

RESEARCH ARTICLE

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'S WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVES AND CONTRADICTIONARY FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY

Yaseen Khudhair Obayes Al-Dulaimi

¹ Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Department of English
E-mail: yaseen.khudhair11@gmail.com

Main Supervisor **Professor Dr. Alhaj Ali Adam**
University of Gezira, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Department of English

Published at 01/06/2021

Accepted at 23/05/2021

Abstract

The present study tries to investigate George Bernard Shaw's woman perspectives and contradictionary female characters in the Victorian society. Although the novel was the dominant literary type throughout the Victorian age stages, George Bernard Shaw left his strong signs on modern English drama as a famous Victorian dramatist. George Bernard Shaw, who won the Nobel Prize as critic and playwright, produced so many literary works comprising the years from the Victorian age to the Interwar years. In fact, Shaw was greatly influenced by the Norwegian playwright Henrick Ibsen as he adopted socialism and realism in his plays. Consequently, Shaw challenged the Victorian age which was mostly controlled by the musical comedies and melodramas for the entertainment of the theatregoers. The social and political thoughts represented in his plays required a particular knowledgeable stimulation that made him leave a strong and obvious sign on Western theatre. In agreement with Shaw's participation in the Fabian society and socialist ideas, Shaw not only witnessed the woman suffragette movement in Britain, but also supported the woman fight for social and political liberation. In this respect, he provided challenging female characters that critically question the stereotypical woman images in the Victorian society. Among Shaw's numerous plays, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' presents the question of a prostitute, later-brothel owner, on the stage. Both female characters of the play, Mrs. Warren who is a brother-owner and her daughter Vivie who is a Cambridge graduate, criticise the role of the woman in the Victorian society. Therefore, George Bernard Shaw's reflection of the Victorian woman foreshadows the upcoming woman suffragette movement for the support of the Victorian women's rights. Seven years after 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' made its opening, Shaw staged his next play 'Press Cutting' which is a farcical comedy about the woman suffragette movement. This time, Bernard Shaw obviously supports women's struggle to achieve the right to vote. In terms of its theme, 'Press Cutting' represents the development achieved by Victorian women who could raise their voice to achieve particular rights.

وجهات النظر تجاه المرأة والشخصيات النسوية المتناقضة لدى جورج بيرنارد شو في المجتمع الفيكتوري

ياسين خضير عبيس الدليمي¹

¹ طالب دكتوراه في الأدب الإنجليزي، جامعة الجزيرة / كلية الآداب و العلوم الإنسانية

بريد الكتروني: yaseen.khudhair11@gmail.com

إشراف أ.د. الحاج علي آدم
جامعة الجزيرة / كلية الآداب و العلوم الإنسانية

تاريخ القبول: 2021/05/23م

تاريخ النشر: 2021/06/01م

المستخلص

تتناول الدراسة الحالية البحث في وجهات النظر تجاه المرأة و الشخصيات النسوية المتناقضة لدى جورج بيرنارد شو في المجتمع الفيكتوري. و على الرغم من أن الرواية كانت تمثل النوع الأدبي السائد خلال فترات العصر الفيكتوري , فإن جورج بيرنارد شو قد ترك إشارات قوية على المسرح الإنجليزي الحديث كمرحى فيكتوري مشهور. إن جورج بيرنارد شو و الذي نال جائزة نوبل كناقذ و كاتب مسرحي قد أنتج عددا كبيرا جدا من الاعمال الأدبية التي تشتمل السنوات من العصر الفيكتوري إلى سنوات الحرب العالمية. في الحقيقة إن شو كان قد تأثر بشكل كبير بالكاتب المسرحي النرويجي هينريك إبسن عندما تبنى الاشتراكية و الواقعية في مسرحياته. و كنتيجة لذلك فإن شو قد تحدى العصر الفيكتوري و الذي كان و بشكل كبير تحت سيطرة الكوميديا الموسيقية و المسرح الغنائي لغرض متعة رواد المسرح. إن الأفكار الاجتماعية و السياسية الممثلة في مسرحياته تطلبت حافزا معرفيا معينا و الذي جعله يترك علامة قوية و واضحة على المسرح الغربي. و مع مشاركة شو في المجتمع الفابي و الافكار الاجتماعية, فإن شو لم يشهد حركة الدفاع عن حقوق المرأة في بريطانيا فحسب و لكنه أيضا قد ساند قتال المرأة من أجل الحرية الاجتماعية و السياسية. و في هذا الاعتبار فإنه قد قدّم شخصيات نسوية متحديّة و التي واجهت و بنقد الصور النمطية للمرأة في المجتمع الفيكتوري. و من بين العديد من مسرحيات شو, فإن مسرحية 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' تقدم قضية العاهرة, مالكة بيت الدعارة على خشبة المسرح. إن الشخصيتين النسويتين كليهما, السيدة ورون و ابنتها فيفي, خريجة جامعة كامبريدج, تنتقدان دور المرأة في المجتمع الفيكتوري. و كنتيجة لذلك فإن تمثيل جورج بيرنارد شو للمرأة الفيكتورية ظل يلازم و منذ البداية الحركة القادمة للدفاع عن حقوق المرأة من أجل دعم حقوق المرأة الفيكتورية. و بعد سبع سنوات من عرض مسرحيته 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', فإن شو قد عرض مسرحيته التالية 'Press Cutting', و التي هي كوميديا هزلية حول حركة الدفاع عن حقوق المرأة. و في هذا الوقت, فإن جورج بيرنارد شو يساند و بشكل واضح نضال المرأة من أجل نيل الحق في الانتخاب. و في ظل موضوعها, فإن مسرحية 'Press Cutting' تمثل التطور الذي حققته النساء الفيكتوريات اللواتي استطعن رفع أصواتهن لتحقيق حقوق معينة.

1. Aims of the Study

The current study tries to achieve the following aims:

1. To what extent could George Bernard Shaw portray the image of the woman in the Victorian society?
2. To what extent did George Bernard Shaw defend the woman's rights in the Victorian society?
3. To what extent did George Bernard Shaw criticize oppression and injustices from which women suffer a lot in the Victorian society?

2. The Significance of the Study

The present study discusses George Bernard Shaw's woman question and contradictory female characters in the Victorian society. It also shows the writer's attitudes towards the roles that women should perform in the Victorian society. In fact, the Victorian era witnessed new significant developments in the placement of women in the English society. While, the Victorian women greatly demanded more social, political and legal rights, and greater economic opportunities, the Victorian social principles saw the increasing identification of women with domestic tasks.

The woman question in the Victorian England referred to the various debates about Victorian women's place in the society, with opposing voices emphasizing either the need of women to have greater educational, economic and political opportunities or the idea that women properly belonged in the home as caretakers to their husbands and children. Queen Victoria herself represented these two aspects of the woman question, as she was frequently depicted as and presented herself in terms of the ideal wife and mother even as she reigned as the monarch.

3. The Scope of the Study

The current study is limited to discuss George Bernard Shaw's woman question and contradictory female characters in Victorian society in three famous plays: 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', 'Press Cutting' and 'Man and Superman'.

4. Introduction

The rise of the female literary writings began in the 18th century, but it was not until the middle of the 19th century that some literary writings became famous and popular. According to Showalter (1978), "*The nineteenth century was the Age of the Female Novelist*". She believes that with the appearance of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, the question of women's aptitude for fiction had been answered. In fact, the situation for women writers was very difficult. With almost no formal educational background and little job opportunities, they had no other choice but to immerse themselves in writing novels as their only way to escape from the dominant patriarchal society.

George Bernard Shaw is clearly known as one of the most revolutionary playwrights of the 19th and 20th centuries. Shaw's social and critical works were surely ahead of his time, therefore, his works were outrageous to a great part of the public. At the same time, this did prevent Bernard Shaw from becoming a highly much-admired playwright whose plays are still read and also performed in different parts of the world. Some of the most observed characteristics of the author's work are his disruptive perspectives on gender relations and femininity, and his female characters, which brought him into prominence as a feminist name in the English drama.

Furthermore, while George Bernard Shaw's female characters are far from reflecting traditional thoughts of womanhood in the Victorian society, they cannot be taken for completely liberated and new woman either. The woman showed by the writer attitude somewhere between traditional and new morals, creating exceptional and particularized female character. While these women present some characteristics of the Victorian ideal and traditional literary types, they are also very much closely related to the figure of the modern woman in the fight for gender equality. In consequence, the female characters in Shaw's plays are not plain, one dimensional descriptions of the typical Victorian woman, but rather mostly complex and often paradoxical personae.

In the current study, the researcher will investigate and examine George Bernard Shaw's attitudes on femininity and gender roles and discuss how they are reflected in the construction of his female characters.

4.1 The Victorian Period

The Victorian period can be traditionally divided into three stages. Moran (2007) divides the Victorian era into three phases: "*the early Victorian stage, the mid-Victorian stage, and the late Victorian stage*". *The early Victorian stage extended roughly to 1850. Throughout this time of apprehension and reform, fear of social unrest and economic instability appeared in public discourse and cultural products. Between 1850 and the 1870s, the mid-Victorian stage was the time of economic success and development, and intellectual achievements, especially the achievements linked to industry. The late Victorian stage inherited the contradictory mix of cultural assurance and self-doubt, but reimagined it as a battle between the outmoded values of the Victorian past and the rebellious, liberating possibilities of a more modern outlook*".

Drama is one of the oldest literary forms, second only to poetry. The word drama is derived from a Greek word that means action or performance. Therefore, the word itself emphasizes the difference between drama and all other literary genres; it is a literary art intended to be performed by a group of actors before an audience. Beginning with the 19th century, however, a new form of drama called 'closet drama' was introduced. Closet drama simply refers to plays intended to be read rather than performed on stage. Qutami (2012) stated that "*Reading a play instead of seeing it performed on stage deprives us from the cumulative impact created by the employment of various visual and audio elements such as the stage sets, costumes, lighting, music and other sound effects*". The greatest figure in English drama in the late 19th and twentieth centuries is unquestionably George Bernard Shaw. His earliest work in drama was directed towards the statement and criticism of contemporary social evils. Evans (1973) indicated that "*The early 19th century is one of the most unrewarding periods in the English literature. It was a great era in poetry and fiction, but men of letters when came into the theatre seldom found themselves in a congenial atmosphere*".

Indeed, while many critics aster that the novel was the dominant literary form throughout the Victorian age, George Bernard Shaw left his mark on English modern drama as a Victorian dramatist. Bernard Shaw, the Nobel Prize winner, playwright and critic, has produced so many great literary works comprising the years from the

Victorian age to the International war years. In fact, George Bernard Shaw adopted socialism and realism in his plays because he was highly influenced by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In consequence, he strongly challenged the Victorian theatre, which was mostly dominated by the musical comedies and melodramas for the entertainment of the theatre audience. In addition, the social and political ideas represented in Shaw's plays required a particular intellectual stimulation that enabled him to leave a great mark on the European theatre.

In his involvement in the Fabian society and socialist ideas, Shaw not only observed the feminist movement in Britain, but also supported the woman struggle for liberation. In this respect, he presented female characters that question the stereotypical woman images in the Victorian age. Among Shaw's numerous plays, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' (1893) brings the story of a prostitute, later brothel-owner, into the stage. Both female characters of the play, Mrs. Warren who is a brothel-owner and her daughter Vivien who is a Cambridge graduate, criticizes the role of the woman in the Victorian society. Therefore, Bernard Shaw's demonstration of women prefigures the upcoming feminist movement for the support of women's rights in the Victorian society. Seven years after "Mrs. Warren's Profession" made its premiere, as the feminist movement gained momentum, Bernard Shaw presented 'Press Cutting' which is a farcical comedy about the feminist movement. This time Bernard Shaw greatly supports women's struggle to achieve the political right to vote. In terms of its theme, this play reveals the progress achieved by the Victorian women who could raise their voice to obtain particular political and social rights.

Structurally, however, it fails to follow social realism that Bernard Shaw adopted in his literary career as a political activist. On the whole, it can be stated that George Bernard Shaw sacrifices his language style, which made him one of the most outstanding playwrights of the modern era, for the benefit of the theme of this play. Consequently, the current study aims to describe and discuss the theme of rights of women as reflected in "Mrs. Warren's Profession" and "Press Cutting" and to analyse George Bernard Shaw's selected plays discussing Shaw's involvement in and support for the feminist movement in order to investigate the woman question in the Victorian age.

4.2 George Bernard Shaw as a Feminist Writer

George Bernard Shaw extremely disagreed with the way women had been treated and considered during the 19th and 20th countries. In his article 'The Quintessence of Ibsen' in 1891, Shaw criticizes the view of women as inferior to men, claiming that *"[...] it is surprising that our society, being directly dominated by men, comes to regard Woman, not as an end in herself like Man, but solely as a means of ministering to his appetite. The ideal wife is one who does everything that the ideal husband likes, and nothing else. Now to treat a person as a means instead of an end is to deny that person's right to live. And to be treated as a means to such an end as sexual intercourse with those who deny one's right to live is insufferable to any human being"* (Shaw, 'The Quintessence of Ibsen', 1891).

George Bernard Shaw strongly defended gender equality and spoke against the traditional concept that women are constructed for domestic life. Shaw claimed that *"if we have come to think that the nursery and the kitchen are the natural sphere of a*

woman, we have done so exactly as English children come to think that a cage is the natural sphere of a parrot – because they have never seen one anywhere else" (Shaw, 'The Quintessence of Ibsen', 1891), criticizing the unfounded assumption that women should achieve the roles of housewife and mother.

On the other hand, *"although Bernard Shaw's political perspectives about the Victorian women opposed the traditional expectation of female obsequiousness and the simple view of women as child-bearers, they frequently contrast with the rather traditional treatment he occasionally gives them in his plays"* (Adams, 1974). In fact, it is possible to recognize a tendency in the playwright to differentiate between feminine and masculine missions and to separate his characters according to traditional gender roles. Although Crane (1974) stated that *"Shaw consistently took up the cause of woman who was expected to embrace her role as an inferior dependent being confined to child bearing and housekeeping"*. Importantly, this division is evident in some of Shaw's literary works such as 'Man and Superman'. Nevertheless, *"George Bernard Shaw was aware that women have the same knowledgeable and artistic capabilities than men and are mostly deprived from performing her effective roles by social and not biological causes"* (Crane, 1974).

In general, George Bernard Shaw's feminism is most apparent in his creation of modern and strong-willed female characters, which are frequently working or financially independent women with an effective and strong similarity with the so called 'New Woman'. Shaw's re-construction of more traditional concepts, even so, is more subtle, although not less present, and was observed by several critics and scholars in the playwright's consistent re-construction of conventional literary types in his plays, among other causes.

4.3 The New Woman

George Bernard Shaw often depicted the figure of the 'New Woman', a feminist ideal that started in the 19th century and *"represents the aspirations of middle-class women to forge roles for themselves within society as independent thinkers who were financially self-sufficient"* (Wilson, 2013). On the other hand, more than a real person or a group, the term 'New Woman' served as *"a way of naming, and thus controlling, a range of ongoing disruptions in the social understanding of gender"* (Powell, 1997). Clearly, it was a very polemic concept from the moment it emerged, since it was creating during a time when women were frequently considered to have freedom. Up until this time, women had been *"idealized entirely through their abrogation of self"* (Wilson, 2013). This refers to that the Victorian women were expected to be self-sacrificing, always putting their responsibilities as mothers and wives before them as great life duties. In consequence, *"female independence was considered as a threat to the marriage institution"* (Sargent, 2009). Powell (1997) indicates that *"The New Woman was not well received because she reopened for discussion some deeply held assumptions about what it meant to be a man or woman"*. Furthermore, *"the concept of women defying what was taken to be nature's order challenged traditional morals values, something which seemed even more dangerous to the British society in a moment when Britain's imperial supremacy was at risk"* (Sargent, 2009).

Consequently, many scholars, artists, journalists and writers who opposed the

concept of the New Woman started satirizing the figure. Powell (1997) claimed that *"Even progressive men who were supportive of gender equality showed mixed feelings towards the New Woman"*. Wilson (2013) depicted the notion of the New Woman as *"masculine in dress and manners"*. Some of Bernard Shaw's female characters, for instance, share similarities with this typecast. Nevertheless, *"what might have caused relatively liberal men like George Bernard Shaw to react rather unexpectedly towards the philosophy of the New Woman was not necessarily the changes related to the female behaviour, but the fact that it required a change in the behaviour of men"* (Powell, 1997). Logically, the threat gender equality represented to the male authority and benefit acquired through gender polarization made most men uncomfortable.

4.4 Temptress, Mother, Goddess: Traditional Literary Types

Although George Bernard Shaw was frankly against stereotype women, Adams (1974) signifies three other literary types in the Shaw's plays: temptress, mother and goddess, claiming that *"These traditional female roles are prevalent throughout Western Literature, and certainly most of the playwright's main female characters shows correlations to one or more of them"*. It is possible that Bernard Shaw's rigid role definition is a result of the literary tradition in which he was certainly engrossed, which means that although his female characters were different from the average Victorian woman, they were constructed in the patterns the writer was familiar with. Adams (1974) clarifies each of the three female characters as follows:

"In the Western Tradition, temptress is a fascinating but evil woman who creates chaos in the world around her. She is frequently associated with animal ferocity, a characteristic that can be clearly observed in Shaw's work. She is the 'femme fatale', a woman who manipulates and corrupts the ones close to her, especially men". Eve, described in the Bible as the one who induced Adam to sin, and Pandora who was responsible for the release of all the evils of humanity in Greek mythology, are classic examples of this type.

"The mother type is the woman represented as the giver and nurturer of life, although she can also have a very protective and controlling character". Eve is also an example of this type, being the mother of humanity according to Christianity. The mother is also a fundamental type in Bernard Shaw's drama and the clearest examples of mother-woman in the plays that will be analysed in the current study are found in 'Man and Superman', where the notion of the Life Force is responsible for the mother physiological natures of the female characters. *"The mother-woman id frequently fused with the symbol of the goddess, generating a type of 'super-mother'. The goddess characterizes power but also purity, sanctity and self-denial"*. Additionally, the goddess is often seen as responsible for the future of humanity.

By investigating the female characters in the following plays, we will discourse what type of women are being represented in George Bernard Shaw's literary works and how they fit into the three literary types mentioned above. Furthermore, we will analyse how they relate to, or differ from, the writer's discussed attitudes and views on gender and womanhood, and investigate their role in the character construction in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' and 'Man and Superman'.

4.5 Mrs. Warren's Profession (1893)

Mrs. Warren's Profession is a play centered on the mother-daughter relationship between Vivie and Kitty Warren, and the participation of the latter with organised prostitution. Although the play was written in 1893, because of its social restrictions and taboo subject-matter, the play could not be performed until 1902 due to the government control. Both heroes in Mrs. Warren's Profession can be seen as liberated modern women, although in different ways. Vivie Warren is an example of the new working woman, and is then a strong woman. She does not take instructions or orders, and makes herself economically independent at the end of the play. Mrs. Warren, on the contrary, initially appears to be more modified to the society's expectations of women. On the other hand, one immediately realises that she has long challenged the society's expectations by having a strong intelligence of self-respect and taking control of her own life. Notwithstanding, both female characters frequently contradict themselves in their concepts of womanhood and independence. In consequence, and because of the different ways the female characters decide to face the values of the Victorian society, Vivie and Kitty require a separate and intensive literary analysis.

4.5.1 Vivie Warren as the New Woman

Vivie Warren is one of George Bernard Shaw's most outstanding representations of the New Woman. In the beginning of the play 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', the character is considered as the opposite of the Victorian woman: the Victorian woman is not interested in the romantic view of the world, she is not interested in the interpersonal relationships, she is a very practical, self-sufficient and confident woman. However, this liberated aspect of Vivie Warren's character is occasionally stereotyped. One of the many instances when this caricaturesque aspect of Vivie Warren can be seen is in her own description of herself, "*I like working and getting paid for it. When I'm tired of working, I like a comfortable chair, a cigar, a little whisky, and a novel with a good detective story in it*" (Shaw, 1893, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'). Furthermore, not only her views but also her dress and her manners are masculinized, giving her more similarities to a caricature than portraying her as a modern woman rejecting typical female roles. Adams (1974) stated that "*Although the author's intention might not have been the satirization of the image of the New Woman, he often emphasizes what were considered more masculine characteristics, making the character resemble the satires commonly produced by critics at the time*".

On the other hand, Vivie Warren still gives some extent of attachment of Victorian morals. One example is the way she reacts to the fact her mother had been in the prostitution business. Vivie Warren is very judgmental when she first finds out Mrs. Warren had been a prostitute, although after her mother educates her on the hardships of being a poor woman, she becomes more understanding. However, what is surprising is that in the end it is not Mrs. Warren's early business as a prostitute that makes Vivie break away from her, but rather the fact that her mother continues working as a prostitute when she no longer needs more money.

Vivie Warren understands a poor girl's reason for selling her dignity as a prostitute, and when she confronts Crofts in the end of the Act III, saying "how helpless nine out of ten young girls would be in the hands [his] and [her] mother" (Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren Profession', 1893). We understand that her aversion is directed towards the exploiters

and not the prostitutes themselves. Laurence (2004) claimed that "*the author speaks through Vivie, accusing the social system instead of the prostitutes*".

Notwithstanding, "*while Vivie still adheres to some Victorian morals and values concerning women, that does not apply to her ideas on gender roles, both in her case and in her perspectives of her mother. Kitty Warren is taking over the traditional role of the father by providing for her daughter while outsourcing the work of raising her, for instance, never bothered Vivie, except perhaps for the fact that they did not develop a strong emotional bond*" (Wilson, 2013). This is also evident on Vivie Warren's personal and professional aspirations; she swears never to get married and wishes to become a working woman instead. Wilson (2013) argued that "*as a new woman, Vivie strives for independence and so refuses the normative standards of middle-class femininity, which placed a premium on women being mothers who selflessly forfeited their own needs to meet those of their husbands and children*". As a matter of fact, this is a fundamental part of the feminist movement, and the opposition to these ideals has been one of the pillars of the fight for female liberation since its very beginning.

In the end of the play 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', Vivie Warren still shows some final acts of revolution against traditional standards. After having sent Frank and Praed out of her office, she has an argument with Mrs. Warren, who stresses she accomplishes her role as a daughter, to which Vivie Warren answers, "*I don't want a mother; and I don't want a husband. I have spared neither nor myself in sending him about his business. Do you think I will spare you?*" (Shaw, YEAR, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'). Clearly, Vivie's attitude reveals how wide-ranging her rejection of the traditional female role is: she does not only refuse the role of marriage and motherhood, she also refuses to fulfill the role of the daughter.

4.5.2 Kitty Warren and Social Criticism

Similar to her daughter, Kitty Warren is also undecided between different ideals and values. Kitty is inconspicuous about being a brothel owner and having a child outside of the marriage institution and desperately attempts to fit into the role of the mother by trying to proclaim her maternal authority over Vivie Warren, who most of the time disrespects it. Notwithstanding, it is not long before it becomes evident that Mrs. Warren will not conform to all of the society's expectations. The first mark observed is with respect to her physical appearance. When she first comes into sight, Mrs. Warren is clearly "*unwilling to capitulate fully to the conventions of middle-class decorum in terms of dress*" (Wilson, 2013), since she is described as "*showily dressed in a brilliant hat and a gay blouse fitting tightly over her bust and flanked by fashionable sleeves. Rather spoilt and domineering, and decidedly vulgar, but, on the whole, a genial and fairly presentable old blackguard of a woman*" (Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren Profession', 1893). Although Mrs. Warren's manner of dressing might also be affected by the years she has worked in her profession, once we realise that Mrs. Warren has a clear understanding of the Victorian social standards.

Kitty, like Vivie Warren, shows some features of the New Woman, since she is outspoken, spontaneous and a woman who has made herself financially independent. On the other hand, the most outstanding way Mrs. Warren challenges the Victorian concepts of feminism is through the awareness of her state as a woman. In fact, for

Mrs. Warren, prostitution was a way of acquiring control over herself and her body in a world where not many choices were available for women in the Victorian society, a fact she claims saying "*It can't be right [...] that there shouldn't n be better opportunities for women. I stick to that: it's wrong*" (Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', 1893).

Even though, prostitutes are in a position where they have to submit to the will of men, the choices available for women of lower social classes are much more humiliating to Kitty Warren, since she considers it impossible to "*keep [one's] self-respected in such starvation and slavery*" (Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', 1893). On the other hand, Kitty Warren realises what is anticipated from her as a woman, and as stated, treats her personal and professional life with discretion. When Vivie Warren asks her if she is not ashamed of her decision, she replies "*Well, of course, dearie, it's only good manners to be ashamed of it: it's expected from a woman. Women have to pretend to feel a great deal that they don't feel*" (Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', 1893).

Another exciting fact about this very singular character is that "*Kitty Warren's story and personality make it impossible for her to be observed either as a villain or as a virtuous at heart but weak-willed woman, the two types of prostitutes that were allowed in drama by Victorian values*" (Laurence, 2004). George Bernard Shaw produces Mrs. Warren as a tool for revealing the Victorian society's guilty on the situation of women, neither defending nor accusing her. If Kitty Warren is to blame for participating in the world of prostitution, so is Crofts for investing in it, as well as Vivie Warren for profiting from her money without bothering to know its source, but specially the whole social system for giving women like her no better choice. "*Without one sole culprit, all members of society become blameworthy for the social injustice suffered by Victorian women, and the audience has to be made aware of it while watching the play*" (Laurence, 2004). Consequently, although Vivie Warren seems to be the woman who refuses the Victorian society standards of femininity the most, in the end it is her mother who truly reflects and sentences gender inequality in 'Mrs. Warren Profession'.

4.6 Man and Superman (1903)

'Man and Superman' was written in 1903, two years after the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Although this play was written approximately ten years after 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' (1893), its female characters can be separated into the three traditional literary types much more easily. Even though, many of the women in the play are unconventional women when compared to the classical examples of these types and to real women of the time. Ann Whitfield, being the female protagonist, is the most complex and contradictory of the women in the play. Some male characters in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' (1893) also have perspectives that deserve to be stated, especially John Tanner, since he is at the same time the fiercest critic of traditional principles, morals, and the great defender of the Life Force, the element responsible for the course of action in the play.

4.6.1 Ann Whitefield, a multifaceted character

Sterner (1989) claimed that "*Ann Whitfield is the initiator and propeller of the dramatic action in the play*". According to Crane (1974), Ann Whitefield is

represented as *"outwardly obedient but inwardly rebellions kind of woman, feigning a high degree of dependency, in order to achieve her ultimate goal conquering Jack"*. *"Ann dominates every male in the play, including reluctant Tanner. Despite she is a dominant character, unlike Vivie Warren in 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', Ann Whitefield does not relinquish her femininity while exercising her power over others, but rather uses it in her advantage"* (Sterner, 1998). Furthermore, Sterner (1998) designates Ann Whitefield as *"neither fragile nor gentle, and by no means quiet, except when it suits her purpose of the moment"*.

In consequence, Ann Whitefield adopts the characteristics of different literary types in 'Man and Superman' (1903), and is perceived differently by each one of the male characters. In her unscrupulous pursuit of Jack, for example, *"She is a temptress, since she seems to him like a dangerous huntress"*, (Adams, 1974), but at the same time a seductive figure, and he frequently compares her to beasts like a *"boa constrictor"* and a *"Bengal tiger"* in her hunting. In the meantime, *"her admirer Octavius and her guardian Ramsden, who is a perfect representative of the patriarchy system and Victorian morality, perceive Ann Whitefield as an innocent, proper lady"* (Watson, 1974), or in Ramsden's words *"a wonderfully dutiful girl"* (Shaw, 'Man and Superman', 1903), approaching Ann Whitefield to the pure, selfless goddess figure.

On the other hand, what makes Ann Whitefield an interesting character is not only her multifaceted nature, but also the fact that she represents the inversion of the traditional parts of the romantic pursuit, *"a great twist in Victorian conventions"* (Sterner, 1998). In the Act II, Jack Tanner informs 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"* (Shaw, 'Man and Superman', 1903). In 'Man and Superman', the woman is represented as the hunter and not as the prey, conferring her the sexual power in the relationship. Moreover, Watson (1974) assures that *"Ann Whitefield prevails against both the man who says he wants to marry her and the one who says he does"*. Nevertheless, this might seem like a revolutionary turn in gender roles, it is a product of Ann Whitefield's placement in the traditional literary type of the mother, a feature which will be more explained and discussed in connection with the concept of the Life Force in the following part of the current study.

4.6.2 Gender Roles and Life Force

Unexpectedly, it is in Man and Superman's unorthodox love chase where traditional gender divisions are most evident in the play. Even though, Ann Whitefield's pursuit of Jack Tanner puts her in a placement of control and power, her behaviour is not attributed to sexual freedom or gender equality, but rather to the Life Force, which is supposedly responsible for a woman's supposed natural, uncontrollable instinct for motherhood, and also forces the story.

Carpenter (1975) claimed that *"the mainspring of the plot is clearly Ann Whitefield's relentless desire to bear Jack Tanner's children"*. *"While Bernard Shaw's purpose was probably to challenge society's assumption of sexual influence relations, it is ironic that he does so by creating a dominant woman whose main goal is to breed"* (Sterner, 1998). The idea expressed through the Life Force that women are *"Nature's contrivance for perpetuating Nature's highest achievement"* (Shaw, 'Man

and Superman', 1903). In fact, this idea contradicts Bernard Shaw's view that women should not be treated as a means but as an end.

The main problem in the belief that there is a natural procreation force that controls the way people behave, an idea which feminists have for so long attempted to fight, is that it supports the separation of men and women in gender roles. Moreover, "*George Bernard Shaw seems to allocate women to a larger part in the process of reproduction, in consequence having a lower disposition for other social activities, which men then take over*" (Pettet, 1951). Also, Gainor (1991) mentioned that "*While men are seen as possessing both progenitive and cultural functions, women are left with purely biological ones*". This means that women have the task of giving continuation to the humanity, whereas men are seen as rational creatures who must seek knowledge. While Ann Whitefield's only intention in the play is to get married to Jack Tanner, he is the intellectual mind of the play. Similar gender role divisions are evident in the protagonist's doubles in Act III, Dona and Don Juan. While Don Juan leads the philosophical conversation between himself, Satan and the Statue in Hell, Dona Ana infrequently speaks and finishes the act in search of a father for Superman. Hence, "*in his attitude towards women and the Life Force, George Bernard Shaw – who in theory advocates sexual equality, makes rigid sex role divisions*" (Adam, 1974).

Equally important, Ann Whitefield already reveals features typical to the very traditional role and literary type of the mother in the beginning of the play, such as the use of particular expressions and treating people around her like children. At the same time, this behaviour can also be a way of challenging male authority. In calling Jack Tanner "*a perfect baby in the things I do understand*" (Shaw, 'Man and Superman' 1903) and referring to Octavius as "*Ricky-Ticky-Tavvy*" (Shaw, 'Man and Superman', 1903) and "*a good boy*" (Shaw, 'Man and Superman', 1903), and even to her guardian Ramsden, who is much older than her, as "*Granny*" (Shaw, 'Man and Superman', 1903), Ann Whitefield disrespects the social considerations and rules she expected to follow in the Victorian society. On the other hand, the most crucial aspect of Ann Whitefield's characterization as a mother-woman is how she is reduced to "*a narrowly focused character bent on marriage to the man of her dreams and the ensuing bliss of motherhood*" (Sterner, 1998), despite her representation as an active and dominating woman.

4.7 George Bernard Shaw and the Victorian Age

It is very important to mention that the social, political and economic developments in the Victorian age, such as the great improvement in the transportation systems and gaining power to have price riots, encourage more people to attend theatres. However, as opposed to the significant role undertaken by the novel type as a way of criticizing the social, political and economic problems of the Victorian age, theatre remained just as a way of an entertainment in the Victorian age. Therefore, especially the early Victorian age was controlled by melodramas when employed stereotypical characters and consisted short scenes accompanied by music. Along with the popularity of melodramas, the technology of the late Victorian drama highly contributed to the development of sensation drama staged with elaborated set designs with the help of machinery of the period. On the hand, the most outstanding figures, Oscar Wilde,

George Bernard Shaw and John Millington Synge, would change the Victorian theatre only at the late years of the 19th century. It would be particularly with these names that the social problems and the criticism of the Victorian society and ideals would be carried to the stage. Considering the overall condition of the Victorian drama, it can be argued that George Bernard Shaw can be recognised as a much-needed playwright in such a controversial and changing period to bring certain role and importance to the drama of the Victorian age. In this respect, Bernard Shaw's plays carry a much questioned subject of the period: the woman case. In this respect, Shaw's plays question the social, economic and political roles and rights of women along with suggesting a new woman type that would carry out the suffragette movement at the turn of the 19th century. Although it is possible to witness the woman type who "[...] *exist as individuals, quite apart from their sexual role*" (Watson, 1964) as reflected by Bernard Shaw in most of his literary works. In this stay, the researcher will also analyse the two female characters from the play 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' who are depicted out of the stereotypical representation of women as either Mary or Eve. Otherwise, the discussion of Bernard Shaw's females characters, who are "more articulate, more expressive, and more elegant" (ibid, 1964) according to Watson, require a particular establishment of the suffragette in which women took the risk of being imprisoned for the sake of gaining the right to vote.

In agreement with Bernard Shaw's discussion of a new woman type in his plays, compared to the stereotypical images promoted by the Victorian society, it is significant to touch upon the suffragette movement and the idea that these women intended to defend. The term 'suffragette' is generally associated with groups of upper and middle social classes who defended their political rights to vote in public elections as Kent (1990) recommends "*Almost all of them came from respectable, middle-class, Dissenting or Evangelical families. For women of their time, they were unusually well educated, though not necessarily formally so, and they tended to escape a Liberal or Radical philosophy. Members of their family were very often politically active and were even political and social 'insiders'*". The suffragette movement is not limited to the United Kingdom in terms of affection and influence of the movement. On the other hand, the discussion of the suffragette movement in the current study will be limited to the Bernard Shaw's involvement in the movement and his plays' influence on the woman question. The movement can be tracked back to 1868 to John Stuart Mill and his introduction of the idea of the rights of women to vote. Beginning with 1868, significant women began to form associations and unions to follow up John Stuart Mill's idea. While 'Votes for Women' was the main slogan for the movement, the problem was in fact deeper when the social circumstances of the Victorian society were considered. Therefore, the woman's rights defenders were also criticised for their manners and somehow superficial approach. In this respect, Kent (1990) stated that "*Within the last few years, historians such as Olive Banks, Les Garner, and Brian Harrison have acknowledged that the suffrage campaign went beyond the strictly political, but they have not adequately analysed the primary connections between sexual issues and the demand for the vote*". As they women the Victorian women fought for a political right, the social aspect of woman was merely ignored. It can be said that the upper social class women who involved in this fight neglected the

requirements and problems of the lower-middle social class and the working social class women. This is also pointed out by Kent (1990): "*The individuals presented here belong overwhelmingly to the middle classes. Despite the contributions made to suffrage by working-class women, middle-class women constituted the vast majority of suffragists. As Jill Liddington and Jill Norris have demonstrated, working-class feminists often advanced an agenda quite different from that of the feminists discussed here; their demands centered on work-related issues such as equal pay*".

Consequently, the idea of feminism, and the social and economic liberation of woman, from time to time, were discussed separate from the suffragette movement which defended a political right. These issues complicated the discussion of the suffragette movement in line with the social problems derived from the ideas and circumstances of the Victorian society.

A part of the criticism towards suffragists arose from the extreme ways they prefer to protest. Especially after 1905, which can be called the third phase of the movement, suffragists began using military ways such as chaining themselves to railings, setting places in fire, conducting raids on Parliament and going for a hunger strike, to get the attention of politicians. It was not just men who opposed the suffragette movement, but females who were in favour of a milder approach also involved in anti-feminist protests at that time. Delap (2005) indicated that "*Some anti-feminists, then, attempted to construct a more 'modern' position for their beliefs*". She further highlighted the complicated understanding of feminism observed in the Edwardian Britain as juxtaposed to the suffragette movement: "*[...] it is clear that Edwardian debates about gender went considerably further than a liberal feminist claim to political rights countered by anti-feminist evocation of 'separate spheres'. Edwardian anti-feminists explored ideas of complementarity of the genders, representing a more dynamic version of separate spheres, one less suffocating and narrow. Edwardian anti-feminists were also more willing to think about a diversity of roles for women than the 'separate spheres' discourse would suggest*" (Delap, 2005).

At the same time, more significantly and different from other feminist movements or protests of the time, the suffragists also took advantage of theater to make their thoughts clear by wider public and to get their sympathy and support. Thus, suffragists introduced almost a new type to Edwardian theatre that Hirshfield (1987) stated that "*[...] the suffrage play, a genre that flourished briefly between 1907 and 1913, [which] remains today a valuable reflection of the attitude and tactics of movement activists as they sought to enlist public sympathy and commitment to the cause of a democratized franchise*". The attitudes of the suffragette movement were carried to the stage with a play written by an American-born actress Elizabeth Robins. Hence, "*Votes for Women was the first and last of its type to be presented on a London stage*" (Hirshfield, 1987). Furthermore, Hirshfield (1987) added "*Robin's drama succeeded, however, in one important respect. It awakened activists to the possibility of utilizing theatre as a form of propaganda, and it thus inspired a subspecies of drama that figured importantly as a weapon in the struggle for the vote: the once-act playlet*". A year later than Robin's suffragette play, the Women Writers' Suffrage League and the Actresses' Franchise League were established bearing similar aims: to

educate the Victorian women and to promote the suffragette movement. The Actresses' Franchise League further played a very important role for preparing a one-act play to be staged at the suffragette meetings. The suffragette themes were also carried to the stage in London as a way of fund-raising. Rather than reflecting an artistic quality or introducing a modern technique, the suffragette plays were basically issue-based plays and had a certain aim. They represented the major intentions of the suffragists to the stage as a direct way to reach audience from various and different social and economic aspects. In this respect, the plays' themes were derived from everyday life aspects of Victorian women that categorizes these plays as realistic. In agreement with their theme and aim, these plays were written and staged by basically female cast. All these characteristics of this drama type made it only popular during the suffragette movement, approximately until 1914. Since one of the aims of the present study is to discuss and analyse George Bernard Shaw's attitude towards the role of the suffragette movement in the Victorian women's liberation, suffragette plays written as a propaganda will not be discussed in detail in the current study. However, the general characteristics of the new drama type will enable a comparison of these plays and of Shaw's to highlight the fact that Shaw's talent introduces more complex woman characters that contributed to the formation of modern woman type who is socially and economically independent beyond the political aim of the suffragists.

For suffragists theatre was turned into an advancement tool and a way to reach a wider public regarding their fight to achieve the right to vote; at the same time, Bernard Shaw encouraged a woman type in her plays, who is "woman incarnate" (Watson, 1964), that portrays independent woman who stands as equal of man. On the other hand, when the aim of the suffragette movement is compared to Bernard Shaw and his representation of a new woman type, this complicates Bernard Shaw's attitude considering the suffragette movement. According to Lady Chance, "*The Woman's Movement is in fact a great Moral Movement. It means the lifting up of woman to be the equal of man in the eyes of the whole nation*" (Kent, 1990). However, Lady Chance's viewpoint does not agree with how Bernard Shaw distinguishes woman suffragists' political agenda compared with his socialist ideas. Equally important, Shaw's personal statements and correspondents with the suffragette movement's leaders also show Shaw's position.

Similar to the viewpoint of his two plays selected to be analysed in the current study, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' and 'The Press Cutting', George Bernard Shaw presents two different attitudes on the subject. The first attitude, Bernard Shaw's statements indicate that he is not an explicit supporter of the woman suffragette movement. On the contrary, the second Shaw's stand reflects his writings that strongly contributed to the woman struggle. In this respect, Watson (1964) stated that "*First, he successfully fought to have women's suffrage included in the Basis of the Fabian Society. Second, he wrote occasionally to reprove the government for its worst excesses in dealing with the suffragists. Third, and most importantly, he was constantly creating dramatic images of women whose ability was combined with great personal charm. The New Women of Shaw's creation are all ultra-feminine feminists*".

In consequence, George Bernard Shaw reflected his support for the women liberation as a playwright and an academic. Furthermore, Shaw supported the idea itself, that women should have equal rights, instead of supporting the actions and protests of the woman suffragists.

Therefore, McFadden (1976) claimed that "*Such tactics were both the products of the women's desperation in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds and an expression of the middle class individualism, adventurism, and political irresponsibility of many of the leaders of the movement. Shaw could not countenance such political methods, and as a dedicated artist he could scarcely approve of the deliberate desecration of works of art*".

George Bernard Shaw further differentiated ideas and actions in a newspaper interview in 1906: "*The suffrage is nothing to me, I have no opinion on the subject. I'm not a woman; I've got the suffrage. Of course, if I were a woman, I'd simply refuse to speak to any man or do anything for men until I'd got the vote. I'd make my husband's life a burden, and everyday miserable generally*" (Watson, 1964). In addition, McFadden (1976) stated that "*Women should always remain firmly in control of their own movement*". Furthermore, through his statement, Bernard Shaw implicitly directed suffragists to continue their acts to get what they wish. On the contrary, he did not consider himself a part of the movement. In another piece published on 'The Times', at the same year, Bernard Shaw suggests that the government needs to employ more police forces in the Parliament upon suffragist's protests of walking into the House of Commons. Shaw's statements on 'The Times' once again reflect his suspicious concerning the suffragist movement and their militant strategies. As a result, these two specific examples taken from Shaw's own words plan the inconsistency Shaw bears in terms of supporting the suffragette movement.

In general, Bernard Shaw's communications with different newspapers and suffragists show his unwillingness to be an active member of the suffragette movement as pointed out by McFadden (1976) "*Yet, his relationship with many of the leading English Suffragettes was an uneasy, and often openly tempestuous one*". Indeed, Shaw believed that women suffragists did not have enough experience in politics to defend their rights in a political ground. Furthermore, Bernard Shaw, as a socialist, reflected some doubts concerning the role of women and their right to vote within the Capitalist System, since it is the whole system that should be evaluated concerning the woman's position in the society. Therefore, it can be claimed that George Bernard Shaw did not believe that only acquiring the right to vote would improve the social position of women in general. At the same time, Bernard Shaw hoped that women could present a significant change in the society beyond a political program. Shaw's perspectives of the social status of women were indicated by himself as follows:

"Now if the race is to survive every woman must have her man and every man his woman: two to the unit. But though the woman has to bear all the labour of children and to nourish and protect the human infant ... her man is to her more than a mere fertilizer. He must be a fighter who can protect her against rape, and her helpless children against robbery by strange fighters" (Watson, 1964).

In consequence, Bernard Shaw highlights the social roles of both male and female in which women, along with men, are uploaded with particular performances and rights

before acquiring political rights. The significance Shaw uploads to the social performances of women becomes apparent at the break out of the First World War. Shaw points out women, who fight for gaining political power through their struggle to acquire the right to vote, as responsible for not exercising their power on men. In his letter to Mrs. Patrick in 1914, he claims that "*Now that they settled the fact that their stupid fighting can't settle anything, and produces nothing but a perpetual Waterloo that nobody wins, why don't the women rise and say 'We have the trouble of making these men; and if you don't stop killing them we shall refuse to make any more'. But alas, the women are just as idiotic as the men*" (Watson, 1964). As can be concluded from his attitude, Bernard Shaw already believes in the fact that women have a very important social status and a strong power. In this respect, it is apparent that the woman question is a far more complex question than suffragists' military acts to acquire the right to vote. Thus, Bernard Shaw defends this complexity along with showing his women characters in such complex nature and status in the society. In proportion to where Bernard Shaw stands in terms of the woman suffragette movement, Holroyd (1979) claims that "*Shaw believed himself to be 'as sound a Feminist as Mary Wollstonecraft'. At heart a suffragist he was on friendly terms with Mrs Fawcett but also remained a good ally to Mrs. Pankhurst until their opposing attitudes to the war drove them apart*". However, McFadden (1976) examines the complexity of Shaw's position as follows "As an 'artist-philosopher' who had much to say about 'the woman question', Shaw could not afford to be oblivious of either the practical political activities or the theoretical ideas of the Suffragettes". In consequence, Shaw's 'artist-philosopher' side makes him create literary works such as 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' in which he presents a social problem, the woman question, onto the stage. Beyond presenting moral and philosophical circumstances of Victorian women, as intended to be analysed in the present study.

4.8 Representation of Victorian Women in the English Theater

It is clear now that Shaw only affords to be a part of "the theoretical ideas of the Suffragettes" through his play 'Press Cutting' written in 1909. Subtitled as "A Topical Sketch Compiled from the Editorial and Correspondence Columns of the Daily Papers". The play was written "*At the request of the popular actor Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, whose wife was president of the AFL*" (Hirshfield, 1987). As a productive playwright, Shaw has produced plays in different types. Therefore, this play is not his first time writing a piece of comedy. However, the significance, or more appropriately lack of significance when compared with his other plays, of this play comes from its themes rather than its type.

Furthermore, It can be argued that Bernard Shaw departs from his familiar writing way, which is focusing on social issues from a socialist perspective mainly, with this play. Shaw puts onto the stage a farcical comedy that does not particularly represent his attitude on the woman question. Therefore, rather than carrying his views on feminism and women rights onto the stage, the play ridicules campaigns and arguments against the suffragists. Hirshfield (1987) emphasized this claiming that "*The object of Shaw's satire was as much the military mind as it was the anti-suffrage posture of contemporary politicians*".

Thus, the play first could not get a license to be staged publicly "*because of its political references*" (Purdom, 1966). The play, beyond depicting an overt support of the suffragists, "*satirized the anti-suffrage attitudes of such conspicuous public figures as the Liberal Prime Minister our, and the Asquith, the Conservative opposition leader Balfour, and the ever popular General Kitchener*" (Hirshfield, (1987). The censorship office laid down the condition that "*General Mitchener was re-named General Bones, and Mr. Balsquith re-named Johnson*" (Purdom, 1966). Although Bernard Shaw claims that "*It is very harmless, just an ordinary skit without a single suffragette in the whole play*" (qtd in Hirshfield, 1987), the play 'Press Cutting' was staged as a part of the suffragette campaign. What Bernard Shaw claims also emphasizes the shortcoming of the play as a suffragette play. In comparison with other topical plays written to support the woman suffragette movement, Shaw's play loses the direct reference of the woman suffragette movement. The play 'Press Cutting' neither depicts a suffragette introducing the woman suffragette movement nor delivers a didactic reference delivering the main aim of the woman suffragette movement. Therefore, it can be claimed that the play 'Press Cutting' has shortcoming both as a suffragette play and as a play by George Bernard Shaw.

The play takes place in General Mitchener's room at the War Office between the General, his orderly, the Prime Minister Balsquith, the office charwoman Mrs. Farrell, and the woman from the anti-suffragette deputation, Lady Corninthia and Mrs. Banger. It is a timeline when martial law was proclaimed and General Sandstone resigned because of his plan to create a male-only zone within a two miles' radius of Westminster. Because many suffragists are out there protesting, Balsquith only succeeds to come to the office safely in disguise of a suffragist. The events in the play are further shaped by the visit of two ladies from the anti-suffragette deputation. First, they criticise males for not adequately struggling against the suffragists. Then, they claim that what women need is not the right to vote but to be accepted in the military forces, simply because, according to their debate and discussions, the great military commanders are in fact women disguised as men. Such perspective eventually leads General Mitchener to be in favour of the suffragists to achieve the right to vote. Furthermore, it is indicated that the government is cracking also to give support to the woman suffragette movement. Bernard Shaw's one-act sketch ends, as appropriate for comedy, with celebration of marriage.

In fact, the play is different from other suffragette plays for not only losing a direct message supporting the suffragette movement. On the other hand, military strategies of the suffragists are stated in the play as if reflecting the voice of anti-suffragists and anti-feminists who disapprove such military strategies. Furthermore, General Mitchener does not accept to support the suffragists not because he does not believe in the woman suffragette movement and in the rights of women, but he is fooled by the ladies. Accordingly, it can be argued that Bernard Shaw makes mockery of both sides: women and men, and suffragists and anti-suffragists. On the other hand, Bernard Shaw succeeds to introduce a woman character who defends the rights of women more strongly than suffragists without consulting extreme tactics. In this respect, Mrs. Farrell, who is known as "*a lean, highly respectable Irish charwoman of about fifty*" (Shaw, 'Press Cutting', 1909), is quite an outspoken woman. It can be claimed that she

exemplifies where Shaw stands in terms of supporting the suffragists and questioning the woman question. She is presented as not interested in the woman suffragette movement because she already suffered enough as a woman in the Victorian society. Therefore, when she defends herself and other women against the General, she does not define a political right only. On the contrary, she succeeds to value and appreciate the effective role that the woman plays in the society through the dangers and difficulties they encounter. When General Mitchener warns Mrs. Farrell that she needs to bear with men and their language because they risk their lives in battlefields to protect them, Mrs. Farrell dares him with the greater risks women take in life. She reminds him that giving birth to a child is the greatest risk: "***Would you put up with bad language from me because I've risked me life eight times in childbed?***" (Shaw, 'Press Cutting', 1909). Mrs. Farrell further defends women arguing that "***I wouldn't compare risks run to bear living people into the world to risks run to blow dtmicut of it. A mother's risk is jooty: a soldier's is nothing but divilmint***" (Shaw, 'Press Cutting', 1909). Even if they do not have the right to vote, therefore, the political power, Mrs. Farrell reminds General Mitchener the real power the woman has, that is the power to reproduce. In consequence, Mrs. Farrell represents the power that Bernard Shaw attributes to women when he criticised their inaction in the face of the First World War. Mrs. Farrell represents the significance of women, and her place that is not restricted by political rights. At the same time, Mrs. Farrell highlights that the social importance and the social status of women cannot be recognised solely by giving them the woman the right to vote. In this regard, Bernard Shaw draws attention to a wider problem concerning the woman question.

On the one side, the play merely satirizes the military strategies of the suffragettes and the reaction they get from the officials. On the other side, towards the end of the play Balsquith explains on how meaningless for women to achieve the right to vote in fact: "***After all, I don't suppose votes for women will make much difference. It hasn't in the other countries in which it has been tried***" (Shaw, 'Press Cutting', 1909). General Mitchener also encourages Balsquith's attitude "***I never supposed it would make any difference***" (Shaw, 'Press Cutting', 1909). This conversation can be explained as outspoken words of Shaw's attitude towards woman suffragette movement. Furthermore, this also shows why Bernard Shaw concentrates more on his women characters, whom he portrays as "New Woman" as underlined above, rather than sticking on the futile campaign for women to achieve the right to vote. Therefore, even in a play written to support the woman suffragette movement, Bernard Shaw does not hesitate to criticise the woman suffragette movement and to reflect his own points of view. In this respect, Mrs. Farrell receives even more significance for representing Bernard Shaw's New Woman type. She is not a representative of upper or middle social class woman who is after political power. As a realist and a woman who suffers socially within the Victorian society, Mrs. Farrell is after respect for her power and struggle as a woman, even as a working woman. Therefore, she also points out the need to develop and improve the circumstances of women from different social classes in the Victorian society. Her needs from the society exceed what can be achieved with the right to vote. Consequently, this is what Bernard Shaw hints beyond the farcical story of the woman suffragette movement. On the other hand, because Shaw's New

Woman type character is not on the foreground, 'The Press Cutting' is merely known as a farcical play about the woman suffragette movement. Furthermore, the play did not succeed to contribute to the development that is expected to be witnessed in the Victorian age, nor as an artistic play that discusses and supports the real cause of the woman suffragette movement.

In fact, this attitude concerning 'The Press Cutting' can be clarified more explicitly when compared with Bernard Shaw's another play 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'. Clearly, it can be claimed that 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' is even more effective in terms of supporting women and feminist ideas for presenting a former prostitute and her struggle to survive as a woman onto the stage. The play was written by George Bernard Shaw in 1893 as the third play of a series classified as "Plays Unpleasant" along with 'Widower's Houses' and 'The Philanderer'. Moreover, since the play focuses on prostitution, it was originally disqualified by the Lord Chamberlain as happened in 'The Press Cutting'. While the play was first staged in 1909 at a members-only club, the first public performance could not take place until 1925. Although prostitution, for the Lord Chamberlain, seemed to be the forbidden subject to be staged in public, the view of the New Woman, that Bernard Shaw would favour in most of his plays, has made the play quite a popular one because the play gets frequent revivals around the world. Eventually, more than the woman suffragette movement, Vivie representing the New Woman type who prefers her independence over formal marriage, characterizes development in terms of rights of women in the late Victorian age.

The play takes place at a cottage after Vivie returns to home upon her graduation from Cambridge University, Vivie's mother, Mrs. Warren, arranges suitors for Vivie to meet there. As Vivie meets with Mr. Praed, her mother's friend, Sir George Crofts, her mother's business partner, Frank Gardner and his father, the course of the play shows the background story of Mrs. Warren. Not seeing her mother very much while growing up, Vivie terrifies once she knows that the money she has enjoyed comes from her mother working first as a prostitute and later as a brothel owner. Mrs. Warren honestly shares her life story with her daughter trying to explain the difficult circumstances that obliged her to choose such way in her life. However, the play ends as Vivie refuses her mother's money and decides not to marry and earn her own money.

Many critics have stated many comments on Vivie and analysed her as a representative of the New Woman Type. In this regard, Purdom (1966) stated that "*[...] represent [s] the passion for conscience, for work, for a cause, for God*". Furthermore, Greco (1967) emphasizes Vivie's roles and qualities that transcend traditional woman type for the Victorian, society arguing that "*Vivie is still one of a distinctly masculine girl in both outlook and appearance, who cares little for convention and unabashedly flaunts her anti-feminine post-ure*". Laurence (2004) indicates that Vivie represents a forerunner female type in the society for George Bernard Shaw, stating that "*[...] Shaw in his play had apart, as all Shaw's great women will be [...]*". Clearly, Vivie is acclaimed for her ability to survive on her own. Not often seeing her mother, not knowing the concept of family, Vivie grew up in boarding schools that taught her to stand on her own feet. Her background implicitly gave her the strength to refuse marriage proposals in a society in which women's sole responsibility is to be a good wife and a mother in exchange with the opportunity to

live her own life. In the meantime, Vivie's act of refusing her mother is at the same time very much questionable when Mrs. Warren's story is perceived from the perspective of female solidarity.

Moreover, Mrs. Warren tells a high familiar story concerning the destiny of most of the unlucky females of the Victorian age. Therefore, Mrs. Warren tells how she survived with a widow mother and a sister who run away. She was working as a waitress working "*fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week*" (II.76). It was there that she met with her lost sister by accident noticing that she is financially in a much better situation. It is through her sister Lizzie that she gets into the business of prostitution with the dream of saving enough money for a house in Brussels. At last, she turns herself into a business woman who is aware of the social circumstances of the time and the possibility of her survival. Laying out the truth concerning the Victorian society, Mrs. Warren justifies her decision to Vivie, saying that "*Do you think were such fools as to let other people trade in our good looks by employing us as shopgirls, or barmaids, or waitresses, when we could trade in them ourselves and get the profits instead of starvation wages? Not likely*" (II.76). At first Vivie comprehends her mother's circumstances and accepts them. She can develop an understanding on her mother's victimization by the society. On the hand, immediately after she knows that Mrs. Warren is still in the business, she refuses her money and has an attitude against her. As opposed to her story, Vivie emphasizes the importance of having a chance to her mother, saying that "*Everybody has some choice, mother. The poorest girl alive may not be able to choose between being Queen of England or Principal of Newnham; but she can choose between ragpicking and flowerselling, according to her taste. People are always blaming circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them*" (II.75).

Mrs. Warren attempts to convince her daughter Vivie that she continued her work as a prostitute to have a particular economic power because she wants Vivie to have a respectable position in the society as a female. In fact, she aims to persuade her daughter Vivie that she made her own conditions to achieve particular power. At the same time, Vivie still does not listen to her mother and her justifications behind her behaviours. In general, Vivie refuses advantages or benefits from the social abuses of the Victorian hypocrisy.

Through such mother-daughter relationship, Bernard Shaw gives a highly complicated social case concerning the rights of women. Marker (1998) claims that "*Assuredly, Mrs. Warren's Profession is an 'unpleasant' play and hence also a 'problem' play, in the sense that it is serious rather than frivolous in intent, is again concerned with social corruption (in this case prostitution), and is determined to fasten the blame for such vice not on the individual (the brother madam) but on a (male, capitalistic) social system that fosters it*".

Equally important, beyond an ethical problem, the play lays out a social one. This complicated case, to a certain extent, presents more development on the woman question by provoking the leaders and also the audience to seriously think about the social rights of women in the Victorian society. Vivie is, indeed, a very strong woman,

her separation from the social realities of the Victorian time can be compared her to the suffragettes who are unaware of the working social class women's problems and obsessed with the right to vote, as if this would clarify the woman question and solve the problems women experience in the Victorian society. Vivie experiences the opportunities provided by her mother without questioning. She is portrayed brave enough to disrespect the comfort her mother's money can buy. Although this can be defined as a step towards her knowledge, this does not mean that she succeed to overcome the Victorian social system established among Victorians. She originates herself to a loneliness because of her choice by refusing both the comfort of her mother's money and her potential suitors. Nevertheless, this isolation makes it unclear for the audience and the readers whether she can succeed to reform the Victorian society or not.

On the contrary, Mrs. Warren is a much more outspoken character reminding Mrs. Farrell. Although her social position is not approved by the Victorian society, she can proudly say that as an employer she is fairer than the society: "*None of our girls were even treated as I was treated in the scullery of that temperance place, or at the Waterloo bar, or at home*" (II.76). In consequence, she portrayed herself believing in sisterhood and supporting women who suffer a lot in the Victorian society. She looks after her girls for not to be abused by the Victorian society and so-called Victorian principles and ideals. As can be noticed in her conversation with her daughter, Vivie, throughout the play, Mrs. Warren, showing the fact that she is a keen observer of the Victorian society, is frank concerning the social problems of the Victorian society, especially concerning the Victorian women. Mrs. Warren shows the grim of the Victorian society openly to her daughter Vivie: "*The only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her. If she's in his own station of life, let her make him marry her, but if she's far beneath him she can't expect it: why should she?*" (II77). While Vivie criticizes her mother because of her profession, Mrs. Warren can criticise the Victorian society through marriage institution. Therefore, her criticism stands as a significant point on questioning the rights of women that is presented as a deeper and more important case compared to the right to vote. Ironically enough, on the other side, Mrs. Warren's mere intent as she reunites with her daughter is to introduce her with a possible suitor for marriage. Upon standing her money for Vivie's learning, Mrs. Warren determines that now it is time for Vivie to find an suitable husband for her to be able to suspend her life in comfort and prosperity. At last, Mrs. Warren cannot fight with the social system and the Victorian society on her own. Otherwise, the attitude of these two women, Mrs. Warren and her daughter, is influential enough to affect the readers and the audience to think about the woman question in the Victorian society. In this consideration, 'Mrs. Warren Profession' not only affects the woman suffragette movement towards granting women rights through its problematic themes and female characters, but also marks George Bernard Shaw's career by defining his social realist theatre.

5. Conclusion

Despite George Bernard Shaw was a very strong advocate for the social and political equality between men and women, this equality is not always easily perceived

in his plays. While Bernard Shaw succeeds in portraying complex, unconventional women, he infrequently fails to "*create female characters who reflects his expressed opinion that women must be regarded as equal to men and must seek personal identity – an identity separate from traditional roles*" (Adams, 1974). Still it cannot be claimed that George Bernard Shaw has not contributed to the change in how women were perceived in and out of literary works. "*More accurately, George Bernard Shaw's most important contribution was not creating fully emancipated characters, but portraying women in the process of liberation of Victorian moral standards and values, who seek greater independence in choosing their roles*" (Crane, 1974). George Bernard Shaw lived in a time when women could not politically vote, have a bank account or own property in the same terms as men, and while he argues against many of the laws and social restrictions responsible for the inequality between men and women, his way and characters were highly affected by the Victorian society he lived in and traditions he experienced.

"*Undoubtedly George Bernard Shaw intended, as do the feminists who succeed him, to reinterpret history in order to give voice to the oppressed women of the world*" (Sterner, 1998); at the same time the same history formed his mind and affected his perspectives and ideas about women and their relation with men. Notwithstanding, the difficult personalities of Bernard Shaw's characters reveal that, while not completely free from traditionalism, the playwright is wandering away from the myth of the moral standards of a Victorian woman and following the changes real women were going through during his time. Furthermore, Gilmartin, (1965), argued that "*While Victorian morality praised certain aspects of a woman's life, George Bernard Shaw never adapted his own ideas to his audience*".

In consequence, while it might be contradictory that the women in George Bernard Shaw's plays occasionally fall back to Victorian values and social principles, his female characters were the product of the period of transition when they were created. Therefore, it is only natural that they do not signify the ideal of feminist liberation and equality, but are rather a representation of women's reality in the turn of the twentieth century.

Moreover, George Bernard Shaw left his mark on modern drama through his social realist plays. In his plays that touch upon the social problems of the Victorian age, his female characters basically draw attention from the critics. The new women type he created in his plays challenge the stereotypical type female characters of the Victorian age. His play 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' (1893) is obviously the best example to both Bernard Shaw's theatre and his new woman type. Therefore, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' greatly reflects Shaw's perspectives Victorian women while exemplifying his contributions to theatre as a socialist. At the same time, when investigated together with 'The Press Cutting' (1909), a later play by George Bernard Shaw, it is possible to see Shaw's contribution to the women's rights. Shaw's plays, in term of their artistic quality, designate the development in English theatre during the late Victorian time as opposed to the significance of the novel genre. George Bernard Shaw's female characters, on the contrary, portray the development and progress the Victorian society needs to attain in terms of the woman question. As a result, Bernard Shaw's female characters through the depiction of independent female characters who fight for their

status in the Victorian society rather than one political right, to a certain degree, contribute to the establishment of feminism more than the woman suffragette movement. One certain evidence can be provided through the renewals his plays achieved as opposed to the suffragette plays. In fact, this designates Bernard Shaw's plays' significance for the modern time. From this perspective, George Bernard Shaw's 'Press Cutting' (1909) fails to contribute to the women's fight for their social positions in the society compared to 'Mrs. Warren's Profession (1893) which signifies its significance both by exemplifying the new woman type and Bernard Shaw's socialist ideas as inspired by Ibsen and realism.

Furthermore, the reasons why the placement of Victorian women came to become so essential to social, political, and literary commentary are diverse, but many reasons can be attributed to the radical changes in the English society brought about by the development of capitalism and industrialization.

In addition, the widespread development of women's labour in industrialization challenged traditional concepts of the Victorian woman as greatly restricted to the home or the farm and economically inferior. Even so, for many middle and upper social class women, the expansion of wealth and leisure corresponded with the opening of some educational opportunities, even as women continued to be barred from higher education. Moreover, due to the legal and social prohibitions, established traditions, and contemporary scientific theories about women's physical and mental limitations, even the most educated women had great difficulty practicing a profession (the medicine, the law, etc.). the second half of the century began to observe some changes , the first women's college opened in 1848, a woman was first accredited as a physician in 1859, but these changes were consistently fought along the way.

Bibliography

- Andrina, Gilmartin (1965), **Mr. Shaw's Many Mothers**, The Shaw Review 8 (1965): 93-103
- Ann, Wilson (2013), **Shutting Out Mother: Vivie Warren as the New Woman, Shaw and Feminism: On the Stage and Off**, D. A. Hadfield & Jean Reynolds, Gainesville: University Press of Florida
- B. Ifor Evans (1973), **A Short History of English Drama**, India: New Delhi, Kalyani Publishers
- Barbara Bellow, Watson (1964), **A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman**, London: Chatto and Windus
- C. B. Purdom (1966), **A Guide to the Plays of Bernard Shaw**, London: Methuen
- Charles, Carpenter (1975), **Sex Play Shaw's Way: Man and Superman**, The Shaw Review (18): 70-74
- Claire, Hirshfield (1987), **The Suffragist as Playwright in Edwardian England**, Frontiers: A Journal of Woman Studies 9 (2): 1-6
- Dan H., Laurence (2004), **Victorians Unveiled: Some Thoughts on 'Mrs. Warren's Profession'**, Shaw Review (24): 38-44
- E., Showalter (1978), **A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing**, New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- Edwin Burr, Pettet (1951), **Shaw's Socialist Life Force**, Educational Theatre

Journal (3): 109-124

Ellen J., Gainor (1991), **Shaw's Daughters: Dramatic and Narrative Constructions of Gender**, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Elsie, Adams (1974), **Feminism and Female Stereotypes in Shaw**, The Shaw Review (17): 17-22

Frederick, Marker (1998), **Shaw's Early Plays**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Gladys, Crane (1974), **Shaw and Women's Lib**, The Shaw Review (17): 23-31

Karen Doris, McFadden (1976), **George Bernard Shaw and the Woman Question**, Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Kerry, Powell (1997), **New Woman, New Plays, and Shaw in the 1890s, The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lucy, Delap (2005), **Feminist and Anti-Feminist Encounters in Edwardian British**, Historical Research 2 (78): 377-399

M., Moran (2007), **Victorian Literature and Culture**, London: Continuum

Mark H., Sterner (1998), **Shaw's Superwoman and the Borders of Feminism: One Step Over the Line?**, Shaw Review (18): 147-160

Michael, Holroyd (1979), **George Bernard Shaw: Women and the Body Politic**, Critical Inquiry 6 (1): 17-32

Michael, Sargent (2009), **Shaw and the New Woman**, Shavian: The Journal of the Shaw Society (11): 5-16

Shaw, George Bernard (1965), **Mrs. Warren's Profession, The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw**, London: Paul Halmlyn

Shaw, George Bernard Shaw (1965), **Press Cutting. The Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw**, London: Paul Halmlyn

Stephen, Greco (1967), **Vivie Warren's Profession: A New Look at Mrs. Warren's Profession**, London Routledge

Suha Qutami (2012), **Introduction to Literature**, Jordan: Amman, Dar Al Shorouk for Publishing & Distribution

Susan Kingsley, Kent (1990), **Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914**, London: Routledge