawyer, for reading the will. Richard Dudgeon, whom they call the 'devil's Disciple' arrives and takes the role of head of the household. Richard informs them that the British troops are on their way to the town, and the town might be under martial law by the morning.

The will is read and Mrs. Dudgeon becomes angry thinking that the will is unfair. The whole members of the family including Mrs. Dudgeon leave the house; since it belongs to Richard according to the will. Richard and Essie are the only ones who remain there.

Act two opens at the Parson's house later that evening. Judith waits anxiously at home for her husband's return. Parson Anderson

arrives and calms his wife who promises to be brave. He tells her that he has invited Richard to their home to talk. Parson Anderson is sure that Richard is in danger of being hung. Judith shows no interest in Richard's invitation to her home.

Shortly after Richard arrives, Parson Anderson is called away to see Mrs. Dudgeon who has fallen ill; and asks Richard to stay at his house until he returns. The British soldiers arrive to arrest Parson Anderson, but they mistake Richard for Mr. Anderson.

Parson Anderson returns to find his wife, Judith, fainting. When she wakes she tells her husband the truth that Richard is going to take the Parson's place even to death.

In Act Three Judith visits Richard the next day at the British headquarter in the Town Hall. In a desperate attempt she tries to convince Richard to tell the court the truth that he is not Parson Anderson. Richard assures her that he is going steadfast in his decision. At last she entreats him to be allowed to attend his trial and to remain silent.

Just before the trial, General Burgoyne informs Major Swindon that Springtown has fallen to the American rebels.

During the trial, Richard continues to assume the role of Parson Anderson in spite of Judith attempts to speak; where he silences her by reminding her of her promise to keep silent.

Richard and General Burgoyne maintain a gentlemanly repartee on the subject of the execution. Meanwhile Judith is unable to stand silent. She tells the court that Richard is not Parson Anderson, her husband; and that they cannot kill an innocent person.

At the gallows, and few minutes before Richard is executed, Parson Anderson arrives to announce his true identity. He also bears a safe conduct for Richard; revealing that he is the leader of Springtown rebellion.

Finally Parson Anderson and Richard realize that they are perhaps more suited to the other's identity; Anderson is a man of action and war, and Richard as a man of insight. The town's people who has previously scorned Richard as the 'devil's disciple' now praise him as a hero.

Mrs. Dudgeon: The Radical Puritan

"... the most licentious woman in the parish on the strength of never having broken the seventh commandment or missed a Sunday at the Presbyterian church"

[Shaw:23]

Mrs. Dudgeon is introduced in the play as a strict Puritan, who knows the Bible and Puritanism as a rigid way of living. She understands religion as merely strict rules of punishment, ignoring its humanitarian content. Religion, according to Mr. Dudgeon's understanding, is no more than punishment; there is no room in her mind or heart for tolerance and love. Rarely, she thinks in God's mercy and this gracious grace of God is not to be found in her 'spiritual' dictionary. She considers herself as one of the most Puritans in the parish, who is restricted to the law of God and guided by it. However, this strictness leads her unconsciously to act against the essential principle of God's doctrine. She is the Puritan who thinks that she is practicing the teachings of the Holy Bible, while in fact she is working against them. Mrs. Dudgeon's heart is empty of any heart-felt compassion. Due to her rigid behaviour towards her household, the house becomes a cave of hatred and cruelty instead of a heavenly refuge for peace and love.

Mrs. Dudgeon ill treatment towards her two sons forces her elder son Richard (Dick) to leave the house (1958:27)

"to live with smugglers and gypsies and villains, the scum of the earth!"

as she puts it. As for the young son Christy (1958:82)

"He has been too well brought up by a pious mother to have any sense or manhood left in him"

as he is described by Richard.

From the outset of the play Mrs. Dudgeon is described by Bernard Shaw (1958:23) as:

"not prepossessing woman" whose "face, even at its best, is grimly trenched by the channels into which the barren forms and observances of a dead Puritanism can pen a bitter temper of fierce pride."

Mrs. Dudgeon is introduced from the beginning as a harsh cruel woman, who treats the young girl Essie severely, insulting her as (1958:23)

"unfeeling sinful girl".

She is Uncle Peter's illegitimate daughter. She comes to live with Mrs. Dudgeon after her father being hung as a rebel against the British troops. Essie becomes one of Mrs. Dudgeon's 'sinful' targets of scolding and rebuke. She never shows herself as a tender mother to the poor Essie; but as a commander in the battlefield commanding his soldier (1958:25-26)

"Don't answer me, Miss; but show your obedience by doing what I tell youAnd don't forget your prayers."

She always addresses Essie to listen to her orders and do what she is told to do. There is nothing in Mrs. Dudgeon's mind but orders and lip service to show herself as a real Puritan. Essie, according to her, is no more than (1958:26)

"the punishment of [her father's] wickedness and shame."

As a pious lady, one expects Mrs. Dudgeon to be more kind, more tender and more patient; however, throughout the whole play she never expresses such heartfelt affection. Boasting is one of her notable characteristics; she always pretends to show herself as faithful and pious Puritan only through lip service (1958:26)

"people who fear God don't fear to give the devil's work its right name."

Mrs. Dudgeon ill treatment to the poor young girl, Essie, is not only through her hateful words, but also by practicing violence. Shaw's stage description is apparent to clarify the matter (1958:34)

"Mrs. Dudgeon takes her roughly by the arm and pulls her round.....She throws her arm away, and goes on peremptorily"

In such Puritan community Essie's character is supposed to be the fruit of the sin of adultery, similar in away to the character of the child Pearl in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel **The Scarlet Letter**. Both **The Devil's Disciple** and **The Scarlet Letter** treat the theme of Puritanism.

Mrs. Dudgeon might be a religious woman, but she understands religion in her own way of hypocrisy and lip service. As a religious lady, one expects her to bear her responsibilities with much patience as religion recommends; but her radical mentality drives her to the other way round. This is Bernard Shaw's style of inversion; his characters usually behave or come finally to situation different from what the audience or the reader expects.

Mrs. Dudgeon always expresses her resentment; even her dead husband and his brother are not safe from her bitter tongue-lashing (1958:27)

"His brother, that was a disgrace to us all his life, gets hanged on the public gallows as a rebel; and your father, instead of staying at home where his duty was, with his own family, goes after him and dies, leaving everything on my shoulders. After sending this girl to me to take care of, too[...] It's sinful, so it is: downright sinful."

Mrs. Dudgeon always complains and grumbles; and we never see her in a mood of content as religion recommends.

In her way of pretention which is an aspect of hypocrisy, Mrs. Dudgeon does not forget to bury (1958:27)

"her face in her hands, as it is her duty as a widow to be overcome with grief"

When Parson Anderson comes to visit her. In fact she pretends to be sad and behave as a widow. She is clever in putting the mask on her face whenever it is necessary. In her discussion with Parson Anderson, one can feel that as if she is reading from the Bible; her words are full of divinity but her acts are far away from the holy doctrine (1958:28)

"It is His will, I suppose, and I must bow to it"

She addresses Parson Anderson; then she adds

"I must bear my cross as best I may."

This means that she is ready to endure her troubles and suffering with patience and courage as a Christian. In fact this is a hypocritical allusion to Jesus Christ's endurance of the Cross. Mr. Dudgeon is ready to give verses from the Bible, but in reality she is unable to translate them into actions.

When Parson Anderson informs her that her son Richard was present at the execution of his Uncle Peter, her immediate response is (1958:28)

“Let it be a warning to him. He may end that way himself, the wicked, dissolute, godless.”

Such words should not come from woman who considers herself a God- fearing. Furthermore, Mrs. Dudgeon is not any mother, but a mother, who is supposed to be pious and godly; she has to be tender and compassionate. She has to pray for him and to ask God to forgive him and guide him to the righteous way, not to curse him. Such behaviour is not accepted from a religious person whose heart is supposed to be full of love and tolerance. As a person who believes in the Bible as the only God’s true law that provides a complete plan for living, is supposed to take more care of her sons, to advise them and instruct them tactfully, to bring them closer to God. Instead, she threatens them and scourging them by her sharp tongue. The teachings of the Bible are changed, by Mrs. Dudgeon, into tools of scourging instead of means to approach the world of God. To her, Christy is “a fool” and Richard is “a lost sinner”. Sin and sinner rather than grace and holiness are the common repeated words on her tongue. Mrs. Dudgeon rarely mentions God’s mercy and compassion unless in pretention and hypocrisy. Most of her speech and conduct reveal a nature of cruelty and hatred. A.C. Ward thinks that (1958:117)

“Mrs. Dudgeon’s Puritanism and that of all who are like her, was horrifying to Shaw because it appeared to be born of a hatred of Life, and to value goodness (right conduct) not for its own sake but only, Shaw thought, as a passport to the Hereafter, a bribe offered to the Creator as the price of admission to an eternity of personal bliss in heaven.”

Certainly Mrs. Dudgeon is not that evil character in her attempt to put the Puritan teachings into practice; but her radical mentality and harsh manner avert her to fulfill her goals. Religion can never be hatred but love; can never be selfishness but self-denial. Whether she realizes her stupidity or not Mrs. Dudgeon works against the essence

of religion. When Parson Anderson tells her that man cannot intervene in God's will because (1958:29)

"That is not in our hand". She replies in prudence.

"Did I say it was, Mr. Anderson? We are told that the wicked shall be punished. Why should we do our duty and keep God's law if there is no difference made between us and those who follow their own likings and dislikings, and make a jest of us and of their Maker's word?"

A gain Mrs. Dudgeon misunderstands God's law when she recommends herself with those who are saved against those who are damned. As a religious woman of godliness, as she thinks she is, she is not allowed to interfere in the Almighty's will to classify those who are purified and those who are not purified. That is what she is doing when she considers her son Richard as a 'lost sinner' it is only God's will and mercy that have the whole right to do so. (The Holy Quran: 4:49)

"Hast thou not turned/ Thy thought to those/ Who claim purity/ For themselves/ Nay- but Allah/ Doth Purify/ Whom He pleaseth/ And they will not be/ Wronged a whit."

Parson Anderson, the kind and moderate Puritan tells Mrs. Dudgeon that if earthly father of Richard is merciful to his sons; so with great reasons the heavenly Judge will be more merciful and more compassionate (1958:29)

"Well, Richard's earthly father has been merciful to him; and his heavenly judge is the father of us all."

Mrs. Dudgeon seems unable to restrain her rage as a religious and pious woman when she is informed that her dead husband has changed his will just before his death. She rages and raves calling her dead husband a thief who has robbed her own money. She also in her rage accuses Parson Anderson of being accomplice in this robbery. (1958:30)

"The more shame on you, Mr. Anderson, you-a minister of the gospel- to act as his accomplice in such a crime."

Actually it is not accepted from a pious Puritan to utter such words to a reverend parson.

Jealousy and even envy are vices that Mrs. Dudgeon is unable to hide. Certainly she is jealous of Parson Anderson and his wife, Judith, and their love relationship and peaceful marriage life. Since there is no room in her heart for love and tolerance, Mrs. Dudgeon is unable to understand the profound love between the two (1958:30)

"We are told that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

She goes on scolding Parson Anderson, unable to hide her jealousy and envy

"And you, you, who followed your heart in your marriage, you talk to me of what I find in my heart. Go home to your pretty wife, man; and leave me to my prayers."

Mrs. Dudgeon inverts the facts upside down; the one supposed to lead the service in the church has to stay at home with his 'pretty wife'; and the one who is supposed to take care of her household has to devote her time saying her prayers. Bernard Shaw introduces Mrs. Dudgeon as a lady of lip service; she always preaches about religion and God's law, but rarely we see her practicing them. Her jealousy and envy arouses when Judith comes to visit her and to help her preparing for the Dudgeons meeting to read the will. She receives Judith with displeased and stiffly manner. Professor Robert P. Whitman argues that Mrs. Dudgeon (1978:63)

"In her hatred to her son, in the frustration of having married the brother of the man she really wanted, in her envy of Parson Anderson's romantic marriage, and in her bitterness towards God, Mrs. Dudgeon represents the very antithesis of love."

Mrs. Dudgeon who is supposed to be more generous and hospitable, as religion bids us to be, is introduced as a miser though she pretends to be devout Puritan. She is described by the playwright's sarcastic way of writing (1958:32)

"producing a decanter of wine, which has no doubt stood there untouched since the last taste occasion in the familyOn the other [plate] she shakes

some biscuits out of a tin, putting back one or two, and counting the rest."

The last time we see Mrs. Dudgeon on stage at the reading of the will gathering. She is shocked when she finds out that most of her husband's heritage goes to his eldest son and heir, Richard. She is described as [*holds herself convulsively rigid*] commenting bitterly (1958:41)

"A very good way to put God's truth. It was every penny my own."

Later on, she leaves the house pouring her curses upon her son, Richard.

Mrs. Dudgeon stands for a section of human beings who think that they are more religious than the others. This sense of pride guides them to the wrong way around, thinking that they are doing good. The Holy Quran speaks about such people (18:103-104)

"Say: 'Shall we tell you/Of those who lose most/In respect of their deeds?/ Those whose efforts have/ Been wasted in this life,/ While they thought that/ The y were acquiring good/ By their Works?'"

Professor Abdullah Yusuf Ali comments on these verses saying (1934/38:758)

"That is, those who prided themselves on their works in this life, and now find that those works are of no avail. Their loss is all the greater because they had a misplaced confidence in their own deeds.[....] Many people have such a smug sense of self-righteousness that while they go on doing wrong, they think that they are acquiring merit".

Mrs. Dudgeon is one of those, who thinks she is the Puritan of the Puritans and that she is going directly to heaven. D.H. Lawrence comments sarcastically on such people saying (1961/1986:192-4)

"To the Puritan all things seems impure as someone says"

Parson Anderson: The Man of Reason and Action

“No doubt an excellent parson, but still a man capable of making the most of this world, and perhaps a little apologetically conscious of getting on better with it than a sound of Presbyterian ought”

[Shaw:27]

Different from the more strict and more rigorous character of Mrs. Dudgeon; the character of Parson Anderson is portrayed as a kind tolerant man. From his first appearance on the stage to visit Mrs. Dudgeon, we realize that Parson Anderson is more moderate in his beliefs and more humble in his behaviour. The Parson shows a mentality of a clergyman who knows well the essence of religion and his duties. In his speech to Mrs. Dudgeon one can detect he is a man of peace, love and tolerance. Even when he speaks about Richard ‘*the devil's disciple*’ as the Puritan community calls him; he mentions Richard with respect, asking God to forgive him.

Parson Anderson's gentlemanly behaviour towards Richard at the meeting of reading the will, gives an impression of a clergyman who knows the teachings of the gospel.

When Parson Anderson invites Richard to his house, he receives him with remarkable respect and hospitality. He even trusts him to remain with Judith alone when he is called to see Mrs. Dudgeon while she is sick. According to Parson Anderson, Richard, whom the whole parish considers him a villain, is a trustworthy man. He knows his good human nature though Judith, like the others, hates him and cannot endure him.

Actually Parson Anderson is a man whose heart is full of trust, honesty and reverence. When we hear him speaking, he speaks in gravity; and when he acts, he acts according to the real principles of religion. If Judith, his wife, behaves mostly according to her sentimental sense, Parson Anderson behaves according to his reasonable mentality and passion.

Parson Anderson understands religion as a means to heavenly content and a way to live life as it should be lived. The first time we see him on the stage, he is described by Shaw (1958:27) as

"a shrewd, genial, ready Presbyterian divine about 50, with something of the authority of his profession in his bearing. But it is an altogether secular authority sweetened by a conciliatory, sensible manner not at all suggestive of a quite through-going other-worldliness."

It seems that Bernard Shaw has chosen this character to represent the clergyman that corresponds with his own concept. He gives Parson Anderson characteristics of more secular power than a man of divine authority; preparing him for one serious act at the end of the play. These characteristics, as well, give him the full chance to play a good role in the gathering of the Dudgeons to read the will of the dead Timothy Dudgeon. In fact, he directs the meeting skillfully using both his divine and secular authorities.

The character of Parson Anderson emerges much clearer as a man of action when he enters the place of execution just at the last moments before hanging Richard. We see him now not as a clergyman of church and peace; but a captain in the militia of the American rebels against the British troops. Now he is the right man in the right place at the right time. He comes to save Richard and declare the town of Westerbridge free. Even his wife Judith, cannot imagine that her husband, the minister of the gospel, has been changed into a man of war. In a rigid tone of a soldier he orders the British General Burgoyne (1958:39)

"to take the rope from the neck of that American citizen."

Now Anderson speaks as a man of military power and a man of state rather than as a man of church; he addresses the General (1958:95)

"And now, General, time presses; and America is in a hurry. Have you realized that though you may occupy towns and win battles, you cannot conquer a nation?"

The character of Parson Anderson becomes more significant through his long speech at the end of the play. It's dramatic

significance resides in the fact that it summarizes the whole idea of the play. It also stands as the essence and the climax of the play. It is this dramatic significance that requires us to quote most of this speech. Parson Anderson addresses General Burgoyne, and indirectly he addresses the audience (1958:93)

“Sir, it is in the hour of trial that man finds his true profession. This foolish young man [...]boasted himself the Devil’s Disciple; but when the hour of trial came to him, he found that it was his destiny to suffer and be faithful to the death. I thought myself a decent minister of the gospel of peace; but when the hour of trial came to me, I found that it was my destiny to be a man of action, and that my place was a mid the thunder of the captains and the shouting. So I am starting life at fifty as Captain Anthony Anderson of the Springtown militia; and the Devil’s Disciple here will start presently as the Reverend Richard Dudgeon ...”

Therefore, the man whom the Puritan community has thought him a ‘devil’s disciple’ is willingly sacrificing himself for the others to live; while the minister of the gospel discovers that he has to act as a soldier or may be as a man of state. It is in this play, states Whitman, that (1978:67)

“Parson Anderson observes that it takes all kinds, the saint and the soldier, Dick and himself, the blasphemer and the traitor, to move the world- in this case American- into the future.”

According to Christopher Gray, Parson Anderson’s conversion has been stated clearly early in the play through Shaw’s stage description (2011:64)

“And so Anderson, the man of peace, becomes a man of war on the road to the final act, in front of painting of Saint Paul, the man of war who becomes a man of peace on the road to Damascus.”

Gray argues that if Richard’s conversion is expected because of his true religious nature, which seems obvious from the first act (2011:67)

“Anderson’s conversion is unexpected and unprepared for because his character development takes place offstage: after his abrupt exit, he does not return until the end of the last act.”

However, Shaw’s stage description of Parson Anderson is a notable hint insinuating that the man (1958:27) is

“capable of making the most of this world.”

He is a man more of action than a man of “*a sound Presbyterian ought*”. On the same context Brad Kent comments on the character of Parson Anderson stating that he (2011:515)

“is not a simple figure of traditional moral and religious authority; instead he undergoes a great deal of personal transformation ... Anderson does not act as a heroic man Judith envisions him to be, ... instead....He refuses prayer as a possible solution, turn his back on God, and rejects his profession...”

Parson Anderson is neither radical nor slack in his Puritanism. Bernard Shaw portrays him to meet his own didactic purpose of edification. He is a moderate Puritan who understands the law of God as well as the necessities of human life as God Himself recommends. Parson Anderson is portrayed as a man of reason and action, rather than a more strict priest, restricted blindly to the teachings of the gospel; and rejecting entirely the worldly life with its beauty and joy.

Judith: The Sentimental Puritan

“... in her face the pretty lines of a sentimental character formed by dreams. Even her little self-complacency is pretty, like a child’s vanity. Rather a pathetic creature to any sympathetic observer who knows how rough a place the world is ”

(Shaw:33)

In act one Bernard Shaw introduces the character of Mrs. Dudgeon and her house in a very gloomy and hateful scene to reflect her radical and strict mentality and her detestable spirit.

In act two the playwright takes us to a completely different scene of beauty, peace and love. This scene is in the house of the Andersons, where we can see Judith lives her pleasant life with her good-hearted husband, Parson Anderson. They live their life in a very decent home pervaded with the spirit of peace and love. Bernard Shaw describes the life here (1958:47-48)

“But there is a difference, for all that. To begin with, Mrs. Anderson is a pleasanter person to live with than Mrs. Dudgeon. [she has] an affectionate husband who is a tower of strength to her: in short, that life is as easy at the minister’s house as it is hard at the farm. This is true; but to explain a fact is not to alter it; and however little credit Mrs. Anderson may deserve for making her home happier, she has certainly succeeded in doing it.”

Though both families belong to the same Puritan community; yet the atmosphere in each home is different. That is because each family understands Puritanism in its own concept; and this is the message that Bernard Shaw is eager to send. If Mrs. Dudgeon is guided by her radical mentality; Mrs. Anderson is guided by her overflowing sentimentalism. The first time she appears on the stage, she is described as (1958:33)

“a sentimental character formed by dreams. Even her little self-complacency is pretty, like a child’s vanity.”

Bernard Shaw’s stage description is enough to draw a lucid portrait for Judith.

Throughout the play Judith is seen guided by her sentimentality and naivety. She looks at Richard as a real “devil” depending on what Mrs. Dudgeon says about her son the ‘lost sinner’, the ‘wicked’ and the ‘villain’. She even repeats mostly the same words of Mrs. Dudgeon that Richard lives

‘with smugglers and gypsies’ (1958:35) “and he has no love for his mother and his family.”

She is different from her husband, the minister of the gospel, who has his independent reasonable impression about Richard. Her naivety is

shown clear in her advice to Essie to be aware of Richard's wickedness (1958:35)

"never mention the name of Richard Dudgeon- never think even about him. He is a bad man."

Because of her naivety and simplicity, Judith is not certain whether it is a sin or not, according to the teachings of religion, to hate someone; she asks her husband. Although she has a feeling of hatred towards Richard; yet her good nature arouses in her a feeling of guilt to hate a human being; though the Puritan community considers him a villain (1958:50)

"Oh, Tony, is it wrong to hate a blasphemer and a villain? I do hate him. I can't get him out of my mind."

However, as a Puritan, Judith does not hesitate to express her feeling of hatred to Richard. She plainly addresses him (1958:55)

"I hate and dread you; and my husband knows that."

Such feeling of detest seems to be unreal but a matter of mere sentimentality. Her character is portrayed as a simple and naïve person whose heart bears no malice against others; her acts as well reveal love and tenderness. Parson Anderson realizes that Judith is not that woman of hatred. He even tells her that her hatred towards Richard is not true, on the contrary, she in fact admires him in her inside (1958:51)

"Come: depend on it, my dear, you are really founder of Richard than you are of me if you knew it. Eh?"

Judith, who is guided by her sentimentality, comes to admire, if not to love, Richard who decides to assume the character of her husband when the British soldiers come to arrest him. Richard, henceforth, is ready to sacrifice himself to save Parson Anderson. This heroic attitude, and what she thinks her husband's cowardice, prompt Judith to look highly upon Richard to the extent that one comes to realize a sense of love towards him. Her passionate sentimentality prompts her to say it openly to Richard, in a fit of anger, that Parson Anderson (1958:69)

"is no longer [her] husband"

Richard heroism and natural goodness inspire her to do anything to save him; even to sacrifice her life for him (1958:71-72)

“ I implore you-listen. You said just now that you saved him for my sake – yes.... a little for my sake. Well, save yourself for my sake. And I will go with you to the end of the world.”

This is Judith the sentimental Puritan, the one who has declared frankly her hatred to Richard; now comes to sympathise with him and even to love him. When she comes to certainty that Richard is going steadfast in his resolution, she finds no way out but to inform the court that Richard is not her husband, as the last desperate effort to save him.

Although she is a Puritan, restricted to the teachings of the Bible; yet her passionate sentimentality compels her to bribe the Sergeant, against her beliefs, to stay inside the location of the execution.

Judith sentimentality again diverts her back to her husband, when she discovers at the end of the play that Parson Anderson is not less as a hero as Richard. Right away she asks Richard to keep her ‘stupid’ behaviour secret.(1958:95)

“Promise me you will never tell him.”

Judith spontaneous sentimentality is apparently realized by her ‘Shrewd, genial’ husband. He is the one who knows her better than anyone else in the parish. He is the one who knows his wife’s delicate sensation. He is sure that his wife has misunderstood him when abruptly left the house in a hurry, leaving Richard alone to face his fate!! In his return back with the safe conduct to secure Richard he finds her inside the place of execution. Parson Anderson is clever enough to read her affections from her exhausted face, then from her awkward situation. Parson Anderson gives an intelligent and direct hint to his wife’s sentimentality when he asks Richard ironically to (1958:94)

“give good advice to this silly sentimental little wife of mine.”

Judith, by no means, represents the real virtue in this strict Puritan community. There are at least three essential features in her personality that one can detect easily; her naivety, sentimentality and humanity.

Richard: The Man of Natural Goodness

"He is certainly the best looking member of the family, but his expression is reckless and sardonic, his manner defiant and satirical, his dress picturesquely careless. Only, his forehead and mouth betray an extraordinary steadfastness; and his eyes are the eyes of a fanatic."

(Shaw: 37-38)

Before his appearance on the stage, Richard is portrayed through his mother, Mrs. Dudgeon as **(1958:27)**

"a lost sinner that left his home to live with smugglers and gypsies and villains, the scum of the earth."

He is also **(1958:28)**

"the wicked, dissolute, godless."

Judith, the Parson's wife, considers Richard as a smuggler who lives with the gypsies **(1958:35)** *"and has no love for his mother and his family; and he wrestles and plays games on Sunday instead of going to church."* She advises Essie not to ask about Richard or even mention his name if she wants **(1958:35)**

"to be a really respectable and grateful girl."

So again he is wicked, ungrateful son and irreligious. According to the strict rules of the Puritan community in the town of Westerbridge, Richard is *'a devil's disciple'*.

This is how we come to draw the first sketch of Richard's portrait, through his mother the radical Puritan; then from Judith the sentimental Puritan.

This is also Bernard Shaw's technique in his melodrama, to create 'topsy-turvy' dramatic situations and to prove later the opposite. Here Richard according to his Puritan community is a 'devil's disciple' but later on he will prove that he is a man of good nature and a man of virtues and magnanimous human values.

Right from the first appearance of Richard on the stage, Bernard Shaw, describes him ironically as

“the reprobate” but (1958:37) “graced beyond his alleged merits by the morning sunlight.”

Richard’s appearance accompanied by ‘the morning sunlight’ in an apparent hint to his brightness and his good nature. He is also described by the playwright as a man of “*extraordinary steadfastness*”. Therefore, Richard is not that sinful person as his mother and Judith assume. These features highlight Richard’s character as a man of nobility, loyalty and magnanimity. The one whom the Puritan community labels him as ‘devil’sdisciple’ will invert this false claim through deeds into something elevated sainthood. Bernard Shaw in his preface ‘On Diabolonian Ethics’ (1958:19) argues that

“Dick Dudgeon, the devil’s disciple, is a Puritan of the Puritans. He is brought up in a household where the Puritan religion has died, and become, in its corruption, an excuse for his mother’s master passion of hatred in all its phase of cruelty and envy... in such a home the young Puritan finds himself starved of religion, which is the most clamorous need of his nature. With all his mother’s indomitable self-fullness, but with Pity instead of Hatred as his master passion, he pities the devil; takes his side, and champions him, like a true Covenanter, against the world. He thus becomes, like all genuinely religious men, a reprobate and an outcast.”

Richard’s mother, the radical and extremist Puritan knows nothing of Gods’ law expect punishment. She knows nothing about God’s mercy and compassion; and that Richard (1958:29)

“will be punished in both worlds”

to stand against his parents. She knows the law of God as a scourge no more no less. Richard’s passionate reaction against his mother’s destructive mentality and hateful spirit force him to leave his house and to live his own independent life.

The first time we see him on the stage, he begins to slash his family members with severe scoring words as people of appearance and hypocrisy. First his mother who is (1958:38) "*keeping up appearance as usual;*" next his Uncle William whom he has not seen since he "*gave up drinking*"; then his Uncle Titus "*the upright horse dealer*" who is always "*looking after ladies.*"

Here Richard attempts to disclose the false mask put on by those "*Puritans*" to hide their realities. However, Richard comes to his real good nature and (1958:39) "*shocked into sincerity*" when he is informed that Essie is present while talking about her and her dead father. Here he expresses natural goodness and shows great instinctive tenderness towards Essie. Moreover, Richard is the only member of the family who acknowledges openly Essie's intimate kinship to the Dudgeons, regardless what the Puritan community and the Dudgeons, in particular, think of her as Uncle's Peter illegitimate daughter. [1958:39-40)

"he hurries remorsefully to Essie...She looks up gratefully at him. Her tearstained face affects him violently; and he bursts out, in a transport of wrath."

When we compare between the passionate kindness of the so-called 'devil's disciple' Richard and the ill treatment and cruelty of his 'pious Puritan' mother, we come to realize the difference between sincerity and hypocrisy. However, one cannot take Mrs. Dudgeon as a totally sinner, nor her son Richard as a saint. Richard never shows any sort of respect or gratitude towards his mother, and this, religiously speaking, is considered 'Disobedience to Parents'. We may understand his attitude as a passionate reaction towards his mother's cruelty and strictness, but it is not accepted from a son towards his parents. Religion prohibits such ingratitude; his good nature is supposed to conduct him avoiding any clash whatsoever with his mother.

In fact his inner goodness attracts the little innocent Essie to sympathise with him from the first glance to see him (1958:37

"Essie, with a gleam of interest breaking through her misery, looks up."

Though she has been warned not to speak or even to think of Richard, the young innocent girl cannot help but to look with joy at him. Essie is moved unconsciously by Richard's gentlemanly manner while he is addressing the meeting, (1958:40) She "...has been hanging on his every word and movement". Essie believes by her natural innocent instinct that Richard might be the one who could take care of her, the matter that becomes true. When they all leave the house angry and frightful after the reading of the will, Essie is left alone with Richard. When (1958:46)

"she falls on her knees, sobbing. He stoops good naturally to raise her..."

Through this manner Richard shows himself as a warmhearted man whom they call the 'devil's disciple'. Christopher Gray's comment on this dramatic situation and humanely conduct is to be quoted here that (2001:65)

"[Richard's] truly sympathetic nature is evident in his kind treatment to Essie; he alone shows mercy toward her, and it is he who assumes the role of protector ...Dick's true religious nature is all the more obvious through his choice of oath; moved by compassion, he forgets his assumed role as the Devil's disciple and swears by God instead of the Devil."

Richard's good nature emerges whenever he finds himself in a situation of kindness and respect. We see him behaves in a striking gentlemanly manner with Parson Anderson, both at the gathering of reading the will and when he is invited to Parson Anderson's house. Richard's real spirit of goodness arouses when he finds himself in a house completely different from his mother's house. If his mother's home provokes in him all the feelings of pain and suffering, the feelings of hatred and antipathy, Mrs. Anderson's home evokes in him the beauty of life, love and peace. It is the first time for Richard to realize the meaning of humanitarian life through the Parson's gentlemanly behaviour towards him. It is the first time for him to feel the beauty of life in this house; he looks dreamily round (1958:56-57)

"I am thinking. It is all so strange to me. I can see the beauty and peace of this home. I think I have never been more at rest in my life than at this moment; and yet I know quite well I could never live here. It's not my nature, I suppose, to be domesticated. But it's very beautiful: it's almost holy."

These outflowing feelings form the real starting point in Richard's most magnificent act in his life. The spirit of cruelty, hatred and hypocrisy in his mother's home has brought him to renegade the false Christianity of his mother and those alike. And now in this house of the Andersons, the illumination of beauty and love brings him back to his natural goodness.

The sense of admiration and new affectionate feelings between Richard and Judith that becomes evident just after he is arrested, sheds light on the good nature of Richard as a man to be respected, admired and loved. Some minutes earlier, Judith expressed her hateful and dreaded feelings to Richard. Now he is arrested as Parson Anderson and ready to sacrifice himself to save him; Judith discovers the spirit of nobility and magnanimity that this man holds in his heart. Just before leaving the house as her husband (1958:59)

"Judith with sudden effort, throws her arms round him; kisses him; and swoons away, dropping from his arms to the ground as if the kiss had killed her."

Towards this magnificent nobility both Judith and her husband become ready to save him at any rate.

According to Richard Burton (1961:91)

"Dick stands for practical, healthy goodness, the goodness that does things and enters into red-blooded human relations; his apparent impiety is only a sound, honest nature's protest against cant, hypocrisy, formal show, and sham. And he is capable of the greatest self-sacrifice when attest comes."

At the prison, when Judith tries desperately to convince him to save himself, Richard's natural goodness transcends all expectations. He addresses her (1958:72)

"If I said- to please you-that I did what I did ever so little for your sake, I lied as men always lie to women. You know how much I have lived with worthless men-aye, and worthless women too. Well, they could all rise to some sort of goodness and kindness when they were in love [the word love comes from him with true Puritan scorn]. That has thought me to set very little store by the goodness that only comes out red hot. What I did last night, I did in cold blood, caring not half so much for your husband, or [ruthlessly] for you [she droops, stricken] as I do for myself. I had no motive and no interest: all I can tell you is that when it came to the point whether I would take my neck out of the noose and put another man's into it. I would not do it. I don't know why not: I sent myself as a fool for my pains; but I could not and I cannot. I have brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it, gallows or no gallows....I should have done the same for any other man in the town, or any other man's wife."

The words here echo, in a way or another, Sidney Carton's words to Lucie Manette in Charles Dickens' **A Tale of Two Cities**; however, Richard's are motiveless and less romantic (Dickens:1997:156)

"it is useless to say it, I know, but it raises out of my soul. For you and for any one dear to you, I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that there was any opportunity or capacity of sacrifice in it, I would embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you."

Richard's self-sacrifice extends further beyond merely personal romantic love. His self-sacrifice is for the future of the whole humanity and his new-born nation of America. His last words while the noose is around his neck to be excused are (1958:93) "Amen! My

life for the world's future!" Again here he proves that he is a real Christian; here he follows Jesus Christ- not the devil-whose Crucifixion was for the redemption of the whole humanity.

Again, similar to that vision of Sidney Carton while getting closer to the scaffold of the guillotine; his self-sacrifice for Lucie or those who are dear to her, is mingled with the self-sacrifice for the future of the world. The vision of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection come at once to his mind (**Dickens:1997:366**)

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall never die."

It is a vision of martyrdom that introduces the minds of both Richard Dudgeon and Sidney Carton. The 'world's future' in the mind of Richard is also clear in Sidney's last words (**Dickens': 1997:366**)

"I see a beautiful city and a brilliant people rising from this abyss, and in their struggles to be truly free, in their triumphs and defeats, through long years to come ..."

Though slightly different in motives, may be, yet both stand for nobility, magnanimity and natural goodness. Whitman emphasizes this idea of resemblance between the two heroes, saying that Shaw (**1978/2014:62**)

"gives us a hero who at first glance may look like Sidney Carton; and since Carton's romantic heroism, either in Tale of Two Cities or in numerous dramatic adaptations, was familiar to Shaw's audience, the association is clearly intentional."

Having the Christian dogma of the Crucifixion and Resurrection Whitman assimilates Richard's self-sacrifice to that of Jesus Christ, that (**1978/2014:66**)

"Dick, who has found himself in an act of unmotivated self-sacrifice, is acting out the central Christian myth, and suffering a kind of Passion in his betrayal, trial, and near execution. Seeing an

association, at least in Shaw's mind, between Dick and Jesus is not an idle fancy. Dick is clearly characterized as a rebel against the laws of the family, of the conventional morality of his day, and of the state."

Whitman goes on to argue that (1978/2014:70-71)

"It is clear that in transcending his cynicism, in recognizing his own worth, Dick sees himself and his life as being a part of something bigger than himself-not a system or an institution, but an impulse, a world will, history."

This spirit of magnanimity, nobility and vitality expressed in unmotivated self-sacrifice argues A.R. Jones (1962/1972:63-64)

"of Dick Dudgeon is matched only by the intelligence and aristocracy of General Burgoyne; the inhumanity and hypocrisy of the family and towns folk, represents the system supported by organized religion and the stupidity of General Swindon, the stupidity of authoritarian government. Both Anderson, the preacher, and Judith his wife, undergo a conversion towards self-awareness and away from the conventional patterns of behaviour in which society has cast them. Both are affected by Dick Dudgeon's vitality and both, like him, learn to stand by 'the laws of their own natures."

Although Richard is described from the beginning of the play as a 'lost sinner' and 'the scum of the earth'; the matter that he himself accepts to be called the 'devil's disciple'; yet from the beginning of his appearance on the stage notable hints from his behaviour are clear to give an impression that this man is of good nature and capable to do magnanimous acts. Richard appears at the end the true Puritan against the false Puritanism of his mother and those like her. The townsfolk who have considered Richard a 'devil's disciple' now they see him the hero of their town they (1958:96)

“surge back again in wild enthusiasm with their band, and hoist Richard on their shoulders, cheering him.”

The Conclusion

The Devil's Disciple is a play that serves the didactic goal of edification. Bernard Shaw believes that the main goal of drama is not merely to entertain but more than that to instruct. His detailed prefaces to his edited plays, as well as the detailed stage settings and descriptions flow in the same stream of Shaw's drama of edification. However, Shaw is not a preacher, but the intellect dramatist who can put the question and let the audience to find out their own solutions or conclusions. **The Devil's Disciple** is a play written *'for the Puritans'* in the sense that it has a religious theme with a message that Puritanism is not to be understood as an abstract dogmatic theology. To be a religious person does not mean to be a strict according to Christianity; and to be a strict does not mean that you are pious. Furthermore, morality and immorality is not to be taken in its literal meaning; but a way of conduct according to God's teachings and human values.

In his book **The Playwright as a Thinker** and in the course of his talk about Bernard Shaw, Eric Bentley argues that (1946/1967:110)

“Morality is not only to do right but to discover what is right; immorality is not only the doing of certain things, but the deception of self in refusing to see what should and should not done. In the drama of fixed morality there is no moral questioning at all. Hence the need of much outward action. We must see the hero in many situations, facing right and facing wrong. He must be put to tests of fire and water.”

Mrs. Dudgeon understands Puritanism according to her radical mentality. Her very strict way of thinking leads her to understand religion completely wrong. This leads to intolerance and hatred; it leads to hypocrisy and vanity.

Richard Dudgeon, her eldest son, suffers a lot of such rigid mentality and rigorous behaviour. He finds out that Puritanism is nothing but hatred and hypocrisy a matter which is against man's natural goodness. Richard's passionate reaction also diverts him to be a 'devil's disciple' according to his Puritan community. It is not his sin to be labeled as the devil's disciple though he accepts it as a challenge. Richard's sin resides in his ingratitude to his mother; even if she is rigorous and hard-hearted mother, it is not accepted from the son to be ungrateful. If we understand his leaving the house as a way to avoid her ill treatment and not to be face to face with her; this does not give him the right to attack her by his impolite words.

Parson Anderson is introduced as a moderate clergyman who knows religion not through words but through conduct and deeds. In his speech to both Mrs. Dudgeon and Judith, his wife, he expresses himself as a wise and moderate reverent minister of the gospel. He is portrayed by the playwright as a man of reason and action.

Judith is portrayed as atypical sentimental young lady who is easily moved by words or actions. She is guided more by her emotions rather than by reason. Though she expresses her feeling of hate and disgust to Richard; yet she is suddenly stirred by his goodness in his act of self-sacrifice. She shows her readiness to "go with [him] to the end of the world" unconcerned about the fact that she is living in a Puritan community and the wife of its shepherd. However, when her husband comes back with the safe conduct to free Richard, right away she comes back to him ashamed of her relationship with Richard, asking Richard not to tell her husband about her foolish sentimental behaviour.

Judith, like many young ladies, is guided by her sentimentality. However, her love to her husband and his wisdom and reason are essential grounds to make their home pervaded in beauty, peace and love.

As an intellect and skillful dramatist Bernard Shaw formulates this melodrama in his distinguished Shavian way. It is the witty dialogue more than any other dramatic device that attracts our attention. It is his brilliant way of characterization that astounds critics to give their definite judgment about Shaw's characters. Whitman argues that (1978/2014:60)

“critics agree that a particular figure embodies or ‘stands for’ a single idea or attitude, but cannot agree at all as to what idea is being represented or how Shaw intends us to feel about the character.”

Regarding his wisdom, intellect and his sublime literature, Shaw is to be considered by Dr. Srinivas (2014:161)

“Like Socrates, Shaw was all-virtuous, all-knowing, and all wise. He is undoubtedly an inveterate champion of the highest form of literature, oriented towards ethical purpose and a cherished life.”

The Devil's Disciple remains one of Shaw's outstanding plays to express his distinguished style of Shavian melodrama.

It is addressed to the Christians in general, and to the Puritans in particular, as Shaw's plainly explicates in his two prefaces 'Why For Puritans?' and 'On Diabolical Ethics'. The play has a didactic message to those who believe that religion is a formulary of restrictive rigorous rules. Religion also is not merely meaningless words and terms to be repeated here or there, nor is it lip service. Religion is a way of conduct that guides man in this worldly life and in the life to come. God, thus, looks not at man's external appearance but to his heart and deeds, and this is the moral that the play attempts to convey to the Puritans and to those who are alike.

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