Paremiological Analysis of "Maxims for Revolutionists"

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Abstract: This article analyzes "Maxims for Revolutionists", an appendix to Shaw's *Man and Superman*, to establish the similarities between the Shavian text and English paremiology after having noted various remarkable likenesses between the "Maxims" and traditional English proverbial lore. As shall be shown, these similarities, far from being coincidental, are the result of Shaw's careful craftsmanship and his own tendency towards the use of proverbial language. Consequently, Shaw resorted to various features commonly found in proverbs, their study, and their compilation for the composition of his collection of sayings. These elements go from the way in which the text is structured, to the use of typically proverbial structures and vocabulary, and the allusion to well-known proverbs as the inspiration for some of the maxims. Finally, the influence of proverbs is so apparent that one of Shaw's maxims eventually transcended the author's original purpose to become a full-blown proverb.
Keywords: Paremiology. Paremia. Maxim. Literature. Bernard Shaw.

Titre : « Analyse parémiologique des "Maximes pour révolutionnaires" ».
Resumé : Dans le présent article, nous analysons les *Maximes pour révolutionnaires*, appendice à la pièce *Homme et Surhomme* de Bernard Shaw, en vue d'établir les similitudes entre le texte de Shaw et la parémiologie de l'anglais. En effet, nous avons observé des ressemblances particulières entre les *Maximes* et les proverbes traditionnels anglais. Ces similitudes, qui sont l'objet de notre démonstration, ne sont pas le fruit du hasard, mais bien le résultat d'un travail méticuleux de Shaw, qui pratique le langage proverbial. Pour ce faire, Shaw fait appel à différentes caractéristiques souvent associées aux proverbes, à leur étude et à leur collection pour constituer son recueil de proverbes. Ces dernières renvoient à l'articulation du texte, à l'utilisation de structures et d'un lexique proprement proverbial, à l'allusion à des proverbes connus comme source d'inspiration pour ses maximes. Pour conclure, l'on observera que les proverbes ont exercé une telle influence que l'une des maximes de Shaw est devenue, à l'insu de l'auteur, un proverbe à proprement parler.
Mots-clés : Parémiologie. Parémie. Maxime. Littérature. Bernard Shaw.

Título: «Análisis paremiológico de "Máximas para revolucionistas"».
Resumen: En este artículo se analiza **«**Máximas para revolucionistas**»**, el apéndice a la obra de Shaw *Hombre y Superhombre*, para determinar las similitudes entre el texto *shaviano* y la paremiología del inglés tras observar semejanzas singulares entre las «Máximas» y el refranero tradicional inglés. Como se pretende demostrar, estas similitudes, lejos de ser una mera coincidencia, son el resultado de una cuidadosa elaboración por parte de Shaw y de su propia tendencia a usas lenguaje proverbial. En consecuencia, Shaw recurre a varias características habitualmente asociadas a los refranes, su estudio y recopilación para la composición de su colección de dichos. Estos elementos van desde la manera en la que se articula el texto, el uso de estructuras y vocabulario típicamente proverbial y la alusión a refranes conocidos como inspiración para sus máximas. Finalmente, la influencia de los refranes es tan patente que una de las máximas de Shaw ha terminado por convertirse en un refrán en toda regla, traspasando la intención original del autor.
Palabras clave: Paremiología. Paremia. Literatura. Máxima. Bernard Shaw.

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INTRODUCTION

The relevance of Bernard Shaw as a writer, a critic, and an opinionator transcends any individual scholarly discipline that has scrutinized the works of the Irish author. Among his many fields of influence, Shaw is placed in an eminent position as one of the intellectuals that contributed to the diffusion of socialist ideas at the turn of the 20th century. These ideas transpire in the social and political themes of his plays and are expounded in works such as *A Manifesto* (1884), *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1889), *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928), and *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944), among others. Yet, a piece that may often be overlooked is "The Revolutionist's Handbook," possibly one of Shaw's most widely read works with political content due to its inclusion as an appendix to his celebrated play *Man and Superman* (1903).

"The Revolutionist's Handbook" appeared in 1905 (Bryan and Mieder, 1994: 42) and is intended to be a manuscript by one of the characters in the play, John Tanner, a modern reincarnation of the Don Juan figure (Berg, 1998: 145-46) and a person of firm political beliefs. At the end of "The Revolutionist's Handbook", which is described as "the most infamous, the most scandalous, the most mischievous, the most blackguardly book that ever escaped burning at the hands of the common hangman" (Shaw, 1998: 45) by Roebuck Ramsdem, Tanner's antagonist, the reader is presented with the collection of 179 aphorisms that make up "Maxims for Revolutionists". Although attributed to Tanner as a book within a book narrative device, the maxims are motivated by Shaw's own tendency towards controversy, which he made evident throughout his career. In relation to this, Barr (1968: 17) discusses that Shaw "is not so much to be deprecated for his indifference to symbolism, motivation, structure, and even poetics, as he is to be recognized as a designedly polemical writer." And polemics can certainly be found at the core of "Maxims for Revolutionists."

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to establish the parallelisms between Paremiology and Shaw's "Maxims." These similarities, rather than being coincidental, are the result of Shaw's own inclination to the use of proverbial language, as noted by Bryan and Mieder (1994). Through careful examination of the maxims from the scope of Paremiology, the underlying proverbial motifs and structures found in Shaw's collection will be dissected in order to determine how they materialize in "Maxims for Revolutionists."

1. PROVERBIALITY IN "MAXIMS FOR REVOLUTIONISTS"

The connection between Shaw's maxims and traditional paremias soon becomes apparent. So evident are some of these links that they can only be the result of careful, deliberate elaboration to endow his work with a proverbial character that determines how it is perceived by readers. Among the proverbial features found in the text, the following stand out:

1) the way in which the text is arranged
2) the dogmatism of the maxims
3) their stylistic inclination
4) the appearance of structures and vocabulary often found in proverbs
5) the use of existing proverbs for the composition of maxims

Each one of these will be analyzed to establish how they influence Shaw's composition but before doing so, a question arises about Shaw's choice of label for his collection of aphorisms: why 'maxims'?

The election of 'maxim' by Shaw rather than a different phraseological category for his list of sayings is not coincidental, as it carries with it a connotation of morality (Sevilla Muñoz and Crida Álvarez, 2013: 109) that is not necessarily associated with proverbs, despite sharing most of their major features. Some of the most commonly listed defining characteristics of provers are their textual independence (Corpas Pastor, 1996: 148; Honeck, 1997: 11-12), their fixed

memorizable structure (Mieder: 2004: 3), their dogmatism (Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2005: 51), their rhetorical inclination (Honeck, 1997: 84; Mieder, 2004: 7), or the possibility of showing some idiomaticity or being used figuratively (Honeck, 1997: 60-62; Sevilla Muñoz and Crida Álvarez, 2013: 107).

Nevertheless, this choice may cause some confusion since labels such as 'adage', 'apotegm', or 'aphorism' are frequently used indistinctively and to many scholars, they are synonyms of the same paremiological categories, presenting overlapping characteristics (Sevilla Muñoz and Crida Álvarez, 2013: 109), which is caused by the lack of a generally accepted taxonomy. Additionally, in the case of maxims, although indubitably belonging in the sphere of paremias (Corpas Pastor, 1996: 132-69), they are closer to the category of quotations than to proverbs due to their known origin, as opposed to the anonymous source of the latter, which is one of the most broadly agreed upon defining features of proverbs (Corpas Pastor, 1996: 147; Mieder, 2004: 9-13; Dundes, 2007: 127, Sevilla Muñoz and Crida Álvarez, 2013: 111). Therefore, regardless of whether the text is taken as Shaw's or Tanner's composition, the fact remains that the author is acknowledged from the onset. This causes the most remarkable distinction between both paremiological categories and affects how the text may be perceived by readers, as shall be seen. Furthermore, in the case of Shaw as a prestigious, authoritative, literary figure, the allegedly moralizing nature of maxims affects has an impact on how the text is received by its readership. Having made these considerations, the proverbial influence on the list of maxims shall be analyzed next.

1.1. Structure of the text

When reading "Maxims for Revolutionists" from a paremiological perspective, the first feature that catches one's attention is the arrangement of the text. In the appendix, the maxims have been sorted ideologically according to the concept or idea to which they refer. Even though this is a common procedure in reference works for phraseology and paremiology, its suitability is debatable, especially when compared with works that present a more straightforward, more accessible, and more intuitive alphabetical sorting by the first key word in a given proverb, generally a noun. The reason for this is that proverbs are open to interpretation and may be applicable to different ideas. Accordingly, listing them under a somewhat broad heading may hinder a reader's ability to locate a specific item (Hernández Cuadrado, 1999: 278).

Shaw opts for this procedure instead of the more unambiguous alphabetical sorting by key word but, in this case, it seems a reasonable choice since his text is not meant as a reference work one may turn to document a given item. Moreover, the alleged moralizing nature of the text and the manageable number of items included in it seem to further justify the choice. Consequently, the 179 maxims are arranged under the following headers:

The Golden Rule	Servants	Time's Revenges
Idolatry	How to Beat Children	Good Intentions
Royalty	Religion	Natural Rights
Democracy	Virtues and Vices	Faute de Mieux
Imperialism	Fair Play	Charity
Liberty and Equality	Greatness	Fame
Education	The Perfect Gentleman	Discipline
Marriage	Moderation	Civilization
Crime and Punishment	The Unconscious Self	Gambling
Titles	Reason	The Social Question
Honor	Decency	Stray Sayings
Property	Experience	Self-Sacrifice

Each one of these includes a varying number of maxims, from only one under headers such as "Fame", "Discipline", or "Civilization", to twenty-six under "Stray Sayings". An example of a paremiographical work following the same system is P. O'Farrell's (1980) *Irish Proverbs and Sayings: A Gem of Irish Wisdom*, which lists its 1056 proverbs under headers such as "Advice", "Age", "Ambition", "Anger", "Attitudes", "Beauty", "Behaviour", "Bitterness", "Blessings", "Borrowing", "Bravery", etc. The most remarkable difference between both works, though, is that O'Farrell's, given its nature as a reference work, lists the headers alphabetically, something that Shaw does not. Presumably, the reason for this is that, again, Shaw did not have any referential purpose for his composition.

Another characteristic that catches the attention of the reader in O'Farrell's collection is the fact that it does not only include proverbs but also rhymes and quotes by famous Irish authors such as Swift, Wilde, O'Casey, and Shaw, among others. This showcases the frequent confusion between phraseological categories and the vagueness of their boundaries, even among scholars devoted to their study and compilation. As a result, the following dozen Shavian quotations can be found scattered throughout the volume:

1) "Titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior and are disgraced by the inferior" (O'Farrell, 1980: 18), listed under "Attitudes".
2) "There is no satisfaction in hanging a man who does no object to it" (O'Farrell, 1980: 18), listed under "Attitudes".
3) "Activity is the only road to knowledge" (O'Farrell, 1980: 35), listed under "Education".
4) "Nothing is ever done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done" (O'Farrell, 1980: 42), listed under "Fighting".
5) "What really flatters a man is that you think him worth flattering" (O'Farrell, 1980: 43), is listed under "Flattery".
6) "When a thing is funny, search for a hidden truth" (O'Farrell, 1980: 54), listed under "Humour".
7) "Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same" (O'Farrell, 1980: 58), listed under "Justice".
8) "There is no love sincerer than the love of food" (O'Farrell, 1980: 60), listed under "Love".
9) "Man can climb the highest summits, but he cannot dwell there long" (O'Farrell, 1980: 62), listed under "Man".
10) "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself" (O'Farrell, 1980: 62), listed under "Man".
11) "Marriage is popular because it combines the maximum of temptation with the maximum of opportunity" (O'Farrell, 1980: 65), listed under "Marriage".
12) "He knows nothing and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career" (O'Farrell, 1980: 73), listed under "Politics".

Unsurprisingly, many of these are taken from "Maxims for Revolutionists", *i.e.* items 1, 3, 7, 10, and 11, whereas the others are taken from various works such as *The Man of Destiny* (1897), item number 2; *Major Barbara* (1905), items 4 and 12; *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), item 5; *Back to Methuselah* (1922), item 6; *Man and Superman* (1905), item 8; and *Candida* (1897), item 9.

Although the fact that all of these can be traced back to a well-known author should prevent them from being considered as proverbs and instead identified as quotations, their inclusion in the volume might contribute, over time, to their establishment as proper proverbs once the connection with their original coiner is lost. As a matter of fact, this occurrence has already taken place in the case of the maxim "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" (Shaw, 1998: 253), which is listed in the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Speake, 2008: 42). Incidentally, the fact that most of the quotations mentioned above come from plays, a genre meant to be performed in front of an audience, may facilitate this occurrence if a sentence catches on among

said audience who may take it as an actual proverb. If that were to happen, the traditional process of dissemination of proverbs by word of mouth would be emulated, even if artificially.

1.2. Dogmatism

One of the reasons why proverbs are such effective discursive elements is the fact that they are often taken to be absolute truths. This widespread belief is called into question by the fact that there are multiple pairs of contradicting proverbs, such as "make haste slowly" (Wilson, 1970: 501) and "strike while the iron is hot" (Wilson, 1970: 781). In this particular pair of proverbs, whereas the former warns against rushing into making decisions or taking action, the latter emphasizes the convenience of taking advantage of a seemingly favorable situation when it presents itself, leading to a lack of congruence between the two. Consequently, it can be seen how two evidently converse ideas cannot both be true at the same time, which automatically discredits the widespread belief of all proverbs being unchallengeable facts. Nonetheless, this idea that all proverbs are true is pervasive and contributes, to a certain extent, to their perpetuation and their relevance in a society that is moving away from traditional, oral communication, the basic means by which proverbs and proverbial wisdom spread.

In relation to the widely perception of proverbs as dogmatic, an approach to the text from a Bourdieuan scope may be enlightening to explain how the text is perceived. As is known, P. Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French philosopher and sociologist who explained communicative interactions by means of commercial exchanges. This is a most enlightening model to explain how the sententiousness of proverbs works, despite having continuously been overlooked by Paremiology. Thus, according to Bourdieu (1991: 66):

> Linguistic exchange- a relation of communication between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering, and therefore on the implementation of a code or a generative competence- is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit. In other words, utterances are not only (save in exceptional circumstances) signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed.

As can be seen, this analysis of communication exchanges can be used to explain how proverbs are given a "linguistic capital" that makes them be taken as unchallengeable. Moreover, in the case of the work under scrutiny here, this capital is heightened by the fact that the list of aphorisms comes from a prestigious and well-respected author that makes them even more undisputable in the minds of many speakers. As a consequence of this, the satirical purpose of the text may be misunderstood, leading to its consideration as a serious piece by an influential writer, especially, given the explicit political and social involvement that Shaw manifested throughout his life.

1.3. Stylistic inclination

Proverbs often include rhetorical devices that contribute to that intangible proverbial character that despite being so hard to define, is so easily recognizable. D. Villers explains how,

> The elegance or aesthetic appeal of a proverb is generally achieved with stylistic or poetic features, which include rhyme, parallelism, metaphor, and more. It is interesting to note that while they abound in ancient or classical proverbs, they are also very common in more modern ones, like *The odds are good but the goods are odd* or *You snooze, you lose*. These features are generally referred to as "proverbial markers" [...], "stylistic features" [...], or "poetic features". (2022: 10)

Additionally, the author goes on to explain the usefulness of such devices in proverbs, establishing how they work during the different steps in the use of a paremia. Thus, according to Villers (2022: 10),

- during the assimilation stage, they act as attention grabbers and make the proverb easier to notice;
- during the retention stage, they make the proverb easier to memorise;
- during the expression stage, they make the proverb more appealing than another form of speech.

In "Maxims for Revolutionists", Shaw shows great poetic disposition, using all sorts of devices in the composition of his maxims. Nonetheless, rhyme, which is often associated with proverbs (Mieder 2004: 7, 14), is rather scarce, probably owing to the fact that it is not quite as common in this particular phraseological genre. Yet, a look at the 179 maxims found in "Maxims for Revolutionists" reveals a variety of stylistic features but in order to avoid excessive lengthiness and repetition, only the following examples have been chosen for their illustrative value:

1) The golden rule is that there are no golden rules. (Shaw, 1998: 251)
2) The bureaucracy consists of functionaries; the aristocracy, of idols; the democracy, of idolaters. (Shaw, 1998: 251)
3) The savage bows down to idols of wood and stone: the civilized man to idols of flesh and blood. (Shaw 251)
4) He who slays a king and he who dies for him are alike idolaters. (Shaw, 1998: 251)
5) Activity is the only road to knowledge. (Shaw, 1998: 253)
6) The most intolerable pain is produced by prolonging the keenest pleasure. (Shaw, 1998: 259)
7) Titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior, and are disgraced by the inferior. (Shaw, 1998: 256)
8) The man who listens to Reason is lost: Reason enslaves all whose minds are not strong enough to master her. (Shaw, 1998: 260)
9) Decency is Indecency's Conspiracy of Silence. (Shaw, 1998: 260)
10) The conversion of a savage to Christianity is the conversion of Christianity to savagery. (Shaw, 1998: 263)

As can be seen, numerous and diverse figures are used by Shaw. There are examples of tropes such as paradox in example 1, metaphor in 5, and personification in example 8. Regarding figures of repetition, Shaw shows an inclination to playing with recurring words in the cases of the epanalepsis in example 1, polyptoton in 2, 9, and 10, anadiplosis in 8, and anaphora in 4. Although the repetition of sounds is not as common as one may have anticipated, there are some examples to be found, such as alliterations in 6, rhyme in 7, or consonance in 9. Finally, in relation to figures based on sentence structure, there is a tricolon in 2, which also includes ellipsis, parallelism in 3, antithesis in 4, and zeugma in 7.

As shown by the examples of uses of poetic devices in "Maxims for Revolutionists" above, the instances presented demonstrate that there is indeed an aesthetic concern in the composition of the maxims. Consequently, apart from the alleged moralizing purpose of the text, the maxims come across as more elaborate sayings, facilitating their memorability and reproducibility by readers.

1.4. Typically proverbial structures and vocabulary

There are some structures that appear frequently in proverbs and which help identify them as such (Mieder, 2004: 7-8). Unsurprisingly, many of Shaw's maxims follow these proverbial structures. A clear example of this are proverbs which start with the phase "no man…", as in the following instances,

- No man before his guide (Wilson, 1970: 569)
- No man better knows what good is than he who has endured evil (Wilson, 1970: 569)
- No man can do two things at once (Wilson, 1970: 569)
- No man can serve two masters (Wilson, 1970: 569)
- No man fouls his hands in his own business (Wilson, 1970: 570)

The frequency of use of this phrase in proverbs is shown by the additional 24 proverbs that are articulated around it in the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (Wilson, 1970, *ODEP* henceforth). Regarding "Maxims for Revolutionists", this formula can be found in,

- No man fully capable of his own language ever masters another. (Shaw, 1998: 254)
- No man can be a pure specialist without being in the strict sense an idiot. (Shaw, 1998: 254)
- No man dares say so much of what he thinks as to appear himself an extremist. (Shaw, 1998: 263)

A second recurring structure found in proverbs, similar to the previous one, and which also appears in various maxims is that which goes "he that" or "he who", as in "he who fights and runs away, may live to fight another day" (Wilson, 1970: 256), "he who pays the piper calls the tune" (Wilson, 1970: 615), "he who lives by the sword dies by the sword" (Wilson, 1970: 445), and another 17 proverbs in the *ODEP*. This introductory phrase is found in the following maxims:

- He who slays a king and he who dies for him are alike idolaters. (Shaw, 1998: 251)
- He who confuses political liberty with freedom and political equality with similarity has never thought for five minutes about either. (Shaw, 1998: 252)
- He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches. (Shaw, 1998: 253)
- He who desires a lifetime of happiness with a beautiful woman desires to enjoy the taste of wine by keeping his mouth always full of it. (Shaw, 1998: 259)
- He who believes in education, criminal law, and sport, needs only property to make him a perfect modern gentleman. (Shaw, 1998: 260)
- He who gives money he has not earned is generous with other people's labor. (Shaw, 1998: 262)

Furthermore, there are also a few proverbs that are introduced by the phrase "A man is…", such as "a man is a lion in his own cause" (Wilson, 1970: 504), "a man is a man though he have but a hose on his head" (Wilson, 1970: 504), "a man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks" (Wilson, 1970: 505), or "a man is not a horse because he was born in a stable" (Wilson, 1970: 505). In "Maxims for Revolutionists", this pattern is found in "A learned man is an idler who kills time with study. Beware of his false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance" (Shaw, 1998: 253) and "A man enjoys what he uses, not what his servants use" (Shaw, 1998: 257). This maxim also comprises a warning to "beware of" something, yet another fairly common phrase in proverbs such as "beware beginnings" (Wilson, 1970: 57), "beware of a silent dog and still water" (Wilson, 1970: 58), "beware of after-claps" (Wilson, 1970: 58), "beware of breed" (Wilson, 1970: 58), or "beware of the man of one book" (Wilson, 1970: 58). In relation to this, similar admonitions can be found in two other maxims: "Beware of the man whose god is in the skies" (Shaw, 1998: 257) and "Beware of the man who does not return your blow; he neither forgives you nor allows you to forgive yourself" (Shaw, 1998: 264-65).

Apart from structures that are readily associated with proverbs, and which contribute to providing a sentence with a memorable, impersonal tone, facilitating their application and reproducibility, there is some vocabulary that is often associated with proverbs rather than with everyday, spontaneous speech. This may be due to the fact that some words come across as old-fashioned, adding to that proverbial, dated character expected of proverbs as well. An example of this is the adjective 'idle' or the noun 'idleness', found in multiple proverbs such as, "be not idle and you shall not be longing" (Wilson, 1970: 395), "idle brain is the devil's shop" (Wilson, 1970: 395), or "idle folks lack no excuses" (Wilson, 1970: 395), and another half-dozen

proverbs found in the *ODEP*. Thus, a reference to 'idleness' is made in the aforementioned maxim "A learned man is an idler who kills time with study. Beware of his false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance" (Shaw, 1998: 253).

Other examples of words that carry some degree of proverbiality in them are 'loath', found in the well-known proverbs "length begets loathing" (Wilson, 1970: 456) and "better go away longing than loathing" (Wilson, 1970: 53), and 'alms', found in proverbs such as "alms never make poor" (Wilson, 1970: 12) and "great almsgiving lessens no man's living" (Wilson, 1970: 12). These two words are brought together in the maxim "Every genuinely benevolent person loathes alms giving and mendicity" (Shaw, 1998: 262).

To sum up, some of Shaw's maxims follow various structures that articulate well-known proverbs. What is more, for their composition, Shaw also employs vocabulary that is associated with proverbial language and which contributes to endowing a sentence with the memorable, impersonal, and sententious character sought by the author, contributing to the pithiness expected of such phraseologisms.

1.5. Proverbial inspiration, modification, and allusion

Apart from the elements characteristic of paremias that have been alluded to so far, several maxims seem to have been motivated by existing proverbs. To prove this, as it might be argued that this consideration is the result of an approach to the text from the biased perspective of a paremiologist eager to find proverbs everywhere, some of the most incontrovertible examples will be discussed.

First of all, the term 'inspiration' is favored over 'influence' because it represents more accurately the phenomenon noted. In relation to this, as M. Landwehr (2002: 2) explains, "inspiration regards the later text [...] as an innovative improvement over the previous one," which is exactly what can be observed in the examples that will be presented. As an example, "Activity is the only road to knowledge" (Shaw, 1998: 253) seems to have been inspired by proverbs such as "knowledge without practice makes but half an artist" (Wilson, 1970: 437), "an ounce of practice is worth a pound of precept" (Wilson, 1970: 601), and "practice makes perfect" (Wilson, 1970: 856). Similarly, the maxim "Life levels all men: death reveals the eminent" (Shaw, 1998: 262) finds inspiration in the well-known proverb "death is the grand leveller" (Wilson, 1970: 174).

The lengthy maxim "No age or condition is without its heroes. The least incapable general in a nation is its Caesar, the least imbecile statesman its Solon, the least confused thinker its Socrates, the least commonplace poet its Shakespear" (Shaw, 1998: 261) elaborates on an idea expressed by the proverb "in the kingdom of blind men, the one-eyed is king" (Wilson, 1970: 428) and it seems reasonable to consider the latter as the inspiration for the former.

Likewise, the maxim "Youth which is forgiven everything, forgives itself nothing: age, which forgives itself everything, is forgiven nothing" (Shaw, 1998: 263-64) finds inspiration in various proverbs, such as "forgive all but thyself" (Wilson, 1970: 281), "young men think old men fools, and old men know young men to be so" (Wilson, 1970: 927), "young men's knocks old men feel" (Wilson, 1970: 928), and "youth and age never agree" (Wilson, 1970: 929).

One last example of a proverb-inspired maxim can be observed in "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it" (Shaw, 1998: 252), which relates to the proverbs "liberty is no licence" (Wilson, 1970: 458) and "too much liberty spoils all" (Wilson, 1970: 831).

Another way in which proverbs have motivated some of Shaw's maxims is through the modification of existing paremias. Although proverbs have a fixed structure that allows for their recognition as such and their memorization (Corpas Pastor, 1996: 88; Mieder, 2004: 3), it is generally accepted that they also allow for different types of modification. This produces what

Mieder and Litovkina (1999) came to call 'anti-proverbs', *i.e*. "parodied, twisted, or fractured proverbs that reveal humorous or satirical speech play with traditional proverbial wisdom" (Mieder, 2004: 28), or what is known in other paremiological traditions, such as the Spanish, as 'deautomatization' (Mena, Martínez, 2003; Martí Sánchez, 2015; Gwiazdowska, 2020), *i.e.* '*desautomatización*', a label taken from Russian formalism by Colombian phraseologist A. Zuluaga Ospina (Mena Martínez, 2003; Martí Sánchez, 2015: 118). According to the concept of 'deautomatization', Mena Martínez (2003) distinguishes between "deviations, variants, and modified or deautomatized" PUs, establishing that deautomatization of PUs is the culmination of the process of phraseological modification, which, contrary to the concept of 'phraseological variant' or 'deviation', implies that the process is intentionally carried out by the speaker, as opposed to the latter two, which, as Mena Martínez explains (2003), may be take place due to geographical reasons or to a lack of competence by the speaker respectively.

Although it is not the purpose of this paper to determine which approach provides a more accurate description of this phraseological phenomenon, whether the one from the Spanish-speaking phraseological tradition or the English-speaking one, both agree that PUs in general, and particularly in the case of paremias (Gwiazdowska, 2020: 132), are frequently subjected to various types of manipulations by speakers to fulfil different purposes, such as humor (Martí Sánchez, 2015: 122), which seems to be the motivation for the composition of Shaw's text. Moreover, in relation to Mena Martínez's triple distinction between 'deautomatized PUs', 'variants', and 'deviations', the latter two occur most commonly in spoken language, rather than in written texts, which is what is being analyzed here. Regarding this, a common explanation for it has to do with the fact that oral transmission often causes those departures from the canonical form found in reference works (Mieder, 2014: 28).

Thus, proverbs, like any other type of phraseologism, may be subjected to four basic processes of conscious, purposeful modification by a speaker with the intention of fulfilling a communication need that he or she may encounter: substitution, expansion, reduction, and permutation (Fiedler, 2007: 95), with an additional fifth type that implies the negation of an affirmative proverb or vice versa (Fiedler, 2007: 95).

Although proverb modifications are not abundant in Saw's "Maxims", two unmistakable examples have been found: "Hell is paved with good intentions, not with bad ones" (Shaw, 1998: 261) and "*Mens sana in corpore sano* is a foolish saying. The sound body is a product of the sound mind" (Shaw, 1998: 263), both cases showing additions to well-known proverbs. The former is a modification to the proverb "hell is paved with good intentions" (Wilson, 1970: 367), whereas the latter elaborates on the proverb "a sound mind in a sound body" (Wilson, 1970: 755), quite frequently recited in its Latin wording, "*mens sana in corpore sano*", as is the case with Shaw's maxim.

The last way in which Shaw's maxims seem to bring into play existing proverbs is through allusions to them. 'Allusion' is different from 'modification' or 'deautomatization' inasmuch as "[s]everal types of modification are applied simultaneously or modifications are combined with other stylistic devices" (Fiedler, 2007: 95). To exemplify this, the following four items have been found to include seemingly indubitable allusions to various proverbs. The first example found is "Your word can never be as good as your bond because your memory can never be as trustworthy as your honor" (Shaw, 1998: 256), which contains allusions to the proverbs "to be as good as one's word" (Wilson, 1970: 317), "an honest man's word is as good as his bond" (Wilson 380), and "good memories have ill judgements" (Wilson, 1970: 322). The second case is that of "The love of economy is the root of all virtue" (Shaw, 1998: 258), which is seen as an allusion to the proverbs "riches are the root of all evil" (Wilson, 1970: 150) and "riches are but the baggage of virtue" (Wilson, 1970: 675). Thirdly, "If the wicked flourish and the fittest survive, Nature must be the God of rascals" (Shaw, 1998: 264) alludes to the proverbs "the more wicked, the more fortunate" (Wilson, 1970: 887), "God (Nature) is no botcher" (Wilson,

1970: 310), as well as to the Darwinian idea of the survival of the fittest. Finally, a fourth example can be found in "If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must Man (*sic*) be of learning from experience!" (Shaw, 1998: 264), an evident allusion to "history repeats itself" (Wilson, 1970: 374) and "the unforeseen/unexpected always happens" (Wilson, 1970: 854).

As has been shown, not only does "Maxims for Revolutionists" draw on proverbial structures and lexicon but it also presents various types of changes to existing proverbs. Consequently, the connection between Shaw's tongue-in-cheek, seemingly didactic sayings and various pieces of traditional folk wisdom is further consolidated.

CONCLUSIONS

After an exhaustive analysis of "Maxims for Revolutionists," it has been proved that traditional proverbs play a major role in the genesis of the text and that, for the composition of his list of moralisms, Shaw resorted to recognizable proverbial devices. This can be observed in the numerous similarities between the maxims and well-known proverbs that have been pointed out throughout this paper.

The first similarity noted between "Maxims for Revolutionists" and paremiographical works is the way in which the text is arranged, presenting the collection of 179 maxims sorted by the topics with which they deal. Yet, these topics seem to follow an arbitrary arrangement, contrary to what is done in paremiographical reference works, which sort section headers alphabetically, facilitating the location of a certain paremia.

Despite the similarities between the two phraseological categories compared, their main difference is the primarily figurative intention of proverbs, something that maxims do not have, as explained by Honeck (1997: 60-62) and Sevilla Muñoz and Crida Álvarez (2013: 109). However, this does not prevent Shaw from finding inspiration in widespread proverbial topics. In fact, the author often turns to common proverbial structures and vocabulary to elevate the style of his maxims and to provide them with the expected dogmatism and sententiousness. In addition to this, there are clear examples of proverbial modification in Shaw's maxims, which are consistent with the usual ways in which phraseology is manipulated through the addition, deletion, substitution, or shift of some of the canonical elements that constitute them. However, in contrast to the generally intended purpose of proverbs or maxims, the tone, ideas, vocabulary, and stylistic devices employed in "Maxims for Revolutionists" reinforce their satirical character, rather than the morality that is to be expected of this type of saying.

Finally, one of Shaw's maxims, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" (1998: 253), has already acquired proverbial status and is included in the *Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Speake, 2008: 42), which cites "Maxims for Revolutionists" as the first recorded occurrence of the phrase. The inclusion of the sentence in a dictionary of proverbs may be arguable as it is generally accepted that it was coined by Shaw, thus lacking the anonymous origin that characterizes proverbs. However, this occurrence is indicative of the process a sentence follows in order to achieve that status and be considered a proverb as, after all, speakers using it may not be aware of its origin. Furthermore, with the passing of time, it may indeed become disconnected from its author, fulfilling one of the main requirements for a phraseologism to be labeled a proverb. If that were the case, it would demonstrate the tendency of Shaw's maxims towards proverbiality, the flexibility of some phraseological units, and their ability to evolve and transcend their presupposed categories.

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