

I have examined Man's wonderful inventions. And I tell you that in the arts of life man invents nothing; but in the arts of death he outdoes Nature herself and produces by chemistry and machinery all the slaughter of plague, pestilence and famine... In the arts of peace Man is a bungler. There is nothing in Man's industrial machinery but greed and sloth: his heart is in his weapons. This marvellous force of Life of which you boast is a force of Death: Man measures his strength by his destructiveness. What is his religion? An excuse for hating me. What is his law? An excuse for hanging you... It is the same in everything. The highest form of literature is the tragedy, a play in which everybody is murdered at the end... The power that governs the earth is not the power of Life but of Death. The plague, the famine, the earthquake were too spasmodic in their action; the tiger, and crocodile were too easily satiated and not cruel enough: something more constantly, more ruthlessly, more ingeniously destructive was needed; and that something was Man, the inventor of the stake, the gallows, the electric chair; of sword and gun and poison gas; above all of justice, duty and patriotism, and all the other isms by which even those who are clever enough to be humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all destroyers.

G. B. Shaw