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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Morality and gender in the works of the playwrights of the New Drama Movement 1894-1914.**

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**Morality and Gender in the Works of the  
Playwrights of the New Drama Movement  
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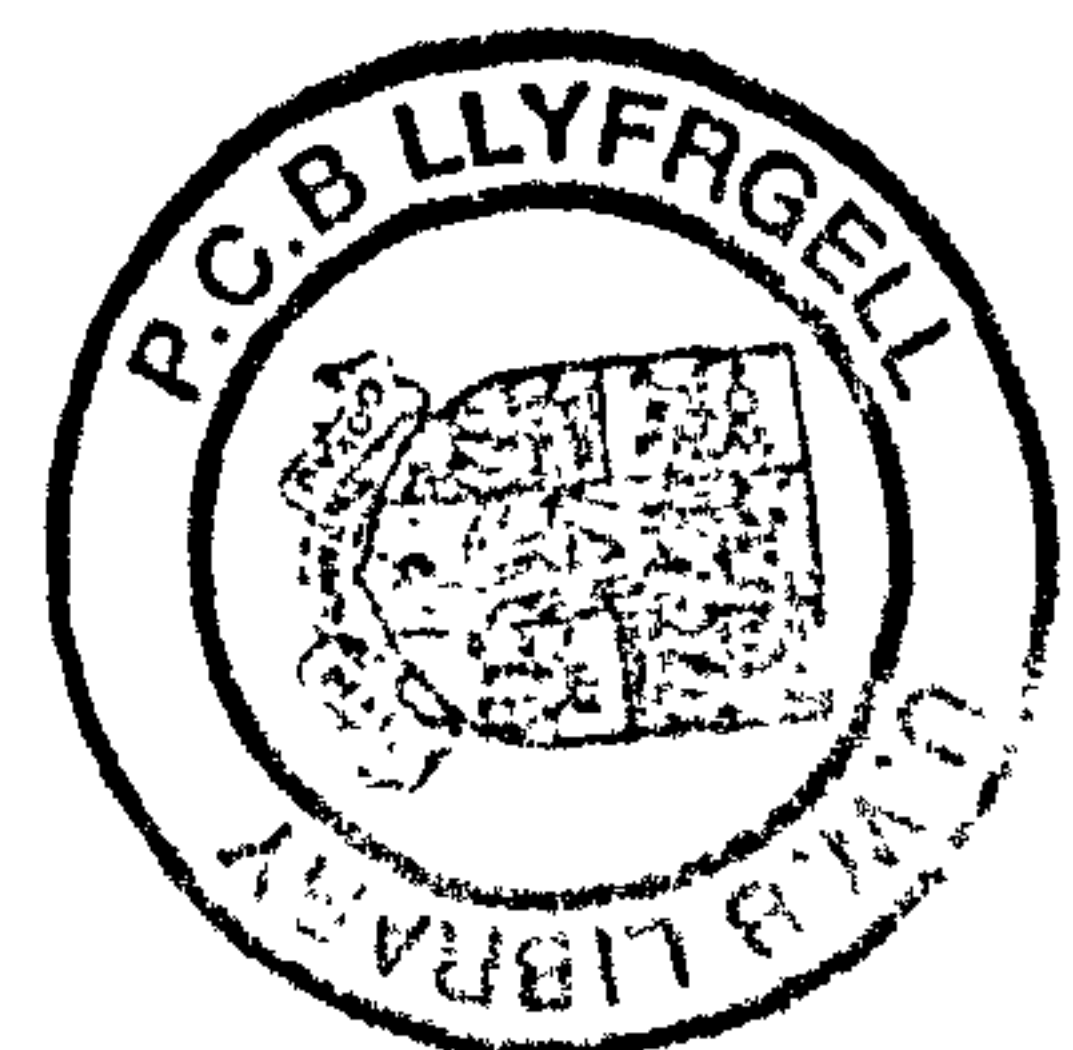
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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
By  
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October 2000



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The “new drama” movement emerged in the 1890s, and bloomed in the first decades of the twentieth century. The present thesis discusses the ways in which the dramatists who contributed to the “new drama” movement in England represented the issues of gender and morality, and the relationships between them. The word “morality” is used herein as a measure of “right” and “wrong” and the principles and the values that have a primary bearing on human conduct. This criterion for judging human behaviour underwent a change of great significance in the period with which this study is concerned. The change was a side-product of the radical and millenarian movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

These movements shed a sceptical light on many of the period’s cultural and social aspects, stirring in people a passion for novel ideas and philosophies. One of the most important of the orthodox tenets found, at that time, to be lacking in credibility was the ethical order which had been authorized by such long-established institutions as official religious authorities and the governing judicial systems. My study will show the way in which the dramatists reflected their conceptions of right and wrong through the social problems they chose to write about, and to what extent each of them mirrored the changing attitudes towards moral questions in their society.

Another part of my study is occupied with issues of gender. This embraces matters such as gender alienation, indoctrination, and sexual relationships. However most important of all will be my analysis of issues relating to morality and affiliated with gender in light of the complicated and dialectic relationship between them. Morality is the system which disciplines liaisons between individuals and institutions, while gender is the "primary category of our social relationships," hence the intriguing relationship between them (1). Gender, as the primary determinant of the moral tone of the nation, began to gain emphasis with the advent of the libertarian age. The awareness of the influence of gender on society's concept of right and wrong manifests itself in the form of its recognition as a significant political force.

The present thesis adopts the sexual antitheses that Helen Haste, a feminist psychoanalyst, singles out as among the most significant in determining the way the West has made sense of sexual relationships since the Industrial Revolution. These are the public/private, active/passive and rational/irrational gender-marked binaries and their ramifications (2). The thesis also explores the role of the mechanistic model which is one of the most significant frames of thought through which the Western world rationalizes gender. This study investigates this model in terms of its being an important part of the structure of cause and effect that helps the perpetuation of the operation of sexual and cultural antitheses and their role in bringing about moral chaos.

Practical experience, the working and the reworking of the material of this thesis, has shown that the ideas around which it is structured are of a peculiarly transient nature. They are fluid and very resistant to neat, logical outlining. They move among each

other's realms freely and without enough inherent semantic control either to warrant, or to admit, their division into separate headings. Consider the pivots of this structure of ideas which are the public/private principles. As they describe and limit the boundaries between male and female physical spaces, they at once sustain these boundaries and regulate human conduct within them. The instantaneousness with which the mind moves from one association to another along the public/private split matches up to the immediacy with which the id is experienced. Not surprisingly so, since this subliminal part of the human constitution is the habitat of gender identity, and the operational ground of the agencies responsible for its socialization (3).

Being a direct descendent of the content of the id, these agencies, which are part of the primary theme of this thesis, have inherited its uncontrollable flexibility. So one moves freely between public and private metaphors which are the frames of reference that describe and limit behaviour within sexual relations. Mobility across the boundaries of the public/private, active/ passive, and rational/ irrational dualities is unrestrained by much deliberated, intermediate logic. Progression to the mechanistic model and its outgrowths, the principles of control and hierarchy, does not warrant many rationally connecting ideas. As soon as we unearth one notion or another from its place in the intermeshed web of meanings, another notion comes to the surface, propelled by the sheer force of its indivisibility from the other ideas.

The theoretical substance of this thesis is impatient with mechanical discipline, so its principal thematic control has to come from the dramatists' main topics. This method, apart from giving shape and definition to the present work, is instrumental in another,

more important, way. It provides an appropriate vehicle to convey the themes of gender and morality. Although the playwrights deal with these themes largely through direct statement, much of their treatment of gender and morality recedes to the background of their concerns, lying hidden beneath preoccupations to which these themes seemingly have no relation. The technique is apt for the exploration of the meaning of maleness and femaleness which lies predominantly in the subliminal part of the human soul. It is also appropriate for the task of connecting the meaning of gender to the ethical givens of the outside world. These two motives, investigating gender meaning and connecting it to morality, are best embodied in the broader metaphor of the obliviousness of the id. This is basically because we experience our gendered, and unavoidably moral, selves unknowingly. The methods by which ideas are ordered in the present work are also instrumental in representing subversive theses more effectively.

The playwrights' engagement in the complicated task of undoing the knots and untangling the perplexities that arise on the basis of the public/private split takes place in the subliminal level of the play. This undressing of the coats of public/private sophistry is accompanied by a presentation of moral solutions that strike at the root of the problems. In the process of doing this, the dramatists often overthrow old prejudices. However, despite their attainment in this context, these dramatists have insights bold enough to realize that some tact is called for in dealing with very long-established beliefs. There is no better illustration of this fact than the example of recasting women's role on the stage. The "new dramatists," in a good number of cases, mould the reformed image in the underlying structure of sexual metaphors rather than refashioning this image in concrete roles which have been for a long time recognized as male prerogatives.

Two apt cases in point are those of Alice Maitland and Barbara Undershaft, a pair of “new drama” protagonists created by Barker and Shaw respectively. They are both recommended to our sympathy through their high moral standards, and both are key figures in the schemes of moral inversion in *The Voysey Inheritance* (Barker) and *Major Barbara* (Shaw). Still, the pair’s refashioned, empowered images occur mainly in the metaphorical structures of the plays rather than in their external incidents; in the plays as “being,” rather than in the plays as “action.” The two female protagonists manage to reconcile masculine and feminine principles in themselves and employ the ensuing blend in the service of a unifying moral purpose. Meanwhile, the administration of the official institutions which form the operational grounds for the prompters of ethical revolution is given to the male protagonists, and not the female protagonists. To make Barbara and Alice top executives in two influential public institutions like the Voysey’s legal firm and the Undershaft factory for manufacturing arms would have seemed a far-fetched concept in the social climate of the time. This is the age in which women were still fighting for their very basic rights, like citizenship and access to their own property. Consequently promoting the two female moral catalysts to leaders of top economic and legal institutions might shatter the basic core of the social realism which is one of the pillars of the “new drama.”

The coverage of the present thesis is not exhaustive but selective, focusing on the task of furnishing a lucid and rounded view of the themes of gender and morality as they are reflected in a representative bulk of the “new drama” output. I have, when possible, grouped the individual plays inside each chapter on each individual playwright according to thematic category. At the same time I have examined the substantiality of gender and



morality from the standpoint of each play possessing a thematic and artistic unity in its own right. The liquid-like nature of the theoretical backbone of this thesis and its resistance to categorization is one of the factors that determine this choice of method. Another is the somewhat unusual way in which the topic of this thesis relates itself to each individual play. What lies at the heart of the socialization of gender, of the complicated interplay of the public and private parts of the sexual symbiosis with each other, and with the issue of morality, is a conglomeration of antithetical and competing images and values. This conglomeration is located at the juncture between conscious and unconscious understanding. For this reason, the "new dramatists," more often than not, find that these issues are best dramatized at the meeting point between the externality and internality; the form and content; the direct and symbolic statements of their plays. This confluence of dramatic layers is frequently situated in the subtext of the play, in the form as the "soul" of the drama. The latter corresponds to the human psyche in that they both draw their authenticity from their exhilarating difference from any number of others cast in the same mould. On the strength of this I have striven to highlight the contents of the "soul" of each play individually, anchoring the theme of gender and morality, which is an important part of this "soul," in the peculiarities and specificities of the diverse human situations embodied in each "new drama" piece.

A study of the relationship between gender and morality will unavoidably steer our thinking towards women's position, and the situation holds in reverse. An evaluation of the role of women serves as the foundations which help to give rise to the subsequent judgement one makes of the public and the private; gender relations as determined by the division, and its metaphorical outgrowth; and the ethical system. Conveniently locating

women on the public/private split, and fixing them there, has always been the most vital step towards preserving patriarchal supremacy. Most of the rules regulating sexual relationships, written and unwritten alike, and most of the gender-marked symbols that pose as the natural components of femininity have one ultimate goal, that is to cast women in the role of the "other." The resulting secondary position is guaranteed to push women away from social centrality and closer to periphery, in a bid to leave the core of social gravity as an exclusive male prerogative.

Women's position is then a monitor of the change in the public/private structure of a given society. For this reason I will be focusing largely on the role of women. Each chapter on each individual playwright concludes with an overall evaluation of the position of women. This evaluation, which comes under the separate heading "The Female Portrait," reflects the extent to which each dramatist subverts the public/private structure and its ramifications in some of his or her representative works. Not only that but I will be also focusing on the image of women in each individual play discussed within each individual dramatist's work. I will be particularly highlighting the position of those female characters who contribute to the inversion of the moral schemes in the plays. The most important point in this context will be the discussion of the structure of sexual metaphors that underpins these images. Ultimately, when the occasion calls for it, I will assess how far this structure pushes the female moral catalysts nearer, or further, from social centrality.

It is most expedient that the theme of gender and morality, the contours of which are predominantly undefinable, should be held together by the more solid, defining

function of the dramatists' main topics. Still, in the final balance, it would seem appropriate that a form of general outlook should be provided after the discussion of the individual playwrights. In it one tries to tease out of the tapestry of desperately knotted conceptions that arise on the public/private distinction a philosophical design which is shared by the dramatists and which is buried in the extreme innerness of the dramatic structure. This design has its source in an allegorical-poetic layer of the drama. The extreme deep-seatedness of this pattern of thoughts helps to crystallize the arguments of the chapters on the playwrights. I have called the division that is concerned with this pattern of thoughts "Who am I and Where is Home?: The Quintessential Dilemma."

As the title suggests, this chapter deals with the fundamental philosophy of being that rationalizes the experience of the "new drama" characters. These figures are perpetually tormented as a result of their being entrapped in human relationships that are based on faulty ethical and sexual structures. The orthodox order creates permanent tension between the public and the private parts of the lives of individuals and societies. This tension is accompanied by a gender-marked metaphorical schism that distances individuals from themselves and from each other. The chaos that ensues from gender alienation and the subsequent lack of communication between the sexes makes the realization of healthy man-woman social units almost impossible. Accordingly, individuals are deprived of the spiritual satisfaction that results from their being at the centre of a healthy domestic arrangement. "Who am I and Where is Home?" explores the tragedy of the anguished "new drama" characters who are lost in no-man's land between the private and the public parts of their lives. It also shows that the only hope of salvation

for these characters, and the society which they represent, resides in the reconciliation of sharply divided sexual/cultural values along the public/private split.

## CHAPTER 1

### NOTES

1. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.60
2. The private/public, active/passive and rational/irrational sexual dualities are part of the central subject matter in Haste's *The Sexual Metaphor*. For publication information see note 1 above.
3. For a discussion of Freud's theory of the unconscious and its relation to the socialization of gender see pp. 12-17 of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEATRE AND SOCIETY

#### I. Cultural and Theoretical Background

In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault says that the extensive deliberation on sex and sexual matters was one of the most prominent cultural and political phenomena in the nineteenth century. In one respect it reflected the age's preoccupation with individualism. Foucault respects what he calls the "*deployment of sexuality*," which conquered and emancipated the "*deployment of alliance*" in Western society. The right to one's body, the right to discover what one is and all that one can be, is the product of the release of one's sexuality from the prison of indoctrination. Foucault believes that the traditional judicial system is unable to recognize the links between sexual liberation, individualism, and the betterment of the individual (1). One of the most important manifestations, and the basis, of the age's preoccupation with the relationship between the private self and the public world was the emergence of psychoanalysis. This "marked a definitive break with the old ways of thinking about the self and viewing the world. This was the beginning of an intellectual and artistic universe which the twentieth century would recognise as its own" (2).

## **Morality and Gender in Psychoanalysis**

The interworking of the ethical self and the gendered self is one of the most significant areas of the broader interaction between the private self and the public world that was brought to focus by psychoanalysis. This science has proved invaluable in changing the social structure of gender, and in particular as it ultimately manifests itself in women's position within this structure. The discoverer of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, drew the world's attention to the fact that the human mind consists of more than one component. Some of these components are external, some are internal. The interworking of these layers, which constitute the psyche, is closely connected with morality, or society's understanding of "right" and "wrong". The operation of the psyche, with its interaction of the internal and external parts, is contingent on a number of complicated determinants. The most significant of these determinants is the individual's relationship with its parents as seen in the light of gender attachment and detachment.

Early in his career Freud identified a divisible part of our humanity, upholding his discovery by scientific methods. The discovery, which he called the "unconscious," is the basic reservoir of mental life; the repository of our repressed wishes and upsurges of imaginative passion that are deemed inappropriate, or at odds with normal feeling. This part of the mind is functional, though strictly speaking not instantly accessible to investigation, either by an observer or by the subjects themselves. Since the contents of the id are at odds with normal feeling, they should be subjected to a standardizing process. The agent of that process is the ego and the repressing forces are the subject's ethical and other standards. The ego's function is to select and reason the needs of the id,

and adapt them to the outside world; it is responsible for engineering the sensory and spiritual demands of the unconscious, so that the actions that ensue from it seem normal. The ego intermediates between the internal and external worlds of the individual, forcing the former to subdue its original nature in order to comply with the ethical standards of society. Thus in its relation to the id, the ego is “like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse” (3).

In abnormal people, those designated pathological, the id resists the engineering authority of the ego, and acts on its own impulses: the person thus appears to be behaving abnormally. For Freud, the existence of an uneasy relationship between the id and the ego is a pervasive phenomenon. The outcome of this conflict is detrimental to the psychological health of the individual, though in different degrees. It is a constant in Freud’s scientific analysis, that the neurotic or compulsive should be differentiated from the balanced, not by type, but by degree (4). In a sense, Freud brought into focus, arguably for the first time, the harmful effects of repressive, and therefore inauthentic, ethical standards on the mental and spiritual fitness of the human subject.

The super-ego, another part of the human mind, is an even deeper and more significant disciplinary agent than the ego, occupying a particular position between it and the id. Whilst it shares the former’s psychological engineering quality, it is related to the latter by dint of their common origin. The super-ego is the remainder of the first object-cathexes, and is the heir to the Oedipus complex after its termination (5). This psychic phenomenon has an ancient and intimate relationship with gender formation at an early age, and therefore cannot fully develop until the children (mostly male children) manage



to identify themselves with the father, simultaneously detaching this self from the mother. The super-ego is the moral censor which derives its authority, as an inward monitor, from external institutions that parallel paternal supremacy, like the church and the judicial order. These cast themselves as guardians of the value system of a nation, the determinants of the sense of "right" and "wrong" in their exclusive forms.

It is difficult to pin Freud down on the question of gender and morality: his writing on both is deeply contradictory. Subversive and conservative forces seem to exist side by side in a great many of his theories. This complexity could be one of the factors that helped place him among the most original thinkers of the twentieth century. His promisingly emancipated attitude that all human beings are intrinsically bisexual, and that sexual identity is structured by our adopting the role of one sex or another at an early time of our lives, implies that sexual attributes are "acquired" rather than "intrinsic." In the same way, he naturalizes the process of gender formation by seeming to wish to ensure that wholesome grown-ups are normal at extensively varied points in the range of socially acceptable gender differences (6).

Likewise, Freud seems to touch upon a revolutionary point by connecting the full development of the super-ego, the agent of the moral conscience, to the process of gender formation. Along these lines, he manages to socialize gender. On the other hand, this theory gears the formation of the righteous personality to its identification with masculinity. In such wise, the Freudian thesis reaches the inevitable conclusion that women are intrinsically deprived of the momentum for a well-defined Oedipus culmination. Woman's moral conscience is thus discredited.

Even when he disparages women in this fashion, it is difficult to decide whether the prominent psychoanalyst intends to idealize patriarchy. The fully developed super-ego, the prerogative of the ultimate masculine righteousness, is one that adheres to the tenets of society rigidly. At different stages of his research, Freud threw sceptical light on these tenets. Early in his psychoanalytic career, including the period under study, he implied a discontent with what passed as "normal" in society by exposing the uneasy relationship between the id, the ego, and the super-ego. At this stage, Freud concentrated more on the mind as an autonomous entity that was, basically, self-regulatory, and his questions were raised along these lines. Later on he put further emphasis on the externality of human existence allowing the external, material world to vitiate the crudity of the isolated life of the mind. He did so by questioning the validity of the moral principles that caused the tension between the id, the ego, and their common offshoot, the super-ego. In *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilization and its Discontents*, both books written in the late 1920s, Freud posits the problem that if we have already lost faith in established metaphysical religions, it is time we put other cultural "possessions" to question. This scepticism helps to throw a more definite light on what Freud meant earlier in his career when he emphasized the highly tense relationships between the id, the ego, and the super-ego. This disharmonious interaction is the cause of the present unhealthy state of the human psyche. Freud maintains that:

It was discovered that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the amount of frustration which society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals, and it was inferred from this that the abolition or reduction of those demands would result in a return to possibilities of happiness (7).

By subjecting cultural ideals to criticism, Freud has partly saved the human mind from condemnation as a form of life that has a brand of evil all its own.

Although Freud acknowledges the distinction between conformity and morality, he is not very clear on whether human “badness” is due to external or internal factors. In “*Thoughts on War and Death*” he exposes this ambivalence showing himself to be more inclined towards pessimism than optimism in reasoning out the morality of war. He states his belief that the core of human nature “consists of elemental instincts, which are common to all men. . . . These instincts in themselves are neither good nor evil. We but classify them and their manifestations in that fashion, according as they meet the needs and demands of the human community” (8). Then, he proceeds to admit that these primitive instincts “undergo a lengthy process of development before they are allowed to become active in adult being” (9). In trying to delineate the nature of this development Freud is torn between two disparate inclinations. On the one hand, he seems ready to admit--albeit in a somewhat indefinite manner--that instinct can be transformed, although he modifies this statement by asserting that we habitually overestimate the human capacity for change. On the other hand, the disillusioned scientist shows a strong proclivity for total pessimism when he exposes his belief that the transformation of the primitive instinct is not only scarce, it is impossible. The subtext is that change is skin-deep and it does not penetrate the deeper layers of the human soul. The “primitive mind is, in the fullest meaning of the word, imperishable” (10).

Psychoanalysis has proved to be instrumental in changing the social construction of gender, in particular as it inevitably manifests itself in the change of women’s position

within this construction. Yet this discipline did not start to properly take its place as a discipline useful for the improvement of gender relations until the latter part of the second half of the twentieth century, with the solidification and cohesion of the work of the movement known as "second wave feminism." One of the most important ways in which this type of feminism--which started roughly in the late 1940s--distinguished itself from other types was its recognition of the importance of "internality," of society's unconscious, in determining the sexual order. Broadly speaking, older types of feminism concentrated on "externality," or on sexual reform on the institutional level. "Second wave feminism," on the other hand, realized that whilst reform must involve the struggle for formal rights for women as a vital step to effecting a balance of power between the sexes, it must go far beyond that as well. Genuine conversion is essentially a matter of altered consciousness: The uncovering and removal of psychological realities underpinning political and economic structure, and the exposition of the way the social "id" produces and reproduces gender meaning through the use of metaphors in language and discourse.

The belief in the necessity of changing the metaphorical structure of gender was one of the products of a major cultural reform brought about by feminism itself: the reconceptualization of knowledge. All types of feminism attacked the masculine institution of academic cultivation for its alienation of women in the role of the other. "Second wave feminism," nonetheless, was distinguished by its dramatic revision of the meaning and significance of knowledge, with the result that a new understanding of gender was introduced to a number of academic branches of learning. Psychoanalysis was one of the most significant disciplines in which altered conceptions of gender shifted

woman to the centre of intellectual acquirement, making her the subject, and not the object of scientific inquiry. Freudian concepts were thus seen from woman's point of view.

Whereas a section of "second wave feminists" found the practices and definitions of psychoanalysis prejudiced, others were sympathetic. Juliet Mitchell and like-minded thinkers promoted the deployment of this discipline as a way to understand the individual's identity in all its aspects (11). The most important of these aspects were gender differentiation, sexual relationships, and the relation of these two to the individual's moral consciousness. Psychoanalysis explored both internal and external aspects of human construction, allowing a deeper understanding of gender and morality than was possible under a scope of vision that concentrated on externality. Nancy Chodorow, a significant psychoanalytic feminist thinker, revises the Freudian theory which states that our sexual identity is constructed through our taking on the position of one sex or another at an early stage of our lives. She shifts the thesis' emphasis away from the deterministic phallogentric bias that is its main drawback. Instead, she presents a forcefully logical case for the emergence of gender identity, which leads to the production of particular social roles, such as mothering. Chodorow attributes the association of the female identity with the role of the mother to the fact that women are invariably responsible for child care (12).

A brief look at the issues of gender and morality in the predominantly patriarchal society that has existed since the Industrial Revolution seems necessary. In attempting this task, I will partly depend on the social critics and moralists who wrote during the

period under study, with especial emphasis on the feminist-orientated among them. I will use these early thinkers to illustrate the significant matters that were relevant within the framework of the age. Among the most consequential of these matters is the material position of women, as opposed to the metaphorical. The latter is best represented through the writings of social theorists who belong to the movement known as “second wave feminism.” Old and new feminisms are nonetheless not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. By *a priori* reasoning, positional and metaphorical structures are ultimately inseparable.

### Sexual Antitheses

Despite the dialectical inevitability of the “oneness” of old and new forms of feminisms, “second wave feminists” are more useful in supplementing my discussion of pervasive gender situations that have remained relatively constant since the Industrial Revolution up till the present time. The most significant of these situations are the sharp divisions between the sexes both positionally and metaphorically; a polarization that most feminists, old and new, find unacceptable in whole or in part. “Second wave feminism” analyzed sexual antitheses in a more concrete and specified manner than older forms of feminism. This is partly due to the fact that the way in which society views and deals with sex differences is, to a large extent, rooted in the cultural unconscious. “Second wave feminists,” armed with a more sophisticated version of psychoanalysis than the older ones, can reach the internality of society’s thinking more efficiently. Besides, “second wave feminism” is more capable of realizing the exact position of women on the metaphorical structure of gender. The ability to identify the female image

in the cultural “id” is the result of the increasing centralization of women in psychoanalysis.

Men’s and women’s values have always been seen as separate by the patriarchal culture. The male culture prefers to view the world in black and white terms. In her book *The Sexual Metaphor* Helen Haste expresses her belief that Western culture prefers to view the world in terms of dualities. The polarization of feminine and masculine values has been one of the mainstays of traditional culture and it has helped to preserve the *status quo*. For Haste, the feminine/masculine duality is the strongest cultural duality. “We inhabit an en-gendered world. Gender is the primary category of our social relationships” (13). Gender “maps on” to many other areas of life (14). She explores the way in which these metaphors sustain the either/or conception. Haste explores the metaphors of gender that characterize traditional ways of thinking, especially the metaphors of public/ private, active/ passive, and rational/ irrational. She also examines the fact that a dualistic way of thinking helps to maintain the hierarchical reasoning of gender values:

Metaphors permeate gender. Our conceptions of sex difference, sex roles and sexual relations are couched in metaphors that explain and justify, and the metaphors derived from gender and sexuality invade vast other areas of life. The primary metaphor of gender is *dualism and polarity*. The metaphor of dualism automatically casts A in antithesis to B; it makes the definition of A as the negation of B. . . . The whole operates as a continual feedback loop, reinforcing and reproducing itself (15).

Public/private division that is linked to, or embraced within, the meaning and function of gender has existed since the inception of politics at the hands of the Greeks. Throughout history, the element, meaning, and scope of public and private vary with the imperative of each society's existence, and turn on its dominant ideology (16). The advent of the age of technology broke up the family unit opening the public-private split into an unprecedented chasm. The household employment, which women and children shared with adult men, declined with the movement of the unit of production outside the home. In the new large industrial unit man became the economical head of the family, since he was the chief earner. The new economical pattern required men to have talents and skills instrumental for work in the public domain which were not required of women. The status of public work was elevated with the rising of the social and political power of middle-class men. Soon new descriptions and perceptions of work developed which made women's labour appear less definitive than it had been before, not the least because it was not paid. The diminishing significance of women's labour brought about a serious drop in women's social status.

The sharp division of sexual roles and social positions was mutually dependent on a certain metaphorical structure, which society utilized to make sense of gender experience. The structure defined maleness and femaleness, and limited behaviour within these two categories (17). This order of gender meaning fitted in well with the public domain's attitudes and purposes. One of the most important metaphorical dualities was rationality/irrationality. This was strengthened by the Darwinian theory which stated that for the species to evolve into perfection it had to disavow areas of non-rationality and must irrevocably and necessarily deny the feminine. Darwin considers women's



qualities, like "intuition," "rapid perception," and "imitations" crude and uncultured because they are not schooled in the deductive logic of masculine rationality. Such inclination to illogicality belongs to the "lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization" (18). As such, feminine irrationality should stand at the opposite pole to masculine rationality for the aid of a healthy evolution.

Rationality soon assumed a universal, all-embracing significance. Science, which was the instigator of this metaphor, was at pains to detach itself from irrational elements, rejecting traditional explanations of natural phenomenon, and of human biology, especially those which had a measure of the occult. It thus eschewed the definitions and practices of medicine which did not conform to the deductive reasoning of science.

Mechanism is another significant metaphor which has governed the Western world since the Industrial Revolution, contributing, as it does, to the creation of a sharp division of sexual values. The old style of living explained nature and the human being's place in it through a metaphor of totality. The earth was an innate and self-sufficient entity, in possession of an internal regulating system, which enabled its components to live within the steady beat of the organic, and to establish a harmonious relationship with the human community. With the prevalence of technology, there was a shift to a metaphor of mechanism. The earth was perceived as fragmented matter, consisting of different parts. Coordinating agencies were transformed from one part to another with the help of external forces that were, allegedly, needed to maintain their efficiency—allegedly, because the masculine establishment has always striven to represent the earth as subservient matter, unable to stand on its own, and therefore in constant want of an

outside controller. The metaphors of autonomy and holism were thus replaced by the metaphors of dependency and atomism.

The metaphor of mechanism was interlocked with a metaphor of control. Man was no longer living in harmony with nature, but he was its master. The aspiring industrialist and scientist needed to enslave all beings to their requirements. Besides, there was a weakening of the concept of the cosmos as a part of a divine design, and therefore reliable and benevolent. Such scepticism resulted in a feeling of insecurity and the need to be in control. The metaphor of mastery over nature leaked over to other domains. The concept of controlling and manipulating nature was applied to human behaviour, so that humanness could be organized by imposing values which forcefully and mechanically trimmed human nature.

Matthew Arnold, a central Victorian philosopher who was a shrewd critic of society, sensed the danger of the dominance of the mechanistic metaphor and warned against it. In *Culture and Anarchy*, he was prompted to express his anxiety that faith "in machinery" was the Victorian's "besetting danger" (19). All aspects of their life had become deeply imbued with the image of mechanism: religion, wealth, reproduction, and even poetry and literature. This metaphorical aspect and its appliances made the Victorians deviate from the real issue behind a given human activity. Tasks were performed as if they "were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them" (20). For Arnold, a culture that is governed by mechanical forces is anarchic. Since there are different ends for every activity, there is no unifying force, no commonly valued goal.

The metaphor of machinery was congenial to the Victorian life because it ministered to growth on the material level, facilitating surfacing capitalism, imperial expansion, and industrial development. By its nature it freed power-hungry middle-class men from the encumbering effect of moral consciousness. This is because

[a] mechanical model can both be controlled and control; the observer who is detached from that which is observed, rather than a part of it, can operate upon that which is observed. If that which is observed is seen not as a living thing but as a mechanical thing governed by laws, then the constraints on what one can do to it are practical constraints of power, not the constraints of ethics (21).

The value of rationality, governance, and mechanism which prevailed in the public sphere, endowed middle-class men with guilt-free dynamism, and so they appropriated all the energy that existed in the politico-economic arena. Such monopoly of activity was one of the reasons that women were relegated to the private sphere. In fact, the evolving capitalist-patriarchal system was erected upon this sharp division between masculine activity and feminine passivity. Keeping women in an exclusive sphere of private passivity was the social order's timeless necessity. So this order invented certain collective myths which masqueraded as the natural components of femininity. They thus created and recreated the psychological conditions for women's passivity.

One such controlling myth was the conviction that female characteristics were the antithesis to male characteristics. The overall structure forced female energy to remain

dormant, so that men could be active, both physically and metaphorically. The materialistic position was supplemented by the metaphorical structure. This is because metaphors are significant, being the agents that restrain and prescribe. They enforced on woman a synthetic standard of behaviour, the better for her to remain encased within the patriarchal prescription of her. One of the most effective ways of ensuring women's passivity was by reconditioning their sexuality.

The predominant concept of female sexuality in the history of Western civilization was that women were voluptuous, closer to nature by virtue of their reproductive functions, and sexually importunate. During certain periods in history this image underwent changes. One such period is the nineteenth century, during which middle-class women were transformed into carriers of moral norms, and ameliorators of men. Women's new position as guardians of the nation's moral worth was one of the reasons why the social order felt the need to prescribe female metaphorical castration. It is ironic that widely diverse male establishments, like the official religion and science, equally affirmed women's sexual passivity, each in a mode appropriate to its dominant ideology. Christianity argued for women's sexual neutering on metaphysical grounds: chastity is willed by divinity, an otherworldly existence far removed from the life of the human mind, and inexplicable by its deductive logic. The Virgin Mother, or Madonna, was restored to the cultural imagination as an essential part of the image of the ideal woman. This image of female deity implied that true woman was sexually passive, and that her presumed desire was only a means to maternity.

On the other hand science affirmed the same notion, women's sexual passivity, using an opposite logic. Perhaps Freud's theories offer the best example of the way in which science collaborated with other cultural aspects to castrate women. This is partly because Freud is one of the major creators of modern thought that is based on deductive logic and careful scientific analysis—but also partly because his work helped to dramatically revise the way we see human behaviour. At one point, this father of psychoanalysis made the now well-known declaration that libido was essentially a male and not a female energy. The assumption that men monopolized all the power of sensuality, which partly arose from the popularization of this Freudian theory, brought about many material injustices for women. The working of the duality active/passive in sexual matters lopsidedly concentrated desire in the male, suggesting the notion that this desire is so extreme, it is uncontrollable. The inevitability of getting male sexual appetite serviced made women the sexual slaves of men. Mythical, outlandish virility justified forms of sexual abuse like prostitution, child abuse, and domestic rape. Hence, a great deal of the efforts of early feminism was directed at overthrowing this fictional manly vigour in an attempt to alleviate the material injustices that blighted women as a consequence of its popularization. In *The Great Scourge and How to End It*, for instance, Christabel Pankhurst argued against the assumed uncontrollability of male sexual drive, seeing it as the establishment's excuse to lighten the moral load of men (22).

The aim of concentrating the sexual energy in the male goes further than ensuring him a guilt-free libido; it intensifies women's passivity. The male-orientated ruling systems have always striven to render women passive by declaring some female characteristics unhealthy. This phenomenon, which goes back to the time of the Greeks

at least, reached its zenith in the Victorian Age when middle-class men's power was at its highest point. This is the time when these men managed to appropriate all the meaningful work in the public sphere, and claim it as their prerogative. It follows that there arose a need to deepen woman's passivity in order to keep her away from competing for power. The social order, largely influenced by Freud's and Darwin's theories, delineated women's sexuality, along with other forms of female active agencies, pathological. Women's desire was established as a form of hysteria. That this medical brutal force is deliberate and necessary is evident in the way it was aggravated after the upheaval of the Women's Movement and the subsequent gradual entrance of women to the public sphere. The feminist writer Elaine Showalter notes that from 1870-1910, the period which saw women starting to make serious inroads into paid work, nervous diseases like anorexia nervosa and hysteria were spreading to epidemic dimensions. The eruption of these forms of female illnesses was observed by the Darwinian nerve specialists who "arose to dictate proper feminine behavior outside the asylum as well as in" (23).

The male establishment prescribed passivity as both in conformity with female nature, and fundamental to preserving this nature. The interpretation of female sexuality by male institutions as pure or secondary was internalized by society, and by women themselves, and turned into techniques for regulating female desire. According to the cultural ideal, woman's sexuality is passive and without autonomy. Women are sexually excited as a consequence of external factors, like male attention, or the desire for procreation. If women are sexually passive, it takes the edge off their power; if their sexuality comes to life only in response to male initiative, it is under male control.

To a certain degree, this was done on account of property. The control of female sexual behaviour before and inside of marriage, as it were, ensured the legitimacy of heirs. But this is only part of the story. Sexuality is the main determinant of a person's selfhood. It orders the way individuals should see themselves and the external world, and as such, the shape of one's sexuality influences one's social and economic stance. Perhaps this fact is aptly demonstrated in a painful, yet illuminating, historical pattern, in conformity with which masculine culture dealt with a certain type of women who possessed assertive sexuality. Witches, the persecuted women, stood for two closely connected elements: free sexuality, and economic independence. The assumption about witches is that they obtained power through fraternizing with the devil, the fraternizing being itself the outcome of an insatiable desire. Question VI of *The Malleus Maleficarum* of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger is devoted to find answers to the taken-for-granted problem of depraved female libido embodied in the image of the witches: "Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions?" (24). In the public imagination, as well as among the literati, a liberated female sexuality was associated with a certain kind of supernatural power, granted to the emancipated by some satanic forms of energy.

The sorceresses were able to cast a charm over people's lives, initiating a change for the better or the worse; they dabbled with traditional herbal remedies, and were paid to cure the sick. This especial brand of genius aroused defensive feeling amongst the members of the medical profession. The last major witch-hunt took place in the seventeenth century. The time marked a major conflict between males and females about access to economical resources. The public sphere was becoming increasingly the

exclusive domain of male action and the masculine self. The medical profession was starting to install itself among the increasingly masculinized public institutions. Hence, the old healing tradition of the irrational guileful woman was subdued by the rising professionalism of the rational medical man. The last major witch-hunt can be seen as a symbol of the suppression the woman of action and positive sexuality at the hands of the power-thirsty male. There is a link between the "anti-witches" sentiment and the enduring attitude to women in general.

### **Sexual Antitheses and Moral Conduct**

Morality is coined of a conveniently fabricated blend of sexual values. The blend was engineered to fit the needs of patriarchy, which manifested itself in different forms from, at least, Plato's time to our own. Yet, after industrialization, orthodox ethics started to take a shape radically different from that of the preceding era, perhaps from that of most of known human history. One of the main reasons for the uniqueness of the ethical system which was initiated at about the close of the seventeenth century was the equally drastic alterations that took place along the public/private division and the resultant polarization of gender values. The decline of household industry and the separation of women's work from men's work caused the alteration. Ways of thinking about morality are unavoidably, if implicitly, tied to assessments of sexual dualities, of which the public/private split is one of the most significant.



The patriarchal-capitalist system was mutually dependent on a sharp division of gender-marked values. The division prescribed activity for men and passivity for women, endowing men with mechanistic control and imposing mechanistic subjection on women. It deemed the masculine self rational and strove to protect it from the polluting effect of the feminine. This pattern of sexual relationships was vital to the patriarchal-capitalist system. Small wonder then that the social order was at pains to impose intense conditioning on women, the better for them to remain encased within the patriarchal prescription of them. One of the most significant cultural occurrences that supplemented the indoctrination of women was the rise of the popular press, one of the side-products of technological improvement. Popular media promoted a kind of conduct-book literature which contained the image of the ideal woman. In fact conduct-book literature existed long before the advent of the age of technology (25). It was used for promoting and prescribing the social ideal of the time: the characteristics of the types who would represent the nation's "sense of right." Up to the close of the seventeenth century this model was the aristocratic male. The reason for that was the cultural climate in which it was congenial for him to assume this role.

In the world that preceded the Industrial Revolution, it was still possible for the aristocratic male, at once a symbol of power and a representative of legitimate morality, to adulterate his masterful image with characteristics that carried feminine connotations. A gentleman's most prominent feature was "nobility of heart," or what was known as "chivalry." This human trait was underlined by metaphors of unworldliness and self-sacrifice, both of which were feminine values. "Nobility of heart," and its feminine connotations were significant aspects of "rightness" as prescribed by the traditional

morality; they were still recognizable values in the form of public life that existed before the age of industrialization.

Aristocracy of spirit and the orthodox appropriateness from which it sprang were still associated with power and powerful people. They were the dominant frameworks for making sense of the experience of the dominant group, the criteria for judging individuals who possessed the privilege of a legitimate personhood in society, i.e. the male of the dominant class. Another reason for the aristocratic male's occupation of the position of moral prototype is conceivably the simple fact that he could afford to. Having been born rich, he was able to eschew the worldly and the material, avoiding the tasteless and corrupting task of competing for possessions. Unworldliness was an indulgence which the middle-class male, the aristocratic patriarch's successor to social centrality, could not afford.

In order to gain his materialistic ends, the middle-class male had to adhere to the mechanistic model. By authority of this model's central value of detachment, the newly empowered male secured himself unrestrained status-seeking. The mechanistic model was a side-product of the age of industrialization. With the advent of this epoch, a metaphorical split paralleled the material chasm that physically separated the public from the private. The "nobility of heart," which was synonymous with the virtue of "doing good for its own sake," began to be considered one of the exclusive characteristics of the divine metaphysical faith which, in turn, was part of the consensus of the old organic world that the atomic age broke up. The era started to recognize that inherited establishments and creeds were generally ill-adapted to the requirements of industry, and

the increasing social mobility that resulted from it. The spiritual, undefined quality of virtue and piety that inspired unquestioned loyalty, and its concomitant, subjection, was made obsolete in the public arena. This arena was totally governed by the values that suited the upcoming social stratum. These are the masculine value of rationality, mechanistic control, and harsh justice. "We have had the morality of submission, and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time is now come for the morality of justice," declares the Victorian sage John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (26). Still, in the circumstances, what was to become of traditional morality? For although it had lost its place in the public sphere, somewhere at the core of the then new life, it was still indispensable.

The epoch was preoccupied with two problems: the first was reconstructing women's role, and the second was refashioning the position of traditional morality. The "sensible" solution was to merge these two elements together, resolving both problems simultaneously. Middle-class women thus became guardians of the age's morality, in a typical stroke of masculine expediency that mechanically rearranged the social loose ends. Morality lost its public position but it was resurrected in the passive role of women. In the process of reconstructing the new female self, the moral doctrines which implied passivity and subjection were submerged with femininity until they became identical. Starting in the early eighteenth century the conduct-book literature did a great deal to help redefining the female character as inert, resigned, and thus undefined. So popular did these books become that by the second half of the eighteenth century almost entirely everyone could perceive the shining example of womanhood they proposed. The influence of such writing was so great that it affected intellectual levels of society,

prompting some of its educators to inaugurate the discourse proposed by these books. In 1798, the influential mentor Erasmus Darwin proposed the conduct books' model woman as the target for his teaching policy. Maintaining that mildness and withdrawal should be the most highlighted features of the ideal female, he warns against "great eminence in almost anything." A clearly defined ambition or position in society is "injurious to a young lady." This lady's temper and disposition "should appear to be pliant rather than robust; to be ready to take impressions rather than to be decidedly marked" (27).

Erasmus Darwin's portrait of the ideal female encompasses the typical either/or way of perceiving gender that dominates the West. He sets female mildness and inertness against masculine boldness and energy; female obscurity against masculine distinction; and female periphery against masculine centrality. Partly with the help of conduct-book literature, patriarchy created and recreated the psychic conditions for women's subjection, and her identification with the tenets of old morality. By the advent of the nineteenth century, the ideal woman, who was born from the identification of the traditional female with sanctioned morality, was ripe to enter the consciousness of the Victorians, and be fixed there, conduct books or no conduct books. The ideal woman entered the domain of common sense, and provided the frame of reference for both intellectual and cultural products. Starting in the eighteenth century, the part of the body of traditional moral doctrines which had the latent meaning of subjectivity and passivity resigned itself completely to the private world. By the advent of the nineteenth century, this remaking of the conditions of history was solidified, and the human values which could not be justified by the masculine standard of hard logic and harsh justice were banished from the public arena and decision-making institutions.

In order to atone for women's complete loss of public, worldly power, and to compensate middle-class men for the loss of spiritual, private morality, the social order invented a channel through which the two elements flowed into each other's realms. This "passageway" of values defined itself as "influence." Women were asked to indirectly motivate men to adhere to the values that traditional morality deemed "right" in the public sphere. One of the earliest and most persuasive conduct books in which the phenomenon of women's influence started to become visible in the late eighteenth century is James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women*. A "principle source of your importance," Fordyce insists, "is the very great and extensive influence which you in general have with our sex" (28). But the pressure of the manipulators of women's influence did not reach its peak until the first half of the nineteenth century.

The cultural products of this period, including the nineteenth-century version of conduct-book literature, insisted on representing women with a version of authority which was more significant than that of men, and yet cannot exactly be described as power. This is because women were not supposed to have anything as imposing and as self-definitive as power. The hallmark of women's influence was highlighted in Sarah Ellis's work that emerged during the period in which the propaganda for women's influence was at its peak. Ellis, who was one of the most popular writers on the subject, and whose ideas were consequential in dictating women's behaviour, encouraged female conduct to be inspired by power and non-power at the same time. This impossible equation is typical of the hypocrisy of patriarchy, to which Ellis's formula belongs, in dealing with the "woman question." In *The Women of England*, she spurs women on in a tone pregnant with melodramatic urgency: "You have deep responsibilities; you have

urgent claims; a nation's moral worth is in your keeping" (29). Even as she embraces a form of active significance, thus centrality, for woman, she violently impedes this very centrality by advising this woman to endorse her own subordinate status:

One important truth sufficiently impressed upon your mind will materially assist in this desirable consummation—it is the superiority of your husband, simply as a man. It is quite possible you may have more talent, with higher attainments, and you may also have been generally more admired; but this has nothing whatever to do with your position as a woman, which is, and must be, inferior to his as a man (30).

Profound contradictions reside in the shape of women's influence as prescribed by the patriarchal ideology of the day, of which Ellis's work is the best representative. To have influence, to have the ability to shape and model other people's lives, is, by necessity, contingent upon the possession of well-circumscribed self-boundaries. To be able to positively manipulate people means to exert active control on others, but first one should be able to exert control on one's own life. Women are not in a position to wield influence, since they are, at the same time, asked to defuse the boundaries of the self, and merge them with others. They are supposed to devote themselves to persuading others to perform deeds which are outside their own, women's, interests. Women's own requirements are contained within their definition as the "fixers" of other people's needs and wants. The patriarchal power gave active significance to women with one hand and took it away with the other. Influence is an activity which enhances women's passivity

because it necessitates diminishing practices and capabilities which help women's self-advancement.

Such duplicity lies at the heart of patriarchy, manifesting itself most powerfully in the establishment's omnipresent attempts, not only to mix the unmixable, but also to divide the indivisible. The calculating function of this male-orientated institution forces morality, with its essentially unified, relatively abstract sense of right and wrong, to acquire sharply divided shades and tones of significance at odds with its nature. The spectrum of the interpretations of moral conduct thus has acquired gender-specific meanings that are, in a Machiavellian fashion, rooted in the ruling order's materialistic needs. In *Beyond Female Masochism*, Frigga Haug, explains how our moral understanding has gender specific meanings. Men's morals are connected with their business abilities, women's morals with their bodies.

So it is not true that each sex is assigned different values from the outset—women are caring, men are brave—but that the same values have different meanings for each sex, they imply different practices and demand different responses. Morality calls both sexes to order, but each sex obeys after its own fashion.

Hence morality becomes a powerful force separating the sexes. For men it centres on property, for women on the body. Even an apparently innocent turn of phrase such as "to initiate a person" typically means that men are inducted into

the mysteries of business, whereas women are introduced to the praxis of sex (31).

Haug believes that the "bisexuality" of moral values is an instrument that is designed to serve the inequitable political and economic patriarchal systems. The power of patriarchy derives from its manipulation of the actual inauthenticity of these moral formulations and not, as it claims, from the supremacy and comprehensiveness of masculine values. Patriarchy acknowledges manly values as the norm, the point of departure. The powerful people coagulate the contradictory conceptions into apparently solid and appropriate images and shared assumptions. These images and assumptions manipulate the conceptual and evaluative responses of individuals so that they come to the conclusion intended by these manipulators. Since gender is a primary reasoning category, the conceptions that are formulated by using the bisexuality of values are effective instruments of social and political conditioning. Haug says that

[the] power of the state is not the expression of a masculine morality which has been erected into a universal ethical code. That power derives instead from the iridescent tones, the shifting meanings and combinations of values, in short the bisexual nature of morality, which makes it possible to appeal to everyone, each in his or her own way. One effect of this is that we become used to thinking of contradictory stances as being as normal as the fact that there are men and women. The exchange of love for money, for example, is something we regard as possible and impossible in the same breath, wanting love both to be the free expression of feeling and to be secured by contract. Or again, we believe that



men are prepared to die for the sake of glory, and that women should be willing to sacrifice themselves for them. Or, finally, we accept that they should commit murder in obedience to higher principles while believing that we are the defenders of life—this idea, too, is an effect of a bisexual morality (32).

### **The Women's Movement and the Reformation of Sexual Metaphors**

In the late nineteenth century sexual relationships, and especially women's role in them, started to change. The change was the outcome of the increase in the intensity and activity of the Women's Movement, which, in turn, was a by-product of the libertarian and radical movements of the era. After the 1880s, the Women's Movement, whose main target was to obtain suffrage, started to produce visible effects. Suffrage was symbolic of women's awareness of their right to a more definitive place in society and to take power in the public realm on an equal footing with men. In addition to the vote, the Women's Rights Movement concerned itself with many other issues that allowed female presence in the public arena, as well as control over the private sphere: equal pay, equal employment opportunities, and equality before the law—particularly in matters which were germane to family organization, like divorce and the custody of children. The outcome of earlier reformation in girl's education was that higher education was accessible in the 1890s, though within bounds, to predominantly middle-class girls. The improvement in education paved the way for middle-class women to enter into professions. During these years, women became a reasonably visible quantity in the labour force.

The opening up of educational and employment opportunities for women is not, in itself, the ultimate indicator of the truth about their emancipation. The achievement of Victorian-Edwardian feminism has to be ultimately measured in terms of the change in women's position on the symbolic structure of gender. The change of "women's place" would not be effective unless it was accompanied by a change in the manner in which women viewed themselves, and the way in which society viewed them. The Women's Movement in its early stages, as seen in the struggle of suffragettes, was deeply rooted in the socio-political life of the community, concentrating on materialistic gains. Generally speaking, it is left to later feminists to explore more subtle problems, in addition to economic and political equality. They interpret gender meaning as it exists in society's unconscious--particularly the specificity of female psychology and its symbolic materialization--and attempt to reconstruct an authentic female identity based on the right cultural ordering of gender. Yet, change in sexual relationships on the psychological level can be identified, though in germinal form, in the turn-of-the century thinkers with feminist sensibilities. Historian Sandra Holton argues that one of the major aims of suffrage was to challenge the period's "restrictive ideologies concerning women." To Holton's mind

suffragists did not seek merely an entry to a male-defined sphere, but the opportunity to redefine that sphere. . . . British suffragists aimed to reform their society by domesticating public life. The most striking aspect of British suffragism, then, is that it did not present feminist goals in terms of equivalence with men but in terms of an autonomously created system of values derived from women's particular experience (33).

One of the places which embraced the change in female psychology on the largest scale was education. This field of work underwent substantial alteration in the wake of the Women's Movement. In the first half of the nineteenth century the aim of girls' education was to mould their character according to the image of the ideal female. The official cultivation of girls' minds consisted of preparing them to be proper wives, whose main asset was their mastery of the skill of appearing, and ultimately being, passive. In "*Of Queens' Gardens*," one of the most authoritative writings that recommended the female cultural ideal of the time, John Ruskin expressed the essence of early Victorian education. He counsels that women "must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise, *not for self-development, but for self-renunciation*" [emphasis added] (34).

Ruskin's contemporary feminists and their predecessors alike attacked the type of attitudes that were represented in his essay. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, the book which in 1792 made the first complete political case for women's rights in Britain, Mary Wollstonecraft traced her female contemporaries' hollowness of character to a system of learning that confined them to roles that resembled the roles which Ruskin was to recommend most emphatically later. These roles had private, passive connotations. Inertness and seclusion resulted in the eighteenth-century women being negatively personal and limited in their attitude to affairs both inside and outside themselves, particularly those relating to morality. Women's obsessive self-interest prompted the author, rather gloomily, to describe them as "rakes at heart." This cultural condition, which was one of the most powerful catalysts of women's upheaval, continued to impede women's moral growth until well into the nineteenth century when Ruskin's writings

helped to enforce it. However the negativism of categorizing female morality in such wise is very much mitigated by Wollstonecraft's expressed belief that women's ethical deficiency is socially induced and not intrinsic to the female character. It is the inevitable consequence of their education which removes them from the much coveted principle of masculine rationality, (coveted by Wollstonecraft, that is). For the pioneer Victorian feminist the main drawback in women's education is that it discourages women from exercising their "understandings" (35).

Pioneers of women's learning, like Emily Davies and Frances Buss, advocated a change of direction in the process of moulding girl's minds. Their curriculum aimed to produce a female identity which strove towards a distinctive whole by defining a personal goal in life, not necessarily that of marriage. For instance, The North London Collegiate School for Girls--which was initiated by Frances Buss in 1850--names its objective as contributing

such teaching as shall place the pupil *en rapport* with the world she is about to enter, and shall inculcate and inspire industry, frugality, self-dependence, self-control, a definite plan of life, the preference of the claims of the future to present enjoyment, and a steady self-advancement for the sake of others as well as for one's own (36).

The female self should be bounded, integrated, and independently motivated. This description of the socially approved female image constitutes a considerable dissent from the sickly female of earlier education. The emancipated school mentors urge their pupils

to think of others as well as oneself, and to combine both self-sacrifice and self-assertiveness in a balanced, healthy psychology.

The improvement of girls' education was the direct result of an increasingly dynamic feminism which challenged many verities of Victorian consensus. The most important of these principles was the assumption that marriage, and reproduction within wedlock, were the only shape in which women's significance might materialize. The Victorians presented women with the ultimate truth that wifedom, whose final aim is motherhood, was the ultimate fulfillment of her morality, which was supposed to be based on spirituality; it was the supreme act of sacrificing the female self for the well-being of the nation. Every woman should aspire to child-birth, and should any woman fail to do so, she was considered, in some way, deviant. Nevertheless, taking into account the exigency of maintaining female sexual passivity, the image of the Virgin Mother was introduced to the motherhood scene to ensure that the desire for procreation in women was not prompted by an assertive sexuality, but it was an act of God, in which woman is only a passive agent.

One of the most prominent writings that opposed the notion of women's confinement to the role of mother and wife was Cicely Hamilton's *Marriage as a Trade*. In this book, Hamilton attacks the notion that marriage is a form of biological destiny for women, which is determined and approved by infallible moral authorities. She stresses the purely materialistic foundation of marriage, arguing that for most women this social arrangement is the only way to earn a living. Refuting the notion of woman's biological

destiny, Hamilton states her belief that marriage should constitute only one aspect of women's lives, and not all aspects of these lives (37).

Besides feminism, there were other cultural movements which attacked marriage, the most important of which was eugenics. The thesis of this movement was based on the notion that human evolution should be promoted by rational intervention. It advocated reducing people to their reproductive roles, and then intermediating between them for the sake of a better species. As such, it would rid the nation of undesirables, a category which included not only the defective, but also less-than-superior stock: superior stock being the middle classes. This social-engineering movement considered as derelict people such as thugs, thieves, the mentally unhealthy and, to a degree, the working class. Despite its forbiddingly immoral tone, it is surprising to see that eugenics captured the social thinking of the day. The majority of intellectuals supported eugenics, which is a possible indication that the theory of evolution had entered the social consciousness, residing in the realm of common sense. This is because this theory embodied a hope of producing a more advanced type of humanity.

Eugenics advocated the emancipation of women and their personal, as opposed to marital, growth. The subscribers to this philosophy endorsed women's liberation mainly because these bearers of human life played an important role in reproduction. Eugenics also advocated freeing women from the institution of marriage on the grounds that it hindered the process of scientific breeding. Social and economic circumstances of the breeders played a greater part in determining their marriage than did genetic givens. The notion that "good women" bred "good men" was at the heart of the eugenic sentiment.

Havelock Ellis, a major eugenicist, presents his views that the “breeding of men lies largely in the hands of women.” That is why the question of eugenics is “to a large extent at one with the woman question” (38). Meanwhile, Karl Pearson, another major eugenicist, was adamant that ensuring the continuity and wholesomeness of the race should take priority over women’s emancipation: “We have first to settle what is the physical capacity of women, what would be the effect of her emancipation on her function of race-reproduction, before we can talk about her ‘rights’” (39). It is evident that within the ideology of these literal minded, though perhaps well meaning, idealistic social engineers, women’s liberty and mental growth are merely secondary issues.

It is ironic that the more intensely eugenics advocates women’s emancipation, the more intensely it contributes to her subjection and alienation in the passive role of the other. Ultimately, the eugenic movement does more to endorse the sexual dualities than to vitiate them. It endorses the sharply differentiated characteristics of mind/body and affirms a natural difference of sexual “essence” by assuming that woman’s essential role is to provide the material “body” necessary to carry the improved intellectual man. The movement also shares with traditional moralists, who champion the notion of “woman’s influence,” their endorsement of the sexual antithesis individual/non-individual. Both patriarchal establishments obscure women’s self-boundaries by encouraging woman’s needs to be contained within her definition as one who serves other’s needs and wants. For the supporters of eugenics, female humanity’s main glory is helping to achieve male humanity’s desire for the superman.

A signifier, and a factor, of the changing structure of the public/private split, which occurred in the wake of the Women's Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was the social promotion of the spinster. The rise of the spinster in terms of number was the result of wars and the emigration of men to remote places in the British Empire. The increasing number of unmarried women was a challenge to the middle-class public/private structure, on which rests political and economic security. In previous years, the spinster was well controlled, being alienated in the role of the old maid. In order to make her image illegitimate, she was treated as an outsider, a psychological misfit, an almost pathological case. With the success of the Women's Movement, the comparative change of attitude towards woman's place, and the growing perceptibility of spinsters in terms of number and status, the image greatly improved. Cicely Hamilton, one of the most glorified bachelor girls of the age, writes:

I suppose that in the recent history of woman nothing is more striking than the enormous improvement that has taken place in the social position of the spinster. In many ranks of life the lack of a husband is no longer a reproach; and some of us are even proud of the fact that we have fought our way in the world without aid from any man's arm (40).

The alteration of the conventional model of sexual differences made way for the emergence of a certain breed of single women who challenged the stereotypes. These women adopted a strong independent female identity, as opposed to the weak dependent female identity. They dispensed with the private, passive world of the old maid, who often kept herself occupied as a servant of the family, or a charity workhand. The new



spinsters entered public professions. Apart from the gains of the Women's Movement, and their own personal determination, women were admittedly helped by other factors. The general speeding up of industrial development, and the increasing social mobility that resulted from it, opened up new niches for women. For instance, the notable growth of the service division of late Victorian economy expanded the category of office jobs, and jobs of a secretarial nature, which furthered employment opportunities for women.

One of the phenomena that simultaneously portrayed the changing of sexual stereotypes and the complex and deep-seated resistance to this change was the "new woman." Although this type of female sprang from the ranks of the single independent women, she was unique in that she was made a victim to cultural mythologizing. It is plausible that the reason for this type of persecution is the fact that the "new woman" was normally younger than the average spinster and not yet unmarriageable. The fact that she has kept a measure of "freshness" is important, because it is typical of patriarchal culture to think that a plain woman is not worthy of attention, not even the negative type.

Another possible reason for the fictionalizing of the "new woman" is that she was showy on purpose, in other words, she dressed the part of the female rebel. In her book, *The New Woman and her Sisters*, Viv Gardner finds that the popular image of the "new woman" is best exemplified by one of the *Punch* cartoon illustrations from 1894 entitled "*Donna Quixote*." The central figure is attired like the typical "new woman." She has a coarse dress and a severe hairdo. She holds the typical props of the "new woman" of the day, the latchkey and the book. She is surrounded by chaotic images signifying the confused notions that fill her defiantly upheld head. Some of the images feature her

enemies; some feature her friends. Among these enemies is the head of the tyrant man and marriage laws. Ibsen's and Tolstoi's works constitute the friendly thoughts. The basic notion behind this figure is the fact that the "new woman" is fighting an imaginary adversary (41).

The "new woman" phenomenon indicates the seriousness of cultural apprehension of changing gender roles. So threatening was the idea of female emancipation, that the social order felt the need to disparage it. The contempt took a parodyingly stylized form, a fact which forcefully decodes the truth about social sentiment. The fear of gender crossing is so strong that it lies deep down in the cultural unconscious, the realm that, according to Freud, expresses itself in symbols and signs. This is the context in which we hear the *Westminster Review* warn in 1889 that the spirit of woman "will yet roll over the world in fructifying waves, causing incalculable upheaval and destruction" (42). This evocation of a biblical vision of apocalypse indicates not merely the usual sense of insecurity accompanying a break in the normal course of things, it induces a sinister feeling of the collapse of the whole foundation of being. The stylistic form of the mythology which embraces this ominous sentiment makes a valid psychological point here. The consequences of changing sexual roles cut so deep that they cannot be explained or understood by ordinary human discourse. Only the uncontrollably mad-with-fear images of the human id, rendered through the symbolic significance of mythology, adequately envisage these consequences.

The "new woman" phenomenon reveals some truth about the real position of the emancipated woman in the cultural psyche. Not only that, but it uncovers deeper truths

about the tension that resided in the inner life of the newly aware woman herself. Although the "new woman" is a stereotype, like any other stereotype she encompasses at least one aspect of reality, or else she would defeat the purpose of the stereotype. In many ways this "new woman" "did exist in 1890s and the 1900s" (43). The abnormal show of defiance is an exaggeration of the inner struggle which her counterpart undergoes in her quest for the self. The counterpart of the "new woman" is usually a middle-class girl who has had, more or less, the same type of upbringing that Carol Dyhouse describes in her book *Feminism and the Family in England*. Dyhouse's women underwent the experience of a loss of the boundaries between the public and the private, and thus the loss of their very selves.

With the help of some biographical extracts from the early female self-realizers of the period, Dyhouse accurately illustrates the kind of upbringing that formed their domestic background. In doing so, she illuminates the circumstances that led to their politicization. Dyhouse exposes the myth in which these feminists were obliged to live. This myth consisted of their being told that they were the private division of society. "Particularly as puberty approached, girls were hedged around with many more restrictions on their freedom than boys ..." (44). In reality, the girls had influence neither on public nor on private lives. For in spite of the limitations which were imposed on their outside movements, the daughters could not look forward to a place of their own in the home. Most of the time and space in the house was devoted to the male members of the family. The intelligent girls rejected their mother's conviction that the home should be generally run "with the needs of their fathers given clear precedence" (45). The outcome of this virtual exclusion from both public and private spheres is that the "new woman"

and her counterparts have inherited a quality of psyche that is without term. This largely accounts for the somewhat absurd defiant look of these female rebels.

A great deal of resentment was voiced about women's lack of physical and mental privacy in the period with which this thesis is concerned, and before and after. In "*Cassandra*," Florence Nightingale expresses her vexation at the constant interruption of women at home. "Women never have an hour in all their lives . . . that they can call their own, without fear of offending or of hurting someone" (46). Virginia Woolf expressed this resentment in 1929 in her book *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf articulated women's lack of entitlement to time and space in middle-class household. The lack of physical privacy led to the lack of mental progress. Woolf imagined what could have happened if Shakespeare had a sister who was as talented as he was. It is almost certain that this sister's artistic inclinations would have been thwarted by the limitations imposed on her. These limitations would have been manifested in her lack of a public form of knowledge or even a few moments to herself:

Meanwhile his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers (47).

The actual exclusion of women from both private and public realms confirms Haug's theories about the underhand way in which patriarchy utilizes a detrimental hybrid of sexual values to serve its own interests. In the case of Dyhouse's women, the intriguing function of a cross-breed of public/private sexual values resulted in women being ejected from both realms so that men could be the sole occupants of these vital binary divisions of society. At the bottom of the division of sexual values is a vast gap between those who own the world and those who do not: a gap that is held dear by patriarchy because it guarantees the supremacy of the male and his institutions.

One of the most significant aspects of the novelty of the "new dramatists" was the exploration of the problem of the polarization of the sexes which led to the exclusion of the weaker sex from both public and private realms. The exploration of gender contrasting opposition both on the positional and metaphorical levels was part of the preoccupation of the "new drama" with the interworking of the private self and the public self. This preoccupation was, in turn, an after effect of the emergence of psychoanalysis. At times, it is part of these theatrical rebels' scheme of social reform to propose a mixture of sexual values that operates positively towards the common good of humanity. The blend of gender-marked values devised by the contributors to the "new drama" movement often runs counter to the Machiavellian compounds of sexual values contrived by patriarchy.

The vision of a humanity morally converted through a radical change of gender relations is an essential part of the consciousness of the "new drama" movement. This vision is congruent with the prospect delineated by Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth*. She

prophesizes that a reformed norm of sexual relationships which holds the female and male principles in equal esteem is the only hope for the spiritual emancipation of the human community. Wolf considers this refined version of sexual relationships to be one of “the establishment’s worst nightmares.” This is because “heterosexuals are the most powerful sexual majority” and a reformed version of their relationship is destined to effect a social revolution stronger in its impact than all known social revolutions. It will abolish the materialistic thinking upon which many unjust political and social systems have based their policies. And “for heterosexual love,” it would be “the beginning of the beginning” (48). But how did the “new drama” relate itself to the issues of gender and morality? More importantly, how did it manage to communicate the way in which its upholders mused over these two highly controversial issues to the theatergoing public in the presence of the all-powerful mainstream theatre, particularly since the latter devotedly catered to the requirements of the orthodox ethical order? This order vehemently preserved orthodox styles of sexual relationships.

## II. The Theatre

The “new drama” movement in Britain emerged from the work of an avant-garde comprising a number of dedicated playwrights including those discussed in my thesis. The dramatists who contributed to the “new drama” believed that theatre should experience a revival in parallel with the rebirth occurring in other cultural spheres, like art, philosophy, and religion where new thoughts, new forms, and more profound truths about life were anticipating the arrival of the new century. The “new drama” envisaged a

pervasive and most significant goal, namely that theatre should present serious criticism of social issues. This earnestness should spring from an examination of social problems free from the encumbrances of Edwardian conventions which, they thought, were bound to give reality a false colouring.

The faith of the "new dramatists" in theatre as a means of reforming society was perhaps influenced by Matthew Arnold who had a fervent hope that art, or "poetry" as he liked to call it, would be the "redeemer" of humanity. In his essay "*The Study of Poetry*," he proposed the astounding idea that literature would soon replace religion as the means both to explain the perplexities of life, and to soothe its pains. Victorian existence, he argued, was governed by moral and philosophical chaos, which resulted from the prevalence of the mechanistic model which, in turn, was the side-product of the materialism of science. Given the inauthenticity and tyranny of this model, art was the only element left suitable to deal with truths about life. This is because literature is partly rooted in the human unconscious, in which truths still lodge untouched by the false absolutism of scientific facts. In Arnold's opinion, the muse of the human "id" can assert itself despite the shaken world of the old dogmas, and the uncertain realities of the new doctrines. To support his case, the prominent critic holds up religion to us as an example asserting that although this form of moral philosophy is rapidly going out of date, it still retains its power through its obviously aesthetic rendition of life. Arnold writes: "The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry"(49).

The playwrights declared themselves in favour of theatre being part of public life, incorporating its worries into the specialized concerns of the Edwardian theatre. In

addition, theatre should travel further in the private dimension, exploring deeper-seated human sentiments. More importantly, it should uncover the tension which resulted from the functional interrelation of the public and private dimensions of the lives of the individuals and societies, a tension that lived beneath the superficially neat functions of the organizing agencies of conventional morality. In order to explore life within the context of the complexities that resulted from the interworking of its internal and external aspects, the innovating dramatists aimed at freeing Edwardian theatre from one of its greatest disadvantages: its exclusive dependence on privateness. This theatre was private, not because it concentrated on domestic affairs, or in the sense that it travelled far into the individual's ego centre (which it did not). Rather, the privateness stemmed from the culturally exclusive assumption on which it was based. It assumed that the wider social and political network did not influence people's lives, and so it concentrated much more upon the characters themselves. In doing so, it ignored the fact that the development of an individual's sensibility and social interaction took place within the wider social and historical context.

Some of the most prominent issues governed by the public/private mode of thought, which the "new dramatists" explored, were: sexual relationships, sexual dualities, and the connection between the two issues and the question of ethics. A key to an understanding of the relationship between gender and morality on the one hand, and the shaping of the immense complication of this subject into the composed form of the new intellectual drama, on the other, lies in the work of two writers from continental Europe, Freud and Ibsen.



### **The "New Drama" and the Socialization of Gender**

Freud's socializing of gender, his linking of one's moral sense, or the super-ego, with one's gender specificity, was already absorbed into the learned person's understanding of the traditional family structure. The acceptance of Freud's theories about morality and gender as part of the ideology of the illuminati of the day was part of the pioneering psychoanalyst's contribution to what was known as "modernism" in theatre. Freud's main contribution to this school of art in the period under study, however, was that he proposed the question of the unconscious. This strikingly new inference captured the imagination of a vast number and range of cultural establishments, including theatre. Freud's effect was most visible in the advanced types of drama, such as Strindberg's, that embraced the turn of the century's mighty cultural upheaval with vigour. This was a new intellectual world which Freudian conceptions largely helped to make.

The avant-garde dramatists were fascinated by the ingenious thinker's conception of the mind as a living thing, as consisting in a number of mental formations, some conscious, some unconscious. The conscious, or the external part communicated with synthetic forces, mainly orthodox ethical tenets, whilst the unconscious, or the internal part, contained the individual's original thoughts. These two sets of opposing forces existed in perpetual tension. The "new dramatists" realized that exploring the private self, and its interconnection with the social self, was one vital path to authenticity in art. In order to achieve this complex treatment of dramatic material, innovation should be introduced to many aspects of the theatre, particularly its technique.

One of the characteristics of the originality of the "new drama" is combining an acute interest in the unearthing of more solid truths about life with the precognition that such an interest demands new theatrical forms to accommodate it. Consequently, there was a significant development in the area of symbolic statement. This is, arguably, the Freudian pursuit that had the greatest impact, not only on the period under study, and not only in drama, but also on the literature of the twentieth century as a whole. The prominent psychoanalyst asserted that the unconscious expressed itself mainly through dreams, which were, for him, a highly stylized and singular version of the individual's inner life. Symbols then were the most efficient indicators of psychological reality.

One of the ways in which symbolism came to life most aggressively in the theatre was in the meshing of its physical and thematic sides. Ibsen, who exerted the greatest influence on the "new dramatists," utilized many forms of symbolism. One of these forms is the manipulation of the intimate, mainly unconscious, relationship between three vital elements of the theatre, namely social ideologies, theatrical techniques, and the actual restrained presence of the audience in the theatre. This relationship made the theatre an especially potent instrument for subverting social and political beliefs, beyond the level of conscious convictions. The physical form provided translatable masked representations, standing as crude corporeal substitutes for implied social and political ideas. These methods recover the subtext, the "unconscious" of the play where disruptive contents reside. The dramatic subtext, like the human id, has a life of its own.

Ibsen uses symbols extensively in his work. In almost every one of his plays, symbolic elements do some of the work that involves communicating subversive social

ideas. Utilizing the physical side of the theatre to present conceptual elements is a recurrent Ibsenesque technique. The critic George Moore, who was the dramatist's contemporary, testifies to the magnificent theatrical effect of this technique on the audience. He describes one of the earliest, and truest to the Ibsenesque spirit, productions of *Ghosts* in the Théâtre Libre in Paris. After a frenzied moment between a mother and her son, the stage is left empty; its emptiness brings into being a sense of dismay combined with an air of alarm that overwhelms Moore so much that he announces that never "in these modern years has such a scene been written as that one." He goes on to say that he has never "felt so divine a horror," as he does when "the mother, overcome, rushes from the room. She is followed tumultuously by the son, and the stage is left empty—empty and not empty—for its emptiness is the symbol of the horror that we feel, the blank stage becomes at once the symbol of the blank insolvable problem which is life" (50).

The use of symbolism, which establishes a line of communication between the unconscious of the play and the audience's id, is one of the most effective methods of handling the subject of gender-marked cultural metaphors. In fact the subject could scarcely be dealt with more efficiently. This is because the meaning of gender is part of the cultural internality; it is the unspoken way in which we make sense of living the "male" and "female" categories. Figures of speech underpinning our thinking about gender are deeply rooted in our id, and therefore resistant to direct questioning, not the least because we are deeply involved with our own gender identity. We are unaware of the role of maleness and femaleness in our lives. Ibsen excels in using symbols to lay bare, and to upset, the deep-seated beliefs about gender. In *Hedda Gabler*, the lady of the

title's most prominent feature is her crossing of gender boundaries, which is conceived as a positive sign of her individuality. Hedda's masculine traits are physically projected through the emphasis which Ibsen places upon a physical object, Hedda's pistols. These gender-specific tools are the protagonist's legacy from her father (51).

In fact, Freud's ideas, along with other types of imported philosophies, came to Britain mainly through the influence of Ibsen; whose influence was far from moderate especially that of his wholesome rebellion against gender indoctrination. Ibsen's plays celebrate the boldness of the individualist; society's hero. He illustrates the struggle of this hero against the forces that endeavour to shape his, or her, experience of living. Prominent among these invincible forces for the dramatist is the socially imposed sexual identity. The Norwegian rebel is powerfully aware of gender roles and their distancing of the individual from his, or her, self. A great number of his individualist icons are women. Hedda Gabler in the play of the same name and Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House* are examples of women who resist sexual and social indoctrination. They both opt for abrupt and violent dissension from traditional styles of life that have previously seemed unyielding to them.

Nora leaves her marital home, and Hedda commits a liberating suicide. The first of these two stalwart subverters was subjected to an intensely traditional upbringing, and her husband who, true to patriarchal traditions, became her mentor in adult life, trained her to conform to orthodox feminine traits. Cultivating self-deception in her, he encouraged her to see herself as a passive object who should be spared the toughening elements of the world outside in order to stay pretty and enjoyable. Nora's marital home

is built on sharply divided principles, e.g. hard *versus* soft, rational *versus* irrational. Much of the couple's exchange is clothed with the metaphors that underlie their relationship, so much so that their encounter is a role-playing rather than real communication. It is sheer romanticizing. Typical fragments of their conversation would be that Nora asks for Helmer's help in a weak helpless manner. He would answer something like:

HELMER: Try to calm yourself and get your balance again, my frightened little songbird. Don't be afraid. I have broad wings to shield you. . . . You are safe here; I shall watch over you like a hunted dove which I have snatched unharmed from the claws of the falcon (p.96).

This speech illustrates the common grounds of the couple's relationship as envisaged by Helmer, and approved by his wife.

As a result of her extremely superficial upbringing, Nora is distanced from herself, and thrown into an oblivious existence, in which she has lost her true human essence. The forcibly externalized wife and daughter eloquently puts her finger on her own dilemma as she tells Helmer: "Now I look back on it, it's as if I've been living here like a pauper, from hand to mouth. I performed tricks for you, and you gave me food and drink" (p.98). Before her awakening, Nora believed wholeheartedly in the principles on which her family life rested. This is partly because of her limited outlook as a woman who has been confined to domestic surroundings all her life, but partly because the ideas which traditional moral propaganda promotes about marriage, of which hers and

Helmer's is a specimen, are, superficially, in sympathy with Nora's own essential principles. According to the instructions of the orthodox moral authorities, the main function of traditional marriage is to further the welfare and togetherness of the family. This is only achieved if there is real love and reciprocity between husband and wife. The doctrine of the unified household finds a welcome in Nora's heart, by reason of its being the principle to which she dedicates herself.

Up till the incident which prompts her disillusionment, Nora has thought that love, reciprocity, and family togetherness are Helmer's ultimate objectives too. But her illusion is destroyed when she realizes that her male partner is more interested in the mechanism of social appearances than in the actual substance of his family life. What he diligently guards is his public self-representation and not real devotion. The propriety of his image as a respectable head of the family is an essential part of this representation. This is the main reason behind the perfection of his performance of the masculine part of the sexual symbiosis, the perfection which has misled Nora to believe that Helmer, like her, has reincarnated himself in the bonds of harmony and mutuality of the couple.

Events proceed to disillusion the Ibsenesque protagonist. The catalyst of her rude awakening is the episode in which her husband discovers her guilty secret. Nora has committed forgery in order to borrow the money needed to pay for a trip meant to improve the husband's health. At one point the forgery is discovered. Up to the point of disclosure, Nora has credited Helmer with the prestigious orthodox male rationality and bravery, which are accompanied by a genuine tendency to protect his dependants. She has favoured him with all the heroism, strength, and energy which exist, albeit in crude

forms, in her own inner nature. She has never doubted that when the forgery is uncovered, he will take her guilt upon himself. So far from having any idea of making such a sacrifice, he lashes out at her with cruel and sickeningly self-seeking reproof. Helmer's attitude prompts Nora to question the relationship which she is accustomed to think of as love.

Traditional and moral authorities promote sexual dualities because they are the backbone of the economical and political institutions which they support. These dualities are powerfully indoctrinated in the social consciousness. It is therefore axiomatic to think that relationships between men and women are conditional on both parties having proper sexual characteristics. In the popular imagination, love, which is the cementing factor of this relationship, exists between people who exhibit sharply divided sexual characteristics. According to Nora's experience hitherto, she and Helmer fall into this category beyond doubt. Yet, Nora now feels that the emotion which has tied her to her husband is not, cannot, be love, since Helmer refuses to recognize it as anything but "silly excuses" (p.93). This enlightenment leads her to rethink her position in her home, and the wifely personality which she has been forced to recognize as her own. So Nora leaves her home, slamming the widely famous door behind her. She then embarks on a quest for the self.

Like Nora, Ibsen's other rebel has no alternative but to perform a radical act in the face of gender repression. Hedda's most prominent feature is her crossing of gender boundaries exemplified by the repetitive references to various aspects of her childhood, such as pistols and horse riding. From these references, we learn that Hedda has been

brought up by her father like a boy. She longs to live the noble and individualistic life of an upper class, privileged male. However, as a rich woman in a male dominated society, she cannot hope to earn enough money to enable her to achieve the high standard of living necessary to support the exclusive lifestyle to which she aspires. Hedda associates a high standard of living with refinement of spirit. She however finds herself obliged to marry an innocuous academic who lacks originality of thought, but who, she hopes, will provide her with a good standard of living. As a consequence of this marriage she is obliged to live within the narrow confines of the stagnant environment which she abhors. She is strongly urged by Tesman's aunt to become pregnant. Even though Hedda has accepted her marriage to Tesman, she resists the thought of pregnancy; she will countenance no silly aunts slobbering over babies. Hedda rejects the mother's role that Chodorow characterizes as a "diffuse, unbounded quality"(52). This role contradicts the well-defined sense of boundaries that Hedda has developed as a child brought up in the masculine tradition.

The protagonist embodies for the female audience all the claustrophobia of middle-class women who had been denied the opportunity of developing their potential. Her energies are restrained, recycled, and are converted to destructive vigour. The castration element stands out most in Hedda's character. She is a steel-minded woman with a sovereign will. The whole of her energetic core is subdued to the vapid and puerile will of her husband and his aunt. Harold Clurman counsels that "in playing the part [of Hedda], an actress must make us sense the flame within her as much as the forces which compel her to quench it. She should be acted as a dashing personality straitened to a frightening quiet" (53).



The emasculation of Hedda, and her entrapment in the female role met with a ready response from Elizabeth Robins and Marion Lea, Robins's partner in obtaining the English performing rights to *Hedda Gabler*. Robins and Lea were aware that the unconventional female protagonist might be misunderstood by the men in the audience, who would react adversely to Ibsen's exposure of the state of sexual estrangement in society. But as far as the women in the audience were concerned, Hedda contributed to an authentic vision of femininity; a parable-like projection of the female self. She threw into relief the dimness of the female image on the stage, an image which was the result of years of objecthood, isolation, and fragmentation. Lea and Robins reported that: "One lady of our acquaintance, married and not noticeably unhappy, said laughingly, "Hedda is all of us!" (54).

The protagonist's disgust at the all-consuming maternal qualities is conveyed with an emotional élan in the scene where the milquetoast people to which she has attached herself--Tesman and his aunt--hint at the possibility of pregnancy by insisting, despite Hedda's objection, that she has "filled out" (p.254). Hedda moans with pain and disgust. The change of her bodily size has a symbolic significance for Hedda; it means losing her control over her own psyche. The loss of physical shape is a symbolic projection of the loss of the boundaries of the self. Elizabeth Grosz, interpreting the French feminist Julia Kristeva's theories, says that she (Kristeva) believes that pregnancy is an experience which enhances women's passivity. Pregnancy is a "process without a subject." Grosz quotes Kristeva as she explores the feeling of mental and physical paralysis that the pregnant woman experiences. This all-consuming passivity is accompanied by the obliteration of identity, by a sense of otherness, and a sense of the

loss of the boundaries of the self: “Cells fuse, split, and proliferate; volumes grow, tissues stretch, and body fluids change rhythm, speeding up or slowing down. . . . And no one is present, within that simultaneously dual and alien space, to signify what is going on. ‘It happens, but I’m not there’” (55).

The maternity that is “without a subject” is the main purpose behind the marriage with Tesman which is urged, if not entirely contrived, by Miss Tesman. The maiden lady desperately wishes for Hedda to give birth to a child so that she, the childless aunt, will have a living soul for whom she can act as carer and nurturer. In Act Four, Miss Tesman visits Hedda in order to convey to her the news of the death of her sister. The former’s visit is brief but charged with subtext. Her speech is comprised of the swift and terse replacement of the vision of death with the vision of life. The rapid alternations between these two concepts betray Miss Tesman’s impatience to counter the recent death with a new life on whom she can practise her one and only gift, maternity.

MISS TESMAN: But I thought, no, I must go and break the news of death to Hedda myself—here, in the house of life.

A while later she cajoles:

MISS TESMAN: Now we must start to sew poor Rena’s shroud. There’ll be sewing to be done in this house, too, before long, I shouldn’t wonder. But not for a shroud, praise God (pp.318-319).

Miss Tesman's speech is almost sinister in its undertones. It conveys the message that if the purpose of her nephew's marriage is not fulfilled, there will be no use for this coupling. This makes Hedda a passive agent for the barren aunt's lust for maternity. Soon after this visit things begin to decline even further in Hedda's life. One of the traumas that follows in the wake of the maiden lady's visit is the death of Loevborg. The latter is Hedda's soul mate, Tesman's rival for her favour, who is also a wild poet and a known libertine. In the episode where Judge Brack tries to impart the news of the death of Loevborg to Hedda and Tesman, Miss Tesman's name gets mixed up in the conversation. This comic misunderstanding suggests, in a characteristic stroke of Ibsenesque vagueness, Miss Tesman's strange, somehow metaphysical involvement in the incident.

TESMAN: Hullo, my dear judge. Fancy seeing you!

BRACK: I had to come and talk to you.

TESMAN: I can see Aunti Juju's told you the news.

BRACK: Yes, I've heard about that, too.

TESMAN: Tragic, isn't it?

BRACK: Well, my dear chap, that depends how you look at it.

TESMAN: (*looks uncertainly at him*) Has something else happened? (p.324).

The dramatist's use of unconscious material in this episode is striking. Subliminal existence is not ordered or reasoned, yet it contains the truer facts of life. The Ibsenesque vagueness, which matches the illogicality of the human id, is one apt method of "unconsciously" discovering the secrets of the "unconscious." In the hidden part of the

mind reside our deepest secrets, and because the id is inaccessible to the conscious memory, it functions independently from our more disciplined faculties.

Similarly, in Ibsen's plays, the unknown sections of the characters' minds are buried in the dramatic subtext, which miraculously resembles the human id in that it has a life of its own. The dramatic subtext keeps producing and reproducing itself, independent of the external texture of the play. In this fashion, in every reading one uncovers a different truth. These truths are strong, the strongest, because they are rooted in the depth of both the audience's id and the dramatic subtext. The episode in which Miss Tesman is incriminated through a magnificent tragic hybrid of accident and yearning is one of many that prompt Barker to applaud the "poignancy" of Ibsen's drama. According to Barker, the Norwegian dramatist's sense of human catastrophe "may be pulsing beneath the commonplace event, its burden only heard in the thing hinted or half said, its springs of action hidden in the actors' secret minds" (56).

It is possible that at the bidding of the unconscious the characters let Miss Tesman's name slip into the conversation. The comic mistake at once betrays something of the abruptness and impulsiveness of the unconscious and the depth of the characters' repression. In the hidden part of the characters' mind dwells the mother figure who controls a great deal of our lives. The imperative of her confinement to the role of nurturing prompts the mother to cultivate a pattern of dependency, which remains with her children in adult life. Although they deeply resent the feminine and the power of their mothers, the children cannot escape from either, which causes them a great deal of resentment. This is why the characters insinuate that Miss Tesman is one of the causes of

Loevborg's death. The insinuation is the characters' way of avenging themselves on the "eternal mother," by disparaging her in the figure of Miss Tesman, who is one of her best representatives.

In the works of the "new dramatists," who were largely influenced by Freud and Ibsen, the unconscious and its symbolism materialized mainly in a frequently used dramatic form. This is the indirect statement. There exists a subconscious level in a great many prominent works of the "new drama." One of the central lines of thought in this thesis is exploring the issues of gender and morality as they are often investigated at this subliminal dramatic layer (57). The dramatists who are discussed in this context took Ibsen to their hearts, adopting his vision about sexual en-genderation and estrangement. In order to bring Ibsen to the public's attention the dramatists had to contend with the prevailing theatrical systems of the times. They believed in the importance of theatre as a generator of social knowledge and not simply a medium for entertainment. They also sought to break away from rigid theatrical styles and the assumptions that form the basis of the commercial theatre.

### **The Well-Made Play and the "New Drama" Forms**

The main theatrical style that the mainstream theatre of the period had to offer was the well-made play. This genre of theatrical writing was rooted in the works of Scribe and Sardou. The plays which were written in this tradition fall into much the same mould. They have a mechanical four-act structure. The first act is the exposition in which we learn all the necessary information about the characters' lives. Then comes a section

devoted to misunderstandings, traumas, and surprises. After the shock-scene comes the climax, the *scène-à-faire*, where the characters confront each other, and a resolution is reached immediately with little regard to the actual clutter that ensues from problematic human relationships. The denouement is the episode that follows the crisis scene, and it shows the aftermath of the decision taken in the crisis scene.

In the classic English play of the genre, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* by Arthur Wing Pinero, Paula's meeting with her ex-lover in her new husband's house is one of the most shocking episodes of the play. The well-made play's creed of coincidence has it that Ellean, Paula's stepdaughter, meets one of Paula's ex-lovers in Paris, falls in love with him and accepts his proposal of marriage. Paula, still ignorant of Ellean's and Hugh's plan to get married, meets Hugh by chance in her drawing room. Paula has then to undergo the episode in which she confronts her husband and stepdaughter. The matter is then resolved by a cut-and-dried ending. Paula commits repentant suicide, while the lover is forgiven.

The rigid structure of the well-made play reflects in its matter an unreal and repressive view of society and social problems. It is built on the mutual pretence between the dramatist and the audience that life is evenly shaped; that it has a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. The mechanical linking of scenes provided by means of carefully planned clues, suggestive remarks, and cataclysmic meetings, provide the plays with substance and facilitates the "natural" evolvment of the plot. These automated devices are necessary in a play that shies away from dealing with real human motives and psychic complications.

The plays which adopted the well-made play mode were mainly written for, and derived their subject matter from, the upper-middle class. Good examples of the moral restrictions imposed on this class and, consequently, on the theatre which it championed, can be found in four period pieces written by the two leading playwrights of the Edwardian well-made play, Arthur Wing Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones. These plays are *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, and *The Case of Rebellious Susan*. All four plays were considered relatively controversial in the 1890s when they were first produced. The main reason for this is the fact that they put a woman who, one way or other, has transgressed the rules of sexual purity, at their centre, and show a measure of sympathy with her. The principal female characters in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* and *Mrs. Dane's Defence* are "women with a past." *The Case of Rebellious Susan* shows a woman on the verge of repaying her husband for his infidelity by embarking on an extra-marital affair of her own in an alien country.

The image of the protagonist of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* encompasses two female adjectives which were used as terms of abuse in the late Victorian England, the "new woman," and the fallen woman. The protagonist has not only committed acts of sexual impropriety, but also dared to step out of gender boundaries by rejecting the traditional feminine role. In other words, Agnes is fallen on principle. She lives with her married lover outside wedlock because she does not believe in the institution of marriage. She will objectify neither her mind nor her body by following traditional feminine codes of behaviour. For instance, she refuses to wear feminine decorative clothes and is content to remain plain and dowdy.

Yet, ultimately, the plays remain tied to the mode of the commercial theatre, especially through the view of sexual morality that they depict. All plays were written in the well-made play mode, and all plays were produced within the context of the commercial theatre establishment, where priority was given to box-office takings. Thus it was inevitable that the plays should reflect the interest of the classes who could afford the price of the ticket. Accordingly, the dramatists' works were obliged to offer an inoffensive view of middle-class morality. Since that morality was closely tied to the preservation of sexual stereotypes, adherence to these stereotypes was one of the major requirements of the well-made play. This adherence implied that one only became established and respected when one performed the sexual role which was demanded of one.

If Lady Susan were to insist on carrying out her decision to behave like her husband, that is to take an active control of her own body, she would have to face dire consequences. She might lose her home, and even Sir Richard Kato's protection since he is likely to renounce her in order to preserve the family's reputation, which he cherishes more than anything else. In *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* Paula's earlier free use of her body has made her an offender beyond redemption. Only annihilation by death might change the situation. Agnes is convinced by a friend and her vicar brother to search her soul, renounce her independence, and resign herself to a passive life of remorse and repentance. Mrs. Dane has to give up her current lover on the grounds that his association with her will cause him misery. She then half-willingly, half-forcibly leaves society to lead a life of inactive powerlessness on its fringes.



The well-made play, consciously or unconsciously, associates social and economic security with one's ability to comply with the requirements of gender roles. This ability, which is part of the person's duty towards themselves and society, is elevated to the plane of ethics. Morality is prescribed by authorities, such as the church and the official judicial system, which decide on questions of "right" and "wrong". One is thus moral if one complies with the requirements of these institutions. The well-made play pretends that the conditioning of people in this way, defining them in terms of restricted social and sexual categories, is a moral act recommended by almost infallible spiritual institutions, rather than determined by commercial, materialistic principles. A "sense of duty" is a prevalent sentiment in the well-made play. Individuals are advised to distance themselves from their real needs and to determine their actions by the principles of the tenets of social "duty." This is because duty is subject to the question of "right" and "wrong," which, in its turn, is determined by incontestable institutions.

However, the conception of morality, or the sense of "duty," as it is understood by the orthodox moral consciousness which the well-made play upholds, is neither infallible nor absolute. The net effect of the well-made play reflects the hypocrisy of conventional moral understanding. The four well-made plays discussed in this part of my thesis offer appropriate examples of the way in which this theatrical genre supports the segregation of gender-marked cultural values and traditional moral ethics. In *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, the lady of the title's attempt at breaking the accepted moral codes by embarking on an extra-marital affair is violently curtailed. Although Susan's intended adventure has been only an angry reaction to the infamous exploits of her philandering husband, she is subjected to a great deal of disciplinary censure. In the course of the play,

she is gradually convinced by her conservative uncle and her own lady friends that she should give up any thought of retribution, as women's virtues are the foundation of the nation's ethical structure. According to the Admiral, a "woman has no right to shake the foundations of society in this way" (58).

At the end of the play, Lady Susan is not only convinced that she must not commit adultery, but also that she must forgive her husband his extra marital relationships. According to the community to which Lady Susan belongs, women are passive receivers of men's active offences:

LADY DARBY: You see, dear, we poor women cannot retaliate.

LADY SUSAN: I see.

LADY DARBY: We must be patient.

INEZ: And forgive the wretches till they learn constancy (pp.160-161).

Lady Susan's and Harabin's marriage is cemented by material goods. Therefore Harabin is allowed to break the law of fidelity as long as he can provide his wife with expensive material goods, a "villa at Cannes and a diamond ring and bracelet from Hunt and Roskell's" (p.116).

Pinero's *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, presents a view of sexual relationships and morality similar to that reflected in *The Case of Rebellious Susan*. Before the incidents of the play begin, Paula committed acts of sexual impropriety. But as she is at present married to a member of the upper classes, she is keen to repent her sins and longs to be

accepted by the respectable circles of society. Paula, who seeks moral conversion, discovers that this task is very difficult under the circumstances in which she lives. Nothing short of suicide could move her stepdaughter Ellean, the representative of middle-class propriety, to accept her repentance as genuine. It is not until the end of the play, when Paula commits suicide, that Ellean realizes that she should have exercised more leniency. Ellean exclaims painfully: "If I had only been merciful!" (59).

The literal-minded young woman's response to the revelation that Paula has had an affair with her intended partner is meaningful. While Ellean forgives Hugh his past sins, she refuses to do the same for her stepmother. Captain Ardale's heroism in India gives her ample excuse to pardon him his sexual licentiousness. Moreover, Captain Ardale's past conduct is not a deviation from the norm, being only part of a "man's life." It is an unwritten social law, which the traditionally pious daughter declares she fully understands and accepts (p.205). Paula's ethics are measured in terms of her success in passively offering her body to the right person. Captain Ardale's morality is decided upon his success in performing active heroic deeds in the war. The well-made play enforces the power of patriarchy which depends on manipulating the bisexuality of sexual values. These values are effective tools of social and political conditioning, and thus control.

Agnes is induced by Gertrude and her brother to accept the Bible as the reference for proper conduct. What the orthodox persuaders want from Agnes is that she internalizes sanctioned moral principles which describe her as "wanton." They succeed in achieving their goal and Agnes changes the way she looks at herself. Formerly she saw

herself as an active woman who positively imposed rigorous rules of conduct on herself. She lived with her married lover out of wedlock, demanding an unconventional, platonic relationship with him. She rejected the idea of a relationship based upon traditional feminine/masculine symbiosis, wanting hers and Lucas's relationship to be based upon the concepts of mutuality and harmony. Agnes believed that she had a mission, which was to initiate social change by promoting her faith. Supremacy over herself was contingent upon her abandonment of society's perception of femininity, and upon her retaining her original persona. To Lucas she expressed her desire to breach the principles embraced in their egalitarian relationship to the world: "We cry out to all people, 'Look at us! Man and woman who are in the bondage of neither law nor ritual! Linked simply by mutual trust! Man and wife, but something better than man and wife! Friends, but even something better than friends!'" (60).

After her conversion Agnes comes to see herself as guilty of doing society a disservice by having just the same characteristics that previously made her think of herself as socially instrumental: activeness and individuation. Her attitude towards her cause after the conversion is reflected in the change of the way she feels about the same alliance with Lucas that she has previously seen as the social manifestation of her morally elevated abstract principles: "What a partnership it has been! How base, and gross, and wicked, almost from the very beginning!" (p.222). Agnes's free use of her own body and soul is now seen, not as symptomatic of an active wholesome self, but a sign of corruption, of a serious handicap in her ethical make up. The reformed ex-rebel is now convinced that for her to really serve society, and to perform her duty to the community, she should relinquish her active public role. Social advancement requires, in

a central way, the passivity of women which ensues from an ongoing need for purification of an eternally operating sin.

Pinero presents Lucas as weak and self-centered. St. Olpherts, Lucas's own uncle, recites a whole catalogue of his moral failings: He is an "egoist" who possesses "ambition without patience, self-esteem without self-confidence." Moreover, he is afflicted "with a desperate craving for the opium-like drug, adulation" (pp.95-96). Meanwhile there seems to be unanimity among all the characters in the play about Agnes's potential virtues. Even Sybil Cleeve, the woman whom Agnes has wronged, admits to having been aware, through other people's account of her husband's mistress that there is "good" in the said mistress (p.213). Despite Lucas's being morally inferior to Agnes, at the bottom of the play is the unmistakable notion that the former is worthier of saving than the latter. Lucas's value is asserted on the basis of his masculinity alone, on the grounds of his possession of the privilege of being a member of the gender that has an inherent right to a prestigious position in society, regardless of his moral character. What is even more striking is the latent notion that the discarded mistress is not the only one who is marginalized. Other elements which are as significant to society's moral health as Agnes's integrity are equally befringed, namely Lucas's wife, their marriage, and the stability of their family. The consequential politician's relatives, including the inessential wife, are desperate to arrange a sham reconciliation between the couple, which will lead to a domestic arrangement "*à la mode*": they will remain married and maintain an appearance of a united family life. In reality, they will live apart (p.160).

The significance of wifedom, the principle of domesticity, and the value of moral commitment diminish in the face of a gainful pursuit which is meant to support patriarchal institutions. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* reflects the hypocrisy of the social order which it upholds. This order claims to elevate women and the family to the height of sacredness on the grounds of their being the guardians of the nation's moral worth, and the source of the individual's real happiness. In reality, the much acclaimed domesticity is only a tool utilized by patriarchy to preserve a structure of gender-marked values, which, in turn, is designed to keep masculinity and its principles at the top of the hierarchy.

This is the same notion that Ibsen, in the forgery episode of *A Doll's House*, criticizes. When Nora committed her crime, she was acting on an intrinsic woman's instinct. In her own mind, the forgery was justified on the grounds that it was committed in order to preserve the life and well-being of her husband: Surely, the law could not be so idiotic as to punish her for a simple offence which was insignificant if compared with the noble motives that had prompted it. Nevertheless, naturally brave and discerning, Nora knows deep down that, in effect, the law is sufficiently myopic to disregard the decency of her motives, and this is the reason behind the deep disquiet which she now experiences. The inexperienced wife and daughter is instinctively, if not yet with an entirely clear sight, aware of how society works: The law, like everything else, is a mechanism that is an end in itself, and not, as she hopes, a means to an end (human equality and happiness). Through Nora's dilemma Ibsen wishes to tell us that the judicial system is a tool which performs many roles. One of the most important of these roles is

promoting masculine rationality into an all-embracing universal value. In commending rationality through the law, the social order can be extremely irrational.

For one thing, if Nora's forgery is seen in the light of the particular circumstances that have prompted it, its impropriety should be significantly diminished. Nora has not only saved the life and prosperity of her husband, but of her entire family. The order of things which traditional morality promotes is conditioned on the male's monopoly of economic power. The male then is the chief provider for the family. If Helmer, the provider for this particular family, were to lose his life, it would be rocked to its foundations. The social order claims to be the guardian of the traditional family's welfare. This is however not true. The social order's *real* interest lies in preserving the supremacy and comprehensiveness of the masculine principles of hierarchy, control, and rationality. In doing so, the order furthers the ethos of a world that comes together through a system of rules, rather than human bonding. It thus defeats the purpose that it claims to champion. In other words, the social order "irrationally" promotes "rationality." *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* advocates a system that upholds masculinity and its principles at the cost of the stability of the family, whilst *A Doll's House* views this same system with disfavour.

Mrs. Dane's destiny, like that of Agnes, Paula, and Susan, reflects the net effect of the well-made play, which advocates excluding women in the passive role of the other. For to say that Mrs. Dane's exile is meant to be her proper punishment is only to scratch the surface of the play's philosophy. The idea in the play, freed from all its side issues, is not the ethical estimation of the wrongdoer's past actions, but her and her like's

nomenclature. Mrs. Dane's world-shaking mistake is not so much the actual sin, as her vigorous, almost aggressive, attempt at self-definition. She believes in her essential goodness and wishes to transform this virtue into the form that is approved by society, the form of the respectable wife of a publicly influential man. She goes out of her way to achieve this goal, charming men and fabricating evidence for people who are interested in knowing her true identity. In the process she endures a great deal of anxiety, and probably self-loathing, originating in the knowledge that she is lying. In the expository scene, which tells us of the existing attraction between Mrs. Dane and Lionel, the lover, we are afforded a glimpse of her attitude of mind. The conversation is about Mrs. Dane's "best self." The woman under discussion modestly warns her lover that he might be deceived by her, and that he may be viewing her superficially. Her reality could be darker than her appearance. Lionel's answer is: "You shan't persuade me that you aren't exactly what I want you to be." The stage direction that follows indicates that Mrs. Dane shows "great delight" at her lover's response (61). The disgraced female is relieved at her male partner's words, mainly because they verify her own belief in herself. Her easement stems also from the thought that a young man with such commanding parentage should be strongly on her side, supporting her claim to respectability and legitimacy.

Later on, the inexcusable scarlet woman discovers that her "essential goodness" is insignificant, that it is of no account if compared with the necessity of classifying her properly. The wrongdoing of Mrs. Dane and her like should not be glossed over or forgotten. The transgressors had best be classified as sinners and then be put aside on the strength of this classification. Society's rules must be invincible, lest illicit sexual activity loses its instrumental penalties. When this happens, the effectiveness of the whole



scenario of temptation, of guilt and shame, as inhibiting factors of women's activities, diminishes. Society thus loses its pet excuse for keeping women confined to their passive, private existence.

The position of Sir Daniel, Lionel's foster father, is a testimony to the fact that the core of the play's ethos is not the condemnation of acts of sexual impropriety *per se*, but the preservation of their useful function in inhibiting female activity and inner-direction. As a youth he was involved in an illicit affair with a married woman, who left him in order to save her child's life. Unlike the female sinner of the play, its male sinner is not incarnated in his past, nor is he distanced from social centrality. On the contrary, he is afforded a very influential position as a judge of high court, and a prominent person in the circle of rich landowners. The judge's moral offence does not affect him because legitimacy is his prerogative as a male. His masculinity absolves him from the need to earn the seal of approval of one authority or another.

Lady Eastney's well-warranted surprise at Sir Daniel's admission that he has had experienced several relationships with women, which have not come up to his expectations, is illustrative of this point.

LADY E: You seem to have thrived very well on it. It can't have been a very unpleasant process. I wonder how many poor women have been sacrificed in the --scrimmage? (p.32).

This speech embraces one of the liberal thoughts of the play, criticizing the inequality within sexual relationships between men and women. The fact that Sir Daniel is exceedingly prosperous despite his disappointment in love indicates that women feel the pangs of a failed relationship much more than men. If such liberal ideas are to be allowed to retain some of their authority they should be considered in isolation from the powerful conservative ideology informing the play (62).

In some of the paradoxical circumstances surrounding its production, *The Profligate* reflects forcefully the actual position of individuals who commit sexual impropriety, both in the cultural reality of the day and in the mainstream theatre. Sexual misconduct was not condemned merely on unprejudiced, abstract grounds; the extent of its "wrongness" depended on the sex of the offender. This fact is best exemplified by comparing the fate of the play's male protagonist with that of the female protagonist of another "fallen person" play, particularly the fate of Paula Tanqueray. In the earlier Pinero tragedy, *Renshaw*, a libertine, finds himself in more or less the same situation as Paula. He is newly married to a woman with an irreproachable past, Leslie. Later, the bride becomes the friend of a woman to whom her husband has done wrong. By chance, Janet, the wronged one, appears at the Florentine villa where the newly married couple are spending their honeymoon. The bride then discovers the truth about her husband's past mistreatment of Janet and leaves him. In Pinero's original ending, the one retained in the printed play, *Renshaw* resolves the situation by taking poison.

In the first production of the play (1889) Pinero was asked by John Hare, the actor-manager of the Garrick Theatre, to change the ending, so that *Renshaw* was not

punished for his immoral deeds. The dramatist agreed, and the ending was changed so that Leslie realized Renshaw's remorse, and offered to forgive him. The ending of the stage version of the play won wide support from the members of the theatrical establishment. Astonishingly enough, this included figures who supported the emancipated "new drama," like William Archer, who agreed with Clement Scott that the play's stage finish was the "only logical conclusion." The apparent soundness of this approved termination stemmed perhaps from the fact that it mirrored to the theatre patrons, as well as to its creators, the backbone of the age's philosophy, faithfully embodying its exquisite ethical contrivance: women carried the nation's moral responsibility, thus relieving men from its encumbering effect. The "burden of the sin you have committed I will bear upon my shoulders," are Leslie's exact words to her "fallen lover" in the forgiveness scene, words that aggressively project the mentality of the typical Victorian female (63). In conformity with the teachings of orthodox moralists, men relate to traditional ethics indirectly through the so-called "woman's influence." Leslie assures Renshaw thus: The "little good that is in me shall enter into your heart" (p.viii). With these words the traditionally quintessential "good" wife endorses the "moral deputation" theory.

The four plays, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, *Mrs. Dane's Defence* and *The Case of the Rebellious Susan*, in addition to the production circumstances of *The Profligate*, reflect the quintessence of the well-made play's philosophy regarding the issue of sexual morality. In the final balance, the plays, *The Profligate* production, and the social order that these two aspects support, aim to advocate the maintenance of a synthetically structured sexual symbiosis. They place the

sexes at polarized positions, enhancing their physical and psychological estrangement. One of the most significant sexual dualities which the plays, and the system they champion, advocate is the active/passive and its ramifications. The social order to which the commercial theatre pays homage imposes passivity on women, by way of curtailing their participation in the significant actions of the world. It does so, whilst endowing men with all the energy necessary to maintain masculine institutions, and their principles, in the centre of power.

In many ways the rigid and hierarchical structure of the well-made play, which tends to simplify issues by treating them as “math” problems with “humans,” is a feature of the larger pattern of the male artistic form in general (64). This form is a product of the masculine mentality which is inclined to overlook the complexity within human relationships. It dismantles human lives and reconstructs them in the shape of simple patterns and forms that can be controlled by an abstract system of rules and guidelines. Hélène Cixous believes that women’s writing should be corrective of the male authorship: “Woman un-thinks the unifying, regulating history that homogenizes and channels forces, herding contradictions into a single battlefield” (65). Similarly Gillian Hanna of the *Monstrous Regiment* delineates the male dramatic form as a “sweep of history, something broad and heavy . . . the male playwright’s sensitivity is often like an empire builder—it wants to consume the whole world and then spit it out again in its own image” (66).

The hollow and power-driven quality of the well-made play technique reflects aggressively on the content, which endorses an equally mechanistic view of the sexes as

standing at opposite positional poles. Each gender is characterized by sharply polarized sexual attributes such as public/private, active/passive, and rationality/irrationality. This view of the sexes is at the heart of the moral scheme of the well-made play and the four plays discussed therein as representative of the genre forcibly intensify this view. The playwrights themselves endorse sexual segregation because their professional genius, if not their very sense of "right" and "wrong," is moulded as part of the generalized consciousness of the class which patronizes the mainstream theatre. The sharp polarization of the sexes on both positional and metaphorical levels is the backbone of the ethical system of this class.

The dramatic method of the well-made play—the artificial ordering of events, glossed over with surface verisimilitude which is not related to the subject matter in any concrete manner—is allowed full freedom to control the way we see this subject matter. By the law of the mechanistic model infused into it, the technique, with its detachment and its extreme externality, keeps at bay any complexity of human emotions. This complexity might be admitted in a dramaturgy which employs subtle artistic interaction between the internal and the external parts of the play. The lack of resilience in the relationship between the form and content facilitates an oppressive, one-sided representation of the dramatic material including a synthetically constructed moral system. The well-made play's aloof, tyrannically vain artistic routine intensifies the sense of the rightness of the ultimate fate of the offending women in the four well-made plays discussed in this thesis. The four female protagonists are forced to abandon most forms of exercise that allow them active self-definition and are subsequently relegated to an

inert, submissive existence. Their banishment from action sometimes is so extreme that it leads to death, as it is the case with Paula Tanqueray.

The playwrights of the "new drama" resented the view of gender and morality which was embedded in the well-made play and the commercial theatre which embraced the genre. The "new drama" upheld the principle that theatre should question taken-for-granted beliefs, two of the most important of which were traditional sexual roles, and inevitably, traditional morality which had an intrinsic link with these roles. Ethics and sexuality were the preoccupation, not only of the "new drama," but also of a wide scope of intellectual and popular cultural products, the pervasive interest in these two issues partly being the result of the acceleration and intensification of the work of the Women's Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. So the dramatists discussed in this thesis sought, each in his or her own way, to modify the rigid structure of the well-made play, both on the thematic and formalistic levels. For instance, Barker's overall dramatic technique differed in essence from that of the well-made play.

The well-made play form is mechanistic and detached, appealing to the senses of the audience rather than to their intellect. As for Barker, the components of his dramatic design are so well cemented that elements which give the pleasure of entertainment cannot be distinguished from elements which promote thoughts. Theatrical techniques do not relate to the senses exclusively, nor dramatic contents embed themselves in the mind only. The audience's imagination is helped to cope with the androgynous effect that is born from the perfect identification of the mind/body elements. The imagination is helped by the subtlety and finery of Barker's directorship that causes the work to flow

like music (67). In this, Barker agrees with the Victorian sage, Walter Pater, who believes that music should be an example for other kinds of arts, because it is the only genre in which matter cannot be separated from form. Consummate art is, then, art that comes as close as possible to the condition of music, dispensing, as it must, with the distinction between form and matter. "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" Pater advises (68).

*The Voysey Inheritance* offers an example of the way in which Barker subverts the well-made play formula by merging the form and content of his plays. He does so partly to produce a different view of gender and morality. Barker particularly wishes to expose the falsehood of the well-made play's claim that sexual values are mutually exclusive. Like many other Court plays, *The Voysey Inheritance* is shapeless in the traditional sense of the word. Barker concentrates less on the natural progress of the plot *per se* than on the realistic representation of characters. He presents them in their natural milieu, performing everyday tasks, which may not have much to do with the essential plot. In *The Voysey Inheritance*, Barker abandons the unity of action that has hitherto governed the plays of the mainstream theatre, and introduces his characters while they are performing their daily activities. We see them cleaning, reading contemporary magazines, and sewing. These functions have no immediately recognizable link with the main plot of the play. Nevertheless, this paraphernalia of everyday activities is employed in certain places to produce latent themes that are instrumental in raising subversive questions about the issues of gender and morality.

One such episode is when Barker exposes the fallacy of Mr Voysey's beliefs. The latter is an ingenious lawyer and businessman, who is an advocate of the segregation of sexual values. He frequently insists on the imperative of separating one's private life and its values from the public realm and its principles. But in actuality his actions belie his convictions, for he frequently mixes the private and the public elements in his life in order to serve his business interests. The mixing is translated into practical terms in Act II. Here, Mr Voysey makes use of the overlapping of the physical space between the private and the public spheres to overwhelm a client. He engineers a business deal with George Booth, a principal investor in the Voysey firm and the family's closest friend, in a way that guarantees his own personal interest. This action goes a long way both to help Mr Voysey achieve his end and to prove Barker's point. Throughout the business conversation, Mr Voysey encourages the constant flow of domestic activities which takes place in this act—and indeed in the greater part of the play—to interrupt proceedings. The resultant discontinuity helps to loosen the thread of the conversation, which unsettles the vulnerable George Booth a great deal. Mr. Voysey uses the physical presence of the Voyseys' home surroundings to get the better of one of the firm's clients by distracting him and breaking the conversation's continuity (69).

There is a great discrepancy between the ingenious financier's claim that he compartmentalizes his life between public and private concerns, and the actual state of his financial and familial affairs. Mr Voysey insists upon setting "blinkers upon his mind" by ignoring the fact that, after all, the substance on which the Voysey family fastens is George Booth (70). The latter is the major investor in the Voysey firm as well as a friend close enough to equal a member of the family. It is the constant presence of



Mr Booth in the private, domestic surroundings of the Voyseys which facilitates the process of his financial exploitation. In this light, Mr Voysey's advice to his son Edward holds no water:

MR VOYSEY: You must realise that money making is one thing, and religion another, and family life a third (p.112).

The technique of the episode in which Mr Booth is underhandedly intimidated is an apt example of the way in which the "new drama" subverts the well-made play formula to reflect unorthodox view of gender and morality. Another such example is to be found in Elizabeth Robins's *Votes for Women*. At one point the playwright introduces a twist on the well-made play's coincidence mechanism in order to comment on an issue which has public/private resonance. Jean, one of the main characters, is a rich girl with personal integrity. Yet because of her money, she is subjected to a great deal of protection by her relatives, which has rendered her ignorant and unable to act on her intrinsic strength of character. In the disfigured coincidence episode, the private and enclosed world of Jean and her relatives is contrasted with another world in the play, which is more public and open. The transference to this world takes place in Act I by means of coincidence, a device reminiscent of the well-made play. The coincidence consists of the protagonist, Levering, dropping her handkerchief. Rather than advocate the tradition of the well-made play, Levering's well-timed indiscretion refutes it. In so doing, the handkerchief incident jettisons the patriarchal tradition on which the dramatic construction of the well-made play is based. Once it has served its purpose, the handkerchief is obliterated. We hear no more of it.

Contrary to the well-made play's adherence to the past, *Votes for Women* ignores this past. Immediately after the link with the past is established, through the unintentional dropping of the handkerchief in Act II, the play opens up to a different world. This is the present and the place is a refreshing spacious "public" place, namely the "north side of the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square." It is a representation of a suffrage rally. In this act the audience is instantly reminded of the play's main underlying issue: the personal is political. The first speaker, the Working Woman, starts her speech by establishing this major theme. In a boisterous fashion, appropriate to her character, she declares: "Wot's politics?... It's just 'ousekeepin' on a big scyle" (71).

In the well-made play of the period, the coincidence, the sudden discovery of events related to the characters' past lives, continues to play a major role in the dramatic conflict which follows. This conflict is born of the characters' intensively private motives. The dramatic action seems to emerge from a psyche that mysteriously regulates itself without much interference from outside circumstances. The play concentrates on the characters themselves rather than on the conditions that shape their lives. Consequently, the "privateness" of the experience is, most of the time, superficial and not grounded in psychological reality. This synthetic psychological exploration necessitates the existence of a tangible link which justifies the "natural" evolution of incidents. In *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, Paula's chance meeting with her ex-lover in her home leads to a trauma which results in her repentant suicide. Although the play ends by pleading for mercy for Paula's case, her death is in many ways a retribution for her past immoral deeds.

Meanwhile, the sudden movement of *Votes for Women* from the mode of the well-made play to that of a personal/political drama is a device which serves to remind us of two major facts: the first is the falsehood of the claim that sexual values are mutually exclusive, the second is that people are not passive recipients of the forces of guilt and retribution. They are part of a larger social fabric; a chain in a continuum that decides a great many of their actions and reactions. In such wise, the “woman with a past” of the well-made play compares unfavourably with her counterpart in *Votes for Women*. The “fallen woman” of traditional drama is assessed against an ideal of female virtue. This ideal is rooted in a physical/moral system of values that belongs exclusively to the private sphere. In contrast, Levering, the “fallen woman” of *Votes for Women*, is assessed in public terms. Her moral worth is measured in terms of her public position as a social and political activist.

### **Theatrical Context in the 1890s**

Not only the form and content of the well-made play were governed by masculine values, but also the theatrical conditions within which these plays were produced. The theatrical establishment was ruled by a strong principle of hierarchy. The hierarchy of pay was based on sex and professional status: leading performers were paid unreasonably more than subordinate actors; men were paid more than women. The only exception to gender discrimination in wages was found in the context of stardom: stars were paid according to their popularity, not their gender. Hierarchy did not stop at external factors, like pay and occupational superiority. It determined the quality, quantity, and casting of

works. Plays were chosen to give the star--who was also the manager of the theatre in most cases--a chance to parade his talent (72). The main standards by which a play's suitability for production was normally vetted were the dimension and dramatic prospects of the chief male part. This resulted in rigid conditioning circumstances which set plays in an unchangeable mould.

Choosing plays for production and vetting actors for performance were mutually dependent processes. Since success was contingent on the special talent of the actor in the leading part, it was considered professional folly to engage an unproven or modestly known actor in this role. The star system generated certain expectations: the audience's enjoyment should be derived from the special talent of the actor in the leading role, and not from the intellectual context of the text brought to life by a well-coordinated dramatic team of actors. The hierarchy that prevailed in theatre bred inauthenticity, because a great deal of the sincerity of the dramatic work was sacrificed to the machinery of promoting the stars. Hierarchy and inauthenticity were the main reasons of the increasing commerciality of the theatre. The artificiality of the process of casting, and of choosing plays for production, affected the content of the work. In much of the mainstream drama, tendencies to seriousness and sincerity were outweighed by the tendency for reassuringly undiscerning faith in things as they are. The mechanism of such vain entertainment was sustained only by the enormous turnover of money.

The unthinking production and reproduction of cash was a significant symptom of the prevalence of the principle of mechanism in the commercial theatre. One of the main abuses of this principle, and its manifestations, was the long-run system. The

system developed in the middle of the nineteenth century as a means of covering the cost of expensive productions. It drained the potency and originality of performers by limiting them to solitary roles, which could extend to a year or so in certain cases. The long-run system was also disadvantageous to playwrighting because it imposed a certain formula, the one that satisfied the paying audience. The wise management at the Court Theatre, which was the birth place of the "new drama" in England, replaced the long-run system of the West End with a system of its own. It operated a semi-repertory bill, facilitating the production of plays with controversial aspects that were not accommodated by the commercial theatre. The plays were run for short periods, with a set number of performances. Experimental pieces were given six to nine matinee shows, then relocated in the evening bill if they proved successful. *The Voysey Inheritance*, and *Votes for Women* were among the plays that had to go through the sifting process of trial productions before they could prove their success. Both plays challenged the well-made play on the level of form and content.

The only way for the "new drama" to develop its own identity was to free itself from dependence on the commercial theatre. There were few pioneering ventures in this vein. The most prominent of these ventures were the Independent Theatre, which was inaugurated by J. T. Grein in 1891, and William Archer's Stage Society (1899). The two play-producing societies aimed to encourage British playwrights to write a sombre and sophisticated drama, which was fit to attain the status of literature. One way of achieving this was to present continental plays, like those of Ibsen and Brieux, which were more realistic and pertinent to the spirit of the age. The use of European writers was meant to place the "new drama" in a wider context, in preparation for its much-awaited revival.

The formative independent theatrical ventures also aimed at providing actors with challenging roles that both encouraged their personal creativity and enhanced their ability to be part of a well-integrated theatrical team. Despite their many problems, the independent theatres left a legacy which was essential to the success of the Court venture: a theatrical milieu that was accommodating of experiments with new ideas and new forms. The efforts of the independent theatres were enhanced, and solidified by the initiation of the Barker-Vedrenne management at the Court Theatre in 1904.

The administrative superiority of the Court Theatre made it a more successful adventure than its predecessors. For the keen professional acumen of J.E. Vedrenne, Barker's business partner, plus large sums from Bernard Shaw, afforded this theatre financial self-sufficiency. This ensured permanent theatre buildings, order, continuity of performance, and regular salaries for the cast. The earlier minority theatres suffered acute financial problems, as a result of which they could not achieve the stability that helped the Court Theatre a great deal. They had no permanent theatres and no ability to pay the cast constant salaries. They depended on the charity of agreeable theatrical administrations for the use of a number of buildings to stage their work. The Court nurtured the new dramatists producing a breed of playwrights who possessed a highly developed social and artistic consciousness. In addition, it provided the theatregoing public with the works of selected European dramatists like those of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, and Hauptmann. The successful enterprise also presented revivals of classics, particularly those which, in a way or another, reflected both on the age and on the philosophy of the "new drama." The quest is best exemplified in Barker's productions of certain Shakespearean plays, most memorable of which was his production of the *Two*

*Gentlemen of Verona*. The exemplary Court repertoire also included some of the works of the highly individualist Greek dramatist Euripides. Most notably there were productions of *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, and *Hippolytus*.

The stability factor was not enough to ensure the success of the Court venture. The sense of continuity had to be given one vital life-giving infusion to make it the thriving affair that it turned out to be. The essential element of success was Barker's highly developed sense of coordination as a director which made the seasons at the Court Theatre (1904-1907) the fine balanced theatrical event on the levels of form and content alike. Strictly speaking, the phenomenon of total production did not start with the Court Theatre. It had roots in the work of the actress Marie Wilton and her husband Squire Bancroft at the Prince of Wales in the 1860s. One of the steps that the Bancrofts took to promote joint action in their team was to give authority to Tom Robertson to direct his own plays at their theatre. Realistic reform in England is normally dated from the coming of the Bancroft-Robertson era (73).

The inclination towards a more collaborative style of management and performance, which counterbalanced the crudeness of entertainment which depended on one performer, was a side-product of the advent of this new tendency to genuineness in drama. The creation of semblance to life demanded more natural action and dialogue and a stronger inclination for ensemble playing. Building carefully structured fiction that looked like life called for calculated atmosphere and scenic effects which produced a more intensive, inward-looking mode of representation than the unsophisticated, external, and exclamatory style of the previous era. The new modes of representation

made the previous ones seem outdated. Blatantly theatrical forms of entertainment like melodrama, burlesque, pantomime, and farce were losing ground to the novel, more naturalistic dramatic genres.

The requirements of realism like the subdued, collective style of acting, and the creation of a realistic scenery demanded the indirect and clever integration of one artistic consciousness: the consciousness of the director. Not only the director but also the author enjoyed more significance in the new collective-realistic mode of representation. The major output of this novel dramatic tendency to sincerity was the well-made play genre, which reached its peak in the era of Pinero and Jones. However we judge the authenticity of the human life which is embodied in this genre, one thing has to be admitted. By coming closer to the style of the realistic novel, the new theatrical form helped to reinstate drama in its proper place as part of literary art.

Despite the joint promotion of the author and the director, the actor-manager still dominated the mainstream theatre that embraced the well-made play genre. The move towards more equitable administration on the artistic and financial levels alike was predominantly superficial. The notion of the collaborative theatre did not fully mature until the advent of the Vedrenne-Barker partnership. The work of the "new dramatists," often brought to life by Barker's directorship, induced changing metaphors in the interconnection between parts of the dramatic work on the one hand, and between the actors in the company, on the other. In the star system the personality of the leading performer defined the motion within the performing team. Without this personality the other parts could not, and needed not, function. Meanwhile, within the context of the



“new drama,” all dramatic parts were given complex treatment, offering opportunities for the actors to develop their creative powers. An actor would not refrain from accepting a small role because he knew he would not be subjected to inferior treatment, as would be the case in a similar situation in the star system.

The relationship between the Court actors was comparable to the manner in which the different parts of an organic entity stood to each other. This relationship depended on a model of separate systems, which had a highly developed potential for adoptive co-operation. Within the performing team the actors were trained to strike the right balance between masculine individuality and feminine subordination. The actors were allowed to be individual enough to interpret their own roles and to structure their own moments on the stage. Barker equated acting with autonomous interpretation, indeed, he defined “all acting as interpretation; it [could] have no absolute value of its own” (74). The “histrionic” mind, the mind that is capable of independent diagnosis of dramatic situations, springs from a deep mental grasp of life and how it is reflected in the play. At the same time, the actors were required to be extremely dependent on each other, and on the general flow of the play. Lillah McCarthy, one of the most prominent Court actresses, reviewed in retrospect that “no one of [the performers] was allowed to act away from the rest of the company, nor away from the play as a complete pattern” (75).

This dependence is necessary because the final piece should be welded together into a poetic pattern, with definite and focused rhythm. In order to achieve this, the actors’ interpretation of the roles should be matured and merged into a uniform oneness. The positive mixing of the masculine value of individuation embodied in the cast’s

independent thinking and the feminine value latent in their submission to an intellectually consistent totality is not merely a direction policy for Barker. It is a life style and an ethical framework. In *The Exemplary Theatre* Barker defines his theatrical company's objective as

unity *in* diversity. . . . Unity in diversity must be our social ideal, and it is this that drama in its very nature does expound and, through the sympathetic power of impersonation, interpret. This is the drama's secret (76).

The Court's correct utilization of sexual values is a social as well as a theatrical philosophy. This is evident in the fact that this utilization embraces other beneficial compromises of cultural and sexual binaries like those of mind/heart and mind/body. In his relation to the human material that forms the substance of his drama, Barker has dispensed with the mechanistic model that imbues all aspects of Edwardian life. The dramatist's attitude towards the objects of the universe, including humans, is the attitude of a participant and not that of an outside controller. "Our understanding of things human will be barren unless we have emotionally realized them first," Barker maintains (77).

The Court's blend of sexual values is used to generate the positive feminine principle of co-operation and harmony. In contrast, the commercial theatre also utilizes the mixture of sexual values in such a fashion, but only to promote the masculine principle at the cost of the feminine one. This theatre, like most other male-orientated institutions, is hypocritical in its attitude to gender. It claims to adopt the masculine principle as an all-embracing and most central human value whilst adulterating this

principle with feminine values, using the ensuing blend to serve its own interest. In actuality the womanly ideal of domesticity is as pervasive in the commercial theatre as any masculine principle. Domesticity penetrates almost every aspect of this establishment: physical details, subject matter, and form.

As far as form is concerned, the "early Edwardian theatre was primarily a drawing-room" (78). This pervasive setting is, by nature, the epitome of domesticity. Thematically: at the bottom of the well-made play genre lies its most significant ultimate imperative, which is preserving the traditional institution of marriage, and its values. The ideology that is embedded in this institution concentrates mainly on the home. Meanwhile, a hearth-like atmosphere distinctively haunts a commercial theatre on a performance night. Mario Borsa, one of its patrons, likens the typical commercial theatre audience to the "guests of a peer's drawing-room, rather than the patrons of a place of public entertainment" (79). Homeliness is the metaphor underpinning theatregoers: their fashion, manner, and general outlook. Henry James vividly describes the typical commercial theatre audience of the time as "well dressed, tranquil, motionless; it suggests domestic virtue and comfortable homes" (80).

The actor-manager's attitude towards his theatre presents a meaningful paradox in terms of the sexual metaphor of domesticity. This stern upholder of the masculine principles of hierarchy and control in external matters, like the balance of power, is strangely imbued with this feminine principle in part of his private being. Macqueen-Pope, a pro-commercial theatre critic, proudly compares the actor-manager's position in relation to his playhouse to that of a dedicated housekeeper to her much coveted nest.

The theatre was run "as were the homes of the people," he claimed, (the people being presumably the middle classes). "It had distinction with stability, and this was bestowed upon it by the actor-managers, whose theatres were their homes" (81).

The domesticity principle took its most acute and profitable shape in the image of the commercial theatre's most important member of personnel: the female star. In fact the very existence of the theatre as a middle-class institution depended on the domestication of this image. The early Victorian theatre was snubbed by the middle classes, and it was not until the 1860s that circumstances began to alter and the bourgeois started to patronize the theatre again. This move took place after working-class theatre was isolated from the mainstream. However the creation of an alternative theatre for the working classes was not enough to ensure the respectability of the West End. "The real legitimation of the theatre as a bourgeois institution depended on the legitimation of the actress" (82). It was not until the leading female performer offered an approved example for middle-class women that theatre gained social recognition. First actresses, like Madge Kendal and Marie Wilton Bancroft, were keen to represent themselves to the world as possessing the traditional morality which encompassed the passivity of virtue and the seclusion of home lovingness. Domestication of the actress's image was made operative with the aid of a number of theatrical and cultural factors. On stage, the actress performed in plays that, in essence, normally emphasized the value of orthodox sexual relationships within traditional domestic arrangements. Off stage, the actress promoted household products and was featured on numerous easily attainable post cards. This accessibility made the female stage performer a familiar part of the household and generated intimacy between her and her public.

It may be that this intimacy was meant to help indoctrinate the image of the female ideal that the actress presented on the stage. But much to the chagrin of the social order, the domestication of the image of the actress worked both ways. Just as it helped indoctrinate the female ideal in some, it stirred rebelliousness at the same ideal in others. It is ironic that the commercial theatre, which strove to establish the female image as passive and private, should be unwittingly the site of female rebelliousness against these very two values. The motivation for this discontent was latent in the image of the actress. On the one hand, the female stage player was manipulated by the actor-manager to represent roles which conformed rigidly to the image of stereotyped femininity, which was promoted by the conventional order. An intensely lit example of the way in which the collective image of women was dramatized on the stage is the incident involving the early Victorian actress Madame Vestris. When she applied to the actor-manager Macready for the production of a play she wrote herself under the telling title of "*Woman*," he maintained that her wish might be granted only if she was to change the focus of gender in her play. His plan was that the major speeches should be said by the leading actor rather than by the leading actress. The paradox of the matter is that even in a play which conscious intention is, strictly speaking, to revolve around the image of a woman, the male figure must occupy the centre. Hence, man relegates woman, as he does in real life, to the role of the other (83).

The actress played roles that were imbued by overtones of subjection and otherness, yet certain aspects of her life, on and off stage, were based on the metaphors which contradict those of the typical female, namely activeness, and a definite place in public life. The actress was financially independent. Like all the other stars her

personality constituted an autonomous part of the artistic structure of the play (individuation and centrality). As a celebrity, the female star commanded a forceful public presence. Like all other aspects of the theatre, the actress's image was based on a complex metaphorical pattern of public/private principles. This image was an indication of the principles of control and mechanism underlying the commercial theatrical institution. The image was intended by the theatrical authorities to enhance both the mechanistic production of money and the mechanistic generation of inauthentic moral values.

Yet, the outcome of this social contrivance was not always satisfactory to orthodox theatrical and moral orders. In a number of leading ladies' images the elements of masculine individuation stood out more than those of female subjection, providing a role model that contradicted the female ideal. Some of these ladies even enjoyed sexual freedom in their private lives. Ellen Terry, for example, had children outside marriage and she did not try to hide the fact. She was even proud of her illegitimate offspring. Terry emphasized the value of domestic respectability mainly on stage by enacting the role of the stereotyped member of her sex. The sense of individuation and the domesticity value combined in the image of some leading ladies to produce a very admirable representation of female identity, which caused disquiet among the younger generation of women. One of these prominent ladies was Ellen Terry.

In "*Ellen Terry and the Revolt of the Daughters*" Susan Torrey Barstow discusses the extent of the popular actress's participation in the activities of promoting the woman question. She finds that the West End star's contribution as a motivator of female

resentment equals direct feminist resistance in significance. The stage performer was much idolized by middle-class female spectators. Thanks to the domesticity principle, and the intimacy associated with her figure as a leading actress, she was seen as a mother substitute for young girls both in her own group and outside it. Terry had a powerful, independent and complete personality, whilst the young girls' mothers were deeply subordinated and private beings. Indeed, Terry offered young girls an alternative role model based on independence and centrality, as opposed to the mother's identity, which was imbued with traditional feminine ethics of privateness, dependence, and periphery. Terry's service to feminism went deeper than mere involvement in the external politics of gender. She helped to reconstruct the female identity (84).

The orthodox theatrical establishment combined the values of hierarchy, mechanism, and control with the feminine principle of domesticity, in order to single out hierarchy, mechanism, and control as pervasive, all-embracing values. For at the bottom of the intense presence of the principle of domesticity in the commercial theatre was not the insistence, but the counter-insistence, on woman's power. The repetitive stressing of women's respectability, which was only achieved if women were kept in a state of inactive virtue within the context of femininity, was necessarily contingent upon the suppression of such self-advancing forms of potency, like control or individuation. No part of the woman should be declared to be available to her. Woman was fully integrated with and subsumed within an overarching patriarchy. The presentation of the female in traditional moral propaganda, and in the mainstream theatre which supported it, was fraught with tension. It alternated between power and non-power. This tension reflected the system's deep-seated suspicion that women, if given personal liberty, would

appropriate power. This tension was relieved by a series of contradictory actions and reactions, which lay at the heart of the dynamic of theatrical institutions.

The mainstream theatre and the Court theatre utilize sexual values in different manners. This results from a fundamental dissimilarity in the central natures of the two theatres. The dissimilarity manifests itself most powerfully in the differing ways in which each type of theatres views the cultural duality internal/external. This duality powerfully maps on to gender relations both in real life and in the way this life is reflected on stage. The duality internal/external affects the view of sexual relationships which is offered by a given play because it influences the theatrical style of this play. The duality's influence encompasses the form, content, and production style of the dramatic work. The commercial theatre is preoccupied with the externality of matters neglecting, even omitting, the necessity of probing inside individuals and societies. In such wise, this theatre promotes the segregation of sexual values on the basis of superficial understanding of sexual relations. The commercial theatre's dependence on the talent of the major performer helps to promote its ideology. The audience's involvement with the external elements of the star's acting style leads to their identification with the feeling and action of the character which this star represents. This identification, in most cases, abolishes the need for the audience to question the world shown in a mainstream play. The playgoer is thus offered a superficial view of life, including sexual relationships.

Unlike the upholders of the commercial theatre, Barker reconciles the cultural duality internal/external in his work. The playwright's dramatic muse stares through the outward object with so much intensity that it should turn inward, plumbing deeper



psychological truths. One of the most significant of these truths is the inauthenticity of sexual values. A good example of how Barker skillfully intertwines the externality and internality, the thematic and stylistic to expose this theme, is to be found in *The Madras House*. The example is used in this part of the present thesis because it strongly embodies the essence of Barker's drama. This includes his work not only as a dramatist but also, and more importantly, as a director. In one of the episodes of *The Madras House* Barker portrays six spinsters of the "old-maid" type, uncovering the deep psychological scars that their lifetime seclusion to the domestic realm, and its principles, has caused them. He shows the girls performing one of the most cruelly monotonous everyday activities: entertaining guests. Several introductions take place during the earlier part of Act I. The Huxtables arrive from church in small groups, and on each arrival the process of introduction and acquaintance making is renewed. The introductions all resemble each other, with slight variations. These social pleasantries reach their peak when Minnie and Clara, the last of the stray Huxtable daughters, come back home. The introduction then becomes more intensified, to take the shape of a lengthy one-phrase chant:

MINNIE: How d'you do?

THOMAS: How d'you do?

CLARA: How d'you do?

MINNIE: How d'you do, Philip?

PHILIP: How d'you do?

CLARA: How d'you do?

PHILIP: How d'you do? (85).

This is a highly theatrical episode, displaying behaviour that nears the tomfoolery of clowns. Yet it makes poignant and thought-provoking communication: the daughters' background as bourgeois females not only oppresses, but socializes them so that they lose the ability to connect themselves to any public form of life. The enforced domesticity, and the systematic suppression of their sexuality, result in the daughters' being extremely alienated in their sexual and class roles. As chaste, would-be bourgeois wives, they are not allowed to work, nor are they permitted to avail themselves of major education that would enable them to analyze or conceive the reality of their situation. They are limited both in action and in means of expression.

Other aspects of the Huxtable conversation, which is mainly related to trivial matters, fall into the same repetitive mode: the matter of the guest's staying for dinner, the weather, the walk, and the view of Crystal palace from the window, are all frequently recurring themes with small modifications. The repetition produces a refrain-like effect essential to poetry and music, which gives the whole piece the distinct shape of these two art forms, allowing us to distinctively hear the "bitter, thrilling music" of the Huxtable girls' "pain" (86). It is like a tense dance with words. Repetition is an essential part of poetry and music, it is also an important aspect of human discourse that stage dialogue had overlooked under the sway of the pseudo-realistic rhetoric of the well-made play.

The poetic image embodies the limitations of the Huxtable girls. One of the ways in which these limitations express themselves is the group of scenes of empty social formalities that verge on comic absurdity. Psychological reality and poetic formality are blended in a way that intensifies the qualities of each. It is precisely the painful

authenticity, the reality of the concrete situation presented, which gives the poetic image its universality and forcefulness. The Huxtable girls' enforced inactiveness is representative of that of all middle-class girls. The technique of the episode which dramatizes their dilemma is part of an artistic pattern that Barker employs, both in his plays and in directing other plays within the Court context. Intense realism that is born of the perfect marriage of stylization and naturalism, of the externality and internality of the drama, in the fashion of the Huxtable daughters' episode, is one vital aspect of Barker's directing policy. For instance, the dramatist-director firmly believes that the external movements of an actor acquire significance and substantiality *only* when they show "a body of living thought and of living feeling, and in themselves an interpretation of life itself" (87). Barker disagrees with the production mode of the commercial theatre which often depends on the external elements of the star's style of acting. For Barker, external performance should reflect something more than its own particularity, it should acquire "further purpose," that of delving deep to the unconscious of life.

The playwrights discussed in this thesis were part of the physical environment of the Court Theatre in the sense that they had some, or all, of their work produced within its network. The network included, apart from the Court itself, the independent ventures which boasted like-minded management, forming an organic link with the mother enterprise. The "blood kinship" between these theatres arose from the fact that they all had more or less the same artistic and administrative foundations. The plays discussed in this thesis were all produced within this intertexture of theatrical bodies. *Mrs Warren's Profession*, to cite an example, was produced by the Stage Society, the predecessor of the Court Theatre to which Barker referred as my "father and mother" (88). *The Madras*

*House*, meanwhile, was produced at the Duke of York as part of Frohman's Repertory Season which was one of the enterprises that had the privilege of hosting the "new drama" after the termination of the seasons at the Court. There are two exceptions: Shaw's *Arms and the Man* and Galsworthy's *The Fugitive* were produced outside the Court network. However the plays are admitted to this thesis on the basis of their perfect embodiment of their creators' attitude towards morality and gender. The two dramatists' philosophies in this context are, in turn, central to the consciousness of the "new drama."

## CHAPTER 2

### NOTES

1. Foucault's views on the relationship between sexuality and politics are discussed in Ruth Brandon, *The New Women and the Old Men: Love, Sex and the Woman Question* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990) p.29. The emphasis in the quotation is Brandon's. Unless it is stated otherwise, the words italicized in the quotations throughout this thesis are italicized in the original. Where the emphasis is not part of the authentic reference the phrase "emphasis added" is incorporated into the text.

2. Brandon, p. 3.

3. Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. John Rickman (1937; London: The Hogarth Press, 1953) p.251.

4. See for instance Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and eds. James Strachey et al., Vol.II (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955) 24 Vols. 1940-68.

5. "cathexes" is the concentration of desire which is directed from the id to its first external objects, the mother and the father.

6. Freud acknowledges that the individual experiences different forms of sexual uncertainty but mainly in infancy. After that, a latent period elapses until the advent of puberty, in which all kinds of sexual pleasure experienced by children are "brought together and organized in two main directions." At this point the "whole sexual life enters the service of reproduction, and the satisfaction of the separate instincts retains its importance only as preparing for and encouraging the sexual act proper." See Sigmund

Freud, *Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis: Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and the Question of Lay Analysis*, trans and ed. James Strachey (1959; London: Penguin, 1962) pp. 74-75.

7. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: W.W Norton, 1961) p. 39.

8. Sigmund Freud, *Thoughts on War and Death, Collected Papers*, trans. Joan Riviere, vol. IV (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925) p.295.

9. Freud, *Thoughts on War and Death*, p.296.

10. Freud, *Thoughts on War and Death*, p.301.

11. See Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974).

12. Attributing sexual differences to the mothering role is a constant point in Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (London: California UP, 1978).

13. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.60.

14. Haste uses this term throughout *The Sexual Metaphor* as a way of expressing the interrelationship between sexual and cultural dualities.

15. Haste, p. 11.

16. For an account of the position of the public/private split within changing historical contexts see Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981).

17. My thoughts about sexual metaphors and the physical conditions that gave rise to them are partly derived from Helen Haste's book *The Sexual Metaphor* (for

publication information, see note 13 above). In this context I am also indebted to a large number of "second wave feminists," particularly those with an interest in psychoanalysis like Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan.

18. Charles Darwin, "*The Descent of Man*," *Human Nature: Darwin's View*, comp. Alexander Alland, Jr. (New York: Columbia UP, 1985) p.191.

19. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, 3th ed. (London: Smith, Elder 1882) p. 15.

20. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 15.

21. Haste, p.49.

22. See Christabel Pankhurst, *Plain Facts about a Great Evil: Or The Great Scourge and How to End It* (London: Women's Social and Political Union, 1913).

23. Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture: 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) p. 222.

24. Heinrich Kramer, and James Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Rev. Montague Summers (1928; New York: Dover Publications, 1971) p. I

25. For a discussion of the different forms of conduct-book literature that existed from the Middle Ages until the present time see Nancy Armstrong, and Leonard Tennenhouse eds. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and Society* (London: Methuen, 1987).

26. John Stuart Mill, "*The Subjection of Women*," *The Victorian Sages: An Anthology of Prose*, eds. Alan W. Bellringer and C.B. Jones (Totowa: N.J: Rowman and Littlefield; London: Dent, 1975) p.94.

27. Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (Dublin: 1798) p.3.

28. James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women*, Vol. 1 (London: A. Millar, W. Law, and R. Cater, 1794) 2 Vols, p.24.
29. Mrs. Ellis [Sarah], *The Women of England: Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits* (London: Fisher, Son, and Co., [1839?]) p.6.
30. Mrs.Ellis [Sarah], *The Wives of England: Their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Obligations* (London: Fisher, Son, and Co., [1843?]) p.27.
31. Frigga Haug, *Beyond Female Masochism: Memory-Work and Politics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992) p.39-40.
32. Haug, p. 50.
33. quoted in Sheila Stowell, *A Stage of their Own: Feminist Playwrights of the Suffrage Era* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992) p.28.
34. John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Gardens," *Sesame and Lilies: And the Political Economy of Art* (London: Collins' Clear-Type Press, [1865?]) p. 60.
35. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792; New York: W.W.Norton, 1975) p.119.
36. quoted in Carol Dyhouse, "The Role of Women: From Self-sacrifice to Self-Awareness," *The Victorians, The Context of English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., ed. Laurence Lerner (London: Methuen, 1978) p.178.
37. Cicely Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade* (1909; Detroit: Singing Tree Press 1971). Arguing against the notion that marriage is a form of biological destiny for women is a constant practice in this book.
38. Havelock Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene* (London: Constable, 1913) p. 87
39. Karl Pearson, "The Woman Question," *The Ethic of Free Thought* (London: 1888) p. 377.



40. Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade*, p.226.

41. Viv Gardner, introd, *The New Woman and her Sisters: Feminism and Theatre 1850-1914* eds. Viv Gardner and Susan Rutherford (Hertfordshire: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1992) pp.4-5.

42. quoted in Linda Dowling, "The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890's," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 33 (1979) p. 439.

43. Gardner, p.6.

44. Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England: 1880-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) p. 16.

45. Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England*, p. 24.

46. quoted in Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England*, pp. 24-25.

47. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1928; London: Penguin, 1945) p.48.

48. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (1990; London: Vintage, 1991) pp.142-143.

49. quoted in Chris Baldick, *Criticism and Literary Theory 1890 to the Present* (London: Longman, 1996) p. 16.

50. George Moore, "Note on Ghosts," "Impressions and Opinions" (London: 1891) rpt. As *George Moore Sees Ghosts in Paris, Ibsen: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Michael Egan (1972; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) p.183.

51. Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler, Plays: two*, trans. Michael Meyer (1974; London: Methuen, 1990). The reference to pistols and horse-riding is found throughout *Hedda Gabler*. All quotations from *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

52. Chodorow, p. 180.

53. Harold Clurman, *Ibsen* (London: Macmillan, 1977) p. 165.

54. quoted in Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Virago, 1981) p.28.

55. quoted in Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (St Leonards, Aust.; Allen and Unwin, 1989) p .79.

56. Harley Granville Barker, *On Dramatic Method: Being the Clark Lectures for 1930* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1931) p.172.

57. For immediate examples see Barker's use of the dramatic subtext to depict the plight of the Huxtable girls. The six traditional spinsters are psychologically damaged as a result of their intense confinement to the private sphere (pp. 102-104 of the present thesis). See also some aspects of Shaw's treatment of the character of his intensively maternal woman Candida Morell. The character is explored through latent meaningfulness. One of the methods of doing this is by creating an indirect resemblance between Candida and the main figure in the painting of Madonna, the eternal mother, which is hanging in a prominent place in the Morell's drawing room (the chapter on Shaw p. 191).

58. Henry Arthur Jones, *The Case of Rebellious Susan, Plays by Henry Arthur Jones*, ed. Russell Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) p.139. All quotations from *The Case of Rebellious Susan* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

59. Arthur Wing Pinero, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray, Trelawny of the 'Wells' and Other Plays*, ed. J. S. Bratton (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995) p.212. All quotations from

*The Second Mrs Tanqueray* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

60. Arthur W. Pinero, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith: A Drama in Four Acts* (London: William Heinemann, 1895) p. 51. All quotations from *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

61. Henry Arthur Jones, *Mrs. Dane's Defence: A play in Four Acts* (London: Samuel French, 1908) p.20. All quotations from *Mrs. Dane's Defence* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

62. In fact, both Jones and Pinero substantially contributed to the development of the theatre of ideas in England in its early stages (the 1880s). In addition to Sir Daniel's incident which exposes sexual double standards, there are many other elements in these two playwrights' works which contain sexually emancipated concepts. In one episode of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, for instance, Paula gets so incensed at the continual judgmental references to her age and looks that she bursts out at her guest, Drummle, who, despite his sympathetic attitude to the pained woman, is one of her unwitting tormentors. Drummle is perhaps not aware how hurtful such remarks can be to a woman who has all her life been trained to see her function as mainly decorative. Paula's words "you'll kill me, amongst you" suggest the wronged woman's frustration at a society that defines her and her sisters totally through men's gaze. See Arthur Wing Pinero, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, p.184.

The part of this thesis which is concerned with Pinero's and Jones's works concentrates on the overall ideology of these works. This ideology was conservative for many reasons. One of these reasons was the fact that Pinero and Jones were both professional writers for the commercial theatre who knew well what worked in this

establishment. They were aware that a successful work should bow to the will of the paying middle-class playgoer. Ultimately, the all-inclusive philosophy of this work should mirror the mentality of this patron. Still, many emancipated aspects exist in Pinero's and Jones's plays. These aspects can be conveniently considered apart from the general philosophical flow of these works. Discussing the theme of morality and gender in the works of playwrights like Pinero and Jones who contributed to the renaissance of the late nineteenth century theatre but failed to remain at the forefront of the movement for a serious National Theatre can constitute an interesting material for another thesis. Oscar Wilde, with his liberated attitudes to the issues of sexual relationships and ethics, is also a likely candidate for being an object of such discourse.

63. quoted in Malcolm C. Salaman, introd, *The Profligate: A Play in Four Acts* by Arthur W. Pinero (London: William Heinemann, 1891) p.VIII. All quotations from *The Profligate* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

64. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982; London: Harvard UP, 1993). Gilligan uses "math" as a metaphor describing the masculine process of thinking which is based on deductive logic.

65. quoted in Sue-Ellen Case, *Feminism and Theatre* (London:Macmillan, 1988) p.128.

66. quoted in Case, pp. 128-129.

67. For a discussion of some aspects of Barker's directorship, see pp. 93-95 of this thesis.

68. W. H. Pater, "The School of Giorgione," *The Victorian Sages: An Anthology of Prose*, eds. Alan W. Bellringer and C.B.Jones (London: Dent, 1975) p. 231

69. Harley Granville Barker, *The Voysey Inheritance, Plays by Harley Granville Barker*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) pp. 107-108. All quotations from *The Voysey Inheritance* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

70. Margery M. Morgan, *A Drama of Political Man: A Study in the Plays of Harley Granville Barker* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961) p. 100.

71. Dale Spender and Carole Hayman eds. *Votes for Women, How the Vote Was Won: And Other Suffragette Plays* (London: a Methuen Theatrefile, 1985) p.61.

72. The actor-manager system contributed little to the development of theatre as a serious, penetrating, and socially critical form of art. Meanwhile the system had many advantages: The prominent actor-managers, such as Henry Irving, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, and Charles Wyndham elevated the status of theatre by being symbols of respectability, both in their personal conduct and in their professional dedication. Their acting styles encompassed a great deal of good craftsmanship that was necessary to keep audiences interested. Their symbolic significance and the finery of their performing specialties gave their theatres permanence, centrality, and substance. In other words, the actor-managers lent theatre a form of social significance that it lacked before; they endowed it with a certain materiality that allowed it to endorse a form of ideology on the ruling classes, which, in turn, decided the moral tendency of society. Without this initial authority, no kind of theatre, mainstream or non-mainstream, could have any impact on the social milieu of the age.

73. I use the word "realistic" advisedly because it is a relative term. Robertson's more rational, underplayed drama looked novel to the theatre of the 1860s. In our time, however, Robertson might seem unrealistic. His plays have numerous theatrical

conventions like soliloquies and asides. Melodramatic aspects still powerfully exist in much of his drama. In many cases, he fails to represent human problems with enough complexity to warrant considering the life they reflect probable. See for instance my discussion of his concept of love as it is represented in his play *Caste*. It is found in the chapter on Hankin in this thesis.

74. Harley Granville Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1922) p. 93.

75. Lillah McCarthy, *Myself and My Friends* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1933) p.50.

76. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p.128.

77. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 128.

78. J.C. Trewin, *The Edwardian Theatre* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976) p.28.

79. Mario Borsa, *The English Stage of Today*, trans. Selwyn Briton (London: John Lane, 1908) p.279.

80. Henry James, *The Scenic Art: Notes on Acting and the Drama 1872-1901*, ed. Allan Wade (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949) p.101.

81. Walter Macqueen-Pope, *Carriages at Eleven* (1947; London: Robert Hale, 1972) p.8.

82. Susan Torrey Barstow, "Ellen Terry and the Revolt of the Daughters," *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 25.1 (1997) p.21.

83. The story of Madame Vestris and Macready is recounted in several books that deal with the Victorian and Edwardian drama, particularly those written by feminist critics. See for instance Holledge, *Innocent Flowers*, p. 22.

84. For publication information for "*Ellen Terry and the Revolt of the Daughters*," see note 82 above.

85. Harley Granville Barker, *The Madras House: A Comedy in Four Acts*, (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977) p. 14.

86. Barker, *On Dramatic method*, p.164. "The bitter, thrilling music of her pain" is the expression used by the author to describe the agony which Cassandra undergoes in a highly charged scene between her and the chorus in *Agamemnon*. Barker sees that the scene deliberately prolongs the occurrence of an imminent murder in order to use the resultant suspense as the external form that hides the internal psychological reality of the protagonist. The magnificent mixing of the internality and externality of drama in this scene of *Agamemnon* resembles the multilateral technique of the Huxtable girls' episode. Both scenes have a tragic musical effect.

87. Barker, *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 227.

88. quoted in Jan McDonald, '*The New Drama*' 1900-1914: *Harley Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, St John Hankin, John Masefield* (London: Macmillan, 1986) p. 12.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE "NEW DRAMA" CHARACTERS

The dramatists of the "new drama" movement subverted the view of gender and morality as reflected by the well-made play. The characters they created can be placed on three levels on a scale of moral worth which pertains to the question of ethicality and sexual relationships. For the sake of providing a helpful guideline I will refer to these categories of characters thus: traditionalists, non-traditionalists, and self-realizers. At the bottom of the moral scale lie the traditionalists, whilst at the top preside the self-realizers. Between these two categories are sandwiched the non-traditionalists.

In this brief introduction to the chapters on playwrights, I will try to delineate the basic features of each category. In the process, I will be using a few examples. The characters taken up in these examples are dealt with merely as specimens which help to further elucidate my explanation, profitably anchoring the general and abstract to the specific and tangible. I have by no means attempted to provide detailed discussions of the moral position of the characters of the "new drama." Such probing is exercised throughout my treatment of the theme of gender and morality in the chapters on individual playwrights. Defining certain characters' moral conditions--the conditions which I have roughly broken down to traditionalists, non-traditionalists, and self-realizers--will be a major part of this treatment.



The group of characters who constitute the traditionalist is composed of the individuals who conform. These individuals take received notions at face value, thanks to their being too prosaic of imagination to entertain an alternative vision. In the well-made play genre this type of character is considered morally superior while in the work of the dramatists of the "new drama" it is considered morally passé. One important reason for the traditionalists' moral mediocrity is that they are alienated in their sexual and social roles. Morell in *Candida* and Major Booth in *The Voysey Inheritance* are appropriate examples of the traditionalists.

The head of the Morell household, who is a parson, is the upholder of the traditional models of true masculinity and femininity--what the nineteenth century called manly man and womanly woman. To his mind women are passive, private, and chaste; men are masterful and active. At one point Candida, Morell's wife, has to choose between him and her young admirer, Marchbanks. The clergyman makes his bid to win his wife thus:

MORELL: I have nothing to offer you but my strength for your defence, my honesty for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity (1).

From Morell's words it is obvious that he thinks of his wife as a passive and private user of the fruits of his active public roles. Morell deceives himself with regard to his wife's passivity and chastity as well as to his mastery over the household. Candida, a non-traditionalist, invalidates Morell's deep-seated misconceptions for him in a subtle

mocking tone which Marchbanks—and the dramatist himself—considers cruel. Candida faces her husband with the truth that it is her strength and activeness that keeps the Morell household erect; she manages the home financially as well as emotionally. Unbeknownst to him, Morell is dependent upon his wife in both business and love. Candida puts a rhetorical question to Marchbanks in Morell's presence which illuminates his dependence upon her:

CANDIDA: Ask me what it costs to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his children all in one. Ask Prossy and Maria how troublesome the house is even when we have no visitors to help us to slice the onions. Ask the tradesmen who want to worry James and spoil his beautiful sermons who it is that puts them off. When there is money to give, he gives it: when there is money to refuse, I refuse it. I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him, and stand sentinel always to keep little vulgar cares out (p.151).

Major Booth is, like Morell, a monument to conventions which stands to be mocked, a man of strict moral ethics who cannot see that his convictions are rapidly becoming old-fashioned. Nevertheless, unlike Morell, Major Booth's character is more comically and manifestly bizarre. His exhibitions of masterliness are grotesque. He is frequently snubbed by the free-thinking individuals in his family. At one point Mr Voysey harshly reprimands him for his constant intimidation of his sister Honor. This incident causes the character of Major Booth to dwindle into something very much like idiocy in the eyes of both the house guests and the audience (2).

Beatrice, another liberal member of the Voysey family, frequently indulges in indirectly making fun of Major Booth through remarks which carry strong but subtle hints of ridicule. The army man is so fast bound to his military ideal of manhood that he never ceases to be a child. He is under the illusion that women's role in life is to serve and obey him. He believes that men must demand, and expect to receive, obedience from women. Harboring a great reverence for respectability, he believes that maintaining such a veneer should take precedence over all other considerations. This is so even if respectability will ultimately mean compromising one's sense of right and wrong. Upon hearing of his late father's dishonest business deals, Major Booth can think of nothing but the family's social standing: "I am feeling far less concerned about the clients' money than I am at the terrible blow to the Family which this exposure will strike. Money, after all, can to a certain extent be done without . . . but Honour--" (p.124).

The moral composition of Major Booth is very similar to that of Sir Richard Kato in *The Case of Rebellious Susan*. Sir Richard believes that it is nature's will that women should have less public (and ultimately private) power than men, and consequently should passively suffer men's brutalities. According to this literal-minded individual it is not man that's ungallant to woman. "It's [nature] that is so ungallant and unkind" to her (3). The characters of Sir Richard Kato and Major Booth have the same outlook on life, yet their positions on the scale of moral worth stand demonstratively apart. Each of the two characters' ethical estimations are incidental to the ideology of the dramatists who created them. Major Booth is the brainchild of a libertarian who owes allegiance to the philosophy of the "new drama." His antiquated beliefs are represented as ridiculous and obsolete. Sir Richard Kato, however, is the creation of a subscriber to the well-made play

cult in which outworn dogmas are the order of the day. As such, Sir Richard's attitudes are validated and his counsel proves to be sound to the end.

Unlike the traditionalists, the non-traditionalist characters possess an unorthodox sensitivity which enables them to be in closer proximity to themselves. One of the most important ways in which their originality manifests itself is in their attitude to traditional concepts of morality. They realize that what passes for "right" and "wrong" in orthodox culture is a superficial construction of the conventional ethical and judicial institutions in order to hold together an essentially void system of beliefs.

In Shaw's *Major Barbara*, Undershaft, an extremely wealthy manufacturer of armaments, might conventionally be called a villain for his obvious violation of the accepted moral codes. Meanwhile his wife, Lady Britomart, might traditionally be regarded as morally superior because she belongs to the upper classes being the daughter of an earl. Her allegedly greater virtue also stems from the fact that she, contrary to the iconoclast Undershaft, observes the accepted rules of right and wrong to the letter. Throughout the play Shaw exposes the paradox involved in what passes as respectable and what is unacceptable in traditional culture through comparing the character of Undershaft and that of his wife. Ultimately the disgraced maker of death and social rebel is found to be ethically superior to one of moral orthodoxy's most cherished prototypes, the respected upper-class lady. The former belongs to the non-traditionalist rank, the latter to the traditionalist.

Undershaft dismisses his wife's claim to "goodness" in the traditional sense as moral balderdash. In his young days of poverty he was boldly careless and disdainful of the ethical rules which decide "right" and "wrong" in conventional culture. Undershaft sees that conventional moral guidelines serve no better purpose than the reinforcement of the existence of diametrically divided classes of people, particularly those of the haves and the have-nots:

UNDERSHAFT: *I was an east ender. I moralized and starved until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs; that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men (p.499).*

After he had become a rich man, Undershaft could afford to act on better principles. He decided to give all classes the right to fight by providing them with arms on equal terms. In Undershaft's philosophy, the real violation of the codes of propriety comes from the social order which encourages the existence of poverty. Undershaft thinks of poverty as

[the] worst of crimes. All the other crimes are virtues beside it: all the other dishonors are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight, sound, or smell of it (p.498).

While Lady Britomart detests her husband's business ethics, she is by no means averse to the profits which it makes. Indeed, she demands her share with marked greediness:

LADY BRITOMART: [to Undershaft] Your ridiculous cannons and that noisy banging foundry may be the Undershaft inheritance; but all that plate and linen, all that furniture and those houses and orchards and gardens belong to us. They belong to me: they are not a man's business. I won't give them up (p.495).

Lady Britomart is not only a hypocrite, she is also a segregationist. At one point during the discussion in Perivale St Andrews, Cusins, her future son-in-law, becomes a candidate for the management of the cannon business. Lady Britomart urges him to sell cannons and weapons to people "whose cause is right and just, and refuse them to foreigners and criminals" (p. 497). Seemingly, it is Lady Britomart and her class who decide the moral tone of the country and in doing so establish whose cause is "right and just." Earlier on she tells her son Stephen:

LADY BRITOMART: It is only in the middle classes . . . that people get into a state of dumb helpless horror when they find that there are wicked people in the world. In our class, we have to decide what is to be done with wicked people (p. 462).

From Lady Britomart's words we may infer that the people "whose cause is right" are the people who are approved of by her and her class. Therefore the persons who should be given arms are those who serve the interest of this class. By contrast, Undershaft endows all classes with a fair chance to fight. He gives arms "to aristocrat and republican, to Nihilist and Tsar, to Capitalist and Socialist" and so on (p.497). Undershaft's attitude is more morally mature than that of Lady Britomart, if only because less self-centered.

Despite the fact that the non-traditionalists have a considerable amount of self-awareness, they are all in one respect distanced from reality. An important part of their consciousness has been blurred or forcibly severed, rendering them unaware of their gendered selves. They make no place in their scheme of things for the primary category of gender, the most important determinant of the ethical attitude of traditional culture. The non-traditional characters' removal from this aspect of human experience, more often than not, causes them and their associates a great deal of sorrow.

For all his strength of mind Mr Voysey is unaware of the relationship between the public and the private spheres in his life. His power of perception tells him that the two spheres are separate, while in reality they are closely connected. The chapter "Theatre and Society" above has shown the way in which Mr Voysey uses his domestic surroundings in order to conduct his dishonest business deals. Besides, Mr Voysey's dismissal of the feminine, cooperative model of thinking, his renouncement of the sentiments of love and sympathy as the basis for the regulation of public affairs has had dire consequences. The poor investors in his firm have lost almost all their money as a result of his dishonest and risky wheeling and dealing.

Undershaft's moral judgement is likewise the ultimate masculine one. He thinks of himself as standing in a state of confrontation with the world, and not connected to it. He will cheat, steal, and attempt to kill rather than be poor. He will save his soul from the humiliating subjectivity of destitution, regardless of the cost to humanity. Undershaft is not content merely to act according to the masculine conviction of harsh justice; he also professes it like a code. Although the successful entrepreneur's motives in building the

Undershaft empire are personal at the start, later, after he has secured a strong financial position, he can afford to mellow out in the role of the benevolent millionaire. He thus develops a more subjective outlook on life:

UNDERSHAFT: I was a dangerous man until I had my will: now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person (p.499).

Undershaft's devotion to the principles of hierarchy and competition is a strong factor in enhancing the divisive forces that result in the existence of classes. This existence, in itself, is the main reason for the poverty which Undershaft believes to be the real "bad" element in society. The evilness of destitution is deliberately overlooked by the official moralists, and therefore has no mention in the mythologized version of "badness" and "goodness" that is fabricated by these moralists. Undershaft's elevating the masculine values of rivalry and opposition to the highest moral ranks holds him back from giving power exclusively to the underprivileged with whose cause he unquestionably sympathizes. Moreover, Undershaft is under the illusion that the best way to help the weak is to preserve the rule of hierarchy. Appealing to Cusins to regard his and Barbara's calling as identical to his (Undershaft's) cause, Undershaft says: "We three must stand together above the common people; how else can we help their children to climb up beside us?" (p.480).

At the summit of the scale of values, beyond the semi-awareness that characterizes the non-traditionalists' consciousness, lie the further reaches of the experience of the ultimate self-realizers. These are the individuals whose political



imaginations are fully formed and whose moral sentiments have awakened from slumber. Like the non-traditionalists, the self-realizers possess an unconventional intellect which enables them to understand the working of their immediate surroundings. However, they differ from the non-traditionalists in that they have the added advantage of seeing behind gender conditioning. This ability elevates their moral status and stretches their cause beyond that of personal gain.

In *The Voysey Inheritance*, Alice Maitland who is the catalyst of moral change in the play, recognizes the fact that the masculine conditioning of Edward, Mr Voysey's son, blurs his essentially sound moral vision. Edward, who replaces his late father as the manager of the Voysey firm, starts his career as a non-traditionalist and is later converted to the position of self-realizer. The positive aspects of the non-traditionalist drive him to rebel against the rigidity of his father's teachings which lopsidedly concentrates on harsh justice. While Mr Voysey refuses to give any priority to the poorer investors in his firm, Edward takes interest in their well-being. By showing consideration for the poor investors in his firm, Edward mingles his father's pure masculine values of harsh justice with a measure of feminine sympathy

Yet, the negative aspects of his moral position as a non-traditionalist have prevented Edward from seeing through gender conditioning thoroughly enough. The well-meaning, but misguided, reformer cannot dissociate himself from the masculine way of thinking which is ultimately bound to bring as much misery to individuals as his father's non-sympathetic policy has done. Although his main aim is to achieve justice in the family firm by correcting his father's business methodology, his orthodox definition

of justice which is based on a pure masculine frame of thought belies his intention. Edward believes in the necessity of following the dictates of the law of property. This means he will ultimately submit to the punishment traditionally imposed upon the persons who violate this law.

Edward wants to bring to light his father's crime and pay back as much money as possible to all the creditors. In order to do so, he must hand over his and his family's assets. Under the influence of his enlightened cousin he comes to realize that his proposed solution to the problem is futile. It will not rescue the clients, moreover, it will prove fatal to the poorer patrons who stand to lose all their meagre assets. Alice realizes that as long as Edward defines justice in the same way as the traditional moral and judicial systems he will not succeed in his mission. Edward's responsibility towards the needy outweighs ideals based upon the abstract rules of traditional judicial system which embodies a synthetic understanding of "right" and "wrong". As such, she impresses on Edward the need to stop perceiving right and wrong in abstract terms and start acclimatizing himself to reality. She begs him to throw away the crutches of received notions, and preformulated rules of conduct, and walk.

Alice believes that Edward's rigid, abstract mode of thinking should be modified by her ethical codes which are based on feminine principles. She disassociates herself mentally from the traditional, judicial way of thinking and professional way of functioning. This stems from her gender conditioning as a woman:

**ALICE: I'm lawless by birthright, being a woman (p.128).**

Free as she is from ideological enslavement, Alice can afford to disregard the dictates of the law of property. She sees that Mr Voysey's business methodology, which subtly milks money from the rich investors' oversized accounts, is feasible only if it is combined with the female sense of togetherness. The reasonable course for Edward will be to continue his father's professional procedures, not to discontinue them, as was his initial plan. According to Alice, Edward should keep stealing from the rich but not in order to further his own ends, as his father has all along been doing. He should use the rich investors' money in order to compensate the poor investors for their grave losses.

Alice is aware of the detrimental effect of exercising a one-sided masculine principle, the principle of hierarchy and harsh justice, in the public sphere. These principles are at the heart of the philosophy of the Voysey firm and the patriarchal tradition from which Edward has derived his thoughts before his conversion. This awareness prompts Alice to think of issues beyond those which are closely related to her. She thinks of others, of the destitute, such as Edward's old nurse who has lost all her money due to Mr Voysey's constant manipulation of the clients' accounts. Alice urges Edward to substitute his father's model of hierarchy and harsh justice with her cooperative model by regarding the interests of the rich clients and those of the poor clients as of equal importance. On a symbolic level, the upgrading of Edward from the status of non-traditionalist to that of self-realizer represents the moral rehabilitation of society as a whole; he is "the society individualised, self-conscious and responsible" (4).

In the following chapters I will be using the three ethical divisions, traditionalists, non-traditionalist, and self-realizers as an instantaneous defining system. They will

function as a short hand of classification which helps to put one directly in the picture, providing a rough outline of a given character's cast of mind. The divisions also help to locate the individuals under study morally in the wider landscape of the characters of the "new drama" as a collective variety.

## CHAPTER 3

### NOTES

1. [George] Bernard Shaw, *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw* (London: Odhams Press, 1937) p.150. All quotations from the Shavian plays which are discussed in this preface are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

2. Harley Granville Barker, *Plays by Harley Granville Barker*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) p.103. All quotations from *The Voysey Inheritance* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

3. Henry Arthur Jones, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, *Plays by Henry Arthur Jones*, ed. Russell Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) p.153. All quotations from *The Case of Rebellious Susan* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

4. Margery M. Morgan, *A Drama of Political Man: A Study in the Plays of Harley Granville Barker* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961) p.100.

## CHAPTER 4

### HARLEY GRANVILLE BARKER

Barker's four plays, *The Voysey Inheritance*, *The Marrying of Ann Leete*, *Waste* and *The Madras House* represent a passing from one public order--social, political, and economical--to another. The shift is dependent on a mutual revival in the circumstances of the private realm. The circumstances include the relationship between the sexes and women's position in them, both on the materialistic and metaphorical level. A change of gender structure in society inevitably involves a change in society's ethical body of beliefs. Moral conversion is marked by the maturation of a young person, who, at the juncture between two moral forms is transformed from a traditionalist status to that of a self-realizer. The alteration of the sexual and moral structures in the plays involves a woman whose social position as a female is reconstructed. Alteration in the physical and relational circumstances of this catalyst is accompanied by a moral conversion, of which these altered circumstances are the result and the effect. The ethical make-up of the moral *agent provocateur* often comprises the right blend of gender-marked values which is useful to the moral transcendence of individuals and societies.

Among the issues that Barker attacks in the four plays under discussion in this chapter is a sharp division of sexual values, particularly those of the public/private and

the active/passive dualities, and their ramifications. He also jettisons the workings of the mechanistic model--which Matthew Arnold sees as the backbone of Victorian life--and the concomitant principles of control and hierarchy. Both the dramatist and the prominent poet-critic lament the lack of unifying ethical purpose in both the private and the public spheres of their society. Barker exposes this Victorian dilemma, which continued to be present in the Edwardian Age, as it manifests itself in different aspects of their lives. In *The Voysey Inheritance* and *The Madras House* law and business are the issues which are scrutinized from the perspective of a detrimental omnipresence of one-dimensional masculine values, particularly those of mechanism, control, and hierarchy. Meanwhile, politics is the principal matter which is dealt with from the same perspective in *Waste* and *The Marrying of Ann Leete*. Barker also sees chaos ensuing from the sharp segregation of gender-marked values in the private realm and its relations, and dramatizes his vision in all four plays.

### Waste (1907)

In *Waste* the dramatist concentrates on the harmful effects of the old moral order without attempting to alleviate the pain by anticipating a newer and better one, as he does in the other plays. He detects the mechanistic model underlying an apparently well-regulated social existence—apparently, because this existence is held together by the superficial trimming of traditional politics. The waste of the title refers to the dissipation of two matters. One belongs to the public realm, and the other to the private one. The first of these is a clever political vision, that of Henry Trebell, for the reform of

education. The brilliant lawyer is lured into the political arena by the party in opposition, the Conservatives. The aim of the party is to use Trebell's political vision in order to pass a bill to disestablish the church and employ the resultant savings in a fund for the improvement of education. The plan fails, however. At a weekend house party, Trebell meets Amy O'Connell, an unhappily married woman, and spends the night with her. The affair results in pregnancy, and whilst Trebell wants the child, Amy is decidedly against the idea.

Despite the fact that Trebell promises her material comfort, Amy is determined to terminate the pregnancy. She has a back street abortion and dies. O'Connell, Amy's husband, is persuaded not to implicate the offending lawyer in his statement at the inquest. Eventually, Trebell is excluded from the Tory party's future cabinet, ironically, not so much because of the scandal but because he does not fit into the Conservatives' political scheme. They decide that his inclusion in the future cabinet will divide the Tory Party and this will cause them to lose the election. The waste referred to in the title partly refers to the dissipation of a brilliant political vision for the reform of education. This waste is the result of futile political stratagems which place political machinations above the national need.

The second of the two dissipated matters of the title is related to the loss of the promising new life of Trebell's unborn child. On a deeper level, the level that is closer to the psychological internality of the play, the title refers to the tragedy brought about by a flaw in the protagonist's moral structure. On the one hand, Trebell's attitude towards traditional politics as a fruitless game lost in abstractions and retreated from actuality is



refreshing. He refuses to be associated with any party and agrees to Wedgcroft's description of him as a man who believes that the "world is grown up enough to do without dogma" (1).

On the other hand, the prominent public man, like Mr Voysey, and the free-thinking patriarchal geniuses whom he represents, is oblivious of one important aspect of his life. His thinking is not gendered; he is ignorant of the role of the private sphere in his life, and great many paradoxes result from his inability to grasp that the private and the public parts of his life cannot be separated. Trebell's brilliant scheme for the reform of education makes him a successful public figure who is sought after by politicians who wish to enliven the image of their party. Despite the fact that his vision for the education of children appears to be sound when measured by the criteria of the public sphere, it proves unfeasible in its application to the private sphere. This fact is exposed through the examination of Trebell's private life. One reason for Amy's refusal to give birth is her ex-lover's attitude to her and to the expected baby. He considers parenthood with the detached reasonableness which he applies to public affairs. Although the innovative politician rejects "dogmas," his attitude towards the awaited child-birth belies his professed belief. He refers to it in terms of its significance to "world affairs." Amy deeply resents this attitude: "What do you mean by the World? You don't seem to have any personal feelings at all," she exclaims (p.190).

There is an enormous schism between Amy's and Trebell's attitudes to parenthood. While Trebell regards the mother-child unit with professional detachment, Amy attaches more personal feelings to her connection with the father-child unit, and

from Trebell she demands a confirmation of romantic love and consideration. "If you loved me .. perhaps I might learn to love the thought of your child" (p.191). Trebell crudely states that he can offer her neither his love, nor his esteem: "[Only] within the last five minutes have I really taken the smallest interest in you" (p.190).

It is also rather unlikely that Trebell will hold any other woman in esteem since, to his mind, women are categorized on the basis of the mind/body division:

TREBELL: I've never met a clever woman .. worth calling a woman (p.175).

In spite of his interest in the issue of education, Trebell is distanced from the actual atmosphere in which children grow. He overlooks the fact that no matter what public education the child gets, he or she cannot grow up to be psychologically healthy in the milieu that he and Amy might create for them. In this milieu the mother has no worth except for her reproductive functions. Near the end of the play, Trebell's wise sister discusses Amy's problem with him:

FRANCES: If you thought of her only as a pretty little fool .. Bearing your child .. all her womanly life belonged to you .. and for that time there was no other sort of life in her. So she became what you thought her (p.233).

Frances is right; it is Amy's enforced alienation in her body that spurs her to undertake the fatal abortion. "Oh, the physical curse of being a woman .. no better than any savage

in this condition .. worse off than an animal. It's unfair," Amy protests to her unyielding lover (p.189).

In spite of the soundness of his political vision for the welfare of children, Trebell fails to protect his own child from destruction. Near the end of the play, and before he commits suicide, he comes to realize his main fault. The disillusioned visionary can now see that he himself, not greatly dissimilar to the traditional politicians whom he scorns, thinks in terms of the abstraction; his scheme for the regulation of society is removed from the human situation in the raw. To Frances he complains of not being able to think; of having all along tried to solve human problems in terms of "legal and political algebra" (p.229). Carol Gilligan, a feminist psychoanalyst, sees that dealing with human problems in terms of mathematical abstractions is part of the typical way in which the masculine mind works (2).

Trebell's suicide is, in part, an admission of his gender blindness. All along he has unknowingly cornered himself in a situation, the two essential components of which cannot exist side by side. This is basically because they belong to two sharply divided cultural/sexual metaphorical structures. Trebell has been adopting the traditional understanding of professionalism as his way of life through which he aims to achieve goodness for humanity. He is nonetheless unaware that the complex cleverness of political tactics, which lie at the heart of his occupation, is merely a mechanism which has as its end battles of diplomacy, and jockeying for position, and not moral reform.

To be professional in the traditional sense is to adopt the masculine attitude of toughness and individuality, eschewing the feminine characteristics of love and togetherness. Trebell refuses to endow Amy, or any other woman, with affection and reciprocity, professing the sexual dualities of mind/body and professionalism/non professionalism as codes. Yet he still wishes to do "good" for humanity by reforming education. The notion of "doing good for its own sake" defeats the spirit of masculine professionalism because it implies the feminine trait of self-sacrifice. The value of "doing good for its own sake" also counteracts the unwritten masculine law of mechanism because it compels a unifying moral force that contradicts this law's main constituent, which is performing acts for their own sake and not for a common goal. Far from revising the social consciousness, the mechanism of diplomacy causes moral chaos, as each politician fights to secure his personal interests against most other considerations. Eventually, an empty compromise prevails, and the little order that might exert itself is achieved with so much difficulty.

The segregation of sexual/cultural values, and the mechanistic principle govern Trebell's attitude to his profession, as well as to his private life. Stylistic devices gesture towards this in the first act. The pseudo-expository conversation and the love-chase scene co-exist within the same dramatic beat, separated only by the lowering of the lights. The discourse reveals the political intrigue, whilst the love-pursuit uncovers that of sexual relations. Within this segregationist society which Barker presents, women's position is less than favourable. Amy is a victim in many ways. She faces death as a result of her illegal pregnancy and her ex-lover's refusal to recognize her as equal to him in humanity. Her personality is frivolous, needful and clingy, which makes her prey to the contempt

and sarcasm of others. What makes her more of a victim is the fact that her unfavourable moral make-up is not entirely intrinsic because it has its roots in external circumstances.

Amy's education was of the limited female type, drummed into her by her parson uncle. In some respects, she is a true product of her environment, being submissive and insipid. In other respects, the unfortunate female is still capable of a form of rebellion. She announces her contempt of pregnancy as defined by Trebell, and most of his male associates, because it renders her pregnancy incarnate as a passive agent for procreation. Amy's attitude exhibits resentment against patriarchal thinking as it materializes in its extreme form in the pattern of thought that has been set up by eugenics. This has got hold of the minds of intellectuals--of which the politicians of the play are representative—prompting them to believe that childbirth is a woman's first duty and that a woman's basic role is to provide good men for the nation.

Amy's position, however, is not unique to her: it embraces all women. The submissive lady's passivity prompts her to define herself in terms of her attractiveness to men. The other women are ostensibly less passive, possessing, as they do, intelligence and instrumentality. Yet, the women are not in a position to directly make use of their abilities, having to act mainly through men. By influencing their male partners privately, they wield power, "if only by proxy" (3). It is this kind of passive power that increases misogynist men's hatred of women. Trebell himself is one of those cynics, so that *Waste* can explore the intensity of traditional gender indoctrination on individuals, even the most discriminating liberals.

In the expository scene, it is the politicians' women folk who offer the first glimpse of the framework of the working of the English government, and not the politicians themselves. Julia Farrant is a competent political hostess, who is also avaricious for power, which she acquires by her ability to influence men. A younger woman, Lucy, seems to be following in Julia's footsteps. Although she is not yet married to her young fiancé, she is already taking a "business-like interest in his welfare." The ambitious woman is so practical that she "won't stand any nonsense. She'll have him in the cabinet by the time he's fifty" (p.172). It is this kind of inert authority that fills Trebell with contempt for women because it suggests dishonesty and selfishness. He sees in the celebrated "woman's influence," in her privateness and subjection, the despotic helplessness of slaves. The "paradox of such slavery," a bitter Trebell complains to Wedgecroft, "is that they're your only tyrants" (p.186).

In *Waste* Barker criticizes the conventional model of sex differences that set the male up as rational, instrumental, and public, whilst defining the woman as private, irrational, and non-instrumental. He also criticizes the working of the mechanistic model that intensifies the sexual estrangement, as it causes each part of the sexual symbiosis to work towards a different end. This segregationist system created a gap, even a chasm, between the sexes, rendering communication between them almost impossible. For the dramatist, sex differences are mostly the product of culture rather than nature. Nevertheless, he unfolds the faults of a moral order without directly attempting to alleviate the resultant pain by representing a shift to a newer and better one, as he does with the other plays discussed here. *Waste* admittedly presents Barker's darker vision.

However, this vision is not without its special mark of hope. The dramatist chooses the subversive aspect of his play to be latent within the very structure of the system. It is hidden in the depths of the tragedy which stems from organizing the relationship between the sexes in the described fashion, and the prevalence of the principles of mechanism and control. Three lives pregnant with new promise are lost in the wasteland of Edwardian society. Trebell's and Amy's pain nags at our minds with the urgency of its bearers' need for more accommodating moral and sexual systems. If Amy's values of love and sharing were taken seriously; if Trebell would stop trying to resolve human problems in mathematical terms, the tragedies of their lives could have been avoided. We feel that the advocates of the body/mind, love/profession sexual dualities should understand that sharing is a mode of effectiveness as good as the aloofness of professionalism. It is also a mode of command that finds its nucleus outside the self. From that nucleus individuals elicit support, not by what they take, but by what they hand over of themselves.

In *Waste*, the barren land of Edwardian life has relatively optimistic potential. One of the ways in which this potential manifests itself is in the understanding that the futile consumption of human prospects is partly caused by external, and not intrinsic factors. Two of the most prominent causes of frustration and inanity in Edwardian society are the socially constructed sexual identity, and the prevalence of the principles of mechanism and control.

### The Voysey Inheritance (1905)

No less than *Waste*, *The Voysey Inheritance* is preoccupied with the task of attacking traditional moral conventions. Among the most prominent issues discussed in relation to orthodox morality is the way society organizes the relationship between the sexes, both on the material and metaphorical levels. In addition, the play criticizes the mechanistic model and its role in creating moral disorientation. Contrary to *Waste*, *The Voysey Inheritance* anticipates the departure of the corrupt order, and the setting-up of a new one. The transition is mediated by a woman of integrity, Alice, and marked by the maturation of Edward, one of the Voyseys' sons. With the help of Alice's correct moral make-up, which consists of the right blend of sexual values, Edward moves from a traditionalist position on Barker's ethical scale to that of self-realizer.

The opening stage direction prepares us for the exploration of the complex relationship between the public and the private. The milieu of the Office of Voysey and Son utilizes a combination of symbols and meanings which are traditionally associated with both the public and the private domains. The first impression given by the internal design of this legal firm is that of domestic reliability: "Its panelled rooms give out a sense of grandmotherly comfort and security, very grateful at first to the hesitating investor, the dubious litigant" (p.85). Shortly after, one is faced with a different metaphor: "Mr Voysey's own room into which he walks about twenty past ten of a morning radiates enterprise besides" (p.85). The combination of the metaphor of industriousness and the metaphor of homely comfort which are reflected in the climate of the Voysey offices strikes the right balance of values, a balance that gains the confidence



of the investors. The result is that Mr Voysey, the head of the Voysey establishment, can cheat them with impunity.

The episode in which George Booth is bullied and cheated out of a business deal subtextually illustrates the way in which Mr Voysey utilizes the bisexuality of values on a practical level (4). It also betokens a trait that the cunning solicitor shares with Trebell, namely the lack of reasoning which both exhibit in their attitudes towards the boundaries between the public and the private sides of their lives. This trait highlights the unhealthy moral structure of the Voysey family, which enforces synthetic separation between two inseparable spheres. To the head of the family's mind, dividing the private sector from the public means preventing the values that are traditionally associated with the private arena from flowing into the public. He dismisses Edward's attempt at helping the weaker investors in his firm, describing it as sentimental, and unbusinesslike. Mr Voysey's segregationist attitude is highlighted in his advice to Edward to stop the leakage of his "impulses" from one domain to another:

MR VOYSEY. Ah, you lack experience, my boy .. you're not full grown yet .. your impulses are a bit chaotic. You emotionalise over your work, and you reason about your emotions (p.112).

The Voysey order enforces a state of separation between private and public moral principles. The main aim of this separation is to make untenable any arrangement which allows these principles to be coequal within interrelated and valued public and private spheres. The ultimate division of values means that one value exists only if the

antithetical one is excluded. Professionalism is thus assessed in terms of its antithesis to emotions. The direct result of this fallacious organization of the Voysey affairs along the public/private split is that the moral health of the family is damaged. The Voysey degeneracy is implied in Mrs Voysey's reference to the "taint" that has "crept in" (p.114). This last phrase is used by the old lady to describe the corruption that has blighted the Cromwell family. By inference, the "taint" is the germ of corruption that has also entered the consciousness of the House of Voysey.

Barker expresses his opinion of Mr Voysey's attitude on both thematic and technical level. Technically, he does so by exposing the hypocrisy of the magnificent cheat, who utilizes a mixture of public and private aspects to serve his less than honourable ends. One of the other, and most important, means of expressing the complex relationship between the private and the public areas is the placing of everyday activities at the centre of dramatic action. This method is a departure from the theatrical norms of the day. By observing the unity of action principle, Jones and Pinero, for instance, establish their chosen moral themes firmly in the centre of their plays. The different pieces of action all contribute to the main plot that carries the moral theme. Barker, on the other hand, has created a great paradox by focusing the action of the play on the daily activities of the Voysey family. This is significant if we consider that the play's major theme is firmly anchored in the public domain. It deals with the conception of fairness in the business world. The paradox underscores Mr Voysey's claim that it is possible, even necessary, to establish clear boundaries and clear antitheses between the public and the private domains.

In "Theatre and Society," which is one of the early chapters of this thesis, Haste's attitude towards the metaphors of the public and the private spheres is explained. In *The Sexual Metaphor*, she points out that the public/private metaphor is one of the main cultural dualities on which gender powerfully "maps." Men, accordingly, are associated with public values, women with private ones. Mr Voysey echoes this in the play by asserting to Edward that separating his private values from his public ones will make "a bigger man of" him (p.94). Mr Voysey's attitude exemplifies the basic masculine moral attitude as described in the mainstream of psychological literature. It emphasizes the importance of individuation and hierarchy.

The metaphor of individuation manifests itself in Mr Voysey's casting aside of the ramshackle, received notion about the sacredness of the claims of property and his insistence on "dealing" out his own "justice" (p.94). If a comparison is made between this attitude and that of his son Edward—and the mainstream establishment to which he belongs—the latter will be found lacking in the former's freshness and innovation. Mr Voysey has substituted for the mainstream legal system that supports the hierarchy of property a system of his own. His is the order of hierarchy of claim. He is impatient with Edward's unquestioning belief in the fairness of formal legal institutions. Mr Voysey resents the fact that it is "hard for a man to see beyond the letter of the law" (p.91). The legal system, according to Mr Voysey, is an artificial institution created to protect those who have grown weak and soft from living off inherited wealth and unearned income. Thus, neither the legal system nor those whom it protects are validated in Mr Voysey's mind. Money, for him, is the privilege of the financially fitter.

Another, less admirable, indication of Mr Voysey's creed of individuation is his perception of himself as standing alone, separate from the world. By insisting on excluding compassion from business, he dispenses with the sense of togetherness that is attendant upon helping others selflessly. In this case, the less fortunate people are the smaller investors in his firm whose financial ruin is imminent. Mr Voysey's belief in the importance of hierarchy functions on two levels: class and gender. His own invented judicial order--survival for the financially fitter--argues for the dismissal from consideration of the non-business orientated. This, in turn, implies the supremacy of the moneyed class. Mr Voysey's attitude towards sexual values is highlighted in the pieces of advice he gives Edward about the issues of moral maturity. The prejudiced entrepreneur seems to equate maturity with one's ability to dissociate oneself from the private sphere and its values. Thus, maturity only comes about by the adoption of masculine values, since masculine values are firmly grounded in the public sphere. It follows that moral maturity requires the rejection of the feminine, as the feminine is antithetical to both the masculine and the public in the mind of a man such as Mr Voysey.

Mr Voysey's model of moral maturity depends on the assumption of a hierarchy where the antithetical quality is inferior. So one is logical only by fighting the impulsive; one is professional only by fighting the emotional; one is masculine only by fighting the feminine. Despite the fact that Mr Voysey's universe of discourse is centred on the conception of harsh justice and separatism, his attitude is not wholly disqualified. We feel that, all things considered, his rejection of the claims of property is, to say the least, refreshing. This is to take into account that he is constantly praised by Beatrice, Hugh's

wife, who is the most independent and insightful of the Voysey daughters-in-law. Her valedictory assessment of what is, to her, Mr Voysey's splendid criminality is validated in the play: "He was a man of imagination and a great financier" (p.155).

The probing of Mr Voysey's ethical self is an important factor in the play because it contributes to the evaluation of Edward's moral maturity. The latter is one of the backbone issues of the play, not the least because it signifies the advent of a new ethical order. Edward's moral maturity is equated with his ability to think for himself and to devise his own scheme of right and wrong. His father defines moral maturity for him thus: "You have to cultivate your own sense of right and wrong; deal your own justice" (p.94). Edward follows his mentor's model of moral maturity as far as his definition of it goes and no further. The original ethical model which Edward cultivates in the course of his journey to self-realization is different in purpose and attitude from that of his father. Up till the end, Edward jettisons his father's attitude of separation, individuation, and hierarchy.

With the help of Alice Maitland, who is to become Edward's fiancée at the end of the play, Edward comes to realize that maturity is attendant upon self-realization. This latter is never complete without acknowledgement of the presence of the other. It is associated with the ability to extend the boundaries of the self to include others, who might be "like" or "unlike" the self. Self-realization is to be aware of the needs of the other as of your own rights. Edward acknowledges the need of the smaller investors, although they are different from him, being members of the lower classes. Maturity is the acquiring of a rounded view of the self that acknowledges the existence of an

autonomous life of work and the interdependence of love and care. Just before he and Alice are finally united, Edward laments his loneliness and expresses his wish to be connected to the world through love: "I need friends. I cling to people that I don't care for deeply .. just for the comfort of it" (p.157).

The necessity of rethinking the validity of the all-prevailing cultural and social duality of business/love is the predominant theme of *The Voysey Inheritance*. Both it and *Waste* deal with the issue of sexual relations within a thematic framework that is firmly rooted in the public sphere, namely that of politics and business respectively. In *Waste* some of the issues that are raised in the course of the narrative are directly concerned with the nature of the male/female sexual duality, especially in the episode that deals with the Amy-Trebell affair. In *The Voysey Inheritance*, on the other hand, most substantial ideas about sexual relationships reside in the internality of the play, they inhabit the "id" of the drama. Even the Alice-Edward affair, which has the form of romance, mirrors the coupling's place in the design of ethical reversal in the play more than it deals with the nature of the masculine/feminine duality. Nevertheless, this theme is just beneath the surface. This goes to show Barker's powerful sense of realism. Earlier in this chapter it is stated that gender is one of the most powerful cultural dualities which maps on to an extensive range of other areas. One of the methods by which the dramatist exposes the complex link between the business/love duality and the male/female one is the probing of Mr Voysey's ethical self. He explores the relationship between Mr Voysey's business ethics and his attitude towards the organization of his affairs along the public/private divide. The discrepancy between these two issues brings home the

revelation that the solicitor's private life is inseparable from the public one, even if he is at pains to assert to the contrary.

The nature of the socially constructed male and female selves is an undercurrent of the play. The disadvantageous effect of the alienation of the individual in a prescribed sexual role is nowhere more palpable than in the personalities of Major Booth and Honor. For the greater parts of their lives, these two Voysey children have been physically and spiritually restricted to exclusive male and female spheres respectively. Honor, the spinster daughter of the Voyseys, has been confined to the domestic surroundings and restricted to her role as the family's nurturer and carer. All the other major female characters in the play except Honor have some links with the outside world. Even the deaf Mrs Voysey connects herself to public life by spending a great deal of her time reading journals on current affairs.

As a result of her enclosure, Honor's essentially female characteristics are unadulterated. Most of her time is spent selflessly serving others. This style of life has created a colossal disproportion in her moral make-up. Her lack of individualism acquires grotesque dimensions. Hugh once sarcastically wonders if it was necessary for his parents to give Honor a name of her own (p.152). In spite of the pathos associated with the figure of "poor Honor," her essential qualities as a female are appreciated by Barker. Honor's usefulness to her family gives her life a purpose and a meaning. She is highly valued by members of her family; she is, after all, essential to their comfort. Major Booth speaks for himself and the rest of the family when he says: "Honor is very happy at home. Everyone loves her" (p.152). In the figure of Honor, Barker expresses his faith in

the female values of responsibility and care. What he criticizes in the homebound maiden lady is the limited sphere within which she is permitted to exercise her magnificent qualities.

Honor certainly leads a much more substantial existence than her brother, Major Booth. The latter is her counterpart in that his moral personality structure is the product of an exclusively masculine sphere: the army. Major Booth adheres blindly to the old fashioned manly ideal of the ultimate supremacy of the male over his household. He expects his sister Honor to pander, slave-like, to his slightest whim. The Voyseys' elder son is habitually ridiculed by everyone, especially Beatrice who seems to derive a great pleasure from belittling him indirectly. Major Booth's almost caricatured distance from himself is evident in his wife's description of the way she normally "handles" him. Emily says: "It's best to allow him to talk himself out. When he's done that he'll often come to me for advice. I let him get his own way as much as possible .. or think he's getting it. Otherwise he becomes so depressed" (p.153). The incident in which Mr Voysey sharply reprimands Major Booth for his inhuman treatment of his sister over a missing box of cigarettes throws an important light on the moral attitude of the head of the House of Voysey (p.103).

By recognizing the attitude of slavery implied in Major Booth's assumption that Honor's role is a menial one, Mr Voysey shows sensibility and benevolence towards the other sex, maybe more so than a Trebell is ever capable of. Nevertheless, this incident highlights even further the ingenious lawyer's psychological distance from his familial/public affairs. He fails to recognize the fact that the subjection of women in



general is the direct outcome of his and his order's attitude of separation and hierarchy. These inconsistencies serve to add humanizing details to Mr Voysey's character. At the same time they reveal an important facet of the traditional male attitude towards the feminine. These attitudes are embodied in Major Booth's figure, albeit in a caricatured form. Mr Voysey is a more realistic embodiment of them. The flip side of the coin that features the masterful public-spirited visage of Mr Voysey is the profile of the private, dependent, and thus inferior, female figure in his household. As a man, he has to comply with the rules of mainstream masculine culture by presenting himself to the world as an efficient leader of his family. The qualities of the efficient leader appear in Mr Voysey's advice to his son Edward to be a man, "and take a practical common-sense view of the position" he finds himself in (p.94). For Edward to be a man he must be instrumental to his family. Therefore he must restrain his sensitivity to the weak and the independent outside its scope.

The fault in Mr Voysey's essentially healthy personality as a committed family man and financial genius is corrected in the person of his niece Alice Maitland who has inherited a great deal of his intelligence and originality. Her nature is described as "healthy and well-balanced." "She possesses indeed the sort of athletic chastity which is a characteristic charm of Northern spinsterhood." More to the point, Alice's "resolute eyes and eyebrows are a more innocent edition of Mr Voysey's, who is her uncle" (p.101). The niece is more able than her uncle to make use of her inherited originality of mind because, as Barker wishes to tell us, she is a woman. Alice herself is aware of the kind of freedom which she enjoys: "I'm lawless by birthright, being a woman" (p.128). In creating Alice's character Barker typically combines the elements of naturalism with

the element of realism. She is a person as much as a personification. She carries the specific qualities of the Voyseys from which she is descended. In addition to that, she possesses the authentic qualities of her sex.

Barker's observation of the fact that women actually enjoy more freedom than men in certain aspects of life is realistic. Helen Haste has noticed that "unlawfulness" in its general implications is a permanent feature of the female:

Women are reared to be aware of the mainstream, and to participate in it through formal education, but in some ways they are less constrained by it. If women are free not to play the game according to the rules of the mainstream, they can explore other possibilities . . ." (5).

The originality of thought which Mr Voysey and his niece share manifests itself in the fact that they disdain the law of inherited property. Alice's attitude is encouraged by her guardian who has advised her to manage her own property, and not depend on other people. In working on the improvement of her own finances, she will have more moral rights to her money (pp.126-127). Nevertheless, the moral stances of Alice and Mr Voysey have elements which sharply contrast with each other, illuminating the qualities of each. The contrast, which is the direct result of sex differences, is highlighted in the way the two characters respond to the major moral question of the play. Part of this question is related to the correctness of Mr Voysey's business ethics. Another part is associated with Edward's maturity, determined by his reaction to the discovery of his

father's misuse of his client's money. Will he follow in his father's footsteps? And if he does, who will he try to rescue first, the smaller investors or the bigger ones?

Just as Mr Voysey advises Edward to shed his sensitivity towards the poorer investors and concentrate on his family's needs, Alice encourages him to do his best to rescue these same investors. By wanting to help the weak and dependent, even at the cost of her own and Edward's comfort, Alice recognizes them as equals and not as inferior "others." Mr Voysey seeks to force moral "tidiness" on society by guarding the rules of hierarchy and separation, while Alice wishes to achieve harmony in society by putting an end to the causes of suffering. She aims to solve the problem of inequality between classes by revising the traditional cultural way of thinking in terms of the either/or duality. Mr Voysey represents this attitude when he says: "You must either be the master of money or its servant" (p.111). This attitude is responsible for distancing the people who are not financially healthy as different from the self.

Alice leads Edward along the path of self-realization by helping him to perceive choices alternative to those of his father. As Ian Clarke points out in *The Edwardian Drama*: "Alice Maitland . . . is a key figure in Barker's inversion of conventional ethical positions" (6). Alice helps Edward to reconcile himself to the values which his father has deemed irreconcilable. She motivates him to combine passion with professionalism when she suggests that he continues with his father's shrewd business methodology but for a different end. This time he will subject the rich investors' interests to the dictates of the poor investors and not *vice versa*. Alice then gently reproaches Edward for being the well-principled prig that he is:

ALICE: It's the worst of acting on principle . . . one is so apt to think more of one's attitude than of the use of what one is doing (p.127).

The principled mind, the mind that thinks in theoretical terms, is the mind that has been trained in the field of abstract knowledge. This demesne is part of the public domain, and has been the privilege of the male gender for centuries. It seems that as a result of certain cultural and social evolutionary processes, abstract thinking has become a permanent feature of gender. In her book *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan, a psychoanalysis-indebted theorist, asserts that in most major psychological studies the male mentality has been found to lean towards the abstract. One of the most important manifestations of this type of thinking makes itself felt when men are faced with a moral conflict and choice. The abstract way of thinking helps to distance the problem by depersonalizing it. Thus, the problem is solved by a reference to principles, notions, and sets of rules. Little deliberation is given to the actual problem. Edward Voysey has a tendency to adhere to abstract principles without considering their effect on the people around him. This is one of the shortcomings that Alice finds unacceptable in her fiancé.

Gilligan believes that women are more capable of finding practical solutions to moral problems as they stand with both feet on the ground. This is partly because women concentrate on the utility of their actions and the effect of these actions on others. When men and women are faced with a moral problem, their minds construct different metaphors. Women think in terms of network, men think in terms of hierarchy. This difference in the mode of thinking between the sexes is the direct result of a basic

difference in the way each defines the self. Men see themselves as separate from the world, women see themselves as connected to the world (7).

In *The Voysey Inheritance*, Alice's desire to reconcile herself to the other--by helping the poor--is a sign of her desire to connect herself to the world. Mr Voysey's dismissal of the needs of the others--the poor clients--is a sign of his wish to separate himself from the world. The fact that Alice's main role in the play is as a helper and inspirer may be seen as one of the modes in which Barker lapses into the conventional philosophy of the age. On close inspection, this fact is nonetheless very much vitiated. Barker has endowed Alice with masculine autonomy on both materialistic and metaphorical levels. However, being one's own person is, in Alice's case, subtly particularized. The unsentimental dramatist has refrained from unrealistically endowing his emancipated female protagonist with such blatant masculine individualism and centrality as the direct management of a public and professional institution such as the Voysey's legal firm would have afforded her. Instead, Barker manages to make Alice powerful in many other ways. One of these ways is giving emphasis and value to her as a person regardless of her marital status.

Before she is engaged to Edward, she has remained single for a long time. However, Alice's unwed state is not represented as a sign of malady, but as a sign of mental and physical health. Mentally, she possesses enough insight and integrity to make her a catalyst of moral betterment. In fact, the Voyseys' promoted bachelor girl is a messenger from the changing world of women, representing her real life counterpart: the powerful spinster whose newly acquired social visibility was a sign of cultural rebirth.

She signifies an essential break in the public/private structure of society, and inevitably in its ethical make up.

Another way of empowering Alice is by highlighting the notion of centrality in her image as the capacity to act, not only on individuals, but also on situations. For instance, she insists on managing her own property, and on being free from the imperative of depending on other people. In addition, Alice's individuality and activeness is not curtailed by her expected marriage to Edward. Her acceptance of his proposal stems partly from a public-orientated philosophy. It is her belief that sharing with another is a way of extending the boundaries of the self, and not a way of abandoning it. The surrender of the self in the mutual seeking of goodness for the partners and the world is egalitarian and symbolically elevated by having a unified moral goal.

Like Alice, Amy O'Connell expresses her need to extend herself to the world through love. Although we sympathize with her spiritual destitution, we might just as well accept that a union between a Trebell and an Amy would not be as ethically correct as that of an Alice-Edward type of association. Amy's traditional female characteristics of passivity and privacy render her helpless in relation to men. This is because she lacks the independence of mind and public presence to compete seriously with their private authority and public supremacy. So Amy would surrender herself in an unequal power relationship which implies her subjection to the more instrumental Trebell. This attachment is bound to result in a relationship of forced dependency, which often leads to the domination of the weaker partner by the forces of compulsive necessity. It is this

governance of the slave which Trebell both despises and fears. Amy's and Trebell's unilateral relationship is, like many other aspects of Edwardian life, imbued with the metaphor of mechanism, which makes the compulsive aspect of their relationship possible. The mechanism and the compulsiveness lead to ethical chaos as each party strives for his or her own ends, and not for a common good. Meanwhile, the harmony and reciprocity of the Edward-Alice association, mediated by Alice's balanced moral make-up, loosens the tight grip of the mechanical model on human relationships. Not ethical chaos but moral purposefulness pervades the new order in *The Voysey Inheritance*.

### The Madras House (1910)

*Waste* deals with the harmful effect of gender-marked dualities on sexual relationships as these dualities map on the sphere of politics. *The Voysey Inheritance* discusses these same dualities as part of the symbolic structure that underlies the world of business. *The Madras House* explores the harmful effects of polarized sexual values directly on sexual relationships, as well as on other cultural aspects. Like *The Voysey Inheritance*, *The Madras House* shows the passing of an old moral order and the dawn of a new one. Barker's analysis of a corrupt moral order in this play encompasses a great deal of social realism because it *directly* links this theme with two vital issues: the first is the public/private division, and the second is women's position within this division. The understanding that the public/private schism, women's gender identity, and the ethical system, are interrelated issues conforms to the overall current of thought which emerged

with the advent of early “second wave feminists,” like Kate Millett for instance. Millett’s book, *Sexual Politics*, was one of the first and most influential texts of “second wave feminism.” In it she argues that in order to understand women’s problems better we must see them from the fundamental premise that the personal is political. Millett writes: “The enormous social change involved in a sexual revolution is basically a matter of altered consciousness, the exposure and elimination of social and psychological realities underlining political and cultural structure” (8). Improving woman’s position will involve sexual revolution, which, in turn, is a vital step towards a cultural and moral revolution.

In *The Madras House*, the theme of women’s role in the community is more developed and focused than it is in the other two plays. In the former play, the female position is firmly at the centre of the debate, and the unfavourableness of their condition is the main cause, and the main effect, of a corrupt social order. The reversal to a better social order is mutually dependent on the improvement in women’s conditions, the two matters being equally important to the happiness of individuals and societies. The passage from one ethical order to another is symbolized by the departure of a corrupt social system, represented by the Madras House, a first-class fashion establishment, and the origination of a new one. The mediator of the change is Philip, the only son of the Madras family, who, at one stage in his life, rebels against his family’s code of ethics. Philip’s maturation, and his transition from a traditionalist state to that of self-realizer, indicates the point of moral reversal.



Unlike *The Voysey Inheritance*, this point takes place before the beginning of the play, and not after it. We are told that long before the play opens Philip has decided to sell the Madras House and stand as M.P. as a way of getting hold of a form of institutional power that would help him to effect social reform. Like *The Voysey Inheritance*, the birth of a new ethical order in *The Madras House* is helped by a female figure. In the first instance, Alice, the moral catalyst, is closely connected to the young man whom she influences with her enlightened views. Edward's maturation, like that of Philip, is an indicator of the advent of a new moral order. In the second instance, Miss Yates, unlike Alice, is not part of Philip's immediate surroundings, although she is one of the different types of women Philip comes across in the course of the play. The circumstances of these women enhance Philip's feeling of the necessity for moral change. Nor does Miss Yates share with Philip a scheme for moral reform. Yet, the principles on which she organizes her life are part of the moral system which Philip wants brought into his new world. They are illustrative of the improved condition of women in a morally modified world.

Philip's motivation for the decision of changing his career and his moral stance is two-fold: personal and political. As the child of an unhappy marriage, Philip has watched the relationship between his parents which is, like all sexual relationships, part of the "farmyard world of sex" (9). This experience has caused him to realize that there is something wrong in the relationship between the sexes. His sense of the personal tragedy intensifies after his marriage. Jessica, Philip's wife, is alienated as a member of the exclusive cult of the "accomplished lady." This makes her twice removed from the "others": she is distanced from men by virtue of her sex, and she is distanced from

ordinary women by virtue of her class. Philip's intense sense of personal tragedy awakens him to the general distance between the sexes and the classes:

PHILIP: We've so organised the world's work as to make companionship between men and women a very artificial thing (p.63).

Philip's politicization is also the outcome of his detached observation of the suffering of women and the lower classes in his workplace. His subtle intellect enables him to realize that there is a link between his personal tragedy and the tragedy of the oppressed men and women in the Madras House. He has come to acknowledge that the root of the trouble is the distance that is created by a harmful and deep-seated way of thinking. This way of thinking distances the classes and the sexes from each other by imposing on them a dualistic ideology. Ugliness is the prerogative of the working class, beauty that of the upper class. Worldliness is the privilege of the male, unworldliness is the lot of the female. Philip seeks a society which bridges the gap between the sexes and the classes by modifying the meaning and symbols that traditional culture attaches to men and women, upper classes and lower classes. In spite of the fact that Philip observes both women and the lower classes, his main concern is women.

Yet, true to Barker's sense of realism, Philip's truths are not absolute. One of the ways by which the dramatist dispenses with the certitude and finality afforded by the synthetic authenticity of the well-made play is by injecting the dramatic structure of the play with an ironic consciousness. Constantine Madras's suggestion that his son's apparent respect for women's mental abilities is nothing more than dressed-up

chauvinism is a way of gesturing towards this parodying spirit (p.95). It is directed at the philosophy of the play itself, more than any other philosophy. Philip's work, which is that of bettering society and breeding an improved ethical system, is essential, but because it must be carried out in a world of misadvised humanity it is also grotesque.

The play offers a series of events which consider different types of women's oppression. These events are represented in a series of loosely connected episodes which form the backbone of the play. In this respect the play's make-up strays from the dominant mode of drama in the period, the spine of which is generally a developed plot. These incidents, which illustrate women's oppression, are linked together thematically and by the presence of Philip as a sensitive commentator. In the first act one encounters the gaggle of the Huxtable girls. Earlier in this thesis, I have explained the way in which Barker utilizes stylistic devices in order to dig down to the depth of their experience. The depiction of restrained bourgeois women in such fashion is a denunciation of sexual conditioning and class formations (10). Act II provides us with a different specimen of female oppression. The act is set in the business offices of Roberts and Huxtable. The working girls are subjected to a harsher form of suppression than the Huxtable girls. They live on the premises, and Miss Chancellor, the housekeeper, closely scrutinizes their movements in and out the dormitory. The girl's contact with the outside world is limited. Philip likens the living-in system to the lives of the Huxtable girls during a conversation with one of the girls: "Emma, people have been worrying your father at the shop lately about the drawbacks of the living-in system. Why don't you ask him to look at home for them?" (p.25).

Miss Yates, the woman with a reformed female identity, who also acts as the moral catalyst of the play, belongs to the milieu of Act II. This is perhaps one of the reasons that make her freer than the other female protagonists in Barker's drama. The fact that she is a working woman--she is a long-time employee of Roberts and Huxtable's drapery establishment--affords her relatively more freedom from ideological indoctrination than her middle-class counterparts. Barker has chosen his most sexually liberated female from the ranks of the working classes partly in order to call into serious question the philosophy of Edwardian England. It is mainly the middle-class woman who is assigned the task of guarding the nation's moral worth. In this way she may be the one who is feeling the pangs of social restrictions most.

The characters of Miss Yates and Amy O'Connell share the same narrative line, that is an illicit sexual relationship which leads to illegitimate pregnancy. Yet, the former's procreative function is put to a better use than the latter's. Miss Yates's fecundity is thus more respected by reason of its existence in a psychologically healthier nature that possesses an enriched gender identity, which is superior to Amy's. In Miss Yates's figure Barker has attempted to redefine female gender identity in a way which is strikingly similar to that of "second wave feminism." Miss Yates's sexuality is original and a comparison between her and Amy might illuminate this point. The latter's need has an indefinite shape, encompassing neither an authentic libido nor pure spirituality. Hers are the amorphous emotions of a hollow woman who is not capable of harbouring any of these two types of attachments. It is in fact Trebell's interest in Amy that motivates and defines the relationship. For the reluctant lover, the unhappily married woman is attractive, but very much on his own terms. Her brand of desirability inflates his ego,

impassioning him for his own contentment. She has a passive sexuality, an answering libido, which comes forth only in response to male approach. Amy's sexuality is thus in Trebell's power, because he can withdraw his interest at any time.

By contrast, Miss Yates's ardor is autonomous and independent of both the male gaze and stereotyped sexual behaviour. Despite the wear and tear of the continual use of her health and youth as a labouring shop assistant, and despite her modest share of classical beauty, she "glows in that room like a live coal." The unconventional woman's eroticism seems to have a life of its own, for she "is by no means pretty, nor does she try to attract you. But you look at her as you look at a fire or a light in an otherwise empty room" (p.38). Miss Yates's personality is not only free of standard sexual metaphor of active/passive, but it is also partly liberated from the notion of the Life Force which so much governs some of the attitudes to women in the "new drama." She admits to Philip that she had willingly and knowingly engaged herself in a sexual affair outside wedlock in order to extend her self-understanding. There had been an aspect of herself, which had not been discovered yet and she meant to discover it. "I took the risk. I knew what I was about. I wanted to have my fling," she says (p.53). The emancipated working woman's conscious aim of employing her procreative abilities was deliberate self-discovery and not helpless fulfillment of the whims of some metaphysical power.

The third act has the top people in the Madras House and Eustace Perrin State, a prospective American buyer of the establishment, discussing the situation of women in the West at the times in which the play was written. The men are particularly interested in exploring the situation of women in relation to the public/private split, each according

to his own terms of reference. Constantine Madras, the founder of the Madras House, offers a solution to what is, in his opinion, the chaos which ensues from the entry of Western women into the public sphere. His solution is simply to ban women from this sphere rigidly. Constantine's ideas are derived from the East where he has been living for a long time. The man and his adopted culture are paranoid about the feminine role, and they are anxious to prevent the pollution of the public space by the private one. Constantine believes that "Europe in its attitude towards women is mad" (p.93). Public life in the West is running aground on the shoals of "prettiness and pettiness" which are women's values (p.99).

Constantine's view of the place of women contradicts that of State. While the first believes that women's eroticism should be exercised only in private and only to the benefit of their male keepers, the second believes that women's eroticism should be allowed entry into the public domain. Through economic freedom women will free themselves from male authority. This will give them the choice of entering the public sphere where they will be seen by men other than their relatives. There is an ulterior motive to State's apparent permissiveness. Encouraging women's exhibitionist tendencies increases their need for clothes. This means that ultimately more cash will find its way into his pocket.

Though State is only a caricature of an American businessman, the ideas that he embodies are the forerunners of those of the present-day fashion industry. The trend in commerce and retailing which State represents will be responsible for determining the shape of women's lives in the West today. This trend depends on scientific research to

ascertain the psychological needs of the buyer. Middle-class women are the main targets of this commercial policy due to their confinement and leisure:

MR STATE: But it is the Middle Class Woman of England that is waiting for me. The woman who still sits at the Parlour window of her Provincial Villa pensively gazing through the Laurel bushes (p.88).

Simultaneously, the cheapness of State's business lyricism, which evokes images of ethereal women, is exposed. The debate to which State is contributing takes place against a background of a mannequin parade, separated from the debating men by a partition. The partition is, on a wider level, a metaphor for the psychological distance between the sexes. The mannequins are grotesquely dehumanized and objectified. They have no identity apart from the fashions they model and the numbers they are allotted. The alienation of the mannequins in their fashionable clothing suggests the hypocrisy of the clothing industry proprietor who claims that his designs are about women "expressing" themselves (p.85).

The mannequins' state of mind suggests that of the middle-class woman on whom State capitalizes. Even lacking modern, more omnipresent, examples, Barker caught the position of middle-class women since the Industrial Revolution unerringly, and stilled it for all times in an aesthetic stylistic transformation. His depiction of the middle-class woman of the future is a striking analogue of the depiction of the woman's position as made in a number of later feminist and anthropological publications. In 1990 Naomi Wolf states her belief that after a century and a half of feminism, women are still

distanced from public life by a certain form of private reality. Women's privateness is maintained via a cultural conspiracy she terms the "beauty myth." The "beauty myth" is "the modern version of a social reflex that has been in force since the Industrial Revolution" (11). The system of mass production needed consumers. This is when the "beauty myth" emerged as a necessary fiction and was spread about by the advanced media technology. The "beauty myth" consists of "continual comparison to a mass disseminated physical ideal" (12). It is the arrangement of women's worth according to culturally imposed physical standards. The myth became even more necessary upon the upheaval of the Women's Movement.

As women gradually made their way into public life on more equal terms, the social order felt the need to counteract their newfound freedom. Since the Women's Movement gradually dispensed with most of the other fictions that helped to keep women in their private sphere, it was left to the "beauty myth" to take over their lost ground. The "beauty myth" expanded, as it had to do all the work of the other fictions. In the present day it has acquired monstrous proportions. It has become a threat to women's health and even their lives. By spreading ideas about beauty that might cause its followers physical discomfort, the "beauty myth" is spreading disease and death among women. For example, Wolf mentions anorexia as one of the most fatal products of the "beauty myth." She conjures up a grotesque fantasy similar in its gruesomeness to that of Barker's alien-like mannequins. She envisages a death village where women are blighted with self-imposed starvation (13).



Wolf's analysis of the net effect of the "beauty myth" gives us an insight into State's business ethics. The boastful entrepreneur represents the precursor of the present-day fashion industry tycoons, who base their business on the "beauty myth." State claims that his fashions are about beauty, love, and life. Wolf exposes the hypocrisy of the "beauty myth" which State's cheap poeticism anticipates:

[The beauty myth] claims to be about intimacy and sex and life, a celebration of women. It is actually composed of emotional distance, politics, finance, and sexual repression. The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power (14).

"Emotional distance" and "sexual repression" are the cause of Philip's anxiety about the relationship between men and women. The solution, for him, is to bridge the psychological gap between them. Barker believes that the cause of that distance is a system of symbols and meanings which underlies social formations. This system penetrates the level of the subconscious. A number of the characters in the play express their inability to understand the micro-underpinnings of traditional sexual relationships:

JESSICA: I want to be friends with men. I'd sooner be friends with them. It's they who flirt with me, Why? (p.134).

THOMAS: [about his relationship with women]. Well, Phil, this is such a damned subtle world. I don't pretend to understand it . . . (p.64).

Barker realizes that the distance between the sexes is a result of the culture's tendency to think in terms of either/or. This idea is implied in the scene which features the men's debate and the mannequin parade. This metaphorical style of staging intensifies the sense of distance between the sexes. It also highlights, forcefully, the mind/body cultural duality which sustains this distance. The suppression of the mannequins is carried out in terms of masculine/feminine polarity, in which men have commandeered all the mental energy: they are active only in intellect and tongue, the mannequins active only in body.

*The Madras House* corrects the detrimental working of active/passive duality largely in the figure of Miss Yates. Barker's individualist heroine defies active/passive sexual duality, not only in her sexual relationships, but also in other aspects of her life. She refuses Constantine's offer of money because she knows that financial support will lead to an unwanted patronage and control of her and her child's moral constructions. By her refusal of Constantine's guardianship, she shows herself to be aware of the harmful effects of active/passive sexual duality. The relationship in which the functioning man provides for the inoperative woman is doomed to take the shape of compulsive dependency which encompasses a great deal of loathing on the part of the man. "Well, I don't want him to hate me" is Miss Yates's response to Philip's suggestion that she accept child support from Constantine (pp.54-55).

Although Miss Yates's pregnancy was initiated by a desire for self-discovery, later, when she becomes pregnant, the Life Force starts to take hold of her. Refusing to share the baby with anyone, she insists on taking it to a distant place where she plans to

bring him up on her own earnings. Miss Yates's seemingly possessive attitude towards her baby is different in essence from that of some other female protagonists of the "new drama" who were possessed by the Life Force. One of the best examples of this category is Ann in *Man and Superman*. This Shavian representation of intensified motherliness is ready to unscrupulously tailor hers and everyone else's lives, especially that of the father, as befits the interest of her much-desired offspring. While Ann forces Tanner to marry her so that they can produce the Superman together, Miss Yates prefers to keep herself and the father of her child free from familial commitment. Unlike the gender-conscious Miss Yates, Ann is oblivious of the emotional distance that a marriage which is based on stereotyped sexual relationship may entail.

In actuality, Miss Yates's unique streak of energy and beauty could be truly a sign of fertility, which may be of the same kind as that of the Life Force. Yet this fertility need not be a passive agent for an institutionalized form of metaphysical force. It is possessed and properly managed by its own owner who sees herself, first and foremost, as an active, self-reliant person, whose productive role is only one aspect of her multifaceted existence, and not the whole of her existence. Miss Yates's pregnancy has been initiated by her desire to complete her experience of living by adding a missing dimension: sexual relationships. Her refusal to surrender herself to the wardenship of Constantine is based on her belief that the relationship in which active/passive duality is in operation is detrimental to the psychological health of the partners. It breeds contempt for the non-doer in the heart of the doer. In Miss Yates's figure, Barker offers a sympathetic view of the "new woman" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Her pains to assert her financial independence and define her own experience of

motherhood might even make her a predecessor of the emancipated woman of the later half of the twentieth century.

The essence of "second wave feminism," and the one characteristic distinguishing it from the earlier Women's Movement, is reproductive rights. The movement strives to free women's reproductive abilities from institutionalization, from the ownership of women and children by men and male establishments. One of the main abuses of institutionalized motherhood is limiting woman to a single universal experience, imposing on her the notion of biological destiny. The formal ownership of women's reproductive functions by male institutions, and the metaphorical ramifications of this ownership, are central to female gender identity. The modification of the image of traditional motherhood in Miss Yates's fashion has profound repercussions for this identity. This modification is one of the vital aspects which facilitates the transition from the Madras House's moral order to a better ethical system.

### The Marrying of Ann Leete (1902)

Like the rest of Barker's plays in this chapter, *The Marrying of Ann Leete* is preoccupied with the decline of an old order, including the analysis of its corrupt aspects. In *The Voysey Inheritance* and *The Madras House* the demise of the latter is marked by the maturation of a young person and their transition from a traditionalist state to that of self-realizer. *The Marrying of Ann Leete* embodies the same concept, albeit its morally developing young person is a member of the opposite sex. Moreover, in *The Marrying of*

*Ann Leete* the notion of a moral catalyst and that of a maturing individual lodge in the same figure, that of the lady of the title.

The three plays in this chapter are set at the time of writing, whilst *The Marrying of Ann Leete* is set in a different time. Rather than placing the play at the turn of the nineteenth century, Barker made the incidents of the play happen at the turn of the previous one, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth. The dramatist wishes to stretch the significance of the play beyond a particular transitory period of time to that of millennial change in general. This is because this change creates deep disquiet in society. The move from one extended period of history to another entails a violent motion which leaves behind vibrations of fear and discontent. For some, this is a time of questioning the old, tired formulas of "right" and "wrong," and replacing them. For others, those who fear change, more rigid boundary control around the two moral categories seem necessary. The latter type of people represent the old order, the former the new order.

The main plot of the play is concerned with the political plotting and scheming of Carnaby Leete, Ann's father. Before the play begins, he makes his eldest daughter, Sarah, marry for political reasons. Through her union with Lord Cottesham, a powerful Tory minister, Carnaby manipulates a change of party. In the course of the play, Leete tries to effect an expedient return to the Whigs by marrying Ann to a pillar of the opposition, Lord John Carp. He conceives of this political project when Lord John, in order to win a bet, kisses Ann. Carnaby thus resembles Mr Voysey in that he, like the ingenious lawyer, utilizes the vague area between his private and public lives. Yet, Mr Voysey is a more substantial type of male than Leete by reason of his being dedicated to

his family and their well-being. The sickly Leete, on the other hand, exploits his own family as much as he exploits strangers.

Ann has a multiplicity of reasons for rejecting her father's attitude. There is the example of her sister Sarah's tragic marriage. Although the political end is achieved, neither Sarah nor her husband find satisfaction and the marriage collapses. Lord Cottesham blames Sarah for everything and, as a result, condemns her to a life of mental vegetation in the provinces. Sarah is a typical female who has been faithful to her essential qualities of self-sacrifice and serviceability. She has made it her purpose in life to assist her family. Even in the face of her own exile, she pleads with her lover to be "useful" to her father. Sarah's services are accepted but never reciprocated. The alienated wife and daughter dwells on the boundaries between the public and the private lives of her husband and father. When events prove that she is no longer useful to either man, she is easily expelled. She becomes a surplus woman, like the Huxtable daughters. In his angry exclamation against the restrictions that Lord Cottesham imposes on his wife, Carnaby evokes images of morbid redundancy: Banished "to a hole in the damned provinces!" (p.67). Ann rejects the venomous effect of Sarah's alienation in her sexual role as a passive female, seeing it as the cause for her sister's weak character. She says to Sarah: "And I curse you . . . because, we being sisters, I suppose I am much what you were, about to be married; and I think, Sally, you'd have cursed your present self. I could become all that you are and more .. but I don't choose" (p.68).

Another contributing factor to Ann's maturity is the awakening of her sexuality by Lord John Carp. This awakening inadvertently offers her the power to rebel and to

choose. Her initial reaction to Lord John's stolen kiss is ambiguous. She regards it as an invasion of her privacy, yet, in her bewilderment, she returns it. Later on, and after some deliberation, she comes to despise Lord John's violation of her self. She begins to wince internally at its implied meaning. Ann rejects the cultural myth which assumes that eroticism is born of the act of the invasion of the female privacy. "Invasion" is a key word in the myth because it implies female passivity and receptiveness.

In the second love scene between the imposing man and herself, Ann's maturation is fully accomplished. The scene takes the form of repetition and recurrence, which is musical in effect. The rhythm of Lord John's sentences is oppressive, powerfully highlighting the aspect of mechanism involved in his attachment to Ann. The strong-willed wooer's imagery is rich with the connotations of possessor/possession and hunter/prey. He is constantly trying to fix Ann with his gaze, rather like the predator does to his victim: "I love you," "Give yourself to me," "Look straight at me" (p.55). Ann reacts unfavourably to Lord John's advances, complaining of being uncomfortable and frightened. When the persistent suitor's pressure on Ann reaches its peak, she comes to fully realize her actual significance, and that she is an object of political exchange between her family and the powerful politician. She issues a desperate cry against her temporarily felt helplessness. "I'm nothing . . . I'm part of my family" (p.55).

After the initial shock subsides, Ann becomes aware that, in future, her relationships with other people should be defined in more active terms on her part. "I want to take people mentally" (p.59). Ann's moral maturity is closely connected with

her sexual maturity as a woman. She shows the first signs of scepticism about her father's order shortly after her first kiss in the garden. At that point she realizes that she is growing up, and that she must make a choice between activity and passivity as sexual, and ultimately, cultural dualities. The first option open to Ann is to be receptive to Lord John's advances. Thus, she will succumb, as Sarah has done, to the pattern of private/public, familial/political exploitation of her menfolk. Nevertheless, Ann can avail herself of another opportunity. She can take the initiative and decide upon the shape which her sexuality will take. This will ultimately mean determining the structure of her relationship with people. Ann opts for the second possibility. Unlike the passive Sarah, who yields to the force "of circumstances," the active Ann withstands them: "Outside things. Why couldn't I run away from this garden and over the hills .. I suppose there's something on the other side of the hills" (p.57).

One incident in the play proves to be significant in finalizing Ann's change of moral and sexual direction. At one point Abud, the gardener, races breathlessly into the garden with the news that Dolly, George's wife, has given birth to a baby. Considering that Abud is Dolly's rejected lover, his reaction to the birth of the baby is, to say the least, unexpected. Ann is dazzled by Abud's objectivity and uninhibitedness. The gardener's basic vitality and virility light in her the spark of life, inspiring in her the desire for procreation. She says of Abud: "he's straight-limbed and clear eyed .. and I'm a woman" (p.69). Consequently the rebellious daughter proposes to Abud, much to the chagrin of her father and sister. The pursued gardener is numb with the shock, but Ann manipulates him with all the political shrewdness of the Leetes: "If we two were alone



here in this garden and everyone else in the world were dead . .what would you answer?"  
(p.69).

Ann's and Abud's marriage is based on a complex pattern of images and conceptions, some symbolic, some materialistic, which allows for different interpretations. Although he has the right of supremacy as the male head of the family, Abud exhibits other attributes which are traditionally considered feminine. In accordance with the traditional feminine unworldliness, he seems to be completely untouched by the artificiality of civilization which governs the behaviour of most of the other characters. He eschews consumerism and the emptiness of social and political competition. He does not bear a grudge against Dolly despite her cruel rejection of him. He gets his satisfaction from producing and reproducing life as a gardener. In fact, he appreciates the life-giving quality in the abstract, which explains his joy at the newly born baby. This life-giving quality has a feminine connotation, being closely connected with child-birth. Besides, the propagative principle, which takes possession of Abud, is affiliated with the image of Mother Earth, which was in force until the Industrial Revolution. The vitalized female value which underlay the universe implied an organic relationship between its elements, including human beings. The organic principle assumed there were connections between all living things, and required both male and female principles to operate harmoniously within the forces of nature. Once there was a move to the mechanistic model, the male became the owner and controller of procreation, along with owning other natural elements.

Both *The Marrying of Ann Leete* and *Waste* uncover the harmful effect of the mechanistic model which lies under the surface in politics and sexual relationships. The prevalence of this model is symptomatic of a civilization that has happened at an unnatural speed, which is the mechanistic speed of technology. Yet *The Marrying of Ann Leete* differs from *Waste* in that it offers alternatives. One way of doing this is to draw on history, revealing in the figure of Abud, the eternal life generator, the image of Mother Earth, and the organic model imbuing it. This image prevailed before the Industrial Revolution. A harmony-orientated principle underlying the earth implied cooperative relations between things based on operational harmony. It thus excluded the metaphor of dualism and contention. This metaphor has prevailed in the universe, including the human community, since the Industrial Revolution.

In addition to overthrowing the atomic model, there are other ways in which traditional sexual dualities are modified in Ann's and Abud's union. By the sudden movement of the middle-class woman to the working-man's cottage, public and private are transformed in one rapid swoop. In the working-class milieu woman participates in maintaining the household in partial parity. Husband and wife both do menial work. Therefore, while Abud tends gardens for housekeeping money, Ann sweeps the cottage floor, prepares dinner, and bears children. This is real, comparatively well-defined work for which she is rewarded with a form of significance. In the working-class marriage strict gender roles are, to a certain extent, ameliorated, not the least because both parties are confined to similar roles, both of which are of the service nature. In the Carp home, on the other hand, Ann's job would be supervising the servants who would be performing most of domestic chores for her. Her part of the work would have no definite

significance and would be easily dispensable. Furthermore, she and her mothering role would be secondary to her husband's political career, and the case of Sarah is a testimony to this. Subsequently both Ann and her maternity would be sacrificed for a political career designed to further patriarchal interest.

The change occurring in the conceptions of public and private in addition to the break in the class structure that results from the play's major cross-marriage are inevitably accompanied by an alteration in other dependent metaphors like active/passive, rational/ irrational dualities. It is Ann who proposes to Abud, reversing the active/passive law that governs sexual relationships. The rebellious upper-class woman chooses the gardener mainly because he has body, as opposed to mind, connotations, namely a healthy physique and life-giving qualities. Actually, Ann's image has masculine ramifications like mind/public, whilst Abud has feminine connotations like private/body. He dictates the rhythm of everyday routine, its tasks and chores: "Four o'clock's the hour for getting up. . . . Breakfast quickly . . . and I take my dinner with me" (p.81).

She nonetheless defines the deeper and more socially and politically significant aspects of their marriage. She prescribes its philosophy and purpose, stretching her interest beyond the immediate private circumstances to a wider, more public scope. For instance the self-realizing young woman rejects the idea of traditional role playing in a sexual relationship: "We're not to play such games at love" (p.81). She also makes it clear that she does not want to be treated as a lover but as a mother, because the aim of her and Abud's coupling, she decides, should be primarily procreation and the renewal of

life. This is one of the points that Ann emphasizes in the early stage of her marriage: "Papa . . . I said . . . we've all been in too great a hurry getting civilised. False dawn. I mean to go back" (p.82).

If Ann seems to be driven by the Life Force it is not entirely in the eugenics' fashion. Unlike Shaw's heroines Candida and Ann Whitefield, motherhood *per se* is not Ann Leete's ultimate end. She looks at procreation partly as a means to the renewal of the human race, the renewal that might bring with it a change in its moral nature. Ann's brand of evolution, though, rejects the Darwinian theory which owes allegiance to traditional moral philosophy. The notion that evolutionary development has proceeded by the mindless mechanism of the survival of the fittest could have never been part of Ann's philosophy. This is because this "new woman" genius refuses the implied denial of women's worth, as well as the lack of moral purpose in this doctrine, which contradicts the main aim of her and Abud's marriage. The main aim of this marriage is not only the renewal of the human race, but also, and equally important, the revision of its system of ethics. The revival should happen in a society which has modified the crudity of sexual symbiosis, and that of class distinction.

Ann's well-defined and articulated philosophy, which is mostly a traditional male prerogative, does not mean that she is an instrument through which Barker expresses his own opinions about evolution. Her politicized principles are appropriate to her character for she has inherited the Leetes' passion for politics. Besides, she possesses the qualities of the "new woman" who constantly demands to be acquainted with the knowledge that traditionally belongs to the public world. This rebellious female who wants a "new

world,” according to her brother George, expresses her wish to be allowed to learn about politics and to have intellectual discourses with people: “I want to take people mentally,” she maintains (p.59).

### **The Female Portrait**

Considered from a certain angle, Ann Leete can be said to tower above Barker’s other two female self-realizers, Alice Maitland and Miss Yates. Her traits are closer to that integral oneness that constitutes the truly emancipated woman. Whilst Alice Maitland challenges the sexual symbiosis of active/passive by insisting on managing her own money, and by her general attitude which implies industriousness and strength of mind, her opposition to this sexual duality is not discussed in relation to her sexuality. This matter undermines, to a certain degree, the wholeness of her female identity. In Alice’s figure Barker subdues the interaction between the sexual self and the social self, whilst in Miss Yates’s figure he highlights it.

Nevertheless, both Miss Yates and Alice Maitland are distanced from a key conception that has a significant impact on the theme of moral transformation and its relation to gender identity, especially that of the female. This is the notion of the maturing young person as an epitome of morally full-fledged humanity. In *The Madras House* and *The Voysey Inheritance* this role is granted to a male figure which, at worst, takes from the strength of Alice Maitland’s and Miss Yates’s emancipation. To a limited degree, something of the traditional female characteristics of the “other” lingers still in

the two women's images. Contrary to these two moral catalysts, Ann Leete is saved from the residues of orthodox female "otherness" by being allowed to represent morally maturing humanity, and therefore being placed nearer to the centre of society. By thus elevating Ann to the state of positive norm, as opposed to that of negative other, Barker not only breaks with the dramatic traditions of his own age, but with that of earlier and later days.

Plays as distant from each other in the time of their writing as the morality play *Everyman* (late 15<sup>th</sup> century) and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952), share an identical tendency to attach little importance to women, exiling them from essential humanity. Both plays, which deal with the human condition in allegorical terms, portray humanity as essentially masculine. In *Everyman* the individual of the title is representative of all men, who, in turn, embody the meaning of mankind. Meanwhile, all the characters in *Waiting for Godot* are males. These characters compose the essence of humanity. In *The Marrying of Ann Leete*, however, this essence is represented by a woman. She is society "individualised, self-conscious and responsible." This phrase which Margery Morgan uses to describe a Barkeresque male character, Edward Voysey, applies with equal accuracy to a Barkeresque female character, Ann Leete (15).

Barker deals with gender issues with the sort of insight that shows him to be ahead of his time. A great many of the issues which he has raised in his plays can be linked to the major lines of thought that have occupied many latter day feminist thinkers. One of the most powerful of these lines of thought is the exploration of the effect of sex segregation and the polarization of sexual formulation on society. Furthermore, he

highlights the fact that these two issues are mutually dependent on the issue of reproduction. Ann Leete's thinking, for instance, links an improved reproductive environment with the improvement of gender identity, sexual relationships, and ultimately, the morality of the nation. In addition, Barker discusses the harmful effect of the mechanistic model which underlies sexual, political, and economic formulations.

Barker also explores women's position within the changing ethical and sexual structure. In *Waste* he represents the plight of women largely through the figure of Amy. The woman is destroyed mainly because she is a traditional female living in an orthodox male society. This society imposes the role of mothering on her, refusing to acknowledge that she might have any significance apart from her reproductive role. Society's contempt of Amy is reflected in the other characters' estimation of her, which is frequently unfavourable. The contempt springs from the sacrificed woman's obvious frivolity and insipidity that is part of her traditional sexual identity, which is prescribed for her by the patriarchal society. Ironically, this society disdains Amy for having the very qualities it recommends.

*The Voysey Inheritance*, *The Madras House* and *The Marrying of Ann Leete* are concerned with women's alienation in their gender roles, but these plays differ from *Waste* in that they offer substitutes. Miss Yates, Ann Leete and Alice Maitland are, in many ways, liberated from gender indoctrination. They also contribute to establishing a new moral order in different degrees and from different positions. Barker frees Ann and Miss Yates from biological determination by adulterating their procreative roles with other dimensions, like the desire to realize the self through exploring one's sexuality

(Miss Yates), and the political interest in a more ethically sound evolutionary process (Ann Leete). Barker centralizes women by allowing Ann Leete to represent humanity.



## CHAPTER 4

### NOTES

1. Harley Granville Barker, *Waste, Plays by Harley Granville Barker*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) p. 184. All quotations from *Waste, The Voysey Inheritance* and *The Marrying of Ann Leete* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text. A caveat: Barker's dialogue is full of pauses which are, in the written texts of his plays, indicated by two periods. Hence, confusion might arise between the full stops which are present in an original version of a quoted Barkeresque material and the periods which are added to this material to indicate ellipsis. To avoid such misunderstanding, it should be emphasized that ellipsis in this thesis is always indicated by more than two periods, while Barker's interrupting full stops are invariably two.

2. See note 64 in the chapter "Theatre and Society" above.

3. Jan McDonald, "New Women in the New Drama," *New Theatre Quarterly*, VI. 21 (1990) p. 34.

4. See the chapter "Theatre and Society" above, pp. 85-86.

5. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p. 88.

6. Ian Clarke, *Edwardian Drama: A Critical Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) p.82.

7. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982; London: Harvard UP, 1993). Gilligan discusses the difference between men's and women's morals throughout *In a Different Voice*.
8. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (1970; London: Virago Press, 1977) p.362-363.
9. Harley Granville Barker, *The Madras House: A Comedy in Four Acts* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977) p. 163. All quotations from *The Madras House* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
10. See the chapter "Theatre and Society" above, pp. 102-104
11. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (1990; London: Vintage, 1991) p.10.
12. Wolf, p.14.
13. Wolf, pp.179-180.
14. Wolf, p.13.
15. Margery Morgan, M., *A Drama of Political Man: A Study in the Plays of Harley Granville Barker* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961) p. 100.

## CHAPTER 5

### GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Shaw, like Barker, criticizes the way in which society organizes the relationship between the sexes, examining the dialectic relationship between this issue and the ethical system. He also exposes the harmful effect of traditional gender relations, orthodox morality, and the mechanistic metaphor which underlies these issues on individuals and society. Nevertheless, Shaw differs from the rest of the "new dramatists" in that his politically reassuring attitude is strangely and uniquely coupled with absurdism. Shaw's belief in the relativity of all truths is, much more than the rest of the "new dramatists," central to his philosophy. It outweighs his belief in any other doctrine. This mental attitude is expedient for investigating traditional sexual relationships because this issue has been long embedded in social consciousness and taken for granted as the "natural way of doing things" that it needs a penetrating intellect to plumb its depths. It demands a vision that discerns a side of reality that has been neglected for so long that it is glossed over and concealed from all but itself.

Shaw's view of the relativity of all truths in general, and of gender verities in particular, is reflected both in the form and content of his plays. In both aspects, there is a heightened sense of play, the habit which Margery Morgan calls "gaiety of mind," and considers the greatest and most characteristically Shavian virtue (1). One important aspect of the distinctiveness of Shaw's technique is that he frequently uses traditional

theatrical formulas, like pantomime, melodrama, and even the well-made play against which he is in fundamental rebellion. Shaw capitalizes on the mechanical aspects of these techniques, with their habitual expectations, to carry his shock tactics to its maximum effect. By adding unusual conceptions and stylistic twists to a benumbingly routine formula, he manages to startle the audience into perceiving a different version of reality that contradicts, or at least, distances, accepted beliefs. Shaw uses theatrical methods in this fashion to iconoclastically overthrow old, worn out doctrines. In *Mrs Warren's Profession* he calls into question the polarization of the public and private realms by exposing the struggle of a young woman, Vivie Warren, with social forces. Vivie's main transgression is that she conceives her self in public terms, defining it as purely professional. Social agencies try to drag her into experiences that are defined and constrained by the rules of the private realm. These are the experiences of the wife and the daughter. The young protagonist's conflict with the social forces that reinforce the public/private cleavage is contained within a broader discord, which is equally disruptive of this cleavage. This is the contention of Vivie's mother, a former prostitute, with established moral conventions.

The image of Mrs Warren, Vivie's mother, is a rebuttal of both social norms and the "woman with a past" tradition of the mainstream theatre. The Shavian fallen woman's attitude to her own moral transgression is a far remove from that of Mrs. Dane or Agnes Ebbsmith, for instance. These well-made play offenders eventually show humble repentance. As a result, they withdraw further into the fringes of society. In contrast, Mrs Warren outspokenly demands social recognition and centrality. She claims her right to respectability on the basis that her career--she is at present a manageress of

several brothels--should be viewed in economic and professional terms appropriate to its nature as a trade. She contends with the traditional moral authority which insists on assessing her and her profession against an ideal which is based on a physical/moral system of values that belong exclusively to the private realm. This is the ideal of female virtue against which most women's activities are traditionally measured.

The rebellion of Vivie and her mother against the restraining function of the traditional public/private antithesis on the thematic level is reinforced by the wild forms that reflect a distorted vision of the traditional family relationships which are the mainstay of this antithesis. The form unites the well-made play elements with the aspects of farce. The coincidences and surprises of the first are accelerated by the unrestrained rhythm of the second. The several disclosures that result from this theatrically unravelling technique upset conventional orthodox sensibilities and shock them. We discover that there are more skeletons in the cupboard than a self-esteeming harlot. The pattern of blood relations is confused, so that parents fail to recognize their offspring, and offspring their parents. Kinsmen are indistinguishable from lovers. Crofts and Frank are both Vivie's suitors and suspected father and brother respectively.

It is a measure of Shavian uniqueness that the relativist-absurdist part of his doctrines which is embodied in his unrestrained technique, is not allowed to force its inherent cynicism and despair on the overall effect of his drama. The dramatist exercises a degree of intellectual and artistic control strong enough to keep the positive part of his doctrines uppermost. One of the ways in which Shaw achieves this is by temporarily abandoning the theatrical device of a well-made plot with mechanically forceful,

apparently narrative, sometimes farcical, concerns, in favour of a dramatized form of philosophical discourse. The debaters reason out the economic, social, and moral terms of the plays. Even if they fail to reach an absolute solution, the debaters' attempt at rationalizing matters with the communicativeness, clarity, and eloquence of people of learning is in itself somehow a constructive element in Shavian drama that enhances its positiveness. In *Man and Superman* the Statue says to Juan in the exceptionally lengthy philosophical debate which occurs in an imaginary paranormal place: "Not that I see any prospect of your coming to any point in particular, Juan. Still, since in this place, instead of merely killing time we have to kill eternity . . ." (2).

It all has something to do with Shaw's doctrine of creative evolution, which is a more socially responsible version of the Darwinian vision of how the world develops; for the digging up of a positive core from certain supposedly mechanical aspects of the universe is a constant Shavian impulse found in both the dramatic and non-dramatic aspects of his intellectual output. A significant aspect of Shaw's philosophy is his standpoint on the question of evolution. The dramatist agrees with Darwin that change occurs by means of a vital selective energy which aspires to a higher level of existence. Meanwhile he rejects the aspect of the Darwinian theory which assumes that the selective energy determines the course of evolution by choosing the person who is more able to stand against external circumstances and win. According to Shaw, the discriminating force lies within the organism and change springs from this organism's inner want, from an overwhelming desire to acquire certain circumstances. Shaw finds the notion of the survival of the fittest hideous and a cause for despair. The concept of development as a chance preservation of whatever properties enabled a being to best compete for space,

food and water, is imbued with the typical masculine metaphor of mechanism, control and conflict. The conception of the survival of the fittest deprives life of one of the most significant hopes that make it tolerable. This is the vision of the universe as governed by what Gilligan terms the feminine principle of network rather than the masculine principle of hierarchy (3).

The Darwinian theory assumes that individuals survive through their ability to subdue nature. Meanwhile, Shaw's thesis supposes that the characteristic mode of fruitful adaptation is the individual's wish to change himself so that he can live harmoniously with the universe, free from empty and violent conflict with it. In *Man and Superman* Don Juan says: "I sing, not arms and the hero, but the philosophic man: he who seeks in contemplation to discover the inner will of the world . . ." (p.379). By regulating himself so that he corresponds to the "inner will of the world," man gradually and organically develops the characteristics that he needs for survival by force of his inner faith alone. Shaw heartily summarizes his philosophy about evolution and how acquisitions are acquired in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*:

You are alive; and you want to be more alive. You want an extension of consciousness and of power. You want, consequently, additional organs, or additional uses of your existing organs: that is, additional habits. You get them because you want them badly enough to keep trying for them until they come. . . . and the habit is formed (4).

Shaw believes that human characteristics alone are acquired through exercising human will; these characteristics are then stored in the unconscious and passed on to the next generation through the human "unconscious memory." Human characteristics are then fatalistically decided by outside circumstances. This supposition has a radical potential for feminism. It implies that mental and behavioural sexual characteristics are, like other human traits, socially constructed and not, as traditional moralists would have us believe, as immutable as one of nature's laws.

Nancy Chodorow explains sexual characteristics and sexual differences in a manner very similar to Shaw's views on how characteristics are acquired. She concedes that gender identity is mostly established in the oblivious phase of the child's life, when the child is around three years old. Granted that it is mostly women alone who are responsible for raising children of both sexes until they are three, the private forces that govern the shaping of gender identity are different for both males and females. The formation of women's gender identity occurs in a background of uninterrupted relationship. The female parent and the female child experience themselves as extensions of each other. This consistent relationship helps to inject the process of identity formation in the latter with the former's main role: mothering. Daughters then inherit productive functions from their mothers.

The natures of the roles that are assigned to the sexes by society dictate their abilities and thus decide their gender qualities. Prominent among female gender attributes is maternity. As such, relational matters are the most central and sustained elements in women's experience. It is primarily the confinement of women to the role of mothering



that results in their feeling of being attached to the world. Chodorow associates traditional female traits like passivity and lack of clearly defined social identity to their imprisonment in the mothering role. She perceives women's expressive abilities, especially those related to maternity, with a negative sense of an absence of self-definition. The job of mothering entails passive, futile qualities that are bound to infect women's characters and cancel their individuality. "Women's role in the home and primary definition in social reproductive, sex-gender terms are characterized by particularism, concern with affective goals and ties, and a diffuse, unbounded quality" Chodorow maintains (5).

By contrast, the mother-son relationship is discontinued as both parties experience themselves as separate from each other. The male child then directs himself to roles other than his mother's nurturing one. He identifies himself with roles that have more public significance and so acquires a more tangible sexual and social identity. "Masculine occupational roles and men's primary definition in the sphere of production are universalistically defined and recruited, and are less likely to involve affective considerations. This nonrelational, economic and political definition informs the rest of their lives" (6). Thus, according to Chodorow, both the mothering and the non-mothering roles with their attendant gender characteristics are transformed to the next generation by the workings of a process of origination and reorigination, which is very similar to Shaw's "unconscious memory." "The production of feminine personalities oriented toward relational issues and masculine personalities defined in terms of categorical ties and the repression of relation fits [gender] roles and contributes to their reproduction" (7).

The role of “creative evolution” in deciding sexual identity is most strongly embodied in the figure of Candida Morell, arguably the most powerful Shavian mother figure. The maternal quality stands out most in her character, despite this character’s immense complexity. One strong evidence to the fact that Shaw has intended Candida to be a concentrated representation of motherliness is his linking of his protagonist’s figure with that of the ultimate mother of humanity, Madonna. The connection is effected indirectly through the Shavian creation’s “spiritual resemblance” to the portrait of the female holy figure positioned over the Morell’s grate. The association between Candida and the eternal conveyer of mothering, then, resides in the internality of the play, rather than its externality. This is an indication that Shaw wants the mothering quality to be latent in the subliminal existence of the matriarch, “unselfconsciously acted” (8). The dramatist is suggesting here that the trait of mothering, as a determinant of sexual identity á la Chodorow, is, like other human characteristics, acquired and passed on via the “unconscious.”

Shaw’s model of evolution is based on the notion of organic development as counter to Darwin’s atomic evolution. This is another way in which the dramatist contributes to feminism, since reclaiming the organic metaphor as opposed to the atomic is central to this movement’s reasoning. The dramatist believes that the human being and the earth should unite to achieve a higher moral and aesthetic purpose. Humans are moral mediators through which serviceable ethical principles are introduced into the universe. This is why the Shavian doctrine acknowledges the fact that creative evolution does not work only in the physical world, it operates in the realm of the mind too. The vision of this human organ gradually refining itself by the force of its own will is a somewhat apt

angle from which to consider Shaw's undramatic verbosity. His lengthy debates, which often break the flow of a characteristically playful intellectual and stylistic hyperbole, are, in some ways, deliberate and purposeful. Their ultimate end is not so much arriving at an absolute truth as embodying a human intellect trying to talk itself into better sense. As Don Juan, the loquacious Shavian philosopher-talker, says in the hell scene of *Man and Superman*: My "brain is the organ by which Nature strives to understand itself" (p.387).

Shaw's iconoclastic overthrow of accepted formulas and the deep sense of social responsibility which prompts it materialize partly through the image of the rebellious, self-realizing, protagonists whom he frequently represents on the stage. The protagonists reject the traditional innate aspects of their environment. In the plays discussed in this chapter, the young men and women in revolt reject the economical, political, and social, aspects of their environment, particularly as these issues "map on" to sexual antitheses: private/ public, passive/ active, rational/irrational and their ramifications. As a result of their rebellion, they either run away from materialistic and emotional entanglements with the rejected world, or stay and bravely face the struggle for better conditions. In *Candida* and *Mrs Warren's Profession* the invalidated material conditions are both corrupt capitalist relations and flawed family ties. The conditions are mutually dependent, and their joint function is supported by an underlying structure of sexual metaphors which places male and female values at opposite poles. In both plays, the protagonists flee from their environment to abstract realms of their own.

Candida (1895)

The focal point in *Candida* is Eugene Marchbanks's maturation. His clumsy twisting and turning to find himself sets in motion the actions and reactions of the play. Yet the repercussion of the forces he sets in motion is that he does find himself. Eugene has been disregarded and deeply humiliated by his parents, enveloped in their admiration for his trendy sisters and brothers. As a result of this neglect Eugene is emotionally starved. Being the poet he is, Eugene turns this childhood pattern of emotional deprivation towards his own need for educated self-realization. If we consider that Candida and Morell are surrogate parents to him, then his understanding of the nature of their marriage is a major factor in his maturation. A major facet of his understanding is centered on the sexual dualities which organize the relationship between husband and wife. Consequently, Eugene pesters the couple and their associates to clarify for him the original behind the false, the reality behind the simulated. Sometimes Eugene urges Proserpine, Morell's secretary, whom he suspects of being in love with her boss, to tell him whether it is "really and truly possible for a woman to love him [Morell]" (p.136). At other times, he insists that Morell himself uncover for him his original self.

**MARCHBANKS:** I dont mean the Reverend James Mavor Morell, moralist and windbag. I mean the real man that the Reverend James must have hidden somewhere inside his black coat . . . (p.146).

For a while Eugene allows himself to be caught in the illusion that Candida, the eternal love-giver, provides the substitute for the love he missed in childhood. He is moved by Candida's apparently inexhaustible ability to administer warmth and care. Eugene mistakes the kind of sentiment that Candida inspires for the kind of love he desires. For Eugene, love is the ability to see another in the raw state, stripped of sexual and social roles. The key words for Eugene's type of love are originality and reciprocity. He thrashes about clumsily, demanding that people tell him what they think. In a moment of highly charged emotion (Act III) Eugene tells Candida: "I never think or feel Mrs Morell: it is always Candida." Calling his female idol by her first name is a step Eugene takes towards communicating with the real person behind the perfect wife and mother (p.145).

Despite his admiration for Candida, Eugene senses that things are not what they seem, words may hide more than they reveal. What people say may be different from what they think, and nothing that is said is indisputable. Eugene, like his creator, possesses an acute awareness of the relativity of all truths. Morell's speech is a perfect example of the insincerity of human utterances. It is basically a beautifully patterned fabric of words, rather than an efficient medium of communication. Its language is that of traditional church ceremonies, mostly a game of words. The following discourse particularly repulses Eugene:

**MORELL:** There are so many things to make us doubt, if once we let our understanding be troubled. Even at home, we sit as if in camp, encompassed by a hostile army of doubts. Will you play the traitor and let them in on me? (p.133).

The dramatic tension in the play is a subcurrent which arises from the conflict of people's thoughts and motives. This technique, which makes use of Freud's theory of the unconscious, brings into focus the internality as well as the externality of the characters and their actions. This is a more naturalistic and realistic representation than the one-dimensional surface similitude of the well-made play. The metaphors which explain the forces at work in the Morells' marriage are a major part of the subtext of the play. The way in which traditional ideals of morality consider this marriage is embodied in Morell's own attitude to it. The parson thinks of himself as the masculine/solid part of the marital symbiosis. Consequently, his wife is the soft/feminine part of this symbiosis. He is the essential, she is the variable; he is the intellect, she is the emotions; he is the public, she is the private. To Morell's mind there are clearly defined and fixed boundaries between his and his wife's moral constructs.

In the climax of the play's action, the confrontation, when Candida makes her choice between Morell and Marchbanks, Morell reveals the metaphors which determine the way in which he perceives his marriage: solidness versus softness. In his bid to win Candida, Morell announces: "I have nothing to offer you but my strength for your defence, my honesty for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity" (p.150). As far as Morell is concerned Candida's virtues—gentleness, purity, and innocence—are the ones required in a woman, who is essentially a helpmate and the provider, not necessarily receiver, of happiness. These soft qualities can only be sustained if they are protected from the roughening influences of the more important activities in the world, the activities that really matter.

On the surface, Candida's and Morell's union represents the successful marriage as prescribed by the established moral order. Morell is the superior male whose superiority rests on his instrumentality, work, leadership, and rationality. He is influential in the public sphere. Candida is pretty, dependent, and an efficient administrator of love and caring. Yet one of the most profound truths of the play is the fact that Candida and Morell are by no means the perfect representatives of diametrically opposed values. Their household might seem to be poised on a fine balance of complementary values, yet this is only seemingly so. For the Morells are first and foremost business people. They show the world what it pleases it to see, indeed; they sell themselves very well.

Nevertheless, Morell is much less aware of this fact than his wife. In the confrontation scene, Candida reveals to Morell that their values are almost the reverse of the values they represent to the world. In reality, it is she—Candida—who possesses the strong, intellectual mind, being the sole manager of the household budget. Generally it is hers and not Morell's, strength that supports the Morell household. The speech which Candida makes before announcing her choice, reveals that her husband is actually the soft and dependent party in their marriage.

CANDIDA (to Eugene): Ask me what it costs to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his children all in one. Ask Prossy and Maria how troublesome the house is even when we have no visitors to help us to slice the onions. Ask the tradesmen who want to worry James and spoil his beautiful sermons who it is that puts them off. When there is money to give, he gives it: when there is money to refuse, I refuse it. I build a castle of comfort and

indulgence and love for him, and stand sentinel always to keep little vulgar cares out (p.151).

Morell finds this revelation extremely disconcerting, stirring his deeply ingrained fear of being identified with the other sex.

The process of the deconstruction of Morell's mind begins earlier in the play when Candida confronts her husband with the truth that the main factor which contributes to his success as a public orator resides in qualities which have feminine, and not masculine, connotations. One of his main attractions is his physical charm and his enthusiasm, and not the intellectual context of his speech. Physical charm and enthusiasm imply the metaphors of body and emotions which are associated with the feminine. Morell is shocked by this revelation which he calls "soul-destroying cynicism" (p.141). The similarity between Morell's role and that of a woman is more directly projected in the following dialogue:

MARCHBANKS: Where would you have me spend my moments, if not on the summits?

MORELL: In the scullery, slicing onions and filling lamps.

MARCHBANKS: Or in the pulpit, scrubbing cheap earthenware souls? (p.146).

Although both Candida and Morell are successful in assuming the gender roles that are expected of them, they differ in the degree of alienation they experience in these roles. By virtue of his intensely masculine enculturation, Morell's distance from reality is



almost unbridgeable. Candida, on the other hand, is pragmatic when it comes to the real forces at work in their marriage. But Candida's proximity to herself is limited. She is able to grasp how their marriage works and no further. Her self-awareness does not go deeper; it does not reach Marchbanks's level of self-realization. At one point, Marchbanks comes to realize Candida's alienation in her role as a carer. He does so in the episode when Candida, yet again, confronts Morell with some unpleasant facet of his moral make-up. Totally inattentive to Morell's resultant discomposure, Candida enjoys what is to her a theoretical situation. She thus fails to relate herself to the actual events. Eugene considers Candida's behaviour cruel. He tells her: "I shudder when you torture him and laugh" (p.142).

Candida's and Mr Voysey's stances have a great deal in common. Mr Voysey jettisons the traditional judicial system, seeing it as a bogus justification for keeping property in the hands of the ruling class. For Mr Voysey, money belongs to the financially fitter. Though Mr Voysey does not believe in the traditional moral definition of justice, he is not liberated from his gender role. The hierarchical mode of thinking to which he rigidly adheres is part of the moral socialization of the male. For Candida, the highly acclaimed moral value of women's "virtue" is designed to regulate sexual relationships, particularly women's behaviour within these relationships. This system of control has been engineered to ensure that a woman is kept in the unquestionable possession of a man. To Morell she admits that she is prepared to give Eugene her so-called "virtue" with both hands should he require it (p.141).

Nevertheless, Candida's readiness to administer love freely is not the kind that springs from the authentic female self. Indeed, it is not the positive female attribute that Eugene imagines it to be. Candida's kind of love, as everything else, is very much the product of a masculine capitalist society. She has internalized the capitalist ethos of commercial gain and hierarchy and applied it in managing her main capital as a female: the ability to administer love. If Mr Voysey adheres to the hierarchy of efficiency, Candida believes in the hierarchy of needs. She finds that the best place to invest her love is the person who needs it most. In the auction episode, for example, Candida offers her self to the "weaker of the two" (p.151).

On the evidence of the play, Morell's and Candida's lives are built on commercialism. They are "almost archetypes of the vast majority of upper middle class humanity" (9). They have secured a firm place in the world; they have established a "home" and this is the sacred child of capitalism and patriarchy. The fact that Morell and Candida are made of the stuff that is required for the established order's conception of "home" is evident in their relationship with the domicile of their childhood. Even when they were young, they were both indispensable in their parents' homes. Burgess, Candida's father, tells her: "The ouse aint worth livin in since you left it, Candy" (p.130). Candida tells of the way Morell's pictures, which all symbolize his leadership abilities, dominate his childhood abode: "James as a baby! the most wonderful of all babies. James holding his first school prize, won at the ripe age of eight! James as the captain of his eleven! James in his first frock coat!" (p.151).

The main asset possessed by Candida and Morell is their ability to comply with gender requirements. Thus they gain their commercial end. Other unfortunate people who are portrayed as somehow "unhoused" are people who are unable to assimilate the appropriate gender role, namely Eugene and Proserpine. Both are either physically or spiritually homeless. Proserpine's spiritual homelessness is the inevitable result of her being a spinster. Eugene is "homeless" on almost all levels. He was found by Morell sleeping on the Embankment, an unmistakable case of actual and symbolic "homelessness." In his childhood abode Eugene is disregarded by his parents, thus he is left in a state of "spiritual homelessness." In the Morell residence the young poet eternally vacillates between the state of "homelessness" and the state of "non-homelessness." While Eugene is always verbally reassured of his being a member of the family, he is often treated as a stranger. When Candida comes back home and she and her husband desire a moment alone, Eugene is asked to take a stroll in the park. Thus, he is not allowed to stay in the house, and at the same time he is not allowed to wander far. The park symbolizes a no-man's land for Eugene (p.131).

The matter of Eugene's and Proserpine's "homelessness" is related to the play's representation of their gender identity. They are portrayed as the underprivileged caste, though not underprivileged on economic grounds. Eugene is the grandson of an earl, and Proserpine is a professional woman with a considerable earning capacity. The main source of Eugene's and Proserpine's exploitation is that neither of them corresponds to the required sexual ideal of the time. The metaphors which underlie their codes of behaviour are at odds with their biological gender. Proserpine is frequently described as "coarsegrained" and "tactless." Coarseness is a metaphor that contradicts the softness of

femininity. “Frankness” and “straightforwardness” in a woman confuse the categories of “thingness” and “passivity” which are traditionally associated with the female sex. A passive “thing” survives through the approval of others, and not through confrontation with them.

For this reason Proserpine is considered a second-class female. Proserpine realizes, and rightly realizes, that Lexy Mill considers her “dowdy and second rate” (p.126). She herself can see that there is a measure of injustice in such a classification. Stripped of all the illusion of the female stereotype, Candida is not actually more beautiful than Proserpine. On the play’s evidence, Proserpine’s assertion that Candida’s eyes “are not a bit better than” hers rings true (p.126). Marchbanks is described as effeminate. The latter is an attribute much abhorred in the late Victorian era. “Much of the unease with [Oscar] Wilde’s appearance and behaviour, before the trials, centred upon ‘effeminacy’” (10).

Both Proserpine and Eugene are love-starved because of their failure to play their assigned gender roles. This is the dramatist’s cry against a cultural condition he finds highly unfair. This condition was reinforced after the Industrial Revolution and by the gradual success of the Women’s Movement. It is a social control system which produces a version of love and fecundity mostly dependent on a conception of beauty which is synthetically constructed. In *The Beauty Myth*, Naomi Wolf expresses ideas very much in common with those of Shaw. She exposes the methods by which contemporary Western civilization organizes the relationship between the sexes. These methods have their roots in the period that immediately followed the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, Wolf

explores the effect of the “cultural conspiracy” which controls the activity of love, mainly with regard to women’s situations. She states her belief that advocates of traditional morality, the manufacturers of the “beauty myth,” aim to control women’s bodies and their productive capacities. They do so by subjecting this capacity to a prescribed version of beauty—or the “beauty myth.” Wolf says:

“Beauty” is not universal or changeless, though the West pretends that all ideals of female beauty stem from one Platonic Ideal Woman. . . . Nor is “beauty” a function of evolution: Its ideals change at a pace far more rapid than that of the evolution of species, and Charles Darwin was himself unconvinced by his own explanation that “beauty” resulted from a “sexual selection” that deviated from the rule of natural selection.

For Wolf, beauty “is a currency system like the gold standard. Like any economy, it is determined by politics, and in the modern age in the West it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance intact” (11).

The type of culture that both Shaw and Wolf criticize is the one that places love in the hands of such people as Morell and Candida. The traditional social order perceives the relationship between the sexes as a kind of commerce, and one which only the people who can produce themselves in the form of the “currency system” of the day can enjoy. Both Morell and Candida are abundantly endowed with the requirements of the prevailing “currency system” of the times, the late Victorian version of the “beauty myth.” If Candida is the Platonic Ideal Woman, the female stereotype, Morell is the

Platonic Ideal Man, the male stereotype whom Wolf--and most other feminists-- fails to acknowledge. The Morells soon change the love with which they have been favoured into a cheap commercial commodity, which resembles their insipid souls. Eugene calls such figures "[wicked] people." By this he means "people who have no love: therefore they have no shame. They have the power to ask love because they dont need it: they have the power to offer it because they have none to give" (p.135). Morell and Candida are thieves of happiness, theirs and other people's.

Eugene's and Proserpine's exclusion from the mainstream culture, or their "homelessness," is the direct result of their undefined sexual identity. This, in turn, is the result of the polarization of sexual values. Shaw declares in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* that polarized gender formulations are bound to have detrimental effects on society. They result in a considerable number of "surplus" people, who cannot be "housed," and so they remain isolated on the outskirts of society. This surplus of people Shaw calls the Bashkirtseffs, after Marie Bashkirtseff, the painter who was deemed asexual by William Stead for her public exhibition of independence:

Hence arises the idealist illusion that a vocation for domestic management and the care of children is natural to women, and that women who lack them are not women at all, but members of the third, or Bashkirtseff sex. Even if this were true, it is obvious that if the Bashkirtseffs are to be allowed to live, they have a right to suitable institutions just as much as men and women. But it is not true (12).

Eugene and Proserpine, the Bashkirtseffs in the play, are exploited by Morell and Candida—the mainstream sex. Most of their exploitation is carried out in economic terms. We are told that Proserpine earns much less money working for Morell than she would do in a city office; that she, lovelorn and compelled by her adoration for Morell, agrees to serve him regardless. The pull of the “Platonic Ideal Man” is too strong for the susceptible woman whose share of female beauty is considered not sufficient to allow her entrance to the much guarded kingdom of love and fecundity. This pull of the “Ideal Man” the conscientious Candida calls “Prossy’s complaint” (p.140).

Eugene, the other Bashkirtseff, likewise offers to do the difficult part of the household work out of his reverence for Candida. The fact that Eugene and Proserpine are kept in an undefined area outside the public and the private divides of the Morells’ lives contributes to the process of their exploitation. For one thing, their continuous physical presence in the Morell residence facilitates their utilization by the Morells for materialistic ends. The comparison between Morell’s and Burgess’s business methodologies is a motif focused upon in the play. The first point of comparison occurs during the first exchange between the two men. Significantly enough, very early in the play, the point of analogy focuses upon the position of the two men’s employees along the private/public and personal/professional schisms. Upon his entrance Burgess greets Morell thus: “Spoilin your korates as usu’l, James. Good mornin. When I pay a man, an’ ‘is livin depends on me, I keep him in ‘is place.” Morell is quick to point out that: “I always keep my curates in their places as my helpers and comrades. If you get as much work out of your clerks and warehousemen as I do out of my curates, you must be getting rich pretty fast” (p.127).

In the light of Morell's self justification, we find that his business strategy, which eliminates the boundaries between the personal and the impersonal, is more commercially successful than that of Burgess. The social order which Morell represents--he calls this order "Christian socialism"--is becoming effective in the realm of politics and business. Burgess offers tangible evidence of this fact: "You and your crew are getting influential: I can see that" (p.129). This order utilizes methods of social coercion which are more sophisticated than the methods of the previous order to which Burgess belongs. The arrival of the new millennium, with its emphasis on human rights, makes blatant exploitation of the less privileged seem an undesirable act of cruelty. The methods of oppression that are based on public/impersonal pattern of social organization have become less effective. The system of social control that gives absolute formal and institutional power to a petty capitalist boss like Burgess is quickly going out of fashion.

As a consequence of this there arises a need to control the weaker section of society from within. This is achieved through the social engineering of a kind of "private reality" by means of which to colonize their consciousness. Morell's blueprint for the subjection of Proserpine and Eugene is a miniature sample of these methods of control. Morell eradicates the boundaries between the public and the private. He encourages the merging of emotions and business in an intriguing fashion which ensures the subjection of dependants without practising any obvious methods of coercion on them. Thus, the oppression of the likes of Eugene and Proserpine has gone underground. The "scullery" in which Eugene spends a great deal of his time peeling "nasty little onions" is perhaps a metaphoric projection of an underworld type of the operation of methods of social control. Shaw prophesies that the arrival of the new, more democratic millennium will



not eliminate the oppression of the weak. This oppression will simply materialize in another form. Shaw connects power with sexuality as the “weakness” of the “weak” is the result of an illegitimate sexual identity. Naomi Wolf shares with Shaw the belief that an individual’s economic power is tied to his or her sexuality. She also agrees that people with illegitimate gender identity are the ones who are economically exploited in society.

Shaw’s sexually illegitimate people belong to both sexes. Both Proserpine’s and Eugene’s labours are exploited in the Morell establishment. For Shaw both sexes are in danger of failing to assume the gender identity required of them by society, and thus of forfeiting social and economic power. Wolf’s illegitimate people, the weak and the sexual outlaws, however, consist solely of women as a collective social class. She argues throughout *The Beauty Myth* that for the greater part of history women have been seen, and encouraged to see themselves, as secondary, non-mainstream people. This concept can be particularly clearly traced in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Creation story embodied by this tradition asserts that women are made from Adam’s rib. Because of this myth women are encouraged to comprehend themselves as “second-rate, an afterthought”: “Eve’s body is twice removed from the Maker’s hand, imperfect matter born of matter” (13). Wolf shows in figures how women’s labour is being bought for much less wages than men’s labour. This is made possible by the highly resilient, and precarious, public/private workings of the “beauty myth.” This culturally constructed merit-measuring standard subtly infiltrates the consciousness of women making them feel worthless. The workings of the “beauty myth” also restrict women’s entrance to the workplace by forcing them to compete with men in an unnatural manner (14).

Wolf and Shaw both believe that the weak are exploited by obscuring the boundaries between the personal and the impersonal, the public and the private. Morell achieves his Machiavellian merging of business and emotions by keeping his employees and his other dependants in a grey area between the private and the public sides of his family's life. The Morell order uses sexuality as a means of breaking the resistance of its dependants. By devising a socially constructed gender identity this system causes apprehensions about gender roles, which helps to keep the vulnerable section of society tied to a private reality. This private reality alienates people from their gender roles by incarnating them in these roles.

Shaw is constantly reminding us of the falsehood of the foundations on which the Morell household is built. This household, and what it stands for in the eye of mainstream culture, is based on the corrupt exploitation of the weak. Moreover, the Morell-Candida type of formations only survives as part of a malevolent economic and political system. Thus, the Morell domestic establishment is not built on finely balanced and complementary sexual values as the advocates of traditional morality claim. It is built on the exploitation of the uncertainty of sexual values. The elements of masculine and feminine are not organized in a healthy and reciprocal manner. The tumult of sexual values is ordered by means of a hierarchical system through which one of the sexes, and its values, presides over the other. Shaw believes that Candida rules the Morell household by virtue of being in charge of the primary recreational activities. The stringent controls that the matriarch imposes on her dependants are necessary to hold the family structure together in the absence of real love and reciprocity.

The Morell abode, the sacred home of the late Victorian era, stands in an uneasy equilibrium. The first stage direction, which describes the Morells' drawing room, indicates this fact. The drawing-room which is the heart and soul of the Victorian British household—is altogether the room of a “good housekeeper, vanquished, as far as the table is concerned, by an untidy man, but elsewhere mistress of the situation” (p.124). The arrangement of the drawing-room items is symbolic of the fact that the female element of domesticity, “tidiness,” prevails in Victorian home life. “Tidiness,” the feminine element which coheres the structure of family life, is kept by Candida, but with an unmistakable note of unease. The play utilizes some of the conventional theatrical mechanisms of the well-made play, partly in order to expose the sense of disquiet that prevails within the Morell household. It preserves the unity of place, and complies with the rules of the clearly defined, ostensibly happy, ending. Eugene is ultimately expelled from the Morell household and the *status quo* is reinstated. The rigid and highly controlled theatrical framework helps to highlight an eminently unstable content. Apart from the elements of dialogue, action, and dramatic subtext that project a sense of tension in the Morells' family life, the play utilizes physical, somehow farcical, techniques. All the characters, apart from Candida, experience some kind of physical instability. Examples are:

Lexy Mill and Proserpine: They are both drunk and extremely dizzy at one point (p.148).

Burgess: “*He becomes bodily weak, and, with his eyes fixed on Morell in a helpless stare, puts out his hand apprehensively to balance himself, as if the floor had suddenly sloped under him*” (p.128).

Marchbanks: "*Candida starts up violently, but without the smallest embarrassment, laughing at herself. Eugene, capsized by her sudden movement, recovers himself without rising, and sits on the rug . . .*" (p.145).

The disequilibrium that is caused by an artificially built structure of human relationships can amount to physical coercion. This Shavian vision of the family forcefully conjures up Juliet Mitchell's words: "the 'true' woman and the 'true' family are images of peace and plenty: in actuality they may both be sites of violence and despair." In essence everything, love, reciprocity, originality, even the individual's mental and physical stability, are sacrificed for the sake of the preservation of the "home." The preservation of the structure of the family is a vital part of the survival of an unjust political and economic system.

This is the conclusion at which Eugene arrives and which marks his maturity. He thus decides to escape, leaving behind his "happiness." Eugene realizes that the ideal of happiness has always taken material form in traditional domestic groupings. The "home" stands for permanence at the cost of creativity, imagination, and even the stability of the soul. This version of happiness is too cheap and meagre to satisfy a poet like Eugene. Eugene's real "home" is "outside" the Candida-Morell type of human formations:

**MARCHBANKS:** Let me go now. The night outside grows impatient (p.152).

The play ends by the expulsion of the young blood in revolt, and the reinstatement of the *status quo*. It is thus superficially consistent with the well-made

play's ending. The radical potential of the play resides in the feeling of disquiet and dismay that it fosters in us. Much of the aversion to the economical and familial relationship represented in the play is transferred to us through the self-realizing poet's horror at the shabbiness of such social ties.

### Mrs Warren's Profession (1894)

Vivie Warren is, like Eugene, one of Shaw's self-realizing protagonists. For her the reality of a world governed by inauthentic moral values proves too much to endure. The escape to an abstract world of her own—her career in accountancy—seems inevitable since she, as a female, is denied the right to fight. Feminist critics vary in their evaluation of Vivie's character. Jill Davis believes that the character has more in common with the parodies of the "new woman" to be found in the popular media of the period. What little psychology it has does not reflect the authentic female self. For Davis, Vivie's emotional distance from her mother mirrors, in Freudian terms, the author's struggle for male sexual identity. In the light of this, Davis believes that Vivie Warren is a man "pretending to be a woman" (15). Contrary to Davis, Marlie Parker Wasserman sees great Shavian insight in the portrayal of the young protagonist. She attributes what she considers Vivie's "abnormal" behaviour to her impersonal upbringing in a boarding school. She believes that Shaw, like herself (Wasserman), is aware of the role of such upbringing in making Vivie an aggressive young woman, incapable of "normal" human feeling (16).

The elements of masculinity are exaggerated in Vivie's image: her handshake, her detached professional manner, and her business-like outfit are larger than life masculine traits which are partly a feature of the overall theatrical technique, and partly the trademark of the "new woman" as she was fictionalized in cultural products. The bicycle, the chatelaine, and the serious-looking books are but the props necessary for the sensational recreation of the "new woman" by the cultural media. All this dramatized manliness is mainly a detached stylization. Shaw has kept the theatrical virtue of the generalized, rather empty, vision of the "new woman" in the popular media, while filling this image with his own substance. In one respect, Vivie Warren's character is a dramatization of the central element of the playwright's own experience. In another, the character is a representation of the struggle of the self-realizer. But in all aspects of her struggle Vivie exhibits many facets of the authentic female. It is usual to dwell upon Vivie's obvious failings and her "abnormal feeling." It is equally easy to overlook the appropriateness of her scorn for what passes as "normal human feeling." It is quite plausible that Vivie's non-standard behaviour is the result of her institutional upbringing. Nevertheless, this upbringing and the type of person it has produced are not necessarily bad. Early in the play Vivie explains to Praed the key elements which shaped her formative years:

VIVIE: I hardly know my mother. Since I was a child I have lived in England, at school or college, or with people paid to take charge of me. I have been boarded out all my life. . . . I don't complain: it's been very pleasant; for people have been very good to me; and there has always been plenty of money to make things smooth (p.64).

Vivie's childhood experience is analogous to that of Shaw whose mother put her designs before her love for her children. Shaw had no priority in her limited affections or her day-to-day affairs. "The result of this general neglect was that Shaw needed to discover the workings of society. Because he did not absorb any of the usual bogus explanations (moral, political and customary) he was compelled to find certain 'true' explanations" (17).

The result of Vivie's impersonal upbringing is both a heightened sense of individuation and a tendency to refuse received notions. Most of the cause and effect structure in the play arises from Vivie's resistance to the constant attempt of the other major characters—except Praed—at invading her well-defined space. Underneath the major dramatic conflict, the sexual duality active/passive is in full operation. The characters' assumption is that Vivie, as a female, cannot, should not be actively involved in defining her own boundaries of the self. She herself is defined by her ability to submerge herself in others. It is the characters' will, and not Vivie's, that ought to determine the shape of her experience. The characters' main objection to Vivie's lifestyle is the fact that she defines herself in clear-cut terms, couched in metaphors which belong to the public and masculine world: she is a business woman. Even Praed, the compassionate artist, expresses indignation at what he sees as too coarse a self-definition for a woman. Praed's response to Vivie's statement that she excludes romance and the notions of beauty from her life is so strongly indignant as to verge on the clownish:

PRAED: I dont believe it. I am an artist; and I cant believe it: I refuse to believe it (p.63).

Each one of the invading characters endeavours to introduce elements of the private sphere into Vivie's life in an attempt to draw her into their orbit, merging her hitherto separate entity in theirs. Mrs Warren demands a mother-daughter relationship from the protagonist, while Frank and Crofts seek marital bonds. Vivie is deeply conscious of the invading characters' unspoken wish to conquer her. The argument that ensues from the conflict between Vivie and her imposing associates is redolent with the metaphor of "forcible entry":

MRS WARREN [to Vivie]: I can enter into your feelings . . . (p.90).

VIVIE: [to Crofts referring to her mother's real profession]. I think you would probably have told me when we were married: it would have been a convenient weapon to break me in with (p.82).

The fact that the invading characters see the boundaries between themselves and Vivie as an undefined area is apparent in their inability to comprehend that Vivie's rejection of them is meant in earnest. Mrs Warren reacts to Vivie's expression of her scepticism of the notion of motherhood by faking emotional scenes, much in the style of mockery burlesque melodrama.

MRS WARREN: Oh, my darling, how can you be so hard on me? Have I no rights over you as your mother? (p.74).



Mrs Warren's histrionics might emerge as her greatest attraction to an audience, but to Vivie it is a source of disgust. To Crofts Vivie's refusal of his proposal of marriage is only part of the titillating game of courtship. He instantly assumes a homely, comfortable sitting posture at odds with Vivie's reserved stance (p.81). It is Crofts's assumption that deceit and maneuvering are inevitable parts of the male/female relationship which exasperates Vivie in the extreme, and not the actual proposal.

Even Frank, the happy-go-lucky malleable young man, who has enormous admiration for Vivie's strength of mind, chooses to ignore Vivie's desire to remain single. Until the near close of the play, Vivie's insistence that brother and sister is "the only relation [she cares] for, even if [they] could afford any other" fails to penetrate (p. 86). It is not until Vivie reveals the truth about her mother's profession that Frank starts to question the feasibility of his marriage to her. Finally he decides to give up his intention of marriage. Then, he brings to an end his dismissal as his own rejection of what he is denied. When the invading characters—especially Mrs Warren and Crofts—finally come to realize that Vivie is serious in rejecting them, they react with marked viciousness. At the end of Act III, Vivie is finally able to stand apart from the pettiness and absurdity of the invading characters' emotions only by cutting herself off from all her roots. She runs to Honoria Fraser's chambers to pursue a career in accounting. It is not until near the end of the play that Mrs Warren comes to realize the seriousness of this decision. Wild at being contradicted, she reverts to shrewishness. Mrs Warren looks at her daughter "*fiercely for a moment with a savage impulse to strike her*" (p.92). It is not anger at filial ingratitude that vents itself thus. This is because hardly any maternal/ filial bond has evolved between the two women who have lived apart all their lives. Crofts's

response to Vivie's refusal of his proposal of marriage is as fierce as to necessitate the introduction of a rifle to the scene. Physical violence, then, impends.

The unstable manner in which the invading characters try to form human bonds with Vivie strongly suggests that they, and not Vivie, are the psychological misfits. With the caprice of the despotic-frenetic they alternate between saccharine pleasantness and outright aggression. The cause of the invading characters' eruption is the fact that the independent young woman's behaviour contradicts the metaphor of passivity and receptiveness that has hitherto determined the way in which they view the feminine. This deconstruction of the symbolic structure of sexual values, and the collapse of the comforting system of polarized categories are bound to disturb the "cool tenor of the mind" (18).

The aspect of the self-realizer and the element of femaleness co-exist in easy equilibrium in Vivie's character, reinforcing each other. For one thing, the near futility of Vivie's struggle is an aspect of her quest for self-realization that is peculiar to the female. In fact, the protagonist was meant to be a representative of the reconstructed female identity as it entered the cultural reality of the day. The work of the supporters of women's movement was nowhere stronger than in the field of education, and the play focused on its young female protagonist's academic training. She embodied the few but pioneer women who had college education, and the even fewer females who applied this education to a matching career. While it is true that the play represents Vivie's career in accounting as the puritan's refugee from a tainted world, it is equally plausible that the education which has led to this career has helped Vivie in many other ways. One of the

most important advantages of the type of learning that Vivie has received is the relatively healthy mental attitude which is based on the right blend of the masculine value of individuation with the feminine value of connection.

The reformed female education and the feminist ethics that fostered it encouraged the industrial ethics of self-improvement and enterprise. On the other hand it emphasized that individuation should work to the benefit of the other as much as the self. Vivie's own education is a step further than her real counterparts achieved in that it is combined with an institutional upbringing. Whatever the disadvantages of such a background, at least it breaks the structure of the public/private sexual duality prevailing orthodox households, together with the emotional dependency and loss of self-boundaries which it fosters. The circumstances that surround Vivie's mental cultivation have nourished a sense of individuation which is part of the feminist ethics of connection through separation.

In fact, Vivie's sense of individuation is more a positive than a negative attribute in her character. It protects her from the kind of relationships which are designed to eliminate her right for self-definition. The young protagonist's sense of individuation only rejects the negative and not the positive connection with the world. It is Vivie's ability to see herself as connected to, and not separate from, the world that enhances the aspects of femaleness in her character. Vivie is deeply apprehensive about the waste of the world's resources. Her main objection to the life style of her mother and her crew is that they are wasters. Their idle and highly predatory ways worry her. Being the daughter of an unknown father, she shudders as she contemplates the possibility of having the

contaminated blood of that "brutal waster" Crofts in her veins (p.74). Vivie's fear of passively being part of the world's wasteful elements indicates that she sees herself and the world as a continuous entity. Vivie is aware that a great deal of the dissipation in the world ensues from the broken line of communication between the sexes. In the opening scene of the play, she reveals the key to her way of thinking. To her, the old mode of sexual relationships as described by Praed, which consists of "gentlemanly chivalry" and maidenly "reserve," is an awful waste of time, especially "women's time" (p.62).

Praed himself repudiates the metaphors which are involved in old-fashioned courtship. Although Praed believes that at present "things are improving," his immediate actions mock his conviction (p.63). Throughout his conversation with Vivie, he is trying to be gallant to her because she is a woman. Praed's self-contradiction is simultaneously comic and illustrative. It points to an important fact. The old mode of courtship, which Praed has deemed obsolete, still survives. That mode of courtship is built on the sexual duality active/passive. Passivity is implied in the maidenly "reserve," activeness in "gentlemanly chivalry."

The sexual duality active/passive is one of the main dualities which create sexual estrangement and necessitates prostitution. Mrs Warren turned to prostitution not simply because she was poor. A major factor in her choice of career was that she was not allowed an active use of her resources. Mrs Warren states her belief that in the present state of things 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" (p.77). As a shrewd businesswoman, Mrs Warren prefers to have access to her own resources: womanly charms. When a man

acts as an intermediary between her and society, the profits she gets for her services to society are much reduced. The duality active/passive as one of the reasons for prostitution is re-affirmed in other places in the play. Prostitution is not simply a profession for poor or fallen women. It is a prevailing sentiment in sexual relationships generally. When Frank expresses his feelings to Vivie as "love's young dream," the latter translates his description of his emotions into her own intelligent language as the "same feeling, Frank, that brought your father to my mother's feet" (p.85).

The mechanism of sexual relationships which brings about chaos and waste is dialectically connected with the broader and equally vain inner workings of capitalism. Small wonder, since, historically speaking, the very definition of the modern form of family arose out of the organization of the public/private structure of society in the Industrial Revolution and its coordinated body, capitalism. Shaw exploits the irresponsible character of farce as a most appropriate metaphor for the moral chaos caused by the omnipresence of the machinery of money. Human relationships are absurdly dominated by a network of commercial exchange, embracing exploiter-exploited types of connections. In her youth, Mrs Warren was used by a slave driver of a restaurateur, and later by the top pimps in the sex trade. Now she herself has become a partner in the capital of this trade, and thereby uses other women's "pleasing" resources for her own benefit. Crofts attempts to buy Vivie's approval of his marriage proposal, while the ineffectual Frank hopes to sell his beauty and charm to the same capable young woman for his keep. When Vivie shows obstinacy in her determination to cut off her mother, the mother, who is a marketer of human emotions, offers to raise her allowance. At one point in his life Rev. Gardner attempted to buy the silence of a woman with whom

he committed adultery. What is more, there is a vague, Ibsen-like, suggestion in the play that this woman is Mrs Warren herself.

As it is the case in *Candida*, the capitalist exploiters of *Mrs Warren's Profession* create certain conditions to disable their victims either materialistically or psychologically, turning their handicap to profit. The labouring girls of Mrs Warren's youth were forced to drudgery for very little money. Their slavery was a necessary commodity designed by a corrupt economical system that allowed for the existence of people who are on the breadline. The abject poverty of wage slaves smoothes the way for the capitalist to employ them for the lowest possible pay. By the same token, Mrs Warren's and Crofts's girls are exploited because of their initial destitution. When "I think of how helpless nine out of ten young girls would be in the hands of you and my mother!" (p.83). Vivie exclaims in a tensed exchange with one of the two evil capitalists she abhors.

If the girls were exploited because of their want of the barest necessities of life, the likes of Vivie, educated and with excellent earning capacity, are exploited by psychological indoctrination. This is what Crofts and Mrs Warren are trying to do in their constant attempt at breaking Vivie's barriers and defusing her self-boundaries along the public/private split. The manner of their appeal to her justifies her calling Crofts, and by association, her mother, "capitalist" bullies (p.83). Apart from Mrs Warren's economic facts which have enough appealing logic to ensure a consideration of her case, the capitalists' bid to win Vivie matches the core of their identities which are, like those of *Candida* and *Morell*, vainly commercial. The manner in which they put their case is

sensationally false, or at least self-deluding. Mrs Warren's and Crofts's methods of rehabilitating the young woman's mind are themselves part of a ludicrously pervasive marketing machinery, governing personal interconnections no less than economic wheeling and dealing. As is the case in *Candida*, the machinery of capitalist-style human relations is largely dependent on the colonization of the individual's inner existence with a fictionalized version of reality. One appropriate example of this is the story which Mrs Warren tells Vivie about the clergyman who, at the start of her professional life, did his best to warn her against the sex-trade. He attempted, vainly no doubt, to induce her to imagine what he claimed to be the end of most prostitutes, suicide by jumping off Waterloo Bridge (p.75). The minister's over-sentimental account of the destiny of prostitution is a typical endeavour, conscious or unconscious, on the part of orthodox morality, of which he is representative, to falsify the truth by sensationalizing it.

Gender is the most significant aspect of the human make-up that is misinterpreted by the mechanism of marketing. This is understandable if we consider the fact that the shape of one's sexuality is the primary determinant of one's economical and social positions. For instance, the sweating girls which Mrs Warren knew in her days of poverty were exploited not merely by the force of their circumstances as the children of ill-provided families. The misuse of the girls' labour was doubly reinforced by their being females. By virtue of their gender they were being confined to a restricted scope of employment imposed on them by the suffocating principle of "woman's virtue." The principle took possession of the girls' conscience in the same way that the inferiority of not being able to comply with stereotyped sexual behaviour appropriated Eugene's and Proserpine's inner recesses of the mind. The authority of the principle of purity prevented

the girls from exploring ways of earning which society deemed unrespectable. The category might include not only prostitution, but also other jobs that were in some ways better than mere drudgery.

Similarly, Vivie's psychological coercion at the hands of Mrs Warren and Crofts, representatives of evil capitalism, aim to prevent her from pursuing a challenging career with certain public significance. Confining her to the private realm does this. The invasion of Vivie's well-defined self-boundaries along the public/private split has a latent threat. If Vivie fails to assume the traditional role of wife and daughter, if she does not cease to define herself in precise terms of public significance, she will prove her difference and perversion. She will hence place herself in danger of being isolated by society, just like Eugene and Proserpine are. However, Vivie, like Eugene, and unlike the banished spinster of *Candida*, chooses, and is not forced, to be isolated from society. Although there is something despondent about this refugee from social evils in the end, she is still young and may yet understand. She herself gestures towards the possibility of her developing a better sense of social responsibility when she, more than once, admits that the only one among her mother's crew with which she might wish to communicate, both at present and in the future, is Praed. Although the latter is subjected to a teasingly satiric treatment, he is morally transcendent by virtue of his having the typical temperament of an idealistic artist.

Both self-realizing young individuals, Vivie and Eugene, abandon the undesirable circumstances in their environment that Shaw, half-seriously, half-jokingly, overthrows in his two plays about social refugees. The two young dissidents particularly scorn the



chaos involved in the mechanistic, compulsive sexual relationships and their concomitants: economical relationships. Yet, whilst Vivie shows signs of the possibility of her cultivating a form of social responsibility in the future, Eugene shows no such promise. Both *Candida* and *Mrs Warren's Profession* operate correctively through the negative feeling of dislike and disquiet that they ultimately leave behind, and despite the social isolation of the protagonists of both plays, the self-realizing young woman of the later play gestures towards a more developed sense of moral responsibility.

### Man and Superman (1905)

Eugene and Vivie have escaped the moral codes of their environment which Shaw vehemently overthrows. The community which they reject is disciplined by the interdependency of capitalism and the synthetic structure of sexual values that sharply alienates the sexes, fostering in them the kind of psychological dependency that makes them easy victims of commercial exploitation. The self-realizing poet-philosopher of *Man and Superman*, however, stays in the same world that he, and his creator, criticize. Nevertheless, the rightness and wrongness of Tanner's perseverance is a matter that is subject to the law of relativity that governs the entire play, in which the main focus is sexual relationships, particularly the issue of reproduction.

In addition to criticizing long-established doctrines in his drama, Shaw reexamined the veracity of the new found philosophies which captured the imagination of the age, including the ones in which he himself believed. This indicates the fact that

the dramatist's main interest is located in the stretching of his concerns beyond the narrow and limited occupations of his age, in the translucence of the eternal in the topical and the universal in the local. *Man and Superman* is one of the best examples in which Shaw subjects a part of his own fresh system of thoughts to scrutiny. The play expounds one of his central philosophies which, significantly enough, is concerned with sexual relationships. Derived from eugenics, the philosophy revolves around the conceptual triangle Man-Woman-Life Force, which is one of the most prevailing--if elsewhere mainly implicitly so—Shavian doctrines. According to it, woman is the blind agent of nature's desire for procreation which Shaw calls the Life Force. Woman is hence externalized and incarnated in the role of the Great Mother who is rather ruthless in her attempt to control her offspring and their father, with a view to channeling their energy into complying with nature's doctrines. Shaw likens this type of woman to powerful female animals with strong devious streaks: she is the boa wrapping itself around her man's body, heedless of his painful attempts at breaking free. She is also the lioness who is able to subdue her male by sheer physical force.

In order to install his new found philosophy, Shaw had to overthrow the long-established traditions of sexual relationships first. One typically Shavian way of doing this is to employ conventional theatrical techniques, and, at times, to adumbrate them with certain twists which subvert accepted beliefs. Act III for instance, is derived from histrionic traditions impregnated with theatricality like the pantomime and the theatre of the masque. In this tradition the main act is often interrupted by an imaginary and theatrical Interlude when the scene shifts to a timeless fantasy place. In *Man and Superman*, the Interlude moves, rather on Elizabethan terms, from the country house, to

an exotic spot on the Spanish Sierra. The transition echoes that of a play like *As You Like It* where the principals move from the Duke's Court to Forest of Arden. In the new locale, they are transformed to the eternal types of Harlequin, Columbine, pantaloon, and so on. In Shaw's play, the characters of the Interlude are stylized, broader versions of the main play.

John Tanner becomes Don Juan, the main figure of the legend bearing the same name. The legend is again, by a highly developed Shavian sense of play, a popular pantomime fable. But in the dramatist's story, this ultimate chaser of women is revealed to be the pursued, and not, as we traditionally believe, the pursuer in the game of love. Within the pantomime framework, Shaw introduces the technique of the morality play to explore sexual relations. Tanner and Ann become abstractions of the two halves of humanity, man and woman. The first represents the intellect, the second, the will.

The morality play and the Harlequinade subvert the sexual myth that man is the pursuer of woman in the traditional love-chase. In actuality, Shaw claims, the situation is reversed: It is woman who is the pursuer of man in fulfillment of nature's impulse for procreation. For Shaw the social convention that obstructs the exuberant flow of nature's purpose most is traditional marriage. The imprisonment of female productive function within the bounds of this institution is vehemently criticized in the episode of Violet's pregnancy. This near foster-child of the Whitefields is secretly married. When she gets pregnant, she is subjected to a heavy dose of deprecating treatment from her friends and family, including her own brother Octavius. On the production of the wedding ring, which serves no better purpose than signifying the legal formality of Violet's attachment

to the father of the child, there is a great change of temperament in the assembly of deprecators. They are converted from being offensively and moralistically high-minded to being humbly apologetic, dutifully cowering before the wedding ring. Violet herself is transformed from the state of disgrace to that of social triumph. Moreover, the emotional ebb and flow implied in the interaction between Violet and Miss Ramsden illustrates the tragedy which ensues from marriage being considered the sole determinant of women's worth in society.

Before the appearance of the wedding ring, Miss Ramsden, who is a potent portrait of the early twentieth century spinster of the old-maid type, appears to be socially acceptable to a relative degree. The usual secondariness of her kind is momentarily relieved by the presence of Violet. For here is a woman who is more deserving of contempt and alienation because of her presumed ultimate offence. Miss Ramsden capitalizes on Violet's predicament to accentuate her own significance as the lady of the moment, the person who is most suitable to deal with young women who are in Violet's position. This self-justified overseer of female chastity locks up the offending young woman in the housekeeper's room by way of making her feel the degradation of her sin more acutely. After the production of the wedding ring, Miss Ramsden is swiftly restored to her insignificant state. The downward spiral is executed by Violet herself who decides to avenge herself for insult at the hand of the despicable, priggish old maid. Violet's harsh words to the latter are: "You owe me an apology, Miss Ramsden. . . . If you were a married woman you would not like sitting in the housekeeper's room and being treated like a naughty child by young girls and old ladies without any serious duties and responsibilities" (p.350).

The Life-Force philosophy illustrates Shaw's theory about gender but only partly so. In the light of this philosophy, sexual relations are seen in very basic terms, too basic for Shaw's subtle intellect that is keenly aware of the complexity of all truths. One significant manifestation of the intricacy of Shaw's view of gender is his realization that it is necessary to connect the way in which society organizes the relationship between the sexes and its economical and political affairs. This part of the dramatist's vision is represented in a number of his plays: *Candida* and *Mrs Warren's Profession* are appropriate examples of this. The emphasis on the dialectical relationship between the public and the private realms on Shaw's lines can lead to the understanding that gender identity is socially constructed. This recognition, which bears the stamp of its own ability to change, belies the biological determinism of the Life Force philosophy. The optimism involved in one Shavian vision of truth is strangely at odds with the tendency of the other to fix men and women in eternal types: Great Mother, Artist Man, and Superman. Shaw's cast of mind which embraces sexual issues with all their dialectic complexities, is partly translated into theatrical forms. The subversive energy of these eludes the rational framework of the Life Force philosophy. The disconnected narrative, the multiformity of styles, and the wandering scenery suggest a resistance to the notion of logic and order implied by the hard science of a genetic engineering thesis. This impression is reinforced by the overabundance of ideas in the dialogue, which makes the intellectual content loose, approximating, in some degrees, to spontaneity.

The grim weight of unchangeability which informs the eternal types of the Life Force philosophy is modified in the play, particularly that of the Great Mother. This happens to be one of the images that Shaw frequently represents with a certain degree of

disapproval due to her absolute, and in Shaw's view, not always just, power as a ruler of the practical realm of domestic and social commitment. In *Man and Superman*, the Great Mother type, embodied in the figure of Ann Whitefield, is not treated with the same degree of uncharitableness as her other Shavian counterparts. One of the reasons for this is the fact that she is protected from the audience's hatred by the distancing effect of the theatrical technique. This technique governs most elements of the play including Ann's image. From a certain angle of vision, the latter's character is a caricature; a larger than life representation of typical female qualities. Tanner recognizes this fact. He tells Ann: "You seem to me to have absolutely no conscience--only hypocrisy . . ." (p.344).

Apart from subverting the aspects of the Life Force philosophy by technical methods, there is a great deal of the reworking of this theory in the most specific terms of the play as an allegorical struggle of masculine and feminine elements. The connotations of mind/body schism embodied in the Shavian thesis and its roots, the eugenics, is modified in the play. Ann's pursuit of Tanner has masculine as well as feminine ramifications. She is not merely a body or a vessel that carries the improved intellectual man. She is an actor, and initiator of the procreative act. Besides, the hard-working material woman is professional, worldly, and practical, talents which most characters in the play cannot boast.

The play's main conflict is between the Great Mother and the Artist Man. Other social issues are either marginalized, or merely educational, with little relation to the structure of action and reaction in the play. For instance, there is no authentic tension in the philosophical debate in the hell scene, the debate in which no particular goal is

achieved except "killing eternity" (p.79). The real conflict is carried out in absolute terms. The contending parties, the pivots of the dramatic scheme, are the Mother and the Artist in their generalized forms. There is very little reflection on sexual relationships in relation to the changing texture of Edwardian society. None of the female characters exhibit the fully blown traits of the newly emancipated woman, like Vivie Warren for instance (19).

The concentration on Ann's fecundity does not mean that women represent only the body in the evolutionary process. In its various reworkings, Shaw's general attitude to gender often suggests that gender identity is socially constructed. In addition, the distancing effect which he applies to the image of the Great Mother mitigates the sense of biological determinism implied in the Life Force philosophy, lending strength to the belief that the Artist Man and the Great Mother are more broad generalizations of the elements of the body and the elements of the mind, than representatives of real individuals. If these elements seem to be exclusively associated with men and women respectively, it is because these elements are, like everything else, part of the current chaotic state of the world. Reforming the mind/body schism, especially as it manifests itself in sexual relationships, is one of the tasks which the world has to accomplish before it brings itself to maturity through mental and physical improvement.

On the materialistic level, there are extenuating circumstances which make Ann what she is. To Octavius she admits that she, as a woman, is forced to see herself in a passive, pure mode and is obliged to get what she wants indirectly, by cajoling. She compares herself unfavourably with Violet who employs direct active methods in her

dealing with people. Despite her cleverness and her unobtrusively being the initiator and manager of the act of procreation, the Shavian Great Mother is under the obligation to keep the appearance of passivity and submissiveness. Owing to her strong inherent tendency to act as nature's procreative agent, and her extreme professionalism in performing this role, Ann knows very well how to increase her chances of reproduction. She is aware, as the other Shavian matriarch, Candida, is, that society only admits to its kingdom of fecundity people who are able to assume stereotyped sexual behaviour. So it is deeply ironic that Ann's characteristics, which the others see as denoting of typical female unworldliness, are derived from the devious girl's extreme professionalism. Strictly female values are, in this way, only the side-view of strictly masculine values.

Tanner is the self-realizing protagonist of the play in that he is an artist philosopher with morally elevated principles, elevated because they are free from the distancing agents that force the individual to lose touch with his own version of the truth. Tanner is more in contact with himself than the other major characters who are lost either in their idiotic beliefs in traditional ethics (Ramsden and Octavius), or in self-centred pursuits (Ann and Violet). For instance Tanner, contrary to Octavius, realizes very well man's role in the sexual pursuit: he is object of the quest and not its subject. He tells Octavius: "You think that you are Ann's suitor; that you are the pursuer and she the pursued; that it is your part to woo, to persuade, to prevail, to overcome. Fool: it is you who are the pursued, the marked down quarry, the destined prey" (p.353).

At the end of the play, Tanner, like Eugene, tries to break away from the force of ordinariness and domestic practicality, but, unlike Eugene, he fails. In the light of the



uncertainty which inoculates most of the aspects of the play, it is difficult to decide whether it is better for Tanner to leave or to stay. While it is true that the conditions which Ann offers are stifling and repressive to creative forces, it is equally true that they work efficiently towards preserving the species. The matter of Tanner's staying in a world with many objectionable aspects can be somehow explained in the light of something Ann says in one of her rare moments of truthful discourse: "I doubt if we ever know why we do things" (p.399). Besides, from the depth of the unique blend of socialism and existentialism which informs the play, one definite line of thought is traceable: Tanner's moral philosophy and Ann's fecundity have a united absolute purpose which is to produce the man who is more advanced on the scale of evolution. For though, at present, Tanner's excessive love for talking seems ludicrous enough to call for "universal laughter," it might still lead to a better future. Woman's procreative function is thus as important as the artist man's intellectual energy; the typically feminine elements are no less significant, or, from a certain point of view, insignificant, than the typically male elements. By the law of creative evolution, the philosopher's intellectual chaos embodies the human mind trying to talk itself into a better sense. By the same law Ann, the Great Mother, might go on breeding until she produces the Superman.

In *Candida* and *Mrs Warren's Profession* the self-realizing protagonists run away from the unfavourable circumstances of their world, the circumstances that are created by the diabolic interworking of capitalist and sexual relations. In *Man and Superman*, the same type of morally aware central character remains in a community with a doubtful set of ethical codes. The real worth of his staying power is nevertheless hard to define in the light of the metaphysical core of the play. One thing is sure: Tanner's and his spouse's

ultimate goal is producing a more advanced type of humanity by blending Ann's vital fecundity with Tanner's energetic intellectuality. This is undoubtedly an admirable ambition regardless of the rightness and wrongness of the ethical codes that regulate human connections, particularly sexual liaisons within these connections. In addition, Shaw's dislike of the notion of biological determinism which he expresses in both the form and content of his plays, is highly subversive of the orthodox ways of regulating the relationship between the sexes. In *Man and Superman*, this liberating Shavian principle ultimately manifests itself in a fair prospect, as metaphysical as any in the play, that in a humanity improved by the process of "creative evolution," the evolution of refined thinking, the polarity of sexual values, which is a feature of primitive minds, would be abated.

### Arms and the Man (1894)

Unlike the protagonist of the three individual plays discussed earlier in this chapter whose perseverance with faulty humanity is fragile, or at worst uncertain, the self-realizing protagonists of *Arms and the Man* and *Major Barbara* wholeheartedly agree to stay and attempt to positively change the adverse circumstances of their world. The moral question in these two plays is partly localized in the rightness and wrongness of war activities, particularly as this question maps on to gender relations. In *Arms and the Man*, the principal issue is a poised dichotomy which provides the central structure of the play. This dichotomy consists in the balancing, both culturally and sexually, of the elements of the private/public, professional/unprofessional, and mind/body dualities. The play's structure and a great deal of its technique and ideas are built around these cultural

and sexual dualities. This fact illustrates Shaw's awareness that thinking in terms of dualities is a major feature of Western culture. The harmful effect of cultural and sexual dualities on the individual and societies is represented through the theatrical medium of pantomime and puppet shows. The routine of the Punch-and-Judy type of entertainment is an apt metaphor for the mechanism latent in human alliances, particularly sexual relationships.

The play's main plot is concerned with the experience of a would-be husband and wife. Each falls in love with a different partner and ends up marrying him or her. The couple's decision to change partners marks their moral maturity. The relationship between Sergius and Raina, before maturation, is of the type that can only be found on the stage of a Viennese light opera. It has no more reality in itself than a stage play. The artificial nature of their courtship stems from the fact that, in conformity with the mechanistic model governing orthodox sexual alliances, they have not chosen each other by personal preference. Raina and Sergius are the offspring of the two most prominent families in Bulgaria. Their marriage is convenient on both a political and a social level. Each one sees the other as a generalized conception of a suitable spouse. Therefore they act, rather than live, the part of lovers. The couple's confinement to class and social traditions distances them from themselves and from each other. Sergius's and Raina's alternative marriages end the state of alienation in which the couple has been living. Raina marries a professional Swiss soldier from the Serb army; Sergius marries Raina's maid.

The Petkoffs' style of life, on which Raina's and Sergius's courtship is based, revolves around a clearly defined and polarized set of values. They think of the issues of sex and class in terms of dualities. Men are public-spirited, brave, and destined for high achievements; women are private, delicate (i.e. pretty and faint-hearted), and destined to live in the shadow of men. In Act I Raina articulates the deeply entrenched active/passive duality in which she has been conditioned to see herself and Sergius. Repenting the fact that she once doubted the reality of Sergius's glory, Raina says:

RAINA: Yes: I was only a prosaic little coward. Oh, to think that it was all true! that Sergius is just as splendid and noble as he looks! that the world is really a glorious world for women who can *see* its glory and men who can *act* its romance! [emphasis added] (p.93).

The public/private schism also works on the class level. Upper-class men are braver than lower class men. Lower-class men are morally inferior to their masters and must be kept in their shadows. The lower-class men's confinement to the background of the upper-class men implies a metaphor of "privateness," removal from the important, and thus public, business of the world. Any attempt to try to stand alone and acquire a distinctive social position of their own has dire consequences. Nicola, the servant who is only too well acquainted with the rules of society, warns Louka, a young servant, against trying to acquire culture in the way that her masters do (by reading books in the library). He also tips her as to the good sense of not aspiring to a more important social position by trying to trap Sergius into marrying her. Sergius describes to Louka the treatment of

soldiers by their army officers in the training camp. The soldiers are subjected to a great deal of humiliating punishment which is designed to keep their souls humble.

The Petkoffs represent the old world. Regarding the world in terms of polarized categories is a sign of primitiveness. The Petkoffs are still at a very early stage on the evolutionary scale. By comparison, Bluntschli, the professional Swiss soldier, represents Western civilization which is more advanced on the evolutionary scale. The duality culture/nature operates on the level of the relationship between two nations which are at different stages of evolution. Nature is the metaphor for the less privileged nation either on the material or intellectual level. Culture is the metaphor for the more privileged nation. There are other dichotomies operating within the culture/nature schism. Professional/unprofessional and personal/impersonal are dichotomies which determine our way of thinking about Bluntschli and Sergius. Bluntschli, the civilized individual, separates emotions from the act of war. War, for him, is a mere business transaction. Contrary to Bluntschli, Sergius regards war as a passionate affair that involves love. (love for one's country).

Shaw equates the Petkoffs with nature because of their primitive style of life. We are told a great deal about this life in Act II, which takes place in the garden. The garden is an apt metaphor for the primitiveness of the upper-class Bulgarian peasants and their closeness to nature. A great deal of comedy is generated from the Petkoffs' pretence to culture which, rather than hiding their primitiveness, highlights it. The following dialogue is a good example of the type of comedy which is attendant upon the behaviour

of the Petkoffs. The style of humour has many similarities with that of later popular entertainers (perhaps the best example is the Morecambe and Wise double-act):

PETKOFF: And how have you been, my dear?

CATHERINE: Oh, my usual sore throats: thats all.

PETKOFF: [*with conviction*] That comes from washing your neck every day. Ive often told you so. . . . Look at my father! he never had a bath in his life; and he lived to be ninety-eight, the healthiest man in Bulgaria (p.102).

Bluntschli believes that emotions should be separated from war because it is dangerous to glamorize war. He makes no pretence to bravery. He carries chocolate instead of cartridges and assures Raina that there are only two types of soldiers: "old ones and young ones" (p.97). The old ones, like himself, know the truth about war; fight only when they have to and fight to survive. The young soldiers, like Sergius, carry ammunition and have heads filled with glory and patriotism. Both Bluntschli and Mr Voysey believe in the necessity of separating emotions from business (for Bluntschli, war is business). Yet there are profoundly different assumptions underlying their attitudes. The hierarchical model on which Mr Voysey's separatist attitude is built defines the professional pole as the essential, the "love" pole as its antithesis, a shortcoming or support. For Bluntschli the exclusion of love from war serves to mitigate the inevitable brutality of war.

Bluntschli's attitude towards war is compared with Sergius's attitude. Despite the fact that Bluntschli does not express an overtly humanitarian opinion towards armed

conflict, his general outlook tends to be more merciful than that of Sergius. The latter's passionate involvement in this conflict urges him to commit blind killings and embark on hasty suicidal missions whereas Bluntschli's detached stance makes level-headed planning possible. Bluntschli allows for killing, but only sparingly. In implicitly mocking tones, the professional soldier describes to Raina what Catherine—Raina's mother—calls Sergius's "splendid" "cavalry charge" (p.92). This is the most recent military act that has raised the Petkoffs' future son-in-law to the rank of national hero in the eyes of his country's people:

THE MAN [Bluntschli]: And there was Don Quixote flourishing like a drum major, thinking he'd done the cleverest thing ever known, whereas he ought to be court-martialled for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field of battle, that man must be the very maddest. He and his regiment simply committed suicide; only the pistol missed fire: that's all (p.98).

Bluntschli shows to what extent Sergius is embroiled in the emotional self-indulgence of traditional war-affairs.

An analogy can be drawn between Bluntschli's moral ethics and those of Alice and Edward in *The Voyage Inheritance*. There are differences between the two creeds, but there are also major commonalities. They both boast underlying philanthropic purposes. The Alice-Edward association advocates the combination of business and love in conducting the essential affairs of the world. They see the positive combination of sexual values as one of the major factors which contribute to the building of a better social

structure. This structure is based on a “network” rather than hierarchical interpretations of human relations. Contrary to the Alice-Edward association, Bluntschli jettisons the introduction of the aspects of love to war. This is because it increases, rather than lessens, the brutal effect of war on individuals. Bluntschli’s attitude, his objection to the mixing of love and war, is substantiated elsewhere in the play.

Shaw demonstrates the misuse of the bisexual nature of sexual values by the traditional advocates of war. Sergius, the adversely passionate soldier, is the unmistakable exponent of this mentality. He is expected to sacrifice himself in the act of becoming a hero. Heroism is a purely masculine attitude implying activity, bravery, and bodily strength, whereas self-sacrifice is a female attitude couched in the metaphors of passiveness and dependence. The traditional moralists of war recommend the merging of the two polarized values in the context of battle because this merging serves to glamorize the act of self-sacrifice. Louka once puts the question of sexual duality brave/faint-hearted to Sergius. Her question includes the operation of this duality on both sex and class levels. Louka asks whether “a man could be as unlike a woman as that.” She also questions the authenticity of the notion that poor men are “any less brave” than rich men (p.116). Sergius clarifies the muddled notion of bravery to Louka by describing to her the happenings both in battle and in the army training camp. Sergius’s description projects his awareness of the manner in which the polarized conceptions of heroism (bravery) and self-sacrifice are exploited by the military leaders. He also explores the fact that “bravery” is a mythical notion invented by the traditional propagandists of war in order to implant the segregation between sexes and classes. For Sergius, neither the poor nor



the rich are brave, as long as they comply with the double standard of traditional morality within or without the context of war:

SERGIUS: They [the men] all slashed and cursed and yelled like heroes. Psha! the courage to rage and kill is cheap. I have an English bull terrier who has as much of that sort of courage as the whole Bulgarian nation, and the whole Russian nation at its back. But he lets my groom thrash him, all the same. Thats your soldier all over! No, Louka: your poor men can cut throats; but they are afraid of their officers; they put up with insults and blows; they stand by and see one another punished like children: aye, and help to do it when they are ordered. And the officers!!! . . . Oh, . . . give me the man who will defy to the death any power on earth or in heaven that sets itself up against his own will and conscience: he alone is the brave man (p.116).

In war the men are expected to be self-assertive enough to be able to kill their enemy, whereas, in the training camp, the men are conditioned to be self-sacrificial.

In *Beyond Female Masochism* Frigga Haug expresses opinions which are strikingly similar to those of Shaw. She sees militarism, and war and the training for them as an apt example of the "benefits of a functioning bisexual morality for the ruling powers." While in most male-defined institutions men are discouraged from objectifying their bodies, the army adopts a different approach. The army specifically encourages the violation of the culturally appropriate metaphors of male self-presentation. The main metaphor for traditional war propaganda is self-sacrifice and the objectification of the

body by making it available for intense discipline. Haug's notion of the male self-representation in the military context is comparable to that of Shaw. She says:

Camaraderie is connected with bodies, and war is at the very least compatible with love of one's country. In military training the body obviously plays a major role. The drills—chest out, stomach in!—are plainly not sexy, but nevertheless resemble the type of instruction that women issue to themselves daily. Here too we encounter male virtues, such as bravery and fortitude, which are not incorporated into the legal code in any direct way. These virtues, which overcome the body, and hence display it in a state of subjection, are legalized in war: cowardice and lack of courage can be treated as desertion and punished with death. It would appear, therefore, as though what happens in a war is not that the ordinary business virtues of men are summoned and deployed, but that the morality of war is composed of both sets of virtues: *to sacrifice oneself as a hero*—that is the ultimate combination (20).

In much the same way as the soldiers described in Haug's portrait of army training, Sergius is required to discipline his body. He is expected to strike an artificial body posture both in war and during the act of courting Raina. The physical posture which Sergius is expected to assume—lofty bearing—is similar to that which soldiers dramatize in war. This "lofty bearing," and the amorously chivalrous attitude attendant upon it proves to be, by Sergius's own admission, a very "fatiguing thing to keep up for any length of time" (p.106).

Sergius's subjection to a double dose of physical discipline causes him deep apprehension. It makes him realize the extent of his dehumanization at the hands of the Bulgarian military and upper classes. Sergius is aware of the distancing effect of intense social and sexual discipline. Agonized at his surrender to Louka's romantic exploitations, he reflects on the fact that he is, most of the time, distanced from his own actions:

SERGIUS: I am surprised at myself, Louka. What would Sergius, the hero of Slivnitza, say if he saw me now? What would Sergius, the apostle of the higher love, say if he saw me now? What would the half dozen Sergiuses who keep popping in and out of this handsome figure of mine say if they caught us here? (p.106).

Sergius suffers from an acutely existential problem. He, like most Shavian male characters, is alienated in his gender and social role. The paradox upon which his public figure is built gives rise to deep apprehension. To the Bulgarian mind, Sergius is a national hero, a brave man, and the top man in the sphere of public affairs. In reality the externalized soldier and lover is not only removed from Bulgarian public arena, but also from the private sphere. In the war his presence is nominal. His main asset is his impulsiveness and readiness to sacrifice himself. If he wins, it is a matter of luck rather than intelligence. Small wonder, as Sergius is ignorant of the conventions of war: "I won the battle the wrong way when our worthy Russian generals were losing it the right way," Sergius tells Catherine bitterly (p.104). In the private sphere Sergius has no control. In the Petkoff household he experiences a lack of privacy as he is constantly under the surveillance of Raina. Confined to the domestic sphere of the house all her life, Raina is

extremely familiar with her environment. This knowledge enables her to choose the most strategic point from which to watch Sergius, even when he is hiding.

The position of Petkoff in his own house is analogous to that of Sergius, albeit Petkoff is less aware of his existential dilemma. Petkoff is conditioned into infinite adaptability. He is what Catherine wills him to be, and owing to her immense power, he is removed from both private and public affairs. He is ineffectual in war. In the library scene, he and Sergius sit, two still comic figures who are comrades in absolute incompetence, while Bluntschli is engrossed in the task of drawing-up plans for the next Bulgarian battle. Sergius, frustrated and comically agonized, mutters a sarcastic remark about the division "of labor!": "He finds out what to do; draws up the orders; and I sign em" (p.111). Of the domestic sphere Petkoff knows very little. It is his wife, Catherine, who masters the ins and outs of the Petkoff household. Her knowledge enables her to engineer Bluntschli's entrance to, and exit from, the house. On a symbolic level the capable matriarch facilitates the cultural invasion of the East by the West. She is highly instrumental in affecting social change. Michael Holroyd assumed that Shaw believed that "society changed only when women wanted it to" (21). Petkoff's "homelessness" is symbolically represented in the ridiculous incident that involves one of his old coats. In order to help Bluntschli escape from her house without being recognized by the soldiers, Catherine hands him one of Petkoff's coats as a disguise. The coat is returned, but only after it has undergone several alterations.

The coat episode symbolizes the existential dilemma of which Petkoff is blissfully ignorant. The returning warrior is pining for his old coat: "Theres only one

thing I want to make me thoroughly comfortable. . . . My old coat. I'm not at home in this one: I feel as if I were on parade" (p.111). But the coat without which he does not feel "at home" now belongs to someone else. This fact leaves Petkoff literally coatless and symbolically "homeless." The heavy dose of travesty involved in this incident tempers the tragic impact of Petkoff's alienation from his immediate surroundings, making it at once funny and illustrative. All along there has been another aspect to his life, barely grasped by him. Catherine's ultimate power over her surroundings allows her a strong control of public affairs. She changes the course of history at her will.

It is significant that Bluntschli's introduction to the Petkoff household takes place in Raina's bedroom. Shaw is reminding us—as he does in the coat incident—of the strong relationship between the manner in which society organizes the relationship between the sexes, and its political affairs. The theme of the cultural invasion of the East by the West is deliberately, and strongly, connected with the sexual duality public/private. This connection is highlighted through the focus on the polarization of elements. The sense of privateness is intensified in the image of Raina. It is doubly privatized. Being the virgin daughter of the top man in Bulgaria, Raina represents this nation's sense of "virtue." Furthermore, Raina's bedroom is the most exclusive part of her private space.

On the other hand, Bluntschli is a man with a definite philosophy: life is business. Therefore, his character embodies a concentration of the business conception. Marvelling at Bluntschli's ability to instantly detach himself from emotional situations and resume a business manner, Sergius exclaims: "What a man! Is he a man?" this last line of the play

gives weight to Bluntschli's main philosophy, concentration on business (p.122). The focus on the paradoxical interaction of polarized values is part of the characteristically Shavian virtue: "gaiety of mind." This mental mirth is underlined by a serious Shavian philosophy: throughout the play, sexual dualities run parallel to cultural dualities. The dualities profession/unprofessional and rational/impulsive can be applied on both sexual and cultural levels. Bluntschli is professional and rational in war, Sergius is unprofessional and impulsive in war. Much in the same way as Bluntschli and Sergius, women are professional and rational in dealing with domestic affairs, men are impulsive and unprofessional in the private sphere (and probably in the public sphere too).

Catherine is extremely diligent in conducting domestic business while Petkoff is almost unconscious of the immediate happenings around him. He is almost utterly guided by impulse and emotions. He easily believes the fabricated story of Raina's chocolate cream soldier, which she has allegedly made in order to decorate a non-existent cake. The story is hastily put together by Raina to counter the awkwardness and surprise she feels at unexpectedly meeting Bluntschli in front of the library. Nicola is introduced into the story as the one who has accidentally ruined the chocolate cream soldier. Petkoff flies into an almost uncontrollable rage at the servant for his alleged negligence and threatens to dismiss him. Nevertheless, he is soon lulled to calmness by the urging kisses of his wife and daughter. He then agrees to forgive Nicola. Shaw's immense appetite for toying with sexual and cultural dualities is underlined by an earnest theme. Sexual and cultural dualities are not only connected by sharing the same metaphorical structure; they powerfully "map on" to each other, influencing each other on practical terms. The manner in which society organizes the relationship between the sexes affects many other

aspects. One of the elements through which Shaw conveys this idea is the titillating interaction between the play's artistic and thematic elements.

*Arms and the Man* has this synthetic resemblance to reality which is necessary for the elements of pantomime and fairy tale. Probing into the metaphors of sexual and cultural dualities that form the underpinnings of the traditional propaganda of war is one of the few moments in which the dramatist supplies his ideas about war with a hint of psychological reality beneath the farcical structure of the play. Shaw has projected the realities of war within the infrastructure of an analytical approach to the sharply polarized sexual and cultural elements in traditional culture: thus he draws one's attention to the overlapping influence of one theme on the other. By doing so Shaw is in agreement with many later feminist thinkers. In *Three Guineas*, for instance, Virginia Woolf debates the association between the repressiveness of fascism and the exaggeration of division between the sexes. The traditional culture which employs the dualities strong/weak and soft/hard as the basis for sexual indoctrination, unconsciously casts the man as the protector of woman. This leads to materialism and belligerence (22).

Shaw considers thought in terms of duality as belonging to more primitive societies. The marriage of Bluntschli and Raina, themselves a combination of polarized qualities is intended to represent the mitigation of the extremes. It is a step towards a better society, represented by Bluntschli and the Western tradition to which he belongs. The play is concerned with the moral maturity of human societies rather than the specific maturity of the individual. The home to which Raina and Bluntschli move is one of Bluntschli's father's hotels. They are, symbolically, in the new home of the maturing

humanity. The numerous hotels that Bluntschli's father owns signify a home which is spacious enough to embrace all humans. "My father is a very hospitable man: he keeps six hotels," Bluntschli says to Raina in his comically matter-of-fact tone (p.100).

### Major Barbara (1905)

In *Man and Superman* Shaw upturns accepted beliefs that form the basis of traditional war propaganda, particularly the orthodox notion of war hero and its metaphorical ramifications. He connects the war ethos to the way in which society organizes the relationship between the sexes. In *Major Barbara* Shaw deals with another facet of war, that is the arms industry, which is one of the most powerful economic institutions that sponsor the war efforts. Like *Arms and the Man*, *Major Barbara* exposes the sexual binary system as one of the main instigators of this destructive human effort. In *Major Barbara*, the sharp division of sexual characteristics is manifested in the asymmetrical organizing of parenting. The play focuses on the individual enactment of this organization in the protagonist's inner conflict between private and public activities. The resolution of this conflict is a mark of Barbara's maturation.

The problematic relationship of Lady Britomart and her children seems to be caused by Lady Britomart's constant presence in their lives, a situation that arises out of the matriarch's total confinement to the private sphere. The mother's main concern is the disciplining of her children. Thus she stifles their souls, never giving them a rest from her persistent and urgent passion. In addition to administering maternal coercion, Lady



Britomart acts as a conservative influence, imprinting her children with the values of her class. Lady Britomart's unwitting politicization of her children contradicts the traditional notions of mothering which assumes that the mother-child relationship resides in the realm of the private. Lady Britomart's alienation in her mothering role is complete. In her Shaw ridicules mercilessly the role of the mother. The matriarch's speech approaches the patter of popular entertainers: "Thank you, Stephen: I knew you would give me the right advice when it was properly explained to you" (p.464).

If Lady Britomart is the archetypal mother, Undershaft is the archetypal father. He is marked by his eternal absence from his children's lives. He only comes forth after the messy business of moulding the souls of his offspring has been completed. Fresh and unharrassed by the business of moral tidying up, Undershaft is ready to charm his children into believing in him. The scene in which Undershaft fails to recognize his son Stephen instantly conjures up in comic terms the type of sentiment invoked by Undershaft's presence. The scene brings relief from the stuffiness of a world weighed down by its confinement to a familiar, detrimentally personal and maternal orbit (Act I, pp.466-467). The episode of confused progeny contrasts favourably with the previous episode in which we see Stephen subjected to maternal coercion. The object of Lady Britomart's intimidating meeting with Stephen is to make him agree with a scheme in which she attempts to use Undershaft's public power for the sake of the family. They are to try and wrest a large allowance from him for his daughters' upkeep and also to force him to give up the family tradition that the Undershaft business should be left not to his son, but to a foundling. The absence of properly defined self-boundaries between mother

and son facilitates the mother's bullying of the son until he feels "outwitted and overwhelmed" (p.464).

Impersonalization is a creed that Undershaft follows in all aspects of his life. In the workplace he refers the matter of his men's discipline to a system of hierarchy whereby each man controls the man one rank beneath him.

UNDERSHAFT: Practically, every man of them keeps the man just below him in his place. I never meddle with them. I never bully them. I dont even bully Lazarus. I say that certain things are to be done; but I dont order anybody to do them. I dont say, mind you, that there is no ordering about and snubbing and even bullying. The men snub the boys and order them about; the carmen snub the sweepers; the artisans snub the unskilled laborers; the foremen drive and bully both the laborers and artisans . . . the chief engineers drop on the assistants. . . . The result is a colossal profit, which comes to me" (pp.492-493).

Undershaft emphasizes the fact that he does not directly intimidate his men. The concept of intimidation here is used with emphasis. It is meant to throw a certain light on Lady Britomart's maternal bullying. Not only Lady Britomart but also the men under Undershaft's leadership feel compelled to bully in order to discipline, and also to satisfy a desire for control. Their direct contact with their dependants makes such practices inevitable. The men live in Undershaft's shadow; theirs is a sort of private world comparable to that of women. They are the unknown part of the widely famous Undershaft establishment. Each man finds in his inferior a chance to compensate for his

lost dignity. They are comparable to the mother who considers her children a means of compensation for her loss of contact with the outside world. Thus she bullies them in order to ensure they are eternally tied to her.

Although the men bear resentment against Undershaft, as a result of their awareness of his ultimate control over them, Undershaft's character is protected from the hatred associated with that of Lady Britomart. Undershaft's absence from his men's immediate sphere and the bribe of the consumer goods that he amply provides function as a distancing effect necessary for this protection. Impersonalization and the effect of money are the two elements that determine Undershaft's relationship with his children. The fact that Undershaft has been absent for the major part of his children's lives somehow endears him to them. This is because he appears in their lives at a time when they have begun to resent their mother's subjective omnipresence and long for a broader, more objective outlook on life. This fact, combined with Undershaft's enormous wealth, contributes to his seductiveness in the eyes of his children. Shaw's insight into the position of the constantly-on-leave father is one of the deepest realities of the human unconscious. The feminist psychoanalyst, Nancy Chodorow, testifies to this. She writes:

Although fathers are not as salient as mothers in daily interaction, mothers and children often idealize them and give them ideological primacy, precisely because of their absence and seeming inaccessibility, and because of the organization and ideology of male dominance in the larger society (23).

Little does Lady Britomart know, when she seeks to avail herself of her husband's public privileges, that she is going to have more than what she bargains for; little does she suspect that with public power comes private control.

The mother's role as an educator of her children diminishes when counteracted by the presence of the public-orientated father who has a deeper and more "real" truth to reveal to his children. Already the refreshingly non-conformist Barbara, with her unconventional ways of perceiving the world, is proving too difficult to handle. Stephen denounces his mother in a style appropriate to his dull, conformist nature: "Any further discussion of my intentions had better take place with my father, as between one man and another" (pp. 489-490).

Shaw has early in his play cast doubts on Stephen's moral maturity by making him one of the people whom he refuses to take seriously: the traditionalists. Stephen is tiresomely literal-minded in his acceptance of the dictates of received notions. He is the sort of man for whom right "is right; and wrong is wrong" (p.463). Stephen's defensive firming up of his ego boundaries against the polluting effect of the feminine is part of his unquestioning belief in the traditional way of seeing things. Taking this into consideration, Stephen's attitude does not constitute a powerful statement against women or against maternity as represented by Lady Britomart's image.

Despite Shaw's refusal to validate Lady Britomart's views—she is also one of the traditionalists—he allows her the expression of her dilemma at the end of Act I. The children's disobedience of their mother seems final when they, under the influence of

Undershaft, are seduced from the traditional family prayers to Barbara's more refreshing Salvation Army sermons.

LADY BRITOMART: That is the injustice of a woman's lot. A woman has to bring up her children; and that means to restrain them, to deny them things they want, to set them tasks, to punish them when they do wrong, to do all the unpleasant things. And then the father, who has nothing to do but pet them and spoil them, comes in when all her work is done and steals their affection from her (p.470).

Lady Britomart and Undershaft represent the feminine/masculine principles respectively. The test of Barbara's moral maturity consists of her ability to reconcile these two principles within herself. The reconciliation must be in accordance with her highly principled self. Barbara's moral maturity is of a strongly political nature. This is because she is, like her father, public-spirited. In fact Barbara exhibits a great many of her father's qualities. Undershaft shows tremendous interest in her, seeing her as an extension of himself. "Aha! Barbara Undershaft would be. Her inspiration comes from within herself. . . . I shall hand on my torch to my daughter. She shall make my converts and preach my gospel—" (p.479). At the same time Barbara shares with her mother her emphasis on love as the determinant of her relationship with people. Barbara joins the Salvation Army, a religious organization which places great emphasis on the love of the people. Although Barbara possesses qualities inherited from both her father and her mother, she resents them both, seeing these qualities as the effect of unhealthy confinement in fixed gender roles.

As much as Barbara suffers from her mother's persistent passion, her father's emotional remoteness and his tendency to impersonalise everything, including his love for children fills her with filial pain. At one point Barbara puts the question of love to her father in a tormented tone: "Father: do you love nobody?" (p.500). Undershaft answers his daughter not with fatherly affection, commensurate with his actual feeling, but with something between a clever evasion and an educational speech on the value of competition: "I love my best friend. . . . My bravest enemy. That is the man who keeps me up to the mark" (pp.500-501). Earlier, in Act II, Undershaft confesses to Cusins that he loves Barbara "with a father's love" (p.479). Despite his protestations, Undershaft evades the metaphor of sentimentalism involved in the declaration of love. For him such a declaration is inadequate to the Undershaft principle. He refers the question of love to a system of hierarchy and competition.

The test of Barbara's moral maturity takes place when we see her in action at the Salvation Army centre. At one point she assumes her mother's bullying maternal attitude; at another she attempts a self-possessed manner which implies respect for the other person's boundaries of the self. This is evident in her relationship with a character from a sub-plot: Billy Walker. One of the episodes that constitutes the sub-plot has Billy crying in response to the "neggin and provowkin," and the Salvation girls' patronizing attitude to him (p.477). Billy's individuality strikes a note in Barbara and she decides to make it her mission to convert him. Billy tries to make restitution for his attack on Jenny Hill—a conventional Salvation Army girl—by trying to effect a balance of rights. He therefore offers to pay her money. Barbara refuses to accept the traditional judicial pattern of crime and punishment which Bill's attitude implies. She will not accept his

offer of money; nor will she accept his readiness to take a thrashing himself. Instead Barbara will win Bill over by making him feel accepted for what he is. Barbara wants Bill to agree to his salvation wholeheartedly, a task difficult to achieve in one accustomed only to bully, or to be bullied into doing things.

Barbara's character is set off by comparison with a more traditional type of Salvation girl. Upon his return from the confrontation that he has had with the man who has allegedly stolen his girlfriend, Bill looks dishevelled in the extreme. His appearance, which clearly shows that he has been beaten, is pitifully funny. While Jenny Hill, Barbara's foil, refuses to laugh at Bill's misfortunes preferring to assure him with "Oh no. We're so sorry, Mr Walker," Barbara insists on seeing the humorous side of the situation. "Nonsense! of course it's funny. Served you right, Bill! You must have done something to him first" (p.481). Jenny Hill finds it necessary to reassure Bill by not facing him with the ridiculous reality of his situation. In so doing, she instantly places herself on a higher moral plane than Bill, casting him as someone whose moral integrity is so fragile as to need constant support and reassurance. Moreover, when offering to forgive Bill, Jenny refers him to the higher authority of God and enhances her own moral status by claiming to act as God's agent.

Barbara on the other hand, faces Bill with his reality, regarding him as a separate adult and refusing to contain him in her own and—God's—purview. Barbara's sense of confrontation, like her father's competitiveness, indicates utter respect for human dignity. But unlike her father, who sneers at the idea that his actions are motivated by any form of

“love,” Barbara is motivated by sheer compassion for humanity. Undershaft insists that his basic motive for building the Undershaft empire is personal gain.

UNDERSHAFT: *I was an east ender. I moralized and starved until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs; that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men. I said “Thou shalt starve ere I starve”;* and with that word I became free and great (p.499).

Although Undershaft’s motives in building the Undershaft empire are personal at the start, later, after he has secured a strong financial position, he can afford to mellow out in the role of benevolent millionaire. He thus develops a more subjective outlook on life:

UNDERSHAFT: *I was a dangerous man until I had my will: now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person (p.499).*

Undershaft’s concern about issues outside himself manifests itself in his acknowledgement that the only way to free people’s souls is to liberate them from material needs. He recommends a reassessment of church catechism to acknowledge that money and gunpowder are the two matters on which salvation rests. His version of charitable works is based on the association of the deadly sins with the backbreaking necessities of food and clothing. By virtue of his masculine way of thinking, Undershaft cannot perceive that any kind of love exists apart from the one that a Jenny Hill is capable of harbouring. The conscientious industrialist despises this kind of love, and rightly so. On the other hand, Barbara’s love is absolute and she admits it. She towers



above her father in her ability to devise in her mind a type of individuality that embraces love with both hands. In fact the core of Barbara's moral construction is the love of humanity. As the Bill Walker episode indicates, Barbara believes that individuality is not separate from love; that to love the other person is to help them to preserve their human dignity. Barbara and her fiancé, Cusins, who shares her moral attitude, accept the burden of the Undershaft inheritance. The couple are to attempt to express their love of the underprivileged people by arming them against the privileged:

CUSINS: As a teacher of Greek I gave the intellectual man weapons against the common man. I now want to give the common man weapons against the intellectual man. I love the common people. I want to arm them against the lawyers, the doctors, the priests . . .(p.502).

Undershaft, despite his sympathy with the poor and his recognition of poverty as the "worst of crimes," disapproves of his daughter's and her fiancé's policy (p.489). He will not favour the poor man with his support against the rich man. Undershaft's moral socialization as a male dictates that he considers all people as having equal rights to fight. Showing sympathy is a type of sentimentalism that Undershaft finds incompatible with his sense of individuality. He states his policy thus: "To give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles: to aristocrat and republican, to Nihilist and Tsar, to Capitalist and Socialist. . .etc" (p.497). Undershaft's morality is, without doubt, the morality of harsh justice. Barbara calls her father's conduct "childish naughtiness":

BARBARA [to Cusins]: Oh, If only I could get away from you and from father and from it all! If I could have the wings of a dove and fly away to heaven! . . . Yes, you, and all the other naughty mischievous children of men (p.502).

Men's naughtiness allows them to get away with initiating war. It gives them the power "to burn women's houses down and kill their sons and tear their husbands to pieces" (p.502). The masculine mentality, which Undershaft adopts, is responsible for instigating war. As an individual, Undershaft's war philosophy might be accepted, even admired; nevertheless it is still part of the masculine mentality which brings about unnecessary destruction. Undershaft as a male can get away with this sort of "evilness" because his style of life has allowed him to retain his charm. There is an emphasis in the play on the implicit connection between Undershaft's charm and his being the male-father, thus not the female-mother. The word "naughtiness" itself implies "boyish charms" rather than "evilness." Shaw is exploring the effect which the ideology of the separate spheres formulations has on the psychology of the sexes and, hence upon the welfare of society.

On one level the word "naughtiness" reminds us of Lady Britomart's maternal ways which assume that all men are children. In a way Barbara's description of her father's public power as a kind of "boyish disobedience" affirms that, to the end, Barbara is her mother's daughter. She has a distinctive, female outlook on life. Nevertheless, by making Barbara use the word "naughtiness" in this context Shaw is not out to disparage women. This might have been the case if the speech belonged to Lady Britomart.

Barbara's originality, and the fact that Shaw approves of her overall moral outlook, make this word seem more a criticism of the masculine rather than the feminine elements.

In *Arms and the Man* Shaw overthrows ideas prompted by traditional war propaganda. In the primitive society of the play the upper classes, who are the upholders of the nation's ethos, directly encourage war and imperial expansion because they possess a primitive sense of morality which glorifies sensational patriotism with a yet undeveloped sense of human rights. Catherine, who is at pains to ensure that she always does the "right" and "proper" thing, is outraged that her husband, the top military man in Bulgaria, has agreed to stop the war and make peace with the enemies. "You could have annexed Serbia and made Prince Alexander Emperor of the Balkans," says she by way of reprimanding Petkoff (p.102). By contrast, *Major Barbara* is set in the West in a milieu that is more advanced on the evolutionary scale than the environment of *Arms and the Man*. The social atmosphere of the first play has benefited from the libertarian and radical movements of the turn of the century. The upper classes, who are no less the setters of the moral tone of the community than their counterparts in *Arms and the Man*, think that it is good manners to show contempt for the backers of human destruction. Lady Britomart, the daughter of an earl, bars her husband from the family home because of his evil profession as an arms manufacturer. "I really cannot bear an immoral man," she exclaims in Stephen's presence (p.463).

Nevertheless, Lady Britomart is, unwittingly rather than deliberately, a sponsor of war. In this she is not greatly dissimilar to Catherine and her own disgraced husband, Undershaft; Lady Britomart has a segregationist attitude which asserts that her class has

the right to assess the moral worth of the other social groups and on that premise to determine the way arms are to be distributed. The aristocratic lady is hence not against war, but against the individuals who oppose the authority of her class. Besides, Lady Britomart is a greedy consumer and the buying power of her and those like her is the mainstay of unjust economical systems which, in turn, are at the heart of the war activity. Shaw's perspective in the two war plays *Arms and the Man* and *Major Barbara* is that ruling classes, in both primitive and advanced societies, who are also the determinants of the moral tone of these societies, are benefactors of war. One of the reasons for the persistence of the fighting spirit across stages of human development is the fact that the sexual binary system, which both plays emphasize as one of the strongest causes of war, has survived cultural changes.

The sharp polarization of sexual values is the model for human organization and one of the strongest causes of social shortcomings in the issues diagnosed in the rest of the plays in this chapter. In *Candida* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, the segregation of gender-marked values is subverted through the feeling of repulsion and apprehension that family relations governed by sharply divided sexual values leave in us. The self-realizing protagonists of the two plays Vivie and Eugene do not offer a solution to the sex discrimination that repulsed them a great deal, although they enhance the subversive aspect of the play by the bitter edge of their resentment. In *Man and Superman* the issue of sexual segregation and the matter of the self-realizing protagonist's attitude to it are contained within the overwhelming relativity of the plays' ideology. As such, the questions proposed for diagnosis in the play, including the sexual binary system and the

fate of the protagonist, are left open to many interpretations, some of which are deeply metaphysical.

In *Major Barbara* and *Arms and the Man*, sexual polarization is identified as one of the main reasons for human unhappiness, both in the public and the private realms. It is the stimulator of tension in the domestic sphere, and the instigator of war in the public sphere. Unlike the rest of the plays in this chapter, Shaw's war-related plays provide an alternative to corruption. They suggest that the right combination of sexual values, used as models for thought, might provide a possible social remedy. And contrary to the protagonists of the three individual plays discussed earlier in this chapter, who are reluctant to accept their tainted world, the self-realizing protagonists of *Arms and the Man* and *Major Barbara* wholeheartedly agree to stay and attempt to positively change the adverse circumstances of their world. The moral question in these two plays is partly localized in the rightness and wrongness of war activities, particularly as they infringe onto gender relations.

### **The Female Portrait**

Shaw contributed to the woman question mainly by iconoclastically overthrowing the image of the ideal woman who was almost an angel in her gentleness, passivity and self-abnegation. His disapproval of this stereotype was so intense that he made the heroine of his first play, *Widowers' Houses*, dramatically fierce whilst still attractive. Blanche Sartorius's coarseness partly satisfies Shaw's appetite for knock-about scenes and comic verbal assaults that are distinct features of the popular entertainment tradition.

In addition, the coarseness partly indicates Shaw's rejection of the notion, predominant in the mainstream theatre of the day, that a woman who cannot conform to the female cultural ideal should be socially alienated. Shaw not only makes his heroine unorthodox, he refuses to estrange her from the other characters. Blanche is nearer to the centre of society than to its periphery because she is still embraced within the realm of accepted love and fecundity. She is loved by several people including her father, her suitor, and her maid. The play, which Shaw wrote for the newly established Independent Theatre, was subjected to a great deal of criticism mainly because of the character of the heroine.

Shaw has reconstructed the female image which embodied traditional feminine traits like passivity to replace it with another of his own invention. The Shavian woman's identity, in any shape it might take, has deep undertones of activity as opposed to passivity. In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Vivie's refusal to be shut up in a relationship that delineates her as passive and private is the main stimulator of the dramatic conflict in the play. She is a woman whose definition of herself is purely based on values which have masculine connotations, most importantly professionalism and its concomitant, activity. What is more, she is not condemned by the dramatist either for her rejection of the roles of daughter and wife or for her insistence on a self definition which contradicts the image of the ideal woman. If the young woman is condemned at all, it is because of her self-imposed banishment from a world in need of reform. Barbara's and Vivie's systems of morals are both rooted in the public sphere, and both are favoured by the dramatist. Yet, the most dramatized female vocation, on the material and psychological levels alike, is embedded in the private, and not the public, sphere. This vocation is parenting.

Although in the rebellious author's plays the dice are often loaded against women who possess concentrated doses of motherliness, like Catherine Petkoff and Candida, his admiration of the energy involved in caring for families cannot be denied. Energy implies activeness and Shaw's women are first and foremost initiators and determinants of the shape of things, and not, like the conventional women of their time, innate idolatry items. The Shavian women's parenting is a form of activity carried out by individuals with agency within and upon their lives, rather than creatures through or to whom things simply happened. Both Candida and Catherine are the main upholders of the social and economic stability of the family by virtue of their solid practicality and hard clarity of the mind.

In Shaw's drama the female characters' procreative energy is never overtly sexual, except in the case of Blanche Sartorius who is the only Shavian heroine to openly exhibit sexual feelings. Nevertheless, in dealing with the dramatist's ambiguousness on the question of female sexuality, it might be wise to reason out that since woman's procreative ability is active and not passive, it necessarily implies a certain form of libido. Since woman is the main spinner of the generative wheel, she must be the stimulating and the motivating force for its key dynamic, libido. In order for her sexually agentic role to be expedient, her physical nature must encompass this type of sexual energy combining, as it does, the pleasure principle with the procreative instinct. Traditional moral sentiment separated sexuality from reproduction by making women the latter's passive agent. It therefore limits women's role to that of a "vessel" for carrying the next generation. The role abolishes the need for women to participate in activating the machinery of breeding and its key element, sexuality.

The unifying of the procreative forces with sexual impulses in the Shavian manner helps to reconstruct female identity as whole and not fragmented, integrating the quality of the approved mother with the quality of the impassioned woman. By contrast, the traditional female identity is divided into two groups: the “non-sexual” good woman and the “sexual” bad woman. This division emphasizes women’s passivity by allowing her to be assessed against an abstract ideal of female virtue. Women’s social worth is thus measured against their ability to passively offer themselves to the best bidder. The fallen women of traditional drama—Mrs. Dane, Agnes Ebbsmith, and Paula Tanqueray--all forfeit this stagnant potential, and are consequently punished for it. Shaw counterpoised the notion of purity with an ideal of his own. His women’s moral worth, like that of men, is measured through active roles which, though, at times, are domestic, have profound economical and social significance.

Candida, for instance, is not condemned for her pseudo-affair with Eugene, nor is she jettisoned for her rejection of the conception of virtue. She is condemned for her business underhandedness. She has abused her post as the guardian of the realm of love and fecundity by fostering psychological dependency in her dependants, which is one of the means through which she conserves her supremacy. Mrs Warren is not criticized for her “unmentionable” profession, but for her active participation in a corrupt economic and social system. By the same token, Vivie Warren’s moral worth is not measured against her refusal to admit familial relationship or her rejection of the role of the wife and daughter. If the self-realizing protagonist is blamed at all, it is because she is an unknowing participant in her mother’s capitalist system through the money which the



latter has spent on her education. In addition, she has abandoned her responsibility as a socially enlightened person by choosing an apathetic style of life.

Shaw's reinterpretation of the role of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has much in common with that of "second wave feminist historians." The latter's fundamental claim is that in order to record history efficiently, we need to find an alternative way of reviving it, particularly the part which is concerned with public/private division and women's place in this division. Feminist historians put women at the centre of inquiry exploring past conditions in reference to her specific circumstances at a given period of history. They thus investigate bygone days starting from the conception of woman as the positive norm, and thus as a newly acknowledged actor and doer. Considered in this fashion, the nineteenth-century private realm with its images of suppressed middle-class women was revised with attention to this woman's private but central and authoritative hold on reproduction (24). By casting Edwardian women, especially those involved in reproduction as actors, and not simply receivers of action, Shaw has revised the female principle of passivity to replace it with the male principle of activity in the fashion of "second wave feminist" historians. By reversing the metaphor of passivity which has been imbuing women's image Shaw has brought women nearer to their right place at the centre of society.

## CHAPTER 5

### NOTES

1. Margery M. Morgan, *The Shavian Playground: An Exploration of the Art of George Bernard Shaw* (London: Methuen, 1972) p.1.
2. [George] Bernard Shaw, *The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw* (London: Odhams Press, 1937) p. 379. All Quotations from Shaw's plays which are discussed in this chapter are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
3. Gilligan's attitude is explained in more detail in the Chapter on Barker, p. 153-154.
4. [George] Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah: A Metabiological Pentateuch* (London: Constable and Company, 1921) p. xxiii.
5. Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (London: California UP, 1978) p.180.
6. Chodorow, p.180.
7. Chodorow, p.180.
8. Margery M. Morgan, *The Shavian Playground*, p.72.
9. Robert F. Whitman, *Shaw and the Play of Ideas* (London: Cornell Up, 1977) p. 196.
10. Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Moment* (London: Cassell, 1994) p. 25.

11. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (1990; London: Vintage, 1991) p. 12.
12. [George] Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (London: Constable and Company, 1929) p. 39.
13. Wolf, p. 93.
14. Wolf, the chapter on work, p. 20-57.
15. Jill Davis, "The New Woman and the New Life," *The New Woman and her Sisters: Feminism and Theatre 1850-1914*, eds. Viv Gardner and Susan Rutherford (Hertfordshire: Harvester/ Wheatsheaf, 1992) p.24.
16. Marlie Parker Wasserman, "Vivie Warren: A Psychological Study," *Fabian Feminist: Bernard Shaw and Women*, ed. Rodelle Weintraub (London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1977) pp. 168-173.
17. Keith M. May, *Ibsen and Shaw* (London: Macmillan, 1985) p. 114.
18. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.3.
19. Shaw, in this instance, has concentrated on reflecting the changing texture of society on class, rather than sexual, grounds. As Tanner tells Octavius of Straker, his class-conscious driver: "Here have we literary and cultured persons been for years setting up a cry of the New Woman whenever some unusually old fashioned female came along, and never noticing the advent of the New Man. Straker's the New Man (p.353).
20. Frigga Haug, *Beyond Female Masochism: Memory-Work and Politics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992) pp.49-50.

21. Michael Holroyd, "*Women and the Body Politic*," *The Genius of Shaw: A Symposium*, ed. Michael Holroyd (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979) p.171.
22. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1938).
23. Chodorow, p. 181.
24. See Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Avon, 1977). See also Nancy Armstrong, "*The Rise of the Domestic Woman*," Nancy Armstrong, and Leonard Tennenhouse eds, *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and Society* (London: Methuen, 1987). The writer highlights the role which women played in improving the economy of the rising middle classes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Women's management of money matters within their domestic realms helped to promote the finances of these upcoming social groups. Armstrong, however, has certain reservations about patriarchy's prescription of the female character in those years.

## CHAPTER 6

### JOHN GALSWORTHY

Galsworthy is comparable to the rest of the "new dramatists" in that he explores the harmful effect of the segregation of sexual values on the moral health of society. He nonetheless differs from his counterparts in one significant matter. He does not directly offer substitutes for the situations he critically dramatizes. Galsworthy's ardent desire is to portray life as it is without much interference from the dramatist's own point of view, whether emotional or rational. Galsworthy's declared dramatic objective is

to set before the public no cut-and-dried codes, but the phenomena of life and character, selected and combined, *but not distorted*, by the dramatist's outlook, set down without fear, favour, or prejudice, leaving the public to draw such poor moral as nature may afford (1).

The extent to which Galsworthy manages to achieve his professed goal has been debated by a number of critics. Nevertheless it must be admitted that he has achieved his realistic aesthetic in so far as he manages to exclude self-reflection and even moral bias in certain aspects of his drama. If not his central philosophy, at least some of the details that elaborate this philosophy are without subjective ideological or personal resonance. For instance there is the fastidious way in which he successfully represents the majority of characters on all sides of a dramatic conflict as equally complex, equally noble and

ignoble. There is the fashion in which he resists providing solutions for problematic situations that call for them, as Shaw does in *Major Barbara*, for example. Shaw makes Cusins and Barbara take over the relatively immoral cannon business and transfer its moral outlook. Philip's change of career and moral attitude in *The Madras House* is an example of Barker's habit of offering direct substitutes for morally defective situations.

To construct his special sense of social realism, Galsworthy employs techniques which are at once extremely naturalistic and extremely stylistic. The dualism of the technique synthesizes the essence of nature, as opposed to merely mimicking it. In some places the dramatist allows photographic means of representation to be so intense as to inspire pity and pathos. In *Justice* he emphasizes the plight of a young, sensitive convict who is imprisoned for the first time for a crime that circumstance has forced him to commit. When Falder is discovered in his solitary cell, it is obvious that the vulnerable young man is not able to adjust to being treated as a criminal. He is filled with horror at the state of compulsory exile in which he finds himself. Alternating and oppressive doses of silence and noise, light and darkness, affect his mind and begin to unsettle him in the extreme:

*A sound from far away, as of distant, dull beating on thick metal, is suddenly audible. FALDER shrinks back, not able to bear this sudden clamour. But the sound grows, as though some great tumbril were rolling towards the cell. And gradually it seems to hypnotize him. He begins creeping inch by inch nearer to the door. The banging sound, travelling from cell to cell, draws closer and closer; FALDER'S hands are seen moving as if his spirit had already joined in*

*this beating, and the sound swells till it seems to have entered the very cell. He suddenly raises his clenched fists. Panting violently, he flings himself at his door, and beats on it (2).*

The emotional intensity of this scene makes magnificent theatre, so magnificent that it prompted the Home Secretary at the time, Winston Churchill, who was present among the audience during the first production of the play (1910), to introduce further reforms in prison conditions.

However, extensive realistic details are not allowed total autonomy. A rigid stylistic spine prevents the drama from collapsing into unilaterality, into mirroring nothing but its own particularity. One of the most prominent devices of such aesthetic control is the use of close parallelism. This method--which Galsworthy applies to the action, plot, characterization, and dialogue alike--helps to preserve his neutrality towards his material. It also stands as a metaphor for one of the most prominent theses in his drama: the exposition of the mechanistic model which governs most public and private contemporary institutions. The supremely unyielding and impassive nature of parallelism echoes the function of power-driven, soulless patriarchal formations. Parallelism and the mechanistic image it projects give expression to another of Galsworthy's persistent concerns, the extensive presence of sharply divided human groups on sexual and social levels. Here parallelism implies the notion of irreconcilability. The segregation is perpetuated by the enormous machine of patriarchal indoctrination that has been operating and turning out its divisive forces for a long time. This division is what the social order, backed-up by patriarchy, wishes to see infused into social consciousness.

The mechanistic model and its polarizing agencies lie at the heart of the dramatic conflict in the four plays discussed in this chapter. *The Silver Box* and *Justice* investigate the function of these agencies in the realm of the law. *Strife* questions the class discordance that is perpetuated by the working of the divisive machinery of patriarchal culture. In the first three plays the sharp division of sexual values is only part of the function of the capitalist-patriarchal machinery. In *The Fugitive*, however, the issue of gender discrimination is paramount.

### The Silver Box (1906)

In *The Silver Box* Galsworthy uses symmetrical structure in order to expose the fact that there is one law for the poor and one law for the rich. A poor out-of-work groom and the son of a prosperous politician commit similar petty crimes. Jack Barthwick, the politician's son, steals the purse of a young woman whom he has been accompanying for the evening. Jones, the groom, having supported the physically unstable Jack and brought him home, steals the young woman's purse in addition to a silver cigarette box. The two men's motives for the thefts are identical. Both men have committed the offence out of spitefulness. Jack feels vengeful towards the young woman as a result of some disagreement between them, whilst Jones is incensed at a society which allows some to enjoy tremendous affluence, while denying others the basic necessities of living.

Jack's family hires a good lawyer who manipulates the court so well that he makes the young man's crime seem minor. Jones, on the other hand, is sentenced to a month's hard labour. Despite the fact that they both commit the same crime, Jack's



money rescues him from Jones's grim destiny. Dialogue reinforces this relentless parallelism. In the court scene the magistrate interrogates and reprimands Jones in public with the same words that Barthwick uses to reprimand his son in private:

MAGISTRATE: Do you mean to say you were so drunk that you can remember nothing?

JACK: [*Softly to his father*] I say, that's exactly what---- (p.43).

MAGISTRATE: Your conduct here has been most improper. You give the excuse that you were drunk when you stole the box. I tell you that is no excuse. If you choose to get drunk and break the law afterwards you must take the consequences. And let me tell you that men like you, who get drunk and give way to your spite or whatever it is that's in you, are---are---a *nuisance to the community*.

JACK: [*Leaning from his seat*] Dad! That's what you said to me? (p.47).

The unfairness of the law is further exposed by the fact that the magistrate takes the incident of Jack's drunkenness lightly; he is even amused by it. Thus the magistrate's reprimand of Jones for his loose, drunkard habits is shown to be extremely unjust. As far as he is concerned, the drunkenness and disorderliness of the powerful politician's son are merely high spirited whilst the underprivileged man's identical conduct is criminal: Jack's behaviour is metaphorically seen as white, whilst Jones's is black. Galsworthy has gone to a great deal of trouble to balance the different elements of the play, in order to bring to the surface this essential black/white duality. Through this static, contrasted

situation Galsworthy exposes the hypocrisy of the law. The close balancing of the positions of the two families against each other is part of the fastidious symmetrical aesthetic structure in which he aims to expose a significant paradox. It is the contrast between the way in which the law treats the Barthwicks and the way it handles the Joneses. The paradox forcefully reflects the administration of the machinery of moral double standard by the judicial establishment. The machinery has been transcending sharp class divisions within which equally polarized ethical codes are perpetuated for centuries.

### Justice (1910)

The analysis of the mechanistic model permeating the legal process in *Justice* is more complex and comprehensive than that underlying *The Silver Box*. The sporadic make-up of the former play affords a series of settings which represent various aspects of this process. The dramatic march through several episodes in the course of judgement and punishment exposes the narrow outlook of the traditional judicial system. The system fails in its application to the extenuating circumstances of Falder's special case. Falder is a junior clerk in James and Walter How's solicitors' office. His reason for committing his crime is to enable him to elope with Ruth Honeywill, the woman he loves, who is married to a drunken fiend. The forgery comes to light and despite the attempts of the office workers to persuade James to forgive Falder and not press charges, James insists on handing Falder over to the police.

During the course of the next two acts Galsworthy tries to expose the failure of the traditional judicial system to understand the extenuating circumstances of Falder's special case. After a long trial scene, in which all the evidence and the extenuating circumstances are represented, Falder is found guilty. The law, in the person of the judge, ignores the fact that Falder is essentially an honest man who has been driven to crime by extremely adverse private circumstances. The law, moreover, is oblivious to the fact that by treating Falder as a criminal he is likely to become one. Frome, the counsel for the defence, pleads with the Judge to consider Falder as a patient and not a criminal.

FROME: Gentlemen, men like the prisoner are destroyed daily under our law for want of that human insight which sees them as they are, patients, and not criminals. If the prisoner be found guilty, and treated as though he were a criminal type, he will, as all experience shows, in all probability become one (p.244).

Many aspects of the play are designed to evoke images of a machine wheeling relentlessly towards a seemingly calculated, but actually random point. One of the best examples of this technique is detected in the dramatization of Falder's condition in the cell. James How triggers the activation of the first part of the machine when he calls in the police. Motion is then transferred from one part to another, as the setting moves across the different locales along the path which the course of Falder's judgement, and ultimate harsh punishment, takes. The machine of justice spins in an obsessive manner, following what seems to be a logically drawn-up scheme, but turns out to be nothing but its own particularity. The scene moves from the solicitors' office, to the courtroom, to different cells, all situated in the corridor leading up to Falder's cell. At this last locale,

which exposes the inhuman treatment of prisoners, the inanity and stupidity of the legal process are revealed. One of the best examples of Galsworthy's use of the metaphor of machinery to expose the oppressive working of the institutions that adopt the mechanistic model as their frame of reference is found in this scene. The sordid tragedy of Falder's collapse is highly accentuated by a muffled sound which resembles the noise produced by a slowly approaching power-driven machine. Like the noise of an engine moving closer, the sound in Falder's cell gradually increases in volume until it deafens him (p. 261).

It is ironic that the more rigid the deductive logic of the law, the less insight it affords into the essence of humanity. Paradoxically enough, it was for the happiness of this same humanity that the legal system initially evolved. This central paradox of the legal system renders it closer to extreme absurdity than to extreme rationality. The moral chaos resulting from this absurdity brings about an impasse in Falder's life, ultimately causing his suicide. Even after he is released, the ex-convict continues to be persecuted by the inane functioning of the mechanistic model, in this instance manifested in the blind machinery of social stigmatization. The sentence that Falder receives remains a black mark in his character that unfairly alienates him from society, causing him to be caught in a vicious circle of wrongdoing and repentance:

FALDER: I seem to be struggling against a thing that's all round me. I can't explain it: it's as if I was in a net; as fast as I cut it here, it grows up there (p.266).

The model of mechanism which governs the legal system carries overtones of control. Justice forces complete objectivism on its employees to ensure the law's control of the human material under scrutiny from within, as much as from without. James How, his office staff, the learned counsels, and the prison administrators, all stand in the same position in relation to the tension existing between the arbitrary machine of the law and the specificness of Falder's case. Although they all appreciate the extenuating circumstances of Falder's offence, the sympathies of those who are employed in legal institutions crumble when they come into conflict with the law. The detachment of the men of the law from the human situation in the law fulfills the atomic model's prescription of the relationship between the human being and his external world. This model enforces a power relation between these two aspects of the universe, a relation that thrives through conflict and separation rather than through harmony and connection. This fact is powerfully reflected in James How's attitude which is shown in a conversation with his son. The father finds the idea of empathizing with Falder's difficulty inconceivable:

WALTER: Put yourself in his place, father.

JAMES: You ask too much of me (p.229).

The excessively sensible man, whose ability to think logically reflects the unyieldingly rational nature of his job, refuses to view Falder's problem from a participant's standpoint. The external operator, the world's objectifier, prefers to consider this problem from the controller's position; thus he relieves himself of the moral guilt that might ensue from his understanding the emotional reality of the situation,

particularly Falder's desperate mental and physical state. The law which James How represents concerns itself with the enforcement of mechanistic order and not the actual solving of human problems. The process of Falder's judgement and punishment is not meant to correct him and educate him to live in harmony with society. Rather it aims at mechanically categorizing him as a social misfit. On the strength of this classification the machinery of "justice" places Falder in his supposedly right place on the fringes of society.

The interrelation between the form, the content, and the actual presence of the audience in the theatre does a great deal to enhance the imagery of justice as relentless, soulless machine. The development of the plot is prolonged. The virtual happenings in Act I, for instance, might take much less time in a conventional well-made play scheme. There is very little plot apart from the discovery of the forgery and James How's interrogation of Falder. The rest of the act is devoted to the photographic details of the daily routine in the solicitors' office. The intervals are filled with conversations--encompassing a great deal of legal jargon--that have a double function. The interaction between the characters during the performance of their duties reveals the peculiarity of each one of them, particularly their attitudes to the legal system. For example there is James How, the reasonable man who has the privilege of money and influence, and whose self-justified wisdom helps to enforce the mechanistic power of justice. There is also Cokeson, the compassionate, albeit timid, managing clerk of the solicitors' office. He is in constant struggle between his desire to help Falder and his deep deference for the law. One of the moments that best illustrates the technique of profitably delayed plot-lines takes place just prior to James How's interrogation of Falder. The moment, which

involves the inquisitor and Cokeson, reveals the main traits of the two characters, at the same time as it indicates the tension existing between the narrative and the naturalistic lines of the drama:

COKESON: You don't want to upset the young man in there, do you? He's a nervous young feller.

...

JAMES: It's a matter of form; but I can't stand upon niceness over a thing like this—too serious. Just talk to Mr. Cowley.

...

COKESON: [*Bursting into voice*] Do you keep dogs? (pp.225-226).

The photographic details which are so organized and restrained by the selective arrangement of incidents offer a view of an organized semblance to life. The technique has another utility. It functions as an oppressive machine diligently intent on its purpose which is to entrap both the audience and the world of the play in a conflict between the artificiality of contrived suspense and the realism of naturalistic details. The audience is eager to watch the unveiling of the incidents, which are, in turn, deftly proportioned by the dramatist. In this the audience is as much a pawn in the motor-driven machinery of the play as Falder is a cog in the wheel of justice. As such, the dramatist recreates the relationship between the audience and the world of the play replacing a relationship of disconnected objectivity with involved observation. At the same time the spectators are distanced from the dramatic material by Galsworthy's habitual rigid stylistic devices. Galsworthy is trying to achieve the right balance between drama and audience, between

the cultural/sexual principles of attachment and detachment, connection and separation, personal and impersonal.

Indeed, the functional interrelatedness between sexual values is a strong undercurrent in *Justice*. It is however more focused in the part of the play's system of thoughts which is concerned with the sexual double standard. The play exposes sexual discrimination in social rules, written and unwritten alike, especially as they take their supreme formal shape in the legal system. This theme is most powerfully dramatized through balancing Falder's position against that of Ruth. The latter is the former's counterpart on the female side. She is, like him, underprivileged both in terms of her social position as a downtrodden wife of a violent husband, and in terms of her inherent want of personal strength. She, like her lover, has committed a social offence. Hers is running away from the marital home and having an affair with Falder. Both characters have been discharged by the machinery of the judicial and moral systems for their inability to stick to the general guidelines for conduct prescribed by these systems. The two share the same extenuating circumstances that have triggered their offences. It is Ruth's abuse at the hands of her husband that has driven her to adultery; and it is the same spousal ill treatment of his girlfriend that prompts Falder to attempt to swindle the money necessary for the couple's elopement.

Falder's time in gaol deprives Ruth of the only male who could protect and provide for her, and in consequence she resorts to prostitution. The social externalization which this profession entails equals Falder's banishment in prison. The nature of Falder's and Ruth's crimes are similar. Each tries to appropriate things that do not belong to them.



Falder intends to lay his hands on part of the firm's money, whilst Ruth misuses an object which is traditionally the property of her husband, and also subject to the control of social values. The object is, paradoxically, her own body. Both offenders stop at the threshold of their crimes and never manage to carry them out. The money cheat is discovered and the love cheat is prevented by her sense of decency from consummating the problematic love affair with Falder. The impeccable parallelism of the position of the male and female protagonists highlights the way in which the social order enhances the double standard in sexual relationships by attesting their moral worth on sharply divided terms. The male's ethical value is measured against his business integrity, the female's against her conduct in love. Traditional morality thus enhances the mind/body sexual duality.

The parallelism between Falder's and Ruth's positions serves another purpose. It indicates that the offences of the two characters are equal both in ethical terms and in the eyes of the law. Still, if by any possibility, the social order is to show some leniency, it is prepared to forgive Falder but not Ruth. James How, the stern upholder of orthodox judicial processes, is at one point ready to give Falder his job back, provided that the latter renounces his girlfriend. James then gives the ex-convict a chance to reinstate himself in a position nearer to the centre of society as a respectable clerk, whilst he denies the ex-convict's lady friend the same opportunity. In the course of the play James puts forward two equally convincing cases against reinstating either of the two outcasts to social legitimacy. The solicitor maintains that it is "out of the question" to send Falder "out amongst people who've no knowledge of his character," because one "must think of

society” (p.229). As for Ruth, she is branded by the righteous man as a “real bad egg” (p.228).

Although the supposedly sound-thinking lawyer believes that both Falder and Ruth are equally dangerous to society, he is still prepared to favour Falder, but not Ruth, with his tolerance. This is despite the fact that Ruth is a more authentic sufferer than Falder. It is she who has been exposed to unbearable living conditions in her marital home, including psychological bullying and direct physical attacks. Indeed she has once been strangled almost to death. Falder’s initial experience of unpleasantness, on the other hand, is indirect. He suffers as a result of his emotional attachment to the battered wife, and not as a result of a direct pain inflicted straight on him. If it is Falder who later has to carry out the criminal action in response to injury, it is because he is the male and hence the actor, as opposed to Ruth, the female who is a non-actor. Ruth’s passivity as a female is another handicap with which she is blighted. The wronged woman is thus, in a sense, the start, middle, and end victim of the piece.

Ruth’s position admits of comparison with Mrs. Jones’s condition in *The Silver Box*. Like the defeated young wife, the downtrodden charwoman is crushed under the unyielding wheels of the machine-like function of masculine institutional formations. She is frequently abused by these formations either as they officially materialize in the legal mode, or as they are individualized in the literary sick shape of a brutal husband. As if it was not enough that the public realm, in the form of the law, is prejudiced against her and her like, she has to undergo abuse in the private sphere too. She is systematically battered by her husband. Moreover, she is humiliated in the Barthwick home, in which

she is employed as a cleaner, by being readily suspected of the theft of the silver cigarette box partly on the "evidence" of her needy background. Mrs. Jones is subjected to a great deal of prejudice both on class and gender levels despite the fact that she is the most productive person in sight. She is constantly engaged in housework either at the Barthwick residence or in her own home. She informs us of the amount of work she does each week during Barthwick's cross-examination of her: "I have a day in Stamford Place Thursdays. And Mondays and Wednesdays and Fridays I come here" (p.17).

In *Justice* Galsworthy lays bare the effect of the mechanistic model as it manifests itself in the judicial process. The blind and machine-like pattern of thought and action disregards human particularities and diversity tossing out, as it does, the weak and the underprivileged, the category of which Falder and Ruth are representative. One of the most effective ways in which Galsworthy dramatizes the blindness of the mechanistic model is by marrying photographic details to a well-made plot and a meticulous selection and organizing of dramatic material. The uneasy fusion of flexible naturalism with rigid stylization evokes, in literal and metaphorical terms, the inhibition and tension created by the presence of the mechanistic model. The dramatist presents women to be the social group which is most affected by this inhibiting function of a machine-like way of making sense of human experience. He balances the situation of the male sufferer against the position of the female sufferer, throwing dramatic emphasis on the ultimate victimization of women.

Moral confusion is a distinctive feature of the mechanistic model which governs all aspects of Western culture, including gender relations. The prevalent ethical codes

cause sexual values to stand at opposite poles, ensuring the absence of a consistent sense of right and wrong in gender relations. Women's morals are thus couched in body/love metaphors, men's in mind/business symbols. Women's offences in their assigned field, the field of body and emotions, are irredeemable because the image of the body, often controlled by the mind, is geared to notions of passivity. The latter metaphor, which is considered a vital component of proper femininity, is one of the main tools which the social order uses to prevent women from entering the public arena. Misconducting oneself in activities that have body/sexual connotations is synonymous with subverting the principle of passivity which is much guarded by patriarchy. The polarization of sexual values and the disproportion in the size of the punishment administered to each sex for identical types of transgressions against the codes of propriety are part of the circumstances that have led to the unfavourable state of Falder's life. In such wise, *Justice* stands out as an indictment against the chaotic function of the mechanistic mode of thought which pervades life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is central to moral disorientation and waste in society.

### Strife (1909)

In *Justice* and *The Silver Box* Galsworthy explores the role of the mechanistic model in perpetuating class and gender segregation, particularly as this model yields its power through official legal institutions. In *Strife*, the same thematic elements are analyzed within the context of another masculine institutional formation, namely capitalism. Although the play dramatizes the dispute between Labour and Capital in an industrial town on the borders of England and Wales, its main focus is not on the validity

of the Labour versus Capital ethos. The two categories do not create each other, but the existence of both is a vital necessity of the machine-like function of the orthodox socio-political order which has been generating class division for a long time.

The moral question in the play is concerned with the shape that moral consciousness can take in a community deeply imbued with the capitalist ethos. The investigation along these lines is largely guided by the observation of the philosophy of the two leaders of the disputing groups, Anthony and Roberts, who can be classified as non-traditionalists. This latter category is the highest moral rank that a Galsworthy male character can reach. The other male members of the two groups can be knit together into one traditionalist set, that of the followers. The play studies the moral attitude of this group collectively and measures it against Anthony's and Roberts's set of virtually identical ethical codes. There is no major moral conflict between the members of the followers' group. They are less elevated than the leaders' group because they are devoid of individuality and assertive scrupulous vigour. They submissively gear themselves to the mechanistic model of thinking and its subsequent moral mayhem. It is a measure of their ethical shallowness that they are eager to find an immediate fix to the problem in hand regardless of the long-term effect of this solution on the next generation or on humanity in general.

On several occasions, Roberts professes his contempt for the workers' moral attitude. He deplores their selfishness and their narrow outlooks:

ROBERTS: They [the workers] can remember the women when their own bellies speak! The women never stops them from the drink; but from a little suffering to themselves in a sacred cause, the women stop them fast enough. . . . If they will go breeding themselves for slaves, without a thought o' the future o'them they breed---(p.126).

On their part, the members of the board are "unimaginative" with reference to the situation of the workers. They focus their attention mainly upon their professional interests in the dispute. They, like the workers, have their shares of petty interests. For example, they are devoted to the value of their shares, which occupies a sovereign place in the scope of their concerns.

The significance of the leaders' moral stance stems from the fact that they can be considered the most morally elevated characters whose will and energy are the only forces that keep the dispute alive. Anthony and Roberts possess what the followers lack, namely the regulating principle, combined with energy that detects the long-distant effect of a compromise between Labour and Capital on themselves, their families, and beyond these families, humanity in general. Both men have radical tendencies based on the idea that the world cannot be run by half-and-half measures. The play concentrates on the psychology of these two men and the destruction and suffering which they bring to their followers. Their political attitudes are seen to be derived from personal attitudes. Edgar, Anthony's son, says of his father's political tendency: "It goes to the roots of his beliefs" (p.141).

According to Frost, Anthony's old servant, Roberts is a man who does not forgive the world for the fact that he was not "born a gentleman." He says of Roberts: "He's not one of these 'ere ordinary 'armless Socialists. 'E's violent; got a fire inside 'im. What I call "personal." A man may 'ave what opinion 'e likes, so long as 'e's not personal; when 'e's that 'e's *not* safe" (pp.143-144). The personal element that Frost fears is perhaps the energy that emanates from Roberts's originality of thinking. This personal antipathy is not entirely, perhaps not at all, related to emotions and sentiments of anger or spitefulness. Both Anthony and Roberts are deferential and appreciative of each other. In the last act the two leaders' followers decide to compromise, much to the leaders' chagrin. Distraught and betrayed, Anthony and Roberts look at each other and "bend their heads in token of respect" (p.155).

The lack of passion in the two leaders' conduct is not the product of inhuman apathy. The genesis of Anthony's and Roberts' uniqueness is as much in their souls as in their minds. The individual emotions that the two men exhibit are the product of their analytical powers mingled with a private sense of responsibility for the well being of the people to whom they are attached. This uniqueness is also the consequence of their love of humanity in general. Both Anthony and Roberts see that compromise is only a way of gradually giving the other party more power, a matter which will, logically, lead to the emaciation of theirs. Both Anthony and Roberts realize that the interest of the Capitalist classes and of the Labour classes cannot be identical.

**ANTHONY:** It has been said that Capital and Labour have the same interests.

Cant! Their interests are as wide asunder as the poles. . . . This half-and-half

business, the half-and-half manners of this generation has brought all this upon us (p.151).

Anthony's insistence on the segregation of classes stems from his belief that the livelihood of his children depends entirely upon this segregation. This is made explicit in his response to his daughter Enid's insistence that he gives in to the demands of the men, Anthony says: "In a few years you and your children would be down in the condition they're in, but for those who have the eyes to see things as they are and the backbone to stand up for themselves (p.115).

Roberts is shrewd enough to see through the myth of working-class passivity. During the meeting of the strikers, he tries to correct the misconception that working-class submissiveness is inevitable. Thomas, one of the workers, insists that nature dictates that the workers should compromise and that their compromise is not shameful because it is willed by this mighty force. Roberts explains to the men that nature is not an unconquerable force, neither does it approve of their passivity. Moreover, nature itself is subordinate to human beings. This is a reality which the men can perceive in their everyday lives:

ROBERTS: *I tell you Nature's neither pure nor honest, just nor merciful. You chaps that live over the hill, an' go home dead beat in the dark on a snowy night—don't ye fight your way every inch of it? Do ye go lyin' down an' trustin' to the tender mercies of this merciful Nature?* (p.135).



Roberts's and Anthony's sympathy does not stop at their followers. Their interests extend to humanity in general:

ANTHONY: I am thinking of the future of this country, threatened with the black waters of confusion, threatened with mob government, threatened with what I cannot see (p.151).

ROBERTS: 'Tis not for this little moment of time we're fighting . . . not for ourselves, our own little bodies, and their wants, 'tis for all those that come after throughout all time . . . Oh! men—for the love o' them, don't roll up another stone upon their heads, don't help to blacken the sky, an' let the bitter sea in over them (p.137).

The question of morality in *Strife* is not a matter that is relevant to the dispute between Capital and Labour. We are asked to assess the moral worth of the followers against that of the leaders. The balance tips to the interest of the leaders as far as one is allowed to favour a Galsworthy character with more sympathy than the others. For Galsworthy's insistence on impartiality in every detail of plot, setting, and character makes it difficult to arrive at a clear-cut judgement of the moral worth of his *dramatis personae*. The two sides which are concerned with the moral question are well represented and the most that can be said about each side is said with equal emphasis. The play furnishes us with full realistic details of the state of poverty in which Roberts's followers live.

In Roberts's cottage Annie, his wife, is shown to be suffering from abject state of malnutrition. The description of the cottage vindicates the deprivation. There is but "a meagre" little fire burning and the room is "very barely furnished" (p.119). Annie's dilemma ostensibly wins our sympathy for the state of the followers on Roberts's side of which she is the best representative. Being Roberts's wife she is his immediate follower. On Anthony's side there is Enid, his daughter. We are asked to sympathize with her because she is in a state of constant anxiety about her father. On the other hand, both Roberts and Anthony are equally long suffering. Annie's situation invokes sympathy for Roberts since Annie is his treasured wife. There is an emphasis in the play on the fact that Anthony has not had any food for days. Furthermore, having a heart problem, Anthony is as much in danger of sudden collapse as Annie herself.

Both Anthony and Roberts have enough personal integrity to make them the nearest things to visionaries in sight. Yet, in the light of the disinterested situation in the play, the intense reality of a society deeply imbued by capitalist-segregationist ethos, and not the moral validity of individual actions, sticks out as the most significant issue. The ethical problem in the play is as much unmediated by the dramatist's outlook as possible. In the light of the relative objectivity of the play one is asked to assess the characters of the two leaders on a more complex, multi-sided basis. As such one might reflect about whether or not to have one's best self as a central authority, as the leaders do, is enough to ensure that one does the right thing. Internal moral authority should be supported by external circumstances. As such, one can have enough individuation to establish his own sense of right and wrong, but not in isolation from the social world. Galsworthy's perspective is that one's own thinking cannot be easily separated from that which is

available in the culture, that is to say, the philosophies and codes of behaviour that have common currency in it. Galsworthy might say with Matthew Arnold that “the extrication of the best self, the predominance of the *humane* instinct, will very much depend upon its meeting, or not, with what is fitted to help and elicit it” (3). The grotesque unreadiness of the world to accommodate a revisory spirit is also the reason that makes Philip, the zealous reformer of *The Madras House*, at least in part of his mind, laugh at his own overambitiousness.

Both Anthony and Roberts believe that their judiciousness will ultimately bring goodness to their followers. The two leaders are not aware that their social consciousness, which is one of the modes in which their moral wholeness materializes, brings about more destruction than the ethical fragmentation of their followers. This is because the two leaders' ideologies have an added advantage over the followers' outlook: they are upheld by more influential figures on both professional and moral levels. Anthony and Roberts are not only morally but also socially transcendent. Anthony has always been at the top of the executive ladder in his capitalist establishment. In the same way, Roberts is not a common man like the labourers he leads. Rather, “he’s an engineer--a superior man,” as Enid thinks of him (p.123). The influential position of the two leaders makes every fault in their ideologies doubly harmful to society. The erroneous aspects of Anthony’s and Roberts’ philosophies lie in their addiction to orthodox, masculine ethics. Their mental schemes are based on a typically masculine thesis. They have a strong conviction that they and their followers stand alone; that in this world there is no place for “others” or people who are unlike them:

ANTHONY: [*Holding up his hand*] There can only be one master, Roberts.

ROBERTS: Then, be Gad, it'll be us (p.111).

For Anthony justice towers above mercy as a moral value. As in *The Voysey Inheritance*, the son pleads for mercy as the father upholds the law of the survival of the fittest:

EDGAR: There is such a thing as Mercy.

ANTHONY: And Justice comes before it (p. 152).

Anthony perceives his son's softness as a dangerous path to feminization, the surrender of masculinity and mighty individualism. The two leaders' segregationist attitudes enhance the schism between classes and induce a strong feeling of inferiority and difference which could be instilled at a deeper level in human societies.

*Strife* offers a meticulous depiction of the schism existing between the two disputing classes on the material level which dictates a near loss of communication on almost all levels. The naturalistic representation is deepened and distilled by aesthetic means. The careful balancing of the elements of Labour life and those of Capitalist existence ensures, as much as possible, the dramatist's emotional distance from the material of his drama. It also, by its nature, underscores the metaphor of parallelism as implying irreconcilability. This very irreconcilability between the classes is what mainstream culture, presided over by masculinist institutions, wishes to infuse into the social consciousness. Anthony and Roberts are part of this culture and their unconscious

is but a piece of its subliminal being. Anthony, for instance, rejects the notion of equality between the classes on principle.

Nevertheless, Anthony's segregatism does not prevent him from showing sympathy for the suffering Annie Roberts. The simultaneous existence of the two polarized gender-marked values--connection through sympathy, and separation through segregation—inside Anthony's soul does not cause him any internal conflict. This is because, to his mind, the two impulses are separable. It is this vagueness and inconsistency of vision in one so robust in mind that show how immovably the orthodox current ideas of a culture can take hold of the imagination of individuals. Orthodox reasoning, which is normally based on uncertain shades and tones of sexual values, is so deeply rooted in popular imagination that it makes individuals accept "contradictory stances as being as normal as the fact that there are men and women" (4).

Women are placed on a different plane in terms of morality. This is perfectly in the spirit of Galsworthy's realism. Since women's tasks and positions on the private/public divide are different to those of men, it is, in naturalistic terms, correct that they should perceive and construe social reality differently. The play is at pains to convey that women have clearly and rigidly defined roles. These are the traditional female roles of nurturance and care. The female characters of both classes are constantly engaged in these activities. They are either busy expressing concern about the suffering on both sides of the dispute, or performing actual household duties, like seeing to meals, making baby frocks and so on. Even Annie Roberts, the dying woman, is constantly worried about her husband's tea.

Their exclusive proximity to those in need of care makes women feel the pain of suffering more acutely than men. When poor children are upset by hunger, it is their female relatives who have to find a way of quietening them, and not their male relatives. When Enid's father has not touched food for three days, she is the first to be informed of this fact by his butler because she is his prime carer. The devoted daughter thus has to experience the pain of being close to a tormented parent at first hand. Situations of suffering are held up to women naked and unavoidable, because they are not dressed up or suppressed by either ideological indoctrination or professional detachment, as they are for men. In addition, women's imposed passivity accentuates for them the agony of those whom they are nurturing. Women know the feeling of being constantly on the sideline, watching the game of competing for power from without and never from within. It is part of their duties as the carers and nurturers of the players to oversee the outward pattern of the game. Thus they can easily guess that the rationality of the players is failing.

Another unbearable condition that results from women's passivity is their utter displacement. Women are expected to be the ultimate bearers of the burden of nurture and care within exclusively private circumstances that are defined largely by public institutions. These public institutions are out of the range of women's direct control. Women are thus left in no-man's land between public and private realms. When a major problem takes place in the public sphere, it affects the lives of the people for whom women deeply care. Ineffectual in both territories, these nourishers and maintainers of men's lives can do nothing but wait passively to see the end of the disturbances that viciously invade their one and only sphere of interest. Madge Thomas, a labourer's daughter, voices her resentment of this state of things: "Waiting an' waiting. I've no

patience with it; waiting an' waiting—that's what a woman has to do! . . ." (p.129). This highly unfair and paradoxical situation makes women the eventual, endmost victims of injustice in both public and private institutions. It is Annie Roberts's death that alerts the combatants to the fact that the dispute has gone as far as it should and that a compromise must be reached.

Women's first hand experience of social reality makes them more qualified to settle the problems of the dispute than men. Enid and her counterpart on the Labour side, Madge, represent the strong-willed women who are not afraid to use their typical qualities, which they have acquired as a result of their close witnessing of suffering, to influence the outcome of the dispute on both sides. While both women have some unflattering remarks about the other class, both also express their disapproval of the principles of their own class. The two peacemakers move between the worlds of the disputing classes trying to bring their own feminine perspective to bear upon the matter. Although Madge and Enid share the same mentality as females, they are different in aspects relating to class feeling. Enid is perhaps able to be somewhat more objective in her outlook than Madge. This is because her views are not blurred by the poverty and deprivation which affect those of Madge. Besides, in realistic terms, it is not exceptional that Enid should feel sympathy with the lower classes from her comfortable stance as a middle-class woman. The situation does not hold in reverse. It is not plausible that Madge should feel the same sympathy towards the upper classes, especially since she and her dependants are at present suffering the worst that their economical position can cause them. For this reason Enid is the chief peacemaker in the play.

The moral judgement of this conscientious carer is grounded in the belief that the world coheres through human connection, rather than through a system of rules, principles, or professional types of relationships. In this she differs from her father and brother. For her father the conflict must be resolved from a premise of separation. Meanwhile, her brother wishes to grant the men all their demands regardless of the suffering which this will cause to his own father, and inadvertently pave the way for a possible future tyranny of labour, as Anthony fears. It is a measure of the unfeasibility of his views that he is unable to guess the right size of danger this outlook may bring on his father. If the men were given all their demands, Anthony would consider it a personal defeat and that would destroy him. According to Edgar's philosophy, one party should survive only at the cost of the other's annihilation. Enid's judiciousness on this matter, however, reflects the attitudes central to the ethics of care typical of the female. She envisions the destitution of the long-suffering workmen and their families, and seeks to respond to her father's requirements in a manner that sustains, rather than severs, connections. As such she reveals a renewed and original moral dimension which more accurately reflects women's thinking.

Edgar mistakes the multiple principles upon which Enid bases her ideas for a failure of logic and moral shallowness. At one point, Edgar rebukes his sister for her supposedly uncertain views on her father's position :“What is it you want? You said just now you hoped he'd make concessions. Now you want me to back him in not making them. This isn't a game, Enid!” Enid's answer reflects her attitude towards moral maturity which is the complete opposite to that of her brother. The well being of



individuals should be the ultimate goal of problem solving and not the ability to construct mathematically sound logical statements:

ENID: It isn't a game to *me* that the Dad's in danger of losing all he cares about in life. If he won't give way, and he's beaten, it'll simply break him down! (p.141).

Edgar's inability to comprehend Enid's moral character can be explained in the light of the fact that his sister's pluralism contradicts the unitary model of making sense of the world which is an offshoot of the masculine model of rationality and mechanism. This is the model that both Edgar and his father adopt despite the disparity of their thinking.

*Strife* illustrates the workings of the mechanistic model in the area of industry and capitalism. The play shows this model to be responsible for spreading moral mayhem in the community because it compels individuals to perform deeds for their own sake and not for a unifying moral purpose. The followers wish to end the dispute for several reasons most of which are of immediate, narrow nature. Some want a quick fix for their financial problems, others wish to save their financial interests from further losses. Meanwhile, the leaders of the two parties possess a more substantial sense of right and wrong, being occupied with more ethically transcendent issues, transcendent because they work towards a more morally unifying purpose. The two leaders' main aim is protecting their families from a possible future risk that might ensue from the compromise. Beyond the well being of their families lies the prosperity of humanity in general. Nevertheless, according to their traditional masculine cultivation, the two leaders

believe that problems should be solved in accordance with the rules of harsh justice and hierarchy of power. Accordingly, they adhere to the premise of separation. It is consistent with this premise to believe that one can protect oneself and one's family only if one defeats and somehow curtails the power of the other. This attitude enhances the mechanism of segregation because it perpetuates divisive feelings in the community, lessening from the unifying power of the leaders' autonomous sense of right and wrong.

The women on the other hand, reside in a different moral universe as a result of their different roles and social positions. The task of administering to the other's needs makes one sensitive to the suffering itself and prone to antagonize, not others--because we are all victims and victimizers in equal measures--but the situation that leads to distress. Men see each other's policies and attitudes as mistakes and thus lose sight of a central unifying issue. Women, on the other hand, see the adversity itself to be a mistake, and try to channel forces into the morally integrative task of defeating this adversity. This is also the attitude of the dramatist himself judging from the painstaking steps he takes to preserve impartiality on the question of his characters' moral worth and the ostensible and blatantly deliberate effort to offer up the situation, more than the characters, for judgement. One apt method of achieving such objectivity is the use of meticulous parallelism. More than just a distancing technical device, parallelism stands as a grand metaphor for sharply divided social groups. The division, and the moral confusion which follows it, are perpetuated by the function of the mechanistic model which lies at the heart of the play's philosophy.

The two Galsworthy plays, *Justice* and *Strife*, which diagnose the function of the mechanistic model in the two vital public institutions, capitalism and the legal system, share a fundamental dramatic conflict. This is the tension between the feminine principle of mercy and the masculine principle of justice as values valid for organizing human relationships. The conflict is concentrated and clarified in the figures of the non-traditionalist protagonists of the two plays. Anthony, Roberts, and Cokeson, all come as close to the rank of self-realizers as a Galsworthy character can. All three possess some kind of moral originality, yet all are geared to the mechanistic frame of thought. Anthony and Roberts are convinced that by refusing to compromise, they are ensuring a long-distance security for their families and for humanity in general. The two leaders firmly believe that as long as public affairs are organized on a hierarchical basis, as long as society is divided into sharply polarized classes, there is bound to be conflict of interests. Nevertheless the two protagonists do not realize that it is actually their attitude which encourages the hierarchical, segregationist model of thinking. Anthony and Roberts place competition and harsh justice before sympathy and mercy as valid moral values.

All those involved in the legal system have a measure of sympathy with Falder. Yet they all are ultimately inclined to gratify the immediate needs of the masculinist institutional machinery by adhering blindly to a unilateral view without a great deal of inner conflict. James How is a representative of the rationality of the law and harsh justice. Meanwhile his son Walter, like Edgar, wishes to implement the principle of mercy alone in the treatment of criminals without giving much thought to its utility. "According to you, no one would ever prosecute," James says to his son sarcastically (p.229). Cokeson on the other hand is able to see both ways. He knows, and deeply feels,

the pain of life in gaol. Although he fully acknowledges that prisons are “*nahsty* places,” he ascertains the necessity of having protection against criminals (p.229). Cokeson is basically a simple individual with an unquestioning loyalty to the moral codes of his community. He is at peace with himself and wishes to see all members of the staff living harmoniously with each other.

The fact that the tense conflict between mercy and justice in the play should be embodied in such a conventionally balanced human being like Cokeson is a strong indication that the two principles are virtually inseparable. Jan McDonald rightly sees Cokeson as “a key to the debate within the play” (5). When the two principles of justice and mercy are forcefully divided, they bring about destruction. This fact is made evident in Falder’s case. The separation of the two principles is shown in the incident when Falder is handed in to the police. This is the point when Cokeson gives up the internal conflict and acquiesces with James How’s rigid rationality. This moment marks the start of Falder’s downward spiral. One of the deepest truths in the two plays, *Justice and Strife*, is that one is compelled to choose between the masculine impulse of justice and the feminine impulse of mercy: that one pole is the negation of the other is at the heart of social evil.

### The Fugitive (1913)

In *The Silver Box*, *Justice and Strife* sexual relations are side issues, in *The Fugitive* they move to the centre. The previous plays show the workings of the

mechanistic model and its divisive forces in the context of public institutions like capitalism and the legal system. *The Fugitive* deals with the same issues but in the private realm of domesticity. The play externally resembles society drama in that it has a pretty drawing room milieu and a stock plot line (for example, in the expository scene the servants provide the preliminary background information about their employers). In addition, it represents an illicit love affair between a married woman and a bachelor man. The plot line related to this affair, in many cases, involves the flight of the wife from her marital home. In the mainstream drama there is usually a dramatization of the teasing potential of the adultery complication (examples are *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, *The Liars* and *Lady Windermere's Fan*). Galsworthy meanwhile has chosen to develop the thesis of the play in an analysis of the actual role of women in contemporary English society, both on the positional and metaphorical levels. The play maps the runaway wife's downward movement from a shop assistant, to a kept mistress, to prostitution.

There is a proliferation of warnings issued to Clare, the fugitive of the title, by a number of characters against the dangers awaiting her in the outside world. The warnings are so exaggerated that they near paranoia. Yet, they reflect certain truths, the interrelation of which affords a complex analysis of the situation of women in the Edwardian age. One such truth is the real state of a world that insists on thinking of women as objects of merchandise or tokens of barter. When a woman loses her owner she becomes something similar to a public utility. Hence the heightened anxiety of the escapee's associates at the mere thought that such a marketable piece of goods should be left for free use outside the official system of exchange. Another truth that the fear-inspiring views of Clare's associates reveal is the way in which women are conditioned

to dread the world outside their passive domestic domains. Most of the warnings are delivered in sensational tones reminiscent of children's stories, or crude melodrama. Twisden, the abandoned husband's legal representative and his mouthpiece, sees it fit to counsel Clare that there "are lots of wolves about" (p.297). Even Malise, one of Galsworthy's non-traditionalists, and the only one of Clare's associates to have the imagination to appreciate her situation, fails to detach himself from the jumbled, ill-informed symbolism built in the popular understanding of the situation of women who are without male guardians. He indignantly protests against Clare's determination to find her way in the world alone:

MALISE: Into *that!* Alone—helpless—without money. The men who work with you; the men you make friends of—d'you think they'll let you be? The men in the streets, staring at you, stopping you—pudgy, bull-necked brutes; devils with hard eyes; senile swine . . ." (p.302).

The public realm is portrayed as an evil territory into which respectable women should never venture. Galsworthy's perspective is that men have always been as successful in keeping women in check by the threat of rape as by its reality. These views are comparable to those of a number of "second wave feminists" about the same issue. One of these social critics' representative arguments against using sexual coercion as a means of social control is found in Susan Brownmiller's book *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. Brownmiller presents her views that the continual and omnipresent existence of the risk of rape is a social conspiracy of intimidation "by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear" (6).

The intensity of the anxiety exhibited by Clare's associates reveals a third fact relating to women's position on the public/private split. The acute apprehension is resonant with deep fears resulting from the knowledge that tension and threat really exist in sexual relationships. The paradigm of gender binary system casts the male as the solid, autonomous part of the symbiosis, and the female as the soft, dependent part of the symbiosis. Sexual power relations give the man, the autonomous positive norm, the right of supremacy and control of woman, the dependent other. The warnings issued to Clare featuring men with almost metaphysical evilness are but an unconscious projection on the part of Clare's associates of the danger they know to exist much closer to home than in the outside world. What seems like external adversaries are but shadows of the primary qualities or impulses entrenched in the cultural unconscious and their main location is not the public realm but the domestic site.

When Clare ventures into the outside world defenceless, she discovers that the trouble she was told to expect from strange men is tolerable and not at all a cause of worry strong enough to stand between a woman and her morally elevated pursuit of economic independence. An evidence of this is found in Clare's account of her days as a shop assistant. When asked by Malise about the forms of sexual harassment against which he expects her to have struggled, she replies:

CLARE: One followed me a lot. He caught hold of my arm one evening. I just took this out [*She draws out her hatpin and holds it like a dagger, her lip drawn back as the lips of a dog going to bite*] and said: 'Will you leave me alone,

please?’ And he did. It was rather nice. And there was one quite decent little man in the shop—I was sorry for *him*—such a humble little man! (p.309).

And this has turned out to be the real size of danger awaiting Clare, and most of her counterparts, in the public sphere. The approaches of the blatantly intrusive men are, in standard cases, of the quasi-predatory type which is so mild that it can be “nicely” warded off by a hatpin. As for the decent types, their unobtrusive infatuation is clearly harmless.

The real harassment on sexual, social, and economical levels comes from Clare’s husband, George. Initially, the discontented wife does not detect this fact. Her resentment is directed at marriage as an institution, and not at her husband as an individual. Clare is not aware that marriage is part of wider, all-embracing masculine institutional formations, and that the principles which these institutions foster penetrate most aspects of contemporary life down to the psychology of the individual male. She is unable to justify her own discontent with her husband, because George has, hitherto, managed to wrap his innate brutality in the tags and rags of respectability. At an early stage of her flight, Clare concedes that “[she has] nothing against [her] husband—it [is] quite unreasonable to leave him” (p.296).

It is only when his wife, or his “property,” has been violated that George shows primitiveness, betraying “the thick skinned conceit of the male animal” (7). With the help of the divorce courts, George tries to wring Malise financially dry. He prosecutes the libertine on the grounds of his being a partner in his wife’s infidelity. The latter action, in



which George shows utmost cruelty, causes Clare to become truly bitter and her resentment of her husband starts to take a definite shape. Now that she is clearly aware of the reason for her acrimony towards her husband, Clare's deep-seated resentment comes to the fore. She lashes out at his legal representative, accusing them both of cowardice. She also announces that at present she is of the belief that her husband's money is tarnished by vice (p.314).

Even before she runs away from home, Clare is maltreated by George who has insisted on having his conjugal rights despite his being fully aware of his wife's chilliness towards him. In her not fully clear state of mind it has been difficult for Clare to determine where the dividing line between rape and between experiencing marital intercourse simply because one is not able to prevent it happening. None of the strange men whom Clare meets outside her domestic sanctuary tries to impose sexual intercourse on her. George himself would, in all probability, refrain from interfering with strange women. While it is true that a woman with no male keeper is considered some form of public property, it is also true that, like any other public property, failure to use her does not reflect in a substantially negative way on each single male.

The ownership of a wife is a matter altogether different, however. Clare has been assigned as her husband's legal possession in conformity with the paradigm of masculine institutions; she is his acknowledged territory. George's ability to control what is his in the eyes of the law is synonymous with his masculinity, and thus with himself (8). The traditionalist's attitude to his wife is based on the masculine ethics of control and hierarchy which are locked in the mechanistic frame of thought. This model guarantees

the man the right of supremacy without troubling him with a guilty conscience. The self-imposing husband's constraints on his wife are the "practical constraints of power, not the constraints of ethics" (9). George's non-moral authority is ratified by the legal system which gives him the right to prosecute her in the divorce courts.

The three truths related to the theme of public/private split, which are reflected in the alarmists' views, are dialectically interconnected. The objectification of women's bodies, female indoctrination, and potential violence in sexual relationships are patterns of oppression that enforce and reinforce each other. Their functional interrelatedness is brought off densely in the tragic incident of Clare's suicide. Clare, embarking on a life of prostitution, meets a young man and makes a business arrangement with him. Two badly behaved gentlemen watch the pair, guess the content of the conversation, and approach Clare in order to arrange an appointment with her for the next day. Clare's conscience gradually works itself into a suicidal state. One of the most obvious reasons for this crisis is the two gentlemen's appearances. Galsworthy uses sensationalism in describing them:

*'Will you have supper with me here to-morrow night?' Startled out of her reverie, CLARE looks up. She sees those eyes, she sees beyond him the eyes of his companion—sly, malevolent, amused—watching; and she just sits gazing, without a word. At that regard, so clear, the Blond One does not wince. But rather suddenly he says: "That's arranged then. Half past eleven . . ."* (p.325).

In her drunkenness, Clare sees the men exactly as they have been portrayed in her associates' fictional descriptions. The fact that Clare is drunk is significant, for the

intoxication is a metaphor of her distance from reality, the same distance that has been forcibly set between her and the outside world by her traditional female indoctrination. For the two men show little of the evil virility of predatory hunters that characterizes the fictional monsters of the alarmists' portrait of strange men. The conduct of the interfering men amounts to little more than the mischeviousness of two dandies who are probably more interested in the game of betting which they are playing between them than in making a real deal with Clare, the locus of their competition. The interfering men in this scene are as easily intimidated by Clare's unmovability as the mild stalker of her shop-assistant days who was intimidated by a hatpin. Only the intruder in this scene refuses to admit his defeat and pretends to the contrary.

It is not the threat to her virtue posed by interfering strange men that has brought about Clare's death. The real culprits are the very masculine institutional formations that claim to protect her from this alleged threat. The harm that her position on the public/private split has caused her is one of the manifestations of the adverse workings of these formations on her. The pattern of life embraced within this split, which is hostile to women, has alienated, and eventually spit her out. She has then lost her hold on both the public and private dimensions of her life, and her lament about her psychological alienation as an individual runs parallel to her metaphorical displacement as a member of the female category:

CLARE: Haven't kept my end up. Lots of women do! You see: I'm too fine, and not fine enough! My best friend said that. Too fine, and not fine enough . . . I

couldn't be a saint and martyr, and I wouldn't be a soulless doll. Neither one thing nor the other---that's the tragedy (p.324).

In her marital home Clare has been treated as a possession and not as a partner in her own right. In her childhood abode, she was subjected to another type of abuse. As a middle-class female, she was trained to be passive, to be acted upon, and not to act upon things. The play concentrates on the circumstances of Clare's childhood particularly her intense traditional upbringing as a rector's daughter. Indeed, this is one of the early pieces of information communicated by the servants in the expository scene. One of the servants describes Clare's father as a "very steady old man" (p.277). Soon afterwards, Sir Charles, George's father, sneers at his daughter-in-law's restiveness: "I've often noticed parsons' daughters grow up queer. Get too much morality and rice puddin'" (p. 281). Galsworthy's carefulness in making Clare's upbringing understood that early in the play is an indication of the fact that so many of the elements of play are dependent on this background information. One of the most important of these elements is the play's philosophy, particularly its attitude to women's position on the public/private split. Preparing Clare for failure in the public world has proved itself fruitful. Her intense indoctrination as a passive middle-class girl is a grave impediment to her. "It's a curse to be a lady when you have to earn your living" Clare says (p.308).

When the fugitive runs away from her marital home, she soon discovers that the circumstances in the public realm are as unfavourable to her as those of the private domain. The jobs available to her and similar unskilled females—which was what most middle-class women were at the time—are harsh, underpaid, and dead-end into the

bargain. Clare is further handicapped by another public institution: the law. The legal system supports her husband in his attempt to prosecute Malise. It thus deprives her, as it does to Ruth Honeywill, of the only man who could at once provide for her and let her keep, at least, a certain measure of her humanity intact. Besides, in Malise's home she can earn a part of her keep by doing some typewriting, which brings someone like Clare, who is virtually unemployable, as close as possible to financial autonomy.

In the four plays discussed in this chapter Galsworthy represents the function of the mechanistic model and its divisive forces in different public and private institutions: the legal system, industry, and marriage. The most powerful manifestation of this model is the Western world's tendency to think in terms of dualities, the frame of thought which is recognized by many feminists as the ultimate cause of class and sex segregation. The power driven quality of this model of thought causes moral confusion as tasks which are performed within its frame of reference tend to serve their own end, and not a unified moral purpose. Individuals, particularly males, are represented as the blind agents of this machinery which governs most public and private institutions; their agency helps the machinery to keep producing and reproducing its divisive forces within this moral mayhem. There are still some morally elevated men, but transcendence is limited and contained by the working of this highly unreflecting frame of thought. Anthony, Roberts, Malise, and Cokeson come as close to the rank of self-realizers as a Galsworthy male character can. As such, they can be classified as non-traditionalists, for despite their originality of thought, they are still slaves of the same machinery that has subdued lesser beings.

In the four plays discussed in this thesis Galsworthy shows intense awareness of the faults of a world governed by the mechanistic model, and burdened by this model's divisive forces, which constantly generate unbridgeable gaps between sexes and classes. Yet the dramatist does not try to offer direct alternatives to the unsound moral structure delineated in his work. The subversive elements in his drama lies instead in the intensity of the realism of the given situation combined with a deep sense of tragedy that informs a great part of this drama.

### **The Female portrait**

In Galsworthy's perspective women are closer to the grade of self-realizers than men. This is because of their different position on the private/public split. Their exclusive relegation to the private sphere and their confinement to the role of caring and nurturing have resulted in their being closer to human suffering, and in their being free from ideological indoctrination. This freedom absolves them from subordination to the mechanistic frame of making sense of the world. The two qualities, the closeness to human suffering and the independence of ideological indoctrination, afford women a clearer insight into problematic human situations including their own. The women in *Strife* are more able than men, who are submerged in their petty ideological warfare, to see and feel the wretchedness resulting from the conflict on both sides of the industrial dispute.

Clare Dedmond is more aware of the real state of her failing marriage than her husband. This is because she is not blinded, like him, by the law of property, which is

one of the most powerful elements of masculine training. The principle of property governs George's attitude to his marriage and his wife. In spite of their developed sense of right and wrong, women are the ultimate victims of society. Women have no economic status, no earning power and this determines their subservient role. It is poor men's wives, like Annie Roberts, who die of malnutrition and inadequate medical care when their husbands' earning power is curtailed. Rich men's wives, like Clare Dedmond, are well provided for only as long as they accept the patronage of a man. Any quest for individuality outside marriage can only lead to starvation because middle-class women are not trained for economic autonomy.

Another cause of women's unprivileged economic situation is that they are the passive part of the sexual symbiosis: active/ passive, private/ public. On the strength of this classification, they are cast in the role of "the other" and distanced from social centrality. Much of the moral worth of women's actions is measured against their ability to preserve their inert marginal position. The most crucial violation of this passive principle would occur in the areas of sexuality. If ever a woman breaks the law of sexual property, like Ruth Honeywill and Clare Dedmond have done, she is never forgiven. Her assuming an active libido jeopardizes, in a central way, the concept of women's passivity, because sexual identity is the most powerful determinant of social identity. Galsworthy condemns the fact that both Clare and Ruth are destroyed because of their quest of an autonomous being outside unhappy marriages.

Despite his accurate description of women's position on the public/private split, Galsworthy does not attempt to offer alternatives by representing a reconstructed female

figure who has a substantial existence outside matrimony or the family home. In this he differs from Shaw and Barker who represent different aspects of the newly empowered single woman who officially defied traditional public/private split. This woman was gradually gaining visibility in cultural reality in terms of number and significance alike. Figures like Vivie Warren, Miss Yates, and Alice Maitland are examples of Shaw's and Barker's representation of the reconstructed female role. Meanwhile, a great deal of the subversiveness of Galsworthy's portrayal of women rests, like most other aspects of his drama, on intense tragi-realistic methods of representation. Annie Roberts's and Clare Dedmond's deaths are harrowing mainly because the circumstances surrounding their deaths have been explained with meticulous attention to physical and psychological details. This fastidious naturalism creates a very unique brand of "educated empathy" peculiar to Galsworthy. One feels that despite their developed sense of right and wrong women have had the worst deal, that there are grave injustices, and that efforts must go into remedying them.



## CHAPTER 6

### NOTES

1. John Galsworthy, *The Inn of Tranquility* (London: Heinemann, 1912). p.189-190.
2. John Galsworthy, *The Plays of John Galsworthy* (London: Duckworth, 1929). p. 261. All quotations from Galsworthy's plays which are discussed in this chapter are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
3. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, 3th ed (London: Smith, Elder, 1882) p. 101.
4. Frigga Haug, *Beyond Female Masochism: Memory-Work and Politics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992) p. 50.
5. Jan McDonald, *The 'New Drama' 1900-1914: Harley Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, St John Hankin, John Masefield* (London: Macmillan, 1986) p. 141.
6. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975) pp.14-15.
7. Galsworthy quoted in James Gordin, *John Galsworthy's Life and Art: An Alien's Fortress* (London: Macmillan, 1987) p.325.
8. Patriarchal middle-class men's obsession with property is one of Galsworthy's favourite targets of social criticism. It is the central theme of *The Man of Property*, Book I of *The Forsyte Saga* which is one of the dramatist's most significant works. See John Galsworthy, *The Man of Property, The Forsyte Saga and A Modern Comedy* (London: Heinemann/Octopus, 1976).

9. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.

49.

## CHAPTER 7

### ST. JOHN HANKIN

In conformity with the principles of the "new drama," Hankin reflects the social problems of the period under study in an earnest, analytical vein. Nevertheless, Hankin's social criticism is conveyed through a highly comic general framework. Yet behind the laugh, there is a certain amount of truth in the dramatist's depiction of social problems. The fact that he wrote for the Court Theatre freed him from the necessity of pleasing the upper classes by reflecting an idealistic view of their moral standards. Whilst the dramatist utilizes all the conventions of the well-made play, he is cynical of its ethical traditions. As far as Hankin is concerned, the so-called ultimate truths of the well-made play are, by no means, ultimate enough. There are deeper realities which govern people's lives. The ultimate truths are codes for respectable behaviour, which individuals can manipulate at their will for the sake of their survival. The dramatist's treatment of sexual and class issues is based on this understanding.

One of the deepest realities exposed by Hankin is the materialistic base of marriage. The dramatist strips the traditional concept of sexual love from many a romantic allurements, exposing the reality of man-woman relationship as rooted in the complexity of the material-psychological climate of the affiliation, and not, as is commonly believed, in an indefinable form of supreme romantic ecstasy. For instance, the sharp polarization of sexual values is one important determinant of the shape of

sexual relationships. In *The Last of the De Mullins*, the self-realizing single mother, Janet, shows an aversion to the idea of marrying the father of her illegitimate son. The aversion stems from the fact that the independent woman, who has long ago elected to live outside familial oppression, has outgrown what she sees as the outdated beliefs of the people of her home village, including those of the ex-lover who impregnated her. As a case in point, Monty, the ex-lover, thinks of a possible proposal to Janet in terms of his being "bound in honour" to her. The latter's response to this is:

JANET: I've done some foolish things in my life, Monty, but none quite so foolish as that. To marry a schoolboy, not because he loves you or wants to marry you, but because he thinks he's "bound in honour" (1).

The reason which Monty gives for wanting to marry Janet is generally acknowledged as a proper impulse in a young man. The play suggests that Monty's account of his sentiment in this context is couched in metaphors that prescribe a negative image of womanhood. This mode of making sense of sexual relationships repulses Janet, the independent woman who refuses to be defined in terms of otherness to the male. Monty's attitude towards his past transgression, the attitude which he defines as "being bound in honour," indicates a certain metaphorical schema: the man, the active legitimate one, is making amends to the woman, the negative other, for her having to experience social prejudice as a result of her violating a sexual rule. The offender has mistakenly offered herself to an unauthorized person, who, by sheer accident, happens to be the virtuous helper himself. Decoding the symbolic potential dormant in folk wisdom's view of the Janet-Monty affair so conveys the message that Monty himself has not erred by

having an illicit sexual relationship with his ex-lover. As a male, he is one of the mighty owners of the material things of the universe, including his own body. As such, he needs no license to use this vital commodity. Janet, on the other hand, is not a proprietor of her own physical parts, let alone having substantial access to assets of the universe. Her illegitimate pregnancy is thus seen as something like the violation of public property rights. Monty's moral responsibility in the matter of his ex-lover's past pregnancy, meanwhile, is his readiness to assist the fallen woman out of sheer kindness. This latter human trait is translated in the common imagination to the principle of chivalry which, in turn, incarnates the most condescending male attitudes towards the feminine.

The shades and tones of gender meaning which are attached to the Janet-Monty affair are too viciously prejudiced to be tolerated by either party. They are bound to bring bitter animosity, conscious or unconscious, to the relationship. This is the kind of danger that Janet, the clever woman, must have sensed in the depth of her subliminal self. Hankin's study of marriage in the light of the social practicality of actual gender roles and their psychological ramifications comes close to Cicely Hamilton's investigation into the concrete foundations of marriage in her influential book *Marriage as a Trade*. Hamilton is one of the pioneers in the direction of exposing the elements of matrimony that are rooted in the material difference of economy and consciousness. The author concedes that what really has spurred her to the authorship of this piece is "the lack of books on the subject with which it deals—the trade aspect of marriage." Since humanity acquired the act of writing, she argues, it has lopsidedly concentrated on the "love of man and woman" (2). Hamilton attempts to throw light on other equally important aspects of male/female alliance, particularly women's economic position in it. Marriage on the part

of woman is “the exchange of her person for the means of subsistence” (3). Women are conditioned early in their lives to believe that their only achievement in life should be motherhood and wifedom. These roles are not only the source of spiritual fulfillment for women, but they are also their only means of support. Woman’s mental cultivation, therefore, should be programmed to fit the needs of the future husband, even at the cost of her own needs: “We planned our lives and knew that he was lurking vaguely in the background to upset our best-laid calculations” (4).

It is this synthetic submerging of human life in other’s need by way of securing it a living; it is the collapse of women’s lives into men’s which ensure that sexual relationships remain of a largely “compulsory” character (5). The elements of coercion render marriage empty and mechanical. In view of the unhealthy state of traditional marriage, the author infers, celibacy should not be considered an undesirable state. Instead, Hamilton wholeheartedly ventures the suggestion that the visible presence of newly empowered unmarried women in society can be both disruptive and reformative of her sister’s standing in marriage. As the spinster improves her own position,

as she takes advantage of its greater freedom, its less restricted opportunities, its possibilities of pleasing herself and directing her own life, she inevitably, by awaking her envy, drags after her the married woman who once despised her and whose eyes she has opened to the disadvantages of her own dependent situation (6).

Hamilton studies the concrete basis of marriage mainly in relation to women. Hankin, on the other hand, sees the financial side of this institution to be vastly significant to both men and women, and consequently, both men and women might opt out for celibacy. In *The Return of the Prodigal*, to name an instance, Eustace abandons his budding admiration for a young lady because it is not an economically viable prospect. He realizes that marriage would jeopardize his financial security. In the three plays discussed in this chapter Hankin undermines the romantic basis of marriage by exposing--as Hamilton does in *Marriage as a Trade*--its solid material foundations. Simultaneously, he twists the ending of the well-made play, which not infrequently consists of an imminent wedding, so that the incidents of his plays often lead to the undoing, rather than the confirmation, of a marriage agreement.

### The Return of the Prodigal (1905)

In *The Return of the Prodigal*, the non-accomplishment of matrimony occurs within a broader unfulfillment of another social contract. This is the son's duty towards his family, and his ability to adhere to its principles. The offender, who is the prodigal son of the title, persists in his unrighteous behaviour after he comes back to his family's home near the beginning of the play. Two of the most significant codes of behaviour which he infringes are the principles of earnestness and hard work which are considered the right qualities for a young man of Eustace's standing. This is the time when the middle classes, to which Eustace belongs, were in the process of gradually approaching the centre of power. Sobriety and industriousness were materialistic needs that were elevated to the status of morality because of their urgency. This is an apt example of the

hypocrisy of patriarchy, in this instance manifested in the middle-class masculine institutions' sentimentalizing and mythologizing of merits that facilitated their supremacy. These merits were conveniently promoted to the rank of "metaphysical abstract goodness." Middle-class men's pressing need was furthering their social centrality. This is the occupation to which Eustace's brother and father, both perfect specimens of the category, have dedicated their lives. Making money, like everything else in Edwardian life, which was partly still involved in the world that the Victorians left behind, was infected with the characteristics of machinery. The influence of this frame of thought was so great that the act of producing wealth had become an end in itself. The ambitious male members of the Jackson family, the representatives of the social-climbing middle-class male humanity, have incarnated themselves, their culture, and the greatness of their nation in it. Matthew Arnold, the ardent critic of the Victorian version of the mechanistic model, has observed that

the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich (7).

Eustace's attitude to his male relatives and what they stand for is critical, albeit in a highly comic manner. He constantly deflates them, particularly his brother. One good example of this is Eustace's laughable comments on Henry's resentment of what is to him the prodigal son's irresponsible attitude to life. The earnest brother's displeasure is



expressed through frequent disagreeing snorts, congenial to the unkindness of his constitution. The wastrel ridicules his brother's manner in sentences like: "My dear Henry, What extraordinary noises you make. It's a terrible habit. You should see some one about it" (8). Another typical example of the attitude of the Jacksons' dissipated son to his prudent and thrifty male relatives is embodied in the stage direction that describes him watching his brother who is enveloped in reading the Market Report in *The Times*. Eustace's poise is entertainingly mocking of the unsuspecting young man's ruling passion for matters related to money (p.170). The interaction of the Jackson's male children exhibits some characteristics of the double acts of popular entertainment. The Henry-Eustace double act features the classical types of the straight man and the fool-clever jester. The straight man, Henry, is so literal minded that he does not notice life's absurd aspects including the emptiness of his own materialistic disposition. The jester, Eustace, is able to detect these inane aspects of his brother's being. He therefore delights the audience by indirectly inviting them to share his keen observations.

Eustace is imminently well-qualified for the rank of quasi self-realizer as he is the only character in the play who seems to possess a great deal of self awareness. He can see through the rigid codes of earnestness and hard work which ultimate aim is accumulating money that blind the majority of the other characters. In fact, Eustace is not a morbid character at all. On the contrary he possesses the potential to be both good and useful to the world. All the major female characters testify to the fact that Eustace, as a child, was cleverer and much more emotionally responsive than his brother. Violet testifies to this as she relates her early experience of her brother: "I can't understand you. As a boy you were so different. You were kind and affectionate and thoughtful for

others" (p.197). Even Lady Faringford who resents Eustace's sloppiness in the extreme, cannot help but concede that he was "a handsome fellow. Clever, too" (pp. 128-129). Hankin is suggesting that, in some way, the culture in which Eustace grew up had a detrimental effect upon his qualities. The type of the consciousness this culture nurtures is Henry's: rigid, unimaginative, and unfeeling. These are the qualities required to survive in a culture ruled by an external, mechanistic model of making sense of the world. Henry is the quintessential symbol of the age, the representative of one of the key male types in this industrial community, the type that Matthew Arnold believes would be counteractive to refinement in mind and spirit. He says of the Henry-like humanity:

Culture says: 'Consider these people . . . their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?' (9).

It is as if Eustace, as he observes his brother's behaviour, was having the same thoughts that Arnold believes a sensible person should have towards the type of people that the brother represents. Eustace is not punished for his healthy scepticism; neither is he disciplined for his transgressions of the codes of hard work. Rather, at the end, he walks away with a life-long pension from his male relatives. The wastrel's lot, the play implies, can be considered happy in the light of his low suitability to survive in the competitive society to which he belongs.

The fusion of relentless logic and comic energy which contrives the twisted ending of *The Return of the Prodigal* has enough potency to bend the most cherished verities of hard work--which is one of the broader themes of the play--along with it. The energetically overthrown creed of earnestness, in turn, subverts the traditional institution of marriage with which it has a strong thematic link. Although Eustace has begun to form some kind of emotional attachment with Stella, he readily gives her up in return for his male relatives' subsidy. Clear-sighted, Eustace realizes that he and Stella are not made of the material that is suitable for their time's accepted version of successful middle-class marriage. This is basically because they are both poor. Eustace is Hankin's mouthpiece, as far as the dramatist can be said to have a mouthpiece. The observant protagonist agrees with Hamilton that traditional marriage, for the greatest part, is based on economical grounds. He also agrees with Arnold that this marriage, like the rest of the Industrial age's aspects of living, is part of a central mechanistic system of relations and conducts by which one performs tasks for their own ends. Successful middle-class marriage, according to Eustace, Hamilton, and Arnold, is one that conforms to a pattern set to further the interest of the ruling class. The union of Stella and Henry falls into this category. This is because in their society the layout of class is rapidly changing; social divisions are reshuffling themselves so that a new type of ruling class might install itself in social centrality. The matrimony of the hardworking industrialist and the idle aristocrat fulfills the requirements of a society in transition. Henry provides the money, Stella, the rank.

The middle classes thus supplement their industriousness with the ornament of breeding. The remade and newly empowered Stella-Henry type of domestic groupings is

at the core of the new society. The evidence of the fact that the desirable family shape springs from the community's politico-economic needs lies in the notion that from the new generation only the Henry-Stella alliance, which fulfills these needs, seems feasible. Both Eustace and his spinster sister Violet are alienated from the kingdom of love and fecundity, just like Eugene and Proserpine, the love-starved individuals of *Candida*. Eustace is not qualified for the role of the provider of a family because of his lack of earning power. Violet is representative of thousands of women who were spit out by the working of the socio-economic machinery of industrialist society.

Violet has been socially displaced. She is the ultimate sacrifice to her father's and brother's rapacity. Having neither social rank nor a substantial amount of money, she cannot hope to marry into the ranks of "great people" as Henry does. By the same token she is not allowed to marry into the "little people" because this will affect her father's dearly bought social rank, let alone Henry's candidature for the position of an aristocratic lady's husband. Even the off-stage menage, the Illingtons, collapses because it does not conform to the social order's requirement of a successful middle-class marriage. The titled husband, Sir James, has committed the unforgivable mistake of taking on a penniless wife, "Mary Illington—she was Mary Tremayne, you know, one of the Wiltshire Tremaynes—hadn't a sixpence—," as Lady Faringford volunteers to Mrs. Jackson (p.122).

Hankin overturns the foundation of marriage within a broader analysis of the prominent code of duty. The two masculine institutions, traditional marriage and the official moral system to which the canon of duty belongs, are shown to be imbued by the

masculine principles of mechanism and control which facilitate the moral chaos informing them. The ethical mayhem manifests itself in the fact that the ultimate goal of both institutions is to further the ambitions of the middle class, and not, as official moralists claim, the spiritual fulfillment of individuals and the welfare of humanity in general.

The harmful effect of the rapid spread of technology and the externalization of social consciousness by the mechanistic frame of thoughts attendant upon it is embodied in the Jacksons' major change of heart. We are told that cloth-making was once a gratifying craft for the Jacksons, but now their interest does not reside in the aesthetic. The Jacksons' recent wealth has been accumulated through the mass production of an inferior quality of cloth, using advanced machinery. Money-making and its concomitant, social climbing, have become the family's Baal to which all are expected to bend their knees. Quantity has replaced quality for the Jacksons. Something very similar to this principle of externalization seems to have since leaked over to the domain of human connections. Relationships between the Jacksons are very much dependent on a somewhat unfeeling pattern of hierarchy and control. On the basis of this materialistic style of life, the Jacksons are divided into two groups: predatory and non-predatory. The first group consists of the male members of the family, Mr. Jackson, Henry, and Eustace. The second group consists of the female members of the family, Mrs. Jackson and Violet. This description is provided for us by Eustace, the cheerful pessimist:

EUSTACE [to Violet] Henry and the governor I can stand up to. They're very much like me. We belong to the predatory type. Only they're more successful

than I am. They live on their workpeople. I propose to live on them. We're birds of a feather. But you're different. I suppose you get it from the mater (p.200).

Henry, the upholder of mechanistic family relations, is an indictment on traditional marriage. Eustace may have sensed the emptiness and horror of the type of matrimony that a society presided over by the likes of Henry can embrace. This awareness has made the protagonist prefer to withdraw from traditional domestic groupings. Ending as it does, *The Return of the Prodigal* subverts both the conventions of traditional marriage and that of the well-made play's happy ending.

### The Cassilis Engagement (1907)

*The Return of the Prodigal*, like Shaw's *Candida*, exposes traditional marriage as an institution that springs from the depth of the socio-economic needs of the minority culture of the ruling section of society. One of the necessities of this section is to make the matter which brings married couples together uniform and external so that the orthodox moral-economic order secures itself a social tool by which to control the change in social arrangements that happens as a result of marriage. The tool takes the form of a mechanical norm that encompasses the conception of love which is commonly known as amorous pre-nuptial courtship. It is axiomatic that this type of courtship is an adequate material for a successful marriage. In *The Cassilis Engagement*, Hankin tries to tell us that this axiom is not true even if the commonness of the idea convinces us that it must have been. One of the cultural products which embraces the notion of traditional

romance as the cornerstone of marriage most is the genre of light comedy which the play assumes. Hankin has used this genre perhaps to invert its very essence, romantic love.

This genre was initiated by Tom Robertson in the 1860s. Robertson was also a pioneer in intensifying the significance of traditional love by representing it as a powerful binding factor that can bring together the most contradictory of elements. This was a by-product of his introducing acceptable marriages between the upper and lower classes. In his best play, *Caste*, the misalliance between the aristocratic George D'Alroy and Esther is acceptable only because the heroine has special characteristics that permit her to be raised up to a higher class. As D'Alroy says:

Oh, *Caste's* all right. *Caste* is a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the door very wide for exceptional merit. Let brains break through its barriers, and what brains can break through love may leap over (10).

As if by a fluke of nature Esther has been born lady-like. D'Alroy meets, falls in love with, and marries Esther, thus rescuing her from her "unnatural" existence amongst the lower classes. *Caste* represents a glamorized version of love and class. It surrounds them with a nimbus of "goodness" which is not clearly defined. If *Caste* seems permissive in its advocacy of cross marriages, this permissiveness is only skin-deep. Under this veneer of leniency is an exceedingly astringent attitude. By making Esther exceptional among her working-class peers, Robertson advocates class distinction. He suggests that there exists a set of characteristics which are determined by nature and

which separate the upper social stratum from the lower one. Robertson is espousing the myth of the exclusiveness of the aristocratic blood. The classes are not only different but also hierarchical. The moral fibre of the upper classes is superior to that of the lower classes. Esther's sister is vulgar, while the father is a drunken thief. While the Eccleses are thus criticized, the moral ethics of D'Alroy and his family are, on balance, not so censoriously questioned. The unifying function of the traditional conception of love, then, is allowed to emphasize its own agency, but not to the point where it becomes subversive of the class *status quo*. Small wonder, since traditional romance was initially created to protect this very *status quo*.

On the level of sexual relationships, the love that brings Esther and D'Alroy together is not a well-defined matter. It is the kind of emotional relationship that develops between a man and a woman simply because they are of the opposite sex and possess similar spiritual structures which mark their "nobility." On the other hand, in *The Cassilis Engagement*, Hankin represents the relationship between classes and sexes in a more analytical fashion. He has stripped the element of fantasy from class and sex issues with which the cup-and-saucer plays—which originated in the works of Robertson—are associated.

Meanwhile the incidents of *The Cassilis Engagement* lead up to the dissolving of the marriage agreement (11). The undoing of Ethel's and Geoffrey's matrimony rests on the play's observation that the traditional myth of love has been manufactured by the social order to make up for the lack of mutuality and harmony that are the effect of rendering the base of marriage materialistic. Such empty connubiality was determined by



systems just as that which makes the Henry-Stella type of affiliation its cornerstone. Ethel realizes that superficial emotional bonds, which are the essence of traditional sexual relationships, are not enough to gloss over vast differences in background. Being enveloped in different interests for such a long time as one's entire childhood, and part of one's adulthood, makes the distance between her and her fiancé unbridgeable.

The plot is intriguing, particularly the narrative line relating to Mrs. Cassilis's diabolical plan to end the marriage agreement: The aristocratic conniver's son, Geoffrey, falls in love with a London lady from a modest background. While Geoffrey's mother is saddened by the news of Geoffrey's and Ethel's engagement, Ethel's opportunistic mother Mrs. Borridge is delighted. The family's aristocratic associates are astonished at the misalliance and think Mrs. Cassilis foolish because she accepts it. Moreover, she encourages a prolonged visit from Ethel and her mother. Mrs. Cassilis's welcoming bearing is only false pretence; she hides her feelings from all but her sister, Lady Marchmont. Mrs. Cassilis hopes that if she endeavours to keep her son, his wellborn relatives, Ethel and her mother all in one place for a sufficient amount of time Geoffrey will realize his mistake and break off the engagement. Mrs. Cassilis's plans prove to be successful. After spending a short amount of time in the country with the Cassilis family and their associates, Ethel is bored to distraction and she herself initiates the termination of the couple's engagement.

The feasibility of Geoffrey's and Ethel's marriage is judged not so much on the grounds of a hazy conception of "blue blood" than on the grounds of practicality and convenience. The Cassilis style of life is so different from that of Ethel and her mother

that Ethel is driven to tears with boredom. The schism cannot be cemented by “love” especially the “love” that is defined by traditional culture which is a questionable value. Hankin believes that “love” is one’s attachment for another of one’s own kind; it only exists between people of compatible interests. This is a wise attitude even if it sounds conservative in the extreme. In “*A Note on Happy Endings*,” Hankin asserts that “the stirrings of young blood and the attractions of a pretty face are not an all-sufficient basis for a union that is to last a life-time” (p.125). Something more than the traditional version of love is advisable in people who are about to enter into a marriage contract.

Hankin’s insistence that classes differ does not necessarily imply that they are hierarchical. While it is true that the Borridges are vulgar to the point of unpleasantness, the Cassilis family and their associates have their own shortcomings. They are boring and hypocritical. The episode in which Lady Mabel, Ethel’s rival for Geoffrey’s attention, sings a German song is an apt example of the hypocrisy of the upper classes. They are seen to be forcing themselves to listen to a performer who has scarcely any artistic talent. While Lady Mabel sings

*[the behaviour of the guests affords a striking illustration of the English attitude towards music after dinner. GEOFFREY stands by piano prepared to turn over when required. LADY REMENHAM sits on sofa in an attitude of seraphic appreciation of her daughter’s efforts. LADY MARCHMONT, by her side, is equally enthralled—and thinks of something else] (12).*

Mrs. Cassilis and Ethel can be classified as non-traditionalists. They are both in touch with themselves enough to realize the reality of their situation; they both have the strength of mind and character to take charge of their own affairs and to prevent the disastrous marriage from taking place. Mrs. Cassilis realizes the true dimensions of her role as a mother. She places this role above everything: her own comfort and the approval of her peers. She risks criticism from the country gentry by appearing to agree to the forthcoming misalliance. In addition to this she endures the company of Mrs. Borridge for whom she can feel nothing but contempt. Hankin builds a great deal of comedy around the scene in which Mrs. Cassilis indulges Mrs. Borridge, so much so that she loses all sense of her surroundings and starts to appear comically gratified. By so doing, Mrs. Cassilis wishes to give Mrs. Borridge sufficient rope with which to hang herself. Mrs. Cassilis confides in her sister Lady Marchmont her intention to press the Borridges "to stay here for a *long* visit. I want them to feel thoroughly at home. Vulgar people are so much more vulgar when they feel at home, aren't they?" (pp.162-163).

Mrs. Cassilis has the ability to dazzle us with her powerful mind which is relentlessly bent on upsetting her son's marriage plans. As a devoted mother, she is determined to spare her son the agony which she expects to ensue from a marriage which is built on faulty basis. The intriguing plot in which she sets about to achieve her goal, like those of most well-made plays, forms an essential part of the piece's entertainment value. The exhilaratingly laughable elements of contrast which eventuate from setting two sharply divided groups, like the upper classes and the lower classes, together give comedy its opportunity, at the same time as they subvert the notion of traditional romance as a powerful unifying factor. This notion is at the heart of commercial genre of

light comedy and the mainstream culture that supports it. This culture and its literary products are heavily infused with the mechanistic model which produces divisive forces. These forces include the metaphorical structure that underpins sexual relationship, which is mutually dependent on the traditional institution of marriage.

### The Last of the De Mullins (1908)

*The Return of the Prodigal* and *The Cassilis Engagement* expose the institution of marriage by revising the happy ending of the well-made play. In Hankin's terms this ending occurs when the protagonist manages to escape an unsuitable marriage. The marriages in *The Return of the Prodigal* and *The Cassilis Engagement* are rejected on economical and temperamental bases respectively. In *The Last of the De Mullins*, the rejection of traditional marriage rests on its being rooted in worn out doctrines represented by the outdated orthodoxy of the aristocratic De Mullins, who are, in turn, a dying breed. Hankin expresses his doubts about the validity of the De Mullins' moral values, which include their attitude to marriage and reproduction, both symbolically and thematically.

The De Mullin tradition is feudal and has been associated with the soil of Brendon since the time of King Stephen. The aristocratic family's ancientness is partly a metaphor of the out-of-dateness of their moral codes. The most prominent feature of the De Mullins is their failing financial and social affairs. The family position is associated

with their mill which has given up the ghost. De Mullin is ill and not surprisingly so, as the family has a history of physical weakness. The physical frailty is, again, a metaphorical projection of the unsoundness of their ethical system. Endowed with neither physical nor mental strength, the De Mullins have gradually degenerated into physical and spiritual poverty. The play's last tableau, featuring the grieving De Mullin, emphasizes the image of death. His "grey head bowed on his chest as Mrs. De Mullin timidly lays her hand on his shoulder" (p.87). Despite their degeneration the De Mullins insist on continuing to live by the standards of the gentry, according to which no man or woman is allowed to enter into a trade or profession. A De Mullin's only duty is to look after their ancestors' land and to guard their honour. The first radical break that Janet makes with the traditions of her family is to assume an active outlook on life, for if the male members of the aristocracy are forced to be passive, the female members are doubly removed from action. Whereas the men are prohibited from work, they are at least given the right to manage their own money and a means of transport. The women on the other hand are permitted neither of these two privileges. In the exposition scene Mrs. De Mullin and the forbiddingly correct Mrs. Clouston, are given the opportunity to talk over the imminent arrival of the family's estranged daughter, Janet. In the process of this, they impart the information necessary for the audience to follow the plot of the play.

Over eight years ago Janet, though unmarried, became pregnant and went to London. Analyzing her behaviour the two antiquated ladies lay the blame for what they consider to be Janet's wrongdoing at the door of her materialistic independence. Janet had a bicycle and access to her own money. The bicycle and the pay cheque were two of the most prominent props associated with the figure of the "new woman" in the popular

imagination of the period. Instead of making them objects of mockery (as the unsympathetic press of the day habitually did), Hankin honours them. The bicycle and freely accessible money facilitated Janet's most creditable success in trade. The bicycle enabled her to flee from home at night and journey to London. The money was used by Janet to buy a partnership in a hat shop. Like the prodigal Eustace, Janet is not punished for her violation of one of the most cherished truths of the well-made play: women's chastity. On the contrary, Janet firmly believes that separating procreation from marriage is an essential step in a woman's progression to self-realization. She announces to her mother, who is shocked at her explanation of the reason for her committing the sexual offence, that the way she feels about reproduction is "how all wholesome women feel if they would only acknowledge it" (p. 85).

Janet is one of the "new drama" representations of the Life Force philosophy. In some aspects of her quest for self-realization she resembles Barker's Miss Yates, particularly in the fact that her procreative energy is amalgamated with other concerns which add a measure of wholeness and complexity to her emancipation. One such concern is financial independence. Janet, like her counterpart in *The Madras House*, refuses to marry the father of her child because she believes that he would have bad effect on her child's life. Miss Yates thinks that financial subordination will accentuate the harmful effect of the active/passive sexual symbiosis on her, installing her firmly in the highly undesirable position of being the passive part of a detrimentally compulsive sexual relationship. Janet likewise believes that an affiliation with the father of her child would inject their being with aspects of the behavioural norm that she has long put behind her. Monty Bulstead's sentiment is restricted by the attitude which Janet has

already rejected, the village of Brendon's attitude. Besides, Bulstead is as dull and insipid as the rest of his community.

The character of Janet is strikingly comparable in point of its dazzling vitality to Barker's working-class rebel. Janet's animated existence is the result of her character's being injected with the masculine principles of activity and independence. Her zest is in a marked contrast to the mediocrity of her female relatives, understandably so, because the eldest daughter's sense of individuation allows her to take a different line from that of her morally debilitated family. The outcome of her taking on positive versions of masculine principles is that she and her son are a much more refined breed than her family. She is mentally clear-sighted while they are morally deluded; she is physically healthy while they are weak. She has a rewarding profession; they have none. Janet's clothes have achieved the subtlety of being both exquisite and simple, while her female relatives' clothes are mechanically made with no place for personal creativity (p.22). This matter reflects the De Mullins' prosaic existence.

Admittedly the play concentrates heavily on Janet's procreative vigour, especially the significance of its end result, Johnny. In many ways he represents the expected superman, the begetting of whom should be every woman's highest ambition. But this is to tell only part of the story. Janet is certainly not a woman who submits to men's prescription of her as merely a means to their end. This is true inasmuch as her character is not one that defines herself in terms of other's needs, even if they were the needs of her own child. Johnny himself testifies to this fact when he states that his mother has taught him that one's obligation is first and foremost to oneself: "Mother says it's every

one's duty to be healthy and to be happy" (p.30). To her father, Janet emphatically declares that she will always be proud of the fact that she has accomplished her mothering role irrespective of her child's possible future resentment of his own illegitimacy: "Whatever happens, even if Johnny should come to hate me for what I did, I shall always be glad to have been his mother. At least I shall have lived" (p.86). Even if her son was to despise her then, it would not affect Janet's feeling of self-fulfillment.

In addition to her autonomous character, Janet has an active libido, as opposite to the assumed passive sexuality of the woman who is mainly a vessel. The sexual autonomy is evident in Janet's announcement, much to the shocked ears of her relatives, that she has enjoyed the process of becoming a mother:

JANET: It was so splendid to find some one at last who really cared for me as women should be cared for! Not to talk to because I was clever or to play tennis with because I was strong, but to kiss me and to make love to me! Yes! To make love to me! (pp.85-86).

Janet's sexual activeness and her autonomous character are combined with her love for her profession. She does not only enjoy it, but she does so with a distinctive feminine outlook. A comparison between her and Henry Jackson is illustrative of this fact. Janet's and Henry's types of minds overlap with metaphors of mechanism and metaphors of relations with the material world; they reflect the contrast between organic models of human beings in harmony with their physical circumstances, and the mechanistic models of controlling their circumstances through technology. Janet's



relation to her work is organic, Henry's is atomic. Defending her profession against her father's denunciatory remarks, the De Mullins' emancipated daughter describes her career as an extension of herself, paralleling in the intensity of its closeness to herself, her much-cherished offspring: "I made it, you see. It's my child, like Johnny" (p.72). Janet is part of her work, and tuned into it. Work is not only a means to support her independent fecundity, but it is an element in her life that is enjoyable for its own sake. Neither is work performed mechanically and viewed with the masculine one-sided principle of professionalism.

Henry, meanwhile, has a typical male attitude towards his career, seeing himself as disconnected from his work and observing it without being part of it. This is symbolically projected in the vast changes which he has introduced into the family business. He has turned it from a concern which brings spiritual contentment through allowing for creativity, to an unimaginative, dull industry. Unlike Janet's hat shop, Henry's factory does not administer to the pleasures of the soul, only to impulses of control and power, manifested mainly by the acquisition of property. One's being is no longer part of the business enterprise to the Jacksons' elder son. This distance allows the power-ravenous Henry, the industrialist-custodian of the age of atomic detachment, to look at that which he is operating not as a living thing, but as "a mechanical thing governed by laws." Consequently, "the constraints on what one can do to it are practical constraints of power, not the constraints of ethics" (13). On a certain level Henry and Janet can be seen as alternative representations of the energy of social advancement: the empty energy of Henry, who is just an outer skin; and the energy of Janet which is part of the internality of the cosmos and which is morally orientated. As the first type of energy

is lopsidedly orientated towards the masculine principles, so the second type is steerable towards the feminine principles and the masculine principles in equal measures.

In the plays represented in this chapter Hankin twists the concept of the traditional marriage simultaneously as he subverts the basis of the well-made play's happy ending. The blissful finish to the events of a play for Hankin is when the protagonist of this play manages to run away from an undesirable marriage. The undesirability of marriage stems from its being imbued with the mechanistic model, along with this model's undertones of hierarchy and control.

### **The Female Portrait**

Within the context of faulty sexual relationships Hankin brought on the stage certain female types which were representatives of the varieties that constituted the social reality of the day. One such variety admits the spinsters of the old-maid type, Hester and Violet. Being specimens of thousands of women who were displaced as a result of the vast changes in the social and economical structure of society, they are both socially out of joint. Whilst Violet is the daughter of a rich, but rankless family, Hester is an impoverished aristocrat. The social status of each encompasses paradoxical elements of greatness and non-greatness which makes it difficult for them to be integrated into a recognizable social system. This fact renders both women unmarriageable, as marriageability depends to a large extent on social legitimacy. This is one of the deepest truths that Shaw exposes in *Candida*.

Hankin gives us a glimpse of the inner recesses of the two single women's minds via a parallel character, Miss Deanes, whose image is presented in comic-tragic tone that lifts to the light hidden psychological realities more aptly than the more naturalistic satire directed at Hester, for instance. Hankin concentrates on Miss Deanes's absurdity of manner that both amuses and disgusts Janet. The fussy, gossipy maiden-lady is so desperate for someone to love and nurture, so lacking in any other self-fulfilling interest that she is prepared to spend whole nights attending to a sick cockatoo. Miss Deanes's emotional and intellectual barrenness reflects the emotional waste that both Hester and her counterpart in *The Return of the Prodigal* live.

In Mrs. Cassilis, Hankin dramatizes the mothering role which was much debated at the time as part of the age's preoccupation with the revival of the notion of woman's place. In his representation there is a marked ambivalence of attitudes. On the one hand he expresses his admiration of Mrs. Cassilis's, and all women's, devotedness to their children. In this particular mother figure he further admires the remarkable originality and intelligence: one can almost sense the energy inherent in the quality of her mind like a tangible force. Nevertheless, like all mothers who are confined to private, passive roles, she is not allowed to use her intellect to exert direct supremacy over matters. She must steer her life behind scenes. The hypocrisy involved in such underhand management of her affairs is viewed by the dramatist with a mixture of sympathy and condemnation. Mrs. Cassilis's marked deviousness is justified on the grounds of her being a devoted mother who has found herself in a difficult situation. Owing to her private, passive identity as a female she is obliged to deal with this situation indirectly. Yet, the intensity of the scheming matron's hatred of Ethel, coupled with her extraordinary ability to hide it

under a gentle veneer--the qualities which shocked her own sister into describing her attitude as "tigerish"--amount to natural evilness (p.165). The queer vehemence of Mrs. Cassilis's maternal vanity, exposed in the following dialogue, enhances this impression:

MRS. CASSILIS: I shall need all my looks now—for Geoffrey's sake.

LADY MARCHMONT: [*Puzzled*]. Geoffrey's ?

MRS. CASSILIS: Looks mean so much to a man, don't they? And he has always admired me. Now I shall want him to admire me more than ever.

LADY MARCHMONT: Why, dear?

MRS. CASSILIS: [*with cold intensity*]. Because I have a rival (p.162).

In the figure of Janet, Hankin puts together the fragmented vision of womanhood that exists in some of his other major female characters. Like Hester and Violet, Janet is single, and like Mrs. Cassilis she is a mother. Yet, Janet is dissimilar to the traditionalist spinsters who cannot deliver themselves from the prison of gender conditioning, and subsequently remain encased within the moral orthodoxy's prescription of them as private old maids. Instead, the self-realizing protagonist refuses to be confined to the private sphere and insists on assuming the active/public values. This relieves her of the obligation that is hampering Mrs. Cassilis's integrity. Janet expresses her views directly and unswervingly without feeling the urge to hide or to be tactful in the fashion of the dedicated, but private, mother. She justifies her illegal pregnancy and her wish to continue her work in the relentless logic and honesty which is traditionally available only to the active/public male, who is the positive norm and not the negative other.

In the figure of Janet Hankin represents one of the most successfully remodeled female identities of the "new drama." The new woman's assumption of masculine principles does not take away from her essential femininity. Rather, she has combined masculine and feminine principles for a morally transcendent purpose. Her unifying moral code defeats the chaotic masculine principle of mechanism and its ramification of hierarchy and control.

## CHAPTER 7

## NOTES

1. St. John Hankin, *The Last of the De Mullins, The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin*, vol.3 (London: Martin Secker, 1912) p. 43. All quotations from *The Last of the De Mullins* and "A Note on Happy Endings" are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
2. Cicely Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade* (1909; Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1971) p.V.
3. Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade*, p.35.
4. Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade*, pp. 27-28.
5. Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade*, p.35.
6. Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade*, p. 229.
7. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, 3th ed. (London: Smith, Elder, 1882) p.17.
8. St. John Hankin, *The Return of the Prodigal, The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin*, vol.I (London: Martin Secker, 1912) p.175. All quotations from *The Return of the Prodigal* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
9. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, p.18.
10. T.W. Robertson, *Caste, Six Plays*, Introd. Michael R. Booth (London: Amber Lane Press, 1980) p.175.

11. The idea of comparing *Caste* to *The Cassilis Engagement* on the grounds of their belonging to the same genre is derived from William H. Philips, *St John Hankin: The Edwardian Mephistopheles* (Associated University Press, 1979). See the chapter on *The Cassilis Engagement*.

12. St John Hankin, *The Cassilis Engagement, The Dramatic Works of St. John Hankin*, vol.2 (London: Martin Secker, 1912) p.193.

13. Helen Haste, *The Sexual Metaphor* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p.49.

**CHAPTER 8**

**ELIZABETH ROBINS**

**AND THE FEMALE “NEW DRAMA”**

Elizabeth Robins is arguably the best representative of the female voice in the “new drama,” particularly that part of the “new drama” which is concerned with issues of gender and morality. Robins participated in a network of theatrical-political activities which made her well-equipped to revolutionize these issues on the stage. Theatrically, she was one of the few prominent women playwrights at the time. She was also one of the even fewer female dramatists who shared the theatrical and social principles of the male “new dramatists,” as well as being part of the physical environment of the Barker-Vedrenne venture at the Court Theatre. *Alan’s Wife*, which Robins wrote in collaboration with Florence Bell, was first produced by the Independent Theatre. Robins’s best play *Votes for Women* was produced at the Court Theatre and its overall theme, which focuses on endorsing women’s right to vote, proved favourable with the persons in charge of this theatre. Barker admitted to being “strongly prejudiced in favour of its subject” (1).

Along with the other Court dramatists, Robins shared a craving for the undivided truth, for the deliverance of what cannot yet be said or done. In fact, Robins played a significant role in introducing Ibsen, the master of the as-yet-unexpressed statement, to the British stage. She was the first to mount plays like *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder* in Britain. Robins and her fellow dramatists within the Court network wanted the



theatre to be an instrument of social reform, not an unthinking reflection of society. This led them to look for a theatre which was liberated from dependence on box-office takings. As such, Robins and the other “new dramatists” of the Court system had one ultimate dream, which was the establishment of a National Theatre.

Politically, Robins was one of the feminists who were directly involved in the fight for the vote. She was a committee member of the WSPU (Women’s Social and Political Union) which adopted a militant attitude towards patriarchy’s abuse of women’s rights. Robins and her fellow fighters had first hand experience of patriarchy’s aggressive reactions to women who were in active dissent at that time. The assumptions that had hitherto been underlying their position as females were aggressively brought home to them. Thus they could understand their own, and their opponents’ position more clearly. *Votes for Women*, which will be discussed later in this chapter, reveals many general, as well as day-to-day realities about the meaning of the adjective “female” in the cultural unconscious. These realities are--directly or indirectly--exposed by the protagonist, Vida Levering, who is, like Robins herself, a militant suffragette. The play makes it clear that Levering has a much clearer view of the subtext of sexual relationships than the other women who have not contributed to a serious, public power struggle between the sexes.

There were other women dramatists who were keen social and theatrical reformers like Robins and who shared the “new drama” principles, particularly those which regarded theatre as an instrument for transforming existing sexual order at the deepest level. Some of the best examples of this category of female playwrights were Elizabeth Baker, Florence Bell, Christopher St John, Cicely Hamilton and Githa

Sowerby. Nevertheless, the majority of these dramatists were not part of the physical milieu of the Court network. Hamilton's *Diana of Dobson's*, for instance, was first performed at the Kingsway Theatre which was outside this network. Whilst Githa Sowerby's best play *Rutherford and Son* was first performed at the Court theatre, it was staged after the termination of the Barker-Vedrenne tenure of 1904 and the transference of the "new drama" workshops to other venues.

Female revolutionary dramatists were not content to partake in the revolutionary theatrical spirit of the age only through writing for male-dominated theatres. They tried to create their own theatrical environment. There were a number of ventures that attempted to create a woman-oriented new theatrical movement. These ventures had more or less the same artistic and theatrical inclinations as the "new drama" which was created within the Court network by predominantly male playwrights. The pioneers in this context were mainly actresses who were dissatisfied with the marginalization of women in male establishments. Some of the best examples were Elizabeth Robins, Marion Lea, Janet Achurch, and Florence Farr. Like their counterparts at the Court the independent manageresses of the female "new drama" avoided commercial practices like the long run and encouraged experimental plays that genuinely questioned social norms. In addition, the female independent managements were biased towards women's work whilst their male counterparts had no definite commitment to female authorship. Despite their relative success, the rarity and financial instability of the independent female managements prevented them from developing into a major avant-garde movement with a major influence on theatrical history.

The most substantial “corrective” female theatrical movements emerged from the founding of the Actresses’ Franchise League in 1908. The League’s main aim was producing and writing in support of the campaign for the vote for women. Two reasonably successful ventures grew out of the League. The first was Inez Bensusan’s Woman’s Theatre Season which started in 1913 at the Coronet Theatre. Bensusan was prevented from embarking on another similar enterprise by the break of the First World War. The second female independent endeavour that sprang from the Actresses’ Franchise League was Edy Craig’s Pioneer Players which continued into the 1920s.

Generally speaking, independent female managements, suffrage and non-suffrage alike, were prevented from developing into major theatrical movements that had a key influence on theatrical history. Independent female managements were less advantaged than the independent male managements which developed into the influential work of the Court network. The problem was not merely financial deficiency, because the Court’s formative bodies, the Independent Theatre and the Stage Society, had the same difficulty. The main problem concerned the position of females as a collective class. Female theatrical reformers were hampered by the same problem that handicapped their counterparts outside the theatre: the lack of a legacy of public power. Women had been external to the power structure for so long that it became difficult for them to make their voices heard on a significant public forum like the theatre even when they supported accepted norms. The matter became much worse when they defied these norms.

In this chapter I will concentrate mainly on the work of Elizabeth Robins. I will be also using some aspects of the works of other revolutionary female playwrights in

order to place Robins in the broader scene of the avant-garde female drama. The inclusion of the other female theatrical reformers is particularly useful in the context of differentiating the works of these female reformers as a collective literary type from those of the male theatrical reformers. The first category of playwrights existed mainly outside the Court setting, the second consisted a large majority of this setting. I will henceforth use the term female "new dramatists" to refer to the female playwrights, both from outside and inside the Court milieu, who upheld theatrical and social reform. The term male "new dramatists" denotes the male playwrights who had the same principles as the female "new dramatists" and who worked within the Court network. The usage of the terms female "new dramatists" and male "new dramatists" in the described manner is confined to this chapter only. Elsewhere in this thesis the term "new dramatists" exclusively refers to the playwrights of both sexes who were, physically, part of the Court system. These dramatists are the main focus of this study. Similarly when the term "new drama" is used in other chapters of this study, it refers solely to the drama created within this system.

One of the central ideas in the previous chapters is how the male "new dramatists" reconstructed the female image by transforming the public/private duality and its ramifications. One of the most prominent ways of doing so is by replacing the central metaphor of passivity with that of activity. This remaking of the female self includes all female roles. The metaphor of activeness imbues the image of the mother and wife no less than it does the image of the empowered single female. Candida Morell, Enid Underwood, and Catherine Petkoff are good examples of active as opposed to passive nurturers and carers. Despite his ambivalent attitude towards maternal women

Shaw, for instance, has managed in the final balance to represent motherhood as an active and not a passive occupation and by doing so he has brought his maternal figures nearer to the centre of society. Shaw has represented these stalwart, proud women as they themselves would like to see themselves and not as moral orthodoxy would like to see them.

Female "new dramatists," Court and non-Court educatee alike, similarly attempt to reconstruct the female image on the stage by transforming the private/public duality and its ramifications. In *Way Stations* Robins ardently invites her fellow playwrights who were fuelled by the sexual reform energy of the time to attempt to rid theatre from its dependence on "chocolate-box" female types. Instead, she recommended a more authentic female image, which embodies such characteristics as complexity and individuality (2). Yet, the "new dramatists" of both sexes were caught in an age which was still not mediated by the knowledge-reforming vigour of a women's liberation movement like "second wave feminism," and so was crudely structured by man-centred concepts. Therefore, the imagination of these inventive dramatists, creative as it was, was handicapped by the lack of more pervasive models for an autonomous female psychology.

This was an age where women were still under the threat of complete psychological annihilation from moralists and scientists who strove to define woman entirely in terms of her relation to others. The nearest to Robins's authentic female that the female and male "new dramatists" had come was to represent women who resisted sexual stereotyping. In addition, these women brought some of the truly positive

feminine characteristics, which they acquired as the result of their being confined in their traditional roles, to bear upon the moral questions of their environment. It is an achievement to create women characters who were able to shatter the crudely self-reflecting patriarchal world of the age. What makes the "new dramatists'" treatment of emancipated women characters more revolutionary was that they managed to portray these women, if not always in a morally acceptable way, at least as being nearer to the centre of society than to its periphery. Autonomous female psychology that had completely freed itself from patriarchal conceptions did not present itself as a viable possibility until "second wave feminists" managed to centralize women in knowledge. This centralization made the precise specifying of women's experience plausible. Having become much more visible to themselves, women had more options to redeem the obscured sense of their identity, sometimes by moving outside the male-centred binary logic altogether.

Male and female "new dramatists" were equally subjected to pervasive man-made female image. Yet the female "new dramatists" differed from the male in the extent to which they were handicapped by this subjection. There is evidence of that in the differing ways in which each gender of playwrights merges the public/private values in their reconstructed moral characters. Consider the relationship between the masculine value of professionalism and the feminine value of caring, which are two of the most significant outgrowths of the public/private duality. When female "new dramatists" fuse these two principles they, in certain instances, do so in a more informed fashion. This educated merging of professionalism and caring is most obvious in the treatment of the female "new dramatists" of the theme of motherhood. As far as maternity is concerned, women

are more able than men to expound on what constitutes “effective” mothering, which ensues from the right blend of professionalism and caring. The mixing is done so well in some of the most prominent works of the female “new dramatists” that proficiency in caring involves making the child’s life paramount. One must forget the self to ensure that the child is nurtured perfectly.

For the female “new dramatists” ultimate self-sacrifice becomes the epitome of ultimate professionalism. In *Alan’s Wife*, a mother kills her child and welcomes her own condemnation to death in order to spare him the acute suffering which results from living with a severe physical handicap. In *Rutherford and Son*, Mary, a poor mother, remains in extremely dehumanizing circumstances under the roof of Rutherford, her forbiddingly overbearing industrialist-patriarchal father-in-law, in order to ensure her child material comfort. Mary’s decision is the result of her extreme proficiency as a mother. At one point in the play, Rutherford’s own children leave him after he has bullied and humiliated them. The industrial establishment to which he has devoted all his life is threatened. Without an heir to carry on, the respected name of the Rutherfords will be forgotten. At this point Mary steps in, seizing the chance to ensure good future for her child. She bargains with her father-in-law, using the language which he appreciates:

MARY: A bargain is where one person has something to sell that another wants to buy. There’s no love in it—only money—money that pays for life (3).

By Rutherford’s own admission, Mary’s business ability surpasses his own: “You think me a hard man. So I am. But I’m wondering if I could ha’ stood up as you’re standing

and done what you've done" (p.189). What has caused Mary's business ability to flourish is her love for her son:

MARY: I love my child. That makes me hard (p.189).

For Mary self-sacrifice and professionalism are two sides of the same coin.

A comparison between Mary and Barker's Miss Yates seems instrumental in the context of drawing an analogy between male "new dramatists" and female "new dramatists". It might further illuminate the division between these two categories of playwrights that comes out of different ways of mixing professionalism and love in the role of mothering. Both women possess well-balanced moral structures that combine public and private values in a healthy balance. Mothering is a touchstone of the validity of the reordering of the public and the private in the moral forms of both female self-realizer. The two are eager wage earners and despite the restrictions and harshness of their work environment both can be said to be financially independent. In comparison with their middle-class sisters who are confined to the private sphere, the two can be said to have experience of the ways of the public world. Both wage earners use as much knowledge of business transactions as their positions as labourers in capitalist establishments affords them in their parenting. Miss Yates's deep knowledge of the psychological effect of an unequal power relationship on individuals has prompted her to refuse the financial patronage of the father of the child. Her confidence of her ability to be financially independent, a confidence she must have developed as a result of years of being outside familial patronage has helped her reach this decision. Her experience in the



public world affords her the ability to plot her escape proficiently: "I've planned it all" she tells Philip (4). Miss Yates's mixing of professionalism with love to rescue her child from patriarchal supervision is admirable but it does not reach the degree of complete integration that Mary's blend of sexual values assumes.

The extent to which each of the two women manages to combine their feminine values with masculine values, which they both acquired through their encounter with their working environment, vary. In Mary's moral construction the union is complete but in Miss Yates's it is partial. Certain aspects manage still to escape from the tight union of masculine and feminine values in Miss Yates's moral construction. The business-like detachment which she has acquired as a result of her long career in an industry which involves a great deal of competitive commerce prompts her to feel separate from the others, including her own son. Miss Yates sees her good as separate from that of her child. This attitude combined with her love for her dependant leads her to engineer her escape route so that her new life takes into account her own welfare as well as her dependant's.

Mary on the other hand sees her happiness and that of her son as an integrated oneness. She takes his interest into hers and is taken into the child's interest. Her professionalism as a wage earner in the masculine tradition has completely collapsed in her professionalism as a mother. Her deep knowledge of human need, a knowledge that was handed down to her, and to all women from their mothers makes her sense that financial independence in her case is harmful to her son. The wages she earns are not enough to raise a contented child and guarantee him enough self-respect and dignity.

This awareness has escaped Miss Yates whose surviving sense of masculine individuation, little as it might be, still allows her to indulge in her quest for self-realization, regardless of the effect of her struggle on her son.

The absolute integration of love and professionalism in Mary's moral design makes her equipped to engineer a perfect business deal which gives her child the best of the two worlds. It ensures him material comfort at the same time as it protects him from the psychological effects of patriarchal guardianship. In the process Mary has sacrificed herself completely. This altruism may sound unhealthy but the fact that the impulse for it lodges in a robust psyche that is recommended to our sympathy might modify its apparent failure. Mary and her creator's perspective is that once a woman elects to bring a human being into the world she must be prepared to make absolute sacrifices. Mothering within the patriarchal context demands unconditional self-renunciation. This is the only way that an industrious carer and nurturer can compensate their dependants their underprivileged position in a deficient society that ignores the interests of women and children.

Patriarchy imposes privateness and passiveness on these two social groups keeping them in men's economic custody. This male designed institution claims that the subjection of women and children in the described manner, the subjection which normally comes as part of traditional family arrangements, is beneficial to both. *Rutherford and Son* exposes the hypocrisy of such patriarchal claims exposing the traditional home as a tyrant institution whose main function is to control women's and children's psychological and material conditions of existence without reference to their

real wants. The traditional home's main role is to ensure the continuance of the patriarchal *status quo*. Mary comments on the morbid spiritual hollowness that prevails the Rutherford household:

MARY: And there's nothing, nothing---except this place you call home (p.145).

Both male and female "new dramatists" attempt to reconstruct gender metaphors through submerged meanings which are hidden behind open themes that belong to the outward, more accessible designs of their works. Yet the nature of the more accessible themes of the male "new dramatists" differs from those of the female "new dramatists." The previous chapters have shown that the themes of the male "new dramatists" are largely grounded in the public sphere and their more direct moral questions are related to the rightness and wrongness of human acts in such contexts as the law, business, and war. The themes of the female "new dramatists" are mainly rooted in the private realm and the questions they raise are more directly related to sexual relationships and women's position in them. Suffrage drama, for instance, is centred around the argument that women should be given more control over both the public and private divisions of their lives within the broader framework of the right to vote.

Elizabeth Baker's *Chains* exposes the unfairness of the fact that the existing sexual order leaves women with most of the responsibility for preserving the home. One of the ways this order does so is by conditioning women to believe that acquiring the status of wife and mother is their only path to social credibility. Lily is a young wife who is struggling against the odds to safeguard her dwelling. She battles to manage it

financially on the meagre salary of her husband, who is a clerk from the lower middle-class ranks. In addition she employs as much tact as she can muster to "contain" her husband's resentment of the littleness of his own means. She does so in order to prevent him from travelling abroad to look for better conditions. Lily has an almost desperate need to keep her family together under the conditions that the existing socio-political system has prescribed for them. She is afraid of change because the hazards that change naturally involves might jeopardize her sense of security and worth as a wife and mother in a stable domestic arrangement. Lily's obsessive need for the stability of such arrangements constitutes a large part of the metaphorical chains to which title refers. The dedicated housewife's compulsive attachment to her uncomfortable home is forcing her and her husband to maintain a way of life they resent (5).

The central point in *Diana of Dobson's* is exposing one of the cruellest predicaments of being born a woman in a capitalist-patriarchal society. It is one's being practically excluded from both public and private spheres. In the domestic realm, a woman is economically secure but only as long as she is in patriarchal custody. In the home of her male guardian she may be provided for but only on temporary basis as she is not substantially insured against losing her provider in the long term. When this happens a woman is thrown into the outside world to earn her living. Her want of formal qualifications, her lack of psychological fitness for financial autonomy, and the general absence of her sex from the power structure make her vulnerable to capital exploitation. Diana, the protagonist of the play, experiences such inhuman manipulation.

After the death of her father, her only provider, she is forced to earn her living working as a shop-assistant in a drapery store. The play exposes the harsh circumstances of women like Diana who are exploited as cheap labourers in capitalist establishments. One of the main purposes of such exposition is to demonstrate that for such women the only way out of grind “and squalor and tyranny and overwork” is to go back to patriarchal patronage through marriage (6). Women have no actual place in the world in which they can stand as persons in their own right. They must be always subjects. The action that leads up to Diana’s matrimony takes the shape of a romantic comedy which gives the play much of its popularity. Simultaneously the play offers a realistic and sobering insight into the purely financial basis of marriage. An aspect of this insight is embodied in the reasons which Diana gives for accepting to marry her suitor:

DIANA: Captain Bretherton—I’m homeless and penniless—I haven’t—tasted food for nearly twelve hours. . . . And now, if I understand you aright—you offer to make me your wife. . . . But, under the circumstances, don’t you think that you are putting too great a strain upon my disinterestedness? (p.76).

Robins’s plays which are discussed in this chapter are *Alan’s Wife* and *Votes for Women*. The plays reflect a number of the most prominent themes of the female “new dramatists.” Most important of these are motherhood and the enfranchisement of women. Within the framework of these more accessible themes, Robins, like the rest of the “new dramatists” at the Court, exposes many realities about the underpinnings of sexual relationships and women’s position in them.

Alan's Wife (1893)

Jean Creyke is a mother who is as successful as Sowerby's Mary in utilizing a perfectly balanced mixture of professionalism and love in performing her job as a carer. The ability to harmonize these two sexual principles is the cause and effect of her being a self-realizer. One of the traits that proves Jean's moral maturity is her pursuit of spiritual elevation through harmonious relationship with her husband. She marries Alan against her parents' wish; Jean's mother wants her to marry the local vicar who possesses a better social position than her chosen spouse. For Jean, the vicar represents an unhealthy and timid mode of life. Weak physique is a sign of a feeble soul. On the other hand, the rebellious daughter admires her husband's sturdy persona, acquired through his existence in the real world and his enjoyment of life. He is unlike Warren who has lived in an artificial world of books and abstract thinking. The vicar's intellectuality has resulted in spiritual aridness; he has a meek soul. Jean resents the fact that he is willing to move in social circles much higher than his own (p.11).

Physical strength is a sign of spiritual wholesomeness. Self-realization is the establishment of a relationship with a man who possesses the same characteristics as her, a man who has a passion for life and who loves "the hills and the heather, and loves to feel the strong wind blowing in his face and the blood rushing through his veins!" (7). Jean feels at home with Alan and the domicile they have created is harmonious and healthy. Spiritual wholesomeness is symbolized by the fact that the proud mistress of the house constantly keeps it clean and comfortable, and "the pleasure she takes in it, too! Keeping it as bright and shining as if there were five or six pair of hands to do it!"

(p.10). Jean looks forward to complementing her and Alan's happiness with a baby who, she feels sure, will be as healthy and happy as her husband. Most importantly, the child will be physically fit like its father (p.14).

Jean suffers a strong shock when she gives birth to a bodily deformed child. She perceives the future as bleak. She and her child will not be able to live the happy independent life she has always been sure will be their lot. She cannot imagine herself living any other kind of life. The distressed mother's relatives and friends try to convince her that it is God's will that the child is deformed and that individuals should "bow to His will" and not try to rebel against it (p. 20). The traditional concepts of right and wrong, embodied by conventional institutions such as the church and the traditional judicial system, all dictate that Jean should bear her cross, raise her child as best she can and banish any thought of rebellion through death. She should substitute her rebellious spirit for a "meek" and submissive one. (p.20) Jean, however, refuses to be indoctrinated by traditional morality. For her the important facets of life are human pride and dignity which are attendant upon mental and physical strength. The emancipated woman resents conformity, which is represented by the character of Warren. In fact, it is very shortly after the vicar, in an attempt to lift Jean's spirits, tells her that her child might compensate for the physical weakness by being a successful academic like him (the vicar) that Jean decides to kill her son (pp.19-20). Jean, like Alice Maitland in *The Voyage Inheritance*, realizes that living exclusively in the abstract world of formal learning does not produce morally healthy individuals.

Jean is advised to keep her child because it will prove to be a comfort to her. However Jean's consideration of the quality of life her child can expect both proves her to be unselfish and simultaneously shows the counsel of her advisors to be based on self interest. Thus Warren tries to convince Jean to accept the child by assuring her that the child will be a source of comfort for her in the future. Jean's immediate reaction is: "But how shall I comfort the child?" (p.19). The child's happiness has priority in Jean's life. She refrains from viewing her relationship with her son as a kind of trade in which favours are expected for services rendered. Jean's love for her child is absolute.

Jean chooses to take no heed of her relatives' advice and to try and do the one thing that will ensure her child's comfort, namely killing him. She believes that by so doing she will show her child "the only true mercy" (p. 25). Jean chooses death because she believes it to be the only way she can liberate herself and her child. In the last scene she awaits the result of the appeal against the death sentence that has been recently issued. She stands alone, separated from the people around her in a fashion that asserts her individuality. The condemned woman's relatives and acquaintances try to distance her from herself by urging her to ask for mercy. Mrs Holroyd pleads with her daughter to claim that she "didn't know what [she was] doing to the little bairn" (p.23). Jean's assertion of her individuality is symbolized by the fact that for the greatest part of the scene she does not speak, but her inner thoughts are conveyed to us as stage directions. Jean, like Mary and all women who have inherited the profession of caring from their mothers, has a deep knowledge of human needs. She knows that living with a severe physical handicap is agonizing. Her proficiency as a protector of her child has made her choose death because she knows that it is the only way out for him.



*Alan's Wife* offers an alternative view of motherhood relieving it from its exclusion to "privateness." In the moral structure of mothers who have internalized patriarchal perceptions of motherhood, this female role entails principles which are derived from the private sphere like passivity and non-professionalism. In this sense the impulse for self-denial, which is one of the main ingredients of motherhood, grows in direct proportion to inertness. Sacrifice becomes the only thing that a woman has to offer in return for financial and spiritual sustenance. Considering that a reward is expected the sacrifice of the passive, non-professional, traditional mother defeats its purpose. It is transformed from a noble impulse to serve others to a kind of commerce, or the exchange value of the weak.

In the moral structure of self-realizing female parents who have resisted patriarchal prescription of motherhood, like Jean, self-sacrifice takes a different shape. It incorporates the masculine principles of activity and professionalism. Jean does not burden her child by demanding future support in return for her present services. One of the most prominent components of her masculine-style professionalism is self-sufficiency. Freedom from want allows her to be autonomous and liberates her from dependence on others. She does not need to sell her services to someone else in order to earn herself a place in the world because she, as a morally mature person, is nearer to the centre of society than to its periphery. In the same way, Jean's child is spared the agony of having to continue enduring an afflicted life in order to be a form of consolation for his mother in the future. When Jean kills her son, she does not stop to reason out the morality of mercy killing which depends, in most cases, on theological concepts and many other inflexible rules. She instinctively guesses the right thing to do. It is whatever

would bring about the greatest balance of contentment over discontent. Jean's style of caring is a reconstruction of the mothering role within a transformed public/private structure. The transformation frees this role from its dependence on the mechanistic model that sustains this structure. As such, for Jean, mothering is not performed for its own sake as this model dictates. The dedicated mother's style of nurturance includes promoting the happiness of every one, including oneself and others.

### Votes for Women (1907)

In *Votes For Women* Robins calls, as she and Florence Bell do in *Alan's Wife*, for the relief of the role of mothering from the prison of privateness, a prospect that includes changing the traditional metaphorical structure underpinning this role. This structure is dependent on such private principles as non-action and unprofessionalism. Diminishing privateness also involves negotiating the material position of the mother on the hierarchical structure of the public/private division. It is the fact that women have little control over their reproductive abilities that drives them to fight for the vote. This latter is the major overall topic of the play. One of the chief plot lines that sets the dramatic events in motion involves a past occurrence which took place before the incidents of the play begin. This incident, which exposes the hypocrisy of patriarchy in its attitude to motherhood, was Levering's illegitimate pregnancy. Her lover, the Honourable Geoffrey Stonor, suggested an abortion as a brilliant political career lay ahead of him and he could not afford the scandal of an illegitimate child.

Levering, powerless as an unemployable refugee from the family home, reluctantly assented. Nevertheless, "the ghost of a child that had never seen the light . . . was strong enough to push [Stronor] out of [her] life" (8). From such episodes like the Levering-Stonor affair we know for whose satisfaction patriarchy works. Robins criticizes what a traditional well-made play like *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* advocates: the only kind of considerations that patriarchal reasoning holds relevant to determining the rightness of actions seems to be considerations having to do with furthering patriarchy's own material interests. This male-orientated institution is based on the mechanistic model in accordance with which tasks are performed for their own ends and not for a unifying moral purpose. As such, patriarchy gives priority to the promotion of its own institutions and not to the happiness and well-being of the traditional family for which this male-orientated body claims to have evolved. In both *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *Votes for Women* the good of a familial unit is sacrificed for the sake of a promising career that is designed to further the interest of the ruling order. The first play seems to agree with the outcome of the Cleeve-Ebbsmith affair which involves the emotional breakup of the Cleeve family. Meanwhile, *Votes For Women* jettisons the act of destroying Levering's child and ruining the prospect of a happy mother-child unit.

The exploration of the clumsy and awkward circumstances in which women have to perform their vital procreative role under patriarchy is one thematic aspect of *Votes for Women*. Within the overall framework of this argument, Robins explores a number of underpinning facts about sexual relationships and women's position in them. One of these facts is the inauthenticity of the separate sphere formulations and their metaphorical ramifications, active/ passive, body/mind and so on. Robins believes that as a result of

the polarization of the sexes, both physically and metaphorically, women have lost control over both public and private spheres. Levering, the play's feminist protagonist and the major self-realizing character, exposes women's existential problems by equating them with Dante's damned people.

MISS LEVERING: He [Dante] said there was not place in Heaven nor in Purgatory—not even a corner in Hell—for the souls who had stood aloof from strife . . . He called them “wretches who never lived,” Dante did, because they'd never felt the pangs of partizanship. And so they wander homeless on the skirts of limbo among the abortions and off-scourings of Creation (pp.59-60).

Women, like Dante's damned, lead isolated lives. They are excluded from the affairs of the world and alienated from each other. Existing almost exclusively in the private sphere of domesticity, they live as subjects, inessential “others” in men's lives. Thus they have no means of extending themselves into the outside world, nor do they have the ability to communicate with each other. Therefore women have “never felt the pangs of partizanship” (p.60).

Robins focuses on the intense sense of privateness with which women's lives are blighted. In order for a woman to liberate herself she should try first to find this innate self. *Votes for Women* does not simply consider the suffragettes' fight for the vote. It is a cry for authentic female definition. The play combines the elements of the private and the elements of the public in a consciously political manner. Robins exploits several aspects of the well-made play, a tradition grounded in patriarchal assumptions, to serve her own

ends. The first act takes place in the hall of "Wynnstay House," a more public part of the British household than the traditional drawing room of the well-made play. The intriguing juxtaposition of the elements of the private and the public in this act brings home to us the central argument of the play: the personal is political.

The very personal story of Levering, which is the major force behind her politicization, is narrated by her. After the abortion trauma passes, Levering returns to England. She then composes herself and thinks more rationally about her past dilemma. She realizes that Stonor is but one of the "far back links in a chain of evidence" (p.80). Levering transforms her anger into action as she decides to join the suffragettes as a step towards a collective and organized fight against the Geoffrey Stonors of this world. Levering also realizes that there is a type of work on a different level to be done. It is to raise women's consciousness of the underpinnings of the wider network of sexual formulations and its detrimental effects on women. Contrary to the female protagonists of the traditional well-made play, Levering is not punished for her past deeds. The traditional female characters with a "past" are somewhat forcibly expelled from society. Paula Tanqueray, in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, Agnes Ebbsmith in *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and Mrs. Dane in *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, are all evicted from society (Some by death, others by exile.) Act I of *Votes for Women* follows the pattern of Shaw's discussion plays. It combines the telling of Levering's personal story with the discussion of impersonal, distant incidents like the women's vote and the necessity of finding homes for destitute "homeless" women. One of the play's major inversion techniques is embodied in the fact that the incidents discussed seem to be remote, belonging strictly to the public sphere, when in fact they are, unbeknownst to the majority of the characters,

intimately connected with their lives, especially those of the female characters. The destitute women's pain only *seems* alien to the affluent environment of Wynnestay House.

It is left to Levering, the self-realizing protagonist, to alert the upper-class ladies to the fact that their position is not as different from that of the destitute women as they might think. "Homelessness," metaphorical, if not literal, is the lot of women. Women, in all their infinite variety, are rendered powerless in both public and private spheres. The matter of a woman's ultimate helplessness is raised during Levering's account of her pilgrimage to the female underworld:

MISS LEVERING: You'll never know how many things are hidden from a woman in good clothes. The bold, free look of a man at a woman he believes to be destitute—you must *feel* that look on you before you can understand—a good half of history (p.50).

Levering's speech alerts the women to the fact that it is an illusion that they have a home of their own. The women might seem to be protected under the roofs of grand houses, but this is so because a man wills it to be so. A woman is protected only when she serves a man's "bed" and "board" (p.85). Once she ceases to be instrumental in this fashion a woman could be easily dispensed with. Once a woman loses the protection of the man she is supposed to please, she is treated as stray thing or a public property. This is a universal truth about women's lives which has existed for "a good half of history" (p.50). (Is the name of the family that hosts Levering, Wynnstay, suggestive in this context?)

Read as win-a-stay, it can imply that a woman has to unceasingly work hard to in order to earn the right to lodge in her male guardian's house. Women inhabit, but they never own, their domicile.)

A tangible and more obvious example of women's "thingness" emerges in the conversation of the upper class ladies and the politicians in Act I. The image they invoke of the spinster illustrates how women become surplus to society when they fail to serve a man's recreational needs. During a conversation which involves public sanitation, the men associate the image of the spinster with "drainage." Grotorex describes the English spinster, of whom Italy is full, as the "sort of woman who smells of indiarubber" (p.46). We can almost smell the drainage in Grotorex's portrait of the English spinster. Elsewhere in the play we are faced with an even more unsettling truth. It is not only the woman who fails to serve a man's "bed" and "board" who is despised. Her sister, the wife and the mother, is equally hated. She is burdened by too much familiarity. Her enclosure in the private sphere and her excessive "closeness" to her menfolk makes her something of a shame. Mrs Freddy, a suffragette of moderate ideals, tells of how she suspects that her husband winces internally when he sees her name on the placards.

MRS FREDDY: Freddy's been an angel about letting me take my share when I felt I must—but of course I've always known he doesn't really like it. It makes him shy. I'm sure it gives him a horrid twist inside when he sees my name among the speakers on the placards (p.57).

Mrs Freddy is not aware of the misogyny integral to her husband's embarrassment at any form of public appearance she might make. Robins gives this particular aspect of the female experience an emotional force by connecting the metaphors of familiarity/unfamiliarity which underlie it to the metaphors embodied in other events in the play. The unpleasantness of the stereotype of English spinsterhood becomes particularly apparent when it is viewed against a background of magnificent Italian literature. In Act I, the politicians conjure amongst themselves the image of the English spinster as manifested in the cultural unconscious. One of them mentions that Italian literature is too fine a topic to be coupled with such an unsavoury matter as public sanitation. Sewage, he adds, is suitable for such people as the English spinster. Sewage and the English spinster are two very "close-to-home" and undesirable objects. They are, therefore, immeasurably unattractive in comparison to the exotic conversational topic of Italian literature.

Although Levering approaches spinsterhood, the metaphor of "redundancy" does not stand out clearly in her image. One of the reasons for this is the fact that she possesses a "somewhat foreign grace" (p.46). Levering is saved from the curse of hated familiarity by the distancing effect of being associated with remote places. The familiarity of women who are in any form of "private" relation to men reduces their charm. The same notion is expounded in Shaw's *Major Barbara* where Lady Britomart's excessive omnipresence in her children's lives diminishes their loyalty to her. The adverse effect of private intimacy on the female image is hardly surprising since the culturally constructed myth of "female charm" is primarily based on the woman's physical attributes. The female self is alienated in the female body. It is therefore vague



and remote, an undefined concept, like women themselves. Once the quality of vagueness and remoteness ceases to exist, a woman's charm is stripped of its illusion and the woman is exposed for what she is: an insipid and embarrassing creature.

The female experience, which is based on the schism distance/closeness, is the direct result of the public/private formulations. This experience is one of the deep and unspoken truths of the play. The metaphors and conceptions which are the foundation of this sub-theme are fragmented and difficult to piece together. This is perhaps a technical attempt by the dramatist to reflect the segmentary nature of women's consciousness. Mrs Freddy is almost unconscious of the misogyny involved in her husband's reluctance to acknowledge her, in any way, as a public being.

The self-realizing Levering, on the other hand, is profoundly aware of the disparaging metaphors that form the underpinnings of the female gender identity. Yet, the emancipated woman's awareness is too deep to be expressed in words, especially words which have been formulated by a predominantly masculine culture. The depth of Levering's awareness and her failure to express many facets of her experience is probably responsible for the look of pent-up anger that is characteristic of her countenance. Lady John says of Levering: "Her mouth—always like this . . . as if she were holding back something by main force!" (the spaced periods are part of the original quotation) (p.51).

*Votes for Women* exposes women's spiritual homelessness in the sense of their being defenceless against constant exposure to the disparaging images of themselves

embedded in the cultural subconscious. The mental “homelessness” is the result of their confinement in the private sphere. The knowledge and the kind of education they receive in their roles as mothers and wives are not instrumental in allowing them to project their experiences of life into the mainstream culture. The same sentiment expressed by Robins in the play can be found in the writing of present-day feminist thinkers. Sandra Lee Bartky in her book *Femininity and Domination* diagnoses women’s mental “homelessness” through the image of a female self-realizer who has recently been awakened to the ways and methods by which women are oppressed. The woman in question feels threatened by the flood of images and metaphors that malign the image of the female in the social psyche. The woman feels a pinch similar in kind to that which a physically homeless person might feel who is constantly exposed to the danger of the streets:

To apprehend myself as victim in a sexist society is to know that there are few places where I can hide, that I can be attacked almost anywhere, at any time, by virtually anyone. Innocent chatter, the currency of ordinary social life, or a compliment . . . the well-intentioned advice of psychologists, the news item, the joke, the cosmetics advertisement—none of these is what it is or what it was. Each reveals itself, depending on the circumstances in which it appears, as a threat, an insult, an affront, as a reminder, however, subtle, that I belong to an inferior caste (9).

Bartky draws our attention to the fact that after more than a century of feminism women are still trapped in a private reality which alienates them in their femininity by

incarcerating them in it. After over a century of feminism women still reside in the domain of the "private," and thus are classed as the "other" and the "inferior."

By thus projecting the fragmented, difficult, and unexplored experiences of women Robins is reminding us of the cultural conspiracy that excludes women from the language of public communication. This exclusion is stressed through the image of Jean Dunbarton. Jean is subjected to an intense process of enculturation by her relatives. She is prevented from extending herself to the outside world in any form. When the plight of the homeless women is mentioned, Jean is strongly advised to dissociate herself from it. Mrs Heriot, Jean's aunt, is quick to remark: "You needn't suppose, darling, that those wretched creatures feel it as we would" (p.50). On the other hand, Jean is encouraged to define herself as exclusively as possible in terms of being Stonor's wife. Therefore she is required to alienate herself in him and his public image. Lord John responds thus to one of Jean's clumsy attempts at imitating her husband's learned speech: "It's all right, my child. Of course we expect now that you'll begin to think like Geoffrey Stonor, and to feel like Geoffrey Stonor, and to talk like Geoffrey Stonor. And quite proper too" (p.44).

The paradox of the matter is that although the sheltered rich girl is required to help Stonor in his political career, she is warned against becoming one of the hateful "political women." Jean's relatives and their associates often talk about this type of women with little generosity. "Unsexed," "discontented old maids and hungry widows," are but few of the unkind words used by the Wynnstays and their associates to describe women who vote, and "do silly things of that sort" (p.47).

When Jean tries to fulfil her relatives' expectations, by talking like Stonor, she is ridiculed amicably:

JEAN (*gravely*): Mr Greatorex—he's a Radical, isn't he?

LORD JOHN: (*laughing*): *Jean!* Beginning to "think in parties"! (p.44).

The endeavours of Jean's relatives to thus enculture her are well intentioned. They seek to protect her from what is to them unnecessary knowledge, a way of preparing her for her role as the fresh and unharassed wife of a respectable top politician. Yet, little do Jean's relatives realize how much their methods of enculturation penetrate into the recesses of her personal identity, standing in the way of her proximity with her self. Sheila Rowbotham expresses a view of women's lives that reflects an existential problem similar to that projected in Jean's character. She says:

The world simply was and we were in it. We could only touch and act upon its outer shapes while seeing through the lens men made for us. We had no means of relating our inner selves to an outer movement of things. All theory, all connecting language and ideas which could make us see ourselves in relation to a continuum or as part of a whole were external to us. . . . We lumbered around ungainly-like in borrowed concepts which did not fit the shape we felt ourselves to be. Clumsily we stumbled over our own toes, lost in boots which were completely the wrong size. . . . We clowned, mimicked, aped our own absurdity (10).

Jean is subjected to the same effective method of enculturation as described by Rowbotham whose women have been so alienated in their prescribed sexual roles as to become clowns. Jean and Rowbotham's women all "lumbered around ungainly-like in borrowed concepts." They "clowned, mimicked," and "aped" their "own absurdity."

No matter how well intentioned Jean's relatives are, the collective ideology that forms the bases of their attitude undermines all that they do. Jean cannot be protected from the outside world without the adverse effect of being stripped of the means to stand against the world on her own. With this sort of insight Robins prepares us for the revelation of how helpless Jean is. This revelation happens in the last act. Many critics liken this act to the climax of one of Ibsen's psychological dramas and one of its emotional realities is to reveal how easily the excessively protected woman can be thrust aside and overwhelmed. Levering and Stonor are bargaining over Jean:

**MISS LEVERING:** One of two things. Either her life, and all she has, given to this new service—or a Ransom, if I give her up to you (p.84).

Jean's "life and all she has" are up for auction while she herself is passively waiting in one of the back rooms of her house. Thus, a transaction which involves almost every aspect of Jean's existence is being conducted while she is in a state of helpless oblivion.

*Votes for Women* deals with the theme of female moral maturity in relation to private/public divisions. Levering is a specimen of the self-realizing woman whose politicization is, in the most part, attributable to her private experience. Jean is a potential

self-realizer, for she has spirit and intelligence. Levering testifies as to Jean's ability to internalize the principles of the libertarian movement of the new millennium, the "New Spirit that's abroad" (p.84). Yet Jean's maturity is checked by her relatives' intensely traditional, moral discipline. Even after she meets Levering and starts to awaken, her coming of age is never achieved. Levering, her most likely mentor, chooses to sacrifice her protégè's maturity for the sake of the women's movement. She strikes a deal with Stonor that if she ceases to interfere with Jean's consciousness, he will help the women's movement in the best way he can. Levering is sure that if Jean herself is aware that a choice was to be made between her own maturity and the general interests of women's movement, she would choose the latter.

MISS LEVERING: One girl's happiness—against a thing nobler than happiness for thousands—who can hesitate?—*Not Jean* (p.85).

### **The Female Portrait**

Jean Creyke is perhaps one of the most coherently liberated characters of the "new drama." Like the female characters of other female "new dramatists," she is in many ways more morally informed than her counterpart creations of the male "new dramatists." Her mixing of public and private values in the context of mothering is more informed than the parallel characters created by the male "new dramatists." Like Sowerby's Mary, Jean Creyke's blending of these two sexual principles is done so well that the private ideal of self-sacrifice becomes the other side of the public principle of professionalism. The method she invents for sparing her child the pain is at once highly

unorthodox and effective. The originality and potency of this method can be achieved only by a seasoned professional who knows exactly the right ingredients for successful problem solving in their assigned fields.

What makes Jean's image even closer to moral wholeness is that her well-balanced moral structure is accompanied by a measure of autonomous sexuality. This flash of libidinous sparkle is what Levering lacks, despite her moral maturation, which springs from her deep awareness of the politics of gender and her theoretical and active dedication to women's cause. Jean's sexual ardour is partly evident in her dedication to the value of mental and physical potency. This dedication is so intense that it prompts Jan McDonald to suggest that *Alan's Wife* is a dramatization of Robins's strong opinion on eugenics (11). Jean's vitality brings her nearer to Shaw's non-traditionalist maternal characters like Candida Morell and Ann Whitefield.

Although Shaw concentrates largely on the agency of the Life Force in these figures' moral structure, he endows these structures with an original brand of vitality all their own. In the light of these Shavian maternal women's intense procreative potency, their general exuberance can be safely interpreted as partly sexual. The same, and still more, can be said of Jean Creyke. Jean carries her dedication to healthy procreation so far that she kills her deformed child in order to ensure that he does not have to go through life with an agonizing physical impairment. Moreover, she almost idolizes her husband's virility and openly shows her admiration of his physical attributes. She displays an intense feeling of great joy when she talks of his "honest blue eyes," "yellow hair," "straight nose," and "firm, sweet mouth" (p.14). In addition, the extravagantly admiring

woman depicts her husband as someone who loves to “feel the strong wind blowing in his face and the blood rushing through his veins.” This description enhances our feeling of Jean’s sensual indulgence (p.12).

The reconstruction of the image of the dedicated matron in Jean Creyke’s character is a cry for the reformation of gender metaphors underpinning motherhood. The improved version of motherhood which frees caring from the materialism of the mechanistic model is bound to do what Freud thought should be the purpose of psychoanalysis. This is to restore humanity to the “possibilities of happiness” (12).



## CHAPTER 8

### NOTES

1. quoted in Sheila Stowell, *A Stage of their Own: Feminist Playwrights of the Suffrage Era* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1992) p.12.
2. Elizabeth Robins, *Way Stations* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1913) p.250.
3. Githa Sowerby, *Rutherford and Son*, Linda Fitzsimmons and Viv Gardner eds., *New Woman Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 1991) p.188. All quotations from *Rutherford and Son* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
4. Harley Granville Barker, *The Madras House: A Comedy in Four Acts* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977) p.54.
5. Elizabeth Baker, *Chains*, Linda Fitzsimmons, and Viv Gardner eds., *New Woman Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 1991)
6. Cicely Hamilton, *Diana of Dobson's*, Linda Fitzsimmons, and Viv Gardner eds., *New Woman Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 1991) p.38. All quotations from *Diana of Dobson's* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.
7. Florence Bell and Elizabeth Robins, *Alan's Wife*, Linda Fitzsimmons, and Viv Gardner eds., *New Woman Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 1991) p.12. All quotations from *Alan's Wife* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

8. Dale Spender, and Carole Hayman eds. *Votes for Women. How the Vote Was Won: And Other Suffragette Plays* (London: a Methuen Theatrefile, 1985) p.84. All quotations from *Votes for Women* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text. Although an expression of great feeling, the title, *Votes for Women*, is written without an exclamation mark.
9. Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (London: Routledge, 1990) p.17.
10. Sheila Rowbotham, "Woman's Consciousness, Man's World," *Feminisms: A Reader*, ed. Maggie Humm (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) p.95..
11. McDonald's viewpoint is mentioned in an unrevised version of Leslie Parker Hill, "Representations of Women in British Drama 1890-1914," Diss. Glasgow U, 1996 p.113.
12. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: W.W Norton, 1961) p.39.

## CHAPTER 9

### WHO AM I AND WHERE IS HOME?:

### THE QUINTESSENTIAL DILEMMA

In the work of the dramatists who contributed to the "new drama," the moral maturity of individuals is decided upon the degree of his or her self-understanding, especially with regard to their gender identity. The inability to see beyond the conditionings of gender is symptomatic of decline, of loss of perception, which results in the decay of personal fibre. Therefore the exploration of individuals' alienation in their gender roles is a recurrent motif in the works of these dramatists. Barker, for instance, explores the theme of gender alienation in figures like Major Booth Voysey. The major's chronic puerility is the result of his restricted masculine training as a military man. Owing to his extreme immaturity, Major Booth's character remains thoroughly ridiculous; he is a caricature despite Barker's attempt to introduce naturalism into his character. He does so by insisting on the family likeness between the Voysey brothers. This is apparent in his description of Trenchard and Hugh, the "eldest and youngest" sons who are as "unlike each other as it is possible for Voyseys to be, but that isn't very unlike" (1).

Nevertheless, amongst the dramatists discussed here perhaps Shaw and Robins provide, between them, the most effective and amusing perspective on gender alienation. This is due to many factors. One of them is that they explore the theme of gender alienation in the individual as well as in the sexes as social classes. The exploration of

the inner psychology of the self and certain patterns of behaviour is developed and deepened because it has relevance in a wider, allegorical presentation of the sexes as collective entities. Another factor that makes Shaw's and Robins's presentation of gender issues and relationships eminent is the fact that they utilize paradoxes to the utmost capacity. Paradoxes for these two dramatists are not merely mechanical devices. They lie at the heart of gender alienation; they are a necessary expression of it; they penetrate every aspect of it. Both Sergius (*Arms and the Man*), and Jean Dunbarton (*Votes for Women*) are intensely alienated in their gender identities. The images of both characters hinge on a subtext of paradoxical notions. (2).

The combination of paradoxical and allegorical forms in Shaw's and Robins's exploration of the theme of gender alienation serves to underline the state of polarization of sexual values and positions in which the sexes live. Each one of the dramatists expresses the theme of gender alienation entirely from his or her own sex's point of view. The result is an amusing and whimsical vision of gender alienation and sexual relationships. It is one unified vision, despite the fact that it is offered by two different dramatists in two different plays and that it represents two polarized stances. After all, opposite sides of the coin still belong to the same coin. Petkoff and Sergius are removed from the public and private spheres whilst the women are afforded dominion over both. Jean's situation has much in common with that of Sergius and Petkoff. Just as they are alienated from themselves and the world, so also is she, only their genders differ. Jean is thus displaced as a result of men's, and not women's, absolute dominion over both public and private affairs.

Home is the most prominent motif used by Shaw and Robins to project an individual's state of alienation in their sexual roles. Jean, Sergius and Petkoff are all removed from both public and private spheres owing to the supremacy of the stronger sex. In both plays, the multiple displacement of these alienated characters is allegorically projected through a strong subtext of homelessness (3). The notion of "home," as a basic physical and spiritual element of an individual's experience of life, forms the backbone of the works of the dramatists who are discussed in this thesis. "Home," as a concept, touches upon the deepest drama of these dramatists' plays, especially those aspects which are germane to the topics of gender and morality and the kinship between them.

Having a satisfactory domicile; securing one's place in the world is a theme that can be found in the works of Ibsen, who has a major influence on the dramatists who contributed to the "new drama." This notion is connected with the theme of gender identity in the Norwegian dramatist's work. In *Hedda Gabler*, Thea's position offers an illuminating example of spiritual "homelessness" that results from the sexual "otherness" of underprivileged people. Thea bemoans the fact that she has never had a home: "If only I had a home! But I haven't. I've never had one" (4). Thea's homelessness is unexpected if one considers the fact that she does not seem to be suffering from Hedda's syndrome; she is not aware of the discrepancy between herself and the role she is required to perform by society, she is a successful wife and step-mother. Nevertheless, the discontented woman can be classified as one of the non-traditionalists. She has sufficient knowledge of herself to realize that her marriage and the wife-mother role that it entails are based on purely materialistic grounds. Her economic dependence on her husband makes her work in his house worth less, reducing her to no more than a convenient item

in a well-managed household. This fact intensifies Thea's "otherness." She says of her husband: "I think he just finds me useful. And then I don't cost much to keep. I'm cheap" (p.263).

Thea longs for a more morally elevated relationship with men, of the type she has cultivated with Loevborg. The Thea-Loevborg union is based on comradeship. This conscientious female believes that her association with the emancipated poet is more morally transcendent than her connection with her husband. This is because it establishes her as an equal with her partner, given the fact that their communication is conducted on a mental-spiritual level. Thea, however, being a non-traditionalist, suffers from a degree of insensibility. She cannot see that her confinement to the role of Loevborg's helpmate reinforces her inferiority. She is still the other, the carer, the dispensable, while Loevborg remains the one, the doer, and the indispensable. Notwithstanding this, Thea's relationship with Loevborg is the closest Thea, as a non-traditionalist character, can come to a mode of self-realization.

In the works of the "new dramatists" the home is divided into two categories: undesirable and desirable. The first is a home based upon purely patriarchal ethics; its moral essence is made up of asymmetrical structures of sexual values. This type of home provides the individual's materialistic needs and grants pseudo-spiritual satisfaction. The Voyseys' abode, which is based on Mr Voysey's patriarchal ethos, is persistently described by the family and their guests as the most irksome and restive of homes both on the architectural and the spiritual levels:

MR VOYSEY: I say. It's cold again tonight! An ass of an architect who built this place . . . such a draught between these two doors (p.101).

BEATRICE: I believe I could write important business letters upon an island in the middle of Fleet Street. But while Booth is poking at a ventilator with a billiard cue. . . no, I can't (p.105).

HONOR: I sometimes think, Alice, that we're a very difficult family. . . except perhaps Edward (p.103).

In *The Madras House* Philip informs his father that as a child he "had no home." The domicile that Constantine and Mrs Madras have offered their child is based purely on Constantine's patriarchal values. Thus it suffers from an acute state of estrangement between the parents. Philip says: "As the son of a quarrelsome marriage I have grown up inclined to dislike men and despise women" (5).

Galsworthy's *Justice* deals with subjects which are firmly based in the public sphere, namely theft and the law of property. Yet the catalyst that set off the incidents of the play is firmly rooted in the private sphere. It is located in a home of the undesirable variety. The nature of the Honeywill menage, which is based on disproportional masculine and feminine principles, has given the husband enough power to enable him to bully his wife both physically and mentally. This has led Falder to commit the forgery in the hope that this act will secure the financial means necessary for eloping with the battered wife. The position of Mrs. Jones, the physically abused wife of *The Silver Box*,

is similar to that of Ruth. The victimization of women in the undesirable homes is then at the bottom of wrongness in both public and private realms. Galsworthy's distinctive dramatic style which combines the irrationality of pathos with the rationality of photographic details presses on us the imperative of finding an alternative to the Honeywill-Jones types of homes.

In opposition to the undesirable type of home stands the desirable one. This kind of dwelling is based on proportional sexual values, it honours the female principle no more nor less than the male principle. In the desirable home the individual finds authentic spiritual comfort. In *The Voyage Inheritance*, Edward's moral conversion is accompanied by the establishment of this kind of home. During the period of transition Edward suffers from moral emptiness, having lost all previous points of reference. He pleads with Alice to provide him with new ethical landmarks:

EDWARD [to Alice]: If you've taken my principles from me, give me advice in exchange (p.128).

Alice offers Edward a new set of moral values that encompasses both female and male principles. The moral conversion is deepened by the establishment of a new type of home for the morally reincarnated:

ALICE (to Edward): While I live . . . where I am will be Home (p.158).



In *The Marrying of Ann Leete*, Ann moves to Abud's cottage, leaving behind her the Leetes' once grand but now declining home. The new small house which is distinguished by its primitiveness and simplicity signifies a morally improved humanity which is still in embryo. In *Arms and the Man* Bluntschli and Raina are representatives of the contrasted values of feminine love and masculine professionalism. Their marriage embodies the mitigation of these extremes which is, metaphorically, a step towards a more morally transcendent humanity. The home to which the couple move is the new home of the improved humanity. The several hotels that Bluntschli's father owns can be seen as one big domicile that is capable of housing this humanity.

In the works of the "new dramatists" the home is represented as the spine of the individual's--and societies'--experience of living. The home that needs to be reformed, a theme which occupies the dramatists in this thesis, has affinities with the traditional domestic arrangements which prevail in modern times, what is technically known as the "nuclear family." The recognition of the nuclear family as a political force makes itself felt exclusively in advanced feminist thinking which recognizes the vital link between the private and public, the personal and political. The dramatists in this thesis share a great deal of the ideology of the advanced feminist thinkers. The "new dramatists" and the advanced feminist thinkers believe that revolutionizing the organization of the private sphere, and thus changing the foundations of modern patriarchal family, is a vital step towards a more elevated social consciousness and a better society.

## CHAPTER 9

### NOTES

1. Harley Granville Barker, *Plays by Harley Granville Barker*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) p.115. All quotations from *The Voysey Inheritance* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

2. Jean's and Sergius's characters are examined earlier in this thesis. They are found on pp. 368-370 and pp. 239-241 respectively.

3. I have discussed the issue of these characters' homelessness in the chapters on playwrights. See pp. 240-242 (Shaw), p 361 and p. 370 (Robins).

4. Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, *Plays: two*, Trans. Michael Meyer (1974; London: Methuen, 1990) p.332. All quotations from *Hedda Gabler* are from this edition and further page references are incorporated into the text.

5. Harley Granville Barker, *The Madras House: A Comedy in Four Acts* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977) p. 121.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION

The logical way to guide this thesis to its end seems to pose the following question: Does the manner in which the “new dramatists” deal with the issues of gender and morality justify their being hailed as theatrical reformers? To answer this question I would like to end with my beginning and with a succinct reassessment of the way in which the theoretical foundations of my thesis, which turn on the ideas of public/private distinction, have been reflected in the works of these dramatists. I will attempt to show to what extent the “new dramatists” have managed to subvert the vital public/private symbiosis and its two most important ramifications, active/passive and rational/irrational. Women are the most sensitive monitors of social change, particularly the change occurring in the public/private division. Hence, the best way to assess the extent to which these creative playwrights defied the sharp polarization of sexual values would seem to be to revalue the manner in which they deconstructed and reconstructed the female image in a new social structure.

The wish to subvert the public/private symbiosis has led the “new dramatists” down many paths. One route is to liberate women’s productive and reproductive abilities from patriarchal possession. Patriarchy has always attempted to control, suppress, or tap into these elemental energies for itself. The locus of such objectification of women is traditional marital formations. One of the ways in which the “new dramatists” challenge such formations is by representing females who refuse to be identified in terms of the

traditional roles of wives and mothers. Vivie Warren and Vida Levering are best examples of this type of women. A second route to the overthrowing of the public/private sexual duality and its ramifications is to represent women who have satisfactorily striven to wrest their reproductive abilities from male proprietorship, and on sponsoring these abilities themselves by taking on paid jobs. Barker's Miss Yates and Hankin's Janet are good cases in point.

Both emancipated women have children outside wedlock, subverting both traditional marriage and the institutionalization of reproduction, which are two of the main causes of the perpetuation of sharply polarized public and private spheres. Each refuses to be part of a compulsive active/passive, owner/non-owner duality by rejecting the economic--and hence psychological--guardianship of the father of her child. Both single mothers have a measure of sexual autonomy which intensifies the metaphor of activeness in their image. This masculine metaphor confers on them the social legitimacy that has hitherto been reserved mainly for male characters on the Edwardian stage. What makes the liberation of both maternal and non-maternal unmarried women more effective is the fact that it is accompanied by moral transcendence which arises from the coexistence of both masculinity and femininity within these psychologically balanced individuals.

Furthermore, the liberated single mothers' developed sense of right and wrong stems from the psychosexual specificity of women. This fact is threatening to the polarized, dualistic sexual *status quo*. These single mothers have the courage to defy the traditional culture's definition of the female. They insist on seeing themselves as they

experience them rather than as they are experienced through men's perception. For instance, both mothers are not afraid to admit that the sexual relationships that have led to their illegal pregnancy have been experienced partly as a means of self-fulfillment. Miss Yates and Janet have thus freed their procreative energies from the patriarchal prescription which defines these energies as passive and secondary.

Trying to find an authentic way of describing the female self is a challenging act because prescribing women's sexual and social identity has been one of patriarchy's most vital ways of subjecting women. It is the social order's favourite schema for making sense of women's lives that justifies and reproduces gender differences and ultimately serves to perpetuate the public/private schism. The "new dramatists" allow the single women to define themselves, and to officially bring their own perception of themselves into unobstructed vision. This, combined with the fact that these women's moral constitutions are endorsed with approval despite their blatant crossing of gender boundaries, has somehow resolved their otherness. The single women's autonomous and morally elevated image brings their characters closer to the integral oneness that places them nearer to the centre of society than to its periphery.

Nevertheless the most substantial change in the female representation on the stage arguably occurs in the image of women who, contrary to their unmarried sisters, have trusted patriarchy with their productive and reproductive abilities. These are the women who have kept to their traditional roles of wives and mothers. Women in this category constituted the largest section of the female population, not only in the period under study, but also for the greatest part of known history, particularly the days that preceded

the Women's Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead of making the figure of the mother and/or wife, which represents the majority of women, officially break some codes of ideal femininity, the "new dramatists" try to concentrate on remodeling her image in the metaphorical structure of their plays.

The "new dramatists" reinterpret the central metaphor of passivity underlying her major roles of nurture and care. The metaphor of passivity is the vital part of the symbolic structure that underlies the public/private polarity which defines the boundaries between male and female space. It is the most vital attribute that sustains these boundaries. Instead of partly or wholly detaching the traditionally maternal woman from her conventional roles, the "new dramatists" deepen her association with these roles at the same time as they subvert their basic inert quality. They recast these roles as active and not, as orthodox historians would have us believe, passive. The fact that the productive and reproductive abilities of traditional women are in the hands of patriarchal power does not radically remove these women's control over them. This is because the basic vitality of these carers and nurturers survives despite all attempts at pacifying it.

By deconstructing the fundamental principle of passivity on which the traditional models of gender rest, the "new dramatists" emphasize the traditional woman's practical effectiveness, thus centrality. This woman is shown to be at the centre of the scheme of things at those levels of existence where the real work of the world is done and where the genuine meaning of living is rationalized. This is a tribute to the contained but highly influential power of the woman who has stayed at home. Candida Morell, Catherine Petkoff, Ann Leete, Enid Underwood, Mrs. Cassilis, Jean Creyke, Alice Maitland all

answer to the description of the empowered wife and/or mother. (Despite the fact that Alice Maitland is initially a mentally and physically healthy spinster, she has all along surreptitiously played the part of Edward's helpmate, which resembles to a great extent the part of the traditional wife. This is despite her being the major moral and practical force in *The Voysey Inheritance*. At the end of the play Alice agrees to marry Edward, thus ratifying her ostensibly secondary role by making it official.)

The tribute that the "new dramatists" pay maternal women places them in line with "second wave feminists." These women's liberation advocates strive to reconceptualize knowledge so that it takes women as its starting point, making them the subject, and not object, of scientific inquiry. They want history to be recorded in a new way that takes into account women's endeavours. "Second wave feminists" want women to be put into history as individuals who act on things and not as people to whom things simply happen. Record-keepers have always concentrated on men's endeavours in the public sphere like wars, for instance. Thus they have de-emphasized the private domestic province where most women have dwelt for the greatest part of history. The distance of women's place in the world from the record-maker's areas of interest makes women appear as if they were completely inert. Away from the abstractness of biased chronicles, the living reality of gender indicates that women have had as much influence in the annals of history as men.

The "new dramatists" go further in their appreciation of woman's role by insisting that women are actually more essential and useful to human existence than men. There is a strikingly powerful tendency in the work of the "new dramatists" to deflate

history's glorification of male achievements. Viewing these dramatists' work from a certain angle, we find that the overall image they produce of the male endeavours in the public sphere is that of immature and ineffective attempts at reducing problem solving to something very similar to abstract, mathematical equations. In the "new drama" there is an abundance of the type that is associated with such practices. Morell, Petkoff, Sergius Undershaft, Major Booth, Anthony and Roberts, Trebell, and Edward (before his conversion) are all good cases in point. They are all beings who are--each to an extent proportional to his place on the moral scale--lost in the inane abstractions of their territorial and/or ideological disputes. The detachment of these individuals' actions from the reality of the human dilemma reduces these actions, in extreme cases, to mere verbal and/or physical acrobatics. As such, these male characters waste their and the world's resources in empty hierarchical/combatative activities, whilst their women are diligently bent on counteracting the aftermath of their irresponsible activities.

The female efforts in this context include encouraging reproduction. This act helps preserve the human race which is at risk from the wars that are constantly aggravated by men's contentious game-playing. The women who have made caring and nurturing their main profession are always attempting to soothe the pain that results from such disputes. Much of the effectiveness of the revolution of the "new dramatists" against sexual orthodoxy rests on reinterpreting history thus so that it is forced to take heed of women's reasoning and women's actions within the domestic realm where most women for a great part of history have dwelt. Such subversion of moral norms turns on an earnest and powerful current of role reversal: on the substitution of female reasoning



for male logic. This clearly undermines the prevalent notion that women are irrational whilst men are rational.

The “new dramatists” challenged public and private divisions of which the rational/irrational and active/passive sexual dualities are the main components. This is one of the factors that contributed to their “novelty” and highlighted the significance of the theatrical venture that fostered them. The Court system was partial to finding ways of promoting human happiness through an inventive drama which was characterized by its genuinely imaginative responses to the situations of life. The creativity of the “new drama” was partly devoted to pointing out the factors which distanced individuals from themselves, particularly gender indoctrination and synthetic moral structure.

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