# The Relationship of Parents and Children

# in

# The English Domestic Plays

# of

# George Bernard Shaw

by

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to bring a new critical perspective to the English domestic plays of George Bernard Shaw by analysing them in the light of Shaw's treatment of parent-child relationships. A domestic play is one in which the plot or problem centres around a family and in which the setting is that family's permanent or temporary home. The period 1890 and 1914 has been chosen for three reasons: first, it was during this time that Shaw began and succeeded in his career as a dramatist; secondly, this period saw the growth of the 'new drama' movement, which considered a discussion of sociological issues a prerequisite for responsible dramatic literature, and thirdly, changes within the theatre itself, most noticeably Granville Barker's seasons at the Court Theatre (1904-1907) gave Shaw the opportunity to have his work intelligently and artistically presented to a growing audience of literary discrimination and social awareness. Heartbreak House is included in this analysis because although not finished until 1917 it was begun in 1913.

The thesis begins with an examination of the influences on Shaw which made the treatment of the parent-child relationship a central theme of his earliest plays. These are

(a) Biographical

(b) Sociological

(c) Theatrical - (i) Nineteenth century Popular Theatre including Melodrama

(ii) Ibsenism

Section Two describes Shaw's treatment of parents and children in his novels. The aim of this section is to demonstrate that the family relationships that assume major significance in the plays are prefigured in the novels not simply thematically but formally.

In Section Three the English domestic plays are placed in four categories under the schematic headings which sometimes overlap:

(a) **Single Parents**
Widowers' Houses, The Philanderer, Man and Superman, Pygmalion, Heartbreak House

(b) **The Return of the Absent Parent**
Mrs Warren's Profession, You Never Can Tell, Major Barbara

(c) **Substitute Parents**
You Never Can Tell, Candida, Man and Superman, Pygmalion Heartbreak House

(d) **Happy Families**
Getting Married, Misalliance, Fanny's First Play,

The conclusion is that Shaw, in expressing his opinions on the relationships of children and their parents in the English domestic plays as well as in his other writings, was challenging the conventions of conventional middle-class society while at the same time expressing, perhaps compulsively, his personal quest for his own 'true' parents.

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## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

SHAW

Unless otherwise indicated, references to Shaw's writings are to The Works of Bernard Shaw. 30 vols. London: Constable. 1930-32.

Where later works are quoted they are acknowledged in the notes.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | I | Immaturity |
| 2 | IK | The Irrational Knot |
| 3 | LAA | Love Among the Artists |
| 4 | CBP | Cashel Byron's Profession |
| 6 | ShS | Short Stories |
| 7 | WH | Widowers' Houses |
| 7 | Ph | The Philanderer |
| 7 | MWP | Mrs Warren's Profession |
| 8 | CAN | Candida |
| 8 | YNCT | You Never Can Tell |
| 10 | MSM | Man and Superman |
| 11 | MB | Major Barbara |
| 12 | GM | Getting Married |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | DD | The Doctor's Dilemma |
| 13 | MIS | Misalliance |
| 13 | FFP | Fanny's First Play |
| 14 | PYG | Pygmalion |
| 15 | HH | Heartbreak House |
| 16 | BTM | Back to Methuselah |
| 19 | Q | The Quintessence of Ibsenism |
| 23 | OTNi | Our Theatre in the Nineties Vol 1 |
| 24 | OTNii | Our Theatre in the Nineties Vol 2 |
| 25 | OTNiii | Our Theatre in the Nineties Vol 3 |
| 29 | PPR | Pen Portraits and Reviews |

PART ONE

# 1

## THE BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT*

It is necessary to examine the personal background of Bernard Shaw, the stock from which he sprang, and the influences to which he was subject at an early age, in order to assess their significant contribution to his presentation of parents and children in his English domestic plays.

Shaw's father was George Carr Shaw. Born in 1814, he was the third son of a Kilkenny attorney and nephew of Sir Robert Shaw of Bushey Park who had been Lord Mayor of Dublin and later, in 1821, had received a baronetcy from George IV. George Carr Shaw could be said to be well connected. He was twelve years old when his father died, some time after which Sir Robert provided a cottage for the large fatherless family to live with their mother. Bernard Shaw was the son of a fatherless father who was raised in a one-parent family.

George Carr Shaw was a partner in Clibborn and Shaw, a small firm of corn merchants when, in 1851, he married Lucinda Elizabeth Gurley who was sixteen years his junior and was the only daughter of Walter Bagnall Gurley. Shaw's maternal grandfather had married the daughter of a reasonably wealthy pawnbroker who had settled money on her and any children she might produce and this was the 'legacy' that Shaw's mother used to help to keep her children after they went to live in London. Bessie Shaw's mother had died young, so from the age of nine, she was brought up by her unmarried and hump-backed aunt Ellen Whitcroft who became a surrogate mother to a motherless daughter. Her younger brother, Shaw's Uncle Walter Gurley, was later 'taken over', as John O'Donovan puts it, by their uncle the barrister, now a Kilkenny squire.[1]

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He eventually became a ship's doctor and between voyages spent time with his sister's family, an exuberant and exhilarating man with a Rabelaisian turn of wit.

Bessie Shaw remembered her life with her aunt as very strict and unhappy but it was there that she received a good education and learned to play the piano, acquiring the thorough grounding in music that was to provide the source of her later independence. Bessie Shaw was eager to escape the tyranny of little Miss Whitcroft and there was no prospect of returning to live with her father who was about to re-marry. She found George Carr Shaw pleasant, humorous, and well-connected; she also believed him to have a pension of £60 a year. Warned by her family of the inadvisability of such a match on the grounds that they considered him to be a fortune-hunter and of his reputation for heavy drinking, she preferred to accept his assurance that he was teetotal.

On the honeymoon spent in Liverpool she discovered that, while her husband might hope to *become* teetotal, he was in fact a drunkard. The new Mrs Shaw found herself considerably less well off after her gesture of independence. Shaw's own description of the early circumstances of his mother stated that:

> Everybody had disappointed her, or betrayed her, or tyrannized over her.
>
> She was not at all soured by this. She never made scenes, never complained, never nagged, never punished nor retaliated nor lost her self-control nor her superiority to spites and tantrums and tempers. She was neither weak nor submissive; but as she never revenged, so she also never forgave. There were no quarrels and consequently no reconciliations.[2]

There were three children of the marriage: Lucinda Frances, born in 1853, who went on the stage in operetta and musical comedy; Elinor Agnes, born 1855 who died of tuberculosis in 1876 and was the only one of her children

for whom Bessie, reputedly, felt much maternal affection; and George Bernard, known in the family as Sonny, born in 1856.

There is no evidence that theirs was a cruel or harsh childhood although Shaw's father had no material success of which to boast. He could barely afford to support his family in an adequate style, certainly not in the style to which his wife was accustomed, and he achieved nothing of which they could be proud. He was, as Hesketh Pearson puts it, 'too respectable for the retail-trade,' which is why he had sold his modest pension and 'bought a wholesale corn business' which while not entirely failing did not flourish.[3] In spite of the shortage of money the household included a succession of £8-a-year servant girls who lived in the basement of their Synge Street house and looked after the children as part of their duties as 'substitute mothers'. There had been one good servant, Nurse Williams, but she left while Sonny was still very young. Bessie did not concern herself too much about them and Shaw remembers his delight at having her butter his bread 'thickly instead of merely wiping the knife on it.'[4] Before he was old enough to go out alone the servant, who should have taken him for a walk in the fresh air, took him to visit her friends in the Dublin slums, or to a public house to meet her male acquaintance. There was little supervision of their activities. After early childhood he could never recall paying a visit to the Shaw relations and this he always ascribed to their disapproval of his father's heavy drinking.

Michael Holroyd makes the observation that Shaw replaced 'the first loveless reality [of his childhood] with one dream and another' and he quotes a letter written to Gilbert Murray. In this Shaw comments on the sexual nature of his dreams about his mother, when he was 'well on in life'.

> ...I had taken it as a matter of course that the maternal function included the wifely one; and so did she...the sexual relation acquired all the innocence of the filial one and the filial one all the completeness of the sexual one...if circumstances tricked me into marrying my mother before I knew she was my mother, I should be fonder of her than I could be of a mother who was not my wife, or a wife who was not my mother.

One must agree with Holroyd's poignant conclusion that: 'Only in his imagination was such a completeness possible. Below the elevation of the dream lay a meagreness of experience.'[5]

Bessie Shaw's 'escape' from her unsatisfactory marriage was into music, particularly into music provided by George John 'Vandeleur' Lee, a singing teacher and the Shaw's near neighbour in Dublin. Although they lived close enough to have met as early as 1852, John O'Donovan believes that she began to take lessons from him sometime around 1858.[6] All his life Shaw was to contest, very strongly, the idea that Lee could have known his mother early enough to have been his father. He wrote to O'Bolger in 1919, 'Just put my mother's singing master and colleague, G J Lee, out of your head for a moment. He has not yet appeared on the scene.' Shaw included this letter to O'Bolger in his Sixteen Self Sketches published in 1939 and in the revised edition of 1947.[7]

Lee had devised a method, referred to as The Method, by those whom he taught, for training the singing voice. Shaw has described Lee's 'meteoric impact...with music, his method, his impetuous enterprise and his magnetism, upon the little Shaw household where a thoroughly disgusted and disillusioned woman was suffering from a hopelessly disappointed husband and three uninterested children grown too old to be petted like the animals and birds she was so fond of...'[7] Bessie had a good voice, underwent Lee's

training and became a member of his amateur musical society. Eventually she sang leading roles and became indispensable to him, transposing, filling out the orchestral parts and accompanying at rehearsals and performances.

In 1865 the Shaw family and Lee, now alone since the death of his younger brother, set up house together in No 1 Hatch Street. Lee required a good professional address to attract his pupils and Bessie's useful services could be relied upon with the family on the premises. It was bigger than the two-bedroomed house in Synge Street and in O'Donovan's words enabled Bessie 'to live in perfect respectability under the same roof as the man who had replaced her husband as her chief male interest.'[8] Around the same time Lee also acquired a second, holiday home for them all, Torca Cottage at Dalkey, overlooking Dublin Bay. This place was loved by the boy and remembered for the personal freedom that he experienced there when he was a man.

These years were successful for Lee who was becoming an important figure in the musical life of Dublin and for Bessie Shaw who was sharing it with him. At her mother's request Lucy was also trained in The Method by Lee with the intention of making a career in the theatre. Sonny was happy being brought up in an atmosphere where music was played, sung, listened to, and discussed and Lee became a substitute father and an important role model for him. The person who clearly was not happy was George Carr Shaw with his position as head of the family usurped since he was no longer the sole provider for his family. In spite of this Shaw always insisted that 'although [Lee] supplanted my father as the dominant factor in the household, and appropriated all the activity and interest of my mother, he was so completely absorbed in his musical affairs that there was no friction and hardly any intimate personal contacts between the two men: certainly no unpleasantness.'[9]

The house was now filled with singers and musicians from Lee's music society and most of these people, including

Lee himself, were Catholics. To George Carr Shaw, a staunch Protestant, and to his son who had both been brought up to believe that Catholics were their inferiors in every sense, this must have been a terrible and humiliating thing. Among other places the music society performed in Catholic churches and at Catholic functions and with it went Mrs Shaw. This 'fraternizing' with the enemy was more likely to be the reason for 'the Shaws' no longer inviting George Carr and his family to their gatherings, than the fact of his heavy drinking. The other Shaws who were known to be drinkers were not excluded. It is unlikely that Sonny did not know this and could have been the reason that he preferred not to recall it in later life as somehow impugning his mother's loyalties.

Bernard Shaw, a Protestant in Catholic Dublin, was brought up in a household that held no significant religious views although he was conventionally baptised into the Church of Ireland. After the age of ten he stopped attending church and Sunday School although in the Preface to Immaturity he describes how he continued to say his prayers, exercising his own 'literary genius' in their composition. (1.I.xxii) Between the ages of twelve and thirteen he was, at the instigation of Lee, removed from the Weslyan Connexional School and sent to the Central Model Boys' School in Marlborough Street. He remained there for less than a year. Sonny hated the school that was attended, for the most part, by Catholic boys and he prevailed upon his father to allow him to leave. He was so ashamed at having been 'planted out' in Marlborough Street that he suppressed the fact for the next eighty years.His formal education was completed at the age of fifteen after two years at a school of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland in Aungier Street. The effect of attending these schools, particularly of attending the Model School has been neglected in appraising the influence that led to his youthful development. This is probably because it was considered that the disclosures of a very old man were

likely to be of little importance. St John Ervine, his friend and biographer, regards Shaw's account of his disclosures in the Sixteen Self-Sketches as 'fantastic tosh' 'from a man so far removed from his boyhood by age and ideas that have long ceased to have any relevance to known facts that even his reminiscences have become romantic fictions'.[10]

Young Shaw loved music, admired Lee enormously, and loved the cottage at Dalkey but he was humiliated at 'having to live in a *ménage à trois* dominated by a Catholic.'[11] Edward McNulty, Shaw's lifelong friend claimed that George Carr Shaw started legal proceedings over the relationship between his wife and Lee, but later dropped them. Eventually there would have to be a change but when it came it was the result of Lee deciding to try his fortunes in London.

He was not getting the recognition that he felt he deserved from the musical hierarchy of Dublin; untrained and unable to read an orchestral score it was unlikely that he ever would, so after some real or imagined slight on his abilities, he left Ireland. There has been a suggestion that he was becoming too interested in Lucy although she did not encourage him and there was nothing going on of which her mother was aware. She and Lee were as close, it appeared, as ever.

Shaw had left school when he was fifteen, taken his first job as office-boy in a firm of land agents at eighteen shillings a week and the result of a sudden vacancy for an honest cashier, the office-boy filled the gap so well that he got the job. He was seventeen when Bessie Shaw, within a month of Lee's departure went to join him, taking her daughters with her. Shaw and his father went into lodgings: no big house to live in, no cottage at Dalkey - Lee had given up the lease - no more exciting concerts. If his mother had not in fact 'run away' with Lee, then she had certainly gone to be where he was living, but Shaw always maintained that she waited a year before she joined Lee and that she only went because there was no other financial

solution. To an adolescent boy, left with a father whom he rather disliked at that time, it must have felt as though she was choosing Lee and her daughters, rather than him and his failure of a father. In the Preface to London Music, written in 1935 he wrote, 'We did not realise, nor did she, that she was never coming back...'[12] He must also have missed Lee very much, the man whom he admired and emulated in many ways: like Lee he slept with his window open, ate brown bread rather than white bread, showed scant respect for the medical and other professions.

For the next two and a half years he was busy. As at that time his ambition was to become a painter he spent hours in the National Gallery of Dublin and took lessons in drawing. There was no more music but his mother had left the piano so he taught himself to play in a rudimentary fashion by picking out the tunes from scores that he recognised, and he found someone to teach him to play the cornet. His friendship with McNulty had ripened although the other had moved away from Dublin and they wrote to each other almost daily.

It was the year of his twentieth birthday when his seemingly secure job came to an end. A relation of his employer, Charles Uniacke Townshend, was made cashier and young Shaw was left on salary but with few duties, all of which was too much for his pride to bear and he wrote a dignified letter of resignation. Soon afterwards came word that Aggie, his youngest sister, had died in the Isle of Wight where she was being treated for tuberculosis. At this he packed his bag, left his father and the city of his birth, not to return for twentyfive years and then with a wealthy wife and his reputation made.

He went to his mother's home in West London and was kept by her during the long years of his apprenticeship as a genius. His observation of his parents had been acute, his experiences as a child were deeply felt and confusing. He had a mother who showed no loving affection to her son, he had come under the influence of a 'superman' who had removed

his mother from her home and who, indeed, might be his real father, while the man he was told was his father was a failure, a 'downstart.'

In later life he described himself as the son of three fathers, George Carr Shaw, his 'Rabelaisian' Uncle Walter Gurley and Lee. In his play Misalliance he gave one of his characters such a background and suggested on several occasions that it was an excellent arrangement to have three fathers. Somewhere along the way he hid deeply inside himself the insecure child who was left with a rejected old man while the disappointed mother-wife went off with the superman. It is recognized as properly part of the process of growing up for the child to leave the mother's influence and the home but in Shaw's case it was the mother who 'abandoned' him and whom he had to go to a foreign country to find again. When he did he stayed with her for almost twenty years and only left to marry an Irish woman with a strong physical resemblance to his mother.

Since Shaw's death, there has been great speculation as to the relationship that existed between Bessie Shaw and George John Lee. B C Rosset, in his book Shaw of Dublin, has made a case for something more than friendship from which:

> The seeds of doubt as well as the seeds of rancour...grew with time, bursting into full bloom during the London years and mark Shaw's literary work with the twin themes of births of doubtful parentage and of hatred mothers and motherhood...[14]

'Hatred' of mothers may be questioned as too strong a statement: with the exception of Adrian Herbert's expressed hatred of his mother there are no other such overt examples. Cashel Byron's dramatic outburst against his mother was more a youthful expression of rebellion, and their final reconciliation made this clear. Nowhere in the English domestic plays are the mothers '*hated*' by their offspring.

It is of some consequence that neither of Bernard Shaw's parents had parents of their own sex to whom they could refer as satisfactory role models in caring for their own children. In addition to this, young Sonny Shaw lacked a large part of the important 'extended' family because of his mother's association with Catholics. As he grew older he 'may have had an unconscious wish to be the son of the remarkable George John Lee and not of the miserable George Carr Shaw.' Holroyd further rightly declares that

> [Shaw's] campaign to demonstrate that he was George Carr Shaw's son was conducted primarily in defence of his mother. He was to model himself on Lee because of the extraordinary effect Lee had produced on Bessie and, in a number of three-cornered relationships, he was to play out the sexuality of their liaison by means of his own chastity. The themes of consanguinity and illegitimacy recur obsessively in his plays, but it is the emotional independence of the woman that is virtuously stressed.[15]

Shaw wrote extensively about his life but it is only in his plays that he expressed these fears that were rooted in his early family life. The family was idealized by middle-class Victorians in the era named after their matriarch queen, but George Bernard Shaw knew from personal experience that the 'idealization' was not ideal.

## NOTES

1 John O'Donovan, 'The First Twenty Years,' The Genius of Shaw, A Symposium Edited by Michael Holroyd, New York, Rinehart and Winston, 1979, p.17

2 Bernard Shaw, Sixteen Self Sketches, London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1949, p.13

3 Hesketh Pearson, Bernard Shaw, 1942: rpt. London: Macdonald & Co, 1975, p.11

4 London Music In 1888-89 As Heard By Corno Di Bassetto (Later Known As Bernard Shaw) With Some Further Autobiographical Particulars. London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1937, p.13

5 Michael Holroyd, Volume 1, 'The Search For Love 1856-1898,' Bernard Shaw, London: Chatto & Windus, 1988, p.20

6 John O'Donovan, 'The First Twenty Years,' p.21

7 'Biographers' Blunders Corrected,' Sixteen Self Sketches, p.86

8 London Music, p.15

9 O'Donovan, p.22

10 London Music, pp.15-16

11 St John Ervine, Bernard Shaw, his Life, Work and Friends, London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1956, p.30

12 O'Donovan, p.22

13 London Music, p.26

14 B C Rosset, Shaw of Dublin: The Formative Years, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1964, p.347

15 Michael Holroyd, 'The Search For Love 1856-1898,' p.24

# THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTEXT*

Shaw was born into a middle-class Victorian family and it is with family relationships that his English domestic plays are concerned. It is therefore important to consider the extent to which he may have been influenced, not only by his own family life, but by the social climate of the time. In a radio discussion Jackie Burgoyne said:

> The importance of the family was a Victorian invention of the upper middle-classes.
>
> [They] had an excess of income they had to find something socially approved of to do with, and wine, women and song were definitely <u>out</u> in the relation to the puritanism [of the time] so that they began to spend their money in increasing quantities on their home and on their domestic life.
>
> For men their children and their wives was a way of showing the world what they'd achieved. They built what we now understand to be a kind of 'ideal' way of living, shown materially in the way that people organised their households, spent money on servants and entertaining, and in showing the position that they occupied in society.
>
> There were also particular values attached to the family that concerned respectability: to be able to portray yourself as an exemplary family man carried advantages that spoke of your status and your sense of 'belonging' that went way beyond simply your achievements as (say) an industrialist.[1]

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According to Anthony Wohl: 'There were few aspects of their society the Victorians regarded with greater reverence than the home and family life within it.'[2] G M Young called the family 'the common Victorian faith' and added: 'The Family may be regarded as of Divine institution, as a Divine appointment for the comfort and education of mankind... [but that] the relations within the family may be both painful and oppressive... [and] disaffection between parents and children may smoulder unseen to the mischief of both.'[3]

When Shaw was born, Victoria had been reigning for nineteen years; when he wrote Widowers' Houses, his first, as well as his first English domestic play, she had been on the throne for fifty-five years. In the many letters that she wrote to her eldest daughter, Vicky, the Crown Princess of Prussia, she gave advice on how children should be brought up, confided her feelings about her own children, and expressed opinions of them from their earliest age. After the birth of Vicky's fourth daughter she wrote, in May 1872:

> I think many Princes a great misfortune - for they are in one another's and almost everybody's way. I am sure it is the case here - and dear Papa felt this so much that he was always talking of establishing if possible one or two of your brothers and eventual grandchildren (of which I fear there is the prospect of a legion with but little money) in the colonies. I don't dislike babies, though I think very young ones rather disgusting, and I take interest in those of my children when there are two or three... but when they come at the rate of three a year it becomes a cause of mere anxiety for my own children.

In a letter of 5 June 1872 she wrote: 'you can understand what I mean about the relations of children and parents. The higher the position the more difficult it is. - And for a woman alone to be head of so large a family and at the

same time reigning Sovereign... is almost more than human strength can bear.'[4]

Queen Victoria as the Mother of the Empire was the great mother figure of her time: she created a sense of maternal benevolence and moreover, epitomised values that could be seen as belonging to the emergent middle class as opposed to those of the somewhat discredited and potentially dissolute, aristocracy.

It was against the values of Victorianism that Shaw with personal knowledge, was rebelling: the hypocrisy of the 'double standard' and respectability. In Sex, Politics and Society, Jeffrey Weeks writes: 'Victorian morality was premised on a series of ideological separations: between family and society, between the restraint of the domestic circle and the temptations of promiscuity; between the privacy, leisure and comforts of the home and the tensions and competitiveness of the work... [It was this separation that] was by the end of the nineteenth century at the heart of moral discourse...'[5]

It is apposite to consider the contribution of Samuel Butler (1835-1902) to our understanding of late-Victorian family life as presented in his fiction, and is of particular interest when considering Shaw's attitudes to parents and to children. Butler was a writer whom Shaw greatly admired although Butler thought little of Shaw and wrote in his Notebooks, 'I have long been repelled by this man though at the same time attracted by his coruscating power... there is something uncomfortable about the man which makes him uncongenial to me.'[6]

Under the heading 'The Family' Butler had this to say:

I believe more unhappiness comes from this source than from any other - I mean from the attempt to prolong family connection unduly, and to make people hang together artificially who would never naturally do so...among the middle and upper [clases] it is killing a large number daily. And the old people do not really

like it much better than the young.[7]

As for the 'old people' and the 'young,' Butler is equating old and young with parent and child, an equation that Shaw also made even when the children are no longer particularly young and the parents are not yet very old. It is the attitudes of the parents and their children that can be said to be categorising them as old or young.
In her Introduction to Erewhon Mary M.T. Threapleton says:

> Some of the most bitter satire in Erewhon is directed against Victorian family life, where in so many cases, as in Butler's own, the rights and individuality of the child were ignored.[8]

The Erewhonians believe in pre-existence: 'that it was the pestering of the unborn which caused them to be brought into this world.' In their pre-existent state the unborn are lectured about the horrors of life: 'To be born is a felony - it is a capital crime...' They are told to:

> Consider the infinite risk; to be born of wicked parents and trained in vice! to be born of silly parents, and trained to unrealities! of parents who regard you as a sort of chattel or property, belonging more to them than to yourself! Again, you may draw utterly unsympathetic parents, who will never be able to understand you, and who will do their best to thwart you... and then call you ungrateful because you do not love them; or, again, you may draw parents who look upon you as a thing to be cowed while it is still young, lest it should give them trouble hereafter by having wishes and feelings of its own.

The visitor to Erewhon, who is the narrator of the story, is told '... if parents were merely to remember how they felt when they were young, and actually to behave towards their

children as they would have had parents behave towards themselves.'[9] He is also told that 'There is no talisman in the word 'parent' which can generate miracles of affection...'[10]

Should the unborn survive as full members of the world they will, in their turn, become pestered by the unborn, 'and a very happy life you may be led in consequence!'

Butler continues the parents' side of the problem:

> Imagine what it must be to have an unborn quartered upon you, who is of an entirely different temperament and disposition to your own, nay, half a dozen such, who will not love you though you have stinted yourself in a thousand ways to provide for their comfort and well-being - who will forget all your self-sacrifice, and of whom you may never be sure that they are not bearing a grudge against you for errors of judgement into which you may have fallen, though you had hoped that such had been long since atoned for. Ingratitude such as this is not uncommon, yet fancy what it must be to bear![11]

The work, however, in which Butler gives a picture of Victorian family life according to his own experience is The Way of All Flesh and R. C. Churchill affirms that:

> Everything was not as happy in the Victorian family garden as it was commonly made out to be, and it was in being the first to point this out that Butler displayed both his originality and his courage,[12]

Written between 1872 and 1884 but not published until 1903 after the author's death, this impressive novel shows the bigotries and constraints within a middle-class household. The absolute authority of the parents, particularly of the father, is in strong contrast to the inadequacy felt by the son. Butler also 'dared to add a

rider to the fifth commandment: 'Honour thy father and thy mother - *if they deserve it.*'[13]

Such authority was typical of the Victorian household: what was not typical was Butler's treatment of the theme and today The Way of All Flesh still has great impact. In the Introduction A.C. Ward comments that:

> It attacked the Victorian edifice at its very centre by (as it were) pulling down the fourth wall of that almost sacred institution of the period, The English Home, showing its inhabitants, The Family, not as a union of loving hearts and happy souls but as a tormented assembly bound together at best by illusion and make-believe, at worst by tyranny and hypocrisy, fear and hatred.[14]

By the time that The Way of All Flesh was published Shaw was well on the way to becoming a successful playwright and although it could not have influenced him or initiated his treatment of his parent/child themes it confirmed and coincided with many of the opinions that he held. The Way of All Flesh is an autobiographical novel, which is one of the reasons for it being considered so shocking. Had it been published when it was finished instead of almost twenty years later it would have been even more startling in its impact.[15]

Unlike Butler, whose main concerns, other than those of a satirist and a man of letter, were with the controversies gathered around the theories of Darwin, Shaw had taken an active interest in political issues from his earliest days in London. He joined the Fabian Society in 1884 and later became a vestyman for the borough of St Pancras in 1897. Widowers' Houses and Mrs Warren's Profession, two of the Unpleasant Plays, advance social arguments and Heartbreak House, the last of the English domestic plays 'includes some of Shaw's most astringent and uncompromising social criticism.'[16] Certainly he did not separate his 'political'

thinking from his playwriting, and regardless of the plays' narrative content, throughout his life he constantly addressed social issues. While the family may be considered as a political metaphor, however, Shaw, in his use of parent/child relationships, was not making explicit political statements, except insofar as the generation conflict expresses the passing of the old order.

In the plays of the nineteenth-century popular theatre tradition which Shaw inherited, there was a substantial number of orphans and of children with only one parent. Orphans were plentiful inside the Victorian theatre because they were plentiful outside it. A man might hope to live to be only 48 and a woman 51.6 years old: if, however, they had been born in 1900 and had been lucky enough to survive the appalling infant mortality that prevailed, especially amongst the masses of the city poor, they might hope to achieve 55 and 57.4 years respectively.[17]

In the later part of the Victorian era the rising birthrate, from around 9 million inhabitants at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had taken the population to more than 36 millions. This increase had continued until the 1880s after which it had begun to fall, a decline which continued until a plateau was reached in the 1930s. 'In 1850 the life expectancy of the male child at birth was just under 40 years, of a female a little less than 42 years'.[18]

Bernard Shaw, while in some sympathy with the Neo-Malthusians who advocated that the bearing of children could change from being 'an involuntary condition of marriage to a voluntary one,' also believed that

> Malthusianism... touched our feelings mainly as a protest against the burden of excessive childbearing imposed on married women. It was not then foreseen that the triumph of the [Malthusian] propaganda might impose a still worse burden on them: the burden of enforced sterility...[19]

There was nothing peculiarly significant in Shaw's electing to involve motherless, fatherless, and orphaned children in his stories. He was merely continuing a long tradition in so doing. Where he was different from his forerunners and his contemporaries was: (a) In his manner of interpreting his one-parent families, and (b) In his continued use of the one-parent family device long after he had evolved his own style as a playwright and outgrown other stylistic features of his early models.

The legal position of parents and their children in the latter part of the nineteenth century was about to undergo a great change. Jeffrey Weeks writes:

> Child rearing was no longer seen as just an individual moral duty: it was a national duty, and this was reflected in the new spirit of the interventionism of the state.[20]

Parental rights were touched upon by the Compulsory Education Act of 1870 and children could be taken from the care of their natural parents by the power of the Poor Law Act of 1899, if those parents were incapable of supporting them or were considered to be 'unsuitable.' It was not until early in the twentieth century, however, that such provisions as school meals for the poor, school medical inspection, and in 1908, the Children Act, were introduced. These Acts and provisions were of enormous importance to the masses of the poor.

In spite of these changes the middle classes, whose children had not been forced into working from a tender age to help to support their families and who were not thought to be in need of care and protection through reason of poverty, were slow to alter their attitudes toward the family. The general view among the 'social' scientists of the day, L. H. Morgan, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer was that:

> ... the monogamous family with patriarchal husband-father at work and submissive-nurturant (and nurtured) wife-mother at home was the highest development... Men had reached a higher point of evolution than woman, whose maturation was arrested at the level of 'primitives' or children, fitting them for the performance of the necessary animal function of reproduction but for little else.[21]

The middle classes, whose sons were educated privately in public and preparatory schools and whose daughters were, for the most part, educated at home, were not in need of 'state benefits.' The schools to which the middle classes did occasionally send their daughters in the early part of the century, were really 'finishing' schools. These schools were small, girls of all ages were taught together in the houses of widowed ladies and genteel spinsters who had themselves no academic or specialist qualifications. The small numbers of both pupils and teachers meant that the school was really an extension of the family and the subjects learned would be those ones that 'young ladies' needed to know in the 'good society' for which they were intended and from which they probably sprang. Towards the end of the nineteenth century when the reformed boarding schools came into being, Martha Vicinus claims that:

> ... reformers first had to fight an uphill battle to convince parents to invest in their daughters' education... In 1898 approximately 80,000 girls over twelve were in secondary schools of varying quality... only 16,000 remained beyond 16.[22]

The majority of daughters, because they did not enjoy the freedom from the parental authority experienced by their brothers, were still subject to the rigours and narrow disciplines of living in close contact with adults who had

complete control over their lives. For daughters, in the prison to which parents alone held the key, the only exchange was to another where the gaoler was the husband: marriage, usually a 'good' one where families were allied with others of similar interests or from which mutually agreed benefits might be gained, was almost the only escape. Jackie Burgoyne, in the Radio 4 discussion on 'The Family', remarked that 'The home is a haven for men... [women] often experience their home and their family as a prison.'

There were some families whose daughters were sent for perhaps a year to be 'finished' abroad, living in an educational establishment or more often with a family of similar status. This practice became more frequent towards the end of the century and it afforded opportunities for single girls to see something of the world before, hopefully, marriage and the inevitable restriction within their own household. One of the greatest dangers in the 'finishing' process might be the influence of new friends made in such circumstances. Close friendships between women - outside the family - were frowned upon and Martha Vicinus writes:

> Daughters were expected to remain emotionally tied to their families, and especially their mothers, until marriage. As a result, friendships were frequently the arena in which young women first fought for their independence from family demands.[23]

Another alternative to studying at home, with the interminable round of trivial pursuits and duties that that entailed, might be to enter into one of the religious Sisterhoods or deaconess's houses where the single daughter had a vocation for religious service.[24] But by far the most attractive course for numbers of intelligent middle-class daughters was afforded by an education outside the home that would prepare them for a life of service as a teacher or nurse.

In the 1850s when Florence Nightingale, against opposition and prejudice, was able to begin some sort of training, she had a painful understanding of the family as a prison: She wrote in 1851:

> 'O weary days - oh evenings that seem never to end - for how many years have I watched the drawing-room clock and thought it would never reach ten! and for 20, 30 years more to do this!'

In a long private note headed 'Butchered to make a Roman Holiday,' she wrote a furious indictment of family life:

> 'Women don't consider themselves as human beings at all. There is absolutely no God, no country, no duty to them all, except the family... I have known a good deal of convents, and of course everyone has talked of the petty grinding tyrannies supposed to be exercised there. But I know nothing like the petty grinding tyranny of a good English family. And the only alleviation is that the tyrannized submits with a heart full of affection.'[25]

Should daughters be lucky enough to persuade their parents that they had a vocation to nurse - after all, they were asked to assist in nursing their elderly relatives and the 'poor' for whom their family might be in some way responsible - then they might enter one of the new teaching hospitals where their maternal feelings could develop within the bounds of their work. 'Probationers were encouraged to see nursing as an extension of mothering,' and if they were lucky they found the ward where they worked 'under the guidance of a wise sister, was defined as a home.'

It was noted how sisters 'often remain for a working life-time at the head of their households as contentedly as a mother at the head of her family, [creating a] home-like,

serene and cheerful atmosphere.'
'In a sense, sisters had enormous power, just as a mother had... The nurses were younger sisters, the patients their children, and the doctors the fathers.'[26]
Martha Vicinus points out:

> For some fathers sending a recalcitrant daughter to college seemed a simple and safe way to pacify her far better than having her traipsing around the slums or wearing herself out in a hospital.[27]

It was in the new colleges, some of which giving qualifications that were not recognised by the universities to which they were attached, that the bright and hopeful daughters blossomed and found some degree of individuality not stifled by parental opposition and disapproval. In 1897 the Women's Institute compiled a list of the number of women attending those colleges:[28]

| | |
|---|---|
| Girton (Cambridge) | 109 |
| Newnham (Cambridge) | 166 |
| Somerville (Oxford) | 73 |
| Lady Margaret Hall (Oxford) | 48 |
| St Hugh's Hall (Oxford) | 24 |
| St Hilda's Hall (Oxford) | 17 |
| Bedford College (London) | 192 |
| Westfield College (London) | 44 |
| Royal Holloway (London) | 111 |

The sons had long had the opportunities to expand within the Oxbridge environment and now the daughters were to have similar opportunities to become something more than young ladies.

However loving and privileged, homes were seen by the enterprising young as places from which they must escape, sometimes at all costs, sometimes only at the expense of

exchanging the guardianship of the parent for the guardianship of the husband. For sons there was always the escape into one of the professions, or for the younger son the inevitable curacy. For daughters, as Hypatia Tarleton said, there was always the fear of:

> Girls withering into ladies. Ladies withering into old maids. Nursing old women. Running errands for old men. Good for nothing at last. Oh, you can't imagine the fiendish selfishness of the old people and the maudlin sacrifice of the young. It's more unbearable than any poverty; more horrible than any regular-right-down wickedness. Oh, home! home! parents! family! (13.MIS.143)

In her biography of Beatrix Potter, Margaret Lane paints a picture of the little girl who 'had been born into a period and a class which seemed to have had little understanding of childhood, [whose parents] were beneath the spell of 'the most enervating and stultifying influence of their century - the sterile spell of moneyed and middle-class gentility.'[29] They seemed 'not to have noticed that she was unnaturally lonely... She neither shared her parents' life nor mixed with other children.'[30] Leaving the parental home and being sent away to be educated, something longed for by so many daughters, was not to be for the solitary little girl. Beatrix did not feel any 'hankerings for school or higher education.' She could write, 'Thank goodness my education was neglected; I was never sent to school... but it was in the days when parents kept governesses, and only boys went to school in most families.'[310] Perhaps, as she later wrote, education might have removed some of that marvellous originality that entertained and has continued to entertain many generations of children. She did not leave her parents' home until she married at the age of 47 and until then she had spent most of her time with them, 'the most respectful and filial of

daughters.'[32] The independence that grew with the success of her books made them unhappy and knowing how they would react she 'dreaded to broach... a subject so unwelcome to her parents as her own marriage.'[33]

A delightful account of a different kind of childhood is given by Gwen Raverat, full of eccentricity, privilege and interesting observation; even so she could write:

> ...our liberty was only relative... I have no hesitation in saying that all our generation was much too carefully brought up. As we grew towards adolescence the restrictions became steadily more painful, for they prevented us from growing in the natural way... Our cousins, Ruth and Nora, were very much more carefully brought up than we were; and they suffered, both then and later more than we did. Frances was the sheltered and adored only child, and though she was less unhappy at the time, she too suffered in the end from the overprotection.[34]

One of the saddest accounts of the 'overprotection' of a child is that of Victoria, second daughter of Edward V11. In the official biography of Queen Alexandra, Georgina Battiscombe touches on the life of the royal princess who was still living at home with her parents at the age of thirty three.

'She was the most intelligent of Queen Alexandra's children and for this reason she suffered the more acutely from the frustrations imposed on her by the narrow limits of a life lived almost completely under the shadow of her mother.'[35]

For no child and for no unmarried daughter was there any easy escape from the overpowering authority of a 'loving home.' The spinster was expected to remain as long as she was needed to perform the duties of a sister and surrogate mother, especially if she were the eldest child, to her younger siblings, and to be first a companion to her mother and later a nurse. When, on the death of her parents, she

was finally relieved of her duties, possibly with little or no income of her own, she was then at the mercy of a brother, dependent upon his charity or that of some other older relation. Failing this she could seek employment as a governess in some suitable establishment until such a time as she became too infirm to support herself.

The relationship of the parents and children in Shaw's English domestic plays reflects the various influences and attitudes of society upon the Victorian family. Thus, for instance, Vivie Warren in 1894 can get only '*what amounts to* a high Cambridge degree' (7.MWP.195) although Frank Gardner, demonstrably less able, would be an eligible candidate. Hypatia Tarleton must expect to wither on the bough unless she marries while her brother Johnny, not the brightest fellow, goes into their father's business. These are just two examples of Shaw 'sticking to the rules', but while Vivie and Hypatia may have to accept certain of society's strictures he gives them freedom to follow their own personal inclinations. So Vivie rejects her mother's money, and with it her mother, because she does not approve of the way that money is earned, and Hypatia blatantly runs down and captures the young man of her choice without observing any of society's formalities. Young women were not supposed to have opinions about the source of the family fortunes or to disown their parents as Vivie did, (although on occasions their families were justified in disowning them), nor was it ladylike to take the initiative in courtship with the brazenness shown by Hypatia.

In the English domestic plays, as in most of his writing, Shaw both reflected middle-class society as it was and in an attempt to change it, turned it upside down in his own idiosyncratic fashion.

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# THE THEATRICAL CONTEXT*

The relationship between parents and children has been a much exploited dramatic theme from Aeschylus' investigation of the conflicting imperatives of filial piety and filial revenge within the House of Atreus in The Oresteia, through Shakespeare's humanistic portrayal of natural and unnatural filial relationships in King Lear and Racine's passionate depiction of incestuous love and hate held within the rigidly decorous Neo-classical form of Phèdre.

Shaw's personal background would doubtless in any case have attracted him towards a contemporary re-examination of the well-worn themes of parents and children but he was, in addition, not short of dramatic models which explored the topic, and, with intelligent eclecticism, he objectified his personal experience by borrowing from and adapting past and contemporary dramatic literature with all the licence of an 'approved fool.'

Captain Shotover may be seen as a cross between a twentieth century Lear, disowning his predatory daughters, 'If [Ariadne] comes I am not at home. If she wants anything, let her take it. If she asks for me, let her be informed that I am extremely old, and have totally forgotten her,' (15.HH.47) and a latter-day Prospero whose 'magic' transforms Ellie/Miranda from a perfect daughter into a perfect wife. But it is not Shakespeare (despite his love of the Bard and his loathing of Bardolatry) whom Shaw adopted as his dramaturgical father. Nor does he, in the English domestic plays, follow the Greek mode so beloved by his surrogate son, Harley Granville Barker, tracing the fortunes of House or Dynasty, when the children are pressed into service, willingly or not, to revitalise a dying lineage.[1]

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Shaw's immediate dramatic models were the nineteenth-century melodramatists, and, simultaneously and paradoxically, the writer who overturned their dramaturgy and the socially acceptable values inherent in the theatrical conventions to which they unthinkingly adhered, Henrik Ibsen.

In the following section I shall examine what I believe are the two main theatrical influences on Shaw's treatment of the parent/child relationship in the English domestic plays, viz nineteenth century melodrama and the dramas of Ibsen.

In a contribution to 'The Saturday Review' 20 April 1895, under the heading 'The Bad Plays,' Shaw defined melodrama generally and, in particular, the melodramas presented at the Adelphi Theatre:

> ...I hold Adelphi melodrama in high consideration. A really good Adelphi melodrama is of a first rate literary importance because it only needs elaboration to become a masterpiece...It should be a simple and sincere drama of action and feeling, kept well within that vast tract of passion and motive which is common to the philosopher and the laborer, relieved by plenty of fun, and depending for variety of human character, not on the high comedy idiosyncrasies which individualize people in spite of the closest similarity of age, sex, and circumstances, but on broad contrasts between types of youth and age, sympathy and selfishness, the masculine and the feminine, the serious and the frivolous, the sublime and the ridiculous, and so on. The whole character of the piece must be allegorical, idealistic, full of generalizations and moral lessons; and it must represent conduct as producing swiftly and certainly on the individual the results which in actual life it only produces on the race in the course of many centuries. (23.OTNi.98)

He also wrote in the same review, 'Unfortunately, really good Adelphi melodrama is very hard to get.'

Almost a year later, in a letter to Ellen Terry, Shaw described a meeting with William Terriss who was an Adelphi actor and a former member of Irving's company, and concluded:

> I seriously think I shall write a play for him. A good melodrama is a more difficult thing to write than all this clever-clever comedy: one must go straight to the core of humanity to get it, and if it is only good enough, why, there you have Lear or Macbeth.[2]

Shaw did, in fact, write The Devil's Disciple for William Terriss but the actor died in the same year as its first performance in New York with Richard Mansfield in the lead as Dick Dudgeon. In his preface to 'Three Plays for Puritans' Shaw said that in time it would be seen as 'the threadbare popular melodrama it technically is.' (12.DD.xxvii)

Although Shaw enjoyed and clearly saw the potential of the melodramatic genre, he could still criticise the Adelphi plays which 'present[s] a fresh combination and permutation of the standard component parts, and so can be described as "new and original"; but the parts are the same, and the manufacture would probably be carried on by machinery if hand labor were not cheaper.' (23.OTNi.195)

His enthusiasm for melodrama began as a youth attending the Theatre Royal, Dublin, and continued throughout his life. His roots were in the nineteenth-century stock company theatre, and in his letters and his theatre criticism he refers to the actors and the plays that he saw before he left Ireland. Foremost among heroes, and one to whom he frequently referred, was Barry Sullivan, 'Of the English-speaking stars incomparably the greatest...who was in his prime when I was in my teens,' he wrote when he was seventy-three years old.[3] In commenting upon Shaw's ten

years as a playgoer in Dublin, Michael Holroyd adds, 'The style of work at which [Barry Sullivan] aimed, its blatant force mixed up with Shavian good manners, stayed with G.B.S. all his life.' Holroyd believes that Shaw's experience of theatre in his Dublin youth was of profound influence upon his development as a dramatist, that the company of actors playing round a star such as Barry Sullivan...was an experience...as if they were his family, and the theatre his home...so that when he came to write plays himself, he instinctively went back to the grand manner and heroic stage business he had imbibed from the pit of the Theatre Royal.'[4] It was this 'exciting or impressive declamation...learnt from oldtimers like Ristori, Salvini, and Barry Sullivan that Shaw was looking for in casting the heroine for Man and Superman. He found her in Lillah McCarthy, an actress 'saturated with declamatory poetry and rhetoric from her cradle, [who] had learned her business out of London by doing work in which you were either heroic or nothing.'[5] He delighted in this quality as he delighted in melodrama.

Shaw recognized that the melodramatic form was an essentially populist one, which, without the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain's office, might well have proved to be a useful propagandist tool of the nineteenth-century reformers, was an ideal vehicle for his own dramatic purpose.[6] Martin Meisel states that it was 'in writing Arms and the Man Shaw found that melodrama was not simply a form to be ridiculed, but one to be converted and saved.[7]

Although, the twelve English domestic plays which I shall examine do not exploit all the possibilities of the genre, of particular relevance to this thesis is the use made in melodrama of the existence, or non-existence, or breakdown of 'normal' parent/child relationships. The dramaturgical patterning of melodramas throughout the nineteenth century, even after the 'French gentlemanly' variety had largely superseded the Gothic, the military and the nautical, and the purely sensational with the increasing influence of the newly attracted middle-and-upper class

audiences, centres around a heroine who is an orphan or who is a 'motherless daughter.' In his study of English melodrama Michael Booth comments that '[The heroine's] predicaments are extreme, her agonies immeasurable. Most of the necessary sentimentalism and pathos attaches to the heroine, who is the emotional core of melodrama and very often the storm centre of its action.'[8] A melodramatic heroine is not only pure, faithful, homeloving and passive (ie possessing all the qualities of an ideal Victorian woman)[9] but she is also, almost always, an orphan, in that one parent at least, usually the mother, is deceased. Motherlessness in the nineteenth century commercial theatre, was the rule rather than the exception and it was based on sound fact as the high percentage of deaths in childbirth can testify.[10]

Melodramas were built around a plot which adhered, loosely, to a pattern that occurred with variations in them all. There was a good father, usually fallen upon hard times with a motherless daughter whose beauty and virtue invariably attracted the villain (who was occasionally a relation). The hero, often poor, or if rich, in disguise, defeated the villain, often in spectacular fashion after which the heroine, who may have been abducted, misled or estranged from her father, was reunited with him if only in death. Added to this there was often at least one 'supporting' character who watched over the interests of the heroine in the absence of the father, as a surrogate parent.

Motherless daughters in melodrama include, as early as 1797 in The Castle Spectre, Angela, who has been brought up by a good old peasant, in ignorance of her true parents. When she is removed to the castle of her wicked uncle Osmond she is watched over by the ghost of her murdered mother who sings lullabies in the night to protect her child, and she also appears to Angela in 'a vision' and blesses her. On discovering that Lord Reginald, her father is still alive in the castle dungeons Angela is prepared to sacrifice herself to save his life by marriage to Osmond, but her father

forbids it. He would rather see her dead than married to his villainous brother, but at the last minute help arrives and Angela is spared.

In John Bull 1803 Mary Thornberry is a motherless daughter who is virtuous, trusting and honest, whose love for her father is so deep as to cause her to run away from him when she fears that she may have betrayed his trust, but eventually the misunderstanding is resolved and a happy ending results. Claudine, in The Miller and his Men 1813, is a dutiful and rather dull, motherless daughter who has a 'perfect' relationship with her father. He is 'broken hearted and bankrupt' and would like her to marry the miller, knowing nothing of his villainy. With the return of Count Frederick, the miller and his band are exposed and Claudine may marry the poor but brave Lothair who has risked his own life to save her. The play ends with an explosion and father and daughter are reunited when 'rushing forward [he] catches Claudine in his arms.'

In The Vampire 1820 Lady Margaret who is motherless, against her instincts and after a premonitory dream, consents to marry a man whom her father esteems but who is, in fact, a vampire. Fathers in melodrama can be too trusting and this one is overpowered by the vampire who requires Margaret's blood in order to survive. Lord Ronald finally realises the danger and forbids her to marry 'before the moon is down.' As a dutiful daughter she obeys and is therefore ultimately saved by the father who had first exposed her to such villainy.

The Life of a Woman 1840 was a melodrama that 'realized' a series of paintings by Hogarth called 'The Harlot's Progress.' Abel Rosemay is a good old curate with two motherless daughters, Grace who is modest and dutiful and Fanny who is easily flattered, fun-loving and bored by home life in their village. Fanny contrives to go to London and there is seduced by the villain: 'A draught was given and I was lost forever.' She turns to prostitution and when she is utterly degraded after various experiences, she encounters

her father who fails to recognize her in the gloom. She confesses to him the life she has been leading and the old man admits that if she were his daughter 'I could not curse her - I might forgive her, but it would break my heart to know her such a wretch.' After this meeting Fanny sickens and dies, forbidding the faithful Dorcas to fetch him to her lest he should curse her. The play ends with the tragic father dying like King Lear on the coffin of his daughter and the final tableau is in the nature of a pieta,[11] with Grace, Dorcas and Adam the loyal hero who will now be the protector of the remaining orphan daughter.

The fathers of melodrama are indulgent with their daughters, loving, protective, and often the victims of unfortunate chance which prevents them from giving their offspring the material benefits that would help to compensate for the lack of motherly affection. The father, who is always 'The Good Old Man,' has 'lost his wife,' and he idolizes his motherless daughter who has 'got her mother's hair,' (or voice or smile). In order to make amends 'he will cheerfully sacrifice his daughter's happiness, and marry her to the villain.' Jerome's satire relies for its humour upon his reader's familiarity with melodrama.[12] Fathers in melodrama can take a very strong line with daughters whom they believe to be behaving immorally, show them the door and even turn them out into the snow, but eventually they are reconciled, if only in death, when all the misunderstandings are brought to light and all is forgiven.

In his English domestic plays Shaw, too, specialises in presenting motherless daughters: Blanche Sartorius, Julia and Sylvia Craven, Candida, Fanny O'Dowda, Eliza Doolittle, Shotover's daughters Hesione and Ariadne, are all motherless, and Ellie Dunn's mother is alive but not present.

Even more vulnerable than motherless daughters, however, are the true orphans of melodrama. Almost always they are female, no doubt to underline their vulnerability

to the predatory or lusting male superiors by whom they are surrounded. Such heroines are Black Ey'd Susan in the play of that name 1829, Eily O'Connor of The Colleen Bawn 1860, May Edwards of Ticket-of-Leave Man 1863, and Claire Ffolliott of The Shaughraun 1875. They all have at least one surrogate parent. Susan lives with old Dame Hatley who is sick and never seen, therefore adding to Susan's plight the problem of keeping a roof over the old woman's head; Eily O'Connor's surrogate father is the parish priest, Father Tom; May Edwards is protected by surrogate parents, Mr and Mrs Gibson, and although Mrs Gibson is never seen, May's landlady, Mrs Willoughby, provides a comic mother figure. Claire Ffolliott with her brother Robert has a surrogate father in the parish priest, Father Dolan. It could also be said that as Conn, the 'shaughraun' has been brought up as Robert's playfellow, that his mother Mrs O'Kelly, is a kind of surrogate mother for the young Ffolliotts and the play opens with her and Claire working together in the dairy.

Shaw has created few orphans in the English domestic plays, only Violet and Octavius Robinson in Man and Superman and, in Misalliance, Gunner is also parentless but they are all provided with surrogate parents. Violet and Octavius were brought up by the Whitefields and Mrs Whitefield is still the mother figure to them both, while there is every indication that Mrs Tarleton will prove to be Gunner's surrogate mother.

The heroes of melodrama, too, are often parentless but little is made of this because 'manly virtues' do not require the protection of a parent as do weaker, womanly ones. If a parent does exist it will be the son's duty to protect the 'good old man' or his mother. In The Colleen Bawn, Hardress Cregan is an example of the son who must protect his mother against the near tragic results of her own foolish pride. William in Black Ey'd Susan, Bob Brierly in Ticket-of-Leave Man and Lothair, the young peasant in The Miller and his Men are all parentless heroes who devote their energies to winning the orphaned or motherless

daughter and to restoring her family fortunes. In A Tale of Mystery 1802, the first play to be called a melodrama,[13] no family is complete: Romaldi and Bonamo have motherless sons and Selina has been brought up to believe herself an orphan under the protection of a loving uncle until her father is revealed. In melodrama there are more father/daughter than there are mother/son relationships, no doubt because this condition more truthfully reflects the society of the time, and also because it excites more pity and 'human interest' both of which are good for the box-office.

This pattern of the female child lacking a parent, usually a mother, was particularly attractive to Shaw who overturned the convention of the time while at the same time adhering to it. Where the mother was absent through death, estrangement, or inadequacy, the daughter was increasingly under the father's (or the surrogate father's) influence, but as Ellen Gainer remarks, 'Daughters...never gravitate towards alternative parent figures of either sex if their own are in place, although they might express a desire for an emotional and/or sexual relation with a male that shares paternal qualities.'[14] The father's, or the father surrogate's influence can be seen in Widowers' Houses, The Philanderer, Man and Superman, Pygmalion and Heartbreak House. In You Never Can Tell the combination of falling in love with Valentine and meeting her hitherto unknown father, causes Gloria to shift her allegiance from her mother, as she recognizes herself in her father. The influence of a father upon a daughter is most powerfully shown in Major Barbara when the absent Undershaft's return is instrumental in changing Barbara's life. As Michael Holroyd says '..hers is not really a conversion: it is a growing-up. She is a chip off the old block, her father, [who has] a genius for action that Barbara inherits.'[15] There is a sense of the happy resolution of the family in this play with parents and children reconciled (Sarah's 'Pip-pip', Barbara's need for motherly advice (11.MB.350) which is not present in You Never Can Tell. In both plays, however, the daughter's

crisis is triggered by the father's return to the family coinciding with, in You Never Can Tell, Gloria falling in love with Valentine, and in Major Barbara, with Dolly Cusins' transformation under the influence of Undershaft.

The influence of nineteenth century melodrama on Shaw's treatment of the parent/child relationships in his English domestic plays can clearly be seen. Martin Meisel was right to affirm that 'The broad style of Melodrama, its vivid, generalized personages, its essential character as a story of perils and providential fulfilments... also made it seem a natural vehicle for the drama of ideas, or the drama of persons who embodied ideas.'[16]

If the theatre of Shaw's youth in Dublin was later to have a formative influence on his playwriting, the dramatic movement that catapulted him into writing for the stage came when he was established in London as a critic and novelist. namely, 'the brisk storm wind' of Ibsen that blew away many of the cobwebs of nineteenth-century convention.

Shaw was closely involved with the Ibsen pioneers, William Archer, whose translations of the plays were the first to be produced in Britain, Charles Charrington, a fellow Fabian generally regarded as the finest director of the avant-garde drama in the pre-Court Theatre era, and, most importantly perhaps, the actresses whose desire to change the conventional images of women that were the norm in earlier drama, led them to mount productions of Ibsen's plays independently at considerable personal sacrifice, viz 'the two high priestesses of Ibsen, 'Janet Achurch and Elizabeth Robins, and, to a lesser extent, Florence Farr. In addition, members of the Fabian Society provided a substantial part of the early audiences for Ibsen's plays.

In discussing the influence of Ibsen upon Shaw and its possible effect on the way in which he presented the relationships of parents and children in his English domestic plays it is important to remember that he was immersed in Ibsen before ever he wrote a play himself. (The 'Passion Play' of his youth was never finished and was not

published until after his death.)[17] In 1882 when Henrietta Frances Lord's translation of A Doll's House appeared it was given a private reading in Eleanor Marx-Aveling's drawingroom with Shaw reading Krogstad. He confessed in the 1905 Preface to The Irrational Knot that 'its novelty as a morally original study of marriage did not stagger me...I had made a morally original study of a marriage myself...without any melodramatic forgeries, spinal diseases, and suicides, though I had to confess to a study of dipsomania.' (2.1K.xxi/ii) We have here a confirmation of Shaw's personal realistic view of family life without the trappings of middle-class Victorian idealism: A Doll's House bears some resemblance to the story of Bessie Shaw who rejected her husband and home to make a life for herself elsewhere. He continues that he was 'very little concerned about Ibsen until on a later occasion William Archer translated Peer Gynt to me viva voce when the magic of the great poet opened my eyes in a flash to the importance of the social philosopher.' (2.IK.xxii/iii)

It was in 1889 that Janet Achurch and her husband Charles Charrington presented the first significant production of an Ibsen play in Britain, A Doll's House. Shaw reviewed the first performance for 'The Manchester Guardian' in place of William Archer who as translator, would not review it himself. Deeply impressed by the play he afterwards wrote: '[I] see a vital truth searched out and held up in a light intense enough to dispel all the mists and shadows that obscure it in actual life.'[18] The following year Florence Farr produced Rosmersholm with Shaw's active encouragement and he confessed in a letter to Charingtom that he was 'terrified...at having thrust Florence on such an enterprize. But the thing went well after all.' The first performance of Ghosts followed which, he declared in the same letter, 'was by no means seen at its best,' although Mrs Theodore Wright, an amateur actress, as Mrs Alving, 'played very well indeed,'[19] A month later Elizabeth Robins, with Marion Lea presented Hedda Gabler and Shaw wrote to

her'...you were sympathetically unsympathetic which was the exact solution of the central difficulty of playing Hedda!'[20]

Shaw's enthusiasm for Ibsen extended to many of the actresses who espoused the plays of Ibsen: he wrote to them, encouraged them, castigated them, and was never afraid to advise them on their performances. He was particularly determined that they should not undermine their talent by indifferent vocal technique and his letters and reviews are filled with useful criticisms. Four days after Charrington's first Doll's House he saw the play for the second time and wrote to Archer, 'I saw a good many shortcomings tonight that escaped me before, and that ought to be remedied somehow.' He continued, 'I am alive to the necessity of perfect diction when an attempt is made at realism in the pitch of conversation.'[21] Shaw took infinite pains to assist his friends in the theatre: he was no carping critic but was practically useful. After attending the first performance of Hedda Gabler he wrote to Elizabeth Robins that from the back of the pit 'most of the seated conversations were inaudible' and that she should mention this to Marion Lea, but to 'be careful not to set her forcing her voice, which is a very peculiar and telling one when she does not smother it with emotion and sitting down.'[22] He could also write to Charles Charrington of her performance in Rosmersholm that 'she lacked certainty of execution both with voice and action; but she got through by dint of brains and a certain fascination and dimly visible originality.[24] After seeing the Charington's 1892 revival of A Doll's House Shaw wrote to Janet Achurch, one of his favourite and most admired actresses, of how she had neglected her voice in her travels, that she 'tightens her lower lip like an india rubber band,' and he accuses her of 'squawking - positively squawking!' He also tells her how much he cares for her and how capable she is of greatness.[25]

Irving Wardle believes that' Teaching is the central passion in all Shaw's major plays: whenever they record a victory, it is the victory of Pygmalion - the release of a free,

autonomous creature from the petrified forest of unexamined values and social conditioning.'[26] Certainly there was something of the 'teacher' in Shaw's relationships with his talented actresses. In his tutorial attitude towards them he was prefiguring his later creation, Henry Higgins, and his relationship with Eliza, as well as his fathers and their relationships with their daughters in the English domestic plays eg John Tarleton, who was forever 'instructing' Hypatia in Misalliance, and Undershaft who, accomplished the transformation of Major Barbara. Margot Peters also suggests that Shaw was 'Excited by his own power to influence Ibsen careers in London'[27] which accounts for the interest he took in these ambitious actresses. For instance, he could not resist persuading Florence Farr to play the passionate Rebecca West in Rosmersholm, although her quiet delivery and gentle demeanour was better fitted for The Lady from the Sea which had been her first choice, because he wanted to leave Ellida to the American actress, Marion Lea. Shaw was always eager to advise and persuade: it was a trait that did not diminish throughout his life. Perhaps it was particularly in his relationship with Janet Achurch that Shaw expressed both the 'teacher' who wished to influence, and the romantic lover. He was a close friend of the Charringtons and for a long time he tried to help Janet in her alcohol and drug addiction. In a letter written in December 1897 he commented upon the way she had behaved: 'After dinner you were a rowdy, unpresentable wretch. Finally you were inarticulate...When I was a child of less than Norah's age, I saw the process in my father; and I have never felt anything since. I learnt soon to laugh at it; and I have laughed at everything since....No use, dear Janet: I cant be your *taskmaster and schoolmaster* any longer...I can only make myself disagreeable and load my heart with a crown of sword points. Let us drop the subject and say goodbye whilst there is still some Janet left to say goodbye to...[28] Of course he did not say goodbye: five years later in a letter to her husband after seeing Janet in The Lady from the Sea

he wrote, '...she left everybody miles behind. The lucidity of her acting in difficult plays is extraordinary: I have serious thoughts of refusing to let anybody else touch my plays...'[29]

In his attitude towards women Shaw was considered to be something of a philanderer. He met Florence Farr at the home of William Morris in 1890 and her 'liberated' feminism, gentleness and beauty soon captivated him. 'She was in violent reaction against Victorian morals, especially sexual and domestic morals; and when the impact of Ibsen was felt in this country...I became persona grata with her; and for some years we saw a great deal of one-another,'[30] he wrote in his 'Explanatory Word' for the publication of his letters to her. One night when Shaw was with Florence, Jenny Patterson, his mistress for the past six years, burst in upon them and the scene that followed provided the models for Julia Craven and Grace Tranfield who fought over Charteris/Shaw in The Philanderer. In spite of Shaw's flirtations with Fabian wives and with actresses, Mrs Patterson had been his only mistress until he and Florence Farr fell in love.

If Florence succumbed to his charms Elizabeth Robins did not and Michael Holroyd is of the opinion that 'What attracted [Shaw] to Elizabeth was that, like his mother, she was at best indifferent to him.'[31] This likeness, with her beauty and her acknowledged great talent as an actress (of her Hedda he wrote, 'I never had a more tremendous sensation in a theatre...')[32] was an irresistible combination. Shaw frequently praised her work in Ibsen plays and at the same time he tried to form a romantic relationship with her, but she would have none of him. 'What have I ever done to you that you should so brutally shew your mistrust of me?' he plaintively asked. 'I cannot help being in love with you in a poetic and not in the least ignoble way.[33] But he could not charm her as he did so many women. Shaw's romantic pursuit of women was his attempt to gain the maternal love denied by 'indifference' and the very *unavailability* of the

actresses made him more ardent. He protested passionate attachment to Achurch who was married, to Robins who was a lesbian, and to Florence Farr who divorced her husband, thus becoming 'available' at which he lost interest (the dream cannot come true). By the time he declared himself to Stella Campbell he was himself a married man.

In 1896 there occurred a conjunction of beautiful and talented actresses all appearing together in Little Eyolf. Janet Achurch as Rita Allmers, Elizabeth Robins as her sister-in-law Asta, Florence Farr to understudy Janet and as the Ratwife, Mrs Patrick Campbell. In Michael Holroyd's words, 'What [Shaw] saw was a microcosm of his life'.[34] At that time he had no idea of the complicating relationship that would occur between himself and Mrs Pat or that in less than two years he would marry the woman who had accompanied him and was watching the same performance, Charlotte Payne-Townshend: that was all in the future.

By 1891 Ibsen's plays had become a matter of great controversy and the dramatic critics were 'battling resoundingly over his reputation.'[35] In 1890 Shaw had written a lecture, 'purposely couched in the most provocative terms,' (19 Q.13) as one of a series to be delivered at the Fabian Summer School, the overall title of which was 'Socialism in Contemporary Literature.' Shaw was 'not attempting to give an allround critique of Ibsen's work but to deal with those aspects of it which fitted into the scheme of the lecture course.'[36] When the Ibsen controversy was at its height Shaw decided to publish the expanded lecture as The Quintessence of Ibsenism and in the 1891 Preface he declared that he was placing in the field his explanation of Ibsen's work 'until a better could be found, [with]...a reminder that it is not a critical essay on the beauties of Ibsen, but simply an exposition of Ibsenism.' (19.Q.14) Jan McDonald writes that Shaw believed that to be an Ibsenite meant to be 'one who appreciated the realist's way of looking at society and conventions rather than the restrictive 'idealist's view.[37] The Quintessence of

Ibsenism was a socialist document, aimed at Fabians and, as Michael Holroyd declares 'designed to purge socialism of flattering sentimentalities.' Shaw attributed his own socialist beliefs and aspirations to Ibsen and it is this 'conversion of Ibsen [that introduces] distortions to some of the plays, though these are partly explained by his not having been able to see all of them performed, and only having heard them in Archer's spontaneous translations.' Holroyd also believes that 'Ibsen's plays had more power to move Shaw than the work of any other living dramatist.'[38] There is considerable proof of this throughout Shaw's correspondence and in his critical writing. In a review of the Independent Theatre Society's 1897 production of Ghosts he wrote:

> ...As in the case of The Wild Duck, all obscurity vanished; and Ibsen's clearness, his grip of his theme, and the rapidity, directness, and intensity of the action of the piece produced the effect they can always be depended to produce in capable hands, such as Mr Charrington's...(25.OTNiii.188)

But Shaw did not indiscriminately agree with everything that Ibsen published and he could write in his review of Archer's translation of John Gabriel Borkman. 'I do not endorse all Ibsen's view: I even prefer my own plays to his in some respects.' (25.OTNiii.31)

Although Shaw was inspired to write plays by his misconception of Ibsenism, as Margery M Morgan remarks, 'As an imitator of Ibsen...Shaw produced work that impresses us much more by his differences from his models, radical differences of tone and quality, than by the detectable similarities.'[39]

Ibsen exploded the myth of the sanctity of the family and it was this in particular that Shaw was to take from him, but only to deal with in his own way. In a great many of Ibsen's plays children die as a result of some attitude

or action of their parents as in Brand, The Wild Duck, Hedda Gabler,The Master Builder, Little Eyolf, When We Dead Awaken, and in The Pillars of Society Bernick's son is spared only at the last minute.

> Blood of children must be spilt
> To atone for parents' guilt

The theme of heredity is most forcibly developed through Dr Rank in A Doll's House, and Oswald in Ghosts. In these scenes both men are the victims of the 'sins of the fathers,' venereal disease, but Hedwig dies to appease her father's (or her surrogate father's) vanity, and Hedda kills herself and her unborn child because her father had disturbed her ability to accept unchallenged the social assumptions about her own gender. The Solness children in The Master Builder perish because their mother's sense of duty exceeds her love for them, for which her reward is an empty nursery, while in When We Dead Awaken, Irene aborts her unborn children to revenge herself on her creator/lover/husband, Rubek. Little Eyolf is a 'torment', 'something gnawing at his parents,' and he is removed by the Ratwife.

Ibsen spills his children's blood while Shaw does not because Shaw is writing comedy where, theoretically at least, the ills, the chaos, and the disorder that affect the lives of his creations, are social - they have been caused by man - and are therefore redeemable. Not for him the nihilism that is a corollary of an adherence to the determinism of heredity. The outcome of comedy is social reconciliation with the 'happy ending' of marriage presenting an image of restored order and a promise of a new beginning. A hundred years on it may seem facile to believe that an improvement in living conditions will bring with it a corresponding improvement of man's moral and social responsibility, but it was a view strongly upheld by the avant-garde writers and audiences of the time. After all,

the 'early productions of Ibsen, [were] mistakenly seen as a propagandist for unconventional but enlightened views about women, marriage and society.' [40] One of the essential differences between the two dramatists is, as Keith M May remarks: 'Everything depends on whether one believes human nature to be the cause or the product of cultural conditions. Ibsen was rather of the first persuasion, Shaw emphatically of the second.'[41] Where Ibsen created tragedy, Shaw created comedy, and in his English domestic plays he did not present pathetic children like Hedwig and Eyolf, or fatally ill ones like Oswald (while his only 'unborn child' is Violet Robinson's - a plot contrivance rather than cause for guilt.) Shaw's children are resilient, prepared to fight back: they do not have to die to expiate either the sins or the inadequacies of their father or mother. They go their own way like Vivie Warren or make their own rules like the Clandon children, but they are never the occasions for parental guilt.

May traces the opposed attitudes of Ibsen and Shaw to their respective childhoods: '[They] were both deeply humiliated as children and of course the quality of each series of hurts was at once unique and representative. Then, the responses made by these children were opposed, since Ibsen chose to endure reality while Shaw decided to alter it...the capacity of each man lay in the peculiar complex of his childhood experiences, a complex that included both his sense of a larger historical framework and his own reactions to specific blows.'[42] This would certainly provide an explanation for the divergence of their views in the subject of the relationship of parents and children in their plays.

The blending of Ibsen's domestic tragedies with the social response, the social comment, and the potential for social protest of melodrama which leads to a happy resolution, acting upon his personal, familial background is what we consider to be the Shavian approach to drama. The common factor shared by the Ibsen platform, the dramaturgical techniques of melodrama with their 'Happy

Endings,' and Shaw's personal experience, is the parent child relationships with which they are all involved. In discussing popular entertainment, Bernard Sharratt comments that much of it provides ' a way of coming to terms with actual fear by deliberately experiencing the emotions appropriate to vulnerability but in a controlled situation where a reassuring outcome is guaranteed.[43] I believe that in the English domestic plays, with the parent/child relationships, Shaw created the 'controlled situations' with a 'reassuring outcome' in order to come to terms with his own unresolved childhood fears.

## NOTES

1 The Marrying of Ann Leete 1902, The Voysey Inheritance 1905, The Madras House 1909. These plays could be considered as Barker's equivalent to Shaw's English domestic plays.

2 Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, Edit.Christopher St John, London: Constable and Co Ltd. 1931, p25

3 A Correspondence p xxv

4 Michael Holroyd, 'The Search for Love', pp56-7

5 Lillah McCarthy, Myself and My Friends, London: Thomas Butterworth Ltd, 1934, p4-5

6 John McGrath, A Good Night Out, London: Eyre Methuen, 1981, pp54-59
In the chapter dealing with 'Contemporary Reality', McGrath lists those qualities in performance that will appeal to a popular audience: directness, comedy, music, emotion, variety, effect, immediacy, localism, and a sense of identity. These may be compared with the ingredients of melodrama.

7 Martin Meisel, Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theater, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1963. p186

8 Michael Booth, English Melodrama, London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965, p30

9 Between 1854 and 1856 Coventry Patmore wrote the poem, 'The Angel in the House,' a description of the perfect wife and mother.

10 'The reproduction of the human race is chiefly fatal to women, of whom 1113 died of metria (a zymotic fever incidental to childbirth) and 2139 of the other puerperal affections. Thus in the births of 593,422 living children 3252 of the mothers died; or one mother died to every 182 children born alive. This great loss of women in the prime of life is the result of negligence and ignorance, in many cases, and would be diminished by the education of the

nurses and midwives who attend the poor. 219 deaths arose from ovarian dropsy; 701 from diseases of the uterus and of other organs of reproduction.'
13th Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England, London, 1854.

11 Martin Meisel, Realizations: Narrative, Practical and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp121-2

12 Jerome K Jerome, Stageland, London: Chatto and Windus, 1889, pp65-6

13 The Oxford Companion to the Theatre, Phyllis Hartnoll, London: Oxford University Press, 1983, p395

14 Unpublished typescript, J Ellen Gainer, 'Shaw's Daughters: Discourses of Gender and Female Identity in the work of George Bernard Shaw.' Cornell University, 1989, p256

15 Michael Holroyd, Bernard Shaw Volume 2 'The Pursuit of Power' 1898-1918, p101

16 Meisel, Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theatre, p223

17 'Passion Play' was first published in a limited edition by the Windhover Press, University of Iowa, 1971

18 Holroyd, 'The Search for Love,' p279

19 Dan H Laurence, Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters 1874-97, London: Max Reinhardt Ltd, 1965, p289

20 Collected Letters, p292

21 Collected Letters, p214

22 Collected Letters, pp291-2

23 Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw, W B Yeats: Letters, Edit. Clifford Bax, London: Home and Van Thal Ltd, 1946, p5

24 Collected Letters, p287

25 Collected Letters, p338

26 Irving Wardle, 'The Plays' The Genius of Shaw, Edit. Michael Holroyd, p156

27 Margot Peters, Bernard Shaw and the Actresses, New York: Doubleday and Co, 1980, p69

28 Collected Letters, p828

29 Collected Letters, p338

30 Florence Farr Letters, p ix

31 Holroyd, 'The Search for Love', p313

32 Collected Letters, p292

33 Collected Letters, p397

34 Holroyd, 'The Search for Love', p374

35 'The Search for Love', p200

36 Jan McDonald, 'The Actors' Contribution to Early Ibsen Performances in London, 1889-1897', Scandinavica, Vol 15, No 1, 1976, p16, note 3

37 Jan McDonald, Scandinavica, p1

38 'The Search for Love', pp198-9

39 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1972, p3

40 Jan McDonald, 'Productions of Chekhov's Plays in Britain Before 1914', Theatre Notebook, Vol xxxiv No 1. 1980, p26

41 Keith M May, Ibsen and Shaw, London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1985, p123

42 Keith M May, Ibsen and Shaw, p10

43 Performance and Politics in Popular Drama, Eds. David Bradby, Louis James, Bernard Sharratt, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, p293

PART TWO

# 4

# THE NOVELS*

In writing his plays Shaw owed much to the established theatrical traditions of his day, calling his stories 'the old stories' and his characters 'the familiar harlequin and columbine, clown and pantaloon.'[1] He also developed and expanded in his plays relationships between parents and children that had first appeared in his five novels.

Barbara Bellow Watson believes that it is not only characters that re-appear in the later plays:

> In his novels, written between 1879 and 1884, there is a mine from which the fertile but thrifty professional took characters, situations and whole scenes for later and usually greater treatment in the plays. As to his theories, these were so well formed during the period of his novel- writing and his early essays of the 1890's that they remained substantially unchanged and... quite serviceable during the sixty or seventy years that followed. New phenomena for which the existing scheme would not work were late and few...[2]

Certainly, relationships crop up in the plays that bear strong and surely more than coincidentally close resemblance to relationships already worked through in the novels. In both novels and plays it is possible to recognize Shaw's unconscious need to present relationships between children and their parents, especially, perhaps, in the novels, of sons with their mothers.

* Notes page 75

As in the popular theatre of the nineteenth century, popular literature was full of stories of orphans and children of single parents. In Shaw's first novel, Immaturity[3] (1879), both Robert Smith and Harriet Russell are orphaned; Lydia Carew, the heroine of Cashel Byron's Profession (1882), is an orphan while Cashel is fatherless; and in The Irrational Knot (1880), Edward Conolly and his sister, Susanna, are also parentless. In all the novels the remaining principal characters possess one parent, rarely if ever, both. Exceptions are Elinor McQuinch, Fanny Watkins and Henrietta Jansenius - the first and second of these young women play supporting roles and the third dies early in the action. Indeed, in Shaw's original plan what was later presented as the complete An Unsocial Socialist (1884) was intended to be merely the first two sections of an extremely long novel; had he gone through with his intentions Henrietta would have been eliminated at a very early stage.

With the exception of Elinor McQuinch who was determined to pursue her own way of life, against any opposition and is, perhaps, the first of Shaw's New Women, this lack of parental control could give a degree of greater social freedom. In an age when women of good family were chaperoned on all occasions, parents' absence had to be compensated for by guardians, servants or friends if the young women were ever to leave the house. Propriety was all. The effect of this was complete control over the life of the daughter, and in consequence determined young women were led into deceit and intrigue in order to break through the stultifying convention under which they lived. Blanche Sartorius in Widowers' Houses is an example of the over-protected only child who is determined to have her own way even if it means deceiving her father. In The Irrational Knot, Susanna Conolly, unchaperoned entirely in her not quite respectable profession as Lalage Virtue, a burlesque actress, was allowed a licence which would have been unthinkable for any well-bred young lady. This same

licence, as well as her natural independent outlook, makes it possible for her to give up her baby with a detachment that is unusual in any fiction of the time; in addition, society does not over-burden her with pressure to keep the child. In spite of the difference in age between them, her attitude is not unlike the attitude of Mrs Byron, Cashel's mother, who is not particularly interested in her son when he is growing up and who can meet him after their years apart with a welcoming display of sentimentality that is only convincing on the most superficial level.

Love Among the Artists (1881) contains 'scenes' obviously from the pen of a dramatist manqué: Susanna Conolly in all her sham Persian finery, flirting with the Rev George; Owen Jack and the Brailsfords in the railway carriage between Slough and Paddington, the intrusion of the guard and his exit in confusion; Harriet Russell's first encounter with Scott when she criticises his painting, ignorant of the artist's identity.

Of the many 'scenes' that can be instanced, the following from Cashel Byron's Profession is quoted at length and it is set out exactly as Shaw wrote it, only prefixing each speech with the name of the speaker in the manner of a play script.Where words occur that are not direct speech they are put in brackets as if they had been written as stage directions: the only words omitted are the occasional 'she said,' 'said Mrs Byron,' or 'said Lydia.' Where those words, normally used in the dialogue of a novel are present with other words of explanation - e.g. 'said Lydia, watching her face,' the description of behaviour or thought is included and the name of the person speaking is deleted.

To set out certain encounters as 'scenes' is to demonstrate the dramatist at work in the novels, and by relating the novels more directly to the plays, to show a more consistent analysis of Shaw's treatment of parent-child relationships. In the following first meeting between Cashel Byron's mother and the woman who will become her daughter-in-law the conversation concerns mothers and sons.

Nine separate times the words 'mother', 'maternal', or 'maternity' are used, and on eight occasions 'son', 'child', 'baby', and 'boy'.

The scene is Lydia Carew's library where she and Adelaide Gisbourne, distinguished actress and mother of Cashel Byron, are engaged in conversation.

LYDIA: Is this part of Lady Constance a favorite one of yours?

ADELAIDE: Troublesome, my dear. (Absently) The men look ridiculous in it and it does not draw.

LYDIA: No doubt. (Watching her face.) But I spoke rather of your personal feeling towards the character. Do you, for instance, like portraying maternal tenderness on the stage?

ADELAIDE: Maternal tenderness, (With sudden nobleness) is far too sacred a thing to be mimicked. Have you any children?

LYDIA: No, (demurely.) I am not married.

ADELAIDE: You should get a baby: it will do you good, physically and morally. Maternity is an education in itself.

LYDIA: Do you think it suits every woman?

ADELAIDE: Undoubtedly. Without exception. Only think, dear Miss Carew, of the infinite patience with which you must tend a child - of the necessity of seeing with its little eyes and with your own wise ones at the same time - of bearing without a reproach the stabs it innocently inflicts - of forgiving its hundred little selfishnesses - of

living in continual fear of wounding its exquisite sensitiveness, or rousing its bitter resentment of injustice and caprice. Think of how you must watch yourself; check yourself; exercise and develop everything in you that can help to attract and retain the most jealous love in the world! Believe me, it is a priceless trial to be a mother. It is a royal compensation for having been born a woman.

LYDIA: Nevertheless, I wish I had been born a man. Since you seem to have thought deeply on these matters, I should like to ask you a question. Do you not think that the acquirement of an art demanding years of careful self-study and training - such as yours, for example - is also of great educational value? Almost as good a discipline as motherhood, is it not?

ADELAIDE: Nonsense! (Decidedly) People come into the world ready-made.[4]

. . . . .

ADELAIDE: I might be your mother, my dear. I might be a grandmother. Perhaps I am.

(There was a plaintive note in the last sentence; and Lydia seized the opportunity.)

LYDIA: You spoke of maternity then from experience, Miss Gisborne?

ADELAIDE: I have one son - a son who was sent to me in my eighteenth year.

LYDIA: I hope he inherits his mother's genius and personal grace.

ADELAIDE: I am sure I don't know, (pensively). He was a perfect devil. I fear I shock you, Miss Carew; but really I did everything for him that the most devoted mother could; and yet he ran away from me without making a sign of farewell. Little wretch!

LYDIA: Boys do cruel things sometimes in a spirit of adventure. (Watching her visitor's face narrowly.)

ADELAIDE: It was not that. It was his temper, which was ungovernable. He was sulky and vindictive. It is quite impossible to love a sulky child. I kept him constantly near me when he was a tiny creature; and when he grew too big for that I spent oceans of money on his education. All in vain! He never shewed any feeling towards me except a sense of injury that no kindness could remove. And he had nothing to complain of. Never was there a worse son.

(Lydia remained silent and grave. Mrs Byron looked beside rather than at her. Suddenly she added,)

My poor darling Cashel

(Lydia repressed a start,)

What a shame to talk of you so! You see I love him in spite of his wickedness.

(Mrs Byron took out her pocket handkerchief; and Lydia was for a moment alarmed by the prospect of tears. But Miss Gisborne only blew her nose with perfect composure, and rose to take her leave.) (4.CBP.157/161)

This episode demonstrates that Shaw was not just writing two or three consecutive speeches for his characters, a device used in the majority of novels, but that he expressed himself naturally in terms of dialogue.

For the most part he indicates what people are thinking by the way in which they speak to each other, and to ensure that this is absolutely clear, he also indicates what they are feeling by the use, in the novels, of authorial comment, and in the plays, of stage directions. In following these directions the actress may obtain explicit and entirely valuable information as to Shaw's attitude to the character that she is playing: if these pointers are ignored, or discarded as being of little account, it is at peril of the interpretation that he intended. They are the bridges between Shaw the novelist and Shaw the playwright and are among the more copiously practical of those written by almost any other playwright either before or since. In spite of their lengthiness there is not a superfluous or 'unworkable' suggestion: not for him the 'Two hundred women finish coming in...' kind of stage direction.[5] As the plays developed out of his gift for dramatic dialogue contained in the five novels it is obvious that he took with him into the theatre a need to explain and describe that which could only be expressed in stage direction. In his brief appraisal of The Philanderer Raymond Williams writes: 'One begins to see the point of the stage directions, of the 'literary treatment:' they indicate whether what is being said is burlesque or high passion. Without them, we would be hard put to know.' In this essay Williams debunks the 'literary treatment' and Shaw's stage directions: 'In practice this means reforming the drama by making it something else. The 'mere dialogue' will stay as it is, but because it is inadequate, the dramatist will turn his text into a pseudo-novel by supplying descriptions of scenery and characters, and prefaces on the subject of the drama as a whole, within which the 'lines' will be interspersed. The issue, of course, is neither a novel nor play, but a thing inferior to

both.'[6] That Raymond Williams disliked the works and ideas of Shaw is evident. This writer disagrees with him and points out that Shaw was writing textural background for the benefit of his actors, and initially, for his first readers who had little opportunity to see the plays. In her dissertation on The Function of the Stage Directions in the New Drama from Thomas William Robertson to George Bernard Shaw Erika Meier says:

> In discussing Shaw, I have been confronted by the old problem as to whether his lengthy stage directions result in a dialogue devoid of theatrical impetus. I have argued that this in not the case, and that in his plays stage directions and dialogue form a perfectly balanced whole...the apparatus is a legitimate duplication of the impulses found in the dialogue; the stage directions are but a means of clarification and cannot be said to absorb the dramatic essence of the play. [7]

Not only do Shaw's stage directions 'clarify' but they encourage the actresses themselves to comment upon the characters they are playing. The excerpt from Cashel Byron's Profession makes splendid use of dramatic irony: Mrs Byron, known to the world and Lydia Carew by her 'stage' name - Adelaide Gisborne - talks about the sorrows and joys of motherhood, her feelings for her own ungrateful son, and only confesses to Lydia at the end of the 'scene', immediately before her exit in the best theatrical fashion, what the reader/audience already know, that she is the mother of Cashel. The reader/audience is able to recall that whatever heart-felt phrase she may now employ concerning the duties of maternity, her actual behaviour to her young son was quite different at the beginning of the story.

Here is a mother with as false an idea of motherhood as Kitty Warren, one who resembles Jo Cuthbertson when he talks about noble suffering and sacrifice, having confused

such qualities with the romantic comedy and tragedy of the theatre upon which, like Miss Gisborne, he depends for his living. The excerpt which occupies four pages in the novel, as a short 'duologue' - it could be performed in about six minutes - tells or reminds the reader/audience of important, interesting, or amusing things in a more economic fashion than could be obtained by the use of non-dialogue, and reported speech.

From this and from analysis of other 'scenes' in the first four novels it seems reasonable to conclude that Shaw was already conceiving them in theatrical terms and that he was already, perhaps obsessively, concerned with examining and commenting upon parent-child relationships.

Indifference is the key to Mrs Byron as well as to Susanna in their roles as mothers, and for neither of them can motherhood begin to compete with their absorption in themselves as actresses. In Love Among the Artists what Mrs Herbert feels for her son Adrian is indifference, chilled by complete disapproval of his chosen career as a painter; that and a genuine dislike of his resemblance to his father, a fact of which they are both aware. The following speech occurs early in the novel when Mrs Herbert and Mary Sutherland are discussing Adrian's artistic ability:

> ... you did not know Adrian's father... He will never add a penny to his income by painting: of that I am certain; and he has not enterprise enough to marry a woman with money. If he persists in his infatuation, you will find that he will drag out his life waiting for a success that will never come. And he has no social talents. If he were a genius, like Raphael, his crotchets would not matter. If he were a humbug, like his Uncle John, he would flourish as all humbugs do in this wicked world. but Adrian is neither: he is only a duffer, poor fellow. (3.LAA.25/6)

This relationship of mother and son is the most

interesting of the parent/child relationships in the novels, not least because of the suspicion that it is a likeness or supposed likeness on Shaw's part to that existing at that time between him and his own mother.[8] Bernard Shaw was twenty-five when he wrote Love Among the Artists, it was his third novel, rejected by every publisher that he approached, and he had been living with his mother for five years.

It is not only the parent who complains: in the following extract Mary Sutherland is again the confidante, this time of Adrian's outburst against his mother.

> 'I do not believe I could make a movement,' he replied indignantly, 'for which my mother would not find some unworthy motive. She never loses an opportunity to disparage me and to make mischief.'
> 'She does not mean it Adrian. It is only that she does not quite understand you. You sometimes say hard things of her, although I know you do not mean to speak unkindly.'
> 'Pardon me, Mary, I do. I hate hypocrisy of all kinds; and you annoy me when you assume tenderness on my part towards my mother. I dislike her. I believe I should do so even if she had treated me well, and showed me the ordinary respect that I have as much right to from a parent as from any other person. Our natures are antagonistic, our views of life and duty incompatible: we have nothing in common. That is the plain truth; and however much it may shock you, unless you are willing to accept it as unalterable, I had rather you would drop the subject.'
> 'Oh, Adrian, I do not think it is right to -'
> 'I do not think, Mary, that you can tell me anything concerning what is called filial duty that I am not already familiar with. I cannot help my likes and dislikes: I have to entertain them when they come to me, without regard to their propriety. You may be quite tranquil as far as my mother's feelings are

concerned. My undutiful sentiments afford her her chief delight - a pretext for complaining of me... 'Mary: I suspect from one or two things you have said, that you cherish a project for reconciling me to my mother. You must relinquish that idea. I myself exhausted every effort to that end long ago. I disguised the real nature of my feelings towards her until even self-deception, the most persistent of all forms of illusion, was no longer possible. In those days I should have hailed your good offices with pleasure. Now I have not the least desire to be reconciled to her. As I have said, we have nothing in common: her affection would be a burden to me. Therefore think no more of it. Whenever you wish to see me in my least amiable mood, re-open the subject, and you will be gratified'. (3.LAA.35/6)

There is something chilling in the simple directness of, 'I dislike her.' The shortness of the sentence emphasises the completeness of the sentiment. In comparison, the youthful Cashel Byron's, 'I tell you, Gully, I hate my mother,' is almost frivolous. (4.CBP.8)

Adrian's acknowledgement of the right of the child to be treated with respect by the parent is a belief expounded by Shaw and repeated by him throughout his lifetime.

The mutual dislike of the Herberts, mother and son, is constantly demonstrated and could be described as obsessive in a novel of 352 pages wherein the first reference appears on page 25 and the last on page 345.

This is Adrian's reply to Mrs Herbert after she has opposed his idea of marrying the concert pianiste, Aurélie Szczymplica:

> '... Mother, I never had a cherished project yet that you did not seek to defeat by sarcasms, by threats, and failing those, by cajolery... And it has always turned out that I was right and that you were wrong...

I am sorry to have to tell you plainly that I have come to look upon your influence as opposed to my happiness. It had been at the end of my tongue often; and you have forced me to let it slip at last.' (3.LAA.175/6)

But it is in the scene that follows, again set out as a playscript when he proposes to Aurélie that he expresses the deep emotional estrangement from his mother that he has long felt. He begins with a provocative and quite unambiguous statement - '... I have no father. I wish to Heaven I had no mother either.' It is a statement to be echoed as a cry from Blanche in Shaw's first published play.

> Can you understand that a mother and son may be so different in their dispositions that neither can sympathize with each other? It is my great misfortune to be such a son. I have found sympathetic friendship, encouragement, respect, faith in my abilities and love... from strangers upon whom I had no claim. In my mother I found none of them: she felt nothing for me but a contemptuous fondness which I did not care to accept. She is a clever woman, impatient of sentiment, and fond of her own way. My father, like myself, was too diffident to push himself arrogantly through the world; and she despised him for it, thinking him a fool. When she saw that I was like him, she concluded that I, too, was a fool, and that she must arrange my life for me in some easy, lucrative, genteel, brainless, conventional way. I hardly ever dared to express the most modest aspiration, or assert the most ordinary claims to respect, for fear of exciting her quiet ridicule. She did not know how much her indifference tortured me, because she had no idea of any keener sensitivity than her own. Everybody commits follies from youth and want of experience; and I hope most people humour and

spare such follies as tenderly as they can. My mother did not even laugh at them. She saw through them and stamped them out with open contempt. She taught me to do without her consideration; and I learned the lesson. My friends will tell you that I am a bad son - never that she is a bad mother. She has the power of bringing out all that is hasty and disagreeable in my nature by her presence alone. This is why I wish I were wholly an orphan, and why I ask you, who are more to me than all the world besides, to judge me by what you see of me, and not by the reports you may hear of my behaviour towards my own people.

These speeches by Adrian could be understood as revealing Shaw's own interpretation of his mother's attitude towards him and his response to that attitude at the time of writing.

AURELIE: ...To hate your mother! If you do not love her, how will you love your wife?

ADRIAN: With all the love my mother rejected... You must be very fond of your own mother.

AURELIE: That is such different... mother and son is a sacred relation. Mothers and daughters are fond of one another in an ordinary way as a matter of course...(3.LAA.177.8)

It is interesting to compare Aurélie's reactions to Adrian's sentiments with Mary Sutherland's. Aurélie and her mother have a reasonable, eminently practical relationship whereas 'Mary, who had lost her own mother when an infant, had ideas of maternal affection which made Adrian's unfilial feeling shocking to her.'(3.LAA.57)

Compared with the highly theatrical relationship between Cashel Byron and his mother, the speeches of Mrs

Herbert and her son could be direct transcripts from the casebook of a psychiatrist.[9]
At the very end of the book, in almost the final scene, once again Mrs Herbert is explaining her feelings for her son to Mary Sutherland:

> '... Geraldine tells me that I have no maternal instinct; but then Geraldine has no sons, and does not quite know what she is talking about. I look on Adrian as a failure, and I really cannot take an interest in a man who is a failure. His being my son only makes the fact disappointing to me personally. I return a kind of nursery affection for my boy; but of what use is that to him, since he has given up his practice of stabbing me through it. I would go to him if he were ill, and help him if he were in trouble; but as to maintaining a constant concern on his account, really I do not see why I should. You... doubtless think me very heartless; but you will learn that children have their separate lives and interests as completely independent of their parents as the remotest strangers. I do not think that Adrian would even like me, were it not for his sense of duty. You will understand some day that the common notions of parental and filial relations are more unpractical than even those of love and marriage'.(3.LAA.345)

And could the twenty five year old Shaw have imagined his own mother would speak of him in that fashion! This detachment of cold reason in the mother and the hurt of the son still speaks in a language that is understood today. In comparison Cashel's 'I hate my mother!' may have been shocking in its time, but it smacks of the author's deliberate intention of shocking his readers and a relationship that has all the trappings of contrivance.
When later Shaw wrote Major Barbara, in the relationship of Lady Britomart and Stephen Undershaft, it can be seen how

the resentment of the son in Love Among the Artists has now become a comedic contrivance. (11.MB.249/259) In Pygmalion Mrs Higgins has developed from the bitter and censorious Mrs Herbert to the calmly elegant mother with the brilliant, if eccentric son, to whom she has become an ideal. (14.PYG.245/6) It is surely more than coincidence that by the time he wrote these plays Shaw had married a woman who bore a physical resemblance to his mother but to whom he was a great success.

After the Herberts perhaps the best drawn of the family portraits is that of Madge Brailsford and her father. From their first appearance in a railway-carriage between Slough and Paddington with the eccentric Owen Jack grinding his teeth opposite there is the sense of action and reaction between them: they *do* things as a result of the relationship between them.

The composer remonstrates with 'the old gentleman' against his insolence to his daughter, but father and daughter tell him to mind his own business. Jack replies, 'Aye.. you are like other children. I was not such a fool as to expect gratitude from you.'(3.LAA.48)

There is a hint in this scene of another to be played, years later, by Praed and Kitty Warren when he tells her that '...Vivie is a grown woman, Pray... treat her with every respect.' (7.MWP.190) Shaw never stopped maintaining that respect is essential to all relationships. The idea of parents respecting their grown-up children was not typical of Victorian attitudes and he was well before his time in advocating it.

Although Madge Brailsford possesses both parents, it is only with her father that the reader is concerned: Mrs Brailsford is an example of Shaw's 'Absent Parent' which is discussed below. There is an occasional passing reference to her, as in the reconciliation scene at the theatre when, in a long speech, Brailsford refers to Madge's sisters as '... all born fools - like their mother. *She* is like me, the only one that is like me!' A moment afterwards he says

how he had set face against Madge going on the stage and '... so did her mother - who could no more appreciate her than a turnip could.'

The reconciliation between father and daughter takes place in a box at the theatre where Madge is currently appearing, and it is made more pertinent and interesting because of the inclusion in the theatre party of Mrs Herbert. Brailsford remarks on the accomplishments of her son and she replies:

> Whatever his career may be, I shall have little part in it. I did not encourage him to be an artist. I opposed his doing so as well as I could. I was mistaken, I suppose: it is easier than I thought to become a popular painter. But children never forgive such mistakes.

BRAILSFORD: Forgive! If *you* have forgiven *him* for disregarding your wishes you can hardly believe that he will be so unnatural as to cherish any bad feeling towards you...

MRS HERBERT: ... If I could honestly admire Adrian's work even now, I have no doubt he would consent to be reconciled to me in time. But I cannot. His pictures seem weak and sentimental to me. I can see the deficiencies of his character in every line of them.

BRAILSFORD: But surely... you do not find that he persists in any little feeling of disappointment that you may have caused him formerly. No, no; he cant do that. He must see that you were actuated by the truest regard for his welfare...

LADY GERALDINE: There is a difference between your case and Mrs Herbert's... And yet... there is some likeness too. You both opposed your children's tastes. But Mrs Herbert does not believe in Adrian's talent, although she is glad he has made a name for himself. You, on the contrary, are carried away by Magdalen's talent; but you are indignant at the position it has made for her. (3.LAA.197/8)

The difference between the parents is emphasised, not only by Lady Geraldine but by what follows their conversation when Owen Jack brings Madge to the box during the next interval.
The actress throws off her cloak 'and then seized her father and kissed him. He said with difficulty, 'My dear child,' sat down, and bent his head, over-powered by emotion for the moment.' After some politeness to the others there present she promises - 'I shall come and see you all tomorrow... Be sure to stay at home for me, won't you?' And her father replies, 'Certainly. Certainly. We shall be very glad to see you.' Again they embrace and Madge goes, leaving her father much moved by the whole encounter. (3.LAA.199/200) When he, too, has left there is an exchange of significance between Jack and Lady Geraldine:

JACK: He finds his pet baby changed into a woman, and he doesnt like it.

GERALDINE: Perhaps so... But there is such a thing as parental feeling; and it is possible that Mr Brailsford may not be philosopher enough to rejoice at a change which had widened the distance between her youth and his age.

The chapter ends, nevertheless, with Mrs Herbert as emotionally detached from her son as she had been before she had witnessed the reunion of the Brailsfords.

MRS HERBERT: I am just thinking, Geraldine... of the difference between Adrian and that girl - Madge Brailsford. She, capable, sensible, able to hold her own against the world. She is everything, in short, that Adrian is not, and that I have often wished him to be. Yet her father seems as far from being united to her as Adrian is from me. Query, then: is there any use in caring for one's children? I really dont believe there is.

GERALDINE: Not the least, after they have become independent of you... (3.LAA.202/4)

What exactly Shaw intended the reader to understand by 'caring for' one's children is debatable: but if 'caring' stands for Mrs Collins' suffocation-with-love of her children, and the interference with independent emotions and intellectual growth, then he was speaking through Lady Geraldine.[10] The point at which it can it be recognized that the children have become independent of their parents, and the way in which both children and parents deal with that recognition will, of course, vary.

As they are leaving the theatre, Adrian, who was also present at the performance, catching sight of his mother pretends not to have seen her and hurries away with Aurélie. He is about to exchange 'the burden of disliking [his] mother for the heavier one of loving [his] wife.' (3.LAA.273)

Writing thirty years later in a preface to the plays of Brieux, Shaw was still concerned with the problem of filial love:

> I lately heard an English gentleman state a very simple fact in these terms: 'I never could get on with my mother: she did not like me; and I did not like her: my brother was her pet.' To an immense number of living English and French people this speech would suggest that its utterer ought to be burned alive, though the substitution of stepmother for mother and of half-brother for brother would suffice to make it seem quite probable and natural. And this, observe, not in the least because all these horrified people adore and are adored by their mothers, but simply because they have a fixed convention that the proper name of the relation between mother and son is love. However bitter and hostile it may in fact be in some cases, to call it by any other name is a breach of convention; and by the instinctive logic of timidity they infer that a man to whom convention is not sacred is a dangerous man... the man who says today that he does not love his mother may... tomorrow steal, rob murder, commit adultery and bear false witness against his neighbour.[11]

Yet Shaw creates women who, in spite of being daughters, manage to pursue their chosen vocation while still remaining warmly affectionate toward their families. As Barbara Bellow Watson says:

> Madge Brailsford is an affectionate daughter, but she is also a new woman, obeying like a man the law of her own nature, instead of obeying like a dutiful daughter the law of her father's nature.[12]

Her last appearance in Love Among the Artists is at her own

At Home where Shaw describes her greeting her father:

> Magdalen kissed him with graceful respect as she would have kissed an actor engaged to impersonate her father for so many pounds a week. (3.LAA.235)

Later, the care with which she makes sure that he leaves early without either offending him or hurting his feelings shows the value she sets on preserving their new good relationship. Shaw could have had Madge in mind when he wrote:

> In the middle classes themselves the revolt of a single clever daughter... and her insistence on qualifying herself for an independent working life, humanize her whole family in an astonishingly short time...[13]

Not all the parent/child relationships are as well 'documented' as the Herberts, the Brailsfords and the Byrons: for the most part they are not strongly developed, rather they are implied and it is by implication that they impress. Isabella Woodward and her aristocratic, member of Parliament father are affectionate and easy-going together; the father of Mary and Charlie Sutherland is a shadowy, 'underwritten' figure, so little does he influence them or the action of the novel; Marion Lind's father is a money-loving social climber whose attitude to her is governed by his attitude to her dead mother who, having eloped with a professor of spiritualism, gave him a reason for his poor opinions of women. The only reason for Marion to consider his feelings would be an adherence to the conventions of the day, and, without the fearless Miss McQuinch she might have been hopelessly dominated by him. Elinor McQuinch, with her determination to be her own mistress, leaves the parental home as soon as she can, unable to bear the suppression of her tentative efforts as a writer.

It never occurred to Mrs McQuinch that she was no more fit to have charge of the youngest than a turtle is to rear a young eagle. The discomfort of their relations never shook her faith in their 'naturalness.' Like her husband and the vicar, she believed that when God sent children he made their parents fit to rule them. And Elinor resented her parents' tyranny, as she felt it to be, without dreaming of making any allowances... (2.IK.34)

Some of the most astringent 'lines' in The Irrational Knot are given to Miss McQuinch, most of them delivered out of a fierce and possessive loyalty to Marion. When Mr Lind is trying to insist upon his daughter marrying Sholto Douglas it is Elinor who says bitterly: 'What can you expect from a father but hostility?' And when Marion reminds her, 'Even so, Nelly, I must not forget all his past care of me,' her reply is:

> What care has he ever taken of you? He was very little better acquainted with you than he was with me, when you came to keep house for him and make yourself useful. Of course, he had to pay for your board and lodging and education. The police would not have allowed him to leave you to the parish. Besides, he was proud of having a nice, pretty daughter to dispose of. You were quite welcome to be happy so long as you did not do anything except what he approved of. But the moment you claim your independence as a grown woman! the moment you attempt to dispose of yourself instead of letting him dispose of you! Bah! I might have been *my* father's pet, if I had been a nonentity. As it was he spared no pains to make me miserable; and as I was only a helpless little devil of a girl, he succeeded to his heart's content...

Ever practical, she then asks Marion: 'But what do you mean

to do? for, after all, though parental love is an imposition, parental authority is a fact.' (2.IK.149/50) The following day, in steeling her friend for a last interview with Mr Lind, she charges her in what may be recognized as Shavian tones:

> Remember that you have to meet the most unreasonable of adversaries, a parent asserting his proprietary rights in his child. Dont be sentimental. Leave that to him: he will be full of a father's anguish on discovering that his cherished daughter has feelings and interests of her own... (2.IK.158)

Of the principal men in the novels they are, for the most part, unattached to either parents or children. Apart from Adrian Herbert and Cashel Byron, only Trefusis, the unsocial socialist, gives any account of this aspect of himself and, in a long dialogue with Henrietta in Chapter 5, he identifies himself as a son and a grandson only to make political capital.[14] It is in his enormous flair for creating women, whether as mothers or daughters, that Shaw excels: especially clever women, career women, women as pursuers and women of the theatre. Before he had formed the first of the great friendships with actresses that were to be so important in his life, those coming events cast their shadows in the form of Lalage Virtue and the Bijou Theatre, Madge Lancaster, neé Brailsford, and Adelaide Gisborne, mother of Cashel Byron, who can say to the unmarried Lydia: 'You should get a baby: it will do you good, physically and morally. Maternity is an education in itself.' (4.CBP.158) Mrs Byron's relations with Cashel are so overlaid with her particular kind of 'star' theatricality that it is difficult to take them seriously. As Constance in King John it is possible that she will be more 'real' as a stage mother than she ever is in dealing with the reality of her own son: but this might be true to the nature of many actresses and was recognized by Shaw very early in his life.

As for those novelists to whom Shaw owes a particular debt, notably Scott and Dickens, of the latter Edgar Johnson has this to say:

> Shaw was steeped in Dickens, and the two men have a great deal in common both in their literary qualifications and in their fundamental viewpoints. Both are great comic writers...[15]

But it is through Jane Austen and Thackeray, those great ironists, that Margery Morgan traces his lineal descent, and she asserts that:

> ... insistence on his technique of borrowing the conventions of his day, and proceeding to invert or distort them, has involved a neglect of the compulsive quality in Shaw's procedure. A happy inability to treat either his material or his medium with consistent seriousness made him one of the most idiosyncratic of Victorian novelists before ever he wrote for the theatre...[16]

The lack of sucess of the five novels may be considered to be the result of the Life Force nudging him into his proper place as a dramatist. It may be said that writing them constituted an essential part of Shaw's apprenticeship. Margery M Morgan in The Shavian Playground writes:

> ... these years of writing... helped to save Shaw's plays from dominance of the tight construction of the *pièce bien faite* and encouraged the experimental flexibility that is a mark of his theatre. As for his art of comedy, the novels had given him scope to work out the variety it was capable of embracing: realism and fantasy, satiric harshness, the physical humours of farce, the sweet-tempered mood, when delicacy of

> feeling is released in laughter. In all the novels there are passages of brilliance that far exceed the quality of the whole. A majority of these bring out the childishness and, with it, the liveliness of the characters.[17]

With his social humanitarianism, his Irish wit and articulacy, his predilection for involvement in political reponsibility, but without the ambition for the party political power that may seduce under the guise of service, Shaw learned the art of didactic persuasion. With the novels he learned how to tell a story.

## NOTES

1 Preface to Three Plays for Puritans, p.xxxviii

2 Barbara Bellow Watson, A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman, London: Chatto & Windus, 1964, p.33

3 Immaturity was first published (in Britain) 1930.

4 cf Butler's 'unborn' in Erewhon.

5 11 Federico Garcia Lorca, Three Tragedies, Trans. James Graham-Lujan and Richard L O'Connell, Introd. Francisco Garcia Lorca, New York: New Directions, 1947, p.161

6 Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, p.281

7 Erika Meier, Realism and Reality, Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967, p.6 and 255

8 St John Ervine, Bernard Shaw, p.78

9 See Daniel Dervin, Bernard Shaw: A Psychological Study, London: Associated University Presses, 1975.

10 Collins decribes his wife's attitude to motherhood in Getting Married, See below, Happy Families

11 Three Plays by Brieux pp.xxxiii-iv

12 Barbara Bellow Watson, A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman, p.158

13 Preface to Unpleasant Plays, p.xviii

14 Trefusis is generally considered to be the prototype for Jack Tanner and a version of Shaw himself. Colin Wilson, Bernard Shaw: A Reassessment, 1969, rpt. London: MacMillan Press, 1981, p.66

15 Edgar Johnson, The Virginia Quarterly Review xxxiii, No I (Winter 1957), p.68

16 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, p.2

17 Margery M Morgan, p.20

**PART THREE**

## 5

# SINGLE PARENTS*

It was his friendship with William Archer that turned Bernard Shaw from writing novels and towards writing plays. The story of their collaboration is well known. As Shaw put it: '... one day [Archer] proposed that we two should collaborate in writing a play, he to supply the constructional scaffolding or scenario, and I to fill in the dialogue'.(29.PPR.20 ) Their friendship only ended with Archer's death in 1924 but the collaboration was short-lived and Shaw put away the resulting two acts for some years. When he did return to them it was in order to provide J.T. Grein with another new vehicle for the Independent Theatre Society to produce at the Royalty Theatre in 1892. It was the first play that he was to have performed and it was called Widowers' Houses. Margery Morgan's observation of how much Shaw 'still had to learn about the art of drama...has been amply demonstrated by Charles Shattuck in his comparison of the text published in 1893 with the revised version Shaw issued in 1898'[1]

In relation to the Victorian theatre, Widowers' Houses was a prodigious feat and Eric Bentley believes that 'it remains the most revolutionary act in modern English drama.'[2] In this, Shaw's first dramatic work, the deep emotional involvement between Sartorius and his daughter leads to that 'clash of egos', described by Colin Wilson as 'the basic dramatic trick that was to serve Shaw all his life.'[3]

* Notes page 122

Shaw exploited the nineteenth-century stereotype of the motherless child which was most likely to be female, guaranteed to touch the hearts of the sentimental Victorian audience and to demonstrate the frailty of womanhood. In his first three plays Blanche Sartorius, the Craven daughters and Grace Tranfield are motherless. 'Fatherless' Vivie Warren has been brought up to have very little contact with her mother. Not for almost twenty years, in Eliza Doolittle, would Shaw create another motherless heroine within his English domestic plays, and in the last of them the Shotover women of Heartbreak House know nothing of their mother. All of these women, with the exception of Vivie Warren, are presented in relation to their fathers with little significant reference to any maternal influence.

At the opening of Widowers' Houses, Blanche and her father are introduced within an entirely conventional setting as wealthy English travellers arriving at a good hotel on the Rhine, dealing with servants, meeting with new, and possibly undesirable, fellow-guests. There is every indication that Blanche has been hopelessly indulged by a doting father in consequence of her motherlessness. She protests to young Harry Trench when they are alone in the garden:

> You thought I was alone, because (with false pathos) I had no mother with me. (7.WH.10.)

'With false pathos' is Shaw's voice saying that Blanche is not sincere in her feeling for her mother. This is a complete reversal of the melodramatic heroine whose pathetic appeal is never 'false'. Blanche does not conform to the heroine stereotype in her rebellious attitude to her father, in her pursuit of Trench, in abusing her faithful maid, nor in vilifying 'the poor.' Until later in the play when Sartorius refers to himself as 'the father of a motherless girl', (7.WH.14) it is not clear whether Mrs Sartorius is dead or merely absent. The fact that the young man and his

companion are not known to Blanche and that she already has a romantic, even a predatory, attachment to Trench is quickly disclosed giving some justification to the portrayal of Sartorius as a harsh and somewhat forbidding 'heavy father,' intent upon having his own way and on protecting his one child from unsuitable acquaintance.

Although she is 'ladylike' Shaw also describes her as 'still her father's daughter': (7.WH.5.) it is apparent that the author sees them as being closely related in their personalities, a similarity that becomes increasingly apparent as the play progresses.

Sartorius inspires fear. He 'is not an easy man to tackle', (7.WH.10.) as Trench says, but Blanche has her own way of inspiring fear, as is shown in her dealings with the parlormaid, and she is totally unimpressed by her domineering parent. Whether she is treating his cultural sight-seeing with indifference or whether she is deliberately deceiving him by meeting with Trench when his back is turned, it is clear that her devotion to her father is less than his to her. That this is an intentional imbalance in favour of Sartorius would seem to be indicated by Shaw's reference to Sartorius as 'a kind and unselfish father' in Appendix I, 'The Author to the Dramatic Critics', in the 1893 published edition of the play.[4]

Despite her deceptions, father and daughter have a warm and affectionate relationship. Perhaps, as Cokane remarks, Sartorius' 'affection for his child is a redeeming point', (7.WH.32.) although Blanche's love for him is flawed by violent temper and hypocrisy, qualities that are recognised and admitted by her father at the beginning of Act 3 as he gazes 'gloomily into the glow' (7.WH.50.) and later when he corrects his message to the unfortunate maid in order to appease, rather than aggravate, his spoilt daughter.

The daring scene where Blanche seizes the maid (called Annie in the 1893 version) 'by the hair and throat' (7.WH.46.) is not intended to be seen as an exceptional occasion and the girl cries, 'You'll be sorry: you always

are. Remember how dreadfully my head was cut last time.' (7.WH.46.) This violence was seized upon by critics as unnecessary, shocking and grotesque and Shaw went to some lengths to reply to them.[5] The discreditable behaviour is more properly the father's who pauses outside the door, coughs to make his presence known, giving the maid time to leave the room 'as demurely as she can.' Everything points to his knowing the sadism of which his daughter is capable yet he prefers to ignore rather than to deal with it, and his only comment is: '(mournfully) My dear: can you not make a little better fight with your temper?' (7.WH.46.)

Blanche is portrayed from the beginning as being a 'well-dressed, well-fed, good-looking, strongminded young lady... fresh and attractive and none the worse for being vital and energetic rather than delicate and refined.' (7.WH.5.) The playwright might have added 'and highly-sexed' had that expression been in respectable common usage at the time. The physical assault on her maid, who protests how much she loves her mistress and stays to be brutally used when the other servants have left, is the result of her rage at being deprived of Trench as a lover. There can be no doubt that Blanche is highly frustrated sexually by having her hopes of marriage dashed and this, coupled with the necessity for that ladylike control so demanded by her father, her 'strong character and her physical courage, which is greater than that of most men,' (7.WH.39.) must result in violent action.

Freud said that:

> Cruelty in general comes easily to the childish nature, since the obstacle that brings the instinct for mastery to a halt at another person's pain - namely a capacity for pity - is developed relatively late.[6]

He is referring to infantile sexuality in this description of cruelty, but it is apposite to Blanche and her behaviour

to her maid, as well as later to her expressed attitude to the poor. There is a childish quality about Blanche, an immaturity in the way she wants her own way and her loss of control and 'tantrums' when she does not immediately get it.

The relationship of father and daughter is heightened by her refusal to marry Trench, and Sartorius states quite categorically:

> (abandoning his self control, and giving way recklessly to his affection for her) You shall do as you like now and always, my beloved child. I only wish to do as my darling pleases. (7.WH.47.)

Blanche responds by throwing her arms hysterically around his neck and in a remarkable speech during which she does not notice Trench and Cokane come into the room - 'she can hear nothing but her own voice', is Shaw's stage direction - she declares: 'I only want to stay with you and be happy as we have always been.' (7.WH.47.) In this speech she identifies so strongly with her father that four times she refers to 'us' or 'we', a manner of speech that she will also adopt when shocked by the revelations of the Bluebook, an unconscious mannerism employed at times of stress when her defence is to see herself as her father's 'partner' as well as his child. Afterwards it is only required that Trench be sent packing by the formidable Sartorius, and father and daughter are left to their old, dark ways together.

If there is any lurking hint of incest between them it can be said to exist implicitly as a passing expression of Sartorius's overwhelming paternal passion. Blanche's determination to remain moody is greater than her father's power to divert her, once her grand gesture of rejection is past, and he knows he will have to continue giving in to her if he is to get any peace.

It is in this emotionally unsettled state that Blanche learns the source of her father's wealth and, when she sees

him named in the Bluebook, her reaction is hate, anger and a sense of personal affront. Until this moment she has shown no interest in her father's affairs, nor is there any suggestion that she might be concerned for his having become a 'slum landlord:' she asks no question that is not directly connected with her own position and the nearest that he comes to an explanation of his methods is to say that property improvements lead to higher rents which the poor cannot afford and which only result in their being 'thrown homeless on the streets.'

When Vivie questions Kitty Warren it is because she is intellectually curious, and she listens attentively to the answers because she wants to know what drove her mother to become a prostitute. From that genuine interest springs a genuine, if short-lived and sentimental, affection.

It is evident that Blanche has no softening memory of a loving mother, nor does Vivie Warren. If Shaw is to expose the myth of the melodramatic heroine of the nineteenth century for what it really is, the 'orphan' image is necessary. But while Blanche has been given everything that money can buy, she has been given no incentive by her father to become anything other than 'a lady,' his definition of such seeming to be 'someone who is acceptable to another 'real' lady' - Lady Roxdale, for instance. It is the lack of ambition for anything other than social acceptance, underpinned by wealth, however earned, that contributes to Blanche's ill-nature, for father and daughter are alike in their sense of social inferiority. He - 'the self-made man' - is able to retain the ability to act in his own interests in spite of being 'embarrassed' or 'shame-faced' because of his humble origins. In the letter writing scene he can - by hints of future patronage - take positive action to advance himself and his daughter. She, on the other hand, can only wait for her father to find a suitable man for her to marry; convention does not allow her any other respectable way of achieving status in good society, a point to be driven home by Mrs Warren. When Blanche is thwarted, for example, when

Trench will give no explanation for refusing her father's money, the depths of her unladylike anger is stirred and 'her voice is no longer even an imitation of the voice of a lady.' (7.WH.36.)
Sartorius, whose wealth creates power and independence, has produced a daughter whose 'education has been of the most expensive and complete kind obtainable; [whose] surroundings have been characterized by the strictest refinement,' she has, in spite of all his efforts, shown herself incapable of becoming the kind of ideal 'lady' that Shaw's audience would recognise as such. Blanche with her cleverness and courage, her spoilt bad temper and her frank sensuality is no more an 'ideal daughter' than Vivie Warren or the Craven girls. Sartorius and Kitty and the Colonel have eventually to accept their offspring for what they are, rather than what they would like them to be.

Blanche's cry to be without father and family, the wish to isolate herself from what offends or threatens her, changes to disgust for the poor: Her solution, 'Well, turn them out...' (7.WH.56.) startles even her father. Although she has never had any interest in his 'practical business' she completely identifies with him in the charges against Robbins Row. Once again the dialogue is skillfully structured, especially in the use of personal pronouns, to show the close relationship of this father and daughter.

SARTORIUS: It's a curious thing, Blanche, that the Parliamentary gentleman who writes such books as these should be so ignorant of the practical business. One would suppose, to read this, that we are the most grasping, grinding, heartless pair in the world, you and I.

BLANCHE: Is it not true? About the state of the houses, I mean?

SARTORIUS:(calmly) Oh, quite true.

BLANCHE: Then it is not our fault?

SARTORIUS: My dear: if we made the houses any better, the rents would have to be raised so much that the poor people would be unable to pay, and would be thrown homeless on the streets.

BLANCHE: Well, turn them out and get in a respectable class of people. Why should we have the disgrace of harboring such wretches?

SARTORIUS:(opening his eyes) That sounds a little hard on them, doesnt it my child?

BLANCHE: Oh, I hate the poor. At least, I hate those dirty, drunken, disreputable people who live like pigs. If they must be provided for, let other people look after them. How can you expect any one to think well of us when such things are written about us in that infamous book? (7.WH.56/7.)

Sartorius first introduces the plural 'we', followed by 'pair' and 'you and I.' Blanche does not hesitate to associate herself with the implication and advances it with her question - 'Then it is not *our* fault?' (7.WH.56.) There has been no suggestion in the Bluebook that she has any connection with the conditions in Robbins Row, but in private with her father, at the moment of shocked discovery, they assume a joint complicity which demonstrates itself in their conscious/unconscious choice of words. Four more collective personal pronouns are used and when Blanche asks,

'How can you expect anyone to think well of *us* when such things are written about *us* in that infamous book?' (7.WH.57.) it is again made apparent that acceptance into society is the only thing that matters to her. Sartorius' reply to her ugly denunciation of the poor who live like pigs, '(coldly and a little wistfully) I see I have made a real lady of you, Blanche,' (7.WH.57.) is the nearest he ever comes throughout the play to accepting responsibility, even blame, for her attitude of cold snobbishness, and the irony of that 'real lady' does not escape the audience. Blanche's reaction to knowing the source of the family wealth may be compared with that of Edward Voysey in Barker's The Voysey Inheritance who, after the first shocked reaction, uses his energy to regain the lost professional integrity of his father and grandfather.

Shaw has drawn parallels between the rent collector Lickcheese and his employer Sartorius, using children as the victims of the evils of the pursuit of self-interest when it is opposed to concern with the general good of society. From his introduction into the play Lickcheese attempts to justify his veniality by referring to his own 'four children looking to [him] for their bread,' (7.WH.29.) and constantly speaks of the children of the poor whom he oppresses, of the 'hungry child crying for... bread'. (7.WH.30.) When he lost his job for being too lenient with the poor he appeals to Trench to put in a word with him to Sartorius but the young man is 'aghast' and cries:

> You took money that ought to have fed starving children!.. If I had been the father of one of those children, I'd have given you something worse than the sack! (7.WH.30)

He continues to excuse his behaviour as a rent collector on the grounds that, 'I have my children looking to me,' (7.WH.32) at which Cokane remarks:

> So has our friend Sartorius. His affection for his daughter is a redeeming point. (7.WH.32)

But this is topped by Lickcheese, still trying to be conciliatory:

> She's a lucky daughter, sir. Many another daughter has been turned out upon the streets to gratify his affection for her. That's what business is, sir, you see... (Furiously) Which of us is the worse. I should like to know? Me that wrings the money out to keep a home over my children, or you that spend it and try to shove the blame on me? (7.WH.32)

There is a clear contrast between Sartorius, the father who 'gets away with it' when he is protecting the interests of his child, and Lickcheese, the father who does not when he is doing no more than his master.

As Sartorius, with the memory of his own early poverty, can be even less justified in his exploitation of the poor, nor can Lickcheese in his new affluence be excused - for all his warmth and good humour - for betraying those hungry children of St Giles and Marylebone and Bethnal Green, and in this respect the two of them can be compared. Both are villains, both corrupt; Blanche is as much a victim as those other children in their power - although in a different way and for different reasons - while one can only speculate on the possible fate of Lickcheese's daughter.

It can be argued that Blanche is the victim of the father's ambition that has crippled his conscience and has turned her into the woman of whom Lickcheese can say: 'I know Miss Blanche: she has her father's eye for business.' (7.WH.63)

A chilling statement to those who know the nature of the father's business and the efficiency with which he pursues it.

To be described as your father's daughter is not a compliment in the mouth of many of Shaw's characters, so Gloria Clandon, forced to reassess herself as the result of falling in love and finding her 'absent' father, all in the same day, can admit to him:

> I've been brought down... I was playing the part of my mother's daughter then; but I'm not: I'm my father's daughter (Looking at him forlornly.) That's a come down, isnt it?... She is our superior: yours and mine: high heavens above us. (8.YNCT.284)

Her younger sister Dolly's crisis, less complicated than Gloria's, with their father, comes when he shows disapproval of her smoking a cigarette and she leaves the table with 'petulant suddenness.' (8.YNCT.284) Crampton is furious and demands that she return while McComas, the lawyer, tries to make the peace: 'Come, Crampton: never mind. She's her father's daughter: that's all.' (8.YNCT.245)
But Mrs Clandon is in no mood for reparations and retorts with deep resentment: 'I hope not... Dolly is hurt and put out by what has passed. I must go to her.' (8.YNCT.245)
Gloria has to acknowledge that she has been 'playing the part of [her] mother's daughter,' although she was not aware of this until she met Valentine and her father. She could not have so described herself until she had stopped playing the part and discovered her true self. While the discovery will not make her love her mother less - Gloria will always accept her mother's 'moral superiority' - in finding her true nature in her likeness to her father, she must abandon the other relationship planned for the two of them by Mrs Clandon.

There are other comparisons of daughters with their fathers: at the end of Major Barbara when the family is visiting the cannon factory Sarah is 'sitting placidly' on a large live shell. Urged to move she calmly refuses, at which Lomax, her fiancé can only say to Undershaft:

'(Strongly remonstrant) - Your daughter, you know!' (11.MB.344) In Mrs Warren's Profession, Vivie, being fatherless, can only say, 'I am my mother's daughter. I am like you,' (7.MWP.250) to her mother; but in Misalliance, quite unsolicited, Hypatia Tarleton says to Joey, 'My father says so; and I'm my father's daughter.' (13.MIS.163/4) Nearly fifteen years later, in Heartbreak House, when Hesione Hushabye, anxious to improve the family's income, becomes enthusiastic about an invention of Shotover's, 'a harpoon cannon' that could be adapted to 'wind in generals' rather than whales, her husband, with a mixture of admiration and acute distaste, uses the same words with which Lickcheese had described Blanche: 'You are your father's daughter.' (15.HH.81)

Although Sartorius can be 'revolted' and exclaim: 'Do you think, Lickcheese, that my daughter is to be made part of a money bargain...' He never speaks again after Lickcheese has silenced him with:

> Oh come, Sartorius! dont talk as if you was the only father in the world. I have a daughter too; and my feelings in that matter is just as fine as yours... (7.WH.63)

The play ends on a disturbingly 'happy' note with all parties satisfied; but they have been exposed as greedy, snobbish, lustful or utterly self-seeking. This is not, therefore, the traditional happy ending of the popular theatre, no-one is to be punished for their bad behaviour and no-one can be extolled for virtue.

In the Sartorius father and daughter Shaw created his least attractive pair, probably the most 'abominably ill-tempered characters' that he was ever to create. (29.PPR.22) That they are uncomfortably believable, behaving as people do in 'real' life, is one of the reasons why the play was received with such general and vociferous disapproval and

the London critic of the Glasgow Herald was almost alone in maintaining:

> The characters are depicted naturally, and not in the glorified form so common upon the conventional stage... and particularly... a heroine who shows her temper to her betrothed and still more to her father, and who, like other estimable womankind who we frequently meet in real life, though rarely on the stage, is always ready to quarrel on a point of feminine dignity, but when 'cornered' is always anxious to forgive and to make friends again.[7]

Shaw called that 'a reasonable criticism' and he warned:

> Let us not try to encourage the hypocrisy of the theatre, already greater than the conventicle, by being more austere in our judgement of dramatis personae than of real men and women.[8]

Shaw's second play, written in the following year, The Philanderer, also presents the father/daughter family. It is often dismissed as the least successful of his early plays (although Chesterton preferred it to Widowers' Houses as did Raymond Williams.)[9] This time there are two heroines. Grace Tranfield, a young widow returned to living with her father, is an early type of the 'New Woman' who would emerge in Vivie Warren. Julia Craven, in whom can be recognized the same quality of sexual energy and barely suppressed, violent emotion as in Blanche, is, with her younger sister Sylvia, another of the motherless and 'unmothered' daughters who live with their father. Both Julia and Blanche are based on Jenny Patterson, a widow with whom Shaw had a love affair at the age of twenty-nine.[10]

While Shaw does not comment upon the responsibility of the fathers for the emotional attitudes and consequent behaviour of their daughters he makes it clear that their

own attitudes and behaviour make them far from suitable parents. Colonel Craven is a retired military man, neurotically engrossed in his own health and believing that his life is to be cut short by a mysterious illness: Jo Cuthbertson, father of Mrs Tranfield, is a complete contrast, being a theatre critic whose 'life has been passed in witnessing scenes of suffering nobly endured and sacrifice willingly rendered,' (7.Ph.88) while sitting comfortably, of course, in the best free seats in the theatre! Of Grace Tranfield's mother Cuthbertson reminisces:

> She might have been worse, You see, I couldnt stand her relations: all the men were roaring cads; and she couldnt get on with my mother. And then she hated being in town; and of course I couldnt live in the country on account of my work. But we hit it off as well as most people until we separated... It was not my fault... Some day the world will know how I loved that woman. But she was incapable of valuing a true man's affection. (7.Ph.98)

Craven and Cuthbertson may be what Charteris calls them, 'a couple of conventional old fathers,' (7.Ph.101) but nothing is known of the mother of Craven's daughter except that he married her for her money, that he 'got to be very fond of her', and that she is dead. Like Blanche, motherless Julia in particular, has been indulged by her father who threatens and cajoles as the whim takes him. He says that 'She cant bear to be crossed in the slightest thing, poor child,' but Sylvia calls her 'the family baby' as once again she bursts into tears. Living with a father who is by turns the military martinet and the loving 'Daddy' has not moderated Julia's flamboyant emotionalism, as he has little idea of how to treat her. After embarrassing her publicly by questioning Charteris and Paramore as to how they will decide who should marry her, he cannot understand why she

should - again - burst into tears: indeed he is 'hurt' and accuses her of not treating him with respect.

Both Kitty and Craven are in complete agreement when it comes to respecting their daughters, and Shaw is hitting at conventional relationships in this: these parents want 'fictional' daughters, not real ones. Sartorius deals more truthfully with Blanche than Craven does with Julia, recognizing, and sometimes remonstrating against, her moodiness.

Although Craven is prepared to be conciliatory when attacked and gives in to Julia's tears every time, the one thing that he will not put up with is her bad manners and he insists that:

> ...if you are not going to behave like a lady... you've got to behave like a gentleman; or fond as I am of you, I'll cut you dead exactly as I would if you were my son. (7.Ph.144)

The daughters of the Unpleasant Plays - and with the exception of Frank Gardner, there are no sons - fall into two categories: Blanche and Julia are extravagantly emotional; Sylvia, Grace and Vivie are undemonstrative, the first of the 'unwomanly' women that Shaw would create in his plays. Where Blanche and Julia are ardent, strong-willed to the point of disagreeableness, and possessive of - even abusive to - the men they want, the others are emotionally cooler and in their attitude to their parents this is particularly striking.

Julia is even more spoilt than Blanche and is treated less consistently by her father. Her sister Sylvia, who wears male clothing and presents a generally androgynous attitude and appearance, may, as Margery M Morgan observes, suggest 'an ideal', a 'perfect balance in human nature,'[11] but she is also immature and mischievous and in her outspoken manner looks back to Nellie McQuinch of The Irrational Knot rather than forward to Vivie Warren. She behaves like an awkward

youth, posturing and playing a role encouraged by Charteris. Her plain speech and downright manner to strangers force even her father to call her a 'vulgar little girl.' For both Vivie Warren and Sylvia Craven their way of dealing with their emotional and family problems is to ape the manners of men.

Grace Tranfield, secure in her widowhood and independent of her father, is able to be less emotionally involved with him; in her ability to decide how she will proceed with her life she most resembles Vivie. There is also a quality of self-righteousness about them both, almost smugness, a sort of satisfaction with themselves, that is not attractive. Grace's self-sufficiency promotes sympathy on behalf of Julia and her failure to engage her rival in a fight for Charteris; there is, in the young widow's ability finally to detach herself from him, a quality also possessed by Vivie when she turns her back on her mother.

It has been suggested that having failed with five novels, with only two performances of Widowers' Houses, none of The Philanderer and with Mrs Warren's Profession banned, Shaw made 'an abrupt change in [his] dramatic subjects and technique.' Emil Strauss adds that this change came:

> after a powerful attempt to develop the modern drama into a new and promising direction, along the lines of Ibsen's later plays but with new and wider aims or purposes.

It would be difficult to disagree with Emil Strauss that 'If a forecast of Shaw's future dramatic writings had been based on [Widowers' Houses and Mrs Warren's Profession] it would certainly have been completely wrong.'[12]

In Man and Superman Mr Whitefield has just died leaving Ann, her sister Rhoda, and Violet and Octavius Robinson who have been under his protection for most of their lives, fatherless. This play can be said to consist of three plays: it is the Comedy in three acts, ie. acts 1, 2,

and 4; it is the Don Juan in Hell scene; and it is the sum of the four acts played continuously. Because of the unpopularity of very long plays, Man and Superman is usually played without including the Don Juan in Hell scene. The Comedy relies heavily upon Ann's dealing with everyone around her and with her manipulation of them, '... she bullies women... she uses her personal fascination to make men give her whatever she wants,' (10.MSM.163) and it is the amusingly predatory way in which she goes about securing the man of her choice that is the main thread of the story.

Throughout the play Ann uses her mother shamelessly; as Tanner says, Mrs Whitefield is 'nonentitized' by her. Opinions are attributed to Mrs Whitefield, desires and motives are proffered in her name, and she is used as her daughter's 'scapegoat.' This comic contrivance is Ann's method of getting her own way from the very opening of the play and she uses variations of her 'scapegoat' technique as many as seven times in her first short scene. Ramsden explains Ann to Octavius and to the audience:

> ...she's a wonderfully dutiful girl. Her father's wish would be sacred to her. Do you know that since she grew to years of discretion, I dont believe she has ever once given her own wish as a reason for doing anything or not doing it. It's always 'Father wishes me to,' or, 'Mother wouldn't like it.' It's really almost a fault in her (10.MSM.6)

Ramsden, of course, does not see through Ann as Tanner and her mother do, nor does Octavius who is besotted with her. Her mother's first words are: 'Now, Ann, I do beg you not to put it on me...' (10.MSM.18) It is interesting to examine Ann's final serious use of scapegoating in her rejection of Octavius:

> ...it is clear from my father's will that *he wished me to marry Jack. And my mother is set on it.* (10.MSM.156)

She quotes both parents, one after the other, to support her intention. When Tavy protests, 'But you are not bound to sacrifice yourself always to the wishes of your parents,' (10.MSM.156) she is insistent and again she cites them both:

'*My father loved me. My mother loves me.* Surely *their wishes* are a better guide than my own selfishness.' (10.MSM.156)

Until now she has always quoted one or other parent in her argument, now she not only summons them both but actually unites them in referring to 'their wishes.' The sentiments in this exchange are unadorned, to the point, and expressed simply in short sentences. Ann is becoming desperate to get Octavius out of the way and to get her relationship settled with Jack. She may be becoming bored by having to resort to such devices to get her own way.

At this moment, in turning down her young poet, Ann's words echo Candida's to Eugene: 'Tavy, my dear, you are a nice creature - a good boy.' (10.MSM.156) Only the name tells us which couple in which play.

Ann's attitude to her mother compares with Candida's to her father. Without patronising him Candida is affectionate towards Burgess: after asking Marchbanks what he thinks of him she says: 'If you had laughed at my father I shouldnt have minded; but I like you ever so much better for being nice to him.' (8.CAN.95) How often are parents and children, in the plays of Shaw, 'not nice' to each other. They may 'use' each other, as Ann Whitefield 'uses' her mother; they may be angry as Tarleton is with Hypatia; or indignant, the Malones; moody, Blanche; forthright and painfully honest, Vivie. But they are rarely what could be understood as gratuitously 'not nice.' When Ann speaks of her father it is invariably to misrepresent her intentions if not to lie shamelessly, and even Tanner who has known them both for years can find himself taken in to the point of a grand rage against all mothers. Ann weaves an especially intricate web in order to prevent Rhoda from

going for a drive in Jack's car and when he finds out she declares that she was only doing it because 'Mother made me,' (10.MSM.59) Mrs Whitefield wanted no taint, Ann implies, from 'that dreadful book' - The Revolutionist's Handbook - to fall on Rhoda. (10.MSM.59) There follows Tanner's diatribe against mothers: a remarkable speech containing sentiments that are central to Shaw's parent/child philosophy, and starting as a protest 'against the vile abjection of youth to age,' where the daughters have become:

> A horrible procession of wretched girls, each in the claws of a cynical, cunning, avaricious, disillusioned, ignorantly experienced foul-minded old woman whom she calls mother, and whose duty it is to corrupt her mind and sell her to the highest bidder. Why do these unhappy slaves marry anybody, however old and vile, sooner than not marry at all? Because marriage is the means of escape from these decrepit fiends who hide their selfish ambitions, their jealous hatreds of the young rivals who have supplanted them, under the mask of maternal duty and family affection. Such things are abominable. (10.MSM.59)

The savagery seems quite gratuitous: nowhere is it suggested that Mrs Whitefield is 'a decrepit fiend' full of 'jealous hatred' for the 'young rivals', her daughters, and she is more likely to promote pitying laughter in the breasts of her family than any emotion other than irritation. The speech begins with the direction, 'working himself up into a sociological rage' which suggests that Tanner is merely playing the revolutionary orator, a pose that he takes from time to time throughout the play and one that Ann delights in deflating. Certainly he overdoes it, which is consistent with his character; but the sentiments expressed are consistent with Shaw's own sentiments, if the

style is operatic and more in keeping with Don Juan's verbal excesses.

Ambiguous as Shaw's attitude to his own mother may have been, Lucinda Elizabeth was never a society mother and there is no evidence that she would have been glad to sell his sisters to the highest bidder. There is evidence, however, recorded by Janet Dunbar, that Shaw's wife, Charlotte, was made wretched in her youth by her mother's endeavours to marry her into the best society. In a frank letter to T. E. Lawrence she records her 'perfectly hellish childhood and youth.'[13] Shaw's identification with Charlotte's youthful experiences may have intensified his criticism of the marriage market which had already been satirised by Oscar Wilde. In Lady Windermere's Fan, for example, the Duchess of Berwick successfully organises her daughter into an engagement during the last ball of the season and Mrs Cheveley in An Ideal Husband remarks 'I don't care about the London season! It is too matrimonial. People are either hunting for husbands or hiding from them...' while Lady Bracknell tells Gwendolen in The Importance of Being Ernest that: 'An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself...' She then interviews John Worthing regarding his eligibility to marry her daughter and advises him to find at least one parent 'before the season is quite over!' Alliances between great and moneyed families were arranged with the utmost care and little consideration for the bride if all other conditions were favourable.

Man and Superman is the first of the 'Family' plays to be written after Shaw and Charlotte married and it is likely that his indignation at the miserable experiences of her girlhood was incorporated as a fit topic for one of Tanner's outbursts. Ann's deflation when he has finished takes the bitterness from the speech and transforms it into laughter-provoking comedy; but it is Tanner's reaction to her

reaction that is the cause of amusement, not the content of the speech.

Shaw's description of Mrs Whitefield shows a kind of admiration for the old lady:

> She has an expression of muddled shrewdness, a squeak of protest in her voice, and an odd air of continually elbowing away some larger person who is crushing her into a corner. One guesses her as one of those women who are conscious of being treated as silly and negligible, and who, without having strength enough to assert themselves effectually, at any rate never submit to their fate... (10.MSM.17)

Mrs Whitefield is, as Ann says, both timid and conventional. When she hears 'her own opinions [of her daughter] so eloquently expressed' by Tanner as he voices Ann's shortcomings, she is 'carried away with relief' and cries, 'Oh, she is a hypocrite. She is: she is... ' (10.MSM.163) but she is unable to admit that she detests her. She is shocked into speaking like a conventional mother:

> Do you mean that I detest my own daughter! Surely you dont believe me to be so wicked and unnatural as that, merely because I see her faults. (10.MSM.164)

And when Tanner asks, cynically, 'You love her, then?' she very properly replies: 'Why of course I do... we cannot help loving our own relations.' Tanner is unconvinced when he adds, '... I suspect that the tables of consanguinity have a natural basis in natural repugnance.' (10.MSM.164) Ann is right when she says that her mother is conventional; Mrs Whitefield's genuine dislike of her daughter has to be conventionally minimized by calling it 'merely seeing her faults,' (10.MSM.164) otherwise how could she live with the guilt of knowing herself to be an 'unnatural' mother.

In this play there is little development of the parent/child relationship; rather, points of view are expressed, not through change or growth but in the contrasted attitudes of the Whitefield mother and daughter and the Malone father and son. Her 'genuine' dislike of her daughter, masked by conventional behaviour thought proper to a 'good' mother, may be compared and contrasted with Malone senior's 'genuine' heavy father attitudes that mask his sentimental love for a son whose income he threatens to cut off if he marries without paternal permission.

Shaw gives an extraordinarily long introductory description of Malone, longer than that given to any other character in the Comedy, with the exception of the descriptions of Hector junior, named after his father, and of Ann Whitefield. His sympathy for, and interest in, this character must make him something more, in the opinion of the playwright, than a 'mere conventional' father.

Malone senior, who is introduced in the last act of the play, meets his particular match in his daughter-in-law, Violet; his appearance being a contrivance whereby her relationship with Hector can be brought out into the open and 'legitimized' by confrontation. This identical naming of father and son characters, an indication of their role playing, leads to the confrontation as Hector accuses: 'You've opened a letter addressed to me. You've impersonated me... that's disawnarable,' (10.MSM.149) but of course Malone was quite within his rights as the letter was also addressed to him. The combination of Hector's high moral tone with Violet's: 'icily pitying his sentimentality... I am astonished to hear a man of your age and good sense talking in that romantic way,' (10.MSM.148) is sufficient to bring Malone round.

Ann's manipulation of her parent is her form of revolt, no other avenue being readily available to an unmarried daughter. Hector, on the other hand, with the greater freedom allowed to sons, is prepared to defy his

father and it is Malone - manipulated by Violet - who capitulates.

Hector is not without filial affection but, as he says, 'I am a son, and, I hope a dutiful one; but before everything I'm a Mahn!!!' (10.MSM.151) It only requires Tanner and Octavius with their offers of financial assistance to have the old man eating out of Violet's cold little hand. She, having lost her natural father and her father substitute in Mr Whitefield, has now found a third father figure in Malone and it would appear that they may be well suited, both enormously practical when it comes to making financial arrangements which assuage Malone's 'family' conscience while continuing to contribute to Hector junior's comfort as expected by his wife. The older generation, in the shape of Mrs Whitefield, Malone and Roebuck Ramsden is hopelessly outclassed by the younger Ann and Violet, and while Mrs Whitefield is the nervous product of years of her daughter's treatment, Malone is demolished in a matter of minutes.

Tanner's outburst against mothers - 'these decrepit fiends' - (10.MSM.59) continues with a far less extravagant conception:

> ...the voice of nature proclaims for the daughter a father's care and for the son a mother's. The law for father and son and mother and daughter is not the law of love: it is the law of revolution, of emancipation, of final suppression of the old and worn-out by the young and capable. I tell you, the first duty of manhood and womanhood is a Declaration of Independence: the man who pleads his father's authority is no man: the woman who pleads her mother's authority is unfit to bear citizens to a free people (10.MSM.60)

In examining Shaw's English domestic/family plays Tanner's suggestion is reinforced: it is the relationships where the parents and their children are of opposite sexes that appear

to be the most successful.

When next he takes a motherless girl for his heroine it is in his eighth English domestic play, Pygmalion. In that it was written for the West End Pygmalion resembles You Never Can Tell, but whereas Cyril Maude and the Haymarket venture did not survive the first rehearsals, Pygmalion, first produced in German in Vienna in 1913 was an enormous success the following year in London.

> It is said that in London alone, under Tree's management, it earned £13,000 in three months. It was soon performed everywhere in Europe in a variety of languages, and by the end of its run Shaw was established as the foremost living dramatist, as well as the richest.[14]

Shaw called it 'a romance in five acts' and as such it is nearer to Cinderella, being a genuine rags to something-like-riches story, than to the story in Ovid's Metamorphoses, but it is a romance, 'an exaggeration, a picturesque falsehood,' rather than a 'love affaire',[15] especially when the prose Epilogue is taken into consideration. 'My stories are the old stories,'[16] Shaw said, and he was using the form of the nineteenth century Romantic Comedy in this play, as he had done in his first play Widowers' Houses.

> The misalliance motif of courtship comedy needs only a slight change of emphasis to become the Cinderella story of romance with its inevitable concomitants, a magical transformation and a fairytale test.[17]

He was in line with T W Robertson, and with other playwrights in taking a romantic theme where the poor girl is ennobled by the man who is in a station above her.[18] Shaw, however, deliberately overturns the convention:

working within the framework of Romantic Comedy he demonstrates realistically that the tall dark hero who snarls at the young girl now lifted above her station and transformed into a lady fit to be his consort, rarely turns out to be Mr Rochester. The success of such themes was assured and is still assured today in the form of romantic novels and in the romantic stories of women's magazines. Of all Shaw's plays Pygmalion is probably the most popular, both on stage and in his own screen version, while, since Lerner and Loewe's adaptation as My Fair Lady, it has reached an even wider audience. [19]

In the play, Henry Higgins, an eccentric phonetician, takes on a bet with fellow-phonetician, Pickering, to transform a flowergirl, Eliza Doolittle, into a duchess: this is the simple story. Higgins has an ideal mother in the background, a surrogate mother - housekeeper Mrs Pearce in the foreground, and a sub-plot that concerns a widowed mother - Mrs Eynsford-Hill - and her two fatherless children. If the flower girl's father, Alfred Doolittle, is added to these characters it can be seen that Shaw's compulsion to air his feelings about parents and children is as strong as ever.

Eliza is an extremely likable figure; like so many of Shaw's women she is drawn as a complete individual and not as a stereotype, in spite of being the motherless girl so beloved of the earlier, popular theatre. At turns both stoical and self-pitying, she is a wonderfully rounded character, demonstrating the ability to change and to develop and grow with which he invests his best women. Sheltering in front of St Paul's church Eliza's enterprising cheekiness is in splendid contrast to Clara's bad temper and Mrs Eynsford-Hill's faded gentility.

Although she is still only aged something between eighteen and twenty - Mrs Pat Campbell was fortynine years old when she created the part! - it is some years since she was turned out of the house by her father and his woman, mistress would be too inflated a word for Eliza's sixth

stepmother, and she has earned her own living ever since, has done without them and still managed to remain 'a good girl.'

Her relationship with her father is one of cheerful, sometimes affectionate, contempt while he appears to think no more of her than of a commodity that can be used to negotiate a quick profit, a state of affairs that Eliza recognizes and accepts with no ill will.

Early in the play Doolittle, in his first visit to Wimpole Street, tells Higgins to 'marry Eliza while she's young and dont know no better.' (14.PYG.239) This is followed almost immediately by her entrance, no longer a 'deplorable figure' but a 'dainty and exquisitely clean young Japanese lady.' (14.PYG.240) This is her first transformation and it began with her father failing to recognize her; she is also described as resembling a lady, if not yet a duchess and it is typical of Shaw's paradoxical treatment that the father has given permission before the request has been made and the idea that Higgins should marry this very attractive lady had been neatly slipped in.

Between Doolittle and his daughter there is little attempt at a convincing relationship: Alfred could just as easily have been presented as Wimpole Street's dustman, on the scrounge after performing some menial task for Mrs Pearce and the household. His two scenes in the play only marginally include Eliza and his whole rapport is with Higgins who encourages him in a patronizing, if amused, fashion to launch himself into his brilliant speeches on behalf of the undeserving poor up against middle class morality.

Doolittle's indifferent fathering serves to remind the audience that, in spite of it, an able and attractive spirit may emerge, just as Margery M Morgan states: '...good mothering licences irresponsible childishness and the creativity inherent in it.'[20] The father can be of greater importance than the fathering and the mother than the mothering.

In his first appearance Doolittle has neither the speech nor the clothes to be taken for anything other than what he is - a dustman, with no aspirations to be other than a dustman. Not a snob, he is 'quite at home in any station of life,' (14.PYG.282) and in this he resembles Higgins whom Eliza attacks as being 'The same to everybody. Like father.' (14.PYG.282) Having no money he is a cheerful and unashamed scrounger, as comfortable in his niche as Mrs Higgins is in hers and as a father he is as little concerned for his daughter as she is for her son, albeit for different reasons.

He knows that Eliza is capable, that she can manage, and if she does well out of the gentlemen who have taken her in - why not? Good luck to them - he does not see why he should not get in on the act. Not a greedy man he is content with the five pounds that is his right to expect as a member of the Deserving Poor whose daughter is on to a good thing. The marriage of their daughters is of importance to the fathers: for Doolittle it will provide some financial spin-off while for Sartorius it is the only road to social acceptance for Blanche. If she is to become a lady through marriage, he, as the father of a lady, will be a gentleman.

The two mothers in the play, Mrs Higgins and Mrs Eynsford-Hill, are examples of single parents existing within respectable society, unsupported by husbands, for whose absence no explanation is given.

Mrs Higgins is the more successful of the two, reflecting a life of privilege: she has money, she both looks and sounds like the lady she is, and her one son has achieved independence and eminence in an unusual scientific field. She possesses the calm authority that attracts others to confide in her and she enjoys the devotion of her eccentric son without the least need to worry about his welfare: he is in the capable hands of the admirable Mrs Pearce.

Henry Higgins, the 'Pygmalion' of the title, is described by Shaw as being:

> ...careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. He is... but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby 'taking notice' eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief... when he is neither bullying nor exclaiming to the heavens against some feather-weight cross, he coaxes women as a child coaxes its nurse when it wants to get anything out of her. (14.PYG.218)

He is the only child of this elegantly self-contained mother against whom he has habitually measured all women of marriageable age and as he cannot marry his mother he has, from time to time, fallen in love with women over forty-five. 'My idea of a lovable woman is something as like you as possible. I shall never get into the way of seriously liking young women: some habits lie too deep to be changed.' (14.PYG.245) In spite of her protestations Mrs Higgins appears to be quite satisfied with the status quo while at the same time conventionally asking: 'When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?' (14.PYG.245) The moment that Henry walks into her drawing room she treats him like a small boy; she scolds and he sulks. Both privately and publicly she corrects him and he barges about her pleasant room like an awkward schoolboy: '... stumbling into the fender and over the fire irons... extricating himself with muttered imprecations... finishing his disastrous journey by throwing himself so impatiently on the divan that he almost breaks it. Mrs Higgins looks at him, but controls herself and says nothing.' (14.PYG.250) She calls Henry and Pickering 'a pretty pair of babies, playing with your live doll,' (14.PYG.256) but her nature is altogether too bland to allow her to become more than a little concerned at the curious *ménage* that exists in her son's Wimpole Street home. Perhaps this is her recognition of his impotence, his indifference to sexual relationships, or perhaps it is indifference on her part.

Mrs Higgins can be seen as a re-drawing of Mrs Herbert in Love Among The Artists; but whereas the cultivated mother/woman of the novel lacks any interest in, or affection for, her son - a reflection of the young Shaw's interpretation of his own mother's detachment from him - Mrs Higgins and Henry have been created to express something like an ideal Mother/Son relationship. She may scold him but she kisses him, touches him, and she entertains people who refer to him as her 'celebrated son!'

By the time Shaw wrote Pygmalion he was certainly Lucinda Elizabeth Shaw's celebrated son and by then was more likely to see himself as Henry Higgins than as Aubrey Herbert. (The model for Higgins was phonetician, Henry Sweet who did not 'suffer fools gladly.') (14.PYG.200) Not that his mother ever provided him with a haven to be compared with Mrs Higgins' Chelsea home; indeed, her indifference to even modestly comfortable surroundings inspired Charlotte Payne-Townshend to carry Shaw away from the room in his mother's house where he languished with an infected foot. 'Charlotte was used to difficult personal relationships, but she had never come across anything so callous as this; the neglect of G.B.S. by his mother...'[21] Shaw says in the prose epilogue of his play:

> When Higgins excused his indifference to young women on the ground that they had an irresistible rival in his mother, he gave the clue to his inveterate old-bachelordom. The case is uncommon only to the extent that remarkable mothers are uncommon. If an imaginative boy has a sufficiently rich mother who has intelligence, personal grace, dignity of character without harshness, and a cultivated sense of the best art of her time to enable her to make her house beautiful, she sets a standard for him against which very few women can struggle, beside effecting for him a disengagement of his affections, his sense of beauty, and his idealism from his specifically sexual

impulses. This makes him a standing puzzle to the huge number of uncultivated people who have been brought up in tasteless homes by commonplace or disagreeable parents, and to whom, consequently, literature, painting, sculpture, music and affectionate personal relations come as modes of sex if they come at all. The word passion means nothing else to them; and that Higgins could have passion for phonetics and idealize his mother instead of Eliza, would seem to them absurd and unnatural. Nevertheless, when we look round and see that hardly anyone is too ugly or disagreeable to find a wife or a husband if he or she wants one, whilst many old maids and bachelors are above the average in quality and culture, we cannot help suspecting that the disenchantment of sex from the associations with which it is so commonly confused, a disenchantment which persons of genius achieve by sheer intellectual analysis, is sometimes produced or aided by parental fascination.

As if Higgins' feelings for his mother were not clear enough, Shaw adds:

> [Eliza] was instinctively aware that she could never obtain a complete grip of him, or come between him and his mother (the first necessity of the married woman)... Even had there been no mother-rival... Had Mrs Higgins died there would still have been Milton and the Universal Alphabet. (14.PYG.290/1)

While Pygmalion may be in no strict sense autobiographical it is easy to understand Maurice Valency's contention that: 'Shaw's entire philosophic structure was an elaborate rationalization of his own psychic situation.'[22] If the ending of this play has been so frequently and so consistently 'adjusted' to provide the Cinderella story with its traditionally happy ending, the playwright himself set

up the misinterpretation, laying a trail of false clues only to explain them away in the Epilogue. St John Ervine describes how 'G.B.S... was wrath with Beerbohm Tree who, as the curtain fell on the last act, threw [Eliza] a rose...'[23]

Mrs Eynsford-Hill could not be in greater contrast: for all her double-barrelled name, she is far less fitted to succeed than Mrs Higgins and her hold on 'good' society is tenuous. Recognised by the practised ear as 'country gentry' she is still a figure of pathos from her first appearance, needing to take shelter from the elements in a public place and surrounded by her social inferiors. To the ill-tempered discomfort of her daughter, she cannot afford to provide private transport for her family, and her son is exposed as a young man incapable even of procuring a taxicab for his mother and sister who must stand dripping and humiliated by his lack of success. Her circumstances are so straitened that Clara expostulates at the extravagance of giving sixpence to a flowergirl, and when the rain ends they must creep away unescorted to get on a motor bus.[24] In the play's first act it is necessary to have a number of people, whose speech represents a wide cross-section of English accents, gathered in one place. The Eynsford-Hills provide the upper end of the selection and Higgins, the Notetaker, does his Music Hall turn of identifying everyone's place of origin. Later, in providing a rehearsal for Eliza at Mrs Higgins' At Home, other upper class persons must be present and who better than the family group who have already appeared under the portico in Covent Garden, the audience remembers them and their small family drama and as a bonus commercial managements do not have to employ too large a cast of actors.

In 'The Tea-party Scene' Mrs Eynsford-Hill apologises for her lack of social success, which she equates with having no money: 'We're so poor! and [Clara] gets so few parties,' she says. (14.PYG.254) She is too conscious of her actual refinement positively to complain, and her small comment about her beloved Freddy, 'But the boy is nice. Dont

you think so?' (14.PYG.254) demonstrates Shaw's skill in presenting a character with great economy; it is an example of genteel pathos that is quite touching. Judged by her own standards, Mrs Eynsford-Hill is an unsuccessful parent for, while she may speak like, and have the manners of, a lady, which indeed she is, she does not have the money or the means to reinforce her position as a lady and thus she will remain disadvantaged. What, for her, is more damning, is that she is unable to live in a way that will ensure an advantageous marriage for her daughter and a profitable match for her son, the only possible ways that exist for them, without family clout of any kind, to enter the best society.

In Pygmalion the relationship between the Doolittle father and daughter shows the woman/daughter as the 'property' of the man/father. The woman is a commodity that the father can (a) sell to another man and (b) does not consider to be 'valuable' until she is wanted by someone else. This behaviour appears outrageous in Doolittle but it is actually common practice in the aforementioned marriage market of 'good society' (and it is her inability to 'set out a good stall' for her children that so distresses Mrs Eynsford-Hill). Higgins treats Eliza no better than Doolittle when he is prepared to discard her after she won the bet for him and he is finished with her. The thematic point is that Eliza does not only become 'a lady' but she becomes her own woman, independent of men, because she is financially and emotionally independent.

John Tanner's suggestion that where parents and their children are of opposite sexes the relationships are the most successful does not always operate in Heartbreak House. This is because the object of the play is to present an aspect of 'civilised' European society grown so aimless and self-absorbed as to be in danger of threatened extinction, and the purpose of the relationships between Shotover and his daughters and between Mazzini Dunn and Ellie is to reflect something of that society. The play begins as though

these relationships are of significance and the first reference to Shotover, before he actually appears, is that he is 'Mrs Hushabye's father', while the long first act is a recital of the attitudes of the two glamorous, middle-aged women towards their aged and mad father who does not like either of them. Hesione, her name is that of the daughter of Laodemon who founded Troy, is married to the heroically named Hector Hushabye, but their sleepy, nursery surnames belie them. Of Hesione: Shotover says 'I keep this house: she upsets it,' (15.HH.46) and of Ariadne his rejection is so complete that he refuses to accept her as his daughter, will not answer her on several occasions when she speaks to him and twice remarks that 'she said she'd marry anybody to get away from home.' (15.HH.54) She bears the name of the daughter of Pasiphae and Minos of Crete who forsook her father and home when she betrayed the secret of the Labyrinth to Theseus and sailed away with him only to be deserted on Naxos. It is significant that Shotover accuses his daughter of abandoning him and not until the end of the play does he address Ariadne as his daughter:

> You left because you did not want us. Was there no heartbreak in that for your father? You tore yourself up by the roots: and the ground healed up and brought forth fresh plants and forgot you. What right had you to come back and probe old wounds. (15.HH.141)

Ariadne's feeling for him, as for everybody and everything, is based on 'right feelings': all her life she was 'always for respectability' (15.HH.51) and she describes herself as a 'woman of the world [who takes] the trouble always to do the perfectly correct thing, and to say the perfectly correct thing...' (15.HH.75) The importance of 'respectability' to a woman, especially if she is without wealth or social 'background,' is a usual theme in the early plays. In the case of Ariadne, who has both, it can be considered neurotic.

She particularly hates the sloppy life at home to which she has returned after twenty three years:

> ... the same disorder in ideas, in talk, in feeling. When I was a child I was used to it: I had never known anything better, though I was unhappy, and I longed all the time - oh how I longed! - to be respectable, to be a lady, to live as others did... I had forgotten that people could live like this. (15.HH.48/9)

When Ariadne returns her father appears not to recognize her but it is never certain that he is not using his old man's lapse of memory to avoid what he does not want to know. On learning that she is in England he says:

> I am not glad. The natural term of the affection of the human animal for its offspring is six years. My daughter Ariadne was born when I was forty-six. I am now eighty- eight. If she comes, I am not at home. If she wants anything, let her take it. If she asks for me, let her be informed that I am extremely old, and have forgotten her. (15.HH.47)

Shotover brings his scientific approach to everything, even to the calculation of the natural term of affection of a father for his child. It is unlikely that he should fail to recognize her, warned by Nurse Guinness only a few minutes earlier that she had returned, and Ariadne is beside herself at his denial: 'She becomes hysterical - Papa: you cant have forgotten me. I am your little Paddy Pattikins. Wont you kiss me.' But he refuses to acknowledge her: his 'absent daughter, Ariadne, [is] a perfect fiend,' (15.HH.50) and he will only repeat that she married a numskull to get away from home. This again is a bid against convention: fathers should recognise their daughters. Shotover has been hurt so much by his younger daughter's defection, that even after

twenty-three years he can only deal with it by denying her: his 'little Paddy Pattikins' - and what sentimental affection is in that old pet-name - who thought that the figurehead of her father's old ship was 'the most beautiful thing on earth' (15.HH.46) and married Hastings Utterword because he resembled it.

Hesione and Ariadne grew up in an atmosphere of emotional, intellectual, and material disorder so that one 'married at nineteen to escape from it,' (15.HH.49) while the other continued in even greater disorder with a husband for whom she acts as an (unsuccessful) pander and whom she treats as a lapdog.

Hector Hushabye starts a flirtation with his sister-in-law the moment they meet but he does not hesitate to give his opinion of both her and his wife:

> Until today I have only seen photographs of you; and no photograph can give the strange fascination of the daughters of that supernatural old man. There is a damnable quality in them that destroys men's moral sense, and carries them beyond honor and dishonor. (15.HH.74)

He spends his life in acting out his dreams, whether as Marcus Darnley or some other, and feels, with Ellie Dunn, that he is '... always expecting something. I dont know what it is; but life must come to a point sometime.' (15.HH.143) Ariadne's advice to Ellie, that having a baby would provide what she is looking for, does not satisfy him. He has his children and he is still wondering, 'How is all this going to end?' (15.HH.143)

Hector is not prepared to go without the comforts he enjoys, does not see himself as the family breadwinner, allows his wife to manage him and is prepared to be supported by the money made from the 'supernatural old man's' inventions when his own dividends have run out, but he has no illusions about the Shotover women. The

relationship between Shotover and the Hushabyes is, perhaps, the most complicated of the parent/child relationships in this play and it is expressed most powerfully in the eerie climax to the first act. In the conversation with Hector Hushabye, the Captain is at his most manic, aspiring to the god-like gifts that will allow him to 'win powers of life and death over [Mangan and Randall]... There is enmity between our seed and their seed.'

HECTOR: It is the same seed... You forget that [Dunn] has a very nice daughter. Mangan's son might be a Plato: Randall's Shelley. What was my father?

SHOTOVER: The damndestscoundrel I ever met.

HECTOR: Precisely. Well, dare you kill his innocent grandchildren?

SHOTOVER: They are mine also.

HECTOR: Just so. We are members one of another. (15.HH.78/9)

Shotover is obsessed by the need to achieve the means of destruction, no matter whose hypothetical grandchildren may be destroyed, and he urges that 'You cant spare them until you have the power to destroy them'; that power to destroy must precede the power to spare is discussed at greater length by Undershaft. Shotover warns that they - the Mangans and the Randalls and the Billy Dunns - in seeking to avoid their own death, 'bring forth demons to delude us, disguised as pretty daughters... for whose sake we spare them.' Coming from a father of two daughters this is the stuff of nightmare which Hector picks up: 'May not Hesione be such a demon, brought forth by you lest I should slay you.'

'That is possible,' agrees the old man. 'She has used you up. and left you nothing but dreams, as some women do.' (15.HH.79/80)

As though prose were not powerful enough to evoke supernatural elements which descend upon them, when Hesione enters the scene they move into heightened poetic language, apostrophising each other and themselves, wailing and raving.

SHOTOVER: What a house! What a daughter!
(Raising a strange wail in the darkness.)

HESIONE:(Raving) What a father!

HECTOR: (following suit) What a husband!

SHOTOVER: Is there no thunder in heaven?

HECTOR: Is there no beauty, no bravery, on earth?

And with a speech that recalls Mrs George in her mystic trance Hesione asks:

> What do men want? They have their food, their firesides, their clothes mended, and our love at the end of the day. Why are they not satisfied? Why do they envy us the pain with which we bring them into the world, and make strange dangers and torments for themselves to be even with us?

The weird chanting into which Shotover now breaks turns the following lines into ritual, and changes the characters into ritual figures, removing them entirely from what passes for normal, even in this extraordinary family.

SHOTOVER: I builded a house for my daughters, and opened the doors thereof.

That men might come for their choosing, and their betters spring from their love; But one of them married a numskull;

HECTOR: (taking up the rhythm) The other a liar wed;

HESIONE: (completing the stanza) And now she must lie beside him, even as she made her bed. (15.HH.82)

The atmosphere of despair and impending disaster is not broken by Ariadne's call from the garden.

It is the action of the Life Force that is missing from this house, which is what Shotover is mourning in the ritual chant: 'no betters', in his opinion, have sprung from the choices made by his daughters and the old man thinks little of their issue. For all her fussing over Ellie Dunn, for all her children, for all the fascination of Hesione, there is an accompanying sense of sterility about her. One is aware that not only the hair is false. Weisenthal remarks that, 'Hesione has already had her children, and has found no other, proper use to make of her enormous vitality.'[25]

Shaw damns Shotover fairly successfully in his daughters, a fact too often overlooked in the more usual comparison of Shotover with Shaw. This may be a just comparison, but Shaw is, after all, damning himself as well as those of his own generation who have allowed the ship of state to drift on to the rocks, an impending disaster that was evident to him as early as 1913 when he began the play. Shaw/Shotover is not just any sailor but a Captain, a leader responsible for the ship, one who should be able to be relied upon to navigate correctly, one of those experienced members of society who failed to guide Europe. In his heyday Shaw/Shotover may have tricked an ignorant and gullible crew into behaving themselves, but at home he was indifferent to the progress of his young family; he drifted when he should have led, and the result of his lack of watchfulness manifests itself in Hesione and Ariadne and the choices that

they made. In them is the mania for what Mangan objects to as: 'this mothering tyranny'. Mother/father and their derivatives can be used as complimentary or as pejorative words according to the circumstances and the speaker. Ariadne tells Mangan to keep on his clothes: '... there is no use in catching physical colds as well as moral ones.' (15.HH.136) Hesione, on discovering that his name is Alfred, suddenly realises that he is a 'real person' and had a 'real mother, like anyone else.' (15.HH.103) This tyranny, together with their ability to fascinate...and make men weep, has occupied their whole lives, Ariadne in the Governor's residences of 'all the crown colonies in succession,' (15.HH.49) and Hesione in the home counties.

The Captain himself has turned to making engines of destruction to satisfy his need to fight 'the enemy', but the need has been diverted into providing money to support the household. When the bombs start to fall he launches himself into a frenzy of orders, role-playing himself back on to the bridge of his ship (the 'Dauntless'!) and in his gnomic utterings he sees the hand of God at work. When the emergency is past he simply falls asleep, a very old and intermittently very mad man who pretends to forget what is too painful to remember and who, in his second childhood, has resorted to playing with dangerous toys.

It is not known who was the mother of Hesione and Ariadne. There are references to Shotover's wives, the black first wife in Jamaica, the West Indian negress to whom he was married for two years; but none to the mother of his children. Hector says that they are 'the mystical progeny' (15.HH.127) of Shotover and the black witch given to him by the devil in Zanzibar, but whoever she is her mystery is intentional and the ambiguity of her race and her colour is preserved.

It is not out of the ordinary that Shaw should create a young woman, Ellie Dunn, to redeem Shotover, at least partially, and to provide the only bleak hope in this most hope-less of all his plays. Ellie is as ardent in her

death-wish as the true inhabitants of Heartbreak House and she holds hands with Hesione, 'radiant with the prospect' that the bombers will strike 'tomorrow night,' (15.HH.149) but, at the close of her day's sudden maturity, she makes a decision to '... give my broken heart and my strong sound soul to its natural captain, my spiritual husband and second father.' (15.HH.138)

She is prepared to be his white wife; the implication being that she will cancel out the black magic and that even in his old age she will release him to the power of her love.

Within the context of the play Ellie Dunn can initially be accepted as a typical nineteenth century heroine, a '*motherless*' only child of a weak but doting father - a man who while he may be ineffective is, nevertheless, virtuous. For him she is prepared to sacrifice herself upon the altar of a loveless marriage. But like everyone else in this play Ellie is not what she seems to be: far from being the only child of an unfortunate idealist, at home she has brothers and sisters and a very realistic mother. She tells Mangan, who has just confessed that her father and his friends are no more to him than 'a heap of squeezed lemons:' (15.HH.86.7)

> How strange! that my mother, who knew nothing at all about business, should have been quite right about you! She always said - not before Papa, of course, but to us children - that you were just that sort of man... my mother married a very good man - for whatever you may think of my father as a man of business, he is the soul of goodness - and she is not at all keen on my doing the same. (15.HH.87)

Ellie, in that phrase ' - not before Papa, of course, but to us children -' demonstrates a reversal of what is usually accepted as normal procedure in the family, that it is the young who should be protected. In this case it is the father who is protected by those whom the society of that

time would certainly consider to be weaker than he. Just as Hedwig and Gina in Ibsen's The Wild Duck humour Hjalmar by not speaking of the unpleasant aspects of their life, so Dunn's wife and children keep from him those things which would distress him to know. Not that Dunn is as self-absorbed and self-pitying as Hjalmar: he is quite aware of the problem of his poverty:

> You dont know what that means at home. Mind: I dont say that they have ever complained. Theyve all been wonderful: theyve been proud of my poverty. Theyve even joked about it quite often. But my wife has had a very poor time of it. She has been quite resigned. (15.HH.94)

In spite of his 'soft centre', there is an especial quality in Dunn, recognized by Hesione who says, '... you must love Ellie very much; for you become quite clever when you talk about her.' (15.HH.95) 'Ellie is such a lovely girl,' (15.HH.96) he says, because she is the result of the great love that he and her mother shared.

As a parent Dunn is very affectionate and he and his daughter are forever touching - 'He draws her arm through his caressingly,' (15.HH.72) and 'He draws her arm affectionately through his,' (15.HH.54) - as with Undershaft and Barbara theirs is a father/daughter relationship where instruction of this nature is given to the actors. Yet he is quite unconcerned about her marrying Mangan, less so than Hesione who has invited them all to the house for the sole purpose of breaking up the proposed match. Shotover, in advising the industrialist against it, is quite blunt. 'Dont. You're too old (15.HH.67) and he adds that Hesione will stop the marriage, he has seen it in her eye. In dissuading Boss Mangan, Shotover becomes lyrical: told that it is not his business, he replies, 'Its everybody's business. The stars in their courses are shaken when such things happen.' (15.HH.67)

And yet Ellie is not so helpless as they presume her to be. Hesione calls her 'a delicate sweet helpless child,' (15.HH.92) and Shotover, 'this innocent child,' (15.HH.47) but her father - who has certainly known her longer - declares that Mangan is really soft and that 'he wont have a dogs chance against Ellie. You know, Ellie has remarkable strength of character.' (15.HH.93) Whatever they all think about her, Ellie is able to say, 'Hesione knows nothing about me: she hasnt the least notion of the sort of person I am, and never will. I promise you I wont do anything I dont want to do and mean to do for my own sake.' (15.HH.97)

The appearance of Ellie Dunn and the eruption of Ariadne, coming within moments of each other, act as catalysts upon the house and its occupants, and from the beginning, there is a dream-like atmosphere that persists throughout the play. The whole strange day and night might almost proceed from Ellie's dream state, the play opens with her falling asleep over her book. Such an idea borders on whimsy and would be eschewed by Shaw, but the reference to sleep and dreams are so numerous as to be overwhelming, and even an artificial, induced sleep resulting from hypnotism is demonstrated when Ellie puts Mangan into a trance. Dunn tells, at length, how he was once hypnotized by Ellie after she had seen a theatrical demonstration of it: Hesione had fallen asleep while preparing the rooms for her guests: Randall is sent to bed by Ariadne so that he will sleep off his nerves, and the last thing she says to him, after the bombs have fallen, is 'The danger is over, Randall. Go to bed.' (15.HH.149) Shotover, in the manner of the very old, is forever falling asleep, and his naps punctuate the play. While Ellie listens 'dreamily with her eyes half closed' there follows a remarkable scene in which is expressed the essence of his character and of his central philosophy:

> When you are a child your vessel is not yet full... When you grow up your vessel overflows... In old age the vessel dries up, there is no overflow: you are a child again...
> I see my daughters and their men living foolish lives of romance and sentiment and snobbery. I see you, the younger generation turning... to money and comfort and hard common sense. I was ten times happier on the bridge in the typhoon, or frozen into arctic ice for months in darkness, than you or they have ever been... I did not let the fear of death govern my life; and my reward was, I had my life... (15.HH.118/9)

Impatient at the polarity of his experience in terms of old and young, rich and poor, waking and sleeping, she challenges him about his drinking and he reveals his secret dread of dreams:

> To be drunk means to have dreams... Drink does that for you when you are young. But when you are old: very very old like me, the dreams come by themselves. You dont know how terrible that is: you are young: you sleep at night only, and sleep soundly. But later you will sleep in the afternoon. Later still you will sleep even in the morning; and you will awake tired, tired of life. You will never be free of dozing and dreams: the dreams will steal upon your work every ten minutes unless you can awaken yourself with rum... (15.HH.119)

At their first meeting Shotover treats Ellie with great kindness and with a sort of recognition - although the recognition is quite incorrect - that he does not show for his daughter, Ariadne. He enquires whether this misguided and unfortunate young lady '... had no friend, no parents, to warn her against [Hesione's] invitations,' (15.HH.45) thus, with that word 'warn', suggesting that Ellie is in a

threatened position. In spite of her frequent protestations of devotion to him, 'I think that my father is the best man I have ever known,' (15.HH.46) Shotover, on learning her father's name, insists that he is the rascally bo'sun, Billy Dunn: so before Ellie's father, Mazzini Dunn, appears, doubt has already been cast upon his integrity and his paternity. (Another comparison with Hjalmar that is not pursued.) Ellie is constantly rebuking others for denigrating her father. Hesione in particular, dislikes him - although, given half a chance, she would gobble him up - and while she calls him ' a very remarkable man', christened by his poetic parents after Guisseppe Mazzini, the Italian liberal cult figure of the eighteen-fifties[26], she adds sarcastically that 'he has been fighting for freedom in his quiet way ever since. That's why he is so poor.' (15.HH.53) His surname Dunn (done) adds a dimension to his character: that his creative life is past, or perhaps that he is a man of whom advantage will always be taken.

So it is near strangers who are looking out for the welfare of Ellie Dunn rather than her natural parents: an old mad sea captain sees more clearly than does her father that marriage with Mangan would be a disaster and tells him so, while Hesione blatantly fascinates Mangan in order to draw him from the younger woman.

Shotover, the father substitute, is also the grandfather substitute through Ariadne's mistaken recognition of Ellie as the daughter of Hesione. Ellie has become the wife, the child and the grandchild of the supernatural old man in his second childhood. Her search, or her dream, has led her from the illusion of romantic love with Marcus Darnley, past Boss Mangan and the temptations of financial salvation for herself and her family, to the security of the old mad Shotover. Something of his vitality enters into her and if she has been dreaming she is now fully awake and alive, willing to give her 'broken heart and [her] strong sound soul to its natural captain, [her] spiritual husband and second father.' (15.HH.138) In this last of the English

domestic plays a mystical father/daughter relationship between Shotover and Ellie has superseded, without destroying, the natural one between Mazzini and Ellie. Shotover is the *second* father, the father of her own choice whom she has found without having to leave the first one.
None of the men proved to be what they seemed: there is nothing princely about Hector and he is not even a romantic hero, Mangan's financial empire is a sham and Shotover's madness begins to sound sane, 'Courage will not save you, but it will shew that your souls are still alive.' (15.HH.147)

Comparisons are often drawn between Heartbreak House and King Lear and in Shakes versus Shav, Shaw's play for puppets written in 1946, Shakespeare demands, 'Could thou write King Lear?'
Shav replies, 'Aye, with his daughters all complete. Could thou have written Heartbreak House? Behold my Lear,' at which a transparency is lit up to show Shotover seated, as in Millais' picture called North West Passage, with a young woman of virginal beauty who quotes from the play.'[27] There are numbers of references to the 'breaking of the heart' in both plays, particularly in Heartbreak House, and the last speech of King Lear as he leaves Gloucester's house to go out into the storm ends:

> ... but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep - O fool, I shall go mad!
> (Act II sc.iv)

As with many of Shaw's plays this one had a provisional, 'working' title - Lena's Father, after which it was called The Studio in the Clouds and alternatively referred to as 'the Hushabye Play.' It was finally named Heartbreak House just before it was finished in 1917.[28]

It was not a conceit of thirty years later that made Shaw write in the preface to Shakes versus Shav where he

compares Shakespeare's family background with his own, and finishes with the words: 'Enough too for my feeling that the real Shakespeare might have been myself, and for the shallow mistaking of it for mere professional jealousy.'[29] Shotover is the old, physically enfeebled father, once a strong leader of men, now seeming mad, who behaves irrationally to all around him. His daughters can be compared to Goneril and Regan and young Ellie Dunn is that Cordelia figure who finally redeems him with their spiritual marriage. The husbands of the daughters may be likened to Albany and Cornwall and even Mazzini could be the 'father-figure' of France with whom Ellie/Cordelia has taken refuge until her return to her 'father.' There are other references that may be made and both Meisel and Margery M Morgan draw attention to Mangan's likeness to Lear in the total stripping away of falseness when he tries to take off his clothes.[30] Morgan sees comparisons with other plays of Shakespeare, particularly with The Tempest where Lear/Ellie compare with Prospero/Miranda.[31] Shaw's preface makes it clear that he was writing 'A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes' that placed his characters in the disintegrating society of Europe that preceded the First World War. His story would, according to Meisel, seem to owe more to 'A Hero of Romance' by Westland Marston[32] while the characters themselves echo Shakespeare.

In a criticism of King Lear Kenneth Tynan finished with the words: 'Soon after writing this, I listened to a recording of the voice of Bernard Shaw, and knew instantly where to seek for this century's only and unexceptionable Lear.'[33]

## NOTES

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2 Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw: Robert Hale Ltd, 1950, p.125

3 Colin Wilson, Bernard Shaw, p.98

4 See Bernard Shaw, Widowers' Houses, Facsimiles of the Shorthand and Holograph Manuscripts and the 1893 Published Text, Introduction by Jerold E Bringle, New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc. 1981, p.276

5 Appendix I, Garland, pp.272-78

6 Sigmund Freud, On Sexuality, The Pelican Freud Library, Volume 7, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977, p.111

7 Appendix I, p.274

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9 G K Chesterton, George Bernard Shaw, London: John Lane, 1909, p.131

Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, p.280

10 St John Ervine, Bernard Shaw, pp.151-7, 166-7

11 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, p.33

12 Emil Strauss, Bernard Shaw: Art and Socialism, London: Gollancz, 1942 pp.33-4

13 Janet Dunbar, Mrs GBS., London: George Harrap & Co.Ltd, 1963, p.45 & pp.281-3

14 Maurice Valency, The Cart and the Trumpet, New York,: Oxford University Press, 1973, p.312

15 The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1952, p.1064

16 Preface, Three Plays for Puritans, p.xxxviii

17 Meisel, p.169

18 T W Robertson, School, 1869

19 My Fair Lady was first produced in New York, March 1956

20 Margery M Morgan, p.173

21 Janet Dunbar, Mrs GBS, p.168

22 Maurice Valency, The Cart and the Trumpet, p.322

23 St John Ervine, p.460

24 An interesting example of similar shame is given by Gore Vidal: 'I once met an old lady who arrived at the same house and at the same time I arrived for dinner. As we went insidside, she asked me quite seriously not to tell anyone I had seen her get out of a 'public taxi-cab' You entertained at home; you travelled in your own car.' 'Social Climbing, According to the Book,' Rocking the Boat, London: Heinemann, 1963, p.221

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28 Collected Letters, 1911-25, p.408

29 Bodley Head, Bernard Shaw, Vol 7, p.471

30 Meisel, Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theater, p.317

31 Margery M Morgan, p.211

32 Meisel, p.317

33 Kenneth Tynan, A View of the English Stage, St Albans: Granada Publishing Ltd, 1976, p.41

# 6

## THE RETURN OF THE ABSENT PARENT*

In Shaw's plays the 'single' parent may also be an absent parent. Kitty Warren is a clear example of this. Mrs Clandon in You Never Can Tell abandoned her husband so long ago that she may be considered to be a single parent insofar as she alone has raised her family while he has returned to living as a single man. In Major Barbara, Undershaft, while remaining financially responsible for his children, has been apart from them for so long that he fails to recognise them when they meet, and his wife considers herself to be a single parent while Undershaft, like Crampton, lives as a single man.

There are three plays, Mrs Warren's Profession, You Never Can Tell, and Major Barbara, in which the reappearance of a parent who has long been absent from home results in a reappraisal of the relationships of the parents with their children, and more particularly, promotes a crisis after which the child can more clearly see and evaluate herself. In each case, the child who is changed irrevocably by the return of the parent is a daughter.

In Mrs Warren's Profession, the third Unpleasant Play, Shaw spurns the easy sentimentality of the Courtesan play: instead he lays the blame for the existence of prostitution squarely on the doorstep of society, understanding that it is the demand that has provided the supply. Not only did he create an unrepentant and successful prostitute, thereby breaking all the rules of social acceptability, but he provided her with a daughter who, finding that she liked neither her mother nor the source of her income, renounced them both.

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Written in 1893, the play was given its first and private performance by the Stage Society in 1905. It was not publicly performed in Britain until 1925.[1] Chesterton stated exactly why it had been banned:

> The crime of Shaw was that he introduced the Gaiety Girl, but did not represent her life as all gaiety. The pleasures of vice were already flaunted before the playgoers. It was the perils of vice that were carefully concealed from them... Mrs Warren's Profession was not up to a sufficient standard of immorality; it was not spicy enough to pass the Censor. The acceptable and the accepted plays were those which made the fall of a woman fashionable and fascinating for all the world as if the Censor's profession were the same as Mrs Warren's profession.[2]

Shaw, in The Author's Apology to Mrs Warren' Profession, expands on this and refers to

> ...an unwritten but perfectly well understood regulation that members of Mrs Warren's profession shall be tolerated on the stage only when they are beautifully, exquisitely dressed, and sumptuously lodged and fed; also that they shall, at the end of the play, die of consumption to the sympathetic tears of the whole audience, or step into the next room to commit suicide, or at least be turned out by their protectors and passed out to be redeemed by old and faithful lovers who have adored them in spite of all their levities. (7.MWP.155/6)

In dealing with a prostitute who has 'got away with it' - just as Sartorius and Lickcheese got away with their slum landlordism - and her relationship with her intellectually ambitious daughter, Shaw presents two problems. He discusses Kitty and Vivie Warren as mother and daughter,

while at the same time exploring the reasons why poor women turned to prostitution. These themes are linked. Vivie can identify with the girls who work for her mother and Kitty says, 'Plenty of girls have taken to me like daughters and cried at leaving me,' (7.MWP.251)

You Never Can Tell, written two years after Mrs Warren's Profession, is wholly bound up with the relationships of parents and children and like the earlier play relies entirely upon those relationships. A Pleasant Play, it is not concerned with the castigation of society but rather with the hazards of all relationships, of life itself. As Bohun says: '... all matches are unwise. Its unwise to be born; its unwise to be married; its unwise to live; and its wise to die.' (8.YNCT.304)
Shaw explains, in his Preface to Plays Pleasant, how he came to write You Never Can Tell:

> [It] was an attempt to comply with many requests for a play in which the much paragraphed 'brilliancy' of Arms And The Man should be tempered by some considerations for the requirements of the managers in search of fashionable comedies for West End theatres... I had no difficulty in complying, as I have always cast my plays in the ordinary practical comedy form in use at all the theatres; and far from taking an unsympathetic view of the popular preference for fun, fashionable dresses, a little music, and even an exhibition of eating and drinking by people with an expensive air, attended by an if-possible-comic waiter, I was more than willing to shew that the drama can humanize these things as easily as they, in the wrong hands, can dehumanize the drama. (8.xi)

This play enjoys a reputation for bearing a strong similarity to Shaw's own family circumstances. It deals with a talented, capable and completely frigid women estranged from a husband who drank and from whom she fled to

a foreign country with their three children, two girls and a boy. St John Ervine remarks at length on the resemblance and adds:

> G.B.S.'s resentment against the loveless and inefficient homes in which he spent his childhood, youth and early manhood is apparent throughout the comedy, though he makes the conditions of Mrs Clandon's home different from these in which he was brought up.[3]

The setting is a fashionable sea-side resort and after the first act in Valentine's dental surgery it is played outside and inside the luxurious confines of the Marine Hotel, where the Clandon family is ministered to by William, the waiter, who acts as friend and ringmaster of the Clandon circus.

The 'story' is simple. When visiting the dentist to collect her younger sister and brother, Gloria Clandon meets Valentine who immediately falls in love with her. His landlord, Mr Crampton, turns out to be their long-lost father. In spite of 'an exhibition of eating and drinking,' a Fancy Ball with dancing couples and harlequinade gaiety, the play does not end with the reconciliation of the parents - who have managed to address each other only eight times during the course of the day - although the home-spun philosophy of the near-comic waiter will send the audience away thinking that they have witnessed a happy ending.

In Major Barbara, Andrew Undershaft is the absent father who returns to his family at the invitation of his wife: in this he is unlike Mrs Warren who had never considered herself to have been absent in the first place, and unlike Crampton who returned only as the result of an accidental meeting.

Like Mrs Warren's Profession, Major Barbara, written more than ten years later, is a play that contains a strong parent/ child relationship. Shaw himself saw similarities

between them and said to Archibald Henderson: 'Perhaps a more suitable title for this play, save for the fact of repetition, would have been 'Andrew Undershaft's Profession.'[4] In it he again attacks social evils, blaming society itself rather than the individual for what was, to him, the worst of crimes and one in which the victim usually connived at his own misery: namely the crime of poverty. While slum landlordism and prostitution were rife they sprang from a general and accepted over-all condition of poverty to which Shaw reacted violently. The fact that poverty was a state declared blessed he found obscene; that it was accepted as inevitable, 'the poor who are always with us,' he opposed throughout his life. He did not see the love of money - but the lack of money - as the root of evil. To him, charity as preached by the Christian Church contained at its heart the sin of accepting poverty as an ill to be endured rather than to be rooted out as intolerable to a caring society. The Church, he felt, condoned where it should have condemned, and whether it gave blankets and coals or bread and treacle, it would have done better had it armed the poor to rise against a system in whose best interests they were kept poor.

Shaw chose to dramatise his beliefs in a play about the spiritual education of a sincere Salvationist, Major Barbara Undershaft, by her father, an international armaments manufacturer. She represented those virtues that prolong poverty by loving, but puny, amelioration of the lot of the poor, based on their worship of a loving Father in Heaven who will ultimately reward them for cheerful stoicism. He, arguing with the skill and passion of the Father of Lies himself believed that money saves souls from the seven deadly sins, that 'Food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children' are millstones round the neck of man and that 'the spirit cannot soar until the millstones are lifted.' (11.MB.338) Compare this with Don Juan's words to The Old Woman (Ana) in Man and Superman written two years earlier. '... there is justice in hell:

heaven is far above such idle human personalities. You will be welcome in hell, Senora. Hell is the home of honor, duty, justice and the rest of the seven deadly virtues. All the wickedness on earth is done in their name: where else but in hell should they have their reward? Have I not told you that the truly damned are those that are happy in hell?' (10.MSM.90) The positions of Barbara and Undershaft are polarised from the beginning of the play and the uneasy, even unlikely, alliance that they form at the end has much to do with this great, though overlong play, being considered Shaw's flawed masterpiece. Desmond MacCarthy believes that '... the defeat of the play is that Barbara's conversion is much less impressive than the loss of her old religion.'[5]

The similarity between Ibsen's Ghosts and Mrs Warren's Profession is evident as both deal with a single parent and an only child, now a young adult, whom the mother has sent away and from whom she has kept the truth of the father's identity; his actual identity in the case of Vivie and his moral identity in the case of Oswald. Both plays touch upon incest, either as a certainty or as a possibility, and in both of them is presented the involvement of the mother with a clergyman. Where Oswald and Vivie are serious people who wish to make their way in their chosen profession, Regina and Frank are only superficially charming and shallow in contrast. Neither Mrs Alving nor Mrs Warren is what at first she may appear to be, and both plays proceed by way of disclosures that are, to the society of the day, shocking and unacceptable conclusions.

In Ghosts, it is the child who returns to the mother after a long absence. In Mrs Warren's Profession it is the mother who returns to the child (a typical Shavian inversion). Vivie, on being told of her mother's arrival is 'not at all pleased.'

> ...My mother has rather a trick of taking me by surprise - to see how I behave myself when she's

> away, I suppose. I fancy I shall take my mother very much by surprise one of these days, if she makes arrangements that concern me without consulting me beforehand... (7.MWP.182)

Ghosts, is a play of great gloom and little hope, Mrs Warren's Profession is more optimistic. Shaw throws light, compassion, and above all, common-sense on to a subject that was to remain taboo for the next 33 years, and he chose to do this by explaining the relationship of 'a most deplorable old rip'[6] of a mother, as he wrote to Janet Achurch, and her daughter, 'an attractive specimen of the sensible, able, highly-educated, young, middle-class Englishwoman.' (7.MWP.182) Chesterton describes the play as being 'concerned with a coarse mother and a cold daughter' but I cannot agree with him that the play represents Shaw's 'only complete or nearly complete, tragedy.'[7] The optimism and humour of Mrs Warren's Profession is not the stuff of tragedy. The importance of a play of the stature of Mrs Warren's Profession is heightened, not diminished, by the many different interpretations and critical analyses that have been drawn from it. So Martin Lamm writes that: 'What spoils this powerful drama is above all its tone, which is too light for the subject with which it is dealing. The basic idea, the need for harmony between one's life and one's beliefs, is as rigorously moral as any of Ibsen's.'[8] While in his essay, The Shavian Machine, T.R. Henn remarks that:

> ...Mrs Warren's Profession comes very close to true tragedy in the Ibsen manner. It is not hard to see why. The theme and its characters are integral, the psychological insight more subtle than usual; and because the speech of the characters is wholly in tone with the playwright's conception of them, it does not jar by any attempt at the self-conscious poetic... And while the component themes are drawn from Shaw's stock-in-trade (poverty, morality, clerical

> hypocrisy, parent-child relationships) they are sufficiently absorbed into the idea of the play not to appear discordant.[9]

While one may not approve of Kitty, or particularly like Vivie, and although the play is not entirely optimistic, there is no blood on the floor when mother and daughter part. In Ghosts, the personal integrity, the 'wholeness', of neither of the two main characters, mother and child, is upheld, whereas in Mrs Warren's Profession both Kitty and Vivie remain themselves to the end, hopeful of their own futures and conscious of the new directions that their lives will take.

Although You Never Can Tell and Major Barbara bear no resemblance to Ghosts, in the Mothers can be seen the shadow of Mrs Alving. Like her, Lady Britomart has distanced her family from what she considers to be the father's malign influence, but unlike Ibsen's heroine, she has not spent years in pretence. Believing that Undershaft has spent his life openly defying 'every social and moral obligation' she has not hesitated to recruit public opinion (Gladstone, The Times, and the Lord Chamberlain) against him, although to small avail: (11.MB.253) again Shaw has stood an idea on its head and in so doing created genuine humour. Mrs Clandon, on the other hand, so detested her husband that her only recourse was actually to flee the country to avoid the father's claim on 'her' children.

None of Shaw's mothers was prepared to lie to their children about their absent fathers, as Mrs Alving lied to Oswald: Mrs Clandon would not hear him spoken of and would not, for years, tolerate questions on his identity, while Kitty Warren was '... so determined to keep the child all to herself that she would deny it had ever had a father if she could.' (7.MWP.192) This attitude recalls Strindberg's The Father and the mother's determination to keep the child to herself. It also has something in common with Rachel Arbuthnot, Wilde's A Woman of No Importance, in her attitude

to Lord Illingworth. Miss Yates in Granville Barker's Madras House and Janet De Mullin in The Last of the De Mullins by St John Hankin react in the same way: this is the New Woman as mother.

Kitty Warren can be seen as both the Absent Parent, the bread-winner, whose meeting with her daughter confirms them both, and as the parent who has remained inadequately present but without providing a good enough Substitute Parent for Vivie during those long inadequacies. In this respect she is unique among parents.

The opening scene of Mrs Warren's Profession serves to explain something of the distance between mother and daughter and Praed's question, 'Has your mother arrived?' (7.MWP.182) promotes an immediate response that is neither friendly nor conventionally respectful. Before Kitty Warren appears the audience will be completely informed as to the young woman's attitude towards her as well as her forthright manner of talking to middle-aged men whom she has not known for more than a few minutes. Praed wonders whether her mother will be disappointed in Vivie as she is 'so different from her ideal,' and continues:

> ... you must have observed, Miss Warren, that people who are dissatisfied with their own bringing-up generally think that the world would be all right if everybody were to be brought up differently. Now your mother's life has been - er - I suppose you know -

But Vivie replies:

> Dont suppose anything, Mr Praed. I hardly know my mother. Since I was a child I have lived in England, at school or college or with other people paid to take charge of me. I have been boarded out all my life. My mother has lived in Brussells, or Vienna and never let me go to her. I only see her when she visits England for a few days. I dont complain: its been very pleasant, for people have been very good to me;

> and there has always been plenty of money to make things smooth. But dont imagine I know anything about my mother. I know far less than you do.

This speech contains the first reference to substitute parents in the English domestic plays and Vivie, like her mother, retains the superstition, as Shaw would have it, that blood is thicker than water. It is those 'other people' who were the child's, and then the young woman's, protectors rather than any natural parent, and she continues in the same speech:

> I dont complain: its been very pleasant, for people have been very good to me...

It is not far fetched to say that these persons and institutes in whose care she has been placed, and who have brought her up to be emotionally self sufficient as well as intellectually extremely able, have constituted between them a series of substitute parents. When Praed tries to change the subject she is 'unmoved' and quite insensitive to his embarrassment:

> Why wont my mother's life bear being talked about... she wont talk about it either... I expect there will be a battle royal when my mother hears of my Chancery Lane project... I shall win... I have no mysteries to keep up; and it seems she has. I shall use that advantage over her if necessary.

Praed suggests that she 'may be too bold. Your mother is not to be trifled with when she's angry.' (7.MWP.187)
Vivie is unperturbed, confidant that she will win:

> You cant frighten me, Mr Praed. In that month at Chancery Lane I had opportunities of taking the measure of one or two women very like my mother. You

> may back me to win. But if I hit harder in my ignorance than I need, remember that it is you who refuse to enlighten me. (7.MWP.188)

This speech gives an insight into Vivie's particular kind of vanity. These women whom she met when she was assisting her friend, Honoria Fraser, in her Chancery Lane chambers, were they clients, or other professional women: were they domineering, mother-figures, these women 'very like [her] mother?' Certainly they would not have been brothel-keepers. She follows this by blaming Praed *in advance* for any misjudgment that she may make; a determination to be right must necessarily be accompanied by a conviction that somebody else is wrong.

The audience is informed of a great many facts in the 'plot-laying' of the first scene and is given plenty of time to absorb something of the way in which this modern, educated, 'new woman' regards her mother.

Perhaps Praed would have enlightened her but he is prevented by Mrs Warren's arrival: she is 'aged somewhat between 40 and 50, rather spoilt and domineering, and decidedly vulgar, but, on the whole, a genial and fairly presentable old blackguard of a woman.' (7.MWP.188) Her first words to her daughter are:

> Vivie: put your hat on, dear: you'll get sunburnt. Oh, I forgot to introduce you. Sir George Crofts: my little Vivie. (7.MWP.189)

In 21 words Mrs Warren balances the whole of Vivie's opening explanatory scene; it is a masterly stroke by which Shaw demonstrates how far he has come from the stilted structural development of Widowers' Houses and The Philanderer.

In Mrs Warren's first speech she implies, with the utmost economy, her entire attitude to her daughter: that Vivie is still a child who must be reminded when and how to dress, that her daughter is socially gauche in not knowing

that sunburn is unfashionable and therefore to be avoided, that she is not a person of consequence - hadn't she almost forgotten to introduce her to Crofts? - and that she is someone who *belongs* to her Mother, to be spoken of as 'my little girl.' It is a combination of words with their implicit opinions to which Vivie reacts very positively.

From the moment she appears Mrs Warren comfortably presumes that she has rights over her daughter, just because Vivie is her daughter: she is scornful of Praed who is already aware that surprises are imminent.

> I think, you know - if you dont mind my saying so - that we had better get out of the habit of thinking of her as a little girl. You see she has really distinguished herself; and I'm not sure, from what I have seen of her, that she is not older than any of us.

Praed's tactful criticism - 'older than any of us', and his warnings are ignored, only provoking from Kitty the conventional point of view that would be accepted by the great majority of late nineteenth-century parents, as well as by a fair majority of parents today. 'Yes; and young people have to get all that nonsense taken out of them, and a good deal more besides... I know how to treat my own child as well as you do.'

When he adds, 'Vivie is a grown woman. Pray, Kitty, treat her with every respect' she answers 'with genuine amazement - Respect! Treat my own daughter with respect! What next, pray!' (7.MWP.190/1) But Vivie turns on her later in the day after again she has resorted to a cry for her 'rights as a mother':

> ...You claim the rights of a mother: the right to call me fool and child; to speak to me as no woman in authority over me at college dare speak to me; to dictate my way of life; and to force on me the

> acquaintance of a brute whom anyone can see to be the most vicious sort of London man about town... (7.MWP.211)

It is clear that Shaw is keenly aware of those areas of impertinent familiarity that exist, usually to the disadvantage of the younger person, within family relationships.

Persistently Vivie claims *her* rights, to know the name of her father, whose blood is in her veins, and while she may declare that she will always respect her mother's right to her own opinions and her own way of life, it is her air of cold superiority that so angers the older woman: 'What right have you to set yourself up above me like this?' (7.MWP.212)

A pattern is emerging of the parent who wishes to dominate versus the child who wishes to go its own way: in the same play the Rev Sam Gardner and his son Frank have a relationship that is thoroughly unsatisfactory. The father is not treated with the respect that he has been conditioned to expect, paying the young man's debts only results in his sanctimonious advice being laughed aside - which, in any case, is all that it deserves - and he gets in return none of the ego-boosting sense of superiority that is the 'right' of any middle-class Victorian parent. Like Kitty Warren and Colonel Craven, he believes that just because he is a parent he has certain unquestionable rights.

In The Philanderer Craven uses almost the same words as Mrs Warren when, in answer to Charteris, he refutes any suggestion that he should respect the feelings of his daughter:

CHARTERIS : You forget the revolt of the daughters, Craven. And you certainly wouldnt have gone on like that to any grown up woman who was not your daughter.

CRAVEN : Do you mean to say that I am expected to treat my daughter the same as I would any other girl?.. Well, dash me if I will. There!' (7.Ph.142/3)

Respect is something to be given to a father as his 'right': it is Craven's right to be respected, but, although he may indulge Julia, the idea of respecting her is totally alien to him.

<u>You Never Can Tell</u> is a play in which people are constantly demanding their rights: Gloria and the twins, like Vivie Warren believe it is their right to know who their father was: Crampton, once he has met them, is particularly determined to exercise his rights over his children and so play a parent's role.

'Heartrent', he complains to Valentine, 'Have I no rights, no claims?' and a few moments later, in his first confrontation with Gloria he asks, 'Do you realize that I am your father?... Do you know what is due to me as your father?... For instance, duty, affection, respect, obedience.' (8.YNCT.251)

Mrs Warren could not have put it any more clearly.

Gloria, in her turn, asks her mother, 'with deep reproach', whom she discovers to have been questioning Valentine about his 'intentions', 'What right had you to do it?'

But the enlightened Mrs Clandon believes in her rights and she replies that she has said nothing that she had 'no right to say.'

Gloria is as stubborn as her father and persists that she '... cannot believe that anyone has any right even to think about things that concern me only.... No one has any right to try [to protect me]: not even [my] mother.' (8.YNCT.269)

Gloria is breaking the conventional mould of the child's most basic right to demand and expect protection from its parent, and, in so doing, she is denying the right of the parent to that function.

These parents, so much more privileged than Kitty Warren, so much more liberal and entirely respectable, whose association with the cathedral close is legitimate, are still anxious to invoke their rights when it comes to dealing with their children. They are no more able to prevent themselves from certain conventional reactions to their children - more particularly Crampton than Mrs Clandon - than they are able to cleanse their stuff'd bosoms of the old resentments that continue to weigh upon their hearts.

Only William, the comic waiter, is able to accept his formidable barrister son for what he is. Indeed he can say, 'It is a pleasure to me to watch the working of his trained and powerful mind: very stimulating, very entertaining and instructive indeed.' (8.YNCT.292) William, it would appear, is lacking a sense of 'what is due to him' as a parent; but whether he has forgone it or whether he does not agree that anything is due to him, is not explored. At Bohun's unexpected appearance William had quailed before him, but he goes on to say: 'Never mind my being the gentleman's father... it is only the accident of birth after all.' (8.YNCT.287)

It is a most unconventional statement from the stereotyped, conventionally comic waiter, and not without a typical Shavian twist. William, who was never master in his own house, whose wife was rather like Gloria, 'of a commanding and masterful disposition', and from whom it is assumed their brilliant son inherited his brilliance, would seem to be as much ill-matched in his marriage as the Crampton/Clandons, thus underlining the point that you never can tell how the children of such unions will turn out. (8.YNCT.305)

Lady Britomart Undershaft, Barbara's aristocratic mother, like Kitty Warren and Mrs McQuinch, believes that the very fact of being a mother confers on her certain rights of interference and she treats her children as children. Stephen, who is 24, she treats as if he were a schoolboy, whilst going to elaborate lengths to appear to be

doing quite the opposite: 'I really cannot bear the burden of our family affairs any longer. You must advise me.' (11.M.B.250)
As Louis Crompton says:

> She thinks she is consulting her son Stephen about the family inheritance when she is in fact revealing her own firm convictions... If she were not as amiable as she is wilful and domineering, she would be an atrocious tyrant, [but] as she is prevented by her affectionateness from acting as peremptorily as she talks, we even end by feeling something like pity for her as a well-intentioned mother balked in the pursuit of her heart's desire.[10]

In Pygmalion, it is Doolittle who introduces the rights of parenthood. Where others have expected obedience, respect, and perhaps even love as their rights, Doolittle is cheerfully unconcerned with everything except a financial return. A less amusing and less sympathetic character than he would be quickly condemned for such sentiments as:

> As a daughter she's not worth her keep... All I ask is my rights as a father... the price of his own daughter what he's brought up and fed and clothed... until she's growed big enough to be interesting to you two gentlemen. Is five pounds unreasonable. (14.PYG.237/8)

> Doolittle's interpretation of his paternal rights may be more honest, and certainly more direct than the parent who protests at the foolishness of educating daughters 'who only go and get married,' but what it amounts to is his right to sell his daughter to whomsoever will pay the price that he asks.

As Malone senior says to Violet when dealing with, what to him is, the unsatisfactory marriage of his son:

'There must be profit for someone.' (10.MSM.147) There is not the slightest point in her protesting that Hector has 'the right' to expect his father to enable him to keep up his financial position in society.

Those parents who expect material return as their rights are more straightforward and more easily satisfied than the ones at the other end of the scale who, like Kitty Warren, are really demanding to be loved. Doolittle has no emotional need of his daughter, but the money would be useful: while Kitty, until she is driven to forgo her rights as a mother has only an idealized and utterly unrealistic attitude to her child.

In each of the three plays the returning parent is seen as the 'intruder' and his/her return as an intrusion. In Mrs Warren's Profession and in You Never Can Tell, the returning parent does not cement the parent/child relationship, only in Major Barbara does that occur; but in every case there follows, upon the parent's return, a period of enlightenment for the children which may or may not prove to be permanent. Barbara leaves the Salvation Army and embraces the work and the 'religion' of Undershaft. In accepting her father, Barbara is accepting the philosophies and the social attitudes that he represents while in You Never Can Tell the rejection of Crampton is the rejection of the nuclear family in favour of the independence of the individual members. Vivie Warren rejects her mother not because she has been a prostitute but because Kitty *now* belongs to that part of society that both creates and capitalizes upon prostitution.

The return of the absent parent brings problems. In Mrs Warren's Profession Vivie has let it be known that she is expecting to fight with her mother, that she is prepared for it, and that she is ready to take the advantage by exploiting her moral prerogative. When the inevitable confrontation between the two women occurs, it begins in a low key, Vivie continuing to do her work, dropping disparaging comments and remaining indifferent as to how

they will be received. If this is the beginning of the 'battle-royal' of which she has warned Praed it begins as only a small skirmish. She doubts whether her 'way of life' would suit her mother, and she enquires, 'Has it really never occurred to you, mother, that I have a way of life like other people?'

Her mother, 'galled by [her] indifference, 'staring at her,' 'puzzled, then angry,' raises the temperature of the conversation until after '(violently) Hold your tongue,' and '(raising her voice angrily)' she asks: 'Do you know who you're speaking to, Miss?'

The opening is made for Vivie's; 'No. Who are you? What are you?' And the battle is joined. (7.MWP.209/10)

Kitty's 'distracted behaviour,' her 'throwing herself on her knees' is in terms of the conventional acting of the period and she protests: 'I am your mother: I swear it. Oh you cant mean to turn on me - my own child! it's not natural...'

Vivie's reply is short and cold: 'Who was my father?'

With Kitty's answer, 'I cant tell you,' the mystery is admitted and is open to one or another interpretation: either she cannot bring herself to tell Vivie the name of her father, or, she just does not know which man was Vivie's father. The girl's disgust that he might be 'that waster Crofts' provokes the most shocking reassurance: 'No, no. On my oath it's not he, nor any of the rest that you have met. I'm certain of that, at least.'

Vivie's reaction to this disclosure is typical of what will be her reaction to emotional situations with which she either cannot or will not deal. First she must absorb the facts and their implication:

> [Her] eyes fasten sternly on her mother as the significance of this flashes on her.
> (Slowly) - You are certain of that, at least. Ah! You mean that that is all you are certain of.
> (Thoughtfully) I see.

Now she briskly reproves her mother for dramatising her feelings - Kitty has buried her face in her hands - and then she proposes arrangements for breakfast, tells her to 'pull herself together' and suggests that they should go to bed as it is getting late. To her mother's wild cry of 'My God, what sort of woman are you?' her cool reply is, 'The sort the world is mostly made of, I hope. Otherwise I dont understand how it gets its business done.' She cannot or will not become embroiled in an emotional welter of explanation and reproach; she asked her question and was answered, she doesnt want to know any more and she will avoid being told any more by going to bed. (7.MWP.211/12)

It is Kitty's sudden snatching back of the initiative, her determination not to be 'put down' by this self-possessed young woman who, having wrung from her mother the secret that she has kept for twenty-two years, now suggests that it is time for bed with insulting indifference, that makes the scene that follows one of the most powerful ever to be written for a mature actress and establishes Shaw's mastery of timing, intensity and climax as unequalled.

MRS WARREN: (suddenly breaks out vehemently in her natural tongue - the dialect of a woman of the people - with all the affectations of maternal authority and conventional manners gone, and an overwhelming inspiration of true conviction and scorn in her.)

Oh I wont bear it: I wont put up with the injustice of it...You boast of what you are to me - to me, who gave you the chance of being what you are. What chance had I? Shame on you for a bad daughter and a stuck-up prude!

VIVIE: (sitting down with a shrug, no longer confident; for her replies which have sounded sensible and strong to her so far, now begin to ring rather woodenly and even priggishly against the new tone of her mother.)
Dont think for a moment that I set myself above you in any way. You attacked me with the conventional authority of a mother: I defended myself with the conventional superiority of a respectable woman. Frankly, I am not going to stand any of your nonsense; and when you drop it I shall not expect you to stand any of mine... (7.MWP.212)

Her reaction to the discovered truth of her mother's profession could not be in greater contrast to Blanche's on reading that discarded Blue Book.

This is not the battle that Vivie had anticipated and the moment that she sits down, moved by the authority of that 'overwhelming inspiration of true conviction and scorn' with its proletariat ring of sincerity, her imagination is arrested in a way never before associated with her mother. Until this point it has been possible to sympathise with Vivie's opinion, Mrs Warren is really a very tiresome woman: over-blown in appearance, self-satisfied and bullying, insensitive to the personality of her daughter, unable to resist the attraction of Frank Gardner, the son of her old lover, and happy in the company of 'that brute Crofts.'

Vivie, for all her irritating briskness, her behaviour that comes uncomfortably close to aping manishness, the opinionated manner that might be tolerated in an adolescent but is unattractive in a woman of 22, is not without a quality of deprivation. For all the money to make things smooth, the lack of complaint, the pleasantness of which she boasts to Praed, there is also a sense of pathos, of a lack

of emotional development about her which Shaw shrewdly emphasises in his always important stage directions.
For instance, in the Act 2 confrontation scene between mother and daughter the stage directions indicate Vivie's changing emotions thus:

> sitting down with a shrug, no longer confident; for her replies, which have sounded sensible and strong to her so far, now begin to ring rather woodenly and even priggishly against the new tone of her mother (7.MWP.212) now thoughtfully attentive (214) intensely interested by this time (215) more and more deeply involved (216) fascinated, gazing at her (217)

Once Mrs Warren starts to speak 'in her natural tongue', as Shaw indicates, there is no stopping her and Vivie's self-righteous little speech on the possibilities of choice for 'even the poorest girl alive,' releases the floodgates. Here again, Shaw's direction is not only explicit but of powerful help to the actress:

> She plants her chair farther forward with brazen energy, and sits down. Vivie is impressed in spite of herself.
> - D'you know what your gran'mother was?

In telling of what is virtually her life story, Kitty Warren not only re-balances the book in her own favour but she places the responsibility for her life of prostitution squarely on the doorstep of society.

> It's far better than any other employment open to her. I always thought that oughtnt to be. It cant be right, Vivie, that there shouldnt be better opportunities for women.

VIVIE: (more and more deeply moved) Mother: suppose we were both as poor as you were in those wretched old days, are you quite sure that you woudnt advise me to try the Waterloo bar, or marry a laborer, or even go into the factory?

MRS WARREN: (indignantly) Of course not. What sort of mother do you take me for! How could you keep your self- respect in such starvation and slavery? And whats a woman worth? Whats a life worth? Without self-respect! Why am I independent and able to give my daughter a first-rate education, when other women that had just as good opportunities are in the gutter? Because I always knew how to respect myself and control myself. (7.MWP.216/17)

Vivie may be emotionally immature but intellectually she understands and applauds her mother on every count. She questions her closely and intelligently, she contributes as an equal to their first real conversation together. When Kitty declares '(with great energy) I despise the [good-for-nothing drunken wasters of women]; they've no character; and if there's a thing I hate in a woman, its want of character.'

Vivie's reply is: 'Come now, mother: frankly! Isnt it part of what you call character in a woman that she should greatly dislike such a way of making money?' (7.MWP.216)

As women of character, both recognise this quality of 'character' in each other: it is what draws them together and it will be what - because it is synonymous with her personal integrity - will cause Vivie to break with her mother. There will not be such another important conversation between parent and child until Shaw writes Major Barbara.

Vivie is completely won over: where years of easy living and higher education had failed to promote the slightest affection for her mother, a talk, informing her that she is the illegitimate daughter of a prostitute, granddaughter of an unmarried fried-fish seller, niece to a retired, high-class whore who resides in Winchester and chaperons girls to the county ball, results in her unqualified admiration. '(fascinated, gazing at her) My dear mother: you are a wonderful woman: you are stronger than all England.' (7.MWP.217)

By the end of the act everyone can feel very comfortable. The brittle, censorious girl is transformed into a loving daughter who will 'be good to [her] poor old mother:' the old rip of a woman may have been a prostitute, but she has the proverbial heart-of-gold; after all, it was the circumstances of poverty and the white-lead factory that drove her to it, and since she has supported, educated, and protected her child, the immoral earnings have been morally employed. Above all, the audience can enjoy a sense of gratification, being sentimentally reassured that the virtue of motherhood is now properly rewarded with filial respect: even more gratifying, since Vivie has been won round, they can identify with her and ignore the suspicion that the playwright was somehow blaming them for the state of society. The curtain scene is entirely conventional, the very stuff of melodrama:

> (with unction) Blessings on my own dearie darling! a mother's blessing!
> (She embraces her daughter protectingly, instinctively looking upward for divine sanction.) (7.MWP.219)

It is a picture of sacred motherhood rewarded, as those that Wilde portrayed in An Ideal Husband and Lady Windermere's Fan: but this is Shaw and that last stage direction is saying something different as the curtain falls.

Parallel to the well documented Warren women are the Gardner men. The Rev Sam is the first of Shaw's clergymen and is not intended to be more than a sketch of hypocritical stupidity.

> Externally he is pretentious, booming, noisy, important. Really he is that obsolescent social phenomenon, the fool of the family dumped on the Church by his father the patron, clamorously asserting himself as father and clergyman without being able to command respect in either capacity. (7.MWP.195)

Added to this, he has put himself in his son's hands by telling him of an escapade in his own irresponsible youth, whilst castigating Frank for irresponsibility, when the 'Miss Vavasour'[11] with whom he was entangled suddenly confronts him in the form of Mrs Warren.

Shaw has produced parents who are not what they at first seem to be, and they would both be recognised by the Victorian audience as having uneasy relationships with their offspring. Vivie, a near caricature of the Ibsenite unwomanly woman who likes 'working and getting paid for it' and whose idea of relaxation is 'a comfortable chair, a little whisky, and a novel with a good detective story in it' and who is, furthermore, indifferent to romance and insensible to beauty. (7.MWP.185) Frank, who has 'made ever such an ass' of himself over a barmaid and whose apology to his father is that he hasn't been so extravagant, he doesn't drink, doesn't bet much and doesn't go 'regularly on the razzle-dazzle as you did when you were my age.' If he is chasing Vivie with the idea of marrying money, he is only following his father's advice that 'since [he] had neither brains nor money, [he'd] better turn [his] good looks to account by marrying somebody with both.' (7.MWP.195/6) Frank's dramatic functions are threefold: 1) he is 'Vivie's little boy' and is part of their shared childish escape from reality, 2) he presents a different kind of

'unsatisfactory' parent/child relationship from hers, and 3) in his attitude to Mrs Warren he shows the conventional response of the young man about town. Frank, who is rejected by Vivie, may be compared with Freddie in Pygmalion who gets the girl. Father and son follow the conventions of farce but the women deny all conventions, and have broken the mould of conventional behaviour, each in her own way.

Sam Gardner and Kitty Warren are both trying to steer their children in directions that are completely different from the ones they themselves took in their own youth. Kitty wants Vivie to have all the advantages that she missed, to be educated, to be accepted in 'good' society, above all to be respectable enough to *be* a lady and not just to 'get away with it' like her sister Liz, while at the same time keeping her self-respect. 'Self-respect' is an expression, still in common usage, for a quality that is almost mystic in its importance to a great proportion of the working classes. It covers such diverse experiences as 'not letting your neighbours know if your husband knocks you about,' to 'providing for a decent funeral.' Gardner has a more shallow approach to his son: while he hopes that Frank will avoid those traps into which he himself fell as a young man, his greatest desire is merely to get the boy off his hands.

In relation to Sartorius, Mrs Warren can be seen as a parent of vision who is prepared to separate herself from her daughter as the only means to what she believes to be the ultimate salvation of her child. Sartorius, too, has provided everything that money can buy but he has stifled his daughter with his cautious, over-protective presence and for all Blanche's courage and her good education he has repressed her by keeping her at his side. There is a case for seeing her as the young and indulged wife in the relationship, rather than the daughter.

Shaw's insight into the relationship of the middle-aged prostitute and her intellectually brilliant daughter is acute enough todemonstrate that the qualities that they

dislike in each other are the qualities that they share. Vivie's determination to go her own way into the actuary's office to make money and to spend it as she pleases, matches her mother's earlier determination first, to get away from the Waterloo bar and later to continue in the business of which she has made such a success. Kitty's gift for 'managing' everyone around her - 'Come! sit up, George; and take your stick out of your mouth.' (7.MWP.189) 'Dont you interfere, Praddy: I know how to treat my own child as well as you do.' (7.MWP.190) 'Vivie: put your hat on, dear: you'll get sunburnt,' (7.MWP.189) - extends to her excellent management of the chain of brothels. 'I must have work and excitement, or I should go melancholy mad. And what else is there for me to do? The life suits me: I'm fit for it and not for anything else.' 7.MWP.250)

It is her inability to give up her managing directorship that is the reason for Vivie giving up her mother. There is an ultimatum, a straight choice over which neither woman wavers. Vivie, deceived she believes by her mother, into thinking that the business has been wound up, is sickened by the knowledge that it is continuing when initial need has passed.

She can accept her mother's reasons for becoming a prostitute in the first place, but she has not really thought about what her mother has been actually doing for the last twenty years. She says to Crofts: 'I myself never asked where the money I spent came from.' She has taken it for granted as thoughtlessly as Blanche Sartorius and Stephen Undershaft have accepted their lives of privilege, but unlike them she feels guilty at not ever having questioned what lay behind her life-style, and she adds: 'I believe I am just as bad as you are.' (7.MWP.232) Kitty had never said that the business was wound up nor had she implied it: the fact is that Vivie is so bowled over - not just by what her mother has *said*, but by the full force of that passionate personality - that it never occurs to her to ask. It is this sentimentalism of seeing Kitty as a great

'Earth-mother' that allows the disclosures to be such a sting in the tail. By the end of the first act Vivie has experienced a kind of emotional revelation. The years of being 'unmothered' have passed, she can embrace her mother and kiss her goodnight: this might well be the first motherly embrace that Vivie has experienced with pleasure. When she learns the truth she is disillusioned, ashamed, guilty and utterly repentant of the experience of the previous evening.

Vivie Warren, in an absent-parent situation with only intermittent contact with her mother, has not had a normal upbringing, and it is likely that she would be emotionally undeveloped like so many of the daughters in the earlier plays and in the novels. By her reaction, it is clear that she has never before been touched by strong emotional feeling: Frank's attachment has not involved her beyond the stage of children's games and even her interest in mathematics has had to be challenged by a bet and remains on an intellectual plane. Her whole behaviour, attitude, and conversation, proclaims the emotionally and sexually unawakened woman who, with some scorn for men and with a growing sense of superiority over those around her, is more likely to become warmly attached to, if not fixated upon, a member of her own rather than the opposite sex. Whether she could be identified as a latent lesbian is pure speculation but there is certainly that possibility. Her closest friend, Honoria Fraser, of whom she speaks most freely, holds the same independent views as her own. Shaw, at the time of writing the Unpleasant Plays, was particularly friendly with Henry Salt and his lesbian wife, Kate, as well as with the Rev Stewart Headlam who 'also had a wife who was a homo,' as he called it, so he was certainly aware of women of this persuasion.[12]

Perhaps Vivie and Honoria are only an example of the kind of 'close friendship' which Martha Vicinus describes in Independent Women (see above p.21) The nature of which was frowned upon by a male dominated society. In The Irrational

Knot Elinor McQuinch and Marion Lind are close friends without any suggestion of deeper involvement, but there are few examples of close friendship between women in Shaw's writing.

Vivie has never known what it is like to live in a conventional home with both parents present, and from her conversation with Praed she would appear to be aware of not belonging, of having no roots to which she can return or with which she can break. In breaking with the mother whom she has only begun to know and love within the previous twentyfour hours, she makes what should be a natural release from parental authority into a profoundly traumatic experience, for her mother and for herself.

The garden scene is crucial in the collapse of her new found role of a good daughter. Frank, as the observer, says, 'She's gone sentimental.' (7.MWP.224) - she had been walking with her arm around her mother - and he cannot resist making fun of Kitty, whereupon Vivie, sensitive for her mother's reputation, warns him to treat her mother with as much respect as he treats his own; she believes that she has changed for the better since yesterday when she admits to having been a little prig, but that today she 'knows' her mother. She is not able to withstand his ridicule, not just of Kitty but more especially of herself, accused of 'attitudinizing' and her new-found love is shaken, first by Frank, determined to keep his special place as the silly little boy with his wise little girl, and immediately afterwards by Crofts' disclosure that Mrs Warren is still profiting from the business of organised prostitution.

It is a mistake to believe that her distress is caused by Crofts' taunting them with being brother and sister: it is the shock of discovering that her mother, relieved of the necessity that drove her to become a prostitute in the first place, now chooses to exploit others caught in the same trap, for financial gain. In socialist terms her mother is capitalising on the horror that only the night before she had professed to deplore.[13]

After this, almost anything that can be said about incest may shock the audience, but Vivie is reacting to a different horror, not to Crofts' crude introduction to her 'brother', and 'the sharp physical pain tearing through [her]' is for the loss of her mother. When Frank holds out his arms to comfort her, her 'cry of disgust' is instinctive: 'Ah, not that - You make all my flesh creep,' it is for men that she feels revulsion and the last thing she would want would be comfort in a man's arms.
The only way she has of dealing with the turmoil of emotions to which she has been exposed is to run away from them for the rest of her life.

In the final confrontation between mother and daughter Margery M Morgan doubts whether Shaw: '... had left himself enough material for a second debate between the two' and that 'Act IV offers a much less forceful interchange than Act II.'[14] Certainly nothing can top the shock disclosure of the first confrontation, but Shaw is not aiming to do this.

There is no way in which Vivie can condone her mother's exploitation of the unfortunate girls that she employs. Unlike Blanche Sartorius who hates, as much as her father despises, the poor from whom he reaps his grim financial harvest, Vivie Warren feels compassion for those girls, and it is an extension of the compassion she felt for the woman her mother had been. But for the woman her mother has become she has only grave disapproval; the shame of those 'two infamous words' that describe Kitty will ring in her ears forever. (7.MWP.242) Inducements are nothing to her; if she were interested in a life of luxury she would want to earn it for herself, and like her mother she wants to have more money than she spends. That Kitty can resort to bribery is a measure of how she has misjudged her daughter.
There is a moment when Vivie is 'arrested', when that 'passionate' voice speaks again telling her that she has been 'taught wrong on purpose', (7.MWP.246) that people are not what they pretend to be, that she'll be cutting her own

throat without her mother's support, but this time, contrary to the earlier response, she recognises the Crofts philosophy and is invulnerable to the overwhelming energy that her mother generates: she can dismiss tears as cheap and be 'jarred and antagonised by the echo of the slums in her mother's voice.' (7.MWP.251)

This last scene between them has been described by Eric Bentley as: '... disconcerting to Victorians in which the mother/daughter conflict is presented with poignant irony only equalled in modern drama by certain scenes in Ibsen and Strindberg.'[15] And Richard Burton appraises the confrontation as: 'one of the very few great scenes in English-speaking drama of our generation... Nothing in the English theatre is better, for its purpose.'[16]

Throughout this scene, Shaw demonstrates his uncanny understanding of women: namely, that where love is present the imagination is caught in a way that opens the mind to greater acceptance of that, which under circumstances of non-love, becomes intolerable. When Vivie loved her mother she could accept her, but it was a love that she was unable to sustain and with no struggle at all she let it go; as Frank says, 'Little family group of mother and daughter wouldnt be a success.' (7.MWP.226) The confrontation in Act IV is truthful and painful because Mrs Warren is no longer seen through the eyes of Vivie's love, but is shown extolling those shibboleths of the working-class, respectability and the 'rights' of motherhood, while, at the same time, abusing her daughter for 'a pious, canting, hard, selfish woman.' (7.MWP.251) Vivie is untouched by it all because she is no longer vulnerable - because she no longer loves. It is the return to the status quo, so far as she is concerned and it is, at last, the battle royal that earlier she had failed to contrive and that now she can easily win as she had predicted. She has renounced the tainted money, she has agreed that 'its better to choose your line and go through with it,' but her moral high-mindedness must add: 'If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did;

but I should not have lived one life and believed in another. (7.MWP.252)

Vivie's victory is complete; of course she is 'right' to break off all connection with Kitty, but the price she pays may be too high and leave her impoverished. Lacking the courage or the will to spend the rest of her life exposing the social evils that she abominates, the problem is thrown back at the audience for them to deal with.

There is a sense that while Mrs Warren has capitulated to the system that produced her, she has developed, through confession and justification, in spite of the melodrama that she employs, and that she will be a changed woman in future: 'from this time... I'll do nothing but wrong. And I'll prosper on it.' (7.MWP.252) She will not necessarily be a better woman, but certainly a different one. Shaw has made his point that where there is no established family bond to which mother and daughter can turn for reference, there is inevitable separation.

When the curtain falls Vivie's virtue may be intact and her hands well washed although it is her mother, with that defiant refusal to shake hands, who has probably warmed the hearts of the audience. But the image with which we are left is strangely disturbing: the small figure who sighs with relief as she settles down to her work, the child who has rejected the 'old blackguard of a woman,' her mother, and with her the sentimentality and the hypocrisy of much of the popular theatre of the nineteenth century. The reality of her future would not, however, have been as a lawyer: as Martha Vicinus says:

While Vivie Warren is last seen in Mrs Warren's Profession as a partner in a thriving female law firm, in actuality neither she nor her friend Honoria Fraser could do conveyancing or other work that required a law degree. For most Cambridge women teaching was the only career available - in positions of more prestige and remuneration, but otherwise little different from

> those of their less - privileged sisters, who for years had crowded into the only respectable profession for middle-class women.[17]

In You Never Can Tell, Mrs Clandon, without any formal education that would enable her to teach, or, it is to be assumed, any inclination to do so, has elected to become a writer. This play explores the effect of the absent father's return on his three children, two of whom he has never seen, and on their mother. Mrs Clandon, the name that she adopted emphasises that she saw herself as the head of the family after leaving Crampton, and it is one of Shaw's most apposite names: 'Clan' from the Gaelic for family and 'don', the secondary definition for 'a distinguished person'. She is a successful author who, unlike Lady Britomart, has supported her children without assistance from their father since the legal separation. She is a writer of fact not fiction, an implication that she is assuming the more masculine role of the bread winner; with her strong sense of social justice she has won great repute - in Madeira - for her Twentieth Century Treatises that cover everything from Cooking to Parents.

Like McComas, her solicitor, and Roebuck Ramsden, friend and adviser of the Whitefields, she was in the political avant garde when she was young and can still be said to belong to 'the forefront of her own period (say 1860-80)' - the play is set in 1896 - 'in a jealously assertive attitude of character and intellect.' (8.YNCT.208)

Gloria, the eldest of the children, has no real memory of her father: she has been brought up by the author of Twentieth Century Children to be her mother's friend. Together they constitute the 'we' of all Mrs Clandon's plans, and having been educated, eventually, to take up her mother's work, she is the main reason for the family leaving Madeira. Mrs Clandon will live on in her beautiful daughter who will be her glorious extension; there is no evidence that Gloria is averse to these plans, and she is described

by the twins as 'the Woman of the Twentieth Century.' The twins, not yet eighteen years old and born after their parents separated, begin by being two of the most irritating characters ever conceived by Shaw, as well as two of the youngest. Cleopatra and Joan are the only notable characters who are younger than, or the same age as, the twins. In a letter to Ellen Terry he describes Dolly as 'youth personified (having no heart)'[18] and a month later, having by then read the play herself, she has this to say of her first impression:

> ...it is tremendous. Frightfully. Interesting, Interesting, INTERESTING.
> Too much, just a <u>wee</u> bit too much of Dolly. I say this as a wary woman, and as if I had to play the part... Too much of a good thing bores folk, especially a funny thing.[19]

In a review of the 1905 Court production of the play Desmond MacCarthy does not find them the irrepressible, gay young people that they are meant to appear.

> The Twins, who are so delightful to the reader, never quite come up to expectation on the stage. High spirits and spontaneous fun are extraordinarily difficult to act; especially when they take the form of a burlesque of sententiousness.[20]

Of a later revival he still complains:

> I have never seen the twins done to perfection... The element they contribute (not counting fun)... is the innocent hardness and delicious inconsiderateness of youth, but their hardness must be innocent, the inconsiderateness charming or we lose the pathos [24]

The difficulty of creating adolescent characters whose precocity does not become tiresome is very great, for in the

manifestation of high spirits the actors must not be 'conscious' of themselves as comic characters and behave accordingly... [but should be] the reverse of self-conscious.'[22]

It is a mistake to consider Dolly and Phil in naturalistic terms only: they are better described in Shaw's own words as 'the jingling bells of a jester's cap'.[23] They are a double-act, using stylised pantomime gestures, picking up each other's words and playing with them like a pair of jugglers, and it is not surprising that they assume the costumes of Harlequin and Columbine for the Fancy Ball. As with many of Shaw's characters the twins are at one and the same time, both individual and typical and to judge them entirely as one or the other would be to misunderstand them.

Whether the twins have been removed from the frying pan of a cruel father only to fall on the fire of an over-indulgent mother it is not possible to know, but it is easy to sympathise with Crampton in his dislike of their posturing rudeness when he says of Dolly, 'That's a spoiled child, Mr Valentine...' (8.YNCT.220)

Dolly is the only one of her children for whom Mrs Clandon feels affection,, which is why, the author says, she is 'hopelessly spoiled,' and while Gloria and Phil are treated as though they might be 'the children of any other woman' Dolly is spoken to indulgently even when every word is a remonstrance at the girl's bad manners. Whenever the mother speaks to Dolly 'the tenderness in her voice is unmistakable.' (8.YNCT.208)

Early in the play it is learnt that the children know nothing at all of the identity of their father and, with the agreement of his sisters, Phil questions their mother. He starts with reasonable tact with a request to be 'taken into[her] confidence,' (8.YNCT.211) which results in a bitter speech from Mrs Clandon on the importance of privacy within a household, and bitter rhetoric on the detestable tyrannies that she had once endured. When they persist,

insisting that, 'It is nonsense to tell us that our father is nothing to us,'she is 'provoked to sudden resolution,' and she effectively stops further questioning 'with quiet force.'

> Gloria: if I had ever struck you (Gloria recoils: Phil and Dolly are disagreeably shocked: all three stare at her, revolted, as she continues mercilessly) - struck you purposely, deliberately, with the intention of hurting you, with a whip bought for the purpose! would you remember that, do you think? (Gloria utters an exclamation of indignant repulsion). That would have been your last recollection of your father, Gloria, if I had not taken you away from him...

This questioning of the mother as to the father's identity is reminiscent of Vivie's questioning of Kitty Warren who cannot answer because she does not know; but whereas in the earlier play the questions result in the breakdown of Mrs Warren's longheld reserve, Mrs Clandon does not budge. She has become so fixed in her rejection of her husband that she can only offer: 'I have kept him out of your life: keep him out of mine by never mentioning him to me again. (8.YNCT.215/6)

There is a seeming contradiction between what she tells her children: 'I cannot tell you what you want,' '... you are too young to be taken into my confidence,' (8.YNCT.214/5) and the fact that nevertheless she has asked her old friend McComas to speak to them, 'because I want you to explain everything to the children... I cannot bring myself to tell them.' (8.YNCT.229) This contradiction is understandable if Mrs Clandon emphasises the <u>I</u> in speaking to her children, indicating not that they should <u>not</u> know, but that <u>she</u> has not the courage to tell them. Nor has she the courage or common sense to tell them that their awaited guest will give them the information they want. (8.YNCT.229)

H C Duffin calls Mrs Clandon, 'perhaps Shaw's ideal wife and mother,' and believes Crampton to be 'a thoroughly likable fellow.' 'But put them together, with their violently positive, flagrantly antithetical natures, and there is the devil to pay.'[24]

Shaw himself corrected this opinion of Crampton, and in spite of McComas's later defence of the man as a husband and father, he remains pathetically unlikable.[25]

There is little justification for considering Mrs Clandon to be the ideal mother and A. M. Gibbs remarks that she is 'certainly presented in a critical light in the play'.[26] Shaw did not correct Duffin's claim with its rider that 'she would have made an excellent mate for Conolly.'[27] A glacial union, if ever there was one! Mrs Clandon admits her inability to be a wife to anyone; it is not just Crampton whom she does not like, but being in the position of the woman as a man's possession, that she cannot tolerate: feeling neither love nor desire for her husband she cannot look at marriage in any other way.

The 'ideal' quality of her motherhood is that she leaves her children alone at those times when they are best left alone - she wouldn't dream of choosing their clothes or preventing them from smoking, any more than she would invade their privacy by questioning their opinions. There is, however an 'unideal' quality, an area of deprivation to which the children have become accustomed since they were born - she has never enjoyed touching them, they have never been cuddled. Alexander Lowen writes:

> [Touch] relates back to the days when being held and touched by ones Mother was an expression of her tender, loving care. Most people in our culture suffer from deprivation of body contact dating back to their infancy. As a result of this deprivation, they want to be touched and held but are afraid to ask or reach for it. They feel a taboo against physical contact because it is too closely associated in their minds and bodies

with sexuality,[28]

Dolly says that kissing is barred in the family and certainly her mother more often rejects than she initiates an affectionate gesture: when Gloria kisses her mother's hair, Mrs Clandon finds this 'a demonstration which disconcerts her extremely' (8.YNCT.276) and although she has affectionately touched Dolly's shoulders few moments earlier, when the girl flings her arms round her mother's neck, 'she detaches Dolly gently.' (8.YNCT.213) If Mrs Clandon is not able to physicalise her love for her children, what horror she must have experienced in their conception!

And yet, and this is an important aspect of the play, the children have survived: brought up away from the influence of a father, never having seen the other relations, supported by a working mother who must lend herself 'conscientiously to the occasional demonstration of fondness by which her children mark their esteem for her,' but which, like all 'displays of personal sentiment secretly embarrass her,' (8.YNCT.208) the twins can be described by William as 'might be the son and daughter of a Dean', (8.YNCT.293) and by Bohun as 'clever children: clear headed well brought up children,' (8.YNCT.296) Had these children remained as bones of contention to be picked at by husband and wife in a Strindbergian battle with each other, it is unlikely that they would have remained such 'very agreeable people personally.' In their case one 'good' parent has doubtless produced a better result than two 'bad' ones.

If one thing comes through the play it is that Crampton, far from being 'a thoroughly likable fellow,' is a hidebound, self-opinionated, bad-tempered, disagreeable, middle-aged man whose children, being old enough and secure enough, will not be able to be corrupted by his fearful regard for respectable opinion. Certainly Gloria, so like him in her emotional nature and her lack of humour, was better removed from a man who displayed many of the worst

attitudes of the Victorian paterfamilias 'Cant you remember someone... who let you do as you liked... and never said a word to you except to say that you must sit still and not speak?' (8.YNCT.215)

While Mrs Clandon may be an attractive and admirable woman on that fine August day in 1896, she is incapable of flexibility: she has remained fixed in the amber of her period. In contrast, Crampton makes painful efforts to change, to adapt, to 'do his best,' as he protests on several occasions. He admits to Gloria, 'I'm afraid I'm sometimes a little irritable; but I know whats right and reasonable all the time, even when I dont act on it.' (8.YNCT.8) His only understanding of himself as a father is as playing a father's 'role.' When he is bested by Bohun in the argument for custody of the twins, he is also bested by the growing affection he feels for them, and when Dolly, precariously balanced on Phil's knee, screams, 'Papa: lift me down,' he responds anxiously to prevent her falling, like a caring father. (8.YNCT.294)

At their first meeting, the 'recognition' scene between long-lost parent and children, is played with amusing variations: Crampton is struck with Dolly's likeness to his mother and when she suggests, incredulously, that he means his daughter, he denies it, 'blackening with hate.' With an intuitive sense of truth she interprets this hate as 'pain' - as toothache, in itself a somewhat banal pain and within the bounds of farcical comedy's permitted pain - nevertheless, as pain. Not toothache but a 'twinge of memory,' he corrects. 'Have it out,' says his unrecognised daughter, who yet reminds him of his mother.

'Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow.'

CRAMPTON: (vindictively) No, not a sorrow. An injury that was done to me once: that's all. I dont forget injuries; and I dont want to forget them. (His features settle into an implacable frown.)

DOLLY: (looking critically at him) I dont think we shall like you when you are brooding over your injuries. (8.YNCT.220)

She is, in fact, giving him notice that he must change his ways if they are to become friends. Earlier she has most strangely quoted Macbeth questioning the Doctor as to the affliction of his wife, in a speech that continues:

> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart? (v.iii)

Although after her first meeting with him Dolly describes Crampton as 'an awful old man!' (8.YNCT.232) she treats him, apart from the warning not to call her 'child', very sympathetically, aware of his embarrassment at being 'a guest at the head of [his] own table,' and confesses that it is 'just as bad for us, you know.' (8.YNCT.241)
Intuition, which is so admirable, does not necessarily prevent callous insensitivity, as when Philip treats his father like a stranger and politely offers to discuss the wine list with him; and toasts proposed by the twins are nothing short of monstrous, with their parents agonising on either side of them, 'To the family!' 'Hearth and Home!' (8.YNCT.242) Demonstrably the children divide the parents. Crampton believes the twins to be spoiled, badmannered and utterly unfit for any reasonable society. Their mother is sensitive about their behaviour but excuses it with, 'Everything is so new to them here...that they are in the wildest spirits. They think every Englishman they meet is a joke.' (8.YNCT.230)

On no account does Mrs Clandon merit the harsh and undocumented, criticism of St John Ervine:

> She loves mankind in the abstract so much that when she contemplates it in the concrete, she loses her temper. She is fond of people who live a great distance away, but she hates the sight of her next door neighbours.[29]

Because she has espoused Great Causes, doubtless as a substitute for that passion unkindled by her husband or any man since, Mrs Clandon has brought up Gloria in her own image, and this worked well enough as long as Gloria herself remained untouched by passion. But the combination of Valentine and her father exposes all Gloria's vulnerability: she recognises her affinity with her father - in spite of her mother's precautions. It is not Dolly who has been bottling up her feelings, Dolly never would, nor never will, so repress herself; it is Gloria, and the shock of discovering the strength of those feelings is what makes her blame her mother in that cry from the heart: 'Mother!.. why didn't you educate me properly? Oh you taught me nothing: nothing.' (8.YNCT.260)

Of the three children Phil is, perhaps, the most shadowy: less irritating than his twin and less lovable, he is forever striking 'head of the family' attitudes as though feeling the need, in the absence of a father to act as the man in charge of the Clandon household. That he does need a father is borne out by his election of the sympathetic William, on very short acquaintance, to that position. More than a little pompous in utterance - many of his remarks start with, 'My knowledge of human nature leads me to believe...' but this is likely to be the result of his striving to be accepted as the one mature male in a household of very strong-minded women. (8.YNCT.213) Like Dolly he is given to quoting and Lewis Carroll, Shakespeare and John Home spring from him in lively fashion, but in spite of the quotations, he has the least to say.[30] Being neither his mother's favourite, like Dolly, not singled out to be especially loved, like Gloria, he is somewhat

isolated, and although rarely seen without his twin, he has more self-sufficiency than either of the girls. It would be reasonable to expect him to be resentful at the appearance of an actual father, for while he may want to know who his father *was*, he is hopeful that he is dead - protesting to Dolly that, 'No man alive shall father me.'

He may invite Crampton to lunch, but declares: '... he is entirely unfit to be my father, and adds with clear alienation, 'or Dolly's father, or Gloria's father, or my mother's husband,' and he continues:

> Here you find a family enjoying the unspeakable peace and freedom of being orphans. We have never seen the face of a relative: never known a claim except the claim of freely chosen friendship. And now you wish to thrust into the most intimate relationship with us a man whom we dont know - (8.YNCT.232)

> Phil does not speak, nor is sought by, his father, for either confidence or conversation, 'not yet strong in the filial line,' (8.YNCT.241) he tells Crampton, and he seems to enjoy the discomfort of the older man when they meet at lunch. Phil, perhaps, has had his place opposite his mother usurped.

At the height of the Fancy Ball when the play is dancing to its final curtain, in 'an attempt at genial fatherliness', Crampton calls, 'Come along, my boy,' and Phil cheerily calls back, 'Coming, dad...' adding to his mother and Gloria while bending his Harlequin's bat around his head in a halo, 'Did you feel the pathos of that?' To whose pathos is he referring? To his father's in having to say 'my' boy rather than the peremptory 'boy' that he had used earlier, in an effort to gain affection? Or perhaps the pathos is Phil's: that 'Coming, dad,' may represent some abdication of his self-assumed status as male head of the Clandons? There is also a strong possibility that Phil/Shaw is 'sending up' the idea of the pathos of the occasion. (8.YNCT.298) Or yet

again he may be playing a new role, the role of a son, as his father is playing the role of a father.

The real horror of this dark comedy, for it is dark in the emergence of a story of a woman and mother so inadequately prepared for marriage with a man with whom she is totally incompatible, is not the relationships of the children with their parents, which, on various levels will continue to prosper. Crampton will be happy to put a brake on his ill humour for the privilege of spending money on his precocious younger children and providing his elder daughter with a dowry, while they will make much of the novelty of finally having a father. Dolly, in less than twelve hours, has assimilated the idea of an actual father to replace the make believe figure of their childhood fantasies, 'the father with lots of money,' (8.YNCT.217) while Gloria's particular fantasy of the 'lonely father with the tender aching heart' (8.YNCT.218) proved to be no fantasy at all. If there is to be any reconciliation between her parents she could be the only possible mediator: but reconciliation is unlikely. After eighteen years, if Margaret Clandon-Crampton is still so traumatized by an unfortunate marriage, there is little chance that she will soften and forgive and no chance at all that she will forget. Some commentators presume that there will be happy reconciliation but there is nothing in the text to support this and it is difficult to understand such a conclusion as the following from C.B. Purdom: 'Husband and wife remain unrelenting, but... the audacity of the twins aided by the pertinacity of the dentist-lover... overcomes their animosity, and a happy conclusion is finally affected...'[31] But Shaw did call the play <u>You Never Can Tell</u> and wrote to Granville Barker: 'It ought to be a very serious comedy, dancing gaily to a happy ending round the grim-earnest of Mrs Clandon's marriage and her XIX century George Eliotism.'[32] The 'happy ending' is a structural feature of comedy but in Shaw's paradoxical fashion it does not mean 'happy reconciliation.'

The Clandon/Cramptons may have a great deal in common

with Lucinda Elizabeth Gurley Shaw and her family. The resemblance to the unsatisfactory married woman who left her husband and with her three children earned their living in a foreign country is too close to be coincidental. At least one critic sees Shaw himself in Mrs Clandon '[She] is, in fact, very much like a critical caricature of G.B.S., a being so rational, self-disciplined, and cool that she cannot possibly understand the rest of us.'[33] It is impossible not to see the Shaw children in the Clandon children and in particular Phil as the youthful 'Sonny.'
We can be sure that Shaw was not unaware of the parallel that could be drawn between his own family circumstances and the one that he invented to satisfy the requirements of the fashionable West End, and that there is a case for identifying aspects of his mother in Margaret Clandon. It would not be speculative to go further and suggest that, for all his high spirits, there is a core of sadness in Philip - the least loved child - which may well be Shaw's memory of his youth.

Major Barbara is not a play, like You Never Can Tell, where the daughters, Sarah and Barbara, have suffered socially through the lack of an incumbent father, and it would be impossible to describe Lady Britomart's establishment as a 'broken home' despite the absent father. They are ladies and possessed of a prestigious lineage through their mother, Lady Britomart. Nor is it like Mrs Warren's Profession, where the parent's obsession is to make her child respectable: the Undershaft children are eminently respectable. Both of the girls are engaged to be married and it is because their mother is concerned with getting good dowries out of their father, Andrew Undershaft, that he is invited to Wilton Crescent, the family home. Lady Brit is the autocratic product of a liberal aristocratic tradition and is, in general, bossy and overbearing; there is more than a touch of Lady Bracknell in her manner and Barbara, with her urge to organise and manage people, is very much her mother's daughter.[34] It is important not to

underestimate Lady Brit's influence, both in the play and on her children: she is no cypher merely to provide the plot-laying that will introduce Undershaft to the audience and to his family, or to speak 'mother' lines that will amuse. Like Kitty Warren and Mrs Clandon she is a woman of character, and she had become estranged from her husband when the children were young because 'the Undershaft tradition disinherits [Stephen]' from following his father into the cannon foundry; her continued estrangement from him is not because she thinks so highly of Stephen's abilities, ('You could easily get a manager and pay him a salary,') but because her sense of family tradition is outraged by Undershaft's greater sense of 'the Undershaft tradition.'

It is apparent that the estrangement was not merely because he would not agree, in Stephen's infancy, to the inheritance - after all, she could look forward to twenty years in which to change his mind - but because she felt his moral influence to be destructive. Her observations of her husband's character are acute and paradoxically correct, as she tells her son:

> ...your father didnt exactly do wrong things: he said them and thought them... He really had a sort of religion of wrongness. Just as one doesnt mind men practising immorality so long as they own that they are in the wrong by preaching morality; so I couldnt forgive Andrew for preaching immorality while he practised morality. You would all have grown up without any knowledge of right and wrong, if he had been in the house... Children did not dislike him, and he took advantage of it to put the wickedest ideas into their heads, and make them quite unmanageable... (11.MB.256/7)

Where Mrs Clandon left the country with her three children in order to avoid her odious husband, Lady Brit has held fast to what she has: it is Andrew Undershaft who has

had to move away while remaining financially responsible for his wife and family. She, with all the natural assurance of her background, is remarkably liberated from the opinions of 'society': as she says about Cusins: 'Let snobbish people say what they please: Barbara shall marry, not the man they like, but the man I like. (11.MB.252)

Her attitude to Undershaft when he arrives is to treat him with the same sort of scolding disapproval as she does her children; a way of behaving that she utterly repudiates when she answers Stephen's, 'either treat me like a child, as you always do, and tell me nothing... or tell me everything and let me take it as best I can.' There may be more irony in Lady Brit's comments than her family realises.

> Treat you as a child!.. It is most unkind and ungrateful of you to say such as thing. You know I have never treated any of you as children. I have always made you my companions and friends, and allowed you perfect freedom to do and say whatever you liked, so long as you liked what I could approve of. (11.MB.254)

Of the opening scene of Major Barbara, Maurice Valency writes, 'there is obviously some reminiscence here of You Never Can Tell[35] and there is certainly something of Mrs Clandon in Lady Britomart but she is totally without bitterness. There is a power struggle, in both plays, between the mother who has brought up the children (both families consist of two daughters and a son) and the absent - now returned father who is received by her as being a bad influence upon them, but it is unlikely that either mother will ever lose the struggle and forfeit the children's love.

With Undershaft's money and her own inestimable self-confidence she has established a security for her children out of which the girls are able to go their own ways. Barbara goes into the Salvation Army. While Lady Brit does not approve, she does not condemn nor forbid. Stephen lacks

the independent attitude of Barbara; he has been and is still over-protected by his mother while at the same time he is dominated by her. She bullies him in small ways: 'Dont make excuses... Bring me my cushion... Dont fiddle with your tie.' (11.MB.249/50) If he begins by being over-attached to her he is able to transfer his affections and admiration to his father without any apparent difficulty within the space of two days. Her speech at the end of Act I is serious although the effect is of comic pathos when she 'swishes away her tears,' determined not to be consoled by her son and prepared to give battle to the whole family if need be:[36]

> ...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. (11.MB.271/2)

Of the children it is Sarah who is least important: Stephen is necessary to the plot. It is Undershaft's rejection of Stephen and his search for, and discovery of, a foundling who will bear his name, that constitutes the play's 'story', what Margery M Morgan calls 'the motif of succession by adoption.' Others among the English domestic plays have introduced variations on the foundling theme: in Mrs Warren's Profession Vivie does not know who her father was and her mother 'would deny [there was one] if she could.' (7.MWP.192) Philip Clandon in You Never Can Tell declares 'No man alive shall father me (8.YNCT.207) and in Misalliance Gunner was wrong in believing Tarleton to be his unknown father. In Major Barbara, as Morgan continues, the foundling issue 'signifies a discontinuity, a possibility of change through free choice .'[37] Sarah's inclusion is

something of a puzzle. She does, however, present a picture of the indolent, unthinking product of monied society against which Barbara is drawn in sharp contrast; as sisters they demonstrate another of the contrasts in which the play abounds; but it is as the fiancée of Charles Lomax that her presence in the play is justified. For it is money that is the main topic of conversation throughout the play and Lomax 'will be a millionaire at 35.' (11.MB.251)

Lady Brit talks about very little other than money in her Wilton Crescent library: the girls' dowries, the expense of running her own establishment and the impossibility of running separate ones for the children, the difficulty her father, the Earl, is having in existing on 'barely £7000 a year' and the details of Charles Lomax's source of income. (11.MB.253) Lomax is the conventional young-man-about-town who thinks in clichés and talks in fashionable slang. It would not have been feasible for Barbara to have had two young men in attendance, thus introducing yet another element of choice (with which the play is not concerned), and if Stephen is to be shown as a solitary prig it is unlikely that Lomax would be his friend. With two daughters there can be two fiancés; Lomax is a foil to Cusins as Sarah is to Barbara. It is as an 'overtaxed' and muddled representative of the Church of England that he is shown, until, in the last few minutes of the play he finds the right words. As Shaw wrote to Gilbert Murray, 'The moral is drawn by Lomax 'There is a certain amount of tosh about this notion of wickedness'.'[38] (11.MB.341)

In The Gospel According to St Andrew Undershaft Shaw calls Undershaft 'the hero of Major Barbara' and the play justifies that title. (11.MB.216) He is a foundling, and like Vivie Warren, he does not know who is his father; what he does know is that he is the result of a succession of a different kind - he is a chosen person who holds allegiance to a tradition other than that of his natural family. He is the most important 'father', even including Shotover, in all the plays. His fatherhood not only embraces his immediate

Wilton Crescent family and Adolphus Cusins, but also his employees for whom he is the 'Dandy-Andy' father and, by extension, all the working peoples of the earth: he is also the Father of Lies, says Cusins, and Father Colossus.

Undershaft's introduction to his children foretells his ultimate attitude to them, indeed a great many of the conclusions of the last Act are foreshadowed in the first. He does not know one from another, admits he cannot remember how many sons he has, and entirely fails to recognise Stephen; as he says later to his wife, 'He has induced us to bring him into the world; but he chose his parents very incongruously, I think. I see nothing of myself in him, and less of you.' (11.MB.315)

Barbara is Undershaft's natural, as well as chosen heir[39], the only one of his children in whom Louis Crompton says: '... the Undershaft-Stevenage marriage justified itself as an evolutionary experiment in the crossing of types and classes.'[40]

This is recognised by her father from their first meeting when he says to Barbara, 'I am right this time, I hope?' and she replies, 'Quite right,' and they shake hands. (11.MB.265)

When he approaches Cusins he says, 'You must be my son, (taking Cusins hands in his,) How are you, my friend? (To Lady Brit) He is very like you, my love.' (11.MB.264) This may be compared to an earlier statement of his wife to their son when she says 'I have always made you my companions and friends'.

Throughout the play Undershaft touches his two 'chosen' children, Barbara and Cusins; particularly he and Barbara take each other's hands, while there is no evidence that he comes near to the others after their initial meeting. There is a comparison to be made with Crampton in their similar situations: Undershaft, sensitive and aware; Crampton, awkward and aggressive. Undershaft's confused diffidence on returning to Wilton Crescent is explained to Lomax: '... if I play the part of a father, I shall produce the effect of

an intrusive stranger; and if I play the part of a discreet stranger I may appear a callous father' (11.MB.265)
This dealing-in-opposites way of speaking is typical of his manner throughout: he is, and remains, a stranger to Sarah; he is callous to Stephen. But 'From the moment that they meet he becomes alive and interesting through the attraction that draws him to his daughter Barbara,'[41] and they are able to converse with direct truthfulness. When Lady Brit complains that 'she has no father to advise her' Barbara quickly interjects, 'Oh yes she has. There are no orphans in the Salvation Army.' To Undershaft's question, 'Your father there has a great many children and plenty of experience, eh?' she replies, looking at him with quick interest and nodding, 'Just so. How did you come to understand that?' (11.MB.267) and a moment later she is reminding him that 'there are neither good men nor scoundrels: there are just children of one father.' (11.MB.269)

Cusins' attitude throughout this scene is interesting. After effectively introducing Undershaft to his children, apart from one short speech to sort out Lomax's bewilderment ('... its quite simple. As Euripides says, one man's meat is another man's poison morally as well as physically.'), he has only listened and watched while Barbara and her father make their bargain to visit each other's place of business. This silence could be taken as premonitory for it was not until the following morning that Stephen told the others about the 'Undershaft tradition,' a silence noticed by Barbara and remembered by her in Act 3. He will go to the Salvation Shelter if, the following day, she will go to his cannon works. She warns him that it may end in his 'giving up the cannons for the sake of the Salvation Army,' and again the end result is prophesied when he suggests the alternative of her 'giving up the Salvation Army for the sake of the cannons?' and they shake hands on it and Barbara 'throws her arms round her father and sweeps him out. (11.MB.269/70) By the time that Cusins and Undershaft

meet again, in the Shelter, there would appear to be an unusual degree of understanding between them: it is as if Cusins has recognized the Father of Lies almost immediately, although it will take later events, culminating in the triumphal procession, for him to recognize the descent of Dionysos.

The 'test' between Barbara and her father occurs in the Salvation Shelter. As Cusins had sat and watched him the previous evening so Undershaft now sits and watches his daughter at work, bustling, encouraging and gently bullying the down-and-outs, the derelicts who have been drawn to the West Ham Shelter by the bribe of bread and treacle and a night's free lodging.

She introduces him as a 'secularist' ('on the contrary, a confirmed mystic') to Peter Shirley with whom he has the infamous exchange: 'I wouldnt have your income, not for all your conscience, Mr Shirley,' but for the most part he sits and watches and listens. (11.MB.286) His initial response to Barbara is clearly reinforced by what he sees and in the following scene with Cusins, he declares 'in towering excitement:

> I shall hand on my torch to my daughter. She shall make my converts and preach my gospel... Freedom and power. Command of life and command of death.' (11.MB.294)

Undershaft has picked up Cusins' reference to Dionysos with the ease of Dionysos himself, and significantly, Dionysos is the only one of the Greek gods who was 'twice born'. Cusins has made it clear that he loves Barbara and intends to marry her: in Undershaft's words, '[he] will stick at nothing: not even the conversion of the Salvation Army to the worship of Dionysos.' Their enjoyment of each other's wit and argument is apparent in everything they say, and there is the beginning of a Father/Son relationship with that, 'Professor Cusins: you are a young man after my own

heart,' to which the response is, 'Mr Undershaft, you are... a most infernal old rascal; but you appeal very strongly to my sense of ironic humour.'

'Undershaft mutely offers his hand. They shake.' Here again is the touching of hands that was established in Wilton Crescent. Undershaft declares that it is 'through religion alone that we can win Barbara' The use of 'we', coming after Cusins' declaration of love promotes the question, 'Have you, too, fallen in love with Barbara?' to which Undershaft replies: 'Yes, with a father's love.' (11.MB.293) There is an echo of Sartorius in Cusins' rejoiner: ' A father's love for a grown-up daughter is the most dangerous of all infatuations.' (11.MB.293)

Throughout the scene together Undershaft is becoming more and more elated. Not only does he speak in '<u>towering excitement</u>,' but '<u>triumphantly</u>' and '<u>with redoubled force</u>:' Cusins tries to '<u>bring him down to earth</u>,' but he continues '<u>with surging energy</u>' until he finally '[<u>seizes Cusins</u>] <u>by the shoulder</u>.' Comparison can be made with the stage direction at the end of Act 2 of <u>Widowers' Houses</u>, 'Sartorius <u>abandoning his self control, and giving way recklessly to his affection for her</u>.)' There is an element of unusual recklessness in both of these fathers in their dealings with their daughters. Yet again there is the need to touch and this time he holds him while they speak until Cusins pushes him away. (11.MB.293/4) It is in their long dialogue that the parent/child relationship begins to shift from Undershaft/Barbara to Undershaft/Cusins and the temptation of Barbara by her father completes the shift of emphasis.

When she returns after the meeting in Cripps Lane, Snobby Price's confession and Barbara's own working up of the crowd has resulted in a collection of four shillings and tenpence. Undershaft casually offers to contribute the 'odd twopence... the millionaire's mite,' to make up the round sum, but Barbara will have none of it. 'You cant buy your salvation here: you must work it out.' His money is

tainted by the bad blood on his hands which nothing but good blood can cleanse. 'Two million million would not be enough.' (11.MB.297)

In this play the theme of money persists throughout, whether as the insistent corollary to the poverty or the necessary adjunct for the good life enjoyed in Wilton Crescent. It is the one commodity of which no one can have enough. Barbara may wish that she could do without money for she is beginning 'to think more of the collection than of the people's souls,' but she knows that in order to go about her ministry those hatfuls of pence and halfpence are nothing: 'We want thousands, hundreds of thousands!' She knows the utter futility of '[talking] religion to a man with bodily hunger in his eyes.' (11.MB.298) At this moment she is almost breaking down: the gap between her own and her father's religion of money and gunpowder - 'the two things necessary for salvation' - is seen to be less wide than would have been supposed. (11.MB.298) Already she is in agreement with him on the need for money; coming to terms with gunpowder will be more difficult. It is in terms of money that Undershaft bids for Barbara's soul - Shaw's interpretation of 'the most cruel tortures' to which Saint Barbara was exposed,

> 'St Barbara is the patron saint of arsenals and powder magazines. Her father delivered her up to Martian, governor of Nicomedia, for being a Christian. After she had been subjected to the most cruel tortures, her unnatural father was about to strike off her head, when a lightning flash laid him dead at her feet. Hence, St Barbara is invoked against lightning. Her feast day is December 4th'.[42]

When Bill Walker returns to the Shelter, fresh from his defeat by Todger Fairmile and wanting to pay for the injury he did Jenny Hill, she refuses his pound just as she refuses the 'millionaire's mite.' As she has said to her

father, 'the Army is not to be bought:' it's Bill's soul that she wants and she will not compromise by taking his sovereign as conscience-money. Undershaft instantly suggests that if she 'will set [Bill's] mind at ease by taking his pound [that he] will give the other ninety-nine.' Bill may be dazed by such opulence, and doubtless Jenny Hill, who would like to have taken the pound in the first place, but Barbara will not be moved. 'You're too extravagant, papa. Bill offers twenty pieces of silver. All you need offer is the other ten. That will make the standard price to buy anybody who's for sale. I'm not; and the Army's not...' (11.MB.301) This is an heroic moment, the Major treating her munition-manufacturer father as a Judas figure: for the second time she has put Satan behind her. Bill Walker, fighting against handing over his soul, puts down his money, nevertheless, and immediately Mrs Baines, the Army Commissioner, comes into the picture.[43] She too, speaks of the urgent need for money and appeals to Undershaft in words that would be pure cynicism if they were not so innocently well-intentioned. Money, she urges, will prevent the poor from embarrassing the rich by rioting; by keeping open their Shelters (West Ham is in danger of closing through lack of funds) the Army takes 'the anger and bitterness' out of the hearts of the poor, a condition which Undershaft finds 'most convenient and gratifying.' Lord Saxmundham, the newly-titled old enemy of the Army, Horace Bodger the whisky distiller, has promised £5000 ' if five other gentlemen will give a thousand each to make it up to ten thousand.' Mrs Baines is not troubled by the source of the five thousand, nor that Undershaft will be giving his five thousand because he can't resist the satisfaction of making Bodger pay up - on the contrary, she says, 'dont be ashamed of being a good man. The Lord will bless you abundantly; and our prayers will be like a strong fortification round you all the days of your life.'

It is as he is writing the cheque that Bill Walker says for the first time in a cynical aside to Barbara, 'Wot prawce

selvytion nah?' (11.MB.302/3/4) For all her protestations the cheque is handed over; the West Ham Shelter is saved, Jenny rejoices, the derelicts are dumbstruck, and Cusins is filled with 'an ecstasy of mischief.' Mrs Baines is convinced that there is 'an infinite Goodness that turns everything to the work of Salvation sooner or later,' (11.MB.306) that good has come out of the profits of war and drunkenness.

Barbara may not be able to be bought but she has just seen the Army bought by the arch enemies of the poor, whose champion the Army is supposed to be, while all around her is the noise and excitement of the procession preparing to set off on its grand march to the Assembly Hall on the Mile End Road. She takes off her badge and pins it on her father's collar, 'not much for five thousand pounds:' the Army has deserted her and Dolly is breaking her heart. She won't march with them, she won't pray for them, and unable to bear any more she gives the order for the procession to start, to be left alone with her betrayal. The Dionysiac element is at its height as Cusins beats his drum, Undershaft intones an Olympian diapason on his trombone, and the Donizetti wedding chorus-march is under way.

> 'Blood and Fire!' from Mrs Baines as she marches with the flag,
> 'Glory Hallelujah!' from Jenny, 'flourishing her tambourine.'
> Undershaft, whose third temptation broke Barbara's faith, 'My ducats and my daughter!'
>
> And Cusins, following him out of the Shelter cries 'Money and Gunpowder!'

In the silence that they leave behind them, Barbara's 'Drunkenness and Murder! My God: why hast thou forsaken me?' (11.MB.308) is shocking; and in its time it was considered by many to be blasphemous. While Barbara can be

accepted as a Christ-like figure, putting into her mouth the words of Jesus on the Cross was an offence for which Shaw was criticised by many. An unknown critic of the time wrote in the Morning Post:

> ...the playwright cannot make this concession to what may be called an agreeable moral without a display of taste so distressingly bad that he merely pains those whom for a wonder he seems trying to please... (29 November 1905)

On the other hand, in her diary of December 2nd, Beatrice Webb - never Shaw's kindest critic - calls Barbara's cry of despair, 'A wonderful and quite rational climax to the true tragedy of the scene of the Salvation Army Shelter.'[44] It is at this moment, forsaken by her Father in Heaven, betrayed by her father on earth who may 'be laying a snare for [her] soul,' (11.MB.336) that Bill Walker taunts her again with, 'Wot prawce selvytion nah?' Before he leaves the Shelter, still calling his soul his own, he will ask the question yet a third time. (11.MB.310)

Barbara is being forced to reassess her attitude to Salvationism: she says the following day to her father, 'I was safe with an infinite wisdom watching me... and in a moment, at the stroke of your pen in a cheque book, I stood alone; and the heavens were empty.' (11.MB.337) Gradually she is coming closer to Undershaft in realising that she 'cant talk religion to a man with bodily hunger in his eyes,' that poverty is the cause of that hunger, and that poverty can only be fought with money. 'But she does not immediately see that Undershaft may have acted, not to destroy her aspirations, but to bring home to her consciousness the fact that it is impossible to save Bill while society is organized in the present fashion.'[45]

After the excitement of the meeting Cusins has had a night of drinking where, he says, Undershaft 'only provided the wine [but that] it was Dionysos who made [him] drunk:'

he was possessed. He continues:

> ...He only sat there and completed the wreck of my moral basis, the rout of my convictions, the purchase of my soul. He cares for you, Barbara. That is what makes him so dangerous to me.

BARBARA: That has nothing to do with it, Dolly. There are larger loves and diviner dreams than the fireside ones. You know that, dont you?

CUSINS: Yes: that is our understanding. I know it. I hold to it. Unless he can hold me on the holier ground he may amuse me for a while; but he can get no deeper hold, strong as he is.

BARBARA: Keep to that; and the end will be right.

(11.MB.312/3)

If this exchange is remembered, the seeming contradictions and anomalies of them deserting the Blood and Fire of the Salvation Army for the Blood and Fire of the Armament Manufacturer are explained.

The moment that her earthly father stepped in to guide her from the impossibility of saving the soul of Bill Walker, or of anyone else, 'while society is organised in the present fashion,' was a moment of complete despair and she tells him that what he did in taking a human soul from her and turning it into the 'soul of a wolf!.. is worse than any murder.' He, the 'clever, clever devil', replies that she despairs too easily, that having struck a man to the heart must have left a mark on him. Barbara's response to this is immediate: she had been castigating him 'with intense conviction' and yet after his short speech of only twenty words she says, 'her face lightened up... Oh, you are

right: he can never be lost now: where was my faith?.. You may be a devil; but God speaks through you sometimes,' and 'she takes her father's hands and kisses them.' (11.MB.324) Again the touching of hands between father and daughter.

This exchange between them is the direct preparation for the great climax of the play which begins with Undershaft's exposition of the true faith of the Armorer during which he appears to exercise a strange hold over Barbara. 'He suddenly reaches up and takes [her] hands, looking powerfully into her eyes;' she speaks as if 'hypnotized'; afterwards 'she resumes her self-possession, withdrawing her hands from his with a power equal to his own.' She recalls the experiences of the last twentyfour hours as being like the earthquake that she and Sarah went through when they were 'little girls': she has felt the first shock wave, now she is waiting for the second. In the speeches that follow, or rather, the speech that continues, Undershaft, once launched, extends his armorer's creed:

> Come, come my daughter! dont make too much of your little tinpot tragedy... you have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion or what not. It doesnt fit the facts. Well, scrap it. Scrap it and get one that does fit. That is what is wrong with the world at present... in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year. Dont persist in that folly. If your old religion broke down yesterday, get a newer and a better one for tomorrow. (11.MB.336)

The difficulties of understanding the relationship between Barbara and her father are made more difficult by the assertions of Undershaft's beliefs in his role in life as an international arms merchant which must be at odds with her Salvationism. Shaw, with no bias against the ability of women to excel in any field they might choose, is not

content with a father who wishes his daughter, as the more competent, rather than his son, to succeed but further complicates his play by introducing the foundling issue, thus bi-passing the Undershaft children and opting for the 'parentless' Cusins.

The fate of the child whose father is unknown is one to which he is constantly drawn, and the 'absent parent' of Victorian melodrama, so contrived to promote pity, so inverted in the case of Shaw's first 'daughter', Blanche Sartorius, may be an inheritance of the nineteenth century. Shaw's obsession with children whose parentage is clouded by doubt can only give rise to speculation regarding his doubts about his own legitimacy. Had Shaw written this play with a straightforward confrontation between parent and child concerned with the morality of the parent's profession, as in Mrs Warren's Profession, the issue would be clear. Indeed, had Shaw kept to his provisional title of Andrew Undershaft's Profession, he could have treated the relationship of father and daughter in a different light.

In Major Barbara the issue is confused by the need for Undershaft to find his foundling heir to Perivale St Andrews: Barbara and Stephen are both barred from the inheritance but Dolly Cusins is a likely candidate. In Undershaft's pursuit of Cusins the emphasis is changed from the father/daughter to embrace a father/son relationship as well. The piece of casuistry that enables everyone to get what they want at the end of the play comes in the form of Cusins' technical illegitimacy. He can cease to be his proposed wife's 'dolly' and become both her brother - by virtue of his adoption by her father - also her father by his adoption of the name of her father, Andrew Undershaft.
All problems are resolved in Shaw's irrepressible sense of anti-climax and the ridiculous. It is not surprising that audiences were, and still are, baffled as to his sincerity, his inability to 'be serious'.
Lady Britomart is outraged and positively forbids Barbara to listen to any more of her 'father's abominable wickedness,'

they must leave, 'come home instantly,' (11.MB.341) but of course they don't; even Sarah decides in favour of her father. The truth is that they are all hopelessly out-manoeuvred by Shaw/Undershaft. The Prince of Darkness has not lost a daughter but gained a son.He shows signs of approving of Stephen once he knows that the young man is not interested in taking on the family business, he even makes a move to shake hands with him, which intention is balked by Lady Brit, while Stephen puts his hand on his father's shoulder, albeit patronizingly. Lady Brit comes into her own particular kingdom as soon as she sets eyes on the model town and the play ends with Barbara holding on to her mother's skirts like a little girl needing her Mama. The parents and their children are united beneath the sign of the sword: eighty years on the audience is still arguing as to what will be the outcome.

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# 7

## SUBSTITUTE PARENTS*

Before considering his use of substitute parents in the English domestic plays it would not be inappropriate to consider Shaw himself in the roles of substitute son and father. Without doubt the most important of his substitute fathers was George John Lee (See above, 'The Biographical Context'). Michael Holroyd, in 'The Search for Love' 1856-1898, traces Lee's influence upon the child and the young man. Shaw was twenty years old and had joined his mother in London when Lee died: the death produced 'no effect on [her] at all...and his career as a pseudo-Lee closed for ever.'[1] With Lee and his natural father, Shaw acknowledged a third 'father,' his maternal uncle Walter Gurley (See 'The Biographical Context') and freely recommended three fathers as an excellent arrangement: in his play Misalliance he created Joey Perceval as a 'man with three fathers.' A case could be made for Shaw's love affairs being the search for a mother-substitute, and the likeness between his wife Charlotte and his mother is frequently remarked upon, but it is only the relationship with Jenny Paterson, however, a friend of his mother and a woman fifteen years older than himself, that could be easily construed as being of a mother-son nature. The intense sexual nature of their long drawn out affair may give the lie to this but it is interesting that, as Holroyd observes, it was after the death of Shaw's father that sex entered the relationship when, 'Almost at once their relationship changed.'[2]

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Foremost amongst the persons with whom he formed a father-son relationship was Harley Granville Barker but he was not the first of them. In 1894 when Shaw was thirty-eight he received a letter from Reginald Golding Bright, a young man in his early twenties, asking for advice on how to become a theatre critic. This was the beginning of a correspondence that continued for more than thirty years. Although most of their letters concerned plays, Shaw also discussed and criticised the young man's literary attempts and Bright went on to become a critic himself and an agent. When requested, Shaw gave generous advice and a letter has survived in which he gave his opinions on how best to deal with the different relationships arising from the remarriage of Bright's father.

> This is just the sort of case in which children are atrociously cruel to their parents. The first thing to do is to clear your mind against all protests against the position of your father's wife. No matter who or what she is or was, whether you and your brothers and sisters like or dislike her, your father's claim to be happy with the woman he prefers and to marry her, and put her interest before those of anyone else, is indisputable. Of course, it is a very disagreeable turn of events for the family, but it is not a grievance. If you take it in bad part, you will do pure, unmitigated, useless harm, since the marriage cannot be undone (even if it were reasonable to demand that it should); and besides, by making your father's relationship with his children resentful and miserable, you will throw him more helplessly than ever on the sympathy of his wife, and almost drive him to make an unfair division of his property in her favour when he dies...[3]

Throughout his long life, in his many letters to young people, Shaw maintained a frank approach to their problems.

Almost twenty years before he knew Golding Bright, one of Shaw's first literary efforts was 'A Practical System of Moral Education For Females Embodied in a Letter to a Young Person of that Sex'. Called My Dear Dorothea, it was to remain unpublished until after his death, and it ends with the words:

> At some future stage of your career, I may again address you on the great subject of yourself. Till then, be assured that I will continue to feel for you the romantic affection of a parent, tempered by the rational interest of an experimental philosopher.[4]

My Dear Dorothea (1878) is written in the manner of the moral tract common in the nineteenth-century, a kind of satiric fiction which could be compared with Philip Clandon's manner of speaking in You Never Can Tell. It cannot be compared directly with more realistic material but it bears strong resemblance to a letter written by Shaw to his elder sister in 1875 when he was nineteen years old and before he left Ireland. The letter advises Lucy how to behave to their mother and it is interesting that much of Dorothea should consist of advice to a little girl on the same subject: in neither the letter nor the book is the father mentioned.[5]

Shaw's relationship with Granville Barker gave rise to rumours that he was the young man's natural father, and Eric Salmon writes that 'Shaw treated Barker as if he were his son.' He also remarks upon their 'artistic relationship [that] was not only remarkably close but in some ways of a filial-paternal kind.'[6]

C. B. Purdom is of the opinion that while Shaw always directed his own plays 'Barker had much to do with them at the Stage Society, at the Court, and elsewhere; in fact, it can be said that he shared the productions with Shaw...'[7] After the failure of Barker's marriage to Lillah MacCarthy, Shaw saw little of him. Nevertheless, Purdom writes that

'their reactions to each other affected their lives throughout.'[8]

The third younger man, whose friendship with Charlotte Shaw was probably closer than with her husband, was T. E. Lawrence. Desmond Stewart in his biography of Lawrence claims that 'Both Shaws had turned their parental urges on to a substitute son, and Lawrence now filled the gap in their lives left by the defection of Harley Granville Barker whose second wife detested the Shaws.'[9]

Lawrence would appear to have been in need of substitute parents as much as the Shaws were in need of a son and went so far as to join the army under the assumed name of Shaw which later he legalised by deed poll.[10] Lawrence and Charlotte exchanged many letters in which they confided their most intimate thoughts and feelings to each other and Desmond Stewart records that when Shaw read this correspondence after his wife's death 'he was shaken.'[11] After Lawrence's death in 1935, driving the motorcycle given to him by the Shaws, when G.B.S. was seventy-nine years old, there were no more substitute sons: the father's role ended with that violent accident. Blanche Patch, Shaw's secretary for 30 years commented that: 'His death was Greek Tragedy to them. They met it like stoics.'[12]

The friendship with Molly Tompkins that began in 1921 when she was twentyfour and Shaw sixtyfive can be construed as a late blossoming variation on the father/daughter relationship of the kind that Shaw had pursued before the turn of the century with attractive actresses (See above 'The Theatrical Context' and below p200) and is well documented by her son.[13]

In the English domestic plays substitute parents are those persons who have been elected by the children, or who have been employed by them or by their natural parents, in a capacity that will include the duties that are more usually undertaken by the child's natural parents. In its relationship with the substitute parent the child has elected itself as a substitute son or daughter: this would

seem to indicate a mutual need for the parent/child substitute.

Shaw is very good at portraying those housekeeper/nanny/mother substitute persons who are so valued by families and households wealthy enough to afford them: they are in marked contrast to the servants who looked after the young Shaw children. His biographers were made aware that he and his two sisters were, as Hesketh Pearson wrote, 'almost exclusively in the company of nurses and servants' rather than with their parents.[14] As late as 1939 Shaw was still producing motherly women to protect and care for his wayward geniuses, In Good King Charles's Golden Days Mrs Basham would as easily tell Mr Newton to look where he's going as keep Charles II waiting on the doorstep.[15] There could be an implicit social comment in Basham's , and the rest of the 'carers' attitudes, to their superiors. A 'We see you on equal terms and don't you forget it' attitude. Shaw's men are, for the most part, eternally children in need of maternal love and protection: this may well be a reflection of Shaw's own unfulfilled childhood need.

The parent and the child figures can be viewed from both the child's and the parent's angle - the child looking for and needing the parent and the parent looking for and needing the child in the substitution. It may be that the parent is looking for the child he or she would *like* to have had rather than the one with which they are blessed.

In Misalliance Tarleton and Summerhays each prefers the other's son, and Mrs Whitefield in Man and Superman admits to disliking her own daughter while loving Violet and Octavius very much, but parenthood does not necessarily bring with it a rational attitude to one's children. At the opposite extreme is Sartorius who dotes upon Blanche, even in the light of what he knows of her selfish and occasionally violent behaviour. For all her attempt at 'rational parenthood' Mrs Clandon finds that it breaks down when Gloria simultaneously falls in love, and is reunited with her father. Children may, and often do, prefer one

parent to another, just as parents may dislike their children or love them inordinately. The fact is that there are preferences in all relationships.

The extent to which 'choice' enters into these relationships varies according to the nature of the relationships. Thus, in You Never Can Tell, Philip's attitude to William the waiter may indicate a more deliberate choice than William's to Philip; the young man, at that point in his adolescence, is more likely to be in need of a father's guidance than is the elderly waiter to be in need of a dependent son. William's job puts him at the service of all of the hotel guests, he must treat them all in a helpful and even 'fatherly' fashion; he does not 'choose' them, caring for them constitutes the nature of his work, as a waiter he is *employed to* serve others. In the same way nannies and nurses and housekeepers are employed to care for others: they are professional 'carers' and presumably have been chosen by their employers for this purpose, and they, in their turn, have chosen to remain

In some cases the professional attitudes of the carers overlap into more intimate relationships of longstanding, as, for example, with Nurse Guinness whose title embraces both aspects. A 'nurse' can be a professional person who serves all who require her special talents, but it is also the name given to the person who lives with the family to care for babies and very young children, later becoming their 'nannie' and often looking after the welfare of succeeding generations as a privileged old retainer.

Young Philip Clandon has decided that William the waiter shall act as the father whom he has never known. This ideal relationship is not developed and stands only, perhaps, to point the contrast between the cantankerous natural parent, Crampton, and the obligingly resourceful waiter. The playwright might well have been expressing, consciously or unconsciously, a personal preference when he has Philip indicate his need for a father in William who is described in the stage direction that opens Act II as:

> ... a remarkable person in his way. A silky old man, white haired and delicate looking, but so cheerful and contented that in his encouraging presence ambition stands rebuked as vulgarity, and imagination as treason to the abounding sufficiency and interest of the actual. He has a certain expression peculiar to men who are pre-eminent in their calling, and who, whilst aware of the vanity of success, are untouched by envy. (8.YNCT.225)

William is himself the first of a number of parents who are less successful in their relationships with their own children than with the children of others. When, unexpectedly, he meets his eminent barrister son, he 'loses his self-possession,' weeps and is overcome with giddiness. He admits that he 'should feel at a great disadvantage off [his] own proper footing' and urges Mrs Clandon to 'Never mind my being the gentleman's father... it is only the accident of birth after all... (8.YNCT.287)

In Major Barbara Mrs Baines is a different kind of parent substitute and can be seen as a mother-figure in her relationship to Jenny Hill and to Barbara and more generally to the poor and needy whom the Salvation Army exists to serve. She is 'missus', not 'miss', and she will stop at nothing to get the best for her 'family' just as Lady Britomart is quite prepared to put her pride in her pocket, as she tells her son, to get more money out of Undershaft in order that their daughters may support separate households. Mrs Baines is 'an earnest looking woman of about 40, with a caressing, urgent voice, and an appealing manner.' (11.MB.301) Her attitude is at once innocent, with its insistence on the reliability of things spiritual - 'She has never prayed in vain,' - while being at the same time entirely practical as can be seen in the way she goes about persuading Undershaft to part with a thousand pounds. (11.MB.298) In spite of this practicality she is not part of

the domestic, but of the spiritual, family with which the Undershaft father and daughter are involved: her language is all of prayers, of Infinite Goodness and blessed work, of Heaven and the Lord. Her eyes are constantly filling with tears and yet she is quite without the shyness that might inhibit her from appealing to the rich on behalf of the poor.

As Undershaft is a father figure to his Perivale workers and is 'at home' in the factory, so Mrs Baines is a mother figure to those under her command and is 'at home' in the Shelter. Her dramatic function is as a representative of worldly institutions to assist Undershaft in undermining his daughter's spiritual beliefs. For Barbara would rather die than take money from the tainted source of Bodger and Co., while Mrs Baines will and does take money from anywhere, convinced that she and the Army can make use even of Bodger. Her 'mother' impulse is as strong in this practical way as Lady Brit's. It could be argued that it is Mrs Baines, the mother-in-God of Barbara, who destroys the faith of the younger woman by taking Undershaft's bribe. Lady Brit, the natural mother, is prepared to demand money from the armament manufacturer for Barbara to live on, but Barbara does not believe it is right for the Salvation Army to 'live' on tainted money. Her 'spiritual mother' Mrs Baines begins the disillusionment by accepting the bribe offered by the father.

The substitute mother in Pygmalion is more easily recognisable as such than is Mrs Baines. Mrs Pearce is Henry Higgins' housekeeper and has taken over from where his natural mother, the excellent Mrs Higgins, left off. Higgins is a man with two mothers, a circumstance enjoyed by all upper class and a great many middle class families who are able to afford a nanny. Mrs Pearce may be called the housekeeper but she is the Henry-keeper, the second mother figure, the nanny who must deal with his childishness, his irresponsibility and his bad manners.

Her speeches to him are scattered with 'nanny' expressions,

'might I ask...sir...if you would be so good as not to...remember not...' While these phrases are deferential they are also powerful assertions of authority and indicate her sense of equality if not superiority. They may be compared with 'committee language' eg 'with respect' (just the opposite intended) 'might I suggest' (I have a far better idea than yours).

> ... might I ask you not to come down to breakfast in your dressing gown, or at any rate not to use it as a napkin to the extent you do, sir. And if you would be so good as not to eat everything off the same plate, and to remember not to put the porridge saucepan out of your hand on the clean tablecloth, it would be a better example to the girl. You know you nearly choked yourself with a fishbone in the jam only last week. (14.PYG.232)

Her care for his behaviour, 'you swear a great deal too much,' as well as her prudent common sense, 'You must be reasonable... You cant walk over everybody like this,' allows him to present himself in his natural mother's drawing room as a little less wilful and uncouth than he would otherwise have been.
Nevertheless, he is baffled by his housekeeper's opinion of him and confides to Pickering:

> ... that woman has the most extraordinary ideas about me. Here I am, a shy, diffident sort of man. Ive never been able to feel really grown-up and tremendous, like other chaps. And yet she's firmly persuaded that I'm an arbitrary overbearing bossing kind of person. I cant account for it. (14.PYG.232)

Mrs Pearce is the sensible mother who must deal with the child every day: Mrs Higgins is the wise and beautiful lady mother who must fulfil her social obligations while another,

a woman of the lower orders, rather than a lady, is employed to keep the headstrong boy in order.

Mrs Pearce is a less eccentric version of Colenso Ridgeon's Emmy in The Doctor's Dilemma who 'has only one manner, and that is the manner of an old family nurse to a child just after it has learnt to walk.' (12.DD.81) Perhaps it is not surprising that Ridgeon is described as 'a man of fifty who has never shaken off his youth... more the young man than the titled physician,' and, like Higgins, he needs a woman to 'look after' him. Emmy's first words to Ridgeon are, 'Have you finished your two eggs, sonny?' She then asks if he has changed his vest and tells him to keep himself tidy 'and dont go messing about and dirtying your hands...' (12.DD.84)

In Pygmalion it is not only to Higgins that Mrs Pearce is a mother figure. In the six months that Eliza lives in Wimpole Street she is virtually adopted by the three adults under whose protection she finds herself, and each of them in that time acts in *loco parentis* to her. As the head of the household, the father figure is Higgins followed by Pickering who is like a kind uncle. From the beginning Mrs Pearce has attended to Eliza's physical welfare and in that capacity is a mother figure just as she is to Higgins himself. A teacher/pupil relationship can also be applied to them with Higgins as the head master of the establishment and Pickering with his gallant good manners as the second-in-command who has taught Eliza by his considerate example:

> But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isnt it? (14.PYG.277)

Mrs Pearce has taught her the practical virtues of soap and water and in these ways resembles the school matron as much as the family retainer. To further expand the pupil/teacher relationship, it is reasonable to believe that

after the party that is Eliza's final examination, had Pickering shown his usual sympathy to her instead of talking to Higgins about his 'triumph', and had Mrs Pearce been present to restrain Higgins in his boorishness, Eliza would not have reacted so violently and would not have 'run away from school.' If the teacher is considered 'good' on results alone, Higgins is undoubtedly good and his obsessive dedication to the challenge of the unspeakable Cockney flowergirl results in the complete metamorphosis of a human being. Regardless of the means that he employs - he bullies, sneers, cajoles, he lives and breathes Eliza - he believes that his methods are justified in his final triumph.

More than once Shaw links Doolittle and Higgins in such a way as to emphasise something of the father figure that Eliza has found in her teacher: 'She knows that Higgins does not need her, just as her father did not need her...' (14.PYG.302) Higgins' suggestion that 'I'll adopt you as my daughter and settle money on you if you like,' shows that he sees her as 'dependent' upon him rather than as a woman who would be glad to be treated as a human being by him. (14.PYG.285)

Those natural fathers Sartorius and Undershaft, it may be suspected, feel more than a father's love for their daughters, Higgins' ideal woman is someone as much as possible like his mother. In a 'fatherly' fashion he even presumes that he can 'dispose' of Eliza when he adds, 'Or would you rather marry Pickering?' He had earlier suggested, 'I daresay my mother could find some chap or other to marry you,' thus strengthening his own parental image. (14.PYG.265) Higgins is the teacher/father figure who is determined on results at whatever cost and pays for them along the way with bullying and bribery. That ring, made so much of by romantic directors and audiences alike, and the opened box of chocolates in his laboratory that had been used in all probability to wheedle the pupil before Eliza, would appear to be part of his 'teaching method', while patience and praise are not. It is also possible that the

chocolates are Higgins' own, that he is the self-indulgent child. The act of biting one in half to share with Eliza could lend itself to a number of interpretations, eg to demonstrate that it is not poisonous (she will not be drugged before abduction) or it could be a 'magic' chocolate that he shares with her for good, or (as in the case of the Snowwhite's apple) for ill.

The parent/child, teacher/pupil relationships may easily extend into others such as the father/employer/boss who must be obeyed by the child/employee/servant who will lose her place and the possibility of promotion if she does not do as she is told. Giles Havergal, in his 1979 Citizens Theatre production of Pygmalion, has expressed the Eliza/Higgins relationship in terms of the actor/director, an apt interpretation when it is considered that Eliza is literally rehearsed in her part as a lady/duchess which means that she must learn how to speak, how to move and behave under scrutiny, just as any drama student must learn to do. The public performance which comes at the end of this very long 'rehearsal' period marks the end of the 'Director's' responsibility after which the actor continues to play the part for just as long as the production is successful or fashionable. It is doubly apt in reflecting the relationship of Mrs Pat Campbell, the first Eliza, and G.B.S. He had fallen seriously in love with her and for almost a year,before she finally agreed to play Eliza, he had courted her with a determination that put his relationship with Charlotte into jeopardy and that only ended when she became bored with him and ran off to marry George Cornwallis-West.

The optimism of Pygmalion is indisputable, not just because Eliza finds her true voice but because it is Higgins who is the instrument of the Life Force, in releasing her ability to become articulate. He is full of the conviction of his own 'rightness' in dealing with her and while he is unsympathetic sometimes, insensitive to her feelings, and always eccentric in his behaviour, there is no malice. He is

no sinister Svengali figure. While Shaw understood that these two people were not intended for each other as were Tanner and Ann Whitefield, he gave Higgins the best lines to persuade Eliza to return to him, when he cried: 'For the fun of it!' (14.PYG.285) But the Life Force, through Higgins himself, has transformed her and she now has no need of him anymore.

In Heartbreak House there are influences, other than their father's, that acted upon the two Shotover girls and shaped them into the women that they became if, as may be presumed, there was no mother in the home. The realistic social structure of the family home is deliberately disturbed in this play to add to the dramatic tensions within the household. Explicit and implicit are confused so that while much is revealed of them, more is obscure. His two daughters were in the care of a substitute or surrogate mother whom Shotover accuses of having brought up his 'wretched children... in ignorance of the commonest decencies of social intercourse.' (15.HH.46)

Nurse Guinness is another of Shaw's servant/mother figures but more in evidence than most of them, appearing in each of the play's three acts and purposely named, we may be sure, by the teetotal Irishman whose names are never undescriptive of the characters to whom they are attached. She looks after Shotover's needs, the very old man perhaps resembling the child. Nurse Guinness is the traditional old retainer, to be compared with similar ones in the plays of Chekhov, who stays on after the children no longer need her. Whether she looked after Hesione's children or whether her sole charge is the aged Shotover is not clear. She is treated by him with the familiar disrespect of her long service which she accepts as a matter of course.

Shotover entrusted his little girls to the care of a woman , who, known or unknown to him, had married a member of his crew, an acknowledged thief at sea who became a thief on land.

For all Guinness's 'duckying' and 'dotying' of her one time

charges there is a harpy side to her that makes her a highly suspect mother figure. When Billy Dunn is flung out of the room she complains, 'Why didnt you shoot him, sir? If I'd known who he was I'd have shot him myself,' (15.HH.112) and she exults 'in hideous triumph' as 'laughing harshly' she goes to make sure that he is really dead after the direct hit on the gravel pit. (15.HH.148) Shotover may blame her for his daughters' social inadequacies but he has made no other provision for them while he was away impressing his wayward crew with his ability to 'divine water, spot gold, explode a cartridge in your pocket with a glance of his eye, and see the truth hidden in the heart of a man.' (15.HH.111)

The relationship of Ellie Dunn and Shotover cannot be discussed as being in the same category as those above: he is no ordinary 'substitute' father adopted by her because she is fatherless for she dearly loves Mazzini: Shotover is Ellie's 'second father', he is the extra parent that wise children choose for themselves. Nor is she only a young woman to be adopted for a day because in his dotage he has lost patience with his middle-aged daughters. In their few hours together Shotover assists at Ellie's transition from youth to womanhood and in doing so behaves with the degree of paternal responsibility that he never showed to Hesione and Ariadne, his natural children.[16]

At the same time there is a sexual or at least a marital implication in the relationship between the Captain and the young woman. She says that she would like to marry him and describes him as her 'spiritual husband:' this is after her romantic ideas about Hector Hushabye have been destroyed by the discovery that he is Hesione's husband. (15.HH.138)

Ellie has been 'taught' about life through the disillusionment of her immature fascination with Hector-as-Marcus Darnley, she has 'learned' the unsuitability of Mangan, and she finally finds her 'spiritual husband' and second father in Shotover. This substitute parent-child relationship, the young woman who discovers her ideal teacher as a soul mate in the old man, is a relationship

often encouraged by Shaw between himself and young actresses. In a letter to Molly Tomkins one of the last of his 'young actresses' Shaw remarked, 'Is it not delightful to be in love? I willl pose for you to your heart's content. You will find it described in Heartbreak House as far as it can be described...'[17] His flirtation with the young American was flattering to them both but was not so serious as the affair with Mrs Patrick Campbell, and his fears of playing the aged pantaloon (or the fool) to her colombine, together with his protectiveness for Charlotte's feelings, were responsible for his concluding the affair, if not the friendship. The parent/child motif, that crops up in so many different guises within the plays, provides a fresh understanding of Shaw's constant search for the family that would provide his 'true' parents and also the 'children' that he never fathered.

The play that, above all others, deals with substitute parents and child takes as its theme the complications that arise when a married couple 'adopt' into their family a very young man, and is Shaw's fifth play Candida.

The 'parents' are James and Candida Morell. He is a caring Socialist parson, a somewhat muscular Christian, just the man to oppose Sartorius's bitter dealing with the poor. He commands respect from those in his immediate circle, and more devotion than his wife thinks is good for him. He is much in demand within the larger sphere as a committed Christian Socialist, and in going about God's work he is as much at home in the Guild of St Matthew as in St Dominic's Church.[18]

Their two children, Jimmy and Fluffy, presently at the seaside getting over their German measles, are introduced and dismissed within four speeches in the first five minutes of the play. There is no attempt at even the briefest statement of the Morells' feelings for their own children, and the effect is that of healthy detachment rather than indifference. It is a matter for speculation as to the

derivation of the little girl's pet name Fluffy, but certainly the implications of the name are of a frivolous and essentially decorative nature. Perhaps this is how she is regarded in comparison to the son who has his father's name, although in diminutive form; she is the less important, the pretty child whose name would be more apt if given to a pet kitten than to a small person.

In contrast to this is their attitude towards their other, adolescent 'child', Eugene Marchbanks, whom James found down-and-out on the embankment and brought home only to discover that the poor boy is, in fact, possessed of ample financial support had he but known how to cash the cheque in his pocket.

So admirable is Morell, the father-substitute, that when the poor boy (who, like a poor boy in a fairy story, has proved to be a product of Eton, a drop-out from Oxford, and the nephew of an earl) returns the hospitality he has been generously given by falling in love with James's wife and insultingly undermining his professional and masculine self-confidence, he does not throw him out of the house. Instead Morell agrees to a confrontation with Candida to establish whether he or the young Marchbanks shall be the one of her choice.

It is likely that Morell takes a fatherly interest in all the young men with whom he associates; in the morning meeting with his curate, Lexy Mill, who clearly adores him, he calls him 'my dear lad' and 'my dear boy.' From Eugene's entrance to the moment when he is provoked to real anger Morell speaks to the young poet with hearty affection. He begins by flattering him at having the 'overpaying' rather than the 'underpaying instinct' when it comes to paying taxis, and in eight pages of following dialogue he addresses him as 'my lad,' 'my dear lad,' 'my dear boy,' 'my dear child,' and 'my boy,' as many as five times, with hearty affection which matches his strong, mellow, physical attractiveness.

Eugene is quite different from this self-appointed

father-figure under whose roof he has sheltered:

> ... a strange shy youth of eighteen, slight, effeminate, with a delicate childish voice, and a hunted tormented expression and shrinking manner that shew the painful sensitiveness of very swift and acute apprehensiveness in youth, before the character has grown to its full strength... the very intensity with which he feels a perfectly commonplace position comes from excessive nervous force; and his nostrils, mouth, and eyes betray a fierce petulant wilfulness, as to the bent of which his brow, already lined with pity, is reassuring. (8.CAN.93)

This long and somewhat emotional description of the poet could be an idealised recollection of Shaw's own fearful youth, just as Charteris in The Philanderer written two years earlier, is an aspect of Shaw the young man, who saw himself as a philandering bohemian.

There is an equally good case for seeing another aspect of Shaw in Morell the campaigning socialist, whose physical description can be more easily identified with the author's than that of Eugene could ever have been. Desmond MacCarthy has maintained that, '... however entertained we may be, we often hear the author ventriloquising rather than the characters themselves speaking'.[19] It is hardly surprising that Shaw should have been accused of 'ventriloquising' when so many critics 'see him' in the characters that he has created, and the idea that he is expressing himself through Morell and through Eugene, as both father and son, is demonstrative of two opposed emotional rather than intellectual points of view within himself. Shaw was always the son figure, from the youthful Robert Smith of Immaturity, arriving in London to seek his fortune - and sometimes he was the daughter[20] - but as he matured, became more confident, and richer, he was also the father, the figure of authority.

Candida is the mother figure and love object of both Morell and Marchbanks, just as in Man and Superman Ann Whitefield will be a potential mother figure and love object of Octavius and John Tanner. She speaks to Marchbanks in warmly affectionate terms, using the same expressions for him as she does for her husband. They are both her 'boys' and this use of the same word can initially give the impression that not only does she equate them emotionally but that she comes close to diminishing her husband while at the same time patronising her 'son'.

An interesting comparison may be made with the contemporary habit of some parents of calling each other Mother/Mummy and Father/Daddy, not only in speaking to the child of the other parent, but in referring to, and in addressing, each other. Edward Albee, in The American Dream (1959 -1960), has satirized the parent/child relationship to the point where none of the characters have names beyond Mommy, Daddy and Grandma, a form of address that seems to represent *what* role the person plays, rather than *who* he is: so, in America, Junior is commonly used when the child has been given the same name as his father. In Man and Superman the Irish-American Malones, father and son, share the same name, Hector, which leads to confusion and the interception of a letter by the wrong person. It is likely that Shaw was known as Sonny, the diminutive of 'son', in his family because, like his father, his first name was George, but such a name only confirmed youthfulness, even nonentity, that he had no name that was his alone. Holroyd declares that it was 'not until [Shaw] had orphaned himself and was reborn the child of his own writings in England that he developed the full intellectual plumage of 'G.B.S.'[21] Nevertheless, he was known as George, a name that he hated and never used professionally, within his family.

After Act I Morell drops the use of 'my boy' to Marchbanks but Candida continues it throughout the play. The effect of this is to deny the young man something of the individuality that a name confers upon its possessor. The

effusive and dominant aspect of Candida's nature can best be shown in the way she addresses James and Eugene: she uses their Christian names even more than she uses their nicknames and in the first act alone, out of the eighteen speeches she makes, only two of them do not contain either the proper name or the nickname of the person to whom she is speaking. On five occasions she refers to, or she calls Eugene 'poor boy,' 'dear boy,' 'nice boy,' 'good boy,' and 'great baby,' while Morell remains 'James,' or at most, 'James dear' when she speaks to him in the presence of others. Morell also contributes to the same pattern when talking to the young man: he calls him 'my boy' five times, and when he believes that Eugene is being foolish he attributes it to 'calf love' and adds, 'Dont force me to shew you the indulgence I should shew to a child. Be a man.' He behaves with the 'complacent superiority' of which Eugene accuses him (8.CAN.99) and by the end of the act the cumulative effect of this way of addressing Marchbanks results in the audience finding him 'childish' too, and James's growing agitation becomes no more than comical. Even when the 'child' goes too far and quotes the Bible against his clerical benefactor the resulting tussle is laughable. Maurice Valency calls him, '... a child of terrifying precocity, desperately advancing his own individuality at the expense of the only man who ever befriended him... a strange figure, at the same time childish and dangerously adult'.[22]

James grasps him 'powerfully by the lapel of his coat,' Marchbanks 'cowers down on the sofa and screams passionately, 'Stop Morell: if you strike me I'll kill myself... Let me go. Take your hand away.' (8.CAN.101) The audience may be excused for its laughter - it has been invited to laugh, especially when 'mother' returns and tidies up the young poet, buttons his collar, ties his bow tie, and even 'arranges' his hair; it is a scene familiar to every woman. Father has spanked the child and mother kisses him better. The little boy goes out arm in arm with her, his

mother's 'little man,' his jealousy and possessiveness momentarily assuaged.

Candida is one of the most popular of Shaw's plays and the heroine, perhaps the most popular of parents although the famous Candida 'charm', incorporates a certain smugness, and, like her husband, she can be accused of some complacency. Shaw describes her 'characteristic expression' as one of 'maternal indulgence' but he adds that 'like any other woman [she makes] the most of her sexual attraction for trivially selfish ends' while her 'largeness of mind and dignity of character... ennoble her cunning in the affections.' (8.CAN.91)

Shaw also describes her as being 'well built, well nourished,' and she may resemble Burgess, her father, who we are told is 'softened by overfeeding.' (8.CAN.85) Burgess calls his daughter by the diminutive, Candy, and if the choice of nickname says something about the bestower and the person to whom the name is given there is something to be learned from 'Candy.' Candida derives from the Latin 'white' and implies 'unbiassed,' 'not censorious,' 'frank; but 'candy' is from a quite different root and means 'crystallized sugar', or 'to preserve in sugar';[23] in America it is a popular name for sweetmeats or confectionery and archaically it meant 'honeyed or flattering.' These overtones suggest aspects of Mrs Morell that are not entirely attractive, indicating something of the way in which she behaved as a child, and consequently the way in which she was treated by her father. The fact that he still calls her by that name can be taken as no more than the persistence of an old habit, childhood names having a way of sticking into adulthood as Shaw knew well enough. On the other hand it could be the result of the parent's inability to accept the child as an adult. In the same way, Mrs Warren must keep her 'little Vivie' and Roebuck Ramsden, in Man and Superman, continues to talk about his 'Annie.'

It is likely, there being no mention of sibblings, that Candida is an only child of her father and that her mother

is dead. Burgess tells Marchbank that when she was a child she used to beg him to tell her fairy stories, and that Candy takes after him. It would appear that as a daughter Candy got her own way by being very sweet to her father. Now as the mother to her children and to 'her boy' James, she is still getting her own way, although he treats her in a very practical way (pointing out that they must all share the household duties , for instance) and it is Eugene who places her upon a pedestal: and where else should the Virgin mother stand.

Shaw remarks upon the likeness - which has been remarked upon ever since - between Candida '[who] is not the hero of the piece,'[24] and Titian's 'Virgin of the Assumption,' a reproduction of which hangs over the hearth, a gift from Eugene.

In a letter to Ellen Terry, 'the author of Candida' wrote, 'Candida, between you and me, is the Virgin Mother and nobody else...'[25] On the face of it this is a difficult image to reconcile with that other aspect of Candida as revealed in a letter to James Huneker where Shaw comments that 'she seduces Eugene just exactly as far as it is worth her while to seduce him'.[26] Perhaps this is what Eric Bentley is referring to when he says of Candida:

> ... it is a confused play but... the confusion goes unnoticed because of Candida's charm and may even be the cause of a degree of emotional tension unusual in Shaw's work. Candida is made out of a Shavian ambivalence: he would like to reject this kind of woman, but actually he dotes on her. One quickly senses that he 'is' Marchbanks.[27]

How does the mother square with the seductress? Candida, with her intuition and her maternal tenderness through which the Life Force works, talks to Morell about teaching Eugene 'what love really is.' She cannot abandon him to bad women, and convention, taboo, and her own

conscious restraint do not allow her a sexual relationship with Eugene. Her desire to protect him from those 'bad women' is purely maternal and involves her fear that no other woman will be 'good enough' for her 'boy'. In spite of telling Morell that she would give her goodness and purity to poor Eugene as willingly as she would give her shawl to a beggar dying of cold, she adds, 'if there were nothing else to restrain me.' (8.CAN.120) The essential restraint is, of course, her love for her husband; but in any case, as Bentley remarks, 'A respectable woman's choice was made before the banns were read.'[28] It is, in any case, her rôle within the play, without which there would be no conflict or competition between the men.

Candida would have been shocked if she had thought that in her dealings with Eugene she had consciously or unconsciously stimulated his sexual desire for her; she had only behaved to him as a loving and reassuring 'mother' in the absence of his real mother. We may be sure that the experience with him will make her wiser with her boy Jimmy when he reaches adolescence.

For all her love of Morell Candida treats him very badly and this is best seen in the second act after she returns from the kitchen and stops him working:

> My boy is not looking well. Has he been overworking... He looks very pale, and grey, and wrinkled, and old. (His melancholy deepens and she attacks it with wilful gaiety) (8.CAN.117)

That stage direction is interesting; unexpectedly this thoroughly good woman 'attacks with wilful gaiety' her husband's melancholy. The audience knows that the poet has distressed the parson, that the 'father's' love has been spurned and his position challenged by the 'son' - but Candida does not know.

All three members of this triangle are playing roles: Morell is being the 'father' to Eugene as well as treating

Lexy as a 'son'; Candida is playing the 'mother' role to James as well as to Eugene, while the young man is rebelling against them both in his role as the 'son' and indulging himself in the roles of poet and lover.

In the scene between Morell and Candida that follows she is, at the very least, surprisingly insensitive. She tells him that his ministry does 'no good,' that all the extra hours he puts in are 'positively' helping his congregation to 'go back fresh and make money harder than ever!' and that his preaching is so splendid that 'its as good as a play for them.' This is a particularly hard criticism for Morell to bear and he is rightly distressed. Young parsons were, and still are, warned by their bishops of the dangers of preaching with the kind of fluency that could be described as 'theatrical.' She adds that he is only 'in love with preaching because [he] does it so beautifully' but he mistakes rhetoric for 'enthusiasm for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.' Women, she says, are enthusiastic, not for his Socialism and his religion but because they all have 'Prossy's complaint'.

Morell is appalled, accuses her of 'soul-destroying cynicism!' and Shaw uses exclamation marks to emphasise the extent of the clergyman's dismay and of Candida's attack, punctuation that is not typical of the author except under some provocation. She goes on to tell him that he is 'spoiled with love and worship,' that he gets 'far more than is good' for him and that it is unfair that all the love should go to him and none to Eugene. At this Morell reacts, not surprisingly; 'a convulsive movement shakes him in spite of himself,' and Candida asks: 'What's the matter? Am I worrying you?' It could be that she has contrived this whole situation, that she really is not as insensitive as she is now appearing to be, and there is an underlying intention to her behaviour in the twentyfour hours that the play covers. It is clear that she is aware of her husband's attractiveness to the women around him, she replaced his secretary with an older woman, and while 'Prossy's

complaint' may be treated lightly she finds it serious enough to list it against him as a weakness *for which he is to blame*, rather than the women. (8.CAN.117/8)

There may be a hint of 'Don Juan's complaint' about Morell who attracts women to himself without finding them sexually desirable. Certainly there is a connection between Candida and Ann Whitefield as Shaw writes in 1904:

> When Ann is married she will look after Tanner exactly as Candida looks after Morell. But when Candida was capturing Morell, and had not yet become his housekeeper and his nurserymistress, she was Ann. The author of Candida is clearly the author of Ann.

Earlier in the same letter he also says:

> 'Ann is the Mother Woman... She is a breeder of men, specialized by Nature to that end and endowed with enormous fascination for it...'[29]

This is eight years after he had written to Ellen Terry, as 'the author,' that Candida is 'the Virgin Mother and nobody else...'

Hindsight is a fine thing, and while it could be said that the relationship between Candida and Ann was, in 1896, still an earnest in the womb of time, it would seem that the two triangles, Candida, Morell and Marchbanks; Ann, Tanner and Octavius, were forming in his mind as possible variations on the Life Force theme. Added to this is the evidence of the short story, Don Giovanni Explains, written as early as 1887, eight years before Candida.

Don Giovanni Explains is, in certain aspects, an autobiographical story with many references to Shaw's relationships with women, in particular with Jenny Patterson. He gives the narrator of the story, a young woman returning from an indifferent performance of the opera an explanation, or justification, of Don Giovanni's behaviour:

'... for experience has taught me that people who are admired often get wheedled or persecuted into love affairs with persons whom they would have let alone if they themselves had been let alone.' (6.ShS.98)
Here is an excellent description of Tanner and of Ann Whitefield who certainly 'wheedled' him, and in his opinion even 'persecuted' him with her determination to marry him.

Later in the story the Don describes himself as '... in fact no worse than a studious and rather romantic free-thinker... [and that] I had no sooner lost my illusions, my timidity, and my boyish curiosity about women, than I begin to attract them irresistibly.' He also refers to 'his absurd reputation' with his female admirers and the 'infernal fascination which in spite of [himself he] exercised (6.ShS.105/108)

There could be said to be similarities between Morell and Tanner who attract women without having to try and there are some obvious similarities between Candida and Ann: their attraction for a young man, a poet, whom they treat flirtatiously, sometimes cruelly and quite irresponsibly: their determination to hold on to the particular man of their choice at whatever cost: a habit of getting their own way. And it is surely more than co-incidental that both have a strong preference for calling their men by other names, Candida by 'my boy,' and Ann by a whole series of fanciful 'nursery' names.
Ann Whitefield uses more nicknames than any other character in Shaw's English domestic plays. She calls Ramsden 'Annie's Granny', John Tanner is 'Jack-the-Giant-Killer', she also suggests that 'Don Juan' would be a good name for him, and Octavius Robinson is 'Ricky-ticky-tavy.' Her mother comments: 'Now that you are Ann's guardian, Mr Ramsden, I wish you would speak to her about her habit of giving people nicknames. They cant be expected to like it,' but when Ann asks Octavius if he wants 'to be treated like a grown-up man,' he, like Ramsden, strongly rejects any change. (10.MSM.21) Ann uses nicknames to flatter,

ingratiate and beguile the men around her and only Mrs Whitefield and Tanner recognize this as part of her method of manipulation. She also uses them to subjugate the men by taking them on in her terms rather than on theirs.

Shaw has written the plays 'out of order'. First the couple in middle age: how they deal with the intrusion into their lives of a talented and disruptive youth whom they have treated as a son, and the subsequent clash between the Mother-Woman and the Artist-Man. Second, the couple in the process, indeed in the throes, of obeying the Life Force, where traditional attitudes are reversed. Woman is the pursuer, man the pursued, and the third figure in the triangle, in this case a doubtful poet, never a very hopeful contender.

In the earlier play the young man is the 'adoptive son' of Candida and James, in the latter, Octavius is the 'adoptive son' of Ann's father and mother. In both plays there is the sense of the lovers, or would-be lovers, being part of an extended family relationship which, through natural laws, is bound to draw their teeth as sexual partners.

In Candida the classic Oedipal relationship is realised and in the best Shavian fashion it is stood on its head. The 'son' does not marry the mother - the mother recognized him the moment he walked in - and, despite what the poet may say to the contrary, the 'father' is not dead, only grossly overworked and in need of a good rest. As a result of his inability to refuse invitations to speak in public, Morell spends barely one evening a week at home with his wife, and when she takes the children on holiday it is Eugene who accompanies them because their father is too busy. So complacent is James that this arrangement does not give him the slightest worry. He even forgets that Eugene has been with the family, and that he is to meet Candida at the station as he had promised. She is clearly displeased when James, in his hearty, unimaginative fashion, presses Marchbanks to stay for lunch after she has already told the young man that he is not to stay as James 'wouldnt like it'

(8.CAN.97) This is another touch of Candida's likeness to Ann Whitefield who often quotes her mother's preferences as a means for getting her own way. When Eugene informs Morell of his 'orders' to leave he is rebuked, 'You are like a child: you cannot hold your tongue,' she tells him later in the day when another of his calculated cruelties to James has been exposed. (8.CAN.135) It occurs to neither Marchbanks nor Morell that she would like to spend some time alone with her husband. So, between the childish possessiveness of the eighteen year old and the unthinking presumption of the forty-year old (of her faithfulness, of her 'chastity'), Mrs Morell decides that it is time that she cleared the air of a good many preconceptions about her status as a Woman.

Shaw describes her as being not without 'cunning in the affections,' and as Morell says, '... where she does not love no law will bind her.' (8.CAN.133) Both Bentley and Valency point out that there is no danger of Candida leaving her husband, that her choice 'is a foregone conclusion,' so what is to be gained by her allowing them the satisfaction of bidding for her favours?

If Morell is to be taught a lesson in cherishing his wife, and if the apron strings are to be wrested from Eugene's greedy fingers, she must go through with it. Nobody had cared for the young man since his old nurse, his earlier mother-substitute, died. His own mother was indifferent to his adolescent miseries and his parents preferred his 'clever fashionable sisters and successful brothers'. (8.CAN.144) Candida must give him the opportunity to break with her and to stride out into the night as a man. And to do this she, as a woman, must take him and his love seriously. Shaw wrote to Ellen Terry: 'Candida, with her boy and her parson, and her suspicion of trading a little on the softness of her contours... In every other play I have ever written - even in Candida - I have prostituted the actress more or less by making the interest in her partly a sexual interest...' [30]

What will become of the bruised ego/feelings/spirit of the father-substitute, Morell, is not disclosed, other than that he and his wife are reconciled, and as Eugene had turned, spontaneously, to him for support and understanding on several occasions at the end of Act 3, probably some of his self-esteem will be salvaged. The language that Eugene uses swings between the first person singular and plural in appealing to Morell, and 'the woman I loved' is already in the past tense.

-'(running to Morell): Oh, Morell, isnt it dreadful? She's angry with *us*: she hates me. *What shall I do?*

- (rising and stealing over to Morell): Morell: theres going to be a terrible scene. Arent you afraid?.. I never envied you your courage before. (He puts his hand appealingly on Morell's forearm) *Stand by me,wont you?* (8.CAN.139)

-'(discouraged): Morell: She's laughing at *us*.

-'(whispering): Stop, Morell. Dont let *us* say anything. (8.CAN.140)

And finally ' - ...Parson James: I give you my happiness with both hands: I love you because you have filled the heart of the woman I loved!' (8.CAN.145)

But Eugene is not Candida's only 'grown-up' son. With James as her 'boy' she fell heir to all the responsibilities for mothering him when she took over from his doting parents and his three sisters.

> ... look at this other boy here: my boy! spoiled from his cradle. We go once a fortnight to see his parents. You should come with us, Eugene, to see the pictures of the hero of that household. 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! James under all sorts of glorious circumstances! You know how strong he is (I hope he didnt hurt you): how clever he is: how happy. (With deepening gravity) Ask James's mother and his sisters what it cost to

> save James the trouble of doing anything but be strong and clever and happy. Ask what it cost to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his children all in one... (8.CAN.144)

In her attitude to him she is not only ministering to James but at the same time satisfying her own deep commitment to motherhood. It is this quality that earns her the popular Virgin Mother title and it is the grounds for rejection of Eugene.

Marchbanks does not want Candida to be mother and sisters to him and it is the only relationship that she has to offer to him, or perhaps to any man. All the rest of her flirtatious behaviour is only the behaviour of a woman who is sexually cool although maternally passionate.

Candida has gone through her 'huntress' phase (as Ann Whitefield will go through hers). The flattery of Eugene's love, the poetry, and the heightened sense of her own importance and power has provided an excitement that she has enjoyed - it has done something to compensate for being surrounded by all those who suffer from 'Prossy's complaint' - but it is not a plane on which she would care to exist for very long.

Shaw's use of language to emphasise the difference between young and old, parent and child, strong and weak, is of particular interest in Candida and an examination of the choice of words in the first act (the second and third acts contain a similar selection) demonstrates this. The opening stage direction mentions 'the delight of children,' 'children,' a 'miniature chair for children,' and calls Morell 'a great baby.' Lexy is described as an 'immature novice;' 'Pycroft Street School' is where 'the children... Jimmy and Fluffy' got their measles; Morell says that Candida would 'nurse' Lexy, he calls his curate 'my boy,' and variations on this expression are used liberally throughout all three acts. 'Young lady' and 'younger' are used by Burgess in referring to Prossy's predecessor: 'your

daughter', 'my daughter,' and 'daughter's husband' describe the Morells.

Eugene is an earl's 'nevvy' and the stage direction that introduces him and which is quoted above contains many words that proclaim his childishness. Eugene 'shrinks' from Morell, he 'cowers down,' and Morell calls him a 'little snivelling cowardly whelp.'

Images of the young man's weakness are invoked in his not being big and strong enough to 'lift a heavy trunk down from the top of a cab,' in not being able to fight 'as a drunken navvy would,' and when he 'flies to the door in involuntary dread.' He says to James that 'you shook me as a terrier shakes a rat,' and 'shrank,' 'terrified,' and 'snivelling little whelp' is repeated. Marchbanks sits in the miniature chair as a physical demonstration of his weakness and vulnerability: '[Eugene] goes to the child's chair... where he sits in the deepest dejection.' This is repeated by Morell in Act 3 when he is afraid that Marchbanks will take Candida from him: 'Morell, quite lost, takes the chair from the fireside: the children's chair.'

In contrast to these words are the ones that suggest mastery or maturity: in the opening moments of the play Morell tells Prossy that he and the Hoxton Freedom Group have 'the same father-in-heaven' (in a conversation very similar to the one which Barbara will have with Undershaft some years later) while 'maternal indulgence,' 'matronly,' and 'motherhood' are words used in describing Candida.

The language of Man and Superman does not strike one so readily as having been chosen to emphasise the authority of the parents or the dependency of the children. The existence of substitute parents in this play has relevance because the stories around which the play is built concern young people who are either orphaned, or possessed of only one parent and who stand as substitute children to certain of their older friends.

Ann and Rhoda Whitefield's father has just died and they are left with a dithering mother and two friends of the family

who, under the terms of his will, have been appointed their guardian. Roebuck Ramsden, an elderly liberal, and John Tanner, a young Member of the Idle Rich who fancies himself as a philanthropic anarchist, thus become the girls' substitute fathers.

Violet and Octavius Robinson are orphans who have lived with the Whitefields since their childhood, have grown up with the sisters and are now twice orphaned in the death of Whitefield who is genuinely, if somewhat excessively, mourned by Octavius. For many years, therefore, Mr and Mrs Whitefield were the substitute parents of the young Robinsons. Mrs Whitefield is particularly fond of Octavius and she is bewildered by finding him, her 'sort of son', in tears at Ann's rejection. All of her bitterness and dislike for her natural daughters pours out to Tanner:

> I dont know why it is that other people's children are so nice to me, and that my own have so little consideration for me. It's no wonder I dont seem to able to care for Ann and Rhoda as I do for you and Tavy and Violet. (16.MSM.161)

In this there is an echo of her late husband, they use the same expression 'little consideration', who was also impressed by other people's children. In the opening scene of the play Ramsden consoles Octavius by repeating his friend Whitefield's last words to him: '... when I see how little consideration other men get from their sons, I realise how much better than a son he's been to me.' (10.MSM.5) Whitefield identifies with 'other mens' sons just as his wife identifies with 'other people's children', and she cares almost as much for Violet as she does for Octavius. The old lady is desolate to be losing Violet: she cries when the girl says goodbye to her, '(she chokes, and then breaks out again): How I wish you were my daughter, Violet!'

Violet soothes her, earlier she had 'petted' her, and taking

a leaf out of Ann's book she says, 'There, there: so I am. Ann will be jealous.' But Mrs Whitefield knows better and replies, 'Ann doesnt care for me a bit'. This leads to Ann's final 'scapegoat' appeal: 'Fie mother! Come, now: you musnt cry any more: you know Violet doesnt like it.' (10.MSM.165) But it is with conscious parody of herself: the trick has served its purpose.

Maurice Valency, curiously, refers to Violet as Ann's sister and it would have seemed reasonable enough for the playwright to have set her in that relationship.[31] As it is, Rhoda, Ann's younger sister, never appears, although there are numerous references to her. Perhaps, as Margery M. Morgan suggests: '[Rhoda] supplies the legal pretext for the appointment of guardians and thus points up the oddity that Ann does not need a guardian...'[32]

While that might be so, the younger sister supplies reinforcements for Ann's arguments 'Mamma knows that she is not strong enough to bear the whole responsibility for me and Rhoda... Rhoda must have a guardian...' (10.MSM.18) This sentiment is picked up and repeated by Octavius the following day when he tells Tanner that, 'Mrs Whitefield is too weak to control Rhoda,' and it is Rhoda's letter that is used to expose Ann's lies, both to Rhoda about their mother and to Tanner about them both. (10.MSM.57) Clearly, a sister who never appears is a very much more convenient scapegoat than one who might, at any moment, turn up and contradict you.

The existence of Rhoda also provides Tanner/Shaw with one of his best anti-parent, anti-sister speeches: 'As a rule there is only one person an English girl hates more than she hates her eldest sister; and that's her mother. But Rhoda positively prefers her mother to Ann.'[33] (10.MSM.56)

For all John Tanner's savage attack on the mothers of fashionable society Mrs Whitefield is not one of them. She is not a matchmaking mother although she has strong feelings when it is a question of who Ann should *not* marry. Tanner may not be her favourite but she likes him better than she

likes her own children if not as well as she likes her substitute children, the Robinsons: she recognises a quality in him, convincing her that he and Ann deserve each other, that Ann would 'meet her match' in Jack Tanner.

In her excellent discussion of Man and Superman Margery M. Morgan implies that it is Whitefield's dead hand, identified with 'patriarchal authority,' that lies upon the action throughout and that the question to be answered is: 'Who is to inherit [that authority]?'[34] Whitefield is closely identified with Ramsden, from the opening conversation with Octavius who reports that: '[Whitefield]... used to say to me that he had met only one man in the world who was the soul of honour, and that was Roebuck Ramsden.' Ramsden's modest rejoiner is '... that was his partiality: we were very old friends...' (10.MSM.6) From the beginning it is Ramsden, the appointed guardian and father-substitute who represents the authority vested in the older generation and it is this authority that the young either challenge (Tanner), manipulate (Ann), or ignore (Violet); Octavius, in spite of looking like a 'jeune premier' is a born old bachelor - a fact recognised only by Ann - and presents no threat to anyone. (10.MSM.4) Thus the children, in opposing the father substitute Ramsden, rather than the father himself, may avoid the stigma of guilt.

Ann and Violet Robinson are nicely juxtaposed throughout the play: Ann is an heiress looking for a husband, or more exactly, being driven by the Life Force to hunt down the husband who will father her children, while Violet is a married woman driven by her materialism to secure the fortune that she insists is hers by right which will support her and the child that she has already conceived. Hector is the willing victim of conventional society where both parties provide what is considered necessary to a marriage (in spite of the 'shocking' secret wedding and the expected baby). But John Tanner is the unwilling victim of the Life Force who struggles to the last minute in his effort to escape the toils but whose fate was decided long ago.

It would seem that Whitefield, for all his confidence as a paterfamilias, canvassed widely before committing himself to naming a second guardian for his daughters; Octavius, Tanner and Ann herself were all consulted, and 'he often talked it over with [Ramsden].' (10.MSM.8) If Ramsden's report is to be believed Whitefield's wish was that Octavius should marry Ann, an idea rejected by everyone with the exception of Octavius and Tanner whose blindness as to his own destiny is the comic impulse of the play. Even Mrs Whitefield, foolish and misunderstood, is wiser than her husband and realises that Octavius would be the wrong man for her daughter.

In Man and Superman, other than Ann, it is her mother who is convinced that Tanner is the right man for her to marry. Unlike Mrs Clandon whose possessiveness towards Gloria leads her to distrust Valentine - 'You are one of those men who play with women's affection,' (8.YNCT.266) Mrs Whitefield's protective love for Octavius - 'I'm very fond of Tavy... I dont want him to be trampled on and made wretched,' (10.MSM.163) is her endorsement of the match.

Ann has been scheming and waiting for her opportunity to ensnare John Tanner for many years and he makes a much more vigorous attempt at escape than does the impoverished young dentist, but both couples finally recognize the inescapability of their passion for each other. This, in the case of Ann Whitefield, will hopefully result in a 'Father for the Superman.' The purpose of the Life Force is to produce children who will forward the force of life in its struggle to create something higher than itself.

The existence of the Life Force was Shaw's own particular explanation for the reasoning behind mankind's search for meaning in life and for the need to acknowledge the existence of a higher power that, throughout all generations has been commonly referred to as gods or God. On May 16 1907 he gave a lay sermon in Kensington Town Hall on his conception of the New Theology. He spoke of the ideas of Charles Bradlaugh, Darwin, Lyall, Lamarck and Samuel Butler

and concluded:

> What you have to understand is that somehow or other there is at the back of the universe a will, a life-force. You cannot think of him as a person, you have to think of him as a great purpose, a great will and furthermore, you have to think of him as engaged in a continual struggle to produce something higher and higher... Now conceive of the force.. as a bodiless, impotent force, having no executive power of its own, wanting instruments, something to carry out its will in the world, making all manner of experiments, trying one thing after another, rising higher and higher in the scale of organism, and finally producing man, and then inspiring that man, putting his will into him, getting him to carry out his purpose, saying to him, 'Remember you are not here merely to look after yourself. I have made your hand to do my work: I have made your brain, and I want you to work with that and try to find out the purpose of the universe; and when one instrument is worn out I will make another, and another, always more and more intelligent and effective.[35]

This was Shaw at his most clear and straightforward in his exposition of the Life Force and it was this conception that informed so much of his work. In 'Shame and Wounded Snobbery', the chapter in Sixteen Self Sketches devoted to the disclosure, dealing with his period of Roman Catholic education Shaw says:

> I... was not the same person I had been... the natural growth which I have described in my play Man and Superman as the birth of moral passion had taken place in me... My scruples began in the Model School...[36]

It was this 'moral passion' which was to be engaged by Henri

Bergson's doctrine of Creative Evolution or é*lan vital* and in 1949 he wrote, 'I was and still am a Vitalist to whom vitality... is a complete mystery.'[37] He referred to Bergson as 'the established philosopher of my sect,' and to himself as a Creative Evolutionist. Conversant with the beliefs and theories of Darwin and of Lamarck, and particularly of Samuel Butler, his idea was not original but nor, as Warren Sylvester Smith says, was it a copy.

> The patches [on the original] supplied by Shaw make the doctrine of creative evolution and the search for social and economic justice into a unified garment. It is the synthesis that is original. Shaw had an unusual facility for absorbing all kinds of diverse material, refining and amalgamating it into something that could legitimately be called his own.[38]

Warren Sylvester Smith, in his comprehensive study of Bernard Shaw and the Life Force, discusses the influences of philosophers, naturalists and scientists upon the development of the writer's theories, and the emergence of these theories in his work. From the beginning of the nineteenth century the birthrate was rising steeply and it was this rise that led to Malthus's warning of consequent dangers. It was not expected that 'plateauing off' in mid-century which would lead to a decline of the birthrate would follow. Subsequent fears of too sharp a decrease in the population lent a certain political impulse in favour of the Life Force. No government will tolerate a shortage of manpower that will reflect in its military strength.

At the end of his long life Shaw was still writing plays and prefaces to plays, making speeches and writing articles in which his dedication to the Life Force is a strong as ever.The final speech in Why She Would Not, the last play that Shaw wrote in 1950 only three months before he died, declares that:

You are not the only woman in the world, nor I the only man. Nature will still torment us with its demand for more children. I may come across a woman with whom I could not live for a single week. You may come across a man with whom the Life Force tells you you should mate, but with whom you could not talk for an hour without being bored beyond endurance. Yet your babies might be prodigies and mine geniuses. Nature does not care a rap for our happiness, only for our progeny. And, sex or no sex, we must leave the world better than we found it or this war-ravaged world will fall to pieces about our ears.[39]

Almost fifty years before this he wrote Man and Superman, the play about the Life Force acting through Ann Whitefield, Everywoman. It is also Shaw's Don Juan play and John Tanner is the hero, the fly who is 'secured forever' by the woman, the spider, the pursuer. The Life Force only works through the right kind of people; and Violet Robinson, haughty, humourless, merciless and without compassion is not the right kind of woman; nor is Mrs Whitefield with her 'muddled shrewdness' and what Margery M Morgan calls her 'signs of lower-middle-class origin'.[40] (10.MSM.17) No more is Miss Ramsden, the barren old maid. Neither is Tavy the right kind of man. But Mrs Whitefield has produced a daughter with the vital genius to recognize who shall be the father of her children, a biological, flesh and blood father, not a substitute, a daughter who can jokingly equate the Life Force with the Life Guards, but who from the beginning, from childhood, for them both, was the instrument of the Life Force, even though it may mean her death.

## NOTES

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2 'The Search for Love', pp.156-66 & passim.

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7 C B Purdom, Granville Barker, London: Rockliffe, 1955, p.290

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22 Maurice Valency, The Cart and the Trumpet, p.123

23 The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1950, p.171

24 Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, p.131

25 A Correspondence, p.29

26 Collected Letters, 1898-1910, p.515

27 Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw, p.70

28 Eric Bentley, p.69

29 Collected Letters, 1898-1910, p.475

30 A Correspondence, p.341

31 Maurice Valency, p.212

32 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, p.111

33 Witty as it may be, it is the kind of generalisation of which Shaw would occasionally deliver himself, and like the more notorious, 'Those who can, do; those who cant, teach,' (10.MSM.219) has foundations in dubious truth.

34 Margery M Morgan, p.111

35 The Portable Bernard Shaw, Ed. Stanley Weintraub, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981, p.313

36 Sixteen Self Sketches, p.28

37 Sixteen Self Sketches, p.75

38 Warren Sylvester Smith, Bishop of Everywhere, Bernard Shaw and The Life Force, University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982, p.35

39 The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw, vol 7, p.679

40 Margery M Morgan, p.108

# 8

## HAPPY FAMILIES*

Of the twelve 'English domestic plays,' only Candida, Getting Married, Misalliance and Fanny's First Play can be said to contain the usual complement of two 'living in' parents. Of those four, Candida, while superficially conforming, is atypical insofar as it deals, not with the relationship of those parents with their own children who are barely referred to and never seen, but with another 'substitute child.[1]' In Getting Married Shaw turned to a completely different structure, the extended one-act play:

> ...The customary division into acts and scenes has been disused, and a return made to unity of time and place as observed in the ancient Greek drama... I find in practice that the Greek form is inevitable when the drama reaches a certain point in poetic and intellectual evolution. Its adoption was not, on my part, a deliberate display of virtuosity in form, but simply the spontaneous falling of a play of ideas into the form most suitable to it, which turned out to be the classical form. Getting Married, in several acts and scenes, with the time spread over a long period, would be impossible. (12.GM.182)

While not an absolute failure Getting Married achieved no particular success with the public nor with the critics whom Shaw had mischievously sniped at, in an article published the week before the play was produced, for what he considered were their consistent critical misunderstandings of his plays.

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> For 150 minutes... There will be nothing but talk, talk, talk, talk - Shaw talk... The play has no plot. Surely nobody expects a play by me to have a plot...[2]

The play presents a series of discussions of the problems, immediate and long-term, in the lives of the wedding party gathered in the Bishop of Chelsea's Norman kitchen while they wait for his youngest daughter to decide whether or not she will go through with the ceremony. Both Edith and Cyril Sykes have been sent literature dealing with their responsibilities as married persons and the liabilities that they could incur. The essays of Belfort Bax on Men's Wrongs were sent to Sykes and to Edith a pamphlet entitled DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO? BY A WOMAN WHO HAS DONE IT.[3] In the course of the next one hundred minutes advice, personal anecdotes, reflections witty and profound are uttered while in the adjoining church a larger congregation assembles, waits, and finally disperses when the expected ceremony fails to take place. It is, as Shaw told the critics, all talk and it is an example of one of his most blatant non-events; but it is an excellent idea for a comedy, representing the essential panic at the centre of every wedding and the sudden, overwhelming feeling that it is all 'a terrible mistake.'

The play is non-naturalistic insofar as the panic is not reflected in the lack of concern on the part of the Bridgenorths for the plight of that large assembly next door sitting through 'all the wedding music in Lohengrin three times over,' (12.GM.306) and unlike the audience, not entertained by an 'abundance of witty and suggestive talk.'[4] In a naturalistic play the genuine good manners of those particular parents would never have allowed them to forget their duty as host and leave their guests for so long without explanation. By the time that the Bishop enquires, 'By the way, what has happened to the wedding party?' (12.GM.350) Collins, the greengrocer as imperturbable as his

great predecessor, William the Waiter, has got everything nicely under control.[5]

The Bishop, known by his family as the Barmecide is a fountain of wisdom and understanding. The 'Barmecide's Feast' is an illusion, particularly one containing a great disappointment.[6] In a letter to Ellen Terry Shaw wrote, 'the fact that nobody cared for me particularly gave me a frightful self-sufficiency, or rather a power of starving on imaginary feasts, that may have delayed my development a good deal... people with happy childhoods usually say - what is incomprehensible to me - that their childhood was the happiest part of their lives.'[7] In his description of the Bishop can once again be seen the lineaments of the author's own mind's eye image of himself.

> He is still a slim active man, spare of flesh... he has a delicate skin, fine hands, a salient nose with chin to match, a short beard which accentuates his sharp chin bristling forward, clever humorous eyes, not without a glint of mischief in them, ready bright speech, and the way of a successful man who is always interested in himself and generally rather well pleased with himself. (12.GM.281)

Edith is his sixth daughter and nothing is known of the five older sisters other than that they are 'unfortunate' by implication and there is no reason to believe that that word is to be taken literally. In a non-naturalistic play the absence of Ethel, Jane, Fanny, Christine and Florence is of as little concern as is the neglected church-full of guests and the non appearance of Sykes' relations. A good proportion of the rest of the family, however, is present: the Bishop's two brothers are there, and his wife's unmarried sister, Lesbia: it is a full dress affair with uniforms military, ecclesiastic and municipal, and the credibility of the family relationships need not be weakened by the non-appearance of, and the non-explanation for, those

five matrons of honour.

As its title suggests the play is an exploration of the relationships of men and women before, during, and after marriage, together with the necessity for humane and enlightened divorce when those marriages break down. Getting Married also deals with the relationships of parents and their children in a way that makes it altogether different from those relationships in any other of the English domestic plays, for the children are as yet unborn to the parents.

Characters in the play talk of how they would deal with hypothetical children in the event of unsatisfactory marriage and consequent divorce, and the following possibilities are considered.

(a) The single woman's potential for motherhood as defined by Lesbia.
(b) The 'possession' or ownership of their hypothetical children by the father or mother, and the rights of both parents and children.
(c) Cyril Sykes' concern with his actual mother in a hypothetical situation which is used as a comedic device to strengthen the slight plot.
(d) Collins' opinion of his wife's relationship with their children.
(e) The nature of the youngest child in the family.

The story of Lesbia Grantham is a celebration of the old maids of England, and her attitude to men is summed up in her name.

Throughout the play she speaks of wanting children but of not wanting a husband, particularly of not wanting Boxer Bridgenorth, the Bishop's brother who has courted her for years: not because she dislikes him 'but only that she's not a marrying woman.'

> I ought to have children. I should be a good mother to children. I believe it would pay the country very well to pay me very well to have children... If I am to be a mother, I really cannot have a husband bothering me at the same time. (12.GM.267)

And on another occasion:

> I want children; and I want to devote myself entirely to my children, and not to their father. The law will not allow me to do that; so I have made up my mind to have neither husband nor children. (12.GM.270)

Lesbia is nicely juxtaposed with Soames, the Bishop's chaplain. She wants children but will have no husband on any account; he wishes to be referred to as Father Anthony but has espoused celibacy and recommends it to the rest of the world. Soames, having become 'secretly converted to Anglicanism at the age of fifteen,' (12.GM.312) has long since abandoned the non-conformism of his father along with the given names of the arch-Nonconformist Oliver Cromwell after whom he was christened; but Lesbia remains unchangeably herself. According to Mrs George she is ignorant of both men and women because 'she's got too much self control.' (12.GM.332)
Lesbia's point of view is put forward in the Preface under the heading, 'The Old Maid's Right to Motherhood':

> The best mothers are not those who are so enslaved by the primitive instincts that they will bear children no matter how hard the conditions are, but... those who place a very high price on their services, and are quite prepared to become old maids if the price is refused, or even to feel relieved at their escape. (12.GM.213)

Although so much is made of Lesbia's wish for children there

is not the slightest suggestion, apart from her own, that she would be a good mother. In 'The Decline in the Birthrate', a Fabian Tract written the year before Getting Married, Sidney Webb attributed a number of reasons for the falling birthrate.[8] He did not specifically mention 'Old Maids' but he wrote that 'the decline... is exceptionally marked where the inconvenience of having children is specially felt.' Another cause was found to be 'in those sections of the population which give [more] proof of thrift and foresight than among the population at large'. Certainly Lesbia could be said to want motherhood on her own convenient terms, if she genuinely wanted it at all. She is described as 'very terrifying to the young and shy... tolerant and amused rather than sympathetic.' (12.GM.266)

It may be that Lesbia has retained the facade of femininity by insisting upon a desire for children, a desire difficult to challenge, secure in the knowledge that she can turn down any man - not only poor old stupid General Bridgenorth - by finding that he falls short of her particular, high standards. This is the sixth wedding to witness her protesting her excellent potential for motherhood, stimulated by yet another proposal from Boxer. Unlike Soames she has not renounced the implication of her name. The Life Force has passed Lesbia by.

Apart from the Bridgenorths it is only Collins who speaks with the authority and experience of a parent and with good common sense. It is he, rather than her father, who advises Edith to get married first and argue about it afterwards; he cites Lesbia as an example of the person who 'waited til she started thinking about it; and then it was all over.' (12.GM.307) When they are endeavouring to draft the contract which is Collins's idea: 'If its to be talk, let it be talk; but if its to be a contract, down with it in black and white,' (12.GM.308) he who declares: 'There's the people that marry for children. There's the people that dont intend to have children and that arent fit to have them.' (12.GM.314) When the Bishop asks, 'Which parent is to own

the youngest child..?' it is Collins who reminds them:

> Theres a third party, my lord. Theres the child itself. My wife is so fond of her children that they cant call their lives their own. They all run away from home to escape from her. A child hasnt a grown-up person's appetite for affection. A little of it goes a long way with them; and they like a good imitation of it better than the real thing, as every nurse knows. (12.GM.319)

There is a great deal of talk of 'owning the child,' as though it were a kind of commodity that could be purchased or passed from hand to hand.

MRS BRIDGENORTH: ... who are the children to belong to?

LESBIA: We have already settled that they are to belong to the mother

REGINALD: ... I'll fight for the ownership of my own children tooth and nail...

EDITH: It seems to me that they should be divided between the parents. If Cecil wishes any of the children to be his exclusively, he should pay me a certain sum for the risk and trouble of bringing them into the world: say a thousand pounds apiece. The interest on this could go towards the support of the child as long as we live together. But the principal would be my property. In that way, if Cecil took the child away from me, I should at least be paid for what it had cost me. (12.GM.319)

Edith, the reluctant bride, is a very bossy young woman, a contrast to Cecil Sykes whose greatest worry is to preserve the financial security of his mother and sisters. She fears being tied, unable to claim a divorce should Cecil turn out to be a murderer or a criminal. He is utterly appalled at the idea of having to deprive his mother as a result of having to pay for Edith's verbal excesses by way of libel actions taken against him. This is the dilemma to which he returns again and again: 'I'd rather have to cut off an inch from my right arm than a hundred a year from my mother's income. I owe everything to her care of me.' (12.GM.294) Was there ever such a devoted son!

'...If it were only myself I shouldnt care. But my mother and sisters! I've no right to sacrifice them.' (12.GM.297)

'...If it were not for my mother...' (12.GM.298)

'...I hope Providence will spare my poor mother...' (12.GM.299)

Surely he protests too much really to convince us that his devotion is entirely genuine, or even worse, is not obsessional. Certainly it is unusual in Shaw's plays to find a child with such a strong sense of filial duty. Perhaps only where the idea of parent-hood is raised to a divine level, as in the case of Barbara Undershaft and Joan, is filial duty not used as a convenience or as a manipulative device to be operated in the best interests of the child. Although Joan does back up a good many of her arguments by declaring them to be the advice of God. In Cecil's case there is a touch of Ann Whitefield, a suggestion of convenience in using the mother and sisters as manipulative devices. Ann gets her own way by pretending that she is only following the wishes of her mother or her late father, and sometimes of them both, protesting that these are not necessarily *her* wishes but that she is a martyr to her sense

of duty. It is an artful pretence that takes in those who wish to be taken in but which amuses the audience while enraging her mother and Jack Tanner. The case of Cecil Sykes is similar: it suggests that he is using his mother and his sister as excuses to cover up his horror that Edith will ruin him financially with litigation. Too much of a gentleman to say that he is thinking of his own interests he transfers his concern to the welfare of his relations, but it is still 'scapegoating.' There is also the strong probability that he has cold feet at the prospect of the approaching ceremony.

It is Collins, who wears the evening dress of a waiter, thus inviting further comparison with William, until his transformation into the alderman's robes, who preserves an attitude of practical sanity and serves to keep impetuous feet on the ground. He deflates those situations that otherwise would become too contentious, and, though sometimes puzzled, he is never shocked by opinions or behaviours. His description of his Matilda who is 'such an out-and-out wife and mother that she's hardly a responsible human being out of her house,' (12.GM.226) expresses yet another point of view of the parent/child position:

> Of course she knows her parents in - well in the way one does know one's parents: not knowing half their lives as you might say, or ever thinking that they were ever young; and she knew her children as children, and never thought of them as independent human beings til they ran away and nigh broke her heart for a week or two. (12.GM.265)

With those words 'for a week or two' Matilda betrays a shallow possessiveness for her children. It could be said that she sees them as an extension of herself, and resembles Kitty Warren and those other parents who do not believe that their children have any rights to lives of their own.

Edith is probably the favourite, youngest, 'the Benjamin - the child of its parents' matured strength and charity, always better treated... and loved than the unfortunate eldest children of their youthful ignorance and wilfulness.' (12.GM.319)

Shaw draws the portraits of the two other youngest children in this play, (and in Misalliance Liza Szczepanowska says 'The youngest child is the sweetest'). (12.MIS.161) Mrs George, the Mayoress, who is attending the wedding in her official capacity, proves to be the sister-in-law of Mr Collins the greengrocer/alderman who is organising the wedding breakfast, (a function he has performed for all the Bridgenorth girls.) She is also discovered to be 'Incognita Amorata,' the writer of anonymous love letters to the Bishop. She describes herself, like Edith, as being the youngest of her parents' children:

> I was a spoilt child. My brothers and sisters were well brought up, like all children of respectable publicans. So should I have been if I hadnt been the youngest: ten years younger than my youngest brother. My parents were tired of doing their duty by their children by that time, and they spoilt me for all they were worth. I never knew what it was to want money or anything that money could buy. When I wanted my own way, I had nothing to do but scream for it til I got it...(12.GM.333)

Edith, Mrs George, and Lesbia Grantham, Mrs Bridgenorth's sister and the third 'youngest child' in the play are all strong and opinionated women who make their own rules about the way they live their lives; all of them are beautiful in their own particular ways. They are examples of the intensely independent and unconventional woman that Shaw most admired and who stride through his plays, indifferent to the opinions of society.

Constantly, in examining the texts, one must return to

Shaw's own descriptions of his characters for illumination and interpretation of the dialogue; thus Edith:

> ... more of a bishop than her father, yet as much a gentleman as her mother. She is the typical spoilt child of a clerical household: almost as terrible a product as the typical spoilt child of a Bohemian household: i.e., all her childish affectations of conscientious scruple and religious impulse have been applauded and deferred to until she has become an ethical snob of the first water. Her father's sense of humor and her mother's placid balance have done something to save her humanity; but her impetuous temper and her energetic will, unrestrained by any touch of humor or scepticism, carry everything before them. Imperious and dogmatic, she takes command of the party at once. (12.GM.295)

Although, on balance, Shaw approves of Edith he appears to be less approving of the Bishop and his wife as parents, although applauding them as people. According to H.C. Duffin, 'Of all the many marriages that Shaw shows us, only one seems to be really successful - that of Bishop and Mrs Bridgenorth...' [9]

Edith, the 'typical spoilt child,' (12.GM.295) has been actively affected by her parents whose household is compared, so far as rearing the child is concerned, with a 'Bohemian' household. Shaw had some personal experience of such households and counted many 'Bohemians' amongst his friends. He was often a guest, until his marriage, in the establishments of such couples as Hubert Bland and E Nesbit.

As though he does not trust his audience/reader to have understood the arguments as set forth by his characters Shaw, perhaps compulsively, enlarges and elaborates his themes in a Preface that is only twenty pages shorter than the play itself and it is as himself, rather than through his characters, that he has the last word. In the section

entitled 'What is to Become of the Children?' '...the interest of the children forms one of the most powerful arguments for divorce. An unhappy household is a bad nursery.' (12.GM.253)

If 'separation' were substituted for 'divorce' this could be an excellent, if simplified, resumé of <u>You Never Can Tell</u> where Mrs Clandon has abandoned her husband and gone with her children to live abroad. It could also be said to reflect Shaw's home life as a boy in a household where the husband 'could do nothing that interested' [the wife whose] 'salvation came through music'.[10] Mrs Clandon's salvation came through literature and she supported her family by writing popular books. Shaw felt strongly that: '... children really do suffer from having too few parents: that is why uncles and aunts and tutors and governesses are often so good for children...' (12.GM.253)

He claimed that, like Joey Perceval in <u>Misalliance</u>, he too had 'a natural father and two supplementaries,' the singing teacher George John Lee and his maternal Uncle Walter Gurly and he added in his <u>Self Sketches</u>:

> Natural parents should bear in mind that the more supplementaries their children find, at school or elsewhere, the better they will know that it takes all sorts to make a world. Also though there is always the risk of being corrupted by bad parents, the natural ones may be - probably ten per cent of them are - the worst of the lot.[11]

In the English domestic plays Blanche Sartorius could certainly be identified as a daughter who might have benefited from having an extended family instead of being so isolated in the attention of her formidable father. In the Preface to <u>Getting Married</u> Shaw also remarked upon: '... [the] abhorrent and... mischievous... theory that the child is the property of the parent.' (12.GM.254)

He is particularly concerned in his plays that

children have rights and that those rights must be respected. Praed speaks for him in Mrs Warren's Profession, and in You Never Can Tell the Clandon children insist upon their rights at every possible opportunity. At the end of 'What is to Become of the Children?' he asserts: 'But, however we settle the question, we must make the parent justify his custody of the child exactly as we should make a stranger justify it' (12.GM.255)

As though the children are hers exclusively and he has no part in them or in their upbringing, Collins' speeches about the way his wife treats their children are, in the Preface, re-worked with additions: Under the heading 'Too Much of a Good Thing' Shaw refers to: '... a mother entirely preoccupied with her affection for her children... is a nuisance... young children may be, and quite often are, killed by her cuddling and coddling and doctoring and preaching... her continuous attempts to excite precocious sentimentality, a practice as objectionable, and possibly as mischievous, as the worst tricks of the worst nursemaids.'

The words 'sentimental' or 'sentimentality' are invariably pejorative in Shaw's vocabulary: in condemning relationships he uses them frequently, although Henderson quotes a comment made by Archer who knew Shaw well:

> Mr William Archer... is of the opinion that Shaw is far less free from sentiment than he appears. 'I suspect Bernard Shaw of being constitutionally an arrant sentimentalist, whose abhorrence of sentiment is as the shrinking of the dipsomaniac from the single drop of alcohol which he knows will make his craving ungovernable'![12]

Under the heading 'Large and Small Families' Shaw again refers to sentimentality:

> Ten children, with the necessary adults, make a community in which an excess of sentimentality is

impossible. Two children make a doll's house, in which both parents and children become morbid if they keep to themselves... though a little sentimentality may be a very good thing, chronic sentimentality is a horror, more dangerous, because more possible, than the erotomania which we all condemn when we are not thoughtlessly glorifying it as the ideal married state. (12.GM.197)

Getting Married is one of Shaw's plays where the characters are all closely connected, if not by blood or by marriage, by: (a) long service - Collins and Soames; (b) co-option - Hotchkiss; (c) a sense of mystic union - Mrs George.
Changes occur to some of them because of what is said in the kitchen that morning: Rejjy and Leo are reconciled, Hotchkiss rejects his role as the cuckoo in their nest and proposes to become Mrs George's latest Sunday husband, and Edith and Cecil finally do make satisfactory arrangements and get married.

In Shaw of Dublin B.C. Rosset makes a strong argument for the relationships of Rejjy and Leo and Hotchkiss being a working out by the playwright of the ménage à trois that existed in young Sonny Shaw's home.[13] A number of likenesses are apparent between the Shaw/Lee and the Bridgenorth/Hotchkiss households but at the end of the long and detailed argument Rosset can only conclude:

> ... that the dramatist within Bernard Shaw possessed him of an extraordinary compulsion to reveal the drama of Hatch Street (his home) and that Getting Married represents Shaw's compromise with the compulsion by being, at least in broad outlines, the re-creation of the Shaw-Lee ménage à trois.[14]

Why Shaw should be different from other writers who use a synthesis of 'real' and imaginary people and situations in their work is not explained. It is likely that the entire

truth behind Lee's relationship with the Shaw family, in particular with Bessie Shaw, will never be fully known since Michael Holroyd has not uncovered specific evidence in the first two volumes of his biography.

After an interval during which he wrote The Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet and some shorter plays, Shaw returned to the Greek one act form in Misalliance which was produced 23 February 1910 as part of the Charles Frohman season of repertory at the Duke of York's Theatre. In this play the characters are not all - although they might have become - members of the same family: Young Gunner could have been Tarleton's son; with no chance of acceptance, Johnny proposed to Lina; Bentley had hoped to marry Hypatia, thus relating Summerhayes as well. It is only Joey Perceval who, presumably, will join the Tarleton family.

Misalliance is, like Getting Married, 'nothing but talk,' although the talk is, quite literally, broken up with scuffles, with an aeroplane crash and with a farcical murder attempt, all of which serve only as interruptions to yet more talk. It received only eleven performances and could not have been judged as successful. Max Beerbohm wrote: 'To condemn a work of Mr Shaw's is for me a new and disagreeable sensation.[15] Under a notice entitled 'Mr Shaw's 'Debate'' he says:

> I have said that these characters are perfunctory. Throughout the play, indeed, I had the impression that Mr Shaw had not done his best - that the work had been thrown off in intervals snatched from lecturing and speech-making and organising this or that... Misalliance is about anything and everything that has chanced to come into Mr Shaw's head. It never progresses, it doesnt even revolve, it merely sprawls.[16]

If compared with the more popular of Shaw's works Misalliance has been reasonably neglected in the theatre and

critically has collected such opposing appraisals as, from Maurice Valency: '... on the whole it marks a low point in Shaw's career.'[17] and from Margery M Morgan: '*Misalliance* belongs with Shaw's very best work.'[18]

For its publication Shaw wrote a long Preface that he called 'A Treatise on Parents and Children' in which he brought together all his theories on how children should best be brought up and educated, and how the ways in which they are usually brought up and educated are, for the most part, either 'sentimental' or repressive. As in the preface to *Getting Married* and in the other, more provocative, prefaces, he introduces or extends arguments that he had not encompassed within the play itself.

H L Mencken states that in certain cases 'the prefaces are far more important than the plays,' and he also remarks: 'When he was content to write plays first and discuss them afterward, he was unfailingly diverting. But now that he writes tracts first and then devises plays to rub them in he grows tedious.'[19] This opinion, however, is not supported by evidence.

Not until *Misalliance* and its preface had Shaw written a play whose theme was 'the wall ten feet thick and ten miles high between parents and children.' (13.MIS.14) It is set in the conservatory of the Tarleton's country house at the beginning of one of those Friday-to-Tuesday long weekends so beloved by the Edwardians. John Tarleton is a manufacturer of underwear, a linen draper and public benefactor with his endowment of free libraries. With his wife and children, Johnny and Hypatia, he is entertaining Bentley Summerhays who is engaged to Hypatia. Bentley's father, ex-colonial Governor Lord Summerhays, and himself in love with his son's girl, is also invited. There are unexpected guests in the course of the afternoon: Joey Perceval an Oxford friend of Bentley's, flying past the house, crashes into the greenhouse just out of sight - but well within hearing - of the audience. With him is the beautiful and gifted Polish acrobat, Lina Szczepanowska.

*Misalliance* was written only two years after the first

aeroplane flight in Britain on 16 October 1908, the same year in which a French woman first flew as a passenger. The first woman to pilot an aeroplane was also French, the self-styled Baronne de la Roche, in 1909, becoming the first qualified woman pilot on 8 March 1910. The first English woman to fly was Miss Edith Maud Cook in 1910. It was very daring for Lina and Joey to fly on 23 February 1910.

The result of the intrusion is that Hypatia jilts Bentley for Joey and Lina carries off Bentley, so all the romantic ends are neatly tied and no one loses out. The third gatecrasher is a young clerk, 'cheaply dressed and strange in manner,' (13.MIS.162) variously referred to as the Man - Shaw's way until a character is identified - as John Brown, and finally, as Julius Baker, although after a moment of quick thinking on Tarleton's part he is introduced as Mr Gunner and thereafter appears as Gunner in the script. He has come to avenge the honour of his dead mother, seduced years before , willingly it would seem, by Tarleton. The play ends with Lina's great speech when she discloses that Bentley, Tarleton and Summerhays have all made love to her and that Johnny has gone so far as to ask her to marry him, a proposal that she considers a dishonour.

Both Getting Married and Misalliance, as befits plays written in the Greek form, Shaw's own words (12.GM.182), have a *dea ex machina*. In the former, Mrs George condescends from the height of her civic dignity through the intercession of the bishop and enhances her godlike qualities by going into a trance and speaking in mystic fashion. In the latter play, Lina Szczepanowska actually descends from the skies in an aeroplane and in falling to earth she demonstrates almost supernatural powers in saving the life of Joey Perceval when he was thrown from the aircraft.

In Hypatia's shameless pursuit of Joey Perceval and his reluctance to be captured Misalliance recalls Ann Whitefield's pursuit of John Tanner. Neither man is able to resist the Life Force working through their determined young

women. Misalliance also looks forward: Gunner's entrance to kill Tarleton and the subsequent disclosures anticipates the Burglar who breaks into Heartbreak House and proves to be Nurse Guinness's husband.

This is a play full of wit, where the young are opposed to the old - either pompously like Johnny - stridently like Hypatia - or precociously like Bentley. All of them are unsympathetically abrasive, but they are acceptably believable, while the three 'outsiders,' also of the younger generation are distinctly unbelievable. Joey Perceval is an underdrawn character in spite of the number of facts we learn about him. Lacking the wit and substance of Tanner he is a poor foil for Hypatia and at the end of the piece the best remembered thing about him is that he is the man with three fathers; probably because this was a claim made later by Shaw himself.[20] Gunner is drawn entirely as a figure of farce; Turkish baths, threatening revolvers, false names, portraits and parodies abound while Lina Szczepanowska, sexually ambiguous, is a mystic who can say, 'For the last hundred and fifty years, not a single day has passed without some member of my family risking his life - or her life. It's a point of honour with us to keep up that tradition.' (13.MIS.153)

Misalliance is the only one of the English domestic plays in which there is reference to a deceased child. Deaths in childhood and infancy were unexceptional at this time and diphtheria, as a killer disease was not brought under control until 1949. Bobby is introduced on two separate occasions by his mother, Mrs Tarleton: she tells Johnny that he 'must not bully the little ones.' (13.MIS.116) to which the aggrieved reply is that fourteen years have passed since he gave Robert a licking. In telling Patsy - the name by which Hypatia is familiarly known - of the nasty minded aristocratic ladies who discuss their drains in her presence, Mrs Tarleton says, 'That was just two months after I'd buried poor little Bobby; and that was the very thing he died of, [diphtheria] poor little lamb!..

It was as good as telling me I'd killed my own child.' (13.MIS.123) He is mentioned a third time by Tarleton in enumerating the Bibles from which they can choose one for Lina: 'Johnny's Bible and Bobby's Bible and Patsy's Bible...' (13.MIS.157)

From the beginning of the play the Tarleton and Summerhays sons are contrasted: the tradesman's son, middle-class, thick-skinned, boorish Johnny; and the youngest son of the aristocrat, runt of the litter, Bentley.

> My father was fortyfour when I was born. My mother was fortyone. There was twelve years between me and the next eldest. I was unexpected. I was probably unintentional. My brothers and sisters are not the least like me. They're the regular thing that you always get in the batch from young parents... I'm different. By the time I was born, the old couple knew something. So I came out all brains and no more body than is absolutely necessary... (13.MIS.111)

Like Edith and Mrs George, Bentley is different from his siblings through having been born in his parent's maturity, and like Mrs George he had only to scream to get his own way. Both young men insult each other from the moment they meet and each seems to prefer the other's father to his own. Later in the day the fathers discuss their preferences. Johnny is impressed by Lord Summerhays whom he admires, appreciates and respects, and of whom - as an Englishman - he is proud. Throughout the play Bentley makes it clear that he thoroughly enjoys Tarleton and jokingly declares, 'This is the man I've adopted as a father!' (13.MIS.128) In this he can be compared with young Philip Clandon who 'adopts' William as his father. In his turn Tarleton gets on very well with Bentley. They even discuss how well they get on together: 'Because I'm a young cub and you're an old josser,' says Bentley. (13.MIS.126) But Tarleton's opinion of his own son is very poor.

Johnny, who believes that 'the writing and talking and artistic lot' are in truth 'the failures and refuse of business (hardly a man of them that didnt begin in an office)' who believes that to take literature or the theatre seriously is to be 'a morbid crank' is hardly likely to win the highest approval of a father who is 'essentially a man of ideas.' (13.MIS.133.4) It is not surprising that Mrs Tarleton is anxious lest her beloved boy should be usurped by Bentley who considers himself to be 'strong on the ideas.' (13.MIS.130) Summerhays expresses great sympathy with Johnny who is quite beside himself at trying to deal with Bentley's tantrums: he offers him a large and ugly punchbowl from the sideboard to smash. This is the first of several real and symbolic smashes that occur during the afternoon. Lord Summerhays confesses that his son is a problem that he has never been able to solve, and continues: 'He has a hard and penetrating intellect and a remarkable power of looking facts in the face; but unfortunately, being very young, he has no idea of how very little of that sort of thing most of us can stand...' (13.MIS.117)

Here is the first reference to the difference between young and old, a theme which will run parallel to the child/parent conflict theme. By speaking in the way that he does, Summerhays is implying that he does not place Johnny in the same category as Bentley. Certainly neither father thinks very highly of his own son and is more at ease with the other young man. As Johnny says bitterly of Tarleton, 'I'm a child to him still: I have no influence.' (13.MIS.118) This is a common complaint of many of Shaw's 'children:' even Barbara Undershaft says of her father, 'He remembers what a fool I was as a baby.' (11.MB.301)

Bentley and Johnny are both, each in his own way, unattractive figures; particularly Johnny with his complacency, his pomposity and his stupidity, while Bentley is a 'burlesque Eugene.' Shaw wrote to Granville Barker that he wanted 'some little squirt of a nervous boy who can cry and scream like a burlesque Eugene.'[21] With his father's

sensitivity carried to ridiculous lengths, Bentley is only redeemed by Lina's confidence in him and by his own determination to overcome his fear of flying. The play's last page of dialogue proclaims a hopefulness that, while Bentley may never grow to heroic proportions physically, he may yet grow spiritually. It is a promise not shared by the other 'children' in Misalliance and it is this potential for spiritual growth that links him, however tenuously, with Marchbanks. In finding the courage to trust himself to the sky it is of significance that he will be in the company of a goddess. Lina has told him that he 'must learn to dare' and 'pale but heroic' he agrees to go with her.
His father begs them 'to wait until morning.'

LINA: There may be a storm tomorrow, And I'll go: storm or no storm. I must risk my life tomorrow.

BENTLEY: I hope there will be a storm.

LINA: (grasping his arm) You are trembling.

BENTLEY: Yes: it's terror, sheer terror. I can hardly see. I can hardly stand. But I'll go with you.

LINA: (slapping him on the back and knocking a ghastly white smile into his face) You shall. I like you, my boy. We go tomorrow, together.

BENTLEY: Yes: together: tomorrow.

(13.MIS.204)

There is more than a hint, in the last moments of Misalliance, of the ending of Heartbreak House:

MRS HUSHABYE: But what a glorious experience! I hope

they'll come again tomorrow night.

ELLIE: (radiant at the prospect) Oh, I hope so.
(15.HH.149)

Her brother is a bullying ass, but Hypatia's vitality is of a different order. Named by her father, (Johnny and Bobby are more their mother's choice of names,) after a fifth century Alexandrian lady of great erudition and doubtful morals, she possesses a lively and enquiring mind in a healthy, energetic body.[22] As with Vivie Warren and 'Candy' Morell her parents call her by a diminutive, Patsy, the effect of which, as with those other parents, is to emphasise the fact that they still see her as a child. This is particularly true of her father who calls her Patsy on all possible occasions. She can be seen as a 'Chekhov young woman,' with something akin to the Masha of The Three Sisters, who is surrounded by the talk, talk, talk, talk of her family, whose only way of dealing with the infinite boredom of her life is to marry. The resemblance however, would end there. With no outlet for the restless energy, the vitality that she shares with her father - she is not allowed to go into Tarleton's business as Johnny has done, nor does she have the determination of a Vivie Warren to go it alone in some chosen career, having received no particular education for such an event - her life is bounded by talk. 'All the day I listen to mamma talking; at dinner I listen to papa talking; and when papa stops for a breath I listen to Johnny talking.' (13.MIS.137)

Hypatia's conversation with Lord Summerhays is a demonstration of her frustration at living at home and of her overwhelming boredom: 'If parents would only realise how they bore their children! Three or four times in the last hour Ive been on the point of screaming.' (13.MIS.137)

Eric Bentley believes that in the disquisitory plays 'the plot centres on two or three characters' although 'the play as a whole does not.'[23] Hypatia is at the heart of this

play and it is her relationship with her father, rather than with her two young men, which is the principal relationship. Tarleton sees himself *in control* of his children: 'I ought to have made Johnny an author,' (13.MIS.134) he says; and of Hypatia, 'my little girl,' he declares: 'I think my idea of bringing up a young girl has been rather a success... She's never been treated like a child. I always said the same thing to her mother. Let her read what she likes. Let her go where she likes...' (13.MIS.145) While he talks to Summerhays about being in control he confesses that: 'once childhood is over, once the little animal has got past the stage at which it acquires what you might call a sense of decency, its all up with the relationship between parent and child. You cant get over the fearful shyness of it.' (13.MIS.146) It takes Tarleton to the end of the play to realise that his control over his children, certainly over Patsy, is finished. To his pathetic, 'I havent been a bad father to you, Patsy.' (13.MIS.196) she replies: 'I dont say you have, dear. If only I could persuade you I've grown up, we should get along perfectly.' (13.MIS.196/7)

Patsy's reply contains the deep truth underlying her relationship with her father, so simple and so simply expressed. It is an echo of Kitty Warren's, 'I brought you up well, didnt I, dearie?' The parent's last resort when appealing for the affection of the escaping child.

John Tarleton is an overpowering personality who takes over in whatever company he finds himself. It is not difficult to understand why his son calls him 'erratic', and declare that 'he has a slate off', that he may be a 'wonderful man; but he's not quite all there.' (13.MIS.136) Talking as he does, at length, on any and every subject, quoting every author, advising friends and relations alike to read those authors, it is not surprising that Hypatia should finally break out. She confides in Lord Summerhays: 'If you sat in silence, as if you were waiting for something to happen, then there would be hope if nothing did happen. But this eternal cackle, cackle, cackle about things in

general is only fit for old, old, OLD people...' (13.MIS.138) She sums up her predicament when she protests that she wants to be an 'active verb': 'to be, to do, to suffer,' (13.MIS.142) Lord Summerhays translates. All of Shaw's women, in life and in his plays, are 'active verbs.'

> You see, I'm young; I do so want something to happen. My mother tells me that when I'm her age I shall only be too glad that nothing's happened; but I'm not her age; so what good is that to me? There's my father in the garden meditating on his destiny. All very well for him: he's had a destiny to meditate on; but I havent had my destiny yet... (13.MIS.138)

Hypatia is flattered and amused at Summerhays' devotion to her; indeed she is almost tempted to accept him but she doesnt 'want to be an old man's nurse' or to have 'undersized children like Bentley.' (13.MIS.140) He may apologise that she is young enough to be his daughter but she flings back that he is old enough to be her grandfather. In typical fashion Shaw makes references to grandparents. Summerhays is painfully sensitive to the way in which she speaks - her slang, her energy with language, her iconoclasm: 'How callous youth is! How coarse! How cynical! How ruthlessly cruel! (13.MIS.142) Into his mouth Shaw puts one of his own strongest expressions of opprobrium; that Hypatia speaks - 'goes on' - 'like the most unwholesome product of the rankest Bohemianism.' (13.MIS.142) Yet it is she who best represents Shaw's attitudes to the waste of the unmarried daughter within the family, in the speech that begins 'Girls withering into ladies. Ladies withering into old maids. Nursing old women.' ('3.MIS.143) What spirit she has! For all her irritating boisterousness Hypatia is a sister of Vivie Warren, of Barbara Undershaft, and of Joan, none of whom are content to wither on the tree 'without even a gardener to snip you off when you are rotten.' (13.MIS.143) She has Tarleton's joyous spirit, and in spite

of his establishment respectability, she recognises the life that is still moving in Summerhays, that he is 'really an old rip like papa.' (13.MIS.143) At the same time, with tact not being her style, with her blunt honesty she can sympathize with Summerhays' daughters who must find their father's endless talk as hard to bear as she does her own father's.

'Ladies withering into old maids' could be a description of the Huxtable 'girls' in Granville Barker's The Madras House, all of whom seem destined to 'wither' on the tree. Hypatia's fears were well founded. The turn of the century was a time when young men were emigrating to seek their fortunes abroad and the Boer War attracted men into the army and contributed to the imbalance of the sexes. If a girl was not married by the time she was twenty she could consider herself to be 'on the shelf'.

It is not surprising that Tarleton and Summerhays, the middle class merchant and the aristocratic public servant, are able to confide in each other when it comes to their attitude to 'the young,' and to their own young in particular. The passion of misunderstanding that can occur between the young and the old, heightened when it exists within the family context, presents a problem that is not confined to one class only, but is universal. Summerhays finds his son lacking in all those qualities of diplomatic genius that have made him an elder statesman of the British Empire: the sight of Bentley screaming on the floor for whatever reason, temper or cowardice, appals him. Johnny he finds far less embarrassing. Tarleton, on the other hand, is diverted and stimulated by Bentley and finds his own son a pompous bore without even that redeeming feature; an ability to make money. 'Better hand Bentley over to me. I can look him in the face and talk to him as man to man. You can have Johnny.' (13.MIS.147) They resemble Mrs Whitefield who prefers the Robinson children to her own. Shaw is always aware that consanguinity does not guarantee a loving relationship. In an amusing scene together the fathers

bewail the gulf between themselves and their offspring, beginning, quite unapologetically with Tarleton's, 'Difficult question this, of bringing up children. Between ourselves, it has beaten me...' (13.MIS.145) From the particular of Johnny and Bentley they move to the general of all fathers and all children: Tarleton argues that a man's shyness with them can be seen by reading the letters that he writes to his own children, 'not about himself or themselves' (13.MIS.146) and he quotes Dickens as a perfect example of this shyness.

Two years earlier, in a letter to Chesterton, Shaw had referred to the private conversation of Bradlaugh: '... as to exchanging ideas, or expressing the universal part of his soul, you might as well have been reading the letters of Charles Dickens to his family - those tragic monuments of dumbness of soul and noisiness of pen...'[24] As Shaw was himself childless there is no way of knowing how he would have written to his own children, and there is no reason to believe that he would not have been afflicted by the dreadful shyness from which Tarleton suffered.

The linen draper, however inhibited he may feel with his own son and daughter, is concerned for the welfare of the girls and young men in his employment and he recounts to Summerhays how he has approached their parents, telling them 'not to let their children go out into the world without instructions in the dangers and temptations they were going to be thrown into.' (13.MIS.147) But the mothers could not speak to the daughters, nor the fathers to the sons - although they all agreed that it was a good idea - any more than he could speak to Johnny. While, thought Tarleton, the relationship between parent and child may be affectionate or useful or necessary, it can never be innocent. It must be presumed that he is making a sexual reference to the relationship when he says that 'You'd die rather than allude to it,' and that 'in a thousand years itll be considered bad form to know who your mother and father are. Embarrassing.' (13.MIS.147) The ultimate of this embarrassment is achieved

in The Thing Happens, the third play in Back To Methuselah, with Confucius who prophecies, '... the family will dissolve: parents and children will be no longer the old and the young... the ties of blood will lose their innocence.' (16.BTM.129)

According to Eric Bentley Misalliance 'demonstrates the diversity and mysteriousness of family relationships.'[25] Within the Tarleton family perhaps only Mrs Tarleton, that 'shrewd and motherly old lady who... is still very pleasant and likeable and unaffected.' (13.MIS.115) is the only person to remain unruffled by the generation 'infighting.' Certainly, 'my Johnny,' is her favourite: Hypatia refers to him as 'your darling,' and adds, 'we all know Johnny's perfection.' (13.MIS.124) while Tarleton calls him, 'your precious Johnny.' (13.MIS.130) The affection is mutual and Johnny prefers his mother to his father: 'Dont you interfere between my mother and me,' (13.MIS.116) he snaps at Bentley. While she still grieves for poor little Bobby, and protects her Johnny's interests, (he's 'as clever as anyone else in his own way,') (13.MIS.124) she knows that Hypatia can look after herself. Confronted by the suggestion that her daughter will not marry the man to whom she is engaged, her reply is, 'Of course not. Is that your great news? I never believed she'd marry him.' Her reaction to Patsy marrying a man she has known for only half an hour is, 'Oh' she has my permission: she ought to have been married long ago.' (13.MIS.203)

Mrs Tarleton is Shaw's archetype of mother-woman; 'the first a model of maternal wisdom' [29.PPR.107] who protects the weak, knowing that the strong can look after themselves. [26] She protected her 'little ones' from Johnny's bullying, she mother-hens Bentley, she excels herself in the care of the son of her old friend Lucy Titmus. Johnny is her undoubted pet but although she protests his abilities, perhaps she protests too much. Her shrewdness may recognise the need he has for someone to stand up for him. Of all the young people, the 'children' in the play, he is the least

likeable, the one least likely to succeed on his own. As Bentley says in their first and opening argument, 'You're nothing but a turnspit... If your father hadnt made a roasting jack for you to turn, you'd be earning twentyfour shillings a week behind a counter.' (13.MIS.115) And Hypatia, talking about the young men who have courted her, 'They wouldnt even have money if they werent the sons of their fathers, like Johnny.' (13.MIS.125) Mrs Tarleton is a splendid woman, comparing favourably with any and all of Shaw's best mothers. Without Mrs Clandon's bitterness, less bland than Mrs Bridgenorth, and an altogether different species from Mrs Whitefield who is reduced to little more than a 'running gag' in the conversation of her scheming daughter, Mrs Tarleton has an excellent relationship with both her children. The scene with Patsy demonstrates their ease in talking very freely to each other - there is little of the Father's shyness here - and the girl can frankly enquire about her mother's marriage. There is neither false modesty nor any of the hectoring so affected by Lady Britomart Undershaft, and yet both of these mothers have produced sons less able than their more forceful and attractive daughters.

Born into the working class and having risen through her husband's financial genius into the wealthy middle class, Mrs Tarleton is untouched by snobbishness: she sees through the 'ladies' on the committee she attends by virtue of the Tarleton money (as she sees through Lord Summerhays) and she retains that prudishness that finds drains a highly unsuitable subject for social discussion without ever becoming a prig. Sensibly, indeed, admirably, once she has discovered the danger of 'drains' she takes charge of those in the Tarleton property, whatever she may think of them privately. Loving and modest she is entirely relaxed and unshocked by Patsy's attitude to men although she may expostulate at her language: 'The things that girls say nowadays!' (13.MIS.124)

As well as to the young people who surround her, Mrs

Tarleton has become a mother-hen to her husband, protecting him and pleasing him with her praise and her welsh rabbits. To him she is the 'Chickabiddy' who must on no account be upset and who must be kept in ignorance of the sexual adventures to which he is irresistibly drawn from time to time. But, of course, she knows about them; as she knows that they constitute no threat to her family or her marriage. He believes that he is discreet in these episodes but he is a man not given to discretion and his daughter, as well as his wife, knows all about them. Hypatia is only concerned that he will not, hypocritically, behave in one way himself while demanding a different code of behaviour from her.

It is Tarleton's spontaneity that makes him the most satisfactory character in the play and one of Shaw's most delightful creations. A vital man, full of the Joy of Life, who can insist that he wont die because he is wearing out or decaying but in order to give the younger fellows a better chance with the girls: 'I shall clear out: but I shant decay.' (13.MIS.127) His children see him in a different light from that in which he sees himself, particularly Hypatia who most resembles him: 'You see what living with one's parents means... living in a house where you can be ordered to leave the room. Ive got to obey: its his house not mine.' (13.MIS.198) For all his stubbornness she knows him to be a man without malice and can add: 'Dont answer him. Joey: it wont last.' (13.MIS.197) Tarleton, 'almost in hysterics,' is finally bested by his daughter. 'He is broken with emotion,' and can only think that it is time for him to read King Lear!' (13.MIS.197) 'Serve me right! Parents and children! No man should know his own child. No child should know its own father, Let the family be rooted out of civilisation! Let the human race be brought up in institutions!' (13.MIS.197)

Beatrice Webb had disliked Misalliance very much when Shaw read it to her and Sidney, taking 'a good three hours.'

It is amazingly brilliant - but the whole 'motive' is erotic, everyone wishing to have sexual intercourse with everyone else - though the proposals are 'matrimonial' for the most part... I dont see any good in the play except intellectual brilliancy... Sidney and I were sorry to see GBS reverting to his studies in anarchic love-making. Now cramming these episodes into <u>one scene</u> gives an almost farcical impression of the rabbit-warren as part of human life...[27]

After attending a performance of Granville Barker's <u>The Madras House</u> and listening to <u>Misalliance</u>, she wrote:

> ... one wonders whether these two supremely clever persons are not obsessed with the rabbit-warren aspect of human society... they both harp on the mere physical attractions of men to women, and women to men, coupled with the insignificance of the female for any other purpose but sex attraction, with tiresome iteration... [28]

In her autobiography, Lillah McCarthy quotes a letter written to her by Beatrice Webb saying, 'I wish you could persuade GBS to do a piece of serious work, and not pursue this somewhat barren tilting at the family.'[29] It would be fair to say that Mrs Webb was more interested in the family as a statistic than as anything else and that she was becoming increasingly out of tune with Shaw of whom she said, in her diary, '... all his talk revolves round persons and not ideas.' In the same entry she confessed:

> We are unhappy about Shaw. About five years ago I thought he was going to mellow into deeper thought and feeling, instead of which he wrote <u>Fanny's First Play</u>![30]

After the failures of <u>Getting Married</u> and <u>Misalliance</u>

Shaw wrote Fanny's First Play as a pot-boiler for Lillah McCarthy to produce at the Little Theatre in 1911: it proved to be highly successful, running for 622 performances, and at his own insistence the author's name was kept from the public. It was, however, an open secret and no-one for a moment believed it to be written by anyone other than Shaw. To Lillah McCarthy he wrote, 'Do everything to suggest the play is by Barrie... you can say with good conscience that the author's name begins with a capital B.'[31]

This first play, written by Fanny O'Dowda, is a 'play within a play' and its atmosphere is decidedly less privileged than any domestic play of Shaw's that has preceded it. This may be because she, being a Fabian/Socialist and in some revolt against her father's old fashioned ideas, has determined to set it, not in the Italian palaces of his preference, nor in the 'old-fashioned country house' that is their residence in England, but between two very ordinary middle-class homes in Denmark Hill, London.

It concerns Gilbey and Knox, partners in the wine business. The family names are typically Shavian: Gilbey is still a brand name of gin as it was a hundred years ago while Mrs Knox has been named to remind audiences of the Calvinist minister. These families expect to be even more closely united by the marriage of their children, both of whom - each unknown to the other - have disappeared from home. Both have been in prison for disturbing the peace, Bobby Gilbey in Wormwood Scrubbs and Margaret Knox in Holloway: Fanny's play unfolds the story of how this incident so affects Margaret that the lives of them all are utterly changed.

The Gilbeys are presented first: a placid mother and a violent father who is concerned only with public respectability. He refers to Bobby as 'your son' when he is angry, 'my son' when he is pleased: a snob determined to be seen doing the right thing, he will go so far as to hire a monsignor's brother to tutor the rather dim-witted Bobby

rather than be outdone by a friend who has produced the son of an archdeacon to tutor his own boy. The mystery of Bobby's absence is explained on the appearance of Darling Dora, a larky young prostitute, who shared Bobby's escapade and did her fourteen days in Holloway with Margaret; she lets them know that he would not give his name to the police for fear of dishonouring his parents. Dora is of the opinion that a too strict upbringing accounts for her young man's behaviour which is why 'when he gets loose theres no holding him.' Father's reaction is predictable: he rages, he pities himself, he declares that the disgrace will kill him, that he'll be marked for life, that his home is 'a respectable household,': the clichés are thick and fast.

'I've done my duty as a father. I've kept him sheltered.' (13.FFP.281) His attitude to the fun loving Dora is summed up by - 'It's the likes of you thats the ruin of the like of him.' (13.FFP.280) Shaw, in this play, uses the language - as well as the stuff - of nineteenth century domestic melodrama. It has been said by at least one critic that: 'Here was the first Shaw play to open the eyes of the playgoer, accustomed to everyday West End theatrical fare, to the possibility that the Shavian drama was for him.'[32]

The Knox family is introduced: he, 'thinner, harder and uglier' than Gilbey, and she, 'a plain woman... with thoughtful eyes and thoughtful ways that make an atmosphere of peace and solemnity.' (13.FFP.285) In the belief that their daughter has run away from home their response is also the conventional one, that they are socially ruined: It's 'all over between us and everybody... people know what to think of her and her parents.' (13.FFP.286) As with the Gilbeys they emphasise the respectability of their home, but there is in Mrs Knox a quality that sets her apart from the rest and that is, perhaps, responsible for the person that her daughter will become. She is a religious woman and is not insensitive: 'If a girl isnt happy in herself,' she says, 'she wont be happy anywhere.' (13.FFP.286) In her diary entry for 13 March 1910 Beatrice Webb wrote:

> Where I think GBS, Granville Barker, H.G. Wells, and many others of the most 'modern' authors go wrong, from the standpoint of realism in its best sense, is their complete ignoring of religion. By religion I mean the communion of the soul with some righteousness felt to be outside and above itself... Not one of [their] women have either the conscious or unconscious form of religion. The abler of these puppets of their thoughts deny it: the stupider are oblivious of it - a few are blatant hypocrites. And, that being so, there is nothing left for them to be but intellects or brutes, and for the most part they are both. It is strange that, whatever these clever men may think and feel themselves, they don't perceive that there is such a thing as religion and that it is a force which moulds many lives and makes the mere rabbit-warren an inconceivable horror.[33]

It would appear that Mrs Webb had forgotten how impressed she had been with Barbara Undershaft and was ignoring Ann Whitefield and the Life Force. Saint Joan (1923), of course, had still to be written. Perhaps she was thinking too much of Shaw 'the philanderer' of whom she had always disapproved on a personal level and this was influencing her judgment. Mrs Knox might have been created by Shaw to appease Mrs Webb's criticism: but if so, she remained unimpressed.[34] Knox - and what a contrast with that munificent tradesman, Tarleton - is untouched by any religious sensibility and can say, 'I've turned many a girl out of the shop for being half an hour late at night; and here's my own daughter gone for a fortnight...' (13.FFP.287)

When Margaret returns with the French marine officer with whom she was arrested and who has bailed her out, she is described as 'a strong, springy girl of eighteen, with large nostrils, and audacious chin, and a resolute manner, even peremptory on occasions...' (13.FFP.287) and at once it

can be seen that she is another splendid Shaw woman, strong and forthright. She has been in Holloway women's prison for two weeks: 'My daughter in Holloway Gaol!'
'All the women in Holloway are somebody's daughter,' she replies to her father. (13.FFP.288) Like Bobby, Margaret has not told the magistrate her name, in order to spare the feelings of her parents, and her only crime was that of being in a dancehall when Oxbridge students began to fight, it being the night of the Boat Race. The police who had come in to quell the riot of high spirits 'suddenly got quite brutal' and attacked the women 'and treated them just as roughly as they had treated the students.' (13.FFP.292) In the midst of it all - defiantly resisting arrest - Margaret hit back; she cursed, she called names, and she smacked a policeman hard enough on the mouth to knock out two of his teeth:

> So now you see I'm not a bit the sort of girl you thought me. I'm not a bit the sort of girl I thought myself. And I dont know what sort of person you really are, or what sort of person father really is... (13.FFP.291)

She comes to the same conclusion as Eliza Doolittle, that 'nobody's really a lady except when they're treated like ladies:' or, perhaps she's not a lady at all because 'we're only shopkeepers,' she adds. (13.FFP.293) Whatever the reason, as the result of her experiences of the last fourteen days, she has lost all pretensions to that respectability so revered by her father. 'That's all our respectability is, pretending, pretending, pretending. Thank heaven Ive had it knocked out of me once for all' (13.FFP.295) In a powerful scene with her mother Margaret explains how the prayer meeting that she had attended before the 'riot' had somehow set her free. That the setting free was for 'evil as well as good' and that for her it had been 'a sort of descent into hell.' (13.FFP.294) Mrs Knox is

greatly agitated by this 'exaltation.' Her conventional religious beliefs are being attacked by her daughter whom she accuses of 'justifying... wickedness in the words of grace.' She says: 'Ive tried to bring you up to learn the happiness of religion. Ive waited for you to find out that happiness is within ourselves... Ive prayed oftener than you think that you might be enlightened.' (13.FFP.295)

This dialogue lifts what has been until now an ordinary melodramatic comedy and the scene, in the language of the theatre, simply 'takes off.' The relationship of Margaret and Mrs Knox can be recognised as having something of the same validity and power as the relationships between mother and daughter expressed seventeen years earlier in Mrs Warren's Profession and in Brieux's Blanchette. It could be argued that Margaret's culminating speech is as good as anything that Shaw wrote for Barbara Undershaft:

> You shouldnt have prayed for me to be enlightened if you didnt want me to be enlightened. If the truth were known, I suspect we all want our prayers to be answered only by halves: the agreeable halves. Your prayer didnt get answered by halves, mother. Youve got more than you bargained for in the way of enlightenment. I shall never be the same again. I shall never speak in the old way again. Ive been set free from this silly little hole of a house and all its pretences. I know now that I am stronger than you and Papa. I havent found that happiness of yours that is within yourself; but Ive found strength. For good or evil I am set free; and none of the things that used to hold me can hold me now. (13.FFP.295)

It is only her father's return to the room that interrupts the scene and with him returns the cliché ridden dialogue, the predictability, the stereotyped behaviour of comic melodrama: - 'Do you think I'm made of iron?' - 'If only we can keep it dark...' - 'Hold your tongue...' (13.FFP.295.6)

He threatens to turn her out if she will not keep quiet about where she has been and what she has done, but she is prepared to tell the world and to leave home, too - and Mrs Knox with her! - at which he collapses and the scene ends: bathos and mock heroics and all very funny.

> Magsy, my child: dont bring down your father's hairs with sorrow to the grave. There's only one thing I care about in the world: to keep this dark. I'm your father. I ask you here on my knees - in the dust, so to speak - not to let it out. (13.FFP.296)

'I'll tell everybody,' is his daughter's defiant reply as the curtain falls. With her determination to share her new freedom Shaw is celebrating yet another vital woman in his gallery of vital women, in contrast with the slave product of respectable society, her fool of a father.

Bobby, the Gilbey's son, is a sharp contrast to Margaret Knox. He is 'unsatisfactory, his parents having imagined that domestic restriction is what they call 'bringing up.' He has learnt nothing from it except a habit of evading it by deceit.' (13.FFP.297) Nor has he learnt anything from his time in gaol, unlike Margaret who extricates them from their engagement to marry that until now they had unthinkingly accepted. Her maturity emphasises his inadequacies: once again Shaw's woman is more advanced than the young man with whom she is juxtaposed, and superior to the 'pars and mars' who shove their offspring into misalliances.

Since the 'disgrace' that their children have brought upon them the fathers are changed men: Gilbey wont get up in the morning and Knox has 'taken to whisky and soda. A pint a week!' Skeletons rattle in the family cupboards. Gilbey confesses that his father had drunk as well and he passes on the advice that was given to him: 'If you find [a weakness] getting a hold on you, make a merit of it...' He is dealing with the shame of his son's imprisonment by swanking 'about

what a dog he is -' (13.FFP.313)

In agreeable fashion all the play's loose ends are tied up in a typically upside down style: the spoilt son gets the jolly prostitute, the smart girl - having fallen in love with the butler - gets her just reward when he is revealed as a duke's brother, and the excellent Captain Duvallet's existence is justified by showing up English zenophobia and by having the best, and the longest, speech in the play, the greater part of which is devoted to the Frenchman's admiration of the English family:

> ... Your daughter, madam, is superb. Your country is a model to the rest of Europe. If you were a Frenchman, stifled in prudery, hypocrisy, and the tyranny of the family and the home, you would understand how an enlightened Frenchman admires and envies your freedom, your broadmindedness, and the fact that home life can hardly be said to exist in England. You have made an end of the despotism of the parent; the family council is unknown to you; everywhere in these islands one can enjoy the exhilarating, the soul-liberating spectacle of men quarrelling with their brothers, defying their fathers, refusing to speak to their mothers. In France we are not men: we are only sons - grownup children. Here one is a human being - an end in himself...(13.FFP.323)

But it is Mrs Knox and her attitude to life who carries Shaw's comment on middle class society. Realising the poverty of soul of Gilbey and her husband she advises them to 'cling to the powers outside' (13.FFP.315) themselves. Margaret was guided to find her way by an inner light but 'you two men [will not] be protected if you make what she did an excuse to go and do as you'd like to do if it wasnt for fear of losing your character. The spirit wont guide you, because it isnt in you; and it never has been: not in either of you.' (13.FFP.314)

As in all Shaw's plays, beneath the comedy, and beneath the 'tomfoolery' of this one, there is a serious statement of faith: and if Mrs Knox is less of a mystic than Mrs George, no Earth Mother, no authority in her own mayoral right - though we are told she is socially more refined than her husband - like Mrs George she introduces the spiritual element, a risky thing for a playwright to allow in a comedy.

> ... we're ignorant. We dont really know whats right and whats wrong. We're all right as long as things go on the way they always did. We bring our children up just as we were brought up; and we go to church or chapel just as our parents did; and we say what everybody says; and it goes on all right until something out of the way happens: theres a family quarrel, or one of the children goes wrong, or a father takes to drink, or an aunt goes mad, or one of us finds ourselves doing something we never thought we'd want to do. And then you know what happens: complaints and quarrels and huff and offence and bad language and bad temper and regular bewilderment as if Satan possessed us all. We find out then that with all our respectability and piety, weve no real religion and no way of telling right from wrong. Weve nothing but our habits; and when they're upset, where are we? Just like Peter in the storm trying to walk on the water and finding he couldnt. (13.FFP.317)

In these plays nothing happens: people call or drop in, quite literally in the case of Misalliance, but it is only for the purpose of continuing the talk about what has already happened before the play opened. Thus in Getting Married Edith and Cecil have been given tracts to read which is why the wedding is delayed and the discussion on getting married ensues as the bride's family waits for her to make up her mind. In Misalliance Summerhays has already made a

declaration to his son's girl, Tarleton who was a young philanderer now is confronted by the result of an old escapade in the form of Gunner. Hypatia has been longing to get away from home for ages and Joey Perceval provides the opportunity, Bentley was never suitable as a candidate and it will take a goddess to tear him away. Fanny's First Play is the vehicle for discussion of how parents come to terms with letting go of their children and how the children themselves learn to go. The nights out that resulted in gaol for Margaret and Bobby have already happened, they return to their homes only to talk about what they have learned.

This is an 'Ibsenesque' or retrospective technique of dealing with the results of events rather than with the events themselves and it suited all three of these plays. It is a technique that is particularly applicable to Getting Married and Misalliance written in the one-act 'Greek form'. In fact it is a technique that is eminently well suited to Shaw's enjoyment of witty and lengthy TALK.

## NOTES

1 See above: 'Substitute Parents'

2 Daily Telegraph, G.B.S., 12 May 1908

3 Ernest Belfort Bax, socialist, journalist, philosopher and ardent anti-feminist 1854-1926

4 H Hamilton Fyfe, 'Shaw's 'dulness'', rev. of Getting Married by Bernard Shaw, World, 20 May 1908

5 See above: 'Return of Absent Parent'

6 'The Story of the Sixth brother,' The Arabian Nights

7 A Correspondence, p.116

8 Fabian Tract No 131. The Decline in the Birthrate,Sidney Webb, March 1907. Published and Sold by the Fabian Society.

9 H C Duffin, The Quintessence of Bernard Shaw, p.72

10 Sixteen Self Sketches, p.14

11 Sixteen Self Sketches, pp.14-15

12 Archibald Henderson, George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Work, (London: Hurst & Blackett Ltd,) 1911, p.498

13 Rosset, Shaw of Dublin, pp.302-18

14 Rosset, p.318

15 Max Beerbohm, 'Mr Shaw's 'Debate',' rev. of Misalliance by Bernard Shaw, Saturday Review, 26 February 1910

16 Max Beerbohm review of Misalliance

17 Maurice Valency, The Cart and The Trumpet, p.292

18 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, p.198

19 H L Mencken, 'The New Dramatic Literature,' rev. of Shaw as 'a somewhat ridiculous crusader', Smart Set, August 1911

20 Sixteen Self Sketches, p.14

21 Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker, p.160

22 Charles Kingsley published a novel called Hypatia in 1874 but it is possible that Shaw took the name

of Charles Bradlaugh's daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, although there is no evidence for this other than the fact of his great admiration for her father.

23 Eric Bentley, Bernard Shaw, p.157

24 Collected Letters 1898-1910, p.762

25 Eric Bentley, p.157

26 Bernard Shaw, My Dear Dorothea, p.52

27 The Diaries of Beatrice Webb, Vol. 3, 1905-24, p.133

28 Beatrice Webb, Vol 3, pp.137-8

29 Lillah McCarthy, Myself and My Friends, London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd, 1933, p.136

30 Beatrice Webb, Vol 3, p.190

31 Lillah McCarthy, p.135

32 Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker, p.195

33 Beatrice Webb, Vol 3, p.137

34 Beatrice Webb, Vol 3, p.157

# CONCLUSION*

The use of fatherless, motherless and orphan children as dramatic characters was part of the stock in trade of playwrights and novelists who preceded and were contemporary with Shaw in Britain and Europe. There was nothing original in his adopting such dramatic devices. They were common currency. Shaw's originality was in exploiting what had become a dramatic cliché in order to propound his iconoclastic and radical views on the conventions of contemporary social structure, particularly as these related to the family. He used nineteenth-century stock characters in the same way as he used other dramaturgical features found in melodrama and in the well-made play. As Martin Meisel writes, 'Shaw's plays are not developments of single nineteenth-century sources, but they have class resemblances to groups of nineteenth-century plays where certain subject matter is characteristically combined with a certain tone and with certain conventions of character, action, and setting.'[1] By manipulating outworn technical devices in a new way, he sought to expose the underlying social and political assumptions which had given rise to such formulaic drama. Exposure of 'dead' social conventions was in part achieved by the exposure of hackneyed dramatic tricks. It is not only in the English domestic plays that parent/child relationships occur. As Margery M Morgan writes: 'There is hardly a Shaw play which is not centrally concerned with the dark shadows of parental authority threatening, or repudiated by, the younger generation.'[2]

* Notes page 271

Although only in Misalliance is the declared theme of the play that of the relationship of parents and children, all of them contain at least significant references to such relationships and at most what could be termed 'obsessive' concern with the generation conflict within the family setting. Not only in the plays but in his novels and in other writings, letters and speeches Shaw expressed his opinions on the complicated relationships of children and their parents. In an early Fabian Tract, he advocated that every child should have 'a refuge from the tyranny of its natural custodians.'[3] It is as if he were compelled to introduce the subject.

This compulsion is believed by many critics to have its roots in Shaw's own early experience as the son of his parents. Although Michael Holroyd's definitive examination of Shaw's life and works is not yet published in full, (the last volume will not be out until 1991), these beliefs have been verified in Volume 1.[4] In the last sentence of the first chapter (which ends with young 'Sonny', now George, Shaw leaving Ireland) Holroyd quotes from a letter that Shaw had written nearly sixty years later: 'as the world is not at present fit for children to live in why not give the little invalids a gorgeous party, and when they have eaten and danced themselves to sleep, turn on the gas and let them all wake up in heaven?' Holroyd believes that this was an exposure of what Shaw felt about his own childhood.[5] The extent to which the behaviour of his parents during his childhood influenced the subjects of his writing is impossible to determine. When a cap that he had worn as a baby was found in his mother's belongings after her death, he reported the incident to Mrs Patrick Campbell and added: 'Had anyone suggested such a possibility I should have laughed him (or her) to scorn. We never know anything about our parents.'[6]

By his own frequent admissions Bernard Shaw was the youngest child of an 'unsuitable marriage'[7] with an alcoholic father and a disillusioned mother, who became more interested in

her music teacher than in her husband and children, yet excerpts from his father's letters to his absent mother ('I delivered your kisses...') when Sonny was a year old show that he received affectionate attention from both parents.[8] Whether these excerpts were chosen to begin Sixteen Self Sketches, the nearest Shaw came to an autobiography, to prove that he was indeed loved - as the 'youngest' and therefore the 'sweetest' child - or to hint at the reverse, that for the four weeks that covered his first birthday his mother's attention was elsewhere, is not known. Whether the boy was indeed neglected by his parents and confused by a situation that Daniel Dervin calls the 'Family Romance'[9] is likewise unclear. To what extent he genuinely wondered which of the men in his mother's life was his father, as B C Rosset suggests, can only be conjectured although there is little external evidence to support her association with Lee at the appropriate time.

It would appear that Shaw created women who resembled his mother in more than one characteristic, and women whom he might have wished to have been his mother. In Mrs Clandon, who could not cuddle her children and who despised her husband, he may have depicted Bessie Shaw in the Dublin years of Lee and the musical entertainments. She could also be equated with Bessie Shaw the independent mother who financially supported her children in a foreign country, while the mother who witnessed the literary rejections of his first years in London was perhaps how he saw Mrs Herbert, making explicit what may have been sub-textual, her scorn for and coldness towards her artist son. Henry Higgins was given a cultured mother, tolerant and humorous, while Candida was the Virgin-mother-goddess of Shaw-Morell and Shaw-Eugene. Critics and scholars have made the case for Shaw 'writing out' consciously or unconsciously the familial relationships of his youth. Rosset finds the Hatch Street ménage reflected in Getting Married: Philip Weissman analyses Shaw's life as written into Pygmalion: Daniel Dervin has made a 'Psychological Study' of Shaw from the

writings and the 'known facts', and the majority of critics sees the Shaw family in You Never Can Tell.

The quest by the Shavian child for his or her 'true' parent, whether real or metaphorical, is a recurrent theme throughout all the plays examined. Fathers are frequently both literally and spiritually unknown to even 'wise' sons and daughters.

Vivie Warren can never know the identity of her father and the Clandon-Crampton children have been speculating over theirs for years before they accidentally 'find' him, while Barbara Undershaft has known little of her formidable father until his 'return' to the Wilton Street home. Substitute parents are sought by young people attempting to fulfil aspects of their personalities that appear incompatible with their generic origins. Philip Clandon 'adopts' the kindly waiter, Johnny Tarleton and Bentley Summerhays each prefer the other's father to his own, and even Ellie Dunn, who dearly loves her father, finds a 'second father' who supplies an element that her own does not. In Candida Eugene compensates for his lack of congenial parents by moving in with the Morells and subsequently, if temporarily, complicating their lives. Mothers and fathers, likewise, seek in the offspring of others, children more congenial to their own temperament and philosophy. Tarleton and Summerhays prefer each other's sons to their own while Mrs Whitefield admits to liking the Robinsons more than her own daughters.

Permutations of the parent/child relationship proliferate and an examination of these serves to illuminate the dual (and often paradoxical) role of Shaw as an individual artist in the Modernist tradition and as a precursor of the political propagandist drama of Berthold Brecht.

The extent to which his personal experience of family life led him to criticise and condemn the sacrosanct myth of the nuclear family - that most Victorian of Victorian values - must remain a mystery. For the moment Dervin's final words must suffice: '... the question and our partial answers only draw us into the mists of deeper mysteries.'[10]

## NOTES

1 Martin Meisel, Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theatre, p.7

2 Margery M Morgan, The Shavian Playground, p.50

3 Edward R Pease, The History of the Fabian Society, New York: International Publishers, 1926, p.43

4 Michael Holroyd, Vol 1 The Search for Love, London: Chatto & Windus, 1988. Vol 2 The Pursuit of Power, 1989. The Lure of Fantasy, 1991

5 Michael Holroyd, 'The Search for Love', p.60

6 Bernard Shaw and Mrs Patrick Campbell: Their Correspondence, Ed. Alan Dent, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd,1952, p.111

7 Everybody's Political What's What? London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1944, p.75

8 Sixteen Self Sketches, p.3

9 Daniel Dervin, Bernard Shaw: A Psychological Study, pp.53-8

10 Dervin, p.337

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