Shaw’s defense of a theater of ideas brought him up against both his great bugbears—commercialized art on the one hand and Art for Art’s Sake on the other. His teaching is that beauty is a by-product of other activity; that the artist writes out of moral passion (in forms varying from political conviction to religious zeal), not out of love of art; that the pursuit of art for its own sake is a form of self-indulgence as bad as any other sort of sensuality. In the end, the errors of “pure” art and of commercialized art are identical: they both appeal primarily to the senses. True art, on the other hand, is not merely a matter of pleasure. It may be unpleasant. A favorite Shavian metaphor for the function of the arts is that of tooth-pulling. Even if the patient is under laughing gas, the tooth is still pulled.  
  
The history of aesthetics affords more examples of a didactic than of a hedonist view. But Shaw’s didacticism takes an unusual turn in its application to the history of arts. If, as Shaw holds, ideas are a most important part of a work of art, and if, as he also holds, ideas go out of date, it follows that even the best works of art go out of date in some important respects and that the generally held view that great works are in all respects eternal is not shared by Shaw. In the preface to Three Plays for Puritans, he maintains that renewal in the arts means renewal in philosophy, that the first great artist who comes along after a renewal gives to the new philosophy full and final form, that subsequent artists, though even more gifted, can do nothing but refine upon the master without matching him. Shaw, whose essential modesty is as disarming as his pose of vanity is disconcerting, assigns to himself the role, not of the master, but of the pioneer, the role of a Marlowe rather than of a Shakespeare. “The whirligig of time will soon bring my audiences to my own point of view,” he writes, “and then the next Shakespeare that comes along will turn these petty tentatives of mine into masterpieces final for their epoch.”  
  
“Final for their epoch”—even Shakespearean masterpieces are not final beyond that. No one, says Shaw, will ever write a better tragedy than Lear or a better opera than Don Giovanni or a better music drama than Der Ring des Nibelungen; but just as essential to a play as this aesthetic merit is moral relevance which, if we take a naturalistic and historical view of morals, it loses, or partly loses, in time. Shaw, who has the courage of his historicism, consistently withstands the view that moral problems do not change, and argues therefore that for us modern literature and music form a Bible surpassing in significance the Hebrew Bible. That is Shaw’s anticipatory challenge to the neo-orthodoxy of today.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to discuss

(A) the unorthodoxy of Shaw’s views on the Bible

(B) the aesthetic merit of Shaw’s plays

(C) Shaw’s theory of art

(D) Shavian examples of the theater of ideas

(E) Shaw’s naturalistic and historical view of morals

2. The author sets off the word “pure” (line 9) with quotation marks in order to

(A) contrast it with the word “true,” which appears later (line 10)

(B) suggest that, in this context, it is synonymous with “commercialized” (line 9)

(C) underscore its importance

(D) strip away its negative connotations

(E) emphasize its positive connotations

3. According to the author, Shaw compares art to tooth-pulling (lines 12-14) in order to show that

(A) the moral relevance of a work of art must be extracted from the epoch in which it was created

(B) true art is painful to the senses

(C) even the best works of art go out of date

(D) pleasure is not the sole purpose of art

(E) all art has a lasting effect on its audience

4. According to the author, Shaw’s didacticism was unusual in that it was characterized by

(A) idealism

(B) historicism

(C) hedonism

(D) moralism

(E) religious zeal

5. It can be inferred from the passage that Shaw would probably agree with all of the following statements about Shakespeare EXCEPT:

(A) He wrote out of a moral passion.

(B) All of his plays are out of date in some important respect.

(C) He was the most profound and original thinker of his epoch.

(D) He was a greater artist than Marlowe.

(E) His Lear gives full and final form to the philosophy of his age.

6. Which of the following does the author cite as a contradiction in Shaw?

(A) Whereas he pretended to be vain, he was actually modest.

(B) He questioned the significance of the Hebrew Bible, and yet he believed that a great artist could be motivated by religious zeal.

(C) Although he insisted that true art springs from moral passion, he rejected the notion that morals do not change.

(D) He considered himself to be the pioneer of a new philosophy, but he hoped his audiences would eventually adopt his point of view.

(E) On the one hand, he held that ideas are a most important part of a work of art; on the other hand, he believed that ideas go out of date.

7. The ideas attributed to Shaw in the passage suggest that he would most likely agree with which of the following statements?

(A) Every great poet digs down to a level where human nature is always and everywhere alike.

(B) A play cannot be comprehended fully without some knowledge and imaginative understanding of its context.

(C) A great music drama like Der Ring des Nibelungen springs from a love of beauty, not from a love of art.

(D) Morality is immutable; it is not something to be discussed and worked out.

(E) Don Giovanni is a masterpiece because it is as relevant today as it was when it was created.

8. The passage contains information that answers which of the following questions?

I. According to Shaw, what is the most important part of a work of art?

II. In Shaw’s view, what does the Hebrew Bible have in common with Don Giovanni?

III. According to the author, what was Shaw’s assessment of himself as a playwright?

(A) I only

(B) III only

(C) I and II only

(D) II and III only

(E) I, II, and III

9. As it is revealed in the passage, the author’s attitude toward Shaw can best be described as

(A) condescending

(B) completely neutral

(C) approving

(D) envious

(E) adulatory