

Socializing Prostitution, Sexuality, Economic Slavery, and Depreciation of Female Identity in Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession

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Abstract: The paper explores George Bernard Shaw's presentation of prostitution, sexuality, women's economic slavery, and depreciation of their identity in Mrs Warren's Profession. It contextualizes enforced prostitution, women's sexual exploitation, and their economic oppression in a male dominated capitalist society of the 19th century England. As a Fabian Socialist, social reformer, and dramatist, Bernard Shaw's views on these issues vied attention of the social and political thinkers, and feminist activists. Prostitution was one of the important issues concerning women that transformed them into saleable bodies, performative ocular sexuality, and coerced them into sex in the brothels of the English society. It not only relegated women to the secondary position, but it explicitly treated them as sex objects. What has not yet been explored, is that by staging prostitution, Shaw advances the notion that woman's role is to receive pains, suffering so that men can advance their knowledge. By making use of masculine dominance over traditionally female values, like other intellectuals from the Victorian period, Shaw viewed inflicting pain as necessary masculine prerogatives.

Key words: freedom, prostitution, sexuality, Shaw, subjugation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Catharine A. MacKinnon states, "Women who are compromised, cajoled, pressured, tricked, blackmailed, or outright forced into sex, (or pornography) often respond to the unspeakable humiliation, coupled with the sense of having lost some irreplaceable integrity, by claiming that sexuality as their own. Faced with no alternatives, the strategy to acquire self-respect and pride is: I chose it" (150). In George Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren Profession, Mrs. Warren is an example of the women left with no alternatives except the claim that her sexuality is her own. The notion of prostitution deals with different dimensions. Lisa Shahriari (2006) argues, "British Literature has considered prostitution in essentially three ways: a necessary social ill ripe for satire, a serious social problem including women's inequality in law and marriage, and as a metaphor for writing for the literary marketplace. The treatment and characterisation of prostitutes within British texts reflect each of these attitudes" (66). George Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession, embarks on all these three ways. Firstly, Shaw satirizes conventional versus new woman i. e. Mrs. Warren versus Vivie Warren. Secondly, he dramatizes prostitution a serious social evil. Finally, he presents the play before audience as a prolific writer. While prostitutes have long been an object of disgust combined with hatred, and prostitution has always been regarded a filthy profession. The Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work (2006) considers prostitution "a sensitive and controversial topic, encompassing both sex and money" (xxi). George Bernard Shaw dramatizes prostitution through the character of Mrs. Warren. In Mrs. Warren's Profession, Shaw depicts that Mrs. Warren relinquishes job of a waitress, prostitutes herself, offer herself for commercial sexuality, and finally she becomes a brothel keeper for the sake of her daughter's upbringing, education, and livelihood, ignoring repercussion of the filthy and damnable

profession that confronted her with her own decay. According to Karen De Riso (2006), "The term "brothel" comes from the Old English "brothel", past tense of "brethen", meaning "to decay", "degenerate", or "go to ruin". In the 15th century, the word came to denote a worthless person or prostitute, and in the 16th century, brothel-house was confused with the unrelated brodel and shifted, meaning from a person to a place" (69). Further, Karen De Riso (2006) writes, "At its most basic, a brothel provides a place in which to conduct commercial sex, and brothel owners extract a profit by facilitating client prostitute-exchanges. To the customer, the brothel provides a readily accessible place where a man can release his sexual tensions and fulfil his fantasies" (69). Lisa Shahriari (2006) writes, "George Bernard Shaw's Mrs Warren's Profession (1893) hinges on the discovery by Mrs. Warren's daughter that not only Mrs. Warren is a former prostitute but also that she continues to be a brothel keeper. Shaw is sympathetic to Mrs. Warren but condemns the man who advanced her the money to open the brothels and continues to profit from the exploitation of the prostitutes. This attitude reflects Shaw's Fabian views. For him, sexual exploitation is treated with the same moral disgust that he considers the more general exploitation of the labouring poor" (68). Shaw justifies Mrs. Warren's decision. He considers prostitution as an alternative for women to earn their livelihood by commercialising their sexuality. Shaw portrays that women have to sell their bodies if they want to survive without being economically dependent on men. In the play, Mrs. Warren says, "The only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her. If she's in her own station of life, let her make him marry her: but if she's far beneath him she cant expect it: why should she? It wouldnt be for her own happiness. Ask any lady in London society that has daughters; and she'll tell you the same . . ." (3: 69). Esther Godfrey (2006) argues, "George Bernard Shaw's 1894 play Mrs. Warren's Profession emphasizes a direct correlation between marriage and prostitution in a society in which women have few opportunities for financial independence" (288). Bernard Shaw contextualizes prostitution with enforced poverty of women marginalized in a patriarchal

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society. Mrs. Warren is an example. She is one of Shaw's portrait about society's indifference women who were forced by circumstance into a life that they could not escape. Likewise, Mrs. Warren discovers that equal employment opportunities for women like men are bleak hence; she decides to indulge herself in the highly exploitative character of venal sex in the English world. Further, Esther Godfrey (2006) opines that surveys of prostitutes in the 19th century show that women without the support of a male wage, either from a husband or close relative, were far more likely to become prostitutes (287). The Shavian critic, Leon Hugo (1971) denounces Bernard Shaw's presentation of Mrs. Warren. He argues that Shaw forces Mrs. Warren to choose between penury and respectability on the one hand, and money and vice on the other. Mrs. Warren chooses money and vice. Criticizing Shaw's views on prostitution, he argues, "Prostitution is a filthy and damnable profession, made wholesome and blessed only by the filthy and damnable social system, which drives women like Mrs. Warren to sell their lives so that they may gain their lives" (88). Thus, the Fabian socialist and social reformer, Bernard Shaw suppresses social evil, and exercises social control over women. Further, Bernard Shaw caricatures women, and subtly insults upon women by repeating the story of Maupassant's Yvette in Mrs Warren's Profession as A. M. Gibbs (1969) views: Shaw's play also bears a critical relation to a popular genre of nineteenth-century plays about the repentant 'Magdalen'. . . . The Magdalens in these plays were generally beautiful, careless, and improvident women, deeply ashamed of their one mistake and desperately trying to "get back" to innocence and respectability. . . . She [Mrs Warren] is Shaw's Wife of Bath: a vital, generous, vulgar woman, whose hard-headed shrewdness in business is balanced by her sentimentality and her powerful maternal affections. (18)

2. Mrs. Warren's Struggle for Economic Freedom

Bernard Shaw depicts Mrs. Warren as a woman who lives a fashionable life of a prostitute by selling her body to pimps. He overlooks her economic oppression in a male dominated capitalist society. Raymond S. Nelson (1972) rightly points out, "Mrs Warren herself worked for a time in a temperance restaurant as a scullery maid; the she became a waitress. Shaw chose to make her waitress . . . for the low wages . . . He might have made her a milliner, a dressmaker, a seamstress, a dancer, or low ranking performer, for these trades seasonally swelled the crowd of streetwalkers. But, as a waitress, she worked fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week and board" (365). Mrs Warren is underpaid; therefore, she embraces prostitution to keep her body and soul together by conforming to the homosocial bonds among men like Sir George Crofts, Praed, Frank, and Reverend Samuel Gardener in a heteronormative male dominative society. The critic, Petra Dierkes-Thrun (2006) also acknowledges that the material and social conditions behind prostitution drove desperate women and girls into selling their bodies and souls for money, and often prompted former victims to become perpetrator in turn (295). Similarly, Edward Wagenknecht (1957) opines that

Mrs. Warren represents women's plea for economic independence. He states, "Mrs Warren's alternative was either to wear out her life in grinding toil or else to become a kept woman. She chose the latter alternative . . ." (108). The notion of prostitution whether legal or illegal was itself immoral and not acceptable to the British people. Shaw's ideology of prostitution was so scandalous that the play was banned for its performance. The literary critic, Lan Tran (2007) also criticises Shaw's notion of prostitution directed in favour of women's economic independence. She writes, "This notion was so scandalous that Mrs Warren Profession was banned in England, and when it was publically staged at a theatre in New York in 1905, the house manager was arrested and warrants were issued for the cast and crew" (95). Criticizing depreciation of women's body, Ruth Mazo Karras (1996) rightly argues, "If prostitution was the best money-making opportunity open to women, that was because other options were closed to them. . . . If prostitution was a good economic opportunity for women, that was because the sexual norms of the culture created a demand among men for nonmaterial of extramaterial sex" (9). Therefore, Bernard Shaw's treatment of Mrs. Warren either live in the grinding poverty or prostitute herself and become a raunchy, and submissive woman, seems to be a manifestation of his antifeminist stance. Mrs. Warren's social and domestic position is similar to that of a married woman from the standpoint of her economic slavery. As a married woman is economically dependent on her husband, in a male chauvinist society, likewise, a prostitute is underpaid by a pimp. The money, Mrs. Warren needs for making a good start is furnished by the pimp, Sir George Crofts, whom she feels obliged to. Crofts keeps most of her earnings she generates for her livelihood by selling her body in different brothels. Consequently, Mrs. Warren's indulgence in prostitution becomes the source of her livelihood and survival of her daughter as well. Lisa Shahriari (2006) argues, "The Victorians did not resolve the problem of prostitution with marriage. Nineteenth-century literature had two traditional endings for women: marriage or death. In Victorian literature, the fallen woman dies after much suffering and repentance" (67). However, the feminist scholars consider women's indulgence in prostitution an antifeminist act. For instance, Simone de Beauvoir opines that the pimps and the madams exploit women in prostitution. Women are insecure and underpaid by their pimps and madams. Hence; Mrs. Warren's status in the play is just like the women who are "Exploited by their pimps and their madams, they live in state of insecurity, and three-fourths of them are penniless" (Beauvoir, 577-78). Mrs. Warren has to give thirty-five percent of the money to Sir George Crofts. It is another offshoot of economic slavery of women.

3. Prostitution and Saleable Body

John Sutherland and Stephen Fender (2011) argue, "In this drama of ideas, Shaw wittily portrayed prostitution and brothel-keeping (neither word features in the text) as 'rational' alternatives to marriage that enabled women to make economic use of their sexuality. Women, Shaw wrote, were driven to the streets for the same reason that prize-fighters were driven to ring. The playwright was an admirer of pugilism (he conducted, later in life, an interesting

correspondence with the world heavyweight champion—and intellectual—Gene Tunney)” (26 September: Stage Censorship finally ends in Britain). Bernard Shaw glorifies prostitution. In the Preface to *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, he writes, “The notion that prostitution is created by the wickedness of Mrs. Warren is as silly as the notion-prevalent . . . Mrs. Warren is not a whit a worse woman than the reputable daughter who cannot endure her. . . . Her indifference to the ultimate social consequence of her means of making money, and her discovery of that means of the ordinary method of taking the line of least resistance to getting it, are too common in English society to call for any special remark” (3: 22). On the contrary, the contemporary social reformer, abolitionist, and feminist campaigner of Josephine held men responsible for prostitution as Pamela Donovan (2006) writes, “Butler saw the very existence of prostitution as an indictment of male supremacy and a cruel class system that forced poor women out onto the street” (72). Thus, Shaw considers prostitution a commonplace for women in the British society, to support their livelihood.

4. Struggle against Male Chauvinism

Mrs. Warren believes that a woman is secondary to man, therefore, she cannot have her own independent identity in the male dominated society she lives. She narrates the same belief to her daughter. Like Mrs. Warren, her daughter Vivie also faces male domination. Both, Praed and Crofts are inclined to take Vivie Warren in their grips either in marriage or prostitution. When they meet her, they try to impress her emotionally. On the one hand, Praed ignores Vivie’s family background as a daughter of a prostitute, and her parents for the sake of his wishes: “What difference can that make? We take her on her own merits. What does it matter who her father was?” (3: 43), on the other, Crofts tries to hide the fact that he might be her father. He says to Praed, “Oh, don’t be alarmed: it’s quite an innocent feeling. That’s what puzzles me about it. Why, for all I know, I might be her father” (3: 43). Petra Dierkes-Thrun (2006) rightly criticises Bernard Shaw’s ideology of reformation of society and homosocial men. He argues, “Shaw’s play casts a deliberately wide net around several possible fathers and lovers for Vivie who are, incidentally, all erotically or romantically connected to Mrs. Warren as well, so that the differences between the two individual women, prostitute and New Woman, mother and daughter, are virtually erased under the calculating gaze of the male characters, an erasure and substitution of the one woman for the other that feels incestuous in its all-too smooth transfer of erotic interest” (294). Moreover, Praed does not like higher education of Vivie Warren. When he comes to know that she is an expert at mathematics, he revolts against her. He says to Vivie Warren, “[revolted] What a monstrous, wicked, rascally system! I knew it! I felt at once that it meant destroying all that makes womanhood beautiful” (3: 37). Thus, Praed and Crofts intentionally reconstruct an abominable image of Vivie Warren. They treat her a sex object and exploit her personality. profession of prostitution degenerates Mrs. progeny. Consequently, Vivie Warren is treated with contempt only because her mother is a prostitute. Nobody likes to marry her if she chooses to marry some man except George

Crofts, a pimp. When Mrs. Warren tells Rev. Samuel Gardener that there is no harm in getting Vivie Warren married to her son, Frank, if she chooses to marry him. Rev. Samuel Gardener refutes Mrs. Warren’s proposal. He says to her, “[astounded] But married to him!--your daughter to my son! Only think: it’s impossible” (3: 53). Thus, Mrs. Warren suffers from penury and her daughter suffers the social stigma of her mother’s profession. Both of them face social orchestration at the hands of the people of their class. Like D. H. Lawrence, Bernard Shaw propagates that the consciousness of women lies in their loins. He estimates Mrs. Warren’s dignity and her prestige in terms of her sexuality. He admires her overt sexual activities which she takes-up in the different brothels for her livelihood. He portrays Mrs. Warren a virtuous woman. In the Preface to *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, he applauds her as, “Her vitality, her thrift, her energy, her outspokenness, her wise care of her daughter, and the managing capacity which has enabled her and her sister to climb from the fried fish shop down by the Mint to the establishments of which she boasts, are all high English social virtues” (3: 22). Moreover, he holds in the Preface to *Mrs Warren’s Profession*: “Mrs. Warren’s defence of herself is not only bold and specious, but valid and unanswerable” (3: 23). Thus, Shaw endorses Mrs. Warren’s decision to embrace prostitution flamboyantly which in turn results in sexual oppression of her body. Kathleen L. Barry (1995) argues, “When sex is objectified and human beings are reduced to vehicles for acquiring it, sexual domination enters into and is anchored in the body. This is the foundation of prostitution and its normalization in the prostitution of sexuality” (26). Shaw argues in favour of objectification of women’s body. He propagates that physical appearance of women is their lot. Raymond S. Nelson (1972) states, “Mrs. Warren had frankly traded in her good looks, and Vivie accepts that fact with sympathetic insight. As a result, she has lived well, reared and educated her daughter beyond her own social station, and surrounded herself with men and women of status and power, if not of integrity” (365). Katie N. Johnson (2015) writes, “Bernard Shaw’s plays forever changed America’s understanding of prostitution: how selling sex for money needed to be contextualized within a larger framework of the politics of women’s work and patriarchal constraints on women in general” (4). Mrs. Warren herself acknowledges to her daughter that her profession requires a new dress daily. She says to Vivie, “It means a new dress every day; it means theatres and balls every night; it means having the pick of all the gentlemen in Europe at your feet; . . . I know what young girls are; and I know you’ll think better of it when you’ve turned it over in your mind” (3: 100). On the contrary, feminist scholar, Beauvoir denigrates objectification of women’s body. She opines that the man who pays for the cosmetics of woman is simply putting chains on her freedom. Beauvoir writes, “In paying for her high-heeled shoes or satin skirt, the patron of a girl makes an investment that will bring returns; the industrialist, the producer in covering his mistress with pearls and furs affirms through her his wealth and power; but whether the woman is a means for making money or an excuse for spending it, the servitude is the same. The gifts lavished upon her are chains” (Beauvoir, 582). Thus, the

physical and sexual objectification of Mrs Warren's body is another offshoot of sexuality for making money.

5. The Interchangeability of Mother and Daughter

In Mrs Warren's Profession, the incestuous desire in male characters shapes an erotic triangle, and designs a tangible consanguinity to 'incestuous' social relations. In various erotic triangles, these relations have simultaneous desire for mother and daughter, Mrs Warren and Vivie, consequently, these two women become interchangeable object of male desire. Petra Dierkes-Thrun (2006) states, "The two women get passed around, fought over, and redistributed among past and former lovers, suggesting their ruthless objectification in a male-dominated social and cultural machinery" (295). Moreover, the interchangeability of mother and daughter strengthens oppression of their sexuality, and makes them tradable commodity. Mrs Warren shares her experience with her daughter the way she prostitutes herself. Petra Dierkes-Thrun (2006) argues, "The interchangeability of mother and daughter, their treatment as freely tradable commodities by the principal male characters, and the conceptual slippage between their male suitors' past and present desires, provides an important undercurrent in Mrs Warren's Profession" (297). The interchangeability is projected for trafficking of women in the play. Therefore, it is manifestation of ostensible sexuality replacing one woman with another.

6. Conflict of Wills

The saleable body becomes one of the reasons of conflict of wills between mother and daughter. In the beginning of the play, the dramatist depicts that Vivie Warren is kept aloof from her mother. She is educated in the male dominated educational system at Cambridge where admission of the female students "prompted a mob of male undergraduates to march on and attack Newnham College—Vivie's College—destroying the main gates—but not harming any of the women students—who remained, virtual prisoners, in their rooms (Conolly, 2005, pp. 92). Vivie goes to the opposite direction for her emancipation. She protests against her mother and does not want to have any relationship with her: "I don't want a mother . . ." (3: 103). Further, she seeks her happiness in a chair, cigar and whisky. In spite of flourishing her social status, she is involved in bad habits which are dangerous to a woman's health. She says to Praed, "Oh yes I do. I like working, I like a comfortable chair, a cigar, a little whisky, and a novel with a good detective story in it" (3: 37). The portrayal of Vivie as a bold, and independent woman is a caricature of New Woman because Vivie's "ability to perform the identity of the New Woman depends on Mrs. Warren's performance of traditional middle-class respectability. For Shaw, Wilson Suggests, the New Woman was merely a new type of middle-class womanhood rather than a radical mode of femininity" (Rodelle Weintraub, 2013, pp. 10). If New Woman of the time tried to revolt and challenge male supremacy, she had to suffer in her life.

7. Vivie Warren's Economic Exploitation

Apparently, Shaw depicts that Vivie Warren overcomes her economic slavery and earns her livelihood on her own, but the fact is that Vivie Warren is treated with disgust by Crofts. By depicting Vivie Warren's revolt against her mother, Shaw propagates the notion that the woman who does not conform to expectations of a male dominated society, suffers in her life. Shaw presents Vivie Warren as a worthless creature because she does not like her mother's ways of living a damnable life. He does not want to marry, procreate, and fulfil the behest of Nature, and thus Shaw's completion of Shaw's purpose of the Life Force. She says to her mother, "I do not want a husband . . ." (3: 103). Kerry Powell (1998) also questions Shaw's depiction of Vivie Warren. She argues, "Vivie Warren is a strong woman, to be sure, but for Shaw a woman's strength is misdirected and grotesque unless fundamentally sexual, seeking out and compelling a superior man to mate with her and produce a "superman" (78). This antifeminist presentation of women shows that the playwright rejects Vivie because she chooses to shun the fulfilment of the purpose of Life Force. Consequently, Vivie Warren is repudiated by the male dominated society. The dramatist propagates that the women who refuse to marry and deny motherhood, and those who break the family and live alone become the object of male contempt. Vivie Warren's deliberate decision to give up her mother and do her own business makes her prey for her own economic suppression. Her decision not only breaks her relationship with her mother but it also keeps her away from her equal rights to men. Ultimately, she has to accept male chauvinist society. The result is that she is underpaid for her actuarial job by the capitalist society. Some critics view Vivie Warren's decision to her own business as her personal freedom. For example, Leon Hugo (1971) opines, "Her demeanour is that of an emancipated [woman] . . . Vivie has won through to the sort of personal freedom which very few women of her time dared hope to achieve. She has won a notable and worthwhile victory" (87). Hugo's statement is unacceptable to the audience of the time because Vivie Warren's decision to give up her mother does not make her an independent woman. It rather destroys her relationship with her mother. An emancipated woman does not treat her mother like Vivie Warren does. Leon Hugo's opinions are, therefore, untenable.

8. Emergence of New Woman: Depreciation of Women's Identity

In the 1890s, the emergence of New Woman was an issue of debate among the intellectuals because women were protesting against male dominance for their equality with men. The New woman was demanding equal rights in marriage, mothering, divorce, education, professional career, economic independence, property and family duties. On the contrary, by writing Mrs Warren's Profession in 1893, Bernard Shaw caricatures New Woman. Shaw depicts Vivie as a New Woman who obtains her higher education at Cambridge, successfully enters professional career and enjoys cigar and whisky in the company of men from upper class strata. But she ultimately fails to understand the familial and social values, and breaks her relationship with her biological mother. Further, Bernard Shaw (1949) opposes the idea of new woman by criticizing

her in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism*. He propagates that woman's participation in the public sphere reduces her capacity of household labour, brewing, spinning and weaving. In his view, it reduces her capacity to produce a number of children: "We have seen also how it leads prematurely to Birth Control, which has reduced the number of children in the middle class households very notably" (175). Ann Wilson (2013) argues, "In *Vive*, Shaw takes the visual cues that signal a mockery of the New Woman and turns them into an expression of independence" (60). Furthermore, Shaw (1949) opines that women contribute a sexless development to the society by choosing professional careers: "This is a sexless development, because when the unmarried daughters, like the younger sons become doctors, barristers, ministers in the Free Churches, managers, accountants, shopkeepers, and clerks . . . they virtually leave their sex behind them, as men do" (176). The critics of Shaw differ from their opinions about Vivie Warren as a New Woman. On the one hand, Ayako Kano (2001) considers Vivie as an example of a New Woman (127) in Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession*, on the other, Kerry Powell holds an opposite stance about Vivie Warren. Powell (1998) recognizes gender binaries which Vivie has to suffer in a capitalist society. She rightly states, "Not only is she a caricature of the New Woman with her manly dress, bone-crushing handshake, and predilection for cigars and whisky, but her uncritical focus on working and making money in a capitalist and sexist economy makes her no more appealing than her notorious mother. . ." (78). It is clear from Ayoko Kano's view that he sides with Shaw's opinion of Bernard Shaw which is untenable because Kano does not identify antifeminist practices which Vivie undergoes in a phallogocentric society, on the contrary, Kerry Powell rightly argues and points out antifeminist acts projected against Vivie Warren by the capitalist and male society. Melanie Orr Francis (1986) opines that Mrs Warren is a good mother of her daughter. She admires Mrs Warren for her plan to seek an ordinary life partner for her daughter Vivie. She states, "Kitty wants an ordinary married life for her Vivie whether it suits her or not, to reinforce Kitty's notion that she has been, after all, a good mother for her daughter" (140). Similarly, Keith May (1981) appreciates Vivie Warren's personal qualities. She opines, "Vivie Warren of *Mrs Warren's Profession* has some of the appropriate qualities - resolute practical sense and a capacity to surpass sex-but, since she is an early figure and Shaw had not yet realized his ideal, she offers only a hint of the conclusive attribute of down-to-earth spiritually" (115). Both the critics have different opinions about female characters. The former deliberates on Mrs Warren's views about marriage of her daughter while the latter emphasizes personal qualities of Vivie's personality. But both of them do not hold opinions about women's freedom and their equal social status with men. Like Melanie Francis and Keith May, Bernard Dukore (1973) holds. Vivie is very much her mother's daughter. Like her mother, she is independent, must work at her own profession, and would be bored by a life of idleness. Mrs Warren is basically a conventional woman who, until forced to do so, feared to mention her unmentionable profession to her daughter; Vivie is a prude

unable, to speak aloud the name of her mother's profession, repelled by both her mother's tainted money and by Frank's (won at poker). (77) On the contrary, Charles A. Berst (1966) refutes the arguments of the Shavian critics that Mrs Warren is a conventional woman. He argues, "Certainly, if anyone is conventional at heart it is Vivie. Mrs Warren admits that she herself is too much of a vulgarian, too honest, too imbued with the excitement of her work—in essence she admits she is less able to play the hypocritical role which society demands as the price of respectability" (402). In spite of discussing the real social status of the female characters, the above critics defend Mrs Warren's and her daughter's status by describing the characteristics of their personalities. These critics do not mention whether Shaw makes caricature of women's personalities, rejects their independent existence and conforms them to male expectations. Their opinions about Mrs Warren and Vivie Warren are, therefore, unacceptable in relation to Shaw's attitude towards women

8.1 Vivie Warren's Struggle for Individual Identity

Bernard Shaw adores the woman who carries out the responsibilities of marriage, motherhood, cooking, washing, and wifely duties to her husband. On the contrary, he rejects the woman who denies these roles. Mrs Warren and her daughter are the examples in the play. Shaw defends Mrs Warren because she accepts her slavery in the male-dominated society. He shows that Vivie Warren breaks relationship with her mother because she cannot carry out the social responsibilities; consequently, she is useless to the society because she proclaims: "Now once for all, mother, you want a daughter and Frank wants a wife. I don't want a mother; and I don't want a husband" (3: 103).

9. Conclusion

The plot is ostensibly to depict realism on poverty but it is littered to ensue women as saleable objects, commodity, prostitutes, and Shaw's antifeminist instance on women as seductress (Shaw accused Jenny Paterson of violating his virginity at the early of twenty-nine.). Throughout the play, Shaw justifies Mrs. Warren's profession of prostitution, and defends the thesis that women's sexual arena is their lot. For example, Mrs. Warren chooses prostitution, and commercialises her sexuality for her livelihood. Likewise, her daughter, Vivie is underpaid by the male dominated capitalist society. She is repudiated by the people of her own class because she is the daughter of a renowned prostitute. The two contradictory female figures viz mother and daughter represent two different designs of human sexuality. The former deals with the prostitution, sexual oppression, economic exploitation, inequality, rejection of a mother by her daughter, latter is transformed into a New Woman, and is a caricature of the New Woman. Like her mother, she also faces economic exploitation, incestuous male desires, and rejection by the society. Thus, both mother and daughter are subjugated to the secondary position to their male counterparts Reverend Samuel Gardner, Sir George Crofts, Praed, and Frank. They are tied to the paradoxical homosocial bond whom the male dominated society holds responsible for their objectification. Like Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Vivie Warren flamboyantly breaks her relationships with her biological mother; but she still feels indebted to her mother's

successful performance of middle-class femininity because, if she could successfully perform the role of the New Woman, she could render it due to her mother who earns money by selling her body. So, by the end of the play, the woman question still remains unresolved and women have to play subservient roles within patriarchal society. The dramatist suggests no resolution to women except their subjugation to men. Bernard Shaw's opinions about prostitution, sexuality, women's economic and sexual freedom therefore, seem to be a manifestation of his antifeminism instance in the play. One of Shaw's contemporary writers also reveals his ambivalent attitude towards women's liberation: "a feminist in politics, but Anti-feminist in emotion. His key to most problems is "Ne Cherchea pas la femme" (Chesterton, 2019).

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