

THE REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN IN THE
PLAYS OF BERNARD SHAW

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

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2016

Abstract

Fattah, Manal, University of Leicester, 2016. The Representation of Children in the Plays of Bernard Shaw.

This thesis explores the parent-child relationships in Shaw's early and middle plays, with a special focus on the destructive and constructive role of parents and children in social and human evolution. It examines how Shaw uses these particular relationships and what they represent in light of his views on social progress, evolution, and education. Although children received a great deal of attention from Shaw, their representation in Shaw's drama has not received much serious attention from scholars and critics. This thesis explores parents and children in eight of Shaw's plays in terms of generational conflict: *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1894), *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), *You Never Can Tell* (1896), *Man and Superman* (1902), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Pygmalion* (1912), *Misalliance* (1910), and *Fanny's First Play* (1911). The first two chapters demonstrate the constructive role of the child in social progress and human evolution and the destructive effect of the parent on the child's progress. The third chapter explores the constructive role of the parent in the child's education and development. The final chapter examines the parent-child relationships in Shaw in light of his views on the family as a social institution. Throughout my study, I refer to a variety of Shaw's non-dramatic writings, such as his prefaces, letters, interviews, and criticism. As a result, this thesis draws the reader's attention to the relation between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings. My study reveals that there is a link between Shaw's progressive views and his plays: both are meant to agitate and provoke the audience into thinking, questioning, and challenging. The conclusion is that Shaw used drama, in general, and the family, in particular, as a vehicle for his views. This is important in understanding Shaw's plays, and it provides evidence of Shaw's commitment to the socialist cause and the didactic purpose of art.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Gail Marshall to whom I am sincerely grateful for her great intellect, excellent advice, and continuous support and guidance. Without her help, I would not have been able to complete this work, and it is such a pleasure and an honour to be her student. I would also like to thank Dr Victoria Stewart and Dr Holly Furneaux for their advice and constructive comments during and after the probation review.

Enormous gratitude is due to the University of Leicester for all the facilities and services provided to me on campus and off campus. Skills and career development resources as well as training programmes and events have been of great benefit to me. Special thanks to Helen Steele, Jackie Hanes, and all other library staff for their advice, guidance, and IT help.

I am deeply indebted to my devoted and beloved husband Awadh Almalky for his patience, comfort, and constant encouragement and support over the years, especially when I get frustrated and stressed. He has always been there for me. I am particularly thankful to him for accompanying me during the course of my study in the UK. What would I do without him?

Last, but not least, my thanks and appreciation go to my wonderful parents and my brothers who have always been an inspiration to me and have always believed in me. I would also like to thank my lovely friend and colleague Najah Alzoubi for her emotional support and the time she has spent listening to me and chatting with me while having our coffee.

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Introduction

Bernard Shaw once declared in a speech delivered to the Fabian Society in 1886: ‘A Socialist cannot define his attitude towards the Family without great risk of placing himself in a false position’ (qtd. in Bertolini, *Family Values* 149). Shaw could not have described himself better, for his attitudes and ideas about the family and children are indeed inconsistent and ambivalent. In this speech, entitled ‘Socialism and the Family,’ Shaw expresses a strong condemnation of the family: ‘I hate the Family. I loathe the Family. I entirely detest and abominate the Family as the quintessence of Tyranny, Sentimentality, Inefficiency, Hypocrisy, and Humbug’ (153). Shaw’s aversion to the family and his belief that it is an insignificant and inefficient institution are expressed more frequently in his non-dramatic writings, especially in his substantial ‘Treatise on Parents and Children’ (1914) (his preface to *Misalliance*). For instance, Shaw claims there that ‘it is an error to believe that the family provides children with edifying adult society, or that the family is a social unit. The family is in that, as in so many other respects, a humbug’ (52). Shaw here repeats a word he previously used in his speech ‘Socialism and the Family,’ ‘humbug.’ The word ‘humbug’ is also repeated in the same treatise and associated this time with ‘nuisance’ to describe the family: ‘the homelier the home, and the more familiar the family, the worse for everybody concerned. The family ideal is a humbug and a nuisance’ (93). Shaw’s desire for the breakup of the family is implicit in this quotation by suggesting that family members should be as distant and independent from each other as possible.

On the other hand, Shaw asserts in *The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928) that ‘the greatest social service that can be rendered by anybody to the country and to mankind is to bring up a family,’ and that ‘[t]he most important work in the world is that of bearing and rearing children’ (25, 326). Both this statement and that in ‘Socialism and the Family’ are discussed in the same context of socialism, and provide an example of how Shaw contradicts himself. In order to understand the reasoning behind Shaw’s views of the family, it would be useful to look at the family in the broader context of socialism. In general, socialism undermines the family and tends to loosen family ties and parental authority. Joan B.

Landes explores the socialist view of the family as depicted in the writings of Marx, Engels, and other socialists: ‘On the one hand, the family (without qualification, e.g., all family life) is depicted as a negative *institution*, a product of class society that will disappear in the socialist future. . . . On the other hand, the family, working class or bourgeois, exists as a negative *effect* of the operation of the laws of capital’ (19). Hence, in both cases, the family is viewed in a negative light. Perhaps most frequently, socialists view the family as a capitalist institution, and they attack its patriarchal, authoritarian form. The negative socialist view of the family is, therefore, in conflict with the positive Christian view of the family as holy and natural. Father Bernard Vaughan in *Socialism from the Christian Standpoint* (1912) expresses his opposition to socialism, denouncing it as ‘a most insidious menace to the State which must rest on its own God-given foundation, the Home’ (150). He perceives socialism and its attempt to transfer parental authority and supervision over the child to the state as a threat to the stability of family life, which is provided by the Christian family (152). Therefore, Shaw’s contradictory views on the family and the bringing up of children reflect the wider debate on the family at the time. Moreover, the socialist influence is evident in Shaw’s attitude towards the family as a social institution. The relationship between Shaw’s ideas about the family and children and his socialism is, thus, worth exploring.

It should be noted that the word ‘child’ in this study is not restricted to mean a young person still in the care of the family, but also, and more frequently, it refers to a particular kind of familial relationship. In fact, when it comes to the representation of children in Shaw’s plays, it is the generational distance rather than the fact that these children are young that is in question. The age of children does not really have significance in Shaw’s prose and dramatic writings. In his prose writings, Shaw asserts that ‘the rights of a child are precisely those of an adult’ (*Prefaces* 76). With respect to Shaw’s plays, they more often portray adult offspring who are ready to be socially and politically active, that is, according to Shaw’s socialist beliefs, rebellious. Therefore, this thesis will primarily be concerned with the adult offspring in Shaw’s plays, and not with actual children or actual childhood. The major questions this thesis attempts to answer are: Was Shaw using the parent-child relationship as a vehicle for his views? If so, how and why?

Shaw, probably more than any other socialist, stresses the importance of children's independence from their parents and opposes parents' interference in the education of their children. On the other hand, Shaw strongly advocates state authority and interference in the education of children. This paradox can be seen in Shaw's attitude towards the 'inculcation' of children and 'moulding' their mind and character, which he criticises in 'Parents and Children'. In regard to the matter of inculcation, Shaw says:

Now family life and school life are, as far as the moral training of children is concerned, nothing but the deliberate inculcation of a routine of complaint, scolding, punishment, persecution, and revenge as the natural and only possible way of dealing with evil or inconvenience. . . . [W]e are probably wrong to inculcate its [the child's] deliberate cultivation. The natural course is for the parents and children to cast off the specific parental and filial relation when they are no longer necessary to one another. (73, 90)

Not only does Shaw criticise the attempt of parents and schoolmasters to mould children, but he also attributes to it the 'docility' of individuals and ultimately the collapse of civilisations: 'All this inculcated adult docility, which wrecks every civilization as it is wrecking ours, is inhuman and unnatural' (79). As for moulding children, Shaw strongly opposes parents' and schoolmasters' attempts to mould children's mind and character:

Most children can be, and many are, hopelessly warped and wasted by parents who are ignorant and silly enough to suppose that they know what a human being ought to be, and who stick at nothing in their determination to force their children into their moulds. (50)

Whereas Shaw rejects the parents' and schoolmasters' interference in the education of the young and their attempts either to inculcate or mould children, he accepts the interference of the socialist state in children's education and even recommends the inculcation of socialist beliefs and creed in children:

Modern governments must therefore inculcate these beliefs and disbeliefs, or at least see that they are inculcated somehow; or they cannot carry on. . . . [A] Socialist Government must equally inculcate whatever doctrine will make the sovereign people good Socialists. . . . Society is impossible unless the individuals who compose it have the same beliefs as to what is right and wrong in commonplace conduct. . . . The social creed must be imposed on us when we are children. (*Intelligent* 423-27)

Of course, the beliefs and disbeliefs Shaw is referring to here are those which are consistent with his own. Shaw thus believes in the importance of inculcating the members of social groups and institutions so that they could be established and maintained. He even uses words like ‘must,’ ‘inculcate,’ and ‘impose’ several times when he discusses socialism and children. However, he refuses to apply the same rule to the family, which confirms his desire to discard it all together. Shaw’s advocacy of the socialist cause and the socialist state’s interference in the education of the young are also manifested in words such as, ‘the Socialist State . . . will teach’ and ‘a Socialist State will not allow its children to be taught’ (424). Shaw in his socialist utopia makes children the property of the state and gives the socialist state full authority to educate them and inculcate its beliefs in them while he completely rejects the authority of parents and schoolmasters. Such a position is in conflict with the mood of the time, for in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, parental responsibility for the child’s upbringing and education was emphasised. Furthermore, the role of the father in the child’s upbringing and education was reinforced by common law at the time. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the father of a legitimate child ‘was entitled to exercise the authority to decide how a child should be educated, what religion he or she should observe, and so on’ (Cretney 566). Accordingly, Shaw’s idea that the parents should not interfere in their children’s education was perhaps an attack on the law at the time.

Jean Reynolds in ‘Education’ (2015) rightly argues that the ‘tension between the intellectual freedom he [Shaw] espoused and the social structure he endorsed is yet another example of the far-ranging (and sometimes contradictory) ideas that shaped Shaw’s thinking’ (271). Shaw’s paradoxes and contradictions are perhaps

due to his experimentation with theories of education and social change. Moreover, Shaw's concern for the education of the young seems to stem from his belief that it is a tool for social change, which anticipates some modern educational reformers, such as John Dewey and Maria Montessori (Reynolds 265).

Many of Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings deal with the education and bringing up of children. However, this topic has generally been overlooked by critics. Not only that but, as David Clare points out in his recent book *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (2016), there is a 'current tendency to overlook or marginalize Shaw in scholarly works on twentieth-century drama and Irish Studies' (5). It was the neglect of Shaw and of children in critical studies of Shaw and Shaw's ambivalent attitudes towards the family and children that triggered my interest in this particular topic. It should be noted that this thesis is not an attempt to resolve the ambivalence or the ambiguity in Shaw; as Mr. Tarleton's statement in *Misalliance* declares: 'Difficult question this, of bringing up children. Between ourselves, it has beaten me' (4: 145). The thesis is, rather, an attempt to understand the role of the family and children in Shaw, and what the parent-child relationship in Shaw's drama means and represents, especially in Shaw's early and middle plays. As Barbara M. Fisher points out: 'The parent-child relation is central to Shaw from *Mrs Warren's Profession* to *Heartbreak House*' (200), that is, Shaw's plays written in the pre-war period. My thesis examines Shaw's plays in the context of his other writings not vice versa. Therefore, it would be convenient to explore first children in Shaw's non-dramatic writings, and then to examine children in Shaw's plays and critical studies.

Children in Shavian Non-dramatic Writings

It is important to examine the way in which Shaw deals with children in his prose writings since the prose is used in this thesis as context for the plays. Because of Shaw's concern for the family and the education of children, the majority of Shaw's non-dramatic writings show his advocacy of children's rights and his preoccupation with how children should be reared and educated. Shaw's major prose writings about children are: 'The Best Books for Children' (1887), 'Treatise on Parents and Children' (1914), 'Socialism and Children' in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928), *Doctors' Delusions Crude Criminology and Sham*

Education (1931), and *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944). Whereas those works constitute the basis of Shaw's ideas about the young, his ideas about children and parent-child relationships can still be pursued through the study of his other works from different genres, such as personal letters, music criticism, drama criticism, and plays. This thesis explores children in Shaw's writings, and consequently explores the relation between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings. It should be noted that some of Shaw's prose writings, specifically *The Intelligent Woman's Guide*, *Doctors' Delusions*, and *Everybody's Political*, postdate the plays discussed in this thesis. Nonetheless, they are important in representing where Shaw eventually gets to in his thinking about the family and education, and thus are worth examining. By the time Shaw wrote *Everybody's Political*, his position in relation to the family and education became fixed, but not entirely clear. His earlier texts were much more flexible, fluid, and experimental. Therefore, my purpose in this thesis is to deal with the non-dramatic writings, which may have informed our sense of Shaw since his death, as a critical and ideological context for the dramatic writings regardless of their chronological order.

Shaw's first prose work, *My Dear Dorothea: A Practical System of Moral Education for Females Embodied in a Letter to a Young Person of That Sex*, written in 1878, shortly after his arrival in London, but only published in 1956, is his major prose work for children. At the time the work was written, there was a growing concern over the treatment of children, and for the first time they had a legal right to good treatment from their parents. Parents were required by law to provide their children with proper education and health care. Forster's Education Act of 1870 provides an example of legislation which makes education for children compulsory. In 1884, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) was founded. Thus, the parent-child relationship took on a legal dimension and was increasingly a public issue rather than a private matter. By this time, Shaw had not yet become a socialist, but *My Dear Dorothea* reflects his radicalism and sympathy with women and children and his awareness of their disadvantages. Modelled on George Augustus Sala's *Lady Chesterfield's Letters to Her Daughter*, which Shaw had read in 1877 (Holroyd, One-Volume 44), *My Dear Dorothea* combines a traditional form with a radical content. As the title indicates, it is a didactic treatise written in the form of a letter to an imaginary five-year-old girl, Dorothea. In

addressing the Victorian girl, Shaw is approaching the problem of oppression, inequalities, and hypocrisy in Victorian England. What is more, the letter shows ‘Shaw’s early vision of women as a rebellious class’ (Watson 41).

Playing the dual roles of parent and teacher, Shaw advises the little girl on how to educate and improve herself, what she may expect from others, and how to treat others and behave in her own right. Shaw seems to inculcate Dorothea, and his readers in general, with values such as independence, free will, and self-sufficiency. The particular combination of them and the way they are advocated make them distinctively something that only Shaw would advocate in such a persuasive and instructive way; added to this is the fact that Shaw is emphasising them in relationship with girls at that time. By advising Dorothea to read whatever she likes even if she is ‘told that [a] book is not fit for’ her, Shaw encourages Dorothea to exercise her free will and to develop independence in learning (22). Shaw also encourages Dorothea to be independent in thinking: ‘Let your rule of conduct always be to do whatever is best for you. . . . I will tell you some of the qualities which you must especially strive to teach yourself’ (25-44). The qualities Shaw believed children should possess are: ‘self-control,’ ‘patience,’ and ‘politeness’ (44-47). Shaw also warns Dorothea against practices that are destructive to the human character, such as ‘hypocrisy’ and ‘tyranny’—two practices Shaw very much despised (35, 48). However, these are only aspirations, not methods. Shaw has no plan or project to teach children to be independent and free thinkers.

In her analysis of *My Dear Dorothea*, Laura Tahir argues that in the letter Shaw attempts to ‘provoke’ Dorothea ‘with the concerns he struggled with himself,’ and concludes that the work reflects Shaw’s ‘recent youth and foreshadow[s] later Shavian themes’ (14, 18). The letter indeed shows the stimulating, polemical, and provocative style which features in Shaw’s writings. Not only that but it also reflects his most recurrent ideas regarding the education of the young, which, as already mentioned, revolve around autonomy and self-directed learning. As Stephen Winsten notes in his afterword to *My Dear Dorothea*: ‘Most of the conclusions arrived at stayed with him [Shaw] for the remainder of a long and active life, and if we were not aware of the fact that it was written in 1878, we might have been deceived into thinking that he was quoting his own plays and prefaces’ (54). Winsten is quite right

in this respect as there are some instances in which Shaw seems to be consistent in his ideas throughout his non-dramatic writings. These instances include Shaw's views of the ineffectiveness of formal or official education, and how it is a means for the 'imprisonment' of children, and of the importance of maintaining children's rights and liberties in education. It will be shown here and throughout the whole thesis that those ideas recur several times in Shaw's non-dramatic writings from *My Dear Dorothea* to *Everybody's Political What's What?*

'The Best Books for Children,' written in 1887, is Shaw's first essay solely about children. It was written for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in response to a series of articles on children's books. However, it was cut by the editors to one paragraph and published as 'A Batch of Books for Boys,' while the rest of the essay has remained unpublished. By this time, Shaw had already become a socialist and member of the Fabian Society, and was so active that in 1887 alone he gave sixty-six public lectures (Holroyd, One-Volume 110). The mid-1880s was one of the hardest periods of his life due to his failure to write successful novels and the fact that it was a time of unemployment, distress, and social unrest in Victorian Britain (Harvey 164). Therefore, in order to support himself, he started a career in journalism, writing reviews for *The World* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but maintaining an involvement in socialist activities which aimed to gradually transform Britain and promote social change. In 'The Best Books for Children,' Shaw explains the great effect of reading books on children, and reflects on his own childhood experience of reading. He explains how he was lucky to be allowed to read anything he liked despite some attempts made by his 'aunts and others who had views about little children' to interfere in his reading choices (25). He claims that he cannot conceive such people 'as having ever been children themselves' (25). This, together with his advice to Dorothea to read whatever she likes, suggests that Shaw's childhood and boyhood experiences might have an impact on his writings. Based on the books he had read himself in his childhood and boyhood, Shaw puts the names of the highly recommended books in a list with two columns: The first column includes the best books for a child, which are *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Immoral Fairy Tales*, *The Ancient Mariner*, *John Gilpin*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. The second column includes the best books for a boy, which are *The King of the*

Mountains, Robinson Crusoe, The Scalp Hunters, The Ingoldsby Legends, Don Quixote, Homer, Sigurd the Volsung, The Waverley Novels, and The Novels of Dumas. Shaw's conclusion is that 'second rate fiction is good enough for grown-up people, but that first rate fiction is needed for children' (27). Shaw argues that those first rate literary works 'will teach the future man how to dream' (28). The role of dreaming in Shaw's socialist utopian vision will be discussed in chapter three.

The period between 1889 and 1914 witnessed the transition from Victorian to modern Britain. The unsettlement of the 1880s and 1890s continued until 1914, and during this period 'the nation was divided on the nature of the eternal social, religious and political certainties' (Harrison 209). When Shaw wrote his 'Treatise on Parents and Children' (1914), his major and most important prose work about children and their education, he had already established himself as a prominent playwright and politician and an amateur eugenicist. Written in the form of a lengthy essay, it is one of Shaw's longest prefaces, in which the content is different and independent from the play, *Misalliance* (1910). As a matter of fact, most of Shaw's prefaces were written after and independent from the plays to which they are attached. In *Thirty Years with G.B.S.*, Blanche Patch, Shaw's secretary, writes:

His prefaces, as he explained to one playgoer, were essays, quite independent of the plays, written when their subject was too large to be fully dealt with on the stage; and it was nonsense to think that they were meant for playgoers to read before the plays could be understood. (54)

Although the subject of children and education is both broad and important, which might justify the length of the 'Treatise on Parents and Children,' it could be said that the length of the preface is sometimes due to Shaw's prolix style more than the breadth and importance of the subject. As G. K. Chesterton notes in his biography of Shaw: 'From first to last Bernard Shaw has been nothing but a conversationalist. . . . [H]e does to some extent talk in order to find out what he thinks. . . . Bernard Shaw offered himself to the world with only one great qualification, that he could talk honestly and well' (225). Shaw would always have more to say about a particular topic than he could express in his plays, whether in terms of words, ideas, arguments, or theories.

Shaw's preface to *Misalliance* is not entirely different from the play. There are some similarities between the two in terms of their subject matter. Both reinforce children's rights and liberties and encourage their independence from their parents as well as their exploration of the world outside the parental home in order to gain experience that will facilitate their learning and self-development. Moreover, both deal with the subject of parental authority and conventional family life and their effects on children. However, the preface focuses more on the education of children than does the play; the play's main theme is the relations between parents and children. In the *Treatise*, Shaw claims that 'we cannot completely educate a child; for its education can end only with its life and will not even then be complete. Compulsory completion of education is the last folly of a rotten and desperate civilization' (66). This statement wraps up the most important points discussed in the 'Treatise on Parents and Children': first, education should not be imposed on children, for it is a natural and spontaneous process. Second, education is a never-ending process. Third, compulsory, or traditional, education produces weak individuals and fragile civilisations.

Similar to Shaw's 'Treatise on Parents and Children,' 'Socialism and Children' in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide* discusses children's rights and education. It indicates Shaw's concern about the treatment of the young and their right to liberty. However, unlike the *Treatise*, it was written after the First World War. Shaw starts this section with a brief discussion of the law's intervention in the relationships between parents and children. He acknowledges the effectiveness of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in reducing the number of cases in which children needed protection against their parents by making it difficult for parents to avoid seeing 'the school attendance officer, the teacher, and the police' for fear of punishment if they did not (412). Nonetheless, he expresses his concern over giving the custody of children back to their abusive or neglectful parents, after their punishment. As John A. Bertolini observes, this is one of the main problems that welfare authorities of the twentieth century have to deal with, 'and Shaw's alertness to it in 1928 shows his familiarity with current social problems as well as his prescience' (148). Having briefly discussed the treatment of children by their parents, Shaw moves on to the 'institutional treatment of children' which is 'murderous for infants and bad for all children' (413). By that he means the

treatment of children in school. Children's schooling and education constitutes the vast majority of 'Socialism and Children.' Shaw again raises the issue of the imprisonment of children in schools for which, in his view, both the government and the parents are responsible. Shaw claims that the existing school education system is merely a 'pretext under which parents get rid of the trouble of their children' (413). However, in contrast to 'Parents and Children,' the subject of schooling and education is discussed within the context of socialism. Not only does Shaw here criticise the education system in the way he does in 'Parents and Children,' but he also expresses his hopes for a change in that system under socialism: 'Nobody [under socialism] who had not a genuine vocation for teaching would adopt teaching as a profession' (415). This is only one example of many instances where Shaw makes a distinction between the failed anti-socialist education system and a (hopefully) successful socialist education system.

Doctors' Delusions Crude Criminology and Sham Education (1931) and *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944) go more deeply into the subject of children's rights and education. Both books were published in the last three decades of Shaw's life, which were characterised by political instability and the brutality of the totalitarian regimes. During this period, Shaw, reacting under the pressures of his desperation, increasingly became convinced that society could not be transformed by democracy, but by revolution. This ultimately led to his admiration (later withdrawn) of Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler, whose inhumane experiments he had defended. Despite his new radical outlook and his preoccupation with political and economic matters, the subject of the family and education was still important and relevant to his discussion.

Sham Education discusses what is wrong with the criminal law, education, and the family, with children as the nexus between the three. In Shaw's view, the law 'fail[s] to protect children from the most detestable forms of molestation' (234). In addition, Shaw views society, school, and family as prisons:

The vast majority of our city populations are inured to imprisonment from their childhood. The school is a prison. The office and the factory are prisons. The home is a prison. To the young who have the

misfortune to be what is called well brought up it is sometimes a
prison of inhuman severity. (174)

The argument stated above is not new and can be found in a number of Shaw's non-dramatic writings, mostly in *Sham Education* and 'The State and the Children' in *Everybody's Political*. It is one of the most frequently recurring ideas in Shaw's writings that the home and the public school are prisons and that the latter is a means for the parents to get rid of their children. In *Sham Education*, Shaw asserts:

[T]here is the fact that education is mostly a pretext under cover of which parents get rid of their duties and escape from the noise, the dirt, the unconscious chaperonage, the perpetual questioning of children. . . . I have alleged, and do still allege, that it is not a system of education but a cloak for something else. And that something else is the sequestration and imprisonment of children so as to prevent them being a continual nuisance to their parents. (291, 321)

What Shaw mostly criticises in school, besides being a place where children are confined to particular spaces controlled by adults, is the schoolmasters' attempts to break the will of children and beat them for the purpose of teaching. 'The schoolmaster,' Shaw says, 'establishes a child prison . . . and covers up the essential cruelty and unnaturalness of the situation by torturing the children if they do not learn, and calling this process . . . by the sacred name of Teaching' (323). Shaw claims that every teacher and educationalist, including Dr. Maria Montessori, knows that, but he was 'the only person who ever mentions it' (323). After criticising the existing education system, Shaw talks about the system he recommends for educating children. He proposes self-education which involves 'tak[ing] advantage of the voluntary associations, the Summer Schools, the professional societies, the propagandist organizations' as well as free or liberal education in which 'young people are as free to walk out of a classroom where they are bored by a dull teacher as grown-up people are to walk out of a theatre where they are bored by a dull playwright' (324-25). There is an implicit comparison here between teacher and playwright, which supports the idea already mentioned that Shaw might be using his plays for an educational purpose, to activate his teachings and put them into practice.

In *Everybody's Political*, Shaw continues his criticism of the education system, and his advocacy of free or liberal education that will, according to him, produce free and 'really educated persons in England' and will result in the 'disappearance of a mass of corruptly inculcated error and obsolescence' (*Sham* 324). This time he gives more details on how to make education liberating and constructive for children. 'What the child needs,' Shaw argues, 'is not only a school and an adult home, but a child world of which it can be a little citizen, with laws, rights, duties and recreations suited to childish abilities and disabilities' (69). Moreover, Shaw claims that '[h]omes, families, and schools should not be workhouses and prisons as well. Children should be educated to live more abundantly, not apprenticed to a life sentence of penal servitude' (177). Thus by 1944, it was still fundamental to Shaw's argument and discussion that children should be free and their rights should be maintained. As he points out, 'children should live in an organized society with rights and constitutions, and be brought up neither as household pets nor as chattel slaves' (*Everybody's* 177). Taking all the above into account, it is evident that Shaw regarded children's rights as paramount; something he believed in and advocated throughout his long life and consistently across his writings.

Children in Shavian and other Dramatic Writings

The purpose of this section is to summarise and contextualise Shaw's dramatic representation of children, and to show the connections between the treatment of children in Shaw and in other plays at the time. This should lead to a better understanding of Shaw's distinctive portrayal of children in his plays. On the other hand, the relationship between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings is complex and cannot be easily defined. Shaw's plays do not show his campaigning for children's rights nor do they raise awareness of children's rights in the way his non-dramatic writings do, although he strongly believed in the didactic purpose of drama, as a letter to Ellen Terry in 1899 reveals: '[I]t is clear that I have nothing to do with the theatre of to-day: I must educate a new generation with my pen from childhood up—audience, actors and all' (*Collected Letters* 2: 97). Shaw here makes a distinction between audience and actors, which implies that they both need to be educated. It also implies that he is going to use the actors to influence and educate

the audience as well. Moreover, Shaw's choice of the 'pen' as an instrument for education, even though he acknowledges in his commentary on Edward Shanks' 'The Printed Play' (1923) that 'the pen and the *viva vox* are different instruments [for playwrights]' (qtd. in West 166), raises another important point that needs to be made explicit. While there are differences between the printed and acted versions of the plays, this thesis takes the former as the main object of analysis. This is because my study deals with comparing texts with texts so that Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings are examined in terms of their content, style, structure, and interpretation.

Shaw's belief in the educational purpose of art is also reflected in the preface to *Pygmalion* (1912), in which Shaw admits that he has 'deliberately' made *Pygmalion* didactic: 'It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else' (773). If one excludes the possibility that Shaw may be deliberately provocative here, then it can be argued that for Shaw art, and drama in particular, is a means to an end, not necessarily an end in itself. Furthermore, if we assume that Shaw took playwriting seriously and meant it to be more instructive than entertaining, it will be worth exploring how he is using the figure of the child as well as the parent-child relationships in his plays, and what they represent.

In a time when the figure of the child and parent-child relationships were used as a mirror of reality and/or as metaphors for social issues, Shaw followed a different path in his drama. His representation of children in his plays seems like a departure from the stereotypical representation of children in late-Victorian literature as weak, suppressed, and neglected. In other words, Shaw's treatment of children, whether young or old, differs from that of his contemporaries. The works of Charles Dickens, though they are early and mid-Victorian, are worth mentioning in this context for their focus on children and their influence on Shaw, especially Shaw's views of the education of children. They represent abuses against Victorian children through the portrayal of orphans, such as *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Pip*, and others. The children are depicted as the victims of the wrongs of the social and

educational systems. Other Victorian writers, on the other hand, use children to raise questions and issues, for example, about marriage, maternity, or parental responsibility. In *Alan's Wife* (1893) by Elizabeth Robins and Florence Bell, a disabled baby is murdered by its mother. The murder of the baby is used in the play to raise important questions about maternity and disability. Similarly, the crippling of Eyolf and his death by drowning in Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* (1894) raises questions about parental responsibility. In August Strindberg's *The Pelican* (1907), the children of the mother have grown up weak and sick because their mother did not nurture them well when they were young. Even when they are adults, their mother continues to destroy their lives, leading to their emotional as well as physical death. The play challenges the traditional role of the mother by portraying her as an unnatural mother and depicting the suffering and death of her offspring. Thus, the children in the works of Shaw's contemporaries suffer to serve the playwright's argument, unlike Shaw's children, as will shortly be explained.

As a social reformer, Shaw could have represented children in a way that is similar to that of his contemporaries in order to raise public awareness and provoke social action. But Shaw instead wrote plays that do not show the logical repercussion of his position as a social reformer and an advocate of children's rights. Furthermore, he did not often write parts for young children in his plays. The youngest on-stage characters are Essie, aged about sixteen, in *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), Ptolemy, aged ten, in *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898), and John of Gaunt, aged seven, in *The Six of Calais* (1934). Both Essie and Ptolemy are represented as parentless. John of Gaunt, on the other hand, appears with his parents, but, like Essie, he plays only a minor role in the play. The offspring in Shaw's plays are strong and able to survive in spite of any social or parental inadequacies. They do not have to die in order to serve Shaw's argument, or, for example, prove his point that parents are the worst guardians of children (Holroyd, *One-Volume* 6), and that 'motherhood is not every woman's vocation' (qtd. in Holroyd, *Body Politic* 19). Furthermore, while the future of the offspring in Robins and Bell's *Alan's Wife* and Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881) is determined by the mothers who are confronted with a choice between ending their children's lives or letting them live with a disability, Shaw's children are the ones who determine their own destiny; and being able to do this is precisely their achievement.

This kind of engagement between theatre, the family, and social and scientific ideas is discussed in Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr's *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (2015). The book provides an invaluable discussion of the use of theatre to convey scientific, mainly evolutionary, ideas during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Shepherd-Barr's examination of Ibsen's and Shaw's treatment of evolution in their plays provides useful evidence of the differences in their dramatic representations of the parent-child relationships. Shepherd-Barr argues that 'it is through gender that Ibsen exerts the most profound impact on the subsequent treatment of evolution in drama,' and that 'the mothers' are Ibsen's primary vehicle for demonstrating his evolutionary ideas (67). This is true for Ibsen; however, it is the children rather than the mothers who seem to be Shaw's primary vehicle for discussing his views, especially those on evolution. Still, as Shepherd-Barr correctly argues, children in Ibsen represent an aspect of evolution, which is that of 'extinction.' Shepherd-Barr relates Ibsen's representation of 'maimed or cursed' children as well as the death and disappearance of children in his plays to 'the idea of extinction' (79-80). This makes Shepherd-Barr consider Ibsen's view of human evolution as degenerative and regressive, as she states: 'Ibsen does not seem to see human evolution as progressive. Not only are we going "astray," but we are on a downward evolutionary trajectory, possibly heading for extinction' (78). It is clear, therefore, that Shaw's representation of strong, vital children has implications for his view of evolution as progressive and hopeful, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

Shepherd-Barr continues her discussion of the depiction of children in the works of Shaw's contemporaries. She explains how Ibsen in *Little Eyolf* and H. M. Harwood in *The Supplinters* (performed in 1913 as *The Interlopers*) depict children 'as interlopers in marriage' (180-81). For example, the mother in 'the draft version of *Little Eyolf*,' as Shepherd-Barr notes, is annoyed by her husband's dedication to his son, 'fearing that she will be supplanted' (181). The children are, therefore, used to discuss issues related to maternity, children's rights, and most importantly, 'the proper place of children within families' (Shepherd-Barr 181). Shepherd-Barr also shows how children are used in nineteenth-century plays, including those of Ibsen and Robins, to discuss 'reproductive issues' (180-202). Shaw's dramatic treatment of parents and children is, however, not part of this discussion. This is perhaps due to

Shepherd-Barr's focus on young children and her awareness that they seldom appear in Shaw's plays. Shepherd-Barr argues that in Shaw's plays, 'there is a gap between woman's compulsion to reproduce and the natural result of this drive; we are shown only the former' (143). Speaking from Shaw's evolutionary perspective, what Shepherd-Barr describes as 'the natural result of this [evolutionary] drive' would be the 'Superman,' a genetically-improved child. The idea that the Superman does not appear in Shaw's plays will be discussed in chapter two, and Shaw's exclusion of young children from his plays will be elaborated upon in chapter four.

In addition to being different from his contemporaries in his representation of children, Shaw appears to be inconsistent or self-contradictory in terms of his own views. This can be seen when comparing the only play he wrote for children, *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), with his ideas about the education of children and the best books they should read. Shaw asserts: 'I wrote *Androcles and the Lion* partly to show Barrie how a play for children should be handled' (Pearson, *Bernard* 300), for J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, in Shaw's view, is too childish. *Androcles and the Lion* is Shaw's direct intervention in the question of the education and bringing up of children. Yet, it does not provide a good example of what children should be taught, and what children's literature should be like from the Shavian perspective.

Moreover, the play can hardly be considered a 'first rate fiction,' compared to what is recommended for children in Shaw's 'The Best Books for Children.' Whereas Shaw in this essay recommends some literary works that 'will teach the future man how to dream' (28), *Androcles and the Lion* does not seem to teach the audience how to dream nor does it explain whether the slaves—Ferrovius, Androcles, Lavinia, and other Christians—are saved at the end of the play by being true Christians or by having other qualities, such as Ferrovius' ability to fight, Androcles' ability to tame animals, and Lavinia's beauty. As Charles A. Berst notes in *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Drama*: 'The Christians are saved not by virtue but by temporarily pleasing the mob. . . . In a spiritual sense the happiness at the end is bogus: if the Christians' cause has gained ground, it has not gained on its own merit' (194). Accordingly, it can be said that the play serves the entertaining purpose of drama, but fails to serve a real educational purpose. As Hesketh Pearson notes in his biography of Shaw: 'Doubtless the children would have thoroughly enjoyed it, but

unfortunately the grown-ups . . . considered the play blasphemous, and instead of foisting it on their offspring forbade them to see it' (300). Considering the play as forbidden for children does not make it the ideal play for children, as Shaw intended it to be, nor does it make it a 'first rate' fiction unless this is all part of Shaw's provocation. Moreover, this could be related to Shaw's idea that children, rather than their parents, should make decisions about what to read and should educate themselves, as he tells Dorothea earlier that she could read everything, including books that are classified as 'not fit' for her: 'If you are told that any book is not fit for you to read, get it and read it when nobody is looking. . . . [A]ll books are fit for you' (22).

Arguably, Shaw's plays are best understood when considered within the context of his other writings rather than within the theatrical context of the time. Using the topic of children as an example, this thesis will explore Shaw's own understanding of the role of drama, how Shaw's ideas function across his different types of writings, and whether the relation between the ideas expressed in his dramatic and non-dramatic writings is one of contradiction, similarity, or development.

Critical Studies of Shaw and Children

To the best of my knowledge, only two works directly address children in Shaw, both of which are theses: Steven W. Orvis' *Children's Rights as an Aspect of Creative Evolution in the Plays of Bernard Shaw* (1978) and Grace Matchett's *The Relationship of Parents and Children in the English Domestic Plays of George Bernard Shaw* (1990). Orvis addresses the overlooking of Shavian ideas regarding children in critical studies of Shaw and asserts that 'few critics demonstrate an awareness of Shaw's interest in or attitude toward children' (1). Although such an observation was made in 1978, things have not much changed since then. Orvis attributes this 'neglect' to the fact that actual children do not feature in Shaw's work, and thus will not likely attract the attention of critics (2). This may justify the neglect of Shaw's representation of children in his plays, but it still does not justify the neglect of Shaw's views on the young as presented in his non-dramatic writings.

Orvis argues that '[b]y advocating the rights of children, Shaw worked, in part, to implement th[e] egalitarian ideal,' and that 'Shaw, by advocating respect for the child's integrity, assists th[e] evolutionary process' (4). Shaw was clearly an advocate of children's rights, and, of course, there is a strong connection between children and Shaw's political and evolutionary views, as my study will demonstrate; however, the connection between children's rights and Shaw's evolutionary theory as well as between them and his plays is not obvious. Orvis takes the relation between children's rights and Shaw's Creative Evolution, in which the driving force behind evolution and the production of a superior race is the will, almost as a matter of course. It seems, however, that there is no clear relation between the two, for in Shaw's evolutionary theory children are viewed as experiments and a means to an end. Their importance mostly lies in their function as facilitators of progress and as the hope of the future. Orvis, however, claims that Shaw's plays represent children's rights, whereas, in my view, the plays do not seem to represent children's rights in a general sense. Rather, some of the works represent the role of children as instruments of the Life Force, or more generally, as agents of progress portraying them as passively submissive to the will of the Life Force and unable to resist its power, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. Nevertheless, I agree with Orvis that one should include in the discussion adult offspring too as 'the ideas embodied in the presentations of these mature parent-child relationships can be shown to reflect Shaw's attitude toward parents and children in general' (3). Thus, my study is similar to Orvis' in that it examines those plays by Shaw which represent both young and adult offspring, but differs from it in that my study tends to explore the relation between Shaw's plays and his own political and evolutionary ideas, including his own perception of children's rights, rather than the relation between his plays and/or his views and children's rights per se. My study examines Shaw's utopian vision of children's rights to total freedom and independence considering it different from modern views of children's rights, which recognise children's rights to freedom and independence but at the same time recognise the need to help children be free and independent and be protected and nurtured (Cipriani 31). Therefore, there is a paradox at the heart of Shaw's ideas concerning children's rights, which is contrary to what Orvis' study suggests. Allowing children to experience absolute freedom and free will could create a nation of egoists. Shaw's

plays discussed in this thesis show him to be ambivalent about nurturing qualities, and to value more the energy and revisionist possibilities embodied by the egoist.

Grace Matchett takes a different approach in her analysis of Shaw's domestic plays. Matchett examines Shaw's treatment of the parent-child relationship in his plays as well as in his novels in the light of the biographical, sociological, and theatrical influences on Shaw which made his treatment of the parent-child relationship, as Matchett claims, a major theme of his earliest dramatic works. Thus, Matchett's study focuses more on Shaw's ideas about the relationships between parents and children as represented in his fictional and dramatic works than on the presentation of those ideas in Shaw's non-literary works. It is worth noting that the exclusion of Shaw's novels in my study is due to their length, as they deserve to be discussed in their own right, and to their being less instrumental, less didactic, and less successful than the plays. Michael Holroyd suggests that Shaw failed as a novelist because of his 'artistic immaturity' (*Immature Novelist* 213). Taking Shaw's treatment of parents and children in his plays as the basis of her discussion, Matchett divides the plays examined into the following categories and discusses them accordingly: single parents, the return of the absent parent, substitute parents, and happy families.

Before she attempts to examine Shaw's domestic plays, Matchett considers the extent to which Shaw may have been influenced by his own family life and childhood experiences and by the social and theatrical context at the time:

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. (29)

Shaw's 'dramatic models,' Matchett suggests, are the nineteenth-century melodramatists and Henrik Ibsen. Although I tend to agree with Matchett that the views of Shaw's contemporaries, mainly Ibsen, might have influenced Shaw's ideas and his own work, the influence is more noticeable in Shaw's representation of the

New Woman than in his representation of children. A good example is the similarity between Ibsen's portrayal of Nora in *A Doll's House* (1879) and Shaw's portrayal of some 'Ibsenite' new women such as Grace Tranfield in *The Philanderer* (1893), Vivie Warren in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1894), and Lina Szczepanowska in *Misalliance*. As I have mentioned earlier, Shaw's dramatic children are quite different from those of Ibsen; they are stronger, more resilient, and more active. Matchett notes this too, and elaborates on the contrast between Ibsen's children and Shaw's children, thus seeming to contradict what she has already said about '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' (38). The influence of Ibsen on Shaw can also be seen in Shaw's use of the 'discussion play,' in which the focus is on the dialogue rather than the plot and action. Shaw derived this form of drama from Ibsen and developed it in new directions. In so doing, Shaw was revolting against both nineteenth-century 'well-made' plays and melodramas. Thus, in contrast to Matchett's work, my study explores the relation between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings, and how Shaw is shedding new light on what a play is rather than merely 'borrowing from and adapting past and contemporary dramatic literature,' as Matchett has argued (29). Moreover, my study examines Shaw's representation of the parent-child relationships in the context of his other writings rather than in the biographical, sociological, or theatrical contexts. A final point of contrast is that unlike the structure of Matchett's work, this thesis classifies Shaw's plays according to theme.

Most Shavian critics have focused on the daughters in Shaw's plays. This is not surprising as the number of daughters in Shaw's plays outweighs the number of sons. Like the majority of Shaw's dramatic children, the daughters are portrayed as strong and active. They make their own choices and do what they assume to be right, regardless of their parents' preferences. J. Ellen Gainor in *Shaw's Daughters: Dramatic and Narrative Constructions of Gender* (1991) and Lagretta Tallent Lenker in *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (2001) focus on Shaw's dramatic daughters and their relationship with their fathers. Their analysis calls attention to the function of the father-daughter relationship, in particular, and the parent-child relationship, in general.

According to Gainor, the familial context and specifically the father-daughter relationship is used in Shaw's plays to address gender issues (160-61). While Gainor offers a comprehensible analysis of the father-daughter relationship in Shaw, she overlooks the mother-child relationship, although she claims that 'Shaw demonstrates the sense of both paternal and maternal creativity in his work,' and that 'the indeterminacy of his function—sometimes father, sometimes mother, sometimes both, with a tension between sole creativity and enforced collaboration—informs the dramas' (160). Gainor thus admits the importance of the role of the mother in Shaw, yet she neglects this aspect of Shaw's drama. Alternatively, she informs the reader of 'the frequency of multiple father figures in the plays and the absence of dominant, let alone multiple mothers' (197). Some examples of important mother figures in Shaw's plays that will be discussed in this thesis include Mrs. Warren in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Mrs. Clandon in *You Never Can Tell* (1896), Lady Britomart in *Major Barbara* (1905), and Mrs. Knox in *Fanny's First Play* (1911). Not only are those figures important in themselves, but also in their relationships with their daughters.

Like Gainor, Lenker stresses the important role of the father-daughter relationship in Shaw, and the way it is used to 'interrogate gender, generational, and familial issues' (44). Lenker tries to cover as many as possible of Shaw's plays (she examines nineteen plays), but fails to give the subject its due. She argues that 'Shaw's daughters . . . are complex creations that, under the code of functional ambiguity, subvert as well as educate and redeem. . . . [D]aughters are the agents of his [Shaw's] literary terror' (168). Yet, she does not foreground the complexity and ambiguity of Shaw's representation of the daughters, and only briefly discusses the way in which Shavian daughters act as a tool for subversion, education, and redemption. Nevertheless, Lenker suggests an interesting and important link between Shaw's daughters and his ideas, an idea I will develop more fully in this study: 'Shaw's daughters become the dramatic vehicle for discussion of his ideas' (167). She argues that the resemblance between Shaw and his dramatic daughters 'is ideological, not biological,' for they 'represent not their literary parent but the ideas that provide the heart of his drama' (167). Lenker, however, does not elaborate on this important point. As in the case of Gainor's study, Lenker overlooks the mother

and son figures, though they are important for the understanding of Shaw's ideas and plays.

Therefore, this study goes beyond the frequent examination of Shaw's portrayal of the relations between men and women, fathers and daughters, and the exploration of his feminist sympathies by examining the relationships between parents (both fathers and mothers) and children (both daughters and sons) in his plays. My approach is similar to Lenker's in that I attempt to explore the family relationships that are represented in Shaw's plays, and, most importantly, what they mean, but in more detail and covering a wider range of Shaw's views and the family relationships. However, whereas Lenker argues that Shaw 'exploit[s] the metaphoric possibilities of that [the father-daughter] relationship' (44), my thesis views the parent-child relationship in Shaw's plays not as a 'metaphor,' but rather as a metonymic relationship, with the part (the family) standing for the whole (society), as will be demonstrated throughout the chapters.

This thesis draws the readers' attention to the relation between Shaw's progressive views, especially those on social progress, evolution, education, and his drama. My choice of these particular themes is in part inspired by Charles A. Carpenter's division, in *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Destroying Ideals* (1969), of Shaw's developmental or evolutionary programme into three phases: the first phase is that of 'destroy[ing] ideals'; the second is that of 'cultivat[ing] the intellect'; and the third is that of 'implant[ing] ideas' (13). Carpenter, a major Shaw critic, describes the first phase as 'ground-clearing' because it clears the way for the will and intellect (13). It involves the destruction of ideals and everything that 'obstructs the fulfillment of the will' (12). When the intellect becomes free, it needs to be supplied with materials 'with which to formulate the higher modes of life that the will hints at and campaigns for' (12). According to Carpenter, these materials, which are essential to the strength and efficiency of the brain and its working as 'an instrument of the will,' are 'ideas' (12-13). The third phase involves ideas 'intruding themselves into the mind and implanting themselves there, with or without man's conscious consent' (12). It can be said, therefore, that the first phase is concerned with destruction, while the second and the third phases are concerned with construction.

Although Carpenter divides Shaw's evolutionary programme into three stages and thus provides a suggestive way of approaching Shaw, he focuses his discussion on the first stage only, represented in Shaw's early plays up to *Man and Superman* (1902). Carpenter explains in detail how Shaw, in the early period of his dramatic career, was preoccupied with the destruction of ideals that stand in the way of his Fabian Socialism. Those ideals, as Carpenter observes, are of two different types: 'social ideals [which] pertain to the institutional structure of society' and 'moral ideals [which] pertain to human conduct' (210-11). To illustrate, an example of the first type of ideals can be seen in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, which will be discussed in chapter one. *Mrs Warren's Profession* addresses social and economic issues related to prostitution and capitalism. The play attacks capitalism and views prostitution as one of its evils, and at the same time undermines the institution of marriage because, under capitalism, it also involves exploitation of women. According to Carpenter, the ideal Shaw is attacking in this play is the understanding of capitalism as 'the best economic system' (19). An example of the second type of ideals can be found in *The Devil's Disciple*, which will be discussed in chapter one as well. Carpenter argues that Shaw in this play attacks the romanticised and 'stereotyped motives of heroism' by substituting 'natural motives' (212). Carpenter argues that Shaw's middle plays, starting from *Man and Superman*, mark the change in Shaw's attention from 'remov[ing] obstructing illusions' to 'creat[ing] new mind' (218). However, Carpenter does not examine the latter 'constructive' stage of Shaw's evolutionary program. Not only that but neither does Carpenter discuss what Shaw thought could obstruct social and human evolution other than ideals and illusions, nor does he discuss the family ideal—though Carpenter mentions in the introduction of his book that the view that 'the family is a natural and sacred institution' is one of 'Shaw's targets' (19).

Using Carpenter's study as the cornerstone of my own study, this thesis explores both the destructive and constructive role of parents and children in social and human evolution. The destructive role of the parent is demonstrated in chapters one and two, while the constructive role of the parent is demonstrated in chapter three. The children almost always play a constructive role in Shaw's plays. Shaw's attack on the family ideal is discussed in chapter four. While this thesis does examine Shaw's attack on some ideals, including duty and happy family life, the

parent-child relationship will be discussed in relation to Shaw's views on social progress, evolution, and education rather than mere ideals. This is because these are some of the most recurrent themes in Shaw's writings. Moreover, the parent-child relationship in most of Shaw's early and middle plays is represented within the context of these themes rather than the context of the rights of parents and/or children. Furthermore, taking into account Carpenter's division of Shaw's evolutionary doctrine into three phases, it can be argued that Shaw's views on social progress and evolution represent the first phase of destroying obstacles, as will be demonstrated in chapters one and two. But unlike Carpenter's study, this thesis classifies the obstacles to progress into external (for example, within society or another individual) and internal (within one's self) ones. Shaw's views on education represent cultivating the intellect phase, as chapter three will show. My study is similar to Carpenter's in that it is an attempt to approach Shaw and measure the development of his thinking and writings, but differs from it in that it examines both the early and middle period of Shaw's dramatic career and uses the parent-child relationship as the basis of discussion.

Like Carpenter, I use Shaw's own classification of his plays into early, middle, and late or third phase, as he remarks: 'all the great artists who have lived long enough have had a juvenile phase, a middle phase, and a Third Manner' (Carpenter 5). According to Carpenter, the first play of Shaw's middle phase is *Man and Superman*, and the first play of his 'Third Manner' is *Back to Methuselah* (1918-20). In *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theater* (1963), Martin Meisel suggests that these three phases parallel a shift in Shaw's 'thinking' and 'dramatic practice' (especially the latter), and divides Shaw's plays according to genre into: 'Melodrama, Discussion, and Extravaganza [which] are respectively emotional, discursive, and symbolic-analogic modes of the drama of ideas' (442-43). Both Meisel and Carpenter acknowledge the difficulty of determining the genre of a Shaw play. Carpenter, for instance, finds it difficult to classify Shaw's *Unpleasant Plays* and *Three Plays for Puritans*, in particular, according to popular genres, and admits that 'these plays embody innovations in form to the extent that both groups deserve recognition as new dramatic genres' (21). Indeed, this also applies to the group of Shaw's discussion plays, which includes *Major Barbara* and *Misalliance*. The innovation of this genre will be discussed throughout the chapters of this thesis.

Meisel argues that Shaw subverted the popular dramatic genres of the nineteenth century, or, as he puts it, ‘exploit[ed] a popular genre for revolutionary purposes’ (141). Thus, according to Meisel, what is innovative about Shaw is his ‘creation of a drama of ideas’ as well as his ‘exploitation of his immediate theatrical past’ (121). Both Shaw’s subversion and exploitation of drama, especially his use of drama as a vehicle for his ideas, are a major focus of this thesis.

Both Meisel and Carpenter are correct in suggesting that the three phases of Shaw’s plays correspond to shifts in his thinking. Shaw’s enthusiasm for the cause of children’s rights and for socialism and Creative Evolution is perhaps more apparent in his early and middle plays than in his later ones. It should be noted, however, that the relationship between Shaw’s socialism and Creative Evolution is complex, and so is the relationship between Shaw and socialism. Whilst the former will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, the latter has been discussed at length in James Alexander’s *Shaw’s Controversial Socialism* (2009). Alexander, a political scientist and a historian, describes Shaw’s socialism as ‘controversial . . . not only in the sense that it was partial, but in the sense that it was deliberately so’ (7). Furthermore, the fact that Shaw’s socialism was revolutionary, propagandist, and subversive, makes it unique, unsystematic, different, and less coherent than that of his fellow Fabians (Alexander 6-7). One can find tensions in Shaw’s political thought between Liberalism and Marxism, in particular between the former’s reformist position and the latter’s revolutionary position (Alexander 17), and between individualism and collectivism (Griffith 150). Moreover, Shaw in his rebellion against the established order employed different strategies, including both agitation and permeation, but almost always sought equality of income and human welfare, which could be described as the utopian goals of his socialist state.

As Clare suggests, Shaw’s socialism and Creative Evolution inform some of his views and plays (8-15). Furthermore, the change in Shaw’s political outlook and strategies is reflected in his plays. His early plays challenge the status quo, and reflect his radicalism and socialist enthusiasm. On the other hand, the middle plays reflect his disillusionment with Fabianism, and his shifting views regarding ‘world betterment’ and human progress. As a result of Shaw’s disillusionment during the 1890s with the revolutionary means of reforming society, he started to develop his

theory of Creative Evolution (Turco 119). In other words, Shaw turned to more gradual means, mainly evolution and education, to achieve human progress. It is worth noting that Shaw never seemed to abandon his socialism, as Alexander rightly points out, ‘Shaw remained committed to socialism to the end’ (Kent, *Context* 237). However, he was experimenting with different ways to achieve socialism and progress, and with different media to express his progressive ideas. Therefore, this thesis argues that evolution and education have a strong relation with Shaw’s socialism: both are a means to achieve socialism. Moreover, as Matthew Yde argues, ‘Shaw’s “eugenic utopianism” cannot be understood if his socialism and his creative evolution are divorced from one another’ (239). In addition to exploring this notion, the thesis considers whether Shaw was using drama, in general, and the family, in particular, as a vehicle for his views.

The instrumental or the educational function of drama is not exclusive to a specific period. However, it has been well recognised from the late-nineteenth century onwards (Jackson 1-2). Anthony Jackson in *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings: Art or Instrument?* (2007) deals with the educational role of theatre as a theoretical issue, and not just one relating to Shaw, focusing on the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. The book provides a study of ‘educational theatre’ in a broad sense focusing on works ‘in which the educational aims and claims are explicit or in which educational intent is clearly embodied’ (3). Jackson describes Shaw as one of the most prominent nineteenth-century pioneers of educational theatre, and one whose plays were educational ‘in intent,’ for Shaw believed that ‘[d]rama had a role to play in changing th[e] world; it had lessons to impart: moral, political, ideological’ (52-53). Jackson is certainly correct in suggesting that Shaw was more explicit than his contemporaries about the utilitarian role of drama. In 1895, Shaw contributed to a symposium on the question, ‘Should social problems be freely dealt with in the Drama?’, in which he stated:

[A] drama with a social question for the motive cannot outlive the solution of that question. . . . It must, however, be borne in mind that the huge size of modern populations and the development of the press make every social question more momentous than it was formerly. . . .

We are therefore witnessing a steady intensification in the hold of social questions on the larger poetic imagination. (qtd. in West 59-62)

Shaw then makes a distinction between drama which appeals to our aesthetic sense and drama which addresses social issues, showing approval of the latter: '*A Doll's House* will be as flat as ditchwater when *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will still be as fresh as paint; but it will have done more work in the world; and that is enough for the highest genius, which is always intensely utilitarian' (qtd. in West 63). Shaw's distinction between the two types of plays is essential to our understanding of his attitude towards the function of drama.

Similar to Jackson, Helen Nicholson in her book *Theatre, Education, and Performance* (2011) discusses the relation between theatre and education as well as the relation between theatre and social reform. Nicholson's study also covers the period from the late-nineteenth century to the twenty-first century. '[T]he end of the nineteenth century,' Nicholson argues, 'saw a far more radical alliance between theatre and social reform, in which the arts became associated with education, health, public morality and social cohesion' (20). Moreover, Nicholson argues that Matthew Arnold and William Morris are the two thinkers who best illuminate the integration of arts (including theatre), education, and social reform in the nineteenth century (22). In contrast to Jackson, Nicholson completely overlooks Shaw and his attempts to use theatre for educational purposes. Nevertheless, Nicholson provides a clue that Shaw may be one of those who were influenced by Matthew Arnold and William Morris during the 1890s, since it was in this period that Shaw was most convinced of the value of using drama for educational purposes: '[B]oth Arnold and Morris succeeded in linking arts education to social equality and personal fulfilment. It was this aspect of their work that captured the imaginations of the more radical educationalists and social reformists of the 1890s' (27). Shaw could be part of a movement that recognised the role of theatre in education and social reform, but what is distinctive about his plays is the way he uses the family and the function of the parent-child relationship in those plays.

Since this thesis is primarily concerned with Shaw and his writings, giving his dramatic and prose works equal importance, it contributes to our understanding of Shaw as both a political thinker and playwright. It also contributes to our

understanding of the function of drama and the representation of adult offspring in drama. This study shows that drama is not always meant solely to entertain, but could also have educational and even political purposes. The thesis examines the way Shaw is using different genres to express his political, evolutionary, and educational ideas. It then explores how those ideas are reflected in Shaw's dramatic representation of the parent-child relationship. It should be noted that some of Shaw's views on politics and eugenics, in particular, are radical and controversial, and took on a different dimension and meaning and turned into something much more troubling later in his career. As John R. Pfeiffer points out in 'Evolutionary Theory' (2015), 'Shaw's starry-eyed hope for a eugenically lifted ascent of the Superman would accompany his bizarre salute, eventually withdrawn, of Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini' (275). Therefore, rather than discussing the repercussions of the actions of those dictators, this thesis focuses on Shaw's political ideas expressed in the early and middle period of his career, and the way they were used in drama, within the family/education context, to provoke people and stimulate their thinking. It is not the business of this thesis to go beyond that arena. The thesis consists of four chapters. Each chapter examines two of Shaw's plays. The plays are discussed in chronological order as much as possible.

The first chapter discusses Shaw's advocacy of social reform by radical means in relation to the young and his experimentation with drama as a means of attacking society and promoting social change. The chapter explores Shaw's views on the rejection of duty and authority, and how Shaw saw the rebellion of the young against authority and duty as promising to pave the way for social change. Then, Shaw's progressive ideas regarding the independence of children and their rejection of authority as reflected in *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple* is examined. The chapter attempts to determine to what extent the child's rejection of the parent for Shaw is a kind of generational shift and a moment of development. The second chapter examines Shaw's thoughts on improving society by more gradual means, such as what he calls 'Creative Evolution.' The chapter also explores how children, in Shaw's view, could participate in this process. Next, it examines the way in which Shaw's dramatic children in *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman* act as instruments of the Life Force, that is, the driving power behind Creative Evolution, for creating the Superman.

The third chapter is an examination of Shaw's views of the education of the young as presented in his non-dramatic writings with special emphasis on the types, methods, and goals of such education for Shaw. The impact of the father-as-teacher role on the daughter in *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* is also explored. The chapter as a whole demonstrates Shaw's belief in the importance of education as a means for improving individuals and society. The final chapter concentrates on Shaw's views on the relations between parents and children as well as the family as a social institution, in addition to what has been already stated here on this subject. Then, it explores how those views are reflected in Shaw's representation of the parent-child relationships in *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play*, Shaw's only two plays in which the relationship between parents and children constitutes the main theme. The work of some distinguished modern Shavian critics, such as Eric Bentley, Charles A. Berst, Louis Crompton, and Bernard F. Dukore, will be considered in this thesis. Such critics have collectively considered Shaw as a prominent dramatic artist. However, my concern in this thesis is not to assess Shaw the dramatist or the philosopher, but to explore his drama in relation to his views expressed in his non-dramatic writings and see the extent to which he used drama to convey his ideas and philosophies.

Chapter One

Children and Social Progress

‘[I]f the energy of life is still carrying human nature to higher and higher levels, then the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better for the hopes of the world’

(Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite* 77).

Introduction

As the above quotation suggests, Bernard Shaw has linked the idea of challenging elders and institutions with progress. Shaw’s rebellious attitude towards established institutions is well-known. But perhaps few people know what Shaw meant by ‘young people shock[ing] their elders,’ and in what way this action, according to Shaw, could lead to social progress. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to explore the relationships between the young, their elders, between children and parents, and social progress in Shaw’s dramatic and non-dramatic writings. In the second part of this chapter, examples from two of Shaw’s plays, *Mrs Warren’s Profession* (1894) and *The Devil’s Disciple* (1897), will be used to illustrate the way children shock their parents. Then, those examples will be examined in light of Shaw’s progressive views, especially his views in the 1890s when he started experimenting with drama as a means of attacking society and promoting social change.

In order to understand the place and responsibility of the young in Shaw’s notion of the betterment of society, Shaw’s views on social change need to be clarified. Shaw was radical in his thinking and his call for social reform. In his non-dramatic writings in general, and his essay *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891) in particular, he repeatedly uses words like ‘rebel,’ ‘revolt,’ and ‘shock’ when he talks about change. Although Shaw’s essays, *The Quintessence*, *The Sanity of Art* (1895), and *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), are quite different, they have something in common: all of them reflect Shaw’s advocacy of a revolt against duty and convention in order to achieve social progress. In the *Quintessence*, Shaw writes:

‘[P]rogress must involve the repudiation of an established duty at every step. . . . There is nothing new, then, in the defiance of duty by the reformer: every step of progress means a duty repudiated, and a scripture torn up’ (7-8). In addition to ‘the defiance of duty,’ Shaw called for defying morality and regarded this act as ‘shocking’ and revolting yet necessary for social progress. ‘The plain working truth,’ Shaw says, ‘is that it is not only good for people to be shocked occasionally, but absolutely necessary to the progress of society that they should be shocked pretty often’ (168). This suggests that Shaw considers the rejection of not only morality, but any convention-bound practice, whether it is religion, duty, or marriage, as a way to shock people’s feelings and prejudices and awaken their minds.

Shaw, in *The Sanity of Art*, continues his rebellion against duty, with special emphasis on the duties of wives and daughters. He encourages young women to free themselves from the ideals of duty and self-sacrifice:

If a young woman, in a mood of strong reaction against the preaching of duty and self-sacrifice and the rest of it, were to tell me that she was determined not to murder her own instincts and throw away her life in obedience to a mouthful of empty phrases, I should say to her: By all means do as you propose. Try how wicked you can be: it is precisely the same experiment as trying how good you can be. (50-51)

Shaw also warns against the consequences of the slavery of young women to duty and the suppression of their instincts, providing an example of a ‘revolted daughter’ who ‘allies herself with really vicious people and with humorists who like to shock the pious with gay paradoxes, in claiming an impossible licence in personal conduct’ (68). Hence, rebellion is a natural consequence of the slavery of duty, loss of individuality, and suppression of instincts. As we read through Shaw’s other non-dramatic writings, we realise that Shaw has repeated over and over his call for abandoning duty so that individuals can be emancipated and society can be developed. He calls duty ‘the tyranny [and] the primal curse from which we must redeem ourselves’ (*Quintessence* 17). Furthermore, we come to understand that duty, according to Shaw, has been used to exploit people for the wrong purposes. For example, it has been used by the rich as a class weapon to oppress the poor, and by the powerful to enslave the weak. In the domestic sphere, duty has been exploited by

husbands to enslave their wives, and by parents to enslave their children. In Shaw's view, unless people free themselves from duty and convention, progress will be almost impossible.

Although the subject of slavery to duty is complex and was of great importance to Shaw, it has not received much attention from critics. With the exception of a few studies made by Arthur H. Nethercot, Charles A. Carpenter, and Bernard F. Dukore, duty and its dramatic representation in Shaw has been a neglected area of Shaw studies. Those works that do examine the rejection of duty in Shaw's plays have overlooked filial duty and its progressive implications. Nethercot in 'The Quintessence of Idealism; Or, the Slaves of Duty' (1947) provides a valuable discussion of duty and idealism from Ibsen until the period just before the First World War. Although duty, or rather 'the slaves of duty,' in Shaw forms an integral part of the discussion, Nethercot focuses more on 'the rights of the New Woman and her discarding of the double standard' and the conflict between the idealist and the realist as manifested in the plays of Shaw and his contemporaries (858). Of the three Shavian plays Nethercot examines (*The Philanderer*, *Widowers' Houses*, and *Mrs Warren's Profession*), only *Mrs Warren's Profession* is discussed in terms of the rejection of filial duty, but neither exclusively nor extensively. Vivie's repudiation of duty to mother and husband is briefly discussed in one paragraph. Nethercot argues that Vivie is 'an example of [Shaw's] conceptions of the Realist' (849). He makes his judgement on the basis of Shaw's description of the realist in the *Quintessence* as someone who refuses to be misled by ideals and sees life as it is (27-28). My study, however, explores in more detail Vivie's rejection of duty in relation to Shaw's views on social progress rather than realism and idealism. Furthermore, my study is not restricted to the daughter's rejection of duty, but also includes the son's, as will be shown in *The Devil's Disciple*.

Similar to Nethercot, Carpenter explores Shaw's treatment of idealism in his early plays. Carpenter's *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Destroying Ideals* (1969) provides an insightful analysis of Shaw's attack on ideals and his dramatic representation of the conflict of ideals. As already mentioned in the introduction, Carpenter discusses the first stage of Shaw's evolutionary program, that of destroying ideals, as represented in Shaw's early plays. Carpenter argues that '[t]he

plot of each [of Shaw's early plays] constitutes "a case to be argued," always a case against ideals,' and discusses Shaw's plays accordingly (18). Yet, Carpenter does not include in his discussion generational conflict and children's rebellion against the ideal of filial duty. Carpenter's discussion of *Mrs Warren's Profession* revolves around the idea that capitalism is to blame for Mrs. Warren's resorting to prostitution. Vivie's rejection of authority and duty is overlooked. In fact, the discussion of the mother-daughter relationship ends with Vivie's reconciliation with her mother after the latter's defence of herself, which Carpenter describes as having a 'compelling power' and leaving Vivie 'if not convinced, at least inescapably convicted' (69). In his discussion of *The Devil's Disciple*, Carpenter completely neglects Act I, which portrays the relationship between Richard and his mother, focusing instead on Richard's self-sacrifice and his 'spontaneous heroism' (158). Nevertheless, Carpenter makes an important point when he suggests that 'the concerted iconoclastic strategies of his [Shaw's] early plays . . . are best viewed within the context of his total rationale for creating a unique, sophisticated, and viable art of destroying ideals' (8). Therefore, in order to understand Shaw's plays, it is important to view them within the context of his own thought, which is the approach of this thesis.

Only Dukore, in his book *Bernard Shaw: Slaves of Duty and Tricks of the Governing Class* (2012), treats duty in Shaw as a major theme. Dukore acknowledges the neglect of the theme of slavery to duty in Shaw studies, including those of Nethercot and Carpenter. Dukore notes that Carpenter has overlooked 'the ideal of moral duty as hypocritical justification for greed and power' (8). Dukore's study regards slavery to duty and the exploitation of duty by the governing class and capitalists as a hypocritical justification, or as Dukore calls it, a 'trick,' for their actions. Although this subject is important and complex, Dukore provides only summarised analyses of Shaw's plays from the early 1890s to the late 1940s comparing and contrasting those plays on the basis of Shaw's treatment of duty, focusing on 'slaves of duty,' 'moral duty,' and 'tricks of the governing class.' Like Nethercot and Carpenter, Dukore seems to have slightly overlooked the theme of filial duty and how its rejection by the offspring is related to social progress. Therefore, this chapter, unlike Dukore's study and other studies on duty in Shaw, will focus on filial duty and how it is exploited by parents to keep their children

under their control, and how children's rebellion against filial duty is a precursor of social progress. As can be seen, the aforementioned studies confirm the importance of duty in Shaw, and its being one of the false ideals that is under attack in Shaw's plays, and thus worth exploring.

Shaw's discussion of duty and convention in his aforementioned essays shows that he was engaged in the discourse on the duty of the unmarried daughter at home which took place in the 1890s. As he writes in the preface of the extended edition of the *Quintessence*, published in 1913:

In the eighteen nineties one jested about the revolt of the daughters, and of the wives who slammed the front door like Nora. At present the revolt has become so general that even the feeblest and oldest after-dinner jesters dare no longer keep Votes for Women on their list of stale pleasantries about mothers-in-law, rational dress, and mixed bathing. Men are waking up to the perception that in killing women's souls they have killed their own. (xi-xii)

It would be useful to talk briefly about 'the revolt of the daughters' before discussing Shaw's representation of revolting offspring in his plays. But we should note first how duty corresponds to social, moral, and religious obligations. The periodicals of the 1880s show that the duty of children to love and obey their parents was motivated by the dictates of religion. For example, an article on 'Filial Love' in the *Bow Bells* in 1882 praises 'affectionate and dutiful' children and asserts that '[f]ilial love will keep men from sin and crime' (443). Moreover, Rev. W. B. Mackenzie in 'Filial Obedience' in 1883 writes: 'We are all ready to admit in theory that children are to obey their parents in all things. . . . The Scriptures place filial obedience among the strongest safeguards and the most solid blessings of life' (19-20). Hence, the duty of children to obey their parents was asserted and argued for in the nineteenth century. However, B. A. Crackanthorpe's series of articles on 'The Revolt of the Daughters' in early 1894, published in *The Nineteenth Century*, provoked a great deal of controversy. It addressed the problem of unmarried daughters whose rights to be individuals and independent beings have been denied by tradition. Crackanthorpe argues in her first article, published in January 1894, that daughters have been enslaved in domestic life and prevented from making 'social experiments'

beyond 'the family domain' (27). And in the third article of the series, published in March 1894, she explains that the reason behind the slavery and discrimination of daughters is that people in England have been constrained by an 'unwritten law' called 'tradition,' under which fall the ideals of duty and self-sacrifice (424-25). Therefore, in Crackanthorpe's view, a revolution against tradition and established social order is not only needed, but also inevitable.

A reply came from two daughters, Kathleen Cuffe and Alys W. Pearsall Smith, in March of the same year, published in *The Nineteenth Century*. They both express the same view as Crackanthorpe and ask for a larger liberty. Both daughters explain the life of the unmarried daughter at home and how she loses her chances of self-development and self-fulfilment by unquestioningly accepting her traditional role and sacrificing herself to those around her. But whereas Cuffe tends to minimise the seriousness of the situation by asserting that '[t]he so-called revolting maiden only asks for a small amount of liberty. . . [and to be] allowed by degrees a modicum of freedom in everyday life' (441-2), Smith, taking a view similar to Shaw's, views the daughters' issue as a serious problem that needs to be urgently addressed. Smith acknowledges that 'unmarried girls at home [are] in danger of withering,' and describes the situation of the daughter whose life is entirely bound up with duty as a 'tyranny' (443-4). Smith asserts that the revolt of the daughter is 'a revolt against a bondage that enslaves her whole life,' and concludes by emphasising the importance of granting daughters freedom, individuality, and 'the ordinary human rights of a human being' (450).

During the same year in which the discourse on the revolt of the daughters took place, Shaw wrote *Mrs Warren's Profession* which depicts the rebellion of a daughter against her mother's authority and her rejection of filial duty. From then on, children became more and more an inherent part of Shaw's political and dramatic writings, both of which suggest the need for wilful and rebellious offspring. One might ask why children, according to Shaw, should be rebellious and independent. Shaw saw the rebellion of the young as promising to pave the way for social change. In his preface to *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898), Shaw states: 'In the middle classes themselves the revolt of a single clever daughter . . . and her insistence on qualifying herself for an independent working life, humanizes her whole family in an

astonishingly short time' (690). Shaw here argues for the effectiveness of the revolt of the offspring as a vehicle for reforming the family and then society as a whole. In fact, rebellion for Shaw is a remedy for social ills. 'A nation,' Shaw asserts, 'should always be healthily rebellious; . . . [a] child should begin to assert itself early, and shift for itself more and more . . . in opinions and conduct' (*Prefaces* 78). Hence, rebellion for Shaw is required for social change, and training children to be not only rebellious but also independent in thought and action is necessary to prepare them to take the lead in social reform.

Since Shaw saw children as the hope of a rebellious nation, he believed that their rights should be assured. He saw children as individuals worthy of constitutional rights. In his book *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928), in particular the section on 'Socialism and Children,' he mentions that children should be given constitutional rights just like women, and that a child should neither be sent to 'Bastilles called schools' nor be made 'the property of its father' (413). Thus, Shaw believed that children should be independent beings and should have a will of their own. He goes even further in suggesting that children can repudiate their duties towards their parents and leave home if they are unhappy in their lives with them. This point is elaborated in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide* when he speaks about 'Socialism and Marriage': 'Vows and inculcated duties may seem effective in keeping unhappy wives and revolting daughters at home when they have no alternative; but there must be an immense number of cases in which wives and husbands, girls and boys, would walk out of the house' (408). The reason for Shaw's belief becomes clear in his next statement: 'No parent would tyrannize as some parents tyrannize now if they knew that the result would be the prompt disappearance of their children' (408). Therefore, Shaw's idea of children leaving their parents' house suggests that he perceives this action as a threat to parents who tyrannise over their children and a pressure that would compel them to improve their treatment. In case children did need to run away from their oppressive parents, Shaw suggested in the Fabian Tract No. 2 that the state should provide them with homes: '[T]he state should compete with private individuals—especially with parents—in providing happy homes for children, so that every child may have a refuge from the tyranny or neglect of its natural custodians' (*Manifesto* 2).

The word ‘tyranny,’ as mentioned by Shaw, carries different meanings in different contexts. The first meaning, which is more general than the other, is what produces ‘much untold human unhappiness’ for husbands and wives, parents and children (*Intelligent* 408). The second meaning appears in Shaw’s preface to *Misalliance* (1914). Tyranny, as Shaw demonstrates here, is a misuse of law by people who fail to understand it, and whose powers and wills are used to ‘thwart the wills and enslave the powers of other individuals and classes’ (80). A Tyrant, as defined by Shaw, would be ‘a person who says to another person, young or old, “You shall do as I tell you; . . . you shall have no will of your own”’ (80). It is this kind of breaking the will of individuals, especially children, that he warns against in this context and which constitutes a major theme in most of his plays. However, it is not the children whose will is broken in Shaw’s drama, but the parents’. As Norbert F. O’ Donnell points out, Shaw presents in his plays ‘a number of portrayals of children blithely going their way against the wills of shocked and more or less resistant parents’ (79). The triumph of the offspring over their parents and their rebellion against their parents’ will is one of Shaw’s favourite dramatic themes.

Since the relation between the young and progress has been discussed from the point of view of Shaw’s political thinking, the relation between them and the elders, or parents, should now be explained. In ‘Parents and Children,’ Shaw suggests that both parents and children should abandon parental and filial behaviour because ‘like all unfree behavior, [it] is mostly bad behavior’ (88). This recalls Shaw’s views on duty and suggests that he considers parental and filial behaviour as ‘unfree’ because it is duty-bound. Shaw also indicates that it is ‘natural’ that parents and children when they are able to take care of themselves ‘cast off the specific parental and filial relation’ (90). Shaw here emphasises the importance of the autonomy and independence of children from their parents, or, symbolically speaking, the separation of the young from the old. Such separation, in Shaw’s view, would have a constructive effect on the formation of children’s character. Shaw explains the negative influence of parents on their children; he mentions two things which enslave children and restrict their liberty: ‘protection’ and ‘bend[ing] the will’ of children to that of the parents (67, 81). Those practices, Shaw argues, have a negative impact not only on children, but also on society as they delay social progress: ‘legislators and parents and the paid deputies of parents are always

inhibiting and prohibiting and punishing and scolding and laming and cramping and delaying progress and growth' (67). For Shaw, the problem of elders controlling the lives of the young and restricting their freedom impedes social progress. The solution for this problem, as already mentioned, is rejecting and rebelling against tyrannical parents, leaving them shocked.

Shavian children can, therefore, be a symbol of both revolution and evolution in modern society. They represent revolution in the sense that their conflict with traditional values and ideas, usually associated with old age, and their rebellion against duty and authority predict social change. Their evolution lies in their ability to improve society and humanity in general by following the will of what Shaw calls 'The Life Force,' a point which will be elaborated in the next chapter, instead of the will of their parents. According to Shaw, both revolution and evolution require wilfulness. Therefore, the individual's will plays a significant role in Shavian drama. The conflict of wills and the clash of opinions in Shaw's drama are apparent in his portrayal of the relationships between parents and their offspring. The offspring are often represented as strong and rebellious, following their own desires rather than the will of their parents.

Sometimes Shavian mothers, such as Mrs. Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple* and Lady Britomart in *Major Barbara* (1905), are represented as strong and domineering. Lagretta Tallent Lenker suggests a way of viewing the Victorian mothers in Shavian drama: 'Victorian mothers often serve as convenient foils to the rebellious younger generations' as well as 'cultural icon[s] of the past' (*Pre-Oedipal* 3, 5). Mrs. Warren in *Mrs Warren's Profession* is another example of a strong Victorian mother, yet her strength fails when it comes to maintaining her relationship with her daughter, Vivie, who seems the stronger of the two women. Thus, in spite of the strength of some Shavian mothers, they ultimately seem weaker than their offspring, especially daughters.

Parental authority is often attacked in Shavian drama. As Margery M. Morgan has pointed out, most of Shaw's plays depict parental authority as 'threatening, or repudiated by, the younger generation' (50). In addition to parental authority, parental rights are under attack in Shaw's early and middle plays. Parents, whether in the plays discussed in this chapter or the next, expect their offspring to

replicate them; but this is not what happens: the offspring go their own way leaving the parents wondering about their neglected parental rights.

In general, the relationships between parents and children in Shaw's early and middle plays can be seen as a subversion of conventional family life and traditional ideas of the parent-child relationship. Shaw's reversal of convention and the subversion of stereotypes are two of his common literary devices which serve his purpose in writing a drama which instructs as well as entertains. These techniques are not used by Shaw alone. However, what is distinctive about Shaw is the unconventionality of the form and content of his plays. Concerning form, he focused on discussion rather than plot and action; the 'discussion play' was first introduced in *A Doll's House* (1879) by Henrik Ibsen, who was a direct influence on Shaw, but Shaw developed it in new directions in his plays, making it more purposeful and comical. This technique allowed Shaw to express his views more freely in the dialogue of the characters, which often takes the form of intellectual argument. The influence of Ibsen on Shaw can be seen not merely on the technical level, but also on the ethical level. What Shaw most appreciated in Ibsen's plays, in particular *A Doll's House*, was their 'utilitarian value' (Jackson 54). Ibsen proved to Shaw that theatre can be more than a means of entertainment; it can also be a means of education and bringing about change. Another point is that Shaw's comedies do not necessarily end in marriage, as was the convention of nineteenth-century romantic comedy. Moreover, Shaw was writing his novels and plays with a deliberate disregard for style, as he declares in his preface to *Immaturity*, written in 1879, 'I have never aimed at style in my life' (645). In the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to *Man and Superman*, Shaw states his own conception of style, giving priority to what there is to say over how to say it: 'Effectiveness of assertion is the alpha and omega of style' (*Prefaces* 165). By identifying style with the ability to assert something, Shaw tends to adapt style to content. Speaking of content, Shaw challenged theatrical norms by discussing topics such as prostitution. Furthermore, passion is subordinate to intellect in his plays, unlike Victorian melodrama in which sentiments are important. Another, and probably the most important, aspect of Shaw's plays is his representation of women actively pursuing men and children as active agents, so that the traditional expectations of the relations between men and women, parents and children, are questioned and challenged.

There are two examples of plays in which Shaw presents independent, wilful offspring who not only break their parents' will, but also repudiate their filial duties and go their own way: *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple*. Both plays, written in the nineties, are revolutionary in the sense that they challenge the traditional ideas of the parent-child relationship, and raise questions of filial rights. Shaw uses the relationships between Vivie and her mother in *Mrs Warren's Profession* and Richard and his mother in *The Devil's Disciple* to demonstrate the rebellion of the offspring against their parents and their rejection of both parental and social authority, which for Shaw is a necessity for social change. Shaw inherited Victorian theatre, but he subverted it for his own purposes. The archetypal parent-child relationship in Victorian melodrama is, as Michael R. Booth puts it, 'an idealistic dramatisation of the family bond' (155). Shaw subverts the parent-child relationship in *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple* to depict the child's rejection of the parent and the challenge to authority, duty, affection, and respect for elders.

Mrs Warren's Profession

Mrs Warren's Profession is one of the plays that would have been admired by the New Women of the 1890s, had it been performed at the time Shaw wrote it, for its portrayal of the New Woman as economically and emotionally independent, and its 'straightforward linkage of prostitution and marriage' (Powell 78). It is the first Shavian play in which the strong-minded New Woman appears freed from traditional domestic roles and filial duties. The idea that women should abandon duty entirely was proposed by Shaw in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* before he started to draw attention to it in his plays. In this regard, he writes: '[U]nless Woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to society, to the law, and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself. . . . Therefore Woman has to repudiate duty altogether. In that repudiation lies her freedom' (41). Through Vivie, Shaw provides an example of a liberated woman who is restrained neither by filial nor marital duty. She cares for her duty to herself above all. Archibald Henderson compares Vivie's rejection of her mother with Nora's rejection of her husband and domestic life in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and calls Vivie 'Nora as daughter' (*Life* 301), in the sense that she leaves her mother and home

‘under a like profound conviction of her duty to herself as a human being—a duty she recognizes as far more obligatory than any she might be conventionally imagined to owe to an able and unscrupulous parent’ (*Man* 532). Shaw’s analysis of Ibsen’s plays in the *Quintessence* shows that he admired Ibsen’s depiction of characters living with conventional ideals which soon become shattered by the conduct of others. In Nora’s case, she has idealised family life and tried to be a dutiful wife and mother, but she finally becomes disillusioned and leaves her husband and children because she realises that there is no higher duty than her duty to herself, ‘to stand quite alone’ in order to discover herself (163). Similarly, Vivie leaves her mother after she realises her hypocrisy and refuses not only to replicate her mother’s life, but also to be part of it. In so doing, Vivie is rejecting her filial duty and her mother’s authority and tendency to possess her. She is also rejecting the maternal role for herself too. She succeeds at the end of the play in gaining her independence, like Nora, and substituting a working life for domesticity.

Mrs Warren’s Profession is the third of Shaw’s *Plays Unpleasant*. It was described by Shaw as unpleasant for its concern with social problems, mainly prostitution. A remark Shaw made to Henderson reveals another reason for Shaw’s categorisation of the play as unpleasant in his two-volume *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant*: ‘I called one of the volumes “unpleasant” for fear that people, without reading them, might give them to children for Christmas presents’ (*Man* 531). The comment reflects Shaw’s concern as to what is appropriate for children, as his article ‘The Best Books for Children’ (1887) clearly shows. The play was meant to draw the public’s attention to the economic oppression of women, which led some of them to prostitution, as well as to the hypocrisy of capitalist society. Since prostitution was one of the forbidden topics in Victorian Britain, the play was censored and not performed in England in public until 1925 (Meisel 158). But, as Alasdair Cameron notes in his review of the Giles Havergal’s new production of the play at the Citizens in 1990: ‘[W]e can see clearly that Shaw actually wrote: a drama about the power politics between parents and children as much as any critique of the hypocrisy of society’ (18). Indeed, the parent-child relationship is one of the major themes of *Mrs Warren’s Profession*.

The play received some negative reviews from the time it was first performed privately in 1902 until its first public performance in England in 1925. An anonymous critic in his review of the play's New York production in 1905 describes the play as 'an insult to decency because [i]t defends immorality . . . and pictures children and parents living in calm observance of most unholy relations' (Conolly 178). What this critic fails to see is that Shaw's subversion of conventional morality and parent-child relationship is at the heart of his purpose in writing this play and part of his provocation. Both prostitution and the parent-child relationship are used to expose the evils of capitalism and to question morality, authority, and duty. Another review of the play's production in Winnipeg in 1907 says that '[t]he play is full of false sentiment and bathotic bosh . . . as . . . when the mother expatiates to the daughter on what an exemplary parent she has been' (Conolly 179). In addition, one author in his review of the play's production in 1925 describes Vivie as 'merely a machine, perfect as only such a machine can be,' meaning that she is untrue to life (Conolly 181). Vivie's lack of emotion and her portrayal as cold-hearted and indifferent to her mother's plea for reconciliation at the end of the play may be read as the result of her emotionally-deprived childhood and the gap between her and her mother caused by the latter's money-making profession. In other words, *Mrs Warren's Profession* shows the contamination of prostitution and how its negative effects pass on to the next generation.

The central parent-child relationship of the play is that between mother and daughter. Both Mrs. Warren and her daughter, Vivie, are strong-minded, hard-working women who live their lives and make their decisions regardless of conventional Victorian ideas and values. Mrs. Warren, in her girlhood, chooses to support herself through prostitution and later through the management of brothels, while Vivie chooses to support herself through an office job, after taking a Mathematics degree at Cambridge. The mother's way of life affects that of her daughter as it goes against the conscience and moral conviction of the latter. Vivie, thus, has to choose whether to forgive her mother and carry on her life with her or abandon her altogether. In fact, Vivie as well as other Shavian children do not 'expiate either the sins or the inadequacies of their father or mother. They go their own way' (Matchett 46). Since children in Shaw's plays serve his political purposes,

it seems logical, then, to represent them as strong and rebellious, for they represent the future.

Another difference between Mrs. Warren and Vivie is that the former, although unconventional in her view of morality and women's choices to support themselves, is conventional when it comes to her relationship with her daughter. In other words, she wants their relationship to be, as Lenker describes it, 'a conventional mother-daughter bond' (*Fathers* 170). She believes that as a mother, she has rights over her child that should not be ignored under any circumstances. She expects from her daughter obedience and care, in return for bringing her up. Furthermore, she thinks that she has the right to control her daughter's life and decide for her how she shall live. However, Vivie is aware of her mother's authority and possessiveness and she complains about it thus: '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' (3: 63). Vivie conceives of Mrs. Warren as having 'the conventional authority of a mother' (*Mrs Warren* 3: 64). For this reason, and others, she rejects her and abandons her filial duties. The play, indeed, subverts parental authority and challenges traditional ideas of the mother-daughter relationship. However, the challenge is not a predictable or stable one. Vivie seems the more responsible of the two women, but her mother shocks the audience with a worldly knowledge that Vivie's education cannot give her, and which indeed her education has shielded her from. Taken side by side, their example challenges questions of social development and progress, such as what counts as progress, and whether it is capitalism and authority or education that can be seen as more compatible with social progress.

At the beginning of the play, the audience is introduced to Vivie Warren as a modern, highly-educated young woman. Praed, an artist and a friend of Mrs. Warren, admires Vivie's unconventionality saying:

PRAED. I'm so glad your mother hasnt spoilt you!

VIVIE. How?

PRAED. Well, in making you too conventional. You know, my dear Miss Warren, I am a born anarchist. I hate authority. It spoils the relations between parent and child: even between mother and daughter. Now I was always afraid that your mother would strain her authority to make you very conventional. It's such a relief to find that she hasn't. (3: 35)

Shaw here is using Praed as his mouthpiece to express his aversion to parental authority which, in his view, destroys the relationship between parents and children. His linking of authority and conventionality reflects his conception of the conventional or traditional parent-child relationship as one in which the parent is stronger than the child and controls the relationship. The unconventional parent-child relationship, which Shaw calls for, would be one in which the child rebels against the parent's authority. Moreover, Shaw seems to suggest that the parent-child relationship embodies something fundamental about conventionality more broadly, hence his subversion of this bond. Although this kind of rejection of the parental role is familiar in literature, what makes it distinctive in this play is that it is actually advocated here, does not happen piecemeal, and is something Shaw sees as a positive in itself, and not something to be judged on results. As Vivie and Praed continue their conversation, more facts about Vivie's relationship with her mother are revealed. Vivie and her mother do not have a close relationship, and they do not see each other very often because of the nature of Mrs. Warren's work which requires her to travel from one place to another. At this point, Vivie has no idea of the real nature of her mother's business nor does she know who her father is.

As the play progresses, facts about Mrs. Warren's past emerge from a conversation between her and her daughter in Act II, but Vivie and the audience are still in the dark about Mrs. Warren's present life and business. The conversation starts with a discussion about Vivie's 'way of life':

VIVIE. [*cutting a page of her book with the paper knife on her chatelaine*] Has it really never occurred to you, mother, that I have a way of life like other people?

MRS WARREN. What nonsense is this you're trying to talk? Do you want to shew your independence, now that you're a great little person at school? Don't be a fool, child.

VIVIE. [*indulgently*] Thats all you have to say on the subject,
is it, mother?

MRS WARREN. [*puzzled, then angry*] Dont you keep on asking me
questions like that. [*Violently*] Hold your tongue. [*Vivie works on, losing
no time, and saying nothing*]. You and your way of life, indeed! What
next? [*She looks at Vivie again. No reply*]. Your way of life will be what I
please, so it will. (3: 61-62)

Mrs. Warren speaks to Vivie with a tone of authority. She, as Louis Crompton puts it, ‘adopts a proprietary attitude toward Vivie and expects that she will in turn pay her a conventional filial deference’ (8). Mrs. Warren does what Shaw warns against in *The Intelligent Woman’s Guide*, which is to treat children as if they were the property of their parent (413). Her words to Vivie: ‘Your way of life will be what I please, so it will’ make her appear a tyrant, according to Shaw’s definition of tyranny. The fact that Vivie stays with her mother even though she detests her attempt to thwart her will and control her life should not be interpreted as a weakness on Vivie’s part. On the contrary, Vivie appears strong from the beginning of the play, but she has a sense of responsibility toward her mother that makes her tolerate the latter’s behaviour. She even sympathises with Mrs. Warren when she knows about her suffering from poverty when she was a girl and her resorting to prostitution to gain economic security. Mrs. Warren here is not only talking to her daughter about her past, but also giving her facts about hypocrisy and the economic exploitation of women, either through marriage or prostitution, in capitalist society. Vivie admires her mother’s cynicism and is touched by the story of her rise from a poor girl to a woman of independent income as this is consistent with her own belief in the struggle for independence.

Mrs. Warren is not, in fact, terrible as a mother, as is Elise in Strindberg’s *The Pelican*, nor is she as irresponsible as the mother in *Little Eyolf*. She did her duty in raising her child and giving her the best education available, in Cambridge. She performed her role as a mother which she assumes, as Andrina Gilmartin points out, comes ‘automatically’ with childbirth (145). However, she lacks the skills needed to parent her child well. Another problem is that she thinks that the act of childbirth gives her the right to control the life of her daughter and impose her will on her. It

seems that Mrs. Warren's misconception of the role of the parent is at the root of her failings as a mother. In addition, her regret at the end of the play that she has not brought up her daughter to be like her, i.e., a prostitute, is a manifestation of her failings.

Fascinated by her mother's story and her journey to independence, Vivie sees her mother as 'a wonderful woman' who is 'stronger than all England' (3: 69). However, it is not long until she changes her opinion of her mother entirely and calls her 'the unmentionable woman' (3: 85). In Act III, Sir George Crofts, Mrs. Warren's business partner, tries to tempt Vivie to marry him with his money and social status, which Vivie considers a bribe. When she refuses his offer, he reminds her that they are both sharing the profits of her mother's business, which is still running, and that the money which provided her with education and clothes was, in fact, earned from that business. Shocked by Croft's news and disappointed by her mother's hypocrisy, Vivie leaves her mother's house at once and goes to London to start work. The reason that Vivie recoils from her mother is that she is ashamed of her hypocrisy, for she has 'lived one life and believed in another' (*Mrs Warren* 3: 104). Another reason, as mentioned by Crompton, is that Vivie 'demands self-respect not just for herself alone, but for all women' (9). When Vivie first accepted her mother, it was because she thought that her mother had left her business since she became economically independent. But when she discovers that prostitution for Mrs. Warren was not a means to an end, but an end itself that made her part of the corrupted capitalist society (Berst 10), she abandons her at once. For Vivie, Mrs. Warren does not deserve respect and gratitude for the care and education she received because the means were wrong. Therefore, she rejects her mother and her tainted money and decides to support herself and earn her living through more appropriate means. In doing so, she denies her mother's example and asserts that women can survive by using their brains, not selling their bodies.

Mrs. Warren is not willing to surrender easily. As Charles Berst describes her, she 'cluck[s] over Vivie like a Victorian mother hen' (16), wondering about her rights as a mother. She says: 'We're mother and daughter. I want my daughter. I've a right to you. Who is to care for me when I'm old? . . . You've no right to turn on me now and refuse to do your duty as a daughter' (3: 103). Dukore interprets Mrs.

Warren's use of the word 'duty' as an attempt to 'win her daughter's devotion,' and not as an indication of her slavery to duty (15). Indeed, neither Vivie nor Mrs. Warren is a slave of duty. What Mrs. Warren is trying to do here is exploit the ideal of filial piety and duty to keep Vivie under her control; she does not necessarily believe in it. She keeps reminding Vivie of the conventional mother-daughter relationship which she asks for. But Vivie's harsh response leaves no way for her mother to justify herself any further: 'Now once for all, mother, you want a daughter . . . I dont want a mother' (3: 103). Vivie here epitomises Shaw's recommendation for the parent-child relationship.

Mrs. Warren's position then changes from defending herself to attacking her daughter. She blames herself for bringing her daughter up to be different from her, i.e., an educated woman with better chances in life. She admits that if she could turn back time, she would raise her daughter to be a prostitute like her. Shocked at her mother's declaration, Vivie is convinced even more than before that her mother does not deserve filial duty and respect. Her opinion of her mother is that she is 'a conventional woman at heart' (*Mrs Warren* 3: 91). In order for her to be able to escape from her mother's conventionality and the 'Victorian bonds of duty to one's parent,' Vivie must be an unconventional and 'unnatural daughter' (*Berst* 10). She thus symbolises the rebellious, modern generation who are going against the mainstream of Victorian thought.

Vivie is a strong daughter who does not turn back from her decision in spite of her mother's plea for reconciliation. She is different from Barbara in *Major Barbara* who, at the end of the play, reaches a reconciliation with her father and thinks that with his help, she will be able to change people's lives for the better. Struck by the fact that she has lost her daughter, Mrs. Warren tries desperately to regain her. She tempts her with money and luxury; however, they are not what Vivie is looking for. She tells her mother: 'I know very well that fashionable morality is all a pretence, and that if I took your money and devoted the rest of my life to spending it fashionably, I might be as worthless and vicious as the silliest woman could possibly want to be without having a word said to me about it. But I dont want to be worthless' (3: 102). Vivie's view of life is free from romantic illusions. Her conscience and moral conviction are stronger than anything else. As Berst points out,

Vivie rejects 'luxury and filial affection' when they are attached to 'social corruption' (11). She devotes herself to work and becomes devoid of not only filial affection and duty towards her mother, but also 'love's young dream,' represented by Frank, who was planning to marry her, and 'the romance and beauty of life,' represented by Praed (*Mrs Warren* 3: 92). Her refusal to submit to the will of her mother and her break with the past show her capacity for social evolution. She does not allow anything or anyone to prevent her from being a better human being, even if that person is her mother. She might have inherited her devotion to work from her mother, but other than that, she is different from her. She symbolises the New Woman who is concerned with duties and obligations to herself as well as other women, and also to a very pure form of morality. She, in fact, substitutes this relationship with other women, a relationship of equals, for her hierarchical relationship with her own mother. This also entails her rejection of marriage, which perhaps calls into question the possibility of a future. It is one of the few times when marriage, or the promise of it, does not feature as the promise of a future in Shaw, as depicted in the following chapters.

Whilst the relationship between Mrs. Warren and Vivie constitutes the main conflict in the play, another minor conflict appears in the relationship between Frank and his father, the Reverend Samuel Gardner, who is a clergyman in the Anglican Church. Gardner is not what the audience expects but is rather, as A. M. Gibbs suggests, 'a figure of ridicule' and 'a father without authority' (*Art* 6-7). He is described in the play's stage directions as someone who is 'clamorously asserting himself as father and clergyman without being able to command respect in either capacity' (3: 47). Frank's disrespect for his father shows in the way he calls him 'gov'nor' instead of father, and when he tells him that Vivie surpasses him in education, sarcastically saying: 'she's a third wrangler. Ever so intellectual. Took a higher degree than you did; so why should she go to hear you preach?' (3: 47). Gardner has no control over his son's disrespectful manners and facetious remarks, and addresses him as 'sir,' unlike Mrs. Warren who calls Vivie 'child' in a superior attitude, which acts to underestimate Vivie's worldly knowledge. Ironically, both 'sir' and 'child' are ways of parents seeking to exert control over their children.

The mother-daughter relationship, represented in Mrs. Warren and Vivie, and the father-son relationship, represented in Gardner and Frank, are in contrast to each other. This contrast between the immoral woman and her 'well brought-up,' highly-educated daughter, and the clergyman and his 'cynically worthless' son is noted by Shaw in 'The Author's Apology' published in 1902 (xxx). The contrast suggests that women without principles, or concern for right or wrong, can bring up their offspring better than men with strong ethical principles such as clergymen. Moreover, by portraying Frank as a trivial, worthless individual without purpose in life, Shaw wants to show that 'clergymen's sons are often conspicuous reactionists against the restraints imposed on them in childhood by their father's profession' (*Apology* xxx). Hence, Shaw seems to suggest that the more restrictions imposed on children by parents, the more likely they are to disobey parents. Frank not only opposes parental authority and filial duty, but thinks that showing love and respect to parents is 'a second-rate thing' (*Mrs Warren* 3: 77). He criticises Vivie's sympathy with her mother after hearing her story and tries to convince her that her mother does not deserve her sympathy or respect. He warns Vivie against sentimentality. As a matter of fact, neither Frank nor Vivie has a sentimental affection for their parents. Vivie's sentimentality towards her mother appears once in the play and only temporarily. Generally speaking, in Shaw's plays, sentimentality is subordinate to intellect and the love relations are subordinate to the parent-child relations.

In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, the focus is on the tension in the relationship between Mrs. Warren and Vivie rather than the love relation between Frank and Vivie. Even Vivie's childish behaviour with Frank when they are alone is a momentary escape from her life with her mother rather than being a sign of true love for Frank, for she says: 'Sh-sh-sh-sh! little girl wants to forget all about her mother,' but she quickly wakes up exclaiming: 'What a pair of fools we are! . . . I wonder do all grown up people play in that childish way when nobody is looking. I never did it when I was a child' (3: 78-79). Vivie is also trying to compensate for her loss of love and playfulness in childhood by playing with Frank childishly. However, her abandonment of Frank shows that she is governed by her mind, not her heart.

Both Frank and Vivie are less sentimental, more intellectual, and both are cleverer than their parents. The representation of clever youth is one of Shaw's purposes in writing this play, as he demonstrates in the *Apology*:

The attitude of the clever young people to their elders is faithfully represented as one of pitiless ridicule and unsympathetic criticism, and forms a spectacle incredible to those who, when young, were not cleverer than their nearest elders, and painful to those sentimental parents who shrink from the cruelty of youth, which pardons nothing because it knows nothing. (xxxv)

Thus, Shaw's depiction of the contrast and conflict between parents and children can be viewed not merely as a parent-child issue, but also as a generational issue. In other words, by representing the parent-child relationship Shaw was able to reflect the gap between two generations, old and new, with different ideas. The presentation of those conflicting ideas or views, which substitutes for physical conflict, is what Shaw admired in Ibsen's work and it became one of his favourite dramatic techniques.

Mrs Warren's Profession, just like other Shavian plays, is about the clash of opinions and conflict of wills in general, and the collision between parental authority and filial choice in particular. Each character in the play has to be, as Meisel states, 'so plausible, so convincing, and so free from special guilt' (132). Thus, each character seems to be justified to the audience by his/her viewpoint. Jacques Barzun suggests that Shaw is a champion in this kind of dramatic technique: 'What makes . . . good theater . . . is opposition, conflict between equally plausible views, and in that department Shaw is supreme. He never sets up a straw man or gives all the good arguments to one side' (83). In the case of *Mrs Warren's Profession*, it is hard to tell which of the two women, Mrs. Warren and Vivie, seems right. Mrs. Warren is persuasive in arguing that she has the right to choose the means by which to support herself as well as her daughter in a patriarchal society in which women are subordinate to and economically dependent on men. Her defence of herself for resorting to prostitution seems very convincing. However, her decision to pursue her profession when she is economically independent even at the cost of losing her daughter is portrayed in the play as a mistake and the main reason for Vivie's

abandonment of her. On the other hand, Vivie is a good example of the independent woman who succeeds in supporting herself in a male-dominant society without having to resort to either marriage or prostitution. But her choice to repudiate her mother and abandon her filial duty potentially seems shocking to those who expect filial piety and deference to parental authority. Nevertheless, the final irony is that Vivie, by choosing work over conventional domestic life, proves that she is her mother's daughter. Moreover, the very act of rejecting her mother proves Vivie to be her mother's daughter. The difficulty is that neither character can recognise this.

Indeed, the play shows that Vivie has got something from her mother, like her love for work, her independence, and her working within capitalism. It also shows that there is some sort of affection and respect in the relationship between Vivie and her mother. But, ultimately, Vivie has to deny her mother's example. She has to be independent and make her own life, just as her mother did, but not in the same way that her mother did it. By refusing to sell her body as her mother did, Vivie is moving towards progression and emancipation. But in order to progress, she has to reject her mother and her way of life.

The Devil's Disciple

Three years after the composition of *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Shaw wrote *The Devil's Disciple*, the first of his *Three Plays for Puritans*. It is one of Shaw's attempts to exploit, subvert, and experiment with popular nineteenth-century melodrama for his own purposes (Meisel 186). Instead of making the hero, Richard Dudgeon, or Dick, act out of love, as the Victorian audience would expect, Shaw depicts him as someone who has 'no motive and no interest' (*Devil's Disciple* 3: 322). Shaw's views which he used to express through his dramatic daughters are embodied this time in his Shavian son, Richard, who is also strong and whose actions are influenced by neither sentimental feelings nor any established duty. He follows 'the law of [his] own nature' and does what he assumes to be right (*Devil's Disciple* 3: 322). Hence, *The Devil's Disciple* is another play in which Shaw portrays independent offspring rebelling against their filial duties.

This play is unique in Shaw's oeuvre in being set in America during the American War of Independence. Shaw's choice of the period of the American

Revolution suggests a link between the overthrowing of political authority, represented by England, and the overthrowing of parental authority, represented by Mrs. Dudgeon. Gibbs argues that Shaw has brought two kinds of rebellion together in this play: ‘child America impudently throwing off parental England’ and another kind of rebellion which is ‘son versus mother’ (*Art* 109). This suggests that parental authority in this play, and maybe in other Shavian plays as well, is a symbol of political authority and vice versa. In Shaw’s view, both kinds of authority should be discarded altogether to make social change possible.

The play depicts not only the attempts of the Americans to rebel against the British, but also the success of such attempts; the thirteen colonies of North America overthrew the authority of the British Empire and declared their independence. In the preface to this play, Shaw writes:

The year 1777 is the one in which the passions roused of the breaking off of the American colonies from England . . . the shooting being idealized to the English mind as suppression of rebellion and maintenance of British dominion, and to the American as defence of liberty [and] resistance to tyranny. (3)

As a social reformer, Shaw finds ‘rebellion,’ ‘defence of liberty,’ and ‘resistance to tyranny’ appealing. The main characters, Richard and the preacher, are rebels. General Burgoyne, by contrast, is a witty, aristocratic British army officer who describes what would Shaw call the tyranny of hanging a rebel as ‘a mere matter of political necessity and military duty’ (3: 53). The fruit of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, is manifested in two things: the arrival of the preacher in the last act and his request for detaching the rope from Richard’s neck, and the departure of the British troops followed by the townsfolk jeering at them and the town band playing Yankee Doodle (J. Evans 42-43).

Shaw’s belief in the importance of reforming society and rebelling against traditional ideas is described by Crompton as something as holy for Shaw as religion: ‘Shaw’s church is one of rebels. Its prophets are . . . scorners of established faiths’ (45). *The Devil’s Disciple* is indeed a rebellion against established religion and conventional morality; and the one who rebels against the two is Richard. He

revolts against his mother, Mrs. Dudgeon, and the way she practises religion and morality. The character of Richard is best described by Shaw himself in a letter he wrote to Ellen Terry: ‘It is not enough, for the instruction of this generation, that Richard should be superior to religion and morality as typified by his mother and his home He must also be superior to gentility—that is, to the whole ideal of modern society’ (*Collected Letters* 1: 734). Once again, the didactic purpose of Shaw’s plays and his intention to preach to the new generation is echoed in this letter. Richard is the model Shaw proposes for a healthy rebellion against conventional ideals of religion, morality, and gentility, all represented by Mrs. Dudgeon. One author in his review of the play’s production in 1899 at Kennington describes Richard as ‘a kind heart, a bitter tongue, and the sworn foe of sentimentality and religiosity—a projection, in fact, of “G. B. S.”’ (*Two Plays* 338). This supports the viewpoint that Shaw’s representation of the younger generation in his plays often reflects his own ideas and beliefs.

As a matter of fact, Richard is not only an enemy of sentimentality and religiosity, but also duty. He is, thus, similar to Vivie in *Mrs Warren’s Profession* in the sense that both of them revolt against their mothers’ authority and abandon filial duty altogether. However, Richard finds a different kind of duty—a duty to mankind. It should be noted that the term ‘duty,’ according to Dukore, is used in *The Devil’s Disciple* and *Mrs Warren’s Profession* to indicate ‘responsibility’ and ‘obligation’ rather than ‘hypocrisy’ (21). Moreover, Richard and Vivie do not exploit notions of duty and obligation to achieve certain goals like Ann in *Man and Superman*, who, as we will see in chapter three, uses duty as a trick to achieve her goal of marriage.

Richard and Vivie also revolt for different reasons, in addition to the rejection of parental authority. Vivie rejects the hypocrisy of her mother and demands a very pure form of morality, whilst Richard rejects his mother’s Puritanism and rigid form of morality, which Shaw demonstrates is hypocritical and immoral. Both Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Dudgeon are judged by their children. Mrs. Warren, the ‘erring mother,’ is judged by her ‘high-principled daughter,’ and Mrs. Dudgeon, who is ‘outwardly pious,’ is judged by her ‘outwardly irreverent son’ (Gilmartin 150). The idea of children loving their parents while they are young and judging them when they become adults was popular in writing of the 1890s. In literature, it appears in

Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance* (1893). Lord Illingworth in the play warns Mrs. Arbuthnot against her son's judgement of her, which, in his view, would do her injustice: 'You have educated him to be your judge if he ever finds you out. And a bitter, an unjust judge he will be to you. Don't be deceived, Rachel. Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them' (112). The same warning a writer gives to his readers in 'Children and Friends?' published in 1894 in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art*. He says: 'The warning, "You will have much pleasure with your children whilst they are young; but beware of the *revanche*," is a wise and a timely one' (113). He explains that children avenge themselves on their parents for controlling them by showing independence and departing from them when they reach adulthood. Children's abandonment of their parents, which the author of 'Children and Friends' calls revenge, is a kind of judgement.

It is worth mentioning that Shaw's treatment of the family situation in *The Devil's Disciple* and the parent-child relationship appears only in the first act, unlike in *Mrs Warren's Profession* in which it informs the whole play. Thus, Shaw gives Mrs. Dudgeon less chance than Mrs. Warren to justify her actions to her children. As a result, the audience, as well as her children, can hardly sympathise with her, and in their judgement, she is a bad mother. She only explains to the Reverend Anthony Anderson the reason why she feels unhappiness in her marriage, but still that does not justify her ill-treatment of her children and of Essie, Richard's illegitimate young niece. She admits that marrying Timothy, Richard's father, instead of his brother Peter, whom she loved, has caused her unhappiness. She has regretted the advice once given to her by a Puritan preacher not to follow her heart because it is 'deceitful . . . and desperately wicked' (*Devil's Disciple* 3: 278). Mrs. Dudgeon's experience of being in an unhappy marriage is similar to that of Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's *Ghosts*, except that Mrs. Alving, as Crompton points out, 'found consolation for her unhappy marriage in her love for her son' (49). Mrs. Dudgeon, on the other hand, is incapable of either kindness or love for her children, and she even considers them as a burden. In a conversation between her and her second son, Christy, she says: 'D'ye think I've not had enough trouble and care put upon me bringing up my own girls, let alone you and your good-for-nothing brother, without having your uncle's bastards' (3: 274). What keeps her in an unhappy relationship with her husband and children is

mainly her commitment to duty as well as other factors related to economics, status, and religion. Her belief that each person should do his duty to his family is what makes her blame her deceased husband for following his brother and leaving his family before he dies: 'and your father, instead of staying at home where his duty was, with his own family, goes after him and dies, leaving everything on my shoulders It's sinful, so it is: downright sinful' (3: 274-75).

Since Mrs. Dudgeon considers abandoning duty a sin, she calls her son Richard, 'a lost sinner' (3: 275). There are other reasons as well for Mrs. Dudgeon's hatred of Richard and calling him a sinner: he rebelled against her will and left his family for years; and he rebelled against her self-denying Puritanism and became the devil's disciple. Michael Billington in his introduction to the play argues that a case of a child's rejection of its parent is manifested in two plays: *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple*. In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Vivie substitutes work for her mother's corrupted life, whereas Richard in *The Devil's Disciple* substitutes 'self-indulgent pleasure' for his mother's religion (13). What Billington calls 'self-indulgent pleasure' would have been the right word to describe Richard's reaction to his mother's religious fanaticism. However, taking into consideration Richard's self-sacrifice 'for the world's future' rather than for love at the end of the play, it seems that Richard is not really indulging in pleasure, otherwise he would not sacrifice his pleasure for the collective good. According to Robert F. Whitman, Richard's 'diabolism' or self-indulgent pleasure is only a 'role' he plays (63). Perhaps Richard plays this role to irritate his family, especially his mother. He proudly and shamelessly admits in front of his whole family that he is 'the Devil's Disciple.' The child's rejection of the parent is, therefore, harsher in *The Devil's Disciple* than in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, for it is motivated by hatred, along with a desire for independence. Richard counters everything his mother does or believes in. While she adheres to religion as a convention, he follows a religion of his own choice. Because of this conflict in beliefs and actions, Mrs. Dudgeon becomes disappointed in her son and treats him as an enemy. Not only that, but she envies him too.

Mrs. Dudgeon's disappointment in her son is revealed from the beginning of the play. While she is sitting at home waiting for her husband's return, her son

Christy breaks the news of his father's death to her. She cries angrily and bitterly not for her loss, but for the responsibility her husband has put on her. She rebukes Christy for his indifference to his father's death, saying with disappointment: 'A nice comfort my children are to me! One son a fool, and the other a lost sinner' (3: 275). Christy is represented by Shaw as a stupid, weak fellow who is, as described in the stage directions, 'soullessly indifferent to the strife of Good and Evil' (3: 274). His inability to rebel against his mother's authority and tyranny due to his weakness makes him submit to her, thus choosing misery over liberty. His characteristics are in complete contrast with those of Richard. His characteristics are, in fact, uncommon among other Shavian sons. He is, however, similar to Stephen Undershaft in *Major Barbara* in that he is dependent on his mother and dominated by her. But Stephen is smarter, and his character is stronger than Christy's. Therefore, it can be said that in *The Devil's Disciple*, Shaw has depicted the strongest of his dramatic sons, Richard, and the weakest one, Christy. The contrast emphasises Richard's strength of character and rebellious nature. However, it is worth mentioning that the first act of the play shows that the real contrast in character is between Richard and his mother rather than between him and his brother.

Mrs. Dudgeon not only tyrannizes over her own children, but also young Essie. She treats her with cruelty, viewing her as another burden her husband has placed upon her before his death. Although Essie is an orphan and only about sixteen years old, Mrs. Dudgeon has no consideration whatsoever for her feelings. She calls her 'sinful girl' and 'the punishment of his [her father's] wickedness and shame' (3: 273-74). Moreover, she exercises authority over her by giving her orders and expecting obedience from her: 'Dont answer me, Miss; but shew your obedience by doing what I tell you' (3: 273). She treats her the way she treats her own children, not as a human being, but as a slave. Essie goes to her room in the first scene and reappears in the scene of the reading of Mr. Dudgeon's will, when she meets Richard for the first time.

Following the arrival of Christy, Anderson comes to the house of the Dudgeons bringing the news of Mr. Dudgeon's death and the new will he had made. The second news outrages Mrs. Dudgeon because she believes that her husband had no right to give his money to someone other than herself, even to their own son. The

dialogue between Mrs. Dudgeon and Anderson reveals how much Mrs. Dudgeon feels injustice and resentment because she realised too late that she did not get any reward for her devotion to duty. In contrast, and adding to her disappointment, Richard, who rejected his family and freed himself from duty towards them, gets the biggest portion of his father's money. The dialogue also shows the amount of hatred that Mrs. Dudgeon and Richard have for each other. Mrs. Dudgeon calls her son 'wicked, dissolute, godless,' and Richard says in the message he sent to his father '[t]hat he would stand by his wicked uncle and stand against his good parents, in this world and the next' (3: 276-77). Richard's words also reveal his love for his uncle who was hanged for being a rebel, and Richard's appreciation of rebellion as well. Mrs. Dudgeon thinks that Richard will be punished for his words and actions. Ironically, he gets rewarded by his father.

The scene of the reading of the will is important for examining the relationship between Richard and his mother. In this scene, Richard appears for the first time in the play, and his mother for the last time. All the members of the Dudgeon family as well as Anderson and his wife, Judith, gather at Mr. and Mrs. Dudgeon's house for the reading of the will. Once more, the audience knows about Richard's bad reputation, but this time not from his mother but from Judith. She warns Essie not to mention Richard's name or think about him because he is 'a bad man' and 'a smuggler' who 'has no love for his mother and his family' (3: 283). Shaw here depicts Richard as someone rejected by everyone, first because of his way of life, which contradicts theirs, and second because of his rejection of his own family. In both cases, Richard is accused of running counter to the laws of his family and society. Judith's advice to young Essie is interrupted by the arrival of Anderson, Lawyer Hawkins, and the Dudgeons. The last person to arrive is Richard.

Richard gets everyone's attention the moment he enters the house. He is, as Shaw states, better-looking than the rest of his family, but 'his expression is reckless and sardonic, his manner defiant and satirical' (3: 286). Richard's character and health are both strong, just like other Shavian young protagonists in general, and Vivie in particular whom Shaw describes as having 'a powerful fist' (*Mrs Warren* 3: 41). Since Shaw considers children as the hope of the world, it makes sense to represent them in his plays as physically and emotionally strong. In contrast to

Shaw's dramatic children, children in Ibsen's plays are often physically weak. Most of them experience weakness in their health, such as Oswald in *Ghosts*. Although Oswald has a strong, rebellious character, his health becomes poor due to a disease he has inherited from his father. This disease makes him, in fact, dependent on his mother, though against his will. Conversely, Shaw's children in general, and Richard in particular, are healthy and not in any case dependent on their parents. In addition to their strength and energy, they are not bound by any sense of duty and conventionality. They believe in liberty and the right to determine their own destiny, except in a few cases where Shawian children, such as Christy, exhibit some weakness in character and cannot liberate themselves from their parents' control, but they are often mocked by Shaw, and their weakness is underlined. This could have implications for Shaw's progressive view and Ibsen's degenerative view of human evolution, as explained by Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr in *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett* (78). Shaw's representation of children reflects his view of evolution as regenerative and progressive, as will be demonstrated in chapter two.

The meeting between Richard and his mother shows an unnatural mother-son relationship, one full of hatred from each side of this relationship. Whitman describes this unusual kind of relationship as 'a violent antipathy within the traditionally sanctified mother-son relationship' (62). When Richard sees his mother for the first time after many years, 'his lip rolls up horribly from his dog tooth as he meets her look of undisguised hatred' (*Devil's Disciple* 3: 286). Mrs. Dudgeon hates her son, and Richard hates his mother to the extent that he opposes everything his mother believes in or stands for, whether piety, virtue, morality, or conventionality. Richard declares in front of everyone that he has become 'the Devil's Disciple,' something completely antithetical to how he was brought up, and that his house will be the devil's home (3: 293-94). He describes his house as 'this house of children's tears,' and he promises that 'no child shall cry in it' anymore (3: 293-94). This reveals his miserable, unhappy childhood, during which he suffered from his mother's tyranny. According to Crompton, the fact that Richard has been 'tyrannized over as a child' makes him react violently 'against any and all bullying of the weak' (49).

Although Richard seems to have no feeling or sympathy for anyone else, he does show sympathy for Essie. It affects him greatly when he notices that she has been crying, and he reacts with violence and wrath asking: 'Who has been making her cry? Who has been ill-treating her?' (3: 288). Mrs. Dudgeon then rises and confronts him, asking him to leave her house. Richard responds with confidence that this is something to be determined after the reading of the will. Mr. Dudgeon's will shows that the house is indeed Richard's subject to some conditions, to which Richard agrees; among them is that Richard shall not let Essie suffer from starvation or poverty. Richard's treatment of Essie does not really change after the reading of the will. He has been good to her from the moment he has met her, knowing that 'there is hope in the eyes of the child' (*Devil's Disciple* 3: 288). His good treatment of her continues to the end of Act I when he acts as her protector. After declaring that his house will be the house of the devil, he sarcastically dares all virtuous attendants to save Essie from this house of the devil. Judith rushes to Essie offering her protection, but Essie rejects her and chooses to be protected by the devil's disciple rather than by God-fearing people. Essie chooses to live with Richard because he is the only one who treats her as a human being. Richard gets Essie's satisfaction and, at the same time, arouses his mother's resentment. At the end of Act I, Mrs. Dudgeon curses Richard as she leaves the house. She acts just like Mrs. Warren at the end of the play when she tells Vivie before she leaves her office that '[n]o woman ever had luck with a mother's curse on her' (3: 104). But since Richard behaves more irreverently than Vivie, his response to his mother's curse is: 'It will bring me luck' (3: 295). The act ends with Essie crying and kissing Richard's hand, for he has saved her from 'this house of children's tears.' He allows her to cry if she wants to, for, as Brad Kent points out, '[t]he next generation does not have its behaviour censored' (515). Since Richard has got rid of his mother, he also has to get rid of her system and replace it with another one that is more suitable for the new generation; one which is based on expression rather than suppression, and love rather than fear.

The rest of the play sheds light on the relationship between Richard and people other than his family members. In fact, the events after Act I revolve around the relationship between Richard and the minister's wife, Judith. While Richard's treatment of his mother shows his wickedness, his treatment of Judith reveals his

goodness, but not his love for her. The sacrifice Richard makes when he is arrested mistakenly and his willingness to face death instead of Anderson may suggest that he is motivated by love for Judith, as would be the case in conventional melodramas. However, Shaw subverts the melodramatic convention and shows Richard's heroic sacrifice is motivated rather by the law of his own nature. Richard explains to Judith why he has acted this way, saying: 'I had no motive and no interest . . . I have been brought up standing by the law of my own nature; and I may not go against it . . . I should have done the same for any other man in the town, or any other man's wife' (3: 322). Richard's speech disappoints Judith as well as the sentimental audience. As a matter of fact, Richard sympathises with Judith in the same way he sympathises with Essie and with anyone who suffers (Whitman 64). No one and nothing can change his conviction or break his will. Therefore, Richard finds peace and relief in adherence to a system of his own choice, while his mother finds fear and pain in adherence to a system chosen for her by convention. As Carol L. Riddle points out, Richard is the only one in the play who does not adhere to 'an external system of belief' (277). He rather adheres to an internal system, that is, his own belief system and revolts against any system that contradicts it.

The play, like *Mrs Warren's Profession*, challenges the traditional parent-child relationship. Richard and Mrs. Dudgeon hate each other, and Richard has to reject his mother in order to progress. Therefore, Richard leaves his house when his father is alive, just like Vivie in *Mrs Warren's Profession*. However, the situation is reversed when Richard comes back for the reading of his father's will. This time, it is the mother who walks out of the house, not the son. Hence, as Mark H. Sterner argues, '[t]raditional forms of authority, such as rights granted by society to parents, are challenged when unmerited' (342). Mrs. Dudgeon is deprived of everything that could give her a privileged position over her son. Thus, her rights are ignored while Richard's rights are assured. Elsie M. Wiedner argues that Mr. Dudgeon has given his wife's dowry to Richard in order to 'liberate[] the inheritance from conventional, duty-bound control' (28). As a result, Mrs. Dudgeon leaves the house and then becomes ill, while Richard enjoys his triumph over his mother and his overthrowing of her law dominated by convention and duty.

Chapter Conclusion

Returning to the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, one can understand the first clause to mean, from Shaw's perspective, evolution, and the second to mean revolution. The relationship between the two will be further explored throughout the thesis. This chapter focuses on one of the revolutionary means Shaw proposes to facilitate social progress, which is the rejection of authority, represented here by the parent. In Shaw's view, social progress will be possible when young people reject authority and abandon their duty to their elders and established institutions.

Accordingly, Shaw seems to suggest that 'the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions' the more independent and free the young become, and thus the more their chances of improving the world increase. Such views are made explicit in Shaw's non-dramatic writings and plays, in particular *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple*. Both plays show an increase in the independence of the child and a decline in parental authority. Shaw's political purposes can be understood by examining his representation of rebellious offspring, such as Vivie, Richard, and the rest of Shaw's young protagonists, who are independent in thought and action and unrestrained by filial duty.

In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Vivie rejects her mother and abandons her filial duty when her mother tries to control her life, and when she finds that her mother's way of life is in conflict with her own principles. Vivie's progression, therefore, depends on her rejection of her mother. This has implications for Shaw's progressive views, which are also reflected in *The Devil's Disciple*. Shaw's representation of Richard, as Whitman puts it, 'a rebel against the laws of the family, of the conventional morality of his day, and of the state' (66), is the outcome of his political thought. Shaw seems to suggest that society needs people like Richard who are able to revolt against the old order and replace it with a new one. Mrs. Dudgeon, since she represents the old order and traditional thought, is portrayed as someone dominated by fear and appearances. Although she is a very adamant character, her weakness is that she is unable to give up conventional ideals. She is like Mrs. Warren in that she asks for a conventional parent-child relationship, one which requires filial deference to parental authority, but Richard rejects this idea and revolts against it. Shaw does not suggest that the child's rejection of the parent

should necessarily be harsh and total rejection (though Richard's is), but rather he suggests that this act of rejection is a moment of development that is necessary. As Shaw suggests in the *Quintessence*, personal development is a necessary precursor of social change (167-68). Thus, it can be said that for Shaw the rejection of parental authority is a kind of generational shift, wherein rebellious children could be a tool for social change.

Indeed, Shaw in *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple* questions parental authority more generally as a concept and practice within the particular cases of Vivie and her mother and Richard and his mother. Since parental authority in Shaw's plays could be a symbol of political authority, Shaw, therefore, seems to present a rejection of a whole system in a particular case of a child and its parent. In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, Shaw rejects capitalism and exposes its corruption and the contamination of prostitution through his treatment of the relationship between Vivie and her mother. In *The Devil's Disciple*, Shaw rejects conventional ideals of religion and morality through his portrayal of Richard and his mother. In addition, the two plays, like most of Shaw's dramas, direct the feelings of the audience towards the relationship between parents and children. As Eric Bentley suggests, Shaw supplants the traditional interest in romantic love with the parent-child relationship: 'instead of the emotions of lover and mistress, he renders the emotions of parents and children, and particularly the emotion of the child rejecting the parent' (*Making* 72). Moreover, Shaw in his plays does not raise the sympathy of the audience for parental rights. On the contrary, his sympathy is on the side of the offspring, especially daughters, and their right to liberty, in part because he thinks that their well-being is a barometer of national well-being. He does not represent them as weak and subordinate to their parents. On the contrary, they are represented as strong-willed and determined to fight for their right of independence and freedom of choice. No wonder they are represented in this way because, as I have argued, Shaw viewed them as a vehicle for social revolution (i.e. radical change), and, as will be explained in the next chapter, a vehicle for social evolution (i.e. gradual change).

Chapter Two

Children and ‘Creative Evolution’

Introduction

Chapter one focused on Bernard Shaw’s radical views on improving society by means of a rebellion against authority, conventionality, and established views of duty, represented in his plays by the rebellion of offspring against their parents. This chapter focuses on Shaw’s thoughts on improving society by more gradual means and producing a new genetically-improved generation. Eugenics is deeply rooted in Shavian socialism, and children provide a really important nexus for Shaw’s political and evolutionary philosophies. Hence, the first part of this chapter will examine Shaw’s views on evolution and will explore how children, in Shaw’s view, could participate in this process. The main concern in the second part of the chapter will be to examine the way in which Shaw’s dramatic children in *You Never Can Tell* (1896) and *Man and Superman* (1902) act as agents of what Shaw calls ‘Creative Evolution.’

In order to understand Shaw’s theory of Creative Evolution, or what he claims to be ‘the religion of the twentieth century’ (*Prefaces* 519), it is necessary to give a brief account of the intellectual background of this theory. This will show that Shaw was engaged in the debates on evolution in the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. In order to facilitate this exposition, the biological and philosophical sources from which Shaw synthesised his evolutionary ideas will be discussed respectively. In the biological sphere, the influences of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Samuel Butler (a mid-Victorian novelist and amateur scientist whose views on evolution are anti-Darwinian) on Shaw will be considered; in the philosophical sphere, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche’s influences will be briefly discussed.

In the early 1800s, Lamarck contributed to the world of science, biology in particular, and developed his theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics in *Zoological Philosophy* (1809). According to this theory, organisms actively

contribute to their own development by means of ‘external stimuli and internal stimulating force’ (195). Therefore, with the help of environment (the external stimuli) and internal driving forces such as desire and effort, animals can develop their own bodies. According to Lamarck, the giraffe developed a long neck as a result of its ‘habit’ of making ‘constant efforts’ to stretch its neck to reach food (122). Moreover, Lamarck suggests that the new characteristic acquired by effort, the long neck in case of giraffes, passes on to the offspring, and thus ‘the same habits and instinct are handed on from generation to generation in the various species or races of animals’ (352-52). The theory, thus, acknowledges the important role of desire and effort in evolution. In addition, the transmission of improved qualities to the next generations through desire and effort allows for the possibility of the development of the race.

Shaw found Lamarck’s ideas plausible, and even more acceptable than Darwin’s theory of evolution, which will be discussed shortly. Shaw’s familiarity with and enthusiasm for Lamarck’s evolutionary ideas can mostly be seen in *The New Theology* and the preface to *Back to Methuselah* (1920). *The New Theology*, a lay sermon Shaw delivered in 1907 at Kensington Town Hall in London, shows Shaw’s interest in the evolutionary ideas of Lamarck and Samuel Butler. Shaw regards Lamarck’s views on evolution and the mechanism of inheriting acquired characteristics, as illustrated by the giraffe example, as sensible, mostly because it ‘implied purpose and will’ (3). Shaw also praises Samuel Butler, whose views will soon be discussed, for reaching the same conclusion as Lamarck’s: ‘that it was no use denying the existence of purpose and will in the universe’ (4). In his preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw interprets Lamarckian views of evolution and at the same time explains his own evolutionary theory. He suggests that the individual acquires a habit through willing as well as a series of efforts and relapses, and that the relapses ‘recur not only from effort to effort in the case of the individual, but from generation to generation in the case of the race’ (488). Then, this conscious process of acquirement becomes ‘an instinctive and unconscious inborn one’ over time and across generations (490). According to Shaw’s evolutionary views, the end of evolution is the production of the ‘Superman,’ whom Shaw describes as ‘the ideal individual being omnipotent, omniscient, infallible, and withal completely, unilludedly selfconscious: in short, a god’ (*Man and Superman* 3: 626).

Shaw, thus, found that Lamarckism supported his own evolutionary ideas, and thus gave hope for the emergence of a generation of Supermen, who would be intellectually, morally, and politically improved as a result of the will and effort of their ancestors. His enthusiasm for Lamarck's theory, and his strong belief in it made him completely reject August Weismann's experiments on mice in the 1880s and 1890s. Weismann put Lamarck's theory to the test by removing the tails repeatedly of successive generations of mice to see if any offspring would be born without tails, but there were none. Shaw's defence of Lamarckian inheritance was that Weismann's experiments had not been tried on characteristics or habits and that they overlooked the power of the will to change (*Prefaces* 503). Hence, in spite of this concrete evidence of Weismann, which undermined Lamarck's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, Shaw believed, or rather hoped, that the evolution of species would be possible through an exercise of the will and desire. Whilst Shaw accepted Lamarckian evolution, he completely rejected Darwin's theory of evolution in which the driving force is Natural Selection. He objected to it as a mechanistic theory with 'no moral significance . . . no purpose, no intelligence,' and, most importantly, no exercise of the human will (*Prefaces* 505). Shaw argues in his postscript to *Back to Methuselah* that Darwinism induces a sense of pessimism: 'What damns Darwinian Natural Selection as a creed,' he says, 'is that it takes hope out of evolution and substitutes a paralysing fatalism which is utterly discouraging. As Butler put it, it "banishes Mind from the universe"' (*Complete Plays* 2: c).

To judge by the number of Shaw's references to Samuel Butler, the influence of Butler on Shaw was great. Several times in his works, including in the *Quintessence*, *The New Theology*, and the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw praises Butler for grasping the whole idea of Darwinism and the danger of it. Moreover, he frequently refers to Butler's ideas expressed in *Luck, or Cunning?* (1886), especially the section on 'The Attempt to Eliminate Mind,' in which Butler explains how Darwinism attempts to 'get rid of feeling, consciousness, and mind generally, from active participation in the evolution of the universe' (135-46). In 1935, on the centenary of Butler's birth, Shaw wrote an article in which he described Butler as '[a] Prophet of Creative Evolution' and 'a man of genius' who was able to predict the negative impact of Darwinism on science and civilisation, which lies in continuing to assume that 'mind, self-control, creative aspiration, and even common

conscience are superfluous inconveniences, useless,' and thus what Butler was trying to do, and what he himself believed should be done was 'restoring mind to the universe from which Darwinism banished it' (11). Hence, both Shaw and Butler were neo-Lamarckians who believed in the power of human mind and the importance of intellect, desire, and will.

On the philosophical level, Shaw is considered a disciple of Wagner, Ibsen, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Links to the Shavian Superman can be found in Wagner's 'The Ring Cycle' and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. Generally speaking, Shaw's thoughts on how mankind should improve are the outcome of his own reworking of what he read. However, his ideas about the Superman and the role the will plays in improving the species were perhaps mostly influenced by the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, in particular, the former's concept of the 'will to live' and the latter's concept of the 'will to power.' Shaw derived the idea of linking sexual relations to the production of a new species, and thus to the development of the race, from Schopenhauer. In the chapter entitled 'The Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes' in *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), a work of which Shaw was aware as his prefaces to *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah* show, Schopenhauer writes:

The ultimate end of all love affairs . . . is really more important than all other ends of human life, and is therefore quite worthy of the profound seriousness with which every one pursues it. That which is decided by it is nothing less than *the composition of the next generation*. . . . The growing inclination of two lovers is really already the will to live of the new individual which they can and desire to produce. . . . Accordingly the fundamental theme of almost all comedies is the appearance of the genius of the species with its aims. (3: 340-66)

Schopenhauer's treatment of the relations between the sexes from a metaphysical perspective influenced Shaw in his dramatic and non-dramatic writings. Shaw came to believe that the motivation behind the union of man and woman should not be mere pleasure but something higher and nobler, such as the production of a higher species, as Don Juan states in *Man and Superman*: 'In the sex relation the universal

creative energy, of which the parties are both the helpless agents, over-rides and sweeps away all personal considerations and dispenses with all personal relations' (3: 637). But whereas Shaw accepted some of Schopenhauer's ideas expressed in *The World as Will*, he, on the other hand, rejected Schopenhauer's pessimistic view of life (Nethercot, *Philosopher* 64).

This aspect of Shaw's thinking is problematic and has provoked criticism, especially from Robert Brustein. Brustein argues that Shaw's metaphysical thought reflects a sense of 'rebellion against the very nature of human existence,' and 'disgust at the human body and its functions' (100). Accordingly, Shaw's metaphysical view of the sexual relationship could be the result of what Brustein describes as Shaw's inability 'to accept man's animality as a permanent fact of life' (100). This seems to explain why Shaw regards the sexual act as instrumental rather than an end in itself. Furthermore, Shaw's Superman transcends all human limitation and imperfection, an idea Shaw developed from Nietzsche, as will be discussed in more detail.

The Shavian word 'Superman' comes from Nietzsche's 'Übermensch,' translated in English as 'overman,' in his discussion of the 'will to power.' Shaw admitted in the preface to *Major Barbara* that he borrowed that word from Nietzsche (29). However, in the same preface, Shaw denied the claim that he got the ideas expressed in the early nineties, in particular in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, from Nietzsche because the first English translation of Nietzsche appeared in 1896, and Shaw could not read German before that time. Furthermore, in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw argues that the idea of the Superman does not necessarily have its roots in the works of Nietzsche but could be traced back to Michelangelo, who 'could paint the Superman three hundred years before Nietzsche wrote *Also Sprach Zarathustra*' (34). Besides, in 'The Revolutionist's Handbook,' by John Tanner, appended to *Man and Superman*, Shaw remarks: 'The cry for the Superman did not begin with Nietzsche, nor will it end with his vogue' (691-92). Nevertheless, Nietzsche was one of Shaw's 'favorite' philosophers who, perhaps, 'stimulated' him the most (Nethercot, *Philosopher* 63-65). Moreover, Shaw was certainly influenced by Nietzsche's concept of the Superman, especially after the English translations of the works of Nietzsche appeared in 1896 and 1899. And in 1902, he wrote *Man and*

Superman and admitted in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the play that his views are similar to those of a number of writers, among them Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Ibsen, for their 'peculiar sense of the world' which he recognised as 'more or less akin to' his own (*Prefaces* 162). Shaw tends to identify himself with this group of writers because of the novelty of their ideas, their ability to teach the audience something, and their recognition of the role of the will in determining human destiny, and in this lies the difference between 'artist-philosophers' and mere 'artists' (*Prefaces* 161-62). Shaw's references to Nietzsche, in particular, are frequent, such as in *The Sanity of Art* (1895), *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1898), *Man and Superman* (preface and play), and *Back to Methuselah*.

Like Nietzsche, Shaw believed in the importance of producing a superior man. Both Nietzsche and Shaw believed in the ability, if not the necessity, of man to elevate himself to superiority through his own will. The idea that man can and should transcend himself, which obviously appealed to Shaw, occurs in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), in which Nietzsche writes: 'I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?' (6). However, Shaw differs from Nietzsche in some respects. In his dramatic writings, Shaw gives dominance to the female over the male in relationships which are considered to be manifestations of the working of the Life Force, the driving power behind Creative Evolution, towards creating the Superman. The woman is the one who exercises the will to get a father for the Superman, and thus becomes the pursuer instead of the pursued, which is a reversal of the traditional relationship between man and woman. In the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to *Man and Superman*, Shaw declares: 'Man is no longer, like Don Juan, victor in the duel of sex. Whether he has ever really been may be doubted: at all events the enormous superiority of Woman's natural position in this matter is telling with greater and greater force' (*Prefaces* 153). Hence, Shaw's inversion of the sex roles; his opposition to Nietzsche's portrayal of women as weak, inferior, and less dominating than men reflects his feminist sympathies, and as Gerald Nforbin argues, serves his 'socialist feminist agenda' (152). Shaw's socialist feminist agenda is compatible with his Creative Evolution insofar as the theory overcomes gender inequality and portrays women playing an active role in initiating the eugenic union and dominating the relationship. However, the relationship between feminism and eugenics is problematic as the

latter, according to Susan Rensing, tends to ‘limit the roles of women to motherhood and breeding for racial betterment’ (96). One way to make eugenics compatible with feminism would be to stress the role of women as ‘sexual selectors,’ and to separate ‘breeding from motherhood’ (Rensing 96). While Shaw’s plays depict the former case, the latter case is neglected and undermined by Shaw’s assertion that ‘[w]oman must marry because the race must perish without her travail’ (*Prefaces* 156), and his portrayal of marriage as necessary for fulfilling the creative evolutionary purpose, as will be shown in *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman*.

By synthesizing, and then politicizing, Lamarck and Butler’s biological theories of evolution and Schopenhauer and Nietzsche’s philosophical notions of the power of the will and the improvement of the race, Shaw developed his own theory of Creative Evolution. Since Shaw’s Creative Evolution is a key subject in this chapter, it deserves some explanation. But before attempting to explain the meaning of Creative Evolution and the Life Force, two terms which recur frequently in Shaw’s writings on evolution, it should be noted that Shaw’s evolutionary ideas developed throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries until they took their final shape and were first presented as a coherent theory in *Man and Superman* and then in *Back to Methuselah*. In *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw alludes to his theory of social evolution, in particular, when he explains the message of Ibsen’s drama. ‘The Lesson of the Plays’ indicates that Shaw approved in Ibsen’s plays the idea that man should follow ‘not the abstract law but the living will’ (167). Since Shaw considers ‘abstract law’ in the *Quintessence* as some kind of ideal, which he regards as dangerously deceptive, then abstract laws and institutions should be removed because adherence to them is incompatible with free will. This justifies his repeated call for a rebellion against laws, institutions, and any form of authority that gets in the way of the will and could halt the evolutionary process.

Creative Evolution for Shaw is a creed that inspires optimism regarding the improvement of humanity. Shaw uses the term interchangeably with Vitalism. Biologically speaking, it opposes Darwin’s mechanism of Natural Selection; philosophically speaking, it is a creative, self-conscious process for producing a superior race. The desire or the impulse that prompts species to evolve physically and intellectually is what Shaw calls the Life Force. Shaw equates the Life Force

with the will in *The New Theology*: he declares ‘[T]here is at the back of the universe a will, a life-force,’ and continues, describing the Life Force in more detail:

Now conceive of the force behind the universe 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 . . . 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, “. . . 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.” (4-5)

In short, the Life Force seems to be an irrational and irresistible force, attempting to develop better human brains and guide human beings towards perfection. It uses men and women as instruments for producing a highly-intelligent species, or what Shaw calls Supermen, that would eventually discover the purpose of life. To achieve the evolutionary goal of progress, a passive submission to the Life Force is needed, but this is an unrealistic expectation. Moreover, to consider the Life Force, a force which is powerless and imperfect in itself, as the only authority to be served is irrational. To assume that the human mind is incapable of understanding the reality or the purpose of the universe is an underestimation of the human mind which has so far discovered many mysteries of life and nature, and reflects Shaw’s lack of understanding of the world. It also reflects Shaw’s ignorance of human nature, as Max Beerbohm puts it: ‘Of Mr. Shaw’s philosophy I need merely say that it rests, like Plato’s *Republic*, on a profound ignorance of human nature’ (T. Evans 80). Shaw seems to be incorporating sexual and survival instincts within his idea of the Life Force. In other words, there is an appropriation of the power of nature.

Shaw felt that a superior race of Supermen was needed when he became disappointed in men for being unable to achieve real progress. In one of the chapters entitled ‘Progress an Illusion’ in ‘The Revolutionist’s Handbook,’ Shaw expresses his disappointment that human civilisation has not made any real progress. He declares elsewhere that ‘there is now no reasonable excuse for refusing to face the

fact that nothing but a eugenic religion can save our civilization from the fate that has overtaken all previous civilizations' (qtd. in Glad 49). As a result, he cried for the Superman: '[W]e now call for The Superman, virtually a new species, to rescue the world from mismanagement' (*Prefaces* 737). The purpose of creating a race of Supermen for Shaw is therefore primarily a political one. In the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to *Man and Superman*, Shaw suggests that human beings should have a better political understanding of the world: 'We must either breed political capacity or be ruined by Democracy. . . . Democracy . . . requires a whole population of capable voters: that is, of political critics who . . . can at least recognize and appreciate capacity and benevolence in others' (*Prefaces* 159). Hence, the failure of democratic policies and politicians seems to be the main reason for Shaw's desperation and resort to the Superman. But this is where Shaw's position becomes difficult and controversial, and could be one of anti-democracy, totalitarianism, or fascism. Shaw's advocacy of the Superman shows his inclination to accept a despotic ruling elite, which could ultimately lead to human destruction. As Piers J. Hale points out, '[t]he elitist ideal inherent to the idea of the superman made it easy for him [Shaw] to accept the singular effectiveness of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin, in each of whom Shaw at one time or another saw the mark of the life force at work' (205). Indeed, there are bigger dimensions to Shaw's political ideas; they were turned into difficult political actions in the twentieth century. However, this thesis looks into those ideas in terms of education, children, and the family rather than in terms of European or military politics.

Among the things Shaw most disliked in contemporary society were capitalism, poverty, and idleness; and he thought that the remedy lay in socialism, that is, an equal distribution of income (Birch 58-64). Shaw perceives eugenics as a requirement for socialism: 'The only fundamental and possible Socialism,' Shaw proposes, 'is the socialization of the selective breeding of Man: in other terms, of human evolution' (*Revolutionist's Handbook* 724). The relationship between socialism and eugenics is complementary for Shaw rather than substitutive. Whereas Shaw suggests in 'The Revolutionist's Handbook' that we cannot have socialism without selective breeding of humans, he states in the *Intelligent Woman's Guide* that we cannot improve the race without achieving socialism first: '[W]e shall never get a well-bred race; and it is all the fault of inequality of income' (55). The reason

for Shaw's pessimism here, although he is always optimistic as far as eugenics is concerned, is that he believes that free choice in marriage is required for breeding a better human race, and this is difficult to achieve in a capitalist society where inequality of income has led to inequality of opportunity. Therefore, in his view, a political revolution that would eliminate all class barriers and a biological evolution that would improve the quality of human beings are both needed to improve society and humanity in general. This suggests that there is a strong connection between Shaw's revolutionary and evolutionary ideas. All of them, in fact, serve his Shavian Socialism. Thus, Shaw's evolutionary theory seems to be driven by four motives: a rejection of capitalism and the existing social order, a fear of degeneration, a desire for redemption, and an interest in eugenics.

Eugenics, its goals and methods in particular, has been a matter of controversy since the late-nineteenth century. This is in part because it violates the laws of nature and the rights of individuals to free choice in marriage and parenthood, and in part because it has not been proven effective in improving mankind and society, not to mention the vagueness of the idea of the 'Superman' and the limited knowledge of the mechanism of heredity at the time. Yet, eugenicists and socialists were quite enthusiastic about race improvement for social and political purposes, hence the development of a eugenics movement in the early-twentieth century. Such a movement was motivated by a desire to improve the quality of the human race by selective breeding, which would increase the birth-rate of the 'fit' and reduce the numbers of the 'unfit.' Eugenicists and socialists were encouraged by the potential progressive implications of eugenics, though each group differed in their specific goals and agendas. However, some of them rejected certain kinds and aspects of eugenics, mainly 'positive eugenics,' while they accepted 'negative eugenics,' which involves the elimination of the unfit, i.e., a form of what we would now call 'ethnic cleansing.'

Among those who rejected positive eugenics, or the encouragement of the reproduction of individuals with superior qualities, were L. T. Hobhouse and H. G. Wells. Hobhouse in *Social Evolution and Political Theory* (1911) argues that it is necessary for the development of eugenics that eugenicists have a clear idea of 'social worth, of the nature of human progress and of the qualities making for it,' and

that they should also have sufficient 'knowledge of the laws of inheritance' so that increasing the production of individuals with desirable qualities could succeed (42). However, this is a matter of philosophy, not biology, as some eugenicists acknowledged the need for 'a well-grounded social philosophy' to better understand 'the causation of many of the higher human qualities' (43). While Hobhouse found positive eugenics discouraging and difficult to achieve, he supported the idea of segregating individuals with inferior qualities, whom he associated with 'insanity,' 'feeble-mindedness,' 'alcoholism,' and 'syphilis,' viewing it as imperative and indisputable (43).

Wells, too, was sceptical about positive eugenics, though he was interested in improving humanity by scientific means. Like Hobhouse, he recognised the difficulty and complexity of applying positive eugenics to human beings. In *Mankind in the Making* (1903), Wells asserts that eugenicists are 'not a bit clear what points to breed for and what points to breed out' (40). Even if they agreed on some qualities, such as 'beauty,' 'health,' 'energy,' 'capacity,' and 'ability,' the chances of transmitting those qualities to the offspring would be very low. This is because, Wells argues, such qualities are not as simple as they might first appear. Each of those qualities has different types and varieties that are 'made up of a varying number of elements in dissimilar proportions' so that the balance of the elements and their arrangement in a certain order determine the result (42-47).

In addition to his discussion of the complexity of the mechanism of heredity, Wells explains the difficulty of determining the undesirable traits. Discussing negative eugenics, Wells argues that the very phrase, the 'elimination' of the 'Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit' has no definition whatsoever, which makes negative eugenics just as complex as positive eugenics (51). Wells takes 'criminality' as an example which illustrates the difficulty in determining what 'points to breed out' (51). Wells suggests that it would be a mistake and even 'a stupidity' to consider criminality as 'a specific simple quality.' Moreover, Wells argues that while it is true that a criminal is 'of less personal value to the community than a law-abiding citizen . . . *it does not follow for one moment that he is of less value as a parent* [Wells' italics]' (54). Therefore, unlike Hobhouse, Wells views the prevention of the reproduction of the unfit as complex and problematic due to the difficulty of defining

the 'unfit' and differentiating between one's social worth and one's worth and competence as a parent. Even Francis Galton, the father of eugenics, once admitted in *Essays in Eugenics* (1909) that 'the goodness or badness of character is not absolute, but relative to the current form of civilisation' (35). Determining who is fit and who is unfit was one of the most problematic issues which eugenicists had to consider in their eugenic policy. Furthermore, Wells in *A Modern Utopia* (1905) stresses the importance of individuality and attacks the whole idea of a state-controlled eugenic programme, and writes: 'Let us set aside at once all nonsense of the sort one hears in certain quarters about the human stud farm' (181).

Even though Shaw shared Wells' scepticism about positive eugenics (Hale 204), he was more optimistic than Wells regarding the potential uses of negative eugenics, perhaps because his view of the application of eugenics as a means of improving society and humanity is, in general, more simplistic and less realistic than the views of both Wells and Hobbhouse. As already explained, Shaw thought that the success of eugenics and the production of the Superman depend on individuals' submission to the power of nature and the elimination of all the barriers that might prevent men and women from mating. Shaw's conception of the Superman is shaped by a philosophical rather than a scientific thought. Maximilian A. Mügge in 'Eugenics and the Superman' (1909) argues that the Superman is an ideal that Nietzsche himself did not fully understand (and neither did Shaw, I would argue). Mügge describes the Superman as 'a goal, a far-away goal of terrestrial life' (185). Shaw's Superman is, indeed, a goal and a solution, and yet what matters more to Shaw is the hope and inspiration that eugenics and the idea of the Superman offer.

However, the hope that Shaw's Creative Evolution offers does not make it acceptable and promising. As Piers J. Hale argues, there is a 'dark side' of Shaw's Creative Evolution (206). Shaw's eugenic plan promises the survival of humanity and our civilisation. Yet, what controls the eugenic process in Shaw's Creative Evolution is the Life Force, which has neither a clear plan nor any assurance of the success of the evolutionary experiment that is achieved by means of 'trial and error' (*New Theology* 5). It can only be assumed that the Life Force is reliable and good enough to achieve progress. But the really dark side of Creative Evolution rather lies, as Hale suggests, in its lack of 'moral significance,' and thus the theory has its

limitations just as did Darwinian theory (207). The very existence of man is threatened by his failure as an evolutionary instrument: 'when one instrument is worn out, I [the Life Force] will make another' (*New Theology* 5). One can only imagine what would happen if human beings proved to be useless for the evolutionary experiment. Moreover, if a super-race was successfully produced, what would happen to the sub-race? But Shaw would not acknowledge those limitations because this would mean to give up his last hope of social and human progress.

It is now necessary to explore the place of children in Shaw's evolutionary theory and how the Life Force works through them. It will be helpful to divide the children into three categories. The first one includes genetically-improved children in the making. They do not exist yet, but Shaw desires to have them through applying his evolutionary theory. In this sense, they could be regarded as the end of Creative Evolution. The second category includes children who already exist. They are considered by Shaw as experiments in the hands of the Life Force, as will be discussed shortly. Shaw's dramatic children constitute the third category. Their representation as agents of evolution, or a means for the Life Force to fulfil its purpose, will be the main theme of the discussion about Shaw's dramatic writings.

Shaw's enthusiasm for eugenics is motivated by a desire to produce children with better capabilities who will participate effectively in society and contribute to attaining a superior civilisation. The problem will be, Shaw argues, when 'children are not destined to become producers, they will be a burden to the nation instead of a reinforcement of it' (*Practical Politics* 55). Therefore, in order to avoid ending up with an increased number of children who are incapable of making any real progress in society, an evolutionary programme needs to be carefully considered and worked out. A new generation of Supermen, superior in its quality to the preceding one, should be produced. Therefore, it can be said that the Supermen are children whose parents have been part of a Shaw-approved breeding programme.

Although Shaw in his treatment of the subject of evolution in his plays does not use real young children, they are included as an integral part of his discussion on the Life Force in his non-dramatic writings. In the 'Treatise on Parents and Children,' he defines childhood as 'a stage in the process of that continual remanufacture of the Life Stuff,' and the child as '[a]n experiment. A fresh attempt

to produce the just man made perfect: that is, to make humanity divine' (45-47). Taking into consideration this definition of the child together with the previous definition of the Life Force in *The New Theology*, it can be inferred that children are experiments only in the hands of the Life Force and not in the hands of their natural parents. In the same 'Treatise on Parents and Children,' Shaw warns parents not to interfere with the experiment of the Life Force by trying to shape the child according to their own vision of its future because such interference will stand in the way of the experiment's success (49-50). In this sense, the child, in Shaw's view, should submit to the will or the drive of the Life Force and thwart any other will which may conflict with it, even if it is the parents' will. This further suggests that the duty of submission to one's parents, and the duty of conforming to established institutions should be repudiated, and this is exactly what Shaw was advocating almost his whole life. It is necessary to note that Shaw considers submitting to duty and authority as an obstacle to evolution, which thus should be removed. Such views are perhaps exaggerated for effect, but seem to reflect Shaw's radical thinking regarding freedom and transcendence. For Shaw, total freedom is necessary for the development of the individual and society; and such freedom should be gained by rebellion when it is not granted. All things considered, Shaw's notions of revolution and evolution are motivated by a desire to transcend political and social constraints as well as human limitations. Needless to say, this is a problematic position.

Whereas Shaw was clearly an advocate of children's rights, his theory of Creative Evolution seems to regard children as objects rather than subjects with rights. Steven W. Orvis, however, claims that Shaw's Creative Evolution 'has tremendous consequence for the theory of children's rights' (82). The reason, Orvis explains, is that Shaw's Creative Evolution secures children's freedom and self-determination (82-83). To the extent that this is true, however, it seems to be based on utilitarian rather than moral reasons. The importance of children in Shaw's Creative Evolution mostly lies in their function as a means for fulfilling the evolutionary process. Moreover, the theory objectifies children by making them 'experiments' and 'instruments' rather than prioritising their own protection, nurture, and development. Orvis indicates that the 'child's own growth . . . [is] best served in this way' of letting the child 'grow on its own according to Life's inner promptings' (82). However, it is necessary for the child's growth that the parent provides the

child with supervision, protection, and nurture. Shaw's Creative Evolution, on the other hand, allows the child total freedom and independence whilst disregarding the role of the parent. The theory is not explicitly for the good of children, and is not intended to preserve children's rights, but rather to pursue an evolutionary objective. If the theory shows any concern for children's rights, it is as a by-product of its primary concern for creating a superior race.

To better understand Shaw's ideas on Creative Evolution, an examination of the way in which they are represented in Shavian drama is needed. It should be noted that this thesis explores the roots and genealogy of Shaw's political and evolutionary ideas, and how they appear in the family context of his plays rather than discussing them in relation to the difficult use or abuse of eugenics in the twentieth century. Within the family/education context, Shaw's ideas are provocative and playfully describe the mechanisms of power. It is only later when those ideas go beyond the plays and the family unit that they become problematic.

The seriousness with which Shaw deals with Creative Evolution in his non-dramatic writings is diminished by his comic treatment of the subject in his plays. Shaw devotes some of his comedies, specifically *Man and Superman*, to the idea of creating a new generation of Supermen and alludes to it in other plays, like *You Never Can Tell*. He dramatises the process by which the Superman is created, and the role of the will in this process. It starts with a desire on the part of a young unmarried woman to obtain a husband of her own choice in order to fulfil her reproductive role, and thus ensure the development of the species. In this case, the man becomes a means for the woman to produce the child, and both the man and the woman become a means for the Life Force to fulfil its purpose, which is to create a superior species. The plays also demonstrate the qualities that the father and mother of the Superman should have; the former should have intellect and the latter wilfulness and determination. Personal interest and sexual attraction are not requirements for mating. These ideas generate some of the comedy in Shaw. The representation of women pursuing men might be part of easy or conventional comedy. However, Shaw takes this convention or stereotype, puts it in a new context, and then politicizes it. As Eric Bentley suggests, Shaw's uniqueness and originality can be seen in the way he 'recreate[s] the sexual charm of both men and

women,' and the way in which 'the women in Shaw pursue a sexual purpose' (*Making* 67). Furthermore, Shaw makes the pursuing woman a strong political figure, and this is something unique in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century literature.

Many Shavian plays deal in one way or another with the theme of evolution and the irresistible power of the Life Force. However, two of Shaw's plays depict the Life Force acting through the will of a woman pushing a man into marriage almost against his will for the purpose of producing a superior race: *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman*. This results in a sex chase between a woman who is determined to have the man as a husband, and a man who is afraid of entering into matrimony, but this obstacle is overcome at the end of the play. Shavian dramatic daughters serve evolution in this instance by choosing their own husbands, who will be fathers to a new generation. As agents of the Life Force, they are determined to get husbands of their own choice, and are motivated by an appetite for evolution manifested as either a physical sensation, like Gloria in *You Never Can Tell*, or a desire for a suitable father for the offspring, like Ann in *Man and Superman*. However, it is worth mentioning that the Superman appears in neither of the plays; only the attempt to create one is dramatised. Moreover, the young women are portrayed as potential mothers of a future generation of Supermen; they do not appear as real mothers. According to Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr, this is due to 'Shaw's revolutionary feminism, his championing of women's liberation from the burdens of motherhood . . . [and] the conflict between the reproductive burden on women and their right to independence' (143). This also justifies the non-appearance of new mothers in Shaw's plays. In addition to Shepherd-Barr's logical interpretation, there are two other possible interpretations: first, that the Superman could be impossible to achieve; and second, that Shaw himself did not have a clear idea of how to achieve the Superman.

You Never Can Tell

You Never Can Tell is one of Shaw's *Plays Pleasant* which he wrote in the 1890s in order to shed light on the romantic follies of society. It is considered one of his lighter comedies, especially when compared to *Man and Superman*. Thematically, it

is about love and marriage, and it deals with the relationships between parents and children, husband and wife, and young lovers about to be married. The play is slightly overlooked in critical analyses of Shaw's plays. Frederick McDowell in 1987 argued that the play has long been neglected and undervalued by Shavian scholars but has finally been discussed seriously by five critics, and he hoped that this would lead to a reevaluation of it (*Higher* 63). Such underestimation is perhaps not surprising because Shaw himself admitted in his preface to *Plays Pleasant* that the play was merely an attempt to answer the 'many requests . . . of managers in search of fashionable comedies for West End theatres' (698). Thus, Shaw's first intention was not to dramatise serious issues in *You Never Can Tell*, or so he alleges. However, he later seems to have reconsidered the play and suggested that it should be regarded with seriousness and not merely as an ordinary farce, as his comment to William Archer, in a letter written in 1906, reveals: 'And you still talk about a "farce." The thing is a poem and a document, a sermon and a festival, all in one' (qtd. in McDowell, *Higher* 64). Similarly, he commented to Granville Barker: 'It has always seemed merely a farce written round a waiter. 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' (*Collected Letters* 1: 471). The surface meaning of 'happy ending,' according to the conventional romantic comedy, is marriage. But looking beyond the surface meaning and in relation to Shaw's evolutionary views, the happy ending seems to be something else, as will be shown later.

Among those who have focused on the play's artistic features rather than its content is Charles A. Carpenter. Although Carpenter admits that *You Never Can Tell* is a prediction of *Man and Superman*—in the sense that both stress the important role of the Life Force and show how it treats the 'Duellist of Sex' (*Art* 128)—Carpenter does not view the play as having implications for Shaw's Creative Evolution, or as one which deals with social issues. Rather, he views the play as 'a humanization of farcical comedy,' and analyses Shaw's artistic strategy of arousing 'sympathy' and 'ridicule' (130-36). However, taking into consideration that Shaw used drama to serve his political and socialist ideas, then the proposition that there is a connection between *You Never Can Tell* and Shaw's political and evolutionary views regarding Creative Evolution should be taken more seriously. Among the critics who have

clearly proposed a link between *You Never Can Tell* and Shaw's political and evolutionary ideas are Martin Meisel, Warren Smith, Stanely Kauffmann, and Frederick McDowell. Meisel in *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theater* (1963) describes Valentine, the hero of *You Never Can Tell*, as being 'caught when a force beyond himself, a Life Force in fact, seizes him in the midst of flirtation and sweeps him into marriage' (179). Similarly, Smith in *Bishop of Everywhere: Bernard Shaw and the Life Force* (1982) has pointed out that '[t]he force that sweeps the characters of *You Never Can Tell* into the twentieth century is perhaps the most joyous force in all of Shaw' (21). By 'the force,' Smith means the Life Force in Creative Evolution, as his subsequent discussion of the play reveals. And in an interview with Jane Ann Crum in 1987, Kauffmann indicates that *You Never Can Tell* reflects the shifting social and political ideas at the turn of the twentieth century, and acknowledges that there is a similarity between *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman* in subject matter but a difference in approach (34-35). Likewise, in the same article which starts with a claim that *You Never Can Tell* is one of Shaw's neglected plays, McDowell continues to analyse the play and notes that Valentine and Gloria 'become (like Jack Tanner and Ann Whitefield later on) indispensable links in the chain of the creative evolution of human kind' (69). Hence, this part of the thesis attempts to determine to what extent *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman* reflect Shaw's creative evolutionary ideas. It should be noted that whereas the key similarities between the two plays, and between them and Shaw's evolutionary theory, lie in the sex chase, or what Shaw calls the 'duel of sex,' it would be wrong to discuss it alone and overlook other familial relationships, especially in *You Never Can Tell*, as they constitute an essential part of the play. Therefore, Shaw's representation of the parent-child relationships in both plays, along with the relations between the sexes, will be discussed in light of his theory of Creative Evolution.

You Never Can Tell is a domestic comedy which revolves entirely around marital and child rearing issues. The story, in brief, is that Mrs. Clandon, a woman with advanced ideas and a mother of three children, Gloria, a grown-up daughter, and younger twins, Dolly and Philip, returns from Madeira to England after an eighteen-year separation from her husband and the father of her children, Fergus Crampton. Not only did Mrs. Clandon leave her husband, but she also concealed his identity from her children and changed her name. In so doing, she wants to raise her

children according to her own principles, away from the influence of their father. But, unexpectedly, the estranged Crampton reappears in the lives of his former wife and children. The possibility of a reconciliation between the parents and a matrimonial union between the eldest daughter, Gloria, and a dentist, Valentine, makes up the plot of the story.

Unlike *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple*, the older generation in this play is not considered a threat to the progress of the younger generation, and thus a rejection is not needed. The rejection of the parent is essential only when the conflict and obstacle to evolution and the child's progress lies within the parent-child relationship rather than within the child, as will be seen in *You Never Can Tell* and later in *Major Barbara*. In *You Never Can Tell*, the existence of parents in the lives of their children facilitates their progress. This accounts for the family reconciliation which precedes the announcement of the engagement of Gloria to Valentine in the last scene. The conflict that the young couple experience but eventually overcome, which constitutes the real barrier to their union, is internal rather than external. This, however, should not be taken to imply that Gloria's parents do not object to her love affair with Valentine, or that they welcome the idea of their marriage. They are one of the obstacles that Valentine encounters in attempting to marry Gloria. But the main obstacle is Gloria's lack of experience with love and affection and her resistance to the power of her natural instincts.

Gloria's attitude towards love and marriage is influenced by her mother's feminist beliefs and liberal views. Before moving to Madeira, Mrs. Clandon was very actively involved in matters related to gender equality, married women's rights, education, and even evolution. As an advanced woman with a cause, she has educated Gloria to be her successor. Gloria does, in fact, follow her mother's liberal ideas of equality, and she adopts a profound critique of marriage. In reply to Valentine's question about her opinion on marriage, she says: 'I do not think the conditions of marriage at present are such as any self-respecting woman can accept' (6: 671). Her opinion is formed by the modern education she has received from her mother and her reading of books such as J. S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women*. As a keen writer of 'Twentieth Century Treatises,' Mrs. Clandon has fed Gloria's mind with modern views. In short, she has been working on developing her daughter's

intellect. But, on the other hand, she has taught her daughter to suppress her feelings and emotions on the ground that sentiment is weakness and ‘passion . . . is humanitarian rather than human’ (*You Never* 6: 624). This results in a conflict within Gloria because, unlike her mother, she is full of passion. Shaw describes the conflict inside Gloria in the play’s stage directions: ‘[T]he conflict of her passion with her obstinate pride and intense fastidiousness results in a freezing coldness of manner’ (6: 624). This ‘freezing coldness of manner’ is perhaps a defence mechanism Gloria uses against any sign of sentiment or attraction towards someone. This kind of imprisonment of feelings limits Gloria’s freedom, which affects her very deeply when she meets Valentine.

Therefore, Gloria’s modern education does not qualify her to take part in the evolutionary process, for to serve evolution, she must follow her natural instincts. In addition, she must change her feminist view of marriage as a degrading institution. Hence, it can be argued that feminism in *You Never Can Tell* is represented as a foe to the Life Force, or Nature as it is called in this play, for it places obstacles in the way of marriage. Kate Taylor, in her review of the play’s production in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1995, argues that the ‘feminist argument against marriage as an institution of subjugation’ opposes love in this play. This is true and could be problematic for Shaw’s credentials as a feminist, especially that the play depicts Gloria’s powerlessness against love and passion. It can also be argued that whereas feminism is an obstacle to the Life Force, love, as well as instinct, could be an instrument that the Life Force uses to bring together a eugenically-promising couple. It should be noted, however, that Shaw does not view marriage as synonymous with the Life Force. In ‘The Revolutionist’s Handbook,’ *Man and Superman*’s appendix, not only does Shaw acknowledge that marriage is unnecessary for the improvement of the human race, but he also suggests that marriage can sometimes delay the arrival of the Superman, for ‘[i]n conjugation two complementary persons may supply one another’s deficiencies: in the domestic partnership of marriage they only feel them and suffer from them’ (695). Therefore, in viewing marriage as a necessary and an enabling institution in his plays, Shaw might be conceding to the dramatic expectations of the genre and form he is using. Marriage needs to be there in order for the Life Force to operate within the play. As John A. Bertolini suggests, *You Never Can Tell* ‘conforms to the argument of comedy,’ and also highlights ‘Shaw’s

development as an individual dramatist using dramatic form to express his personality and view of life' (*Wilde* 158). A parallel can thus be drawn between Shaw's plays and his views, and between his comedies and life.

Mrs. Clandon's child-rearing methods are not as useless for the purpose of evolution as one might think. Thanks to her mother, Gloria has learned the importance of independence and free will, two qualities that agents of the Life Force should have. Sympathising with Mrs. Clandon and recognising her role in educating Gloria, Miriam Chirico acknowledges that Mrs. Clandon 'has taught Gloria to reason and think for herself' (112). Mrs. Clandon herself acknowledges that her children have been raised in a family in which 'mutual respect,' 'independence,' and 'privacy' are highly valued (6: 627). Another advantage for Gloria is that her mother is someone who, like Shaw, detests the oppression of women and children. For this reason, Mrs. Clandon has left her husband and taken her children away from him, as she says to Gloria:

MRS CLANDON. [*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. (6: 631-32)

Mrs. Clandon does not only justify why she took her children away from their father and had never mentioned him for years, but she also suggests that if she had not done this, her children would have been brought up differently. They could have been in a life, she explains, 'in which husbands open their wives' letters, and call on them to account for every farthing of their expenditure and every moment of their time; in which women do the same to their children; in which no room is private and no hour sacred; in which duty, obedience, affection, home, morality and religion are detestable tyrannies, and life is a vulgar round of punishments and lies' (6: 627-28). In short, if Mrs. Clandon had stayed with her husband, her children would have been physically and mentally subjugated to their father, instead of being free in will and

action. Hence, her rejection of her husband is for the sake of her and her children's independence.

Nevertheless, Gloria is less independent in thought than Philip and Dolly because she follows to a large extent her mother's mode of thought. But there are some occasions in which she counters the opinion of her mother, such as when she joins the twins in their insistence on knowing who their father is despite their mother's disapproval, saying: 'Mother: we have a right to know' (6: 629). Shaw indicates in the stage directions that this is Gloria's first attempt to rebel against her mother. This justifies Mrs. Clandon's 'wounded' response: 'In your mouth "we" used to mean you and I, Gloria' (6: 629). Although Mrs. Clandon has taught her children the merits of freedom and independence, she feels disappointed when Gloria does not follow in her footsteps. The reason is that she has paid special attention to prepare Gloria to take up her work of social reform, and thus expects her to live up to her expectations and to affiliate with her. However, Gloria is different from her mother in some respects. Shaw describes her as 'a much more formidable person than her mother. She is the incarnation of haughty highmindedness, raging with the impatience of a mettlesome dominative character paralyzed by the inexperience of her youth. . . . Unlike her mother, she is all passion. . . . A dangerous girl, one would say, if the moral passions were not also marked, and even nobly marked' (6: 624). Indeed, Gloria would be a 'very dangerous girl' if she was not under the influence of her mother's educational principles, and if she was more aware of herself and her own nature.

However, the presence of Mr. Crampton and Valentine in Gloria's life helps her explore the womanly and emotional side of her nature, this side which has long been controlled by reason and rationalism, represented in the play by Mrs. Clandon. In order to take part in the evolutionary process, Gloria's restrained instincts need to be stimulated and released by someone. This is the role of the comic hero of the play and the 'Duellist of Sex,' Valentine, who succeeds in releasing Gloria's restrained passion. Thus, while the intellectual emancipation of Gloria is Mrs. Clandon's domain, Gloria's emotional emancipation is Valentine's domain. Valentine is a young dentist described by Shaw as a man whose 'professional manner . . . is underlain by a thoughtless pleasantry' and someone who is 'in search of amusing

adventures' (6: 615). However, what brings Valentine and Gloria together is not merely Valentine's quest for love and adventures, but rather, as McDowell puts it, 'the "chemical" affinities established by the overarching Life Force—which can be invoked but not contained by reason' (*Higher* 73). The Life Force is portrayed in the play as the force which determines the couple's destiny.

Act II deals with the relationship between the estranged Crampton and his children, Gloria, Philip, and Dolly. Crampton criticises the twins' manners, their habits, and their attitudes towards filial obligations. Philip, for instance, interrupts his father's proposal that they have a blessing before they eat, and he considers his and Dolly's misbehaviour towards their father to be the consequence of their being 'not yet strong in the filial line' (6: 657). Still more shocking for Crampton is his discovery that Dolly smokes. His opinion of her is that she is ill-mannered, 'spoiled,' and 'not fit for any society' (6: 636, 659). Furthermore, Crampton dislikes the way in which the twins treat him as if he were a stranger by calling him 'Mr. Crampton' and finds it offensive; the twins completely reject their father and his authority. Philip believes his father is 'entirely unfit to be [his] father, or Dolly's father, or Gloria's father, or [his] mother's husband,' and Dolly refers to her father as '[a]n awful old man' (6: 648). Crampton blames Mrs. Clandon for bringing up her children in this way, which he finds unconventional. The twins' unconventionality lies in their rebellion against social conventions and their independence from the influence of both of their parents, unlike Gloria who falls under the influence of her mother. Therefore, they are more advanced than Gloria and would be more qualified to take part in the process of evolution if they were older and were represented as 'lovers,' not as 'brother and sister,' as Margery Morgan notes (91).

Critics have different views on the representation of the twins in the play. According to Morgan, the twins are 'free beings' because they are 'not creatures of society as Gloria and her mother are, and hardly subject to the laws of this world at all' (90). While Morgan suggests that the inclusion of the twins in the play is for the purpose of comparison with Gloria and her mother, A. M. Gibbs argues that '[t]he inclusion of the twins in the cast is but one reminder of the possibilities of playful and exuberant benignity in the workings of the life force' (*Art* 91). While both interpretations are feasible, it seems that the twins provide an example of children as

experiments in the hands of the Life Force and not in the hands of their parents, as Shaw suggests in 'Parents and Children' (45-50). The reason which makes them qualified to aid evolution lies mostly in the fact that they are free individuals following the drive of the Life Force only. They assert their rights to freedom and independence in a way that is distinctively Shavian. As Gareth Griffith suggests, Shaw's portrayal of the twins exemplifies his ideas about children's rights and education stated in 'Parents and Children' (147). Those ideas will be discussed in more detail in the next chapters.

The father, however, seems to be less rejected by Gloria in comparison to the twins' harsh rejection of him and their rebellious attitude towards him. Unlike the twins, Gloria treats Crampton with more respect and calls him 'father,' but she utters the word with indifference to its meaning. Applying what she has learned from her mother, she assures him that she believes in neither filial duty and obedience nor affection. 'I obey nothing,' she says, 'but my sense of what is right. I respect nothing that is not noble. That is my duty. . . . As to affection, it is not within my control. I am not sure that I quite know what affection means' (6: 667). Crampton's attempts to convince his daughter to love him and to give him his rights as a father are in vain because they are in conflict with Gloria's rational standards. Crampton, thus, uses a different strategy which he thinks could be a solution to this problem. He advises his daughter not to think but to feel (*You Never* 6: 668). Such an advice is important for assisting the evolutionary process because the Life Force, as Smith suggests, 'culminates in a basic repudiation of rationalism' (21). But Gloria does not respond to her father's suggestion because she is still ignorant of feelings and emotions and holding tight to rationality. The father's situation gets worse when he curses Gloria's mother, to which Gloria reacts with intense anger: 'How I hate the name [of father]! How I love the name of mother! You had better go' (6: 669). But to judge by Gloria's following her heart rather than her mind at the end of the play, it seems that her father's advice has triggered her development.

The one who plays the most significant role in Gloria's transformation is Valentine. Valentine at the end of Act II demonstrates his ability to stir the depths in Gloria and induce her to love him by using his intellect. His tactic is first to engage Gloria in a rational discourse about marriage, giving her the opinion she wants to

hear and which appeals to her feminist conviction. Then, he starts to describe what he feels in her presence offering her a combination of scientific and mystical explanations of his feelings: '[M]y blood got oxygenated,' '[i]t's a curiously helpless sensation,' and '[l]et's call it chemistry' (6: 672-73). He emphasises the mysteriousness and the powerfulness of Nature, and their helplessness to resist it: 'As if Nature, after letting us belong to ourselves and do what we judged right and reasonable for all these years, were suddenly lifting her great hand to take us—her two little children—by the scruffs of our little necks, and use us, in spite of ourselves, for her own purposes, in her own way,' and he describes the force that drives them together as 'the most irresistible of all natural forces' (6: 672-73). Shaw's philosophy of the Life Force, especially as expressed in *The New Theology*, is reflected most obviously in this speech of Valentine. The speech describes the mechanism of the Life Force, the function of men and women as its 'instruments' and the embodiment of its will, and the way it gets men and women 'to carry out [its] purpose' (*New Theology* 5). However, the description is rather ambiguous as to what the purpose of the Life Force is, unlike *Man and Superman* wherein Shaw provides a very clear explanation of the purpose of the Life Force, and evolution in general, which is to produce a superior race. This ambiguity could be due to the fact that at the time Shaw wrote *You Never Can Tell*, his evolutionary ideas were still in the formative stage. But by the time he wrote *Man and Superman*, his ideas were crystallised.

Having described his feelings for Gloria, Valentine declares his love for her. Gloria feels terrified because she is not accustomed to such sentiments, and is new to this kind of human relationship. Hence, she tries to retreat and resist the power of love by making a few comments, such as: 'Isn't that rather fanciful?', 'Nonsense!', '[t]hat is ridiculous, and rather personal,' and 'I think you are sentimental, and a little foolish' (6: 673-75). Gloria's comments suggest that she either cannot understand or will not confront her feelings. Chirico argues that the function of such expressions is 'to counter [Valentine's] will and do not voice [Gloria's] own intentions' (111). They could also be a way for Gloria to counter her own fear of losing self-control and abandoning her feminist beliefs. But her reproach to her mother at the end of Act II, 'Why didn't you educate me properly? . . . You taught me nothing: nothing' (6: 676), shows that she lacks a proper education on affection and physical sensation,

something which Mrs. Clandon has deliberately taught her to avoid. Although the education Mrs. Clandon has given to her daughter does not seem to serve the cause of human evolution, the course of events in the play proves that it facilitates Valentine's task of stimulating Gloria's evolutionary appetite, as will soon be explained.

Gloria appears very confused and unable to understand what is happening to her. Her inner feelings are those of weakness and shame. But then, she comes to realise her true feminine self and surrenders to the laws of Nature: 'I am one of those weak creatures born to be mastered by the first man whose eye is caught by them; and I must fulfil my destiny, I suppose' (6: 686). Gloria gradually ceases to be under her mother's guidance and lets herself be guided by the Life Force instead. Watching her daughter losing control over herself and submitting to her womanly impulses, Mrs. Clandon, in an attempt to save her daughter, exposes Valentine's previous love affairs and warns Gloria not to be one of his victims. This results in further conflict within Gloria between sympathy and rationality: emotional inclination towards Valentine and intellectual inclination towards her mother.

Mrs. Clandon also tries to make Valentine turn away from her daughter by convincing him of the futility of love affairs, but in vain. She undermines selfish personal sentiments and, on the other hand, encourages selfless devotion to the cause of humanity: '[A] life devoted to the Cause of Humanity has enthusiasms and passions to offer which far transcend the selfish personal infatuations and sentimentalities of romance' (6: 681). In her undermining of sentiments and sexual satisfaction Mrs. Clandon echoes Shaw's own view, although this play suggests that they could be a means to induce someone to enter into matrimony, and thus to carry on the process of evolution. Recognising the significance and the evolutionary nature of the union of Valentine and Gloria, McDowell compares them to 'Adam and Eve' and argues that they 'look back to our first parents and forward to a progeny that will nourish the life of the race' (*Higher* 69). What Mrs. Clandon fails to understand is that marriage could serve the cause of humanity or, to be more precise, the cause of humanity's evolution, if partners are carefully selected.

Viewing Gloria's resistance from the perspective of Creative Evolution, it seems that Gloria is trying to resist the force of Nature she feels in the presence of

Valentine, which attempts to ‘use [her], in spite of [herself], for her own purposes, in her own way’ (*You Never* 6: 672-73), that is, Gloria is driven by impersonal rather than personal forces. Such impersonal forces, as will be demonstrated in *Man and Superman*, are what direct men and women towards the creation of the Superman. Thus, Valentine plays a role not only in awakening Gloria’s feelings, but also in stimulating her maternal instincts, although he has not expressed his intention to marry her. In fact, he denies Crampton’s claim that he intends to marry Gloria saying: ‘Who wants to marry her? I’ll kiss her hands; I’ll kneel at her feet; I’ll live for her; I’ll die for her; and that’ll be enough for me’ (6: 664). Thus, it is not clear yet whether Valentine’s intentions are genuinely to awaken Gloria’s heart or to play with it. This confusion is reinforced by Valentine’s confession to Mrs. Clandon in the next act that he is just doing his part in the sex chase as the ‘Duellist of Sex.’

It is worth noting that the ‘duel of sex’ was first introduced in *The Philanderer* (1893), through Julia’s pursuit of Charteris, and later in *Man and Superman*, through Ann’s pursuit of Tanner. However, it becomes increasingly purposeful throughout Shaw’s plays, rather than being merely a delightful game. Valentine considers his relationship with Gloria as a kind of game he calls ‘the duel of sex’ in which, as he explains, the ‘old fashioned man,’ from whom the ‘old fashioned mother’ used to protect her daughter by giving her ‘a scientific education,’ learned about scientific education and feminism as well as ‘how to circumvent the Women’s Rights woman’ (6: 683-84). He confesses to Mrs. Clandon that because of the modern and scientific education she gave to her daughter, he was able ‘to get to the point [he] got to this afternoon in eighteen minutes’ (6: 684). Hence, the play shows that even scientific and feminist education cannot free women from the inescapability of the laws of Nature. Women must fulfil their biological role to ensure the evolution of the species. Accordingly, Gloria’s reluctance to be in a relationship with Valentine should not be seen as merely a reluctance to abandon feminist beliefs and submit to men, but also a reluctance to submit to Nature.

Realising that her daughter has been caught in a trap and manipulated by Valentine, Mrs. Clandon becomes even more determined to break up their relationship. Kate Taylor describes Nora McLellan’s performance of Mrs. Clandon as ‘a humane Mrs. Clandon, rather than some great Amazon crusader.’ Some critics

may expect a more aggressive Mrs. Clandon, someone who would protest more angrily against men's oppression of women and, accordingly, would do everything in her power to prevent her daughter from entering into a love or matrimonial relationship. However, if Shaw were to make Mrs. Clandon more aggressive in attempting to impose her will on her children, Gloria would have to reject her mother, according to the Shavian tradition in the early plays, to move on with her life. But Shaw made Mrs. Clandon wiser and more 'humane' to show the audience that the factors that cause Gloria's real crisis are internal rather than external. All that Mrs. Clandon does is warn Gloria of the consequences of being in a love relationship with Valentine. Another reason why Mrs. Clandon should not be portrayed as aggressive or a caricature, such as Mrs. Dudgeon, is that she is educated and enlightened enough to know how to deal with her children, unlike Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Dudgeon.

Before Gloria's relationship with Valentine develops, Gloria reconciles with her father in Act IV. She recognises that she is her father's daughter, for she has inherited the sentimental, emotional side of her nature from him. 'I was playing the part of my mother's daughter,' she admits, 'but I'm not: I'm my father's daughter' (6: 700). As Dorothy Hadfield argues, the fact that Gloria has inherited her intellect from her mother and her passion from her father is a reversal of the stereotypical parental role in the gender hierarchy (67). It becomes ironical that Shaw, or rather Valentine, claims that intellect is 'a masculine specialty' (*You Never* 6: 686), whereas it is mostly represented in the play by Mrs. Clandon. Gloria also discovers that she and her father have something in common: both 'know what's right and dignified and strong and noble,' yet they are unable to act upon it (*You Never* 6: 700). Hence, Gloria's communication with her father enables her to relate to him, reconsider her loyalty to her mother, and better understand her feelings for Valentine. She becomes more confident to make a decision regarding her relationship with Valentine away from the influence of her mother.

Gloria in the last scene, which follows the family reunion, exercises her will upon Valentine and pushes him into matrimony against his will. She commands Valentine to '[g]et up' and not to have 'false delicacy,' and to tell her mother that they 'have agreed to marry one another' (6: 718). The idea of commitment and loss

of freedom terrifies Valentine, as his comment on Gloria's proposal to marry him indicates: 'It's perfect madness . . . Gloria: dont be rash: youre throwing yourself away. I'd much better clear straight out of this, and never see any of you again. I shant commit suicide: I shant even be unhappy. Itll be a relief to me: I—I'm frightened,' to which Gloria replies: 'You shall not go' (6: 719). This speech, and the whole scene, is a reversal of expectations and gender roles, for the female is portrayed as the sexual initiator and the male as her victim, which creates humour and at the same time undermines patriarchy and stereotypical gender roles. The play is not anti-feminist after all; Gloria, though she ends up accepting marriage, is the one who exercises authority and dominates the relationship. She, as Chirico notes, 'has found a compromise between feminist independence and matrimonial interdependence' (124). Thus, it can be said that Shaw was in some ways successful in depicting marriage as an enabling institution for human evolution without compromising women's liberty and autonomy. Moreover, Shaw's feminist sympathies can be seen in his portrayal of Crampton and Valentine as weak, powerless, and unable to assert their authority over women.

As Gibbs suggests, the powerful natural force Valentine was describing earlier in the play 'has become personified as Gloria' (*Art* 101). Valentine describes the scenario wherein he becomes, as Carpenter puts it, 'Nature's main victim' (*Art* 132), saying: 'I was being tempted to awaken your heart: to stir the depths in you. Why was I tempted? Because Nature was in deadly earnest with me when I was in jest with her. When the great moment came, who was awakened? who was stirred? in whom did the depths break up? In myself— m y s e l f' (6: 717). Valentine's speech implies that both Valentine and Gloria were a means for the Life Force to fulfil its evolutionary purpose. Valentine has been used to awaken Gloria's womanly feelings and maternal instincts, and Gloria is being used now to convert their relationship into marriage. However, in order for them to get married, an economic difficulty needs to be solved. Here comes the role of the lawyer Bohun, the waiter's son, who is represented as 'the most [and perhaps the only] authoritative male figure in the play' (Hadfield 69). Bohun advises Valentine to have a settlement since Gloria has property and money and he has none. Gloria gives her consent before Valentine can say a word, and the matter is settled. This happy ending needs to be examined and understood within the context of Shaw's evolutionary views. Applying Shaw's

theory of Creative Evolution, the happy ending seems to be the triumph of the Life Force over human resistance to marriage and childbearing, and not simply marriage.

The significance of the waiter and his son, Bohun, lies mostly in their acute remarks about how the world works, which reflect some of Shaw's own philosophical views. Bohun suggests that there is some kind of irrationality behind everything that is considered rational, such as birth, marriage, life, and death: '[A]ll matches are unwise. It's unwise to be born; it's unwise to be married; it's unwise to live; and it's unwise to die' (6: 720). According to Smith, this remark together with the way Valentine is pushed into marriage, apparently against his will, 'imply that forces beyond rational explanation are at work in guiding human destinies' (22). This irrationality is a basic feature of the Life Force, which is, as Shaw argues, 'working up through imperfection and mistake to a perfect, organized being, having the power of fulfilling its highest purposes,' and eventually leading to a rational understanding of the purpose of the whole universe (*New Theology* 4-5). As McDowell points out, Bohun has 'an intuitive sense of the divagations and complicated workings of the Life Force' (*Higher* 74). Portrayed as 'the voice of reason,' Bohun reveals the negative or the dark aspect of Shaw's philosophy (McDowell 81). The waiter counters his son's pessimistic view of life with a more optimistic one: 'Every man is frightened of marriage when it comes to the point; but it often turns out very comfortable, very enjoyable and happy indeed . . . You never can tell, sir: you never can tell' (6: 721). His remark 'you never can tell' provides a perfect conclusion to the play: the marriage of Valentine and Gloria is an experiment; it may work and contribute to the development of the race by producing a superior species, or it may not work, and in this case, the Life Force will make other instruments to carry out its evolutionary purpose. The union of Valentine and Gloria and the quasi-debate between the waiter and his son successfully allude to Shaw's Creative Evolution, and, more importantly, imply that it is a proposition that could be true or false, no matter how absurd or irrational it seems. Indeed, the waiter and his son's remarks together indicate the correlation between philosophy and comedy which exists in a number of Shaw's plays, but more evidently in *Man and Superman*, as will be discussed in the following section.

Man and Superman

While some of Shaw's plays allude to his creative evolutionary views, as has been already demonstrated in *You Never Can Tell*, *Man and Superman* is Shaw's first conscious attempt to dramatise his philosophy of Creative Evolution. Shaw subtitled the play 'A Comedy and a Philosophy.' The comedy comprises three acts, Act I, Act II, and Act IV. The philosophy is more embodied in Act III, in particular in the 'Don Juan in Hell' scene (Tanner's dream), and 'The Revolutionist's Handbook.' As indicated in an article in *The Washington Post*, published in 1907, Shaw said in 1905 that one of his main goals in writing *Man and Superman* 'was to impress this idea [of the Superman] upon the public mind, believing it would have more effect than if presented in any other manner' (A3). This brings into consideration the very important question of why Shaw chose drama to convey his political and evolutionary ideas. Shaw recognised that what makes drama an effective tool is that it educates and at the same time entertains people in a way that other non-dramatic means cannot do. Undoubtedly, fiction can do this as well, and Shaw had already written five novels before he turned to drama—*Immaturity* (1879), *The Irrational Knot* (1880), *Love Among the Artists* (1881), *Cashel Byron's Profession* (1882) and *An Unsocial Socialist* (1883). However, Shaw's novels were rejected by the reputable British publishers. They were unsuccessful financially and artistically. But from Shaw's point of view, the real reason why his novels failed was not due to, as he puts it, 'any lack of literary competence on my part, but to the antagonism raised by my hostility to respectable Victorian thought and society' (qtd. in Henderson, *Shaw's Novels* 18). Swan Sonnenschein, who published Shaw's last novel after it was rejected by other publishers, wrote to Shaw in 1888, suggesting that he 'go in for plays' as a more suitable medium for him than novels (Henderson, *Shaw's Novels* 18). This advice is perhaps based on Shaw's artistic skills and talents rather than his belief in the didactic purpose of art, which was not yet forthcoming by that time. By the early 1890s, Shaw became convinced that the play was a more proper medium for him than the novel, writing to Archibald Henderson in 1890: 'My next effort in fiction, if ever I have time to make one, will be a play,' and to Daniel Macmillan: '[T]he novel was not my proper medium. I wrote novels because everybody else did so then' (Henderson, *Shaw's Novels* 18). It is worth mentioning that in the 1890s, a large number of novelists, and writers in general, were also trying

their hand at plays, resulting in the 'New Drama' (Archer 663-72), of which Shaw was a pioneer.

Charles Berst in his discussion of *Man and Superman* describes the 'heightened intellect which is alive in good comedy' as an 'effective . . . philosophical tool,' i.e. not just educative, but philosophical too (108). However, Shaw's comedic treatment of the philosophy of Creative Evolution was criticised by Leo Tolstoy who considered it a 'defect' in *Man and Superman*: 'The first defect,' Tolstoy wrote to Shaw in an undated letter, 'is that you are not sufficiently serious. One should not speak jestingly of such a subject as the purpose of human life, the causes of its perversion, and the evil that fills the life of humanity today' (qtd. in Henderson, *Man* 583). He continued to reproach Shaw for making such an important topic subject to laughter and satire.

Man and Superman is remarkably effective in treating evolutionary and revolutionary ideas with good humour. The play is really complex in terms of structure and content. With regard to structure, the 'Don Juan in Hell' scene in Act III is a dream sequence; a play in itself indeed, which can be performed apart from the social comedy, just as the latter can be performed without the former. It is primarily centred around the relations between the sexes which are presented as a sex chase in which woman is the pursuer and man is the pursued; as discussed earlier, Shaw had already used the idea of the reversed sex chase in *The Philanderer* and *You Never Can Tell*. However, what distinguishes this play from its predecessors is that it has been given a scientific interpretation. As Carpenter points out, 'human passion [in *Man and Superman*] is linked, theoretically and dramatically, with a cosmic force' (*Art* 216). Thus, it has nothing to do with sexual satisfaction or any sort of personal pleasure, but with the eugenic breeding of the Superman. Barbara Bellow Watson confirms this point in her book *A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman* (1964) when she explains the aim of Ann's pursuit of Tanner:

[T]he aim for which she works so unscrupulously is something higher than her own pleasure, either the pleasure of physical sensations or the vanity which is so large a sexual motive. Her aim is, as she tells the universe in the last words of the colloquy in hell: "A father! a father for the Superman!." (63)

Therefore, Ann's aim could be described as humanitarian and progressive (depending, of course, on how one views Shaw's notions of the Superman, which is far from an uncontroversial subject).

As explained in the first part of this chapter and in *You Never Can Tell*, the Life Force needs instruments comprised of men and women to achieve its ends. In *Man and Superman*, the Life Force first works through Ann and is manifested as a desire for a suitable father for the genetically-improved child, i.e., the Superman. Hence, it is Ann's mission to push the reluctant Tanner, who prefers freedom to the subjection of marriage, into matrimony. Therefore, it can be argued that *Man and Superman* is a complement to *You Never Can Tell* because the theme of one's determination to win the duel of sex and the other's defeat and surrender to the Life Force is first presented in *You Never Can Tell* and further developed in *Man and Superman*. Whereas the couple in *You Never Can Tell* do not know with certainty but suspect that they are driven by an irresistible force, the couple in *Man and Superman* are fully aware that they are in the hands of the Life Force, or, as Tanner puts it, 'in the grip of the Life Force' (3: 681). Furthermore, the motives behind the union of Ann and Tanner appear in the play as evolutionary rather than sexual, as in *You Never Can Tell*. In order to make the analysis of *Man and Superman* easier to comprehend and follow, a division of the total play into—main play, interlude, and appendix—is necessary. The main play, or the comedy, consists of acts I, II, and IV. The interlude is Act III; and, finally, the appendix is John Tanner's 'The Revolutionist's Handbook.'

The main plot of the comedy revolves around Ann's relationship with Tanner, her co-guardian and the object of her creative desire, and her relationship with Mrs. Whitefield, her mother. Unlike *You Never Can Tell*, Ann's struggle to secure a sexual partner does not demand a parent-child conflict, nor does it involve an internal conflict on her part, for the New Woman or feminist view of marriage is absent from this play. Ann's father is dead, and her mother has no real authority over her; what is more, she is, as Tanner states in Act I, 'nonentitized,' and used by Ann as a scapegoat (3: 536). Ann, therefore, differs from Vivie and Richard, whose rejection of their parents is discussed in chapter one, in that she finds no reason to revolt against her passive mother; she is able to get her own way calmly and

manipulatively. Indeed, Ann's manipulation of her parents' wishes to suit her own needs and of social expectations regarding a daughter's obedience forms a principal part of the comic action. Roebuck Ramsden, Ann's guardian and one of the people who is duped by her, sees Ann as a dutiful daughter because, as he explains at the beginning of the play, she always uses expressions, such as, "Father wishes me to," or "Mother wouldn't like it" (3: 520). Another expression used by Ann to justify her actions is 'Mother made me' (3: 573). Ann, in fact, manipulates the social conventions of parental authority and filial piety for her own purposes. An example of such purposes is when she rejects Octavius, who is in love with her, so that she can marry Tanner, the man of her choice: '[I]t's clear from my father's will that he wished me to marry Jack. And my mother is set on it' (3: 670). Octavius is deceived by Ann's tricks and her playing the part of the dutiful girl, which disguise her real duty of bringing genetically-improved children into the world. According to Louis Crompton, Shaw considered those tricks as a means that is 'justified by its ends' (88). For evolutionary purposes, Tanner is a more suitable husband for Ann and father for the Superman than Octavius. He is a thinker, a man of ideas, and his intellect is what most attracts Ann. In contrast, Octavius lacks both intellect and vitality and, as Gibbs remarks, 'is associated with sentimentality, debased romanticism and the poetic idealization of woman' (*Art* 125). Such qualities make him less qualified to serve an evolutionary purpose.

Mrs. Whitefield is aware of her daughter's hypocrisy and her determination to marry Tanner, but she cannot stand in her way. Her words to Ann are: 'Now, Ann, I do beg you not to put it on me,' and she tells Tanner: 'Oh, very likely you will [marry Ann]: you know what she is when she has set her mind on anything. But dont put it on me: thats all I ask' (3: 532, 676). She is unable to express her own opinion of her daughter, but she is quite relieved when she hears her opinion expressed by Tanner: 'Oh, she is a hypocrite. She is: she is. Isnt she?' (3: 677). Her attitude towards Ann may be interpreted as a weakness in her character; however, her response to Tanner when he accuses her of detesting her daughter reveals something else. 'Do you mean that I detest my own daughter!' Mrs. Whitefield protests, '[s]urely you dont believe me to be so wicked and unnatural as that, merely because I see her faults' (3: 678). Grace Matchett views Mrs. Whitefield as a 'conventional' mother whose 'genuine dislike of her daughter has to be conventionally minimized

by calling it “merely seeing her faults” (96). However, Mrs. Whitefield does not seem to dislike Ann; she simply sees her faults and loves her regardless of them. Moreover, it is true that she is a conventional mother, and this implies that she believes in the naturalness of the mother-daughter affection.

Tanner believes at first what Ann says about her mother’s authority and interference in her life, and this stirs up his revolt against all mothers. In fact, what Tanner says in the main play about mothers reflects to a large extent Shaw’s own views:

What is [fashionable society]? A horrible procession of wretched girls, each in the claws of a . . . mother, . . . 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 their only 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. (3: 573-74)

This speech of Tanner is quite important as it reflects Shaw’s views on marriage from feminist and evolutionary perspectives. Shaw blames mothers for subjugating their daughters in the domestic role and making them economically dependent on men by selling them to ‘the highest bidder.’ According to Shaw’s dramatic and non-dramatic writings, two solutions are offered to this problem: from the feminist standpoint, women have to renounce marriage altogether and support themselves in order to be emotionally and economically independent of men. This is, of course, a radical solution represented in Shaw’s plays by the New Woman’s rejection of marriage and the maternal role, as in the case of Grace in *The Philanderer*, Vivie in *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, and Lina in *Misalliance*. From the evolutionary standpoint, women should secure husbands of their choice, whom they recognise as having desirable genes, to improve the race. In this case, the offspring are the ones who are supposed to choose their own partners, not their parents (a point emphasised and elaborated in Act III in the dream sequence). Shaw, in the *Intelligent Woman’s Guide*, reaffirms the necessity of free choice in a eugenically-motivated marriage:

‘There is nothing for it but to let people choose their mates for themselves, and trust to Nature to produce a good result’ (54).

The solution to the problem of parental authority, which is proposed here and dramatised in other plays, 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’ (*Man and Superman* 3: 574). As already mentioned, there is no need for Ann to rebel against her mother and declare her independence for two reasons: first, her mother does not have authority and control over her; and second, Ann is able to manipulate and take advantage of the idea of the mother-daughter relationship and the convention of filial piety to entrap Tanner into marriage. But what Tanner says about ‘the woman who pleads her mother’s authority’ being ‘unfit to bear citizens to a free people’ stresses the importance of freedom and the independence of agents of the Life Force, especially women, who are expected to produce higher individuals. It also seems to reflect Shaw’s belief in Lamarck’s theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Here, the acquired characteristic that Shaw wishes to be passed on to the next generation is independence. This characteristic is attributed to both sexes. There are, however, other qualities attributed to each sex: woman’s instinctive will to procreate and man’s intellect. When the former meets the latter, the union of man and woman will have the potential to produce a new breed of Supermen.

The essence of the main play lies in the fact that Ann represents instinctive will and Tanner represents intellect. Shaw has made Tanner a socialist with revolutionary ideas and, as stated in the preface to this play, ‘a political pamphleteer’ (505). Most of the ideas on the Life Force, if not all, are expressed in the main play through Tanner, and in the dream through Don Juan, Tanner’s double. However, it is Ann who most represents the workings of the Life Force because without her will and determination to have Tanner as her husband and the father of her children, there would be no matrimonial union. Michael Billington, in an article in *The Guardian*, describes the fact that Tanner is a preacher of the Life Force while Ann is the embodiment of it as ‘the supreme Shavian joke’ (11). Indeed, the whole play, especially Act IV, suggests that Tanner is aware of the inevitability of the evolutionary process, and that a woman’s role as an agent of the Life Force is to find

a husband who will make a suitable father for her children, as his following words indicate: 'We do the world's will, not our own. I have a frightful feeling that I shall let myself be married because it is the world's will that you should have a husband' (3: 680). Yet, he escapes when Ann initiates the love chase; however, his escape is not really from Ann, but from marriage and fatherhood and the burden of their responsibilities. For him, marriage means commitment, 'surrender,' 'capitulation,' and 'acceptance of defeat' (*Man and Superman* 3: 680). As a social reformer, he attempts to free himself for the more important responsibility of improving the world.

Tanner's defeat by the Life Force and his acceptance of marriage and fatherhood put an end to Ann's pursuit and to the whole play. But before discussing the end of the play, it is necessary to explore what qualities in Ann have enticed Tanner into marrying her, despite her hypocrisy, if not her sexual attractiveness. Tanner tells us that 'the Life Force endows [Ann] with every quality,' and he refers to her wits (3: 682). Ann, in fact, has some qualities which enhance her role as an agent of the Life force, such as personal fascination, femininity, intelligence, and self-control. While such qualities are positive, some negative characteristics have been attributed to Ann, such as 'mendacity and duplicity' (Morgan 112). This suggests the complexity of her character, especially that Ann is seen in the play mostly from Tanner's point of view. A young actress, Frances Dillon, was not able to play the role of Ann as it should be. Shaw, therefore, wrote her a letter in 1908 advising her to read the letters of Queen Victoria in order to learn more about 'ladylikeness.' In the letter, he wrote:

No matter how improperly she may behave, an English lady never admits she is behaving improperly. Just as there are lots of women who are good-hearted and honest and innocent in an outrageously rowdy way, so are there ladies who do the most shocking things with a dignity and gentility. . . . Ann is one of the latter sort; and this is what you have not got in Ann. (*Collected letters* 2: 817)

Hence, Ann is never innocent, but at the same time does not seem a bad sort of person. Her hypocrisy is not a part of her nature; it is carefully planned in order to achieve her goal, which is a noble one. Morgan views Ann's attempt to secure a

husband as ‘conventionality hand-in-hand with calculation’ (112). Ann might be conventional in her search for marriage and domesticity, but her way of choosing and chasing her mate is unconventional, as the following scene between her and Tanner in the last act illustrates:

TANNER. The will is yours then! The trap was laid from the beginning.

ANN. [*concentrating all her magic*] From the beginning—from our childhood—for both of us—by the Life Force.

TANNER. I will not marry you. I will not marry you.

ANN. Oh, you will, you will.

TANNER. I tell you, no, no, no.

ANN. I tell you, yes, yes, yes. (3: 682-83)

However, it is worth noting that the strong, determined woman in pursuit of the male is conventionally comedic. But Shaw uses that comedy to achieve his ends; he tries to shock people out of their complacent views by mocking preconceptions, whilst actually advocating the situation that they are laughing at. All things considered, it can be argued that Shaw sees Ann’s determination, her use of her personal fascination to dominate men, and even her ‘mendacity and duplicity’ as justified by the impersonal, universal ends of breeding the Superman. Ann has been tempted by the Life Force to do everything in her power to have Tanner as a husband so that the new generation will inherit his superior intellect. She eventually succeeds in capturing him and bringing him under the control of the Life Force. ‘I love you,’ Tanner tells Ann, ‘[t]he Life Force enchants me: I have the whole world in my arms when I clasp you’ (3: 683). Both Ann and Tanner realise the evolutionary aspect of their union and, thus, their role as instruments of the Life Force. Tanner is, therefore, different from Jack in H. M. Harwood’s *Supplanters* (1913), whom Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr describes as the father who ‘objects to the idea that he is merely a tool in evolution’ (178). According to Shepherd-Barr, both *Man and Superman* and *The Supplanters* constitute an ‘attack on the institution of marriage’ (178). *Man and Superman* rather attacks conventional or romantic views of marriage. Moreover, the fact that it ends with Tanner’s acceptance of marriage and fatherhood reveals Shaw’s view of marriage as a reproductive institution which must operate on an evolutionary basis and produce superior individuals, as expressed in his preface to *Getting*

Married (1908): 'if marriage cannot be made to produce something better than we are, marriage will have to go, or else the nation will have to go' (7).

Indeed, the end of the play allows for different interpretations and viewpoints. The fact that the play ends with Tanner's capitulation and Ann's victory has been viewed as both pessimistic and optimistic. For example, Morgan's view, not only of the end but of the whole play, is to some extent pessimistic, for she sees it as embodying 'the smothering sense of security, comfort and complacency that can resist all change' (115). On the other hand, Gibbs views the end of the play in a more positive light; he sees it as 'a victory of the will' (*Art* 127). In fact, Gibbs' optimistic view seems more plausible and compatible with Shaw's evolutionary ideas. Shaw's writings in general, and *Man and Superman* in particular, suggest that evolution is based on hope, unlike Darwinian Natural Selection in which evolution is depicted as a purely mechanical operation. It is true that the creation of the Superman and the improvement of mankind may involve self-sacrifice. For example, Ann in the last act claims that her marriage to Tanner may not lead to her happiness, but to her death, because she may risk her life in childbirth; and Tanner says that both he and Ann have renounced 'tranquility . . . for the cares of a household and a family' (3: 686). It is a sacrifice of the individual for the collective good. Like the marriage of Valentine and Gloria, the marriage of Tanner and Ann may or may not be happy because it is, after all, an experiment. Thus, the phrase 'you never can tell' which Shaw associated with his pleasant play, discussed earlier in this chapter, could also be applied to *Man and Superman*.

While the main play dramatises the attempt to create a higher species through Ann's pursuit of Tanner as a father for the Superman, the 'Don Juan in Hell' scene, or Tanner's dream, dramatises the Creative Evolution theory itself and advances it. In his preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw asserts: 'in 1901, I took the legend of Don Juan in its Mozartian form and made it a dramatic parable of Creative Evolution' (523). The 'Don Juan in Hell' scene reinforces the ideas represented in the main play, but it does not affect its course of action. It consists of a long philosophical dialogue between Don Juan (Tanner in the main play), Dona Ana (Ann), The Statue of Don Gonzalo (Ramsden), who appears in the dream as Ana's father, and the Devil. The most important ideas on Creative Evolution, the purpose

of life, marriage, and women, most of which reflect Shaw's own views, are expressed by Don Juan who, as in the main play, is a philosopher. Don Juan asserts that the male is only a means for the female to produce children, and that the female, because of her procreative function, is more involved than the male in the evolutionary process. Moreover, he claims that the Life Force cares for marriage only as a means to fulfil its creative purposes. Since the real purpose of marriage is to create the Superman, money, love, and romance are unnecessary conditions for marriage. The couple, Don Juan says, could be total strangers brought together by the Life Force. Therefore, parents should not interfere in the choice of a spouse for their offspring because their interference will impede the workings of the Life Force. The fruit of eugenic marriage, as opposed to conventional marriage, is the production of 'an organ by which it [the Life Force] can attain not only self-consciousness but self-understanding' (*Man and Superman* 3: 201). Don Juan tells us that this organ is a superior brain; like the brain of the philosopher. This suggests that intellect is necessary to make the union of man and woman eugenically beneficial.

The Devil holds views opposite to those of Don Juan, and this is not surprising since he represents in the dream self-indulgence and pleasure seeking. He views love and women merely as a source of enjoyment, and thus denies that women, and even men, have to fulfil any evolutionary purposes. He sees the whole idea of world betterment as illusion. This is why he remains in Hell, the place which the Statue describes as 'a place where you have nothing to do but amuse yourself' (3: 610). The Statue, like the Devil, wants to enjoy his pleasures, and this is what makes him bored in Heaven. Thus, he decides to join the Devil in Hell, the place of pleasure. In contrast to The Statue, Don Juan chooses to leave Hell and go to Heaven, 'the home of the masters of reality,' for he wants to progress and possess 'higher organization,' deeper self-consciousness, and 'clearer self-understanding' (*Man and Superman* 3: 616-641). Don Juan does not search after pleasures. Instead, he cares about 'the work of helping Life in its struggle upward' (*Man and Superman* 3: 618).

Dona Ana adds nothing significant to the discussion. But her existence in the dream is extremely important. She is contrasted with Don Juan in being able to practise the theory of Creative Evolution rather than merely talk about it. Just before

the end of the dream, she realises that her work on earth is not done yet, and thus she neither joins Don Juan in Heaven nor the Devil and her father in Hell:

ANA. . . . Tell me: where can I find the Superman?

THE DEVIL. He is not yet created, Señora.

THE STATUE. And never will be, probably. Let us proceed: the red fire will make me sneeze. [*They descend*].

ANA. Not yet created! Then my work is not yet done. [*Crossing herself devoutly*] I believe in the Life to Come. [*Crying to the universe*] A father! a father for the Superman! (3: 649)

Ana's recognition of her unfinished work, and her cry for 'a father for the Superman' suggest two things: one is that Shaw identifies woman with will, and the other is that woman is more committed to her role as an agent of the Life Force than man. This further suggests that the woman's contribution to the evolutionary process is more real and fundamental than man's. As if Dona Ana returns to earth in the form of Ann Whitefield to find a father for the Superman, and thus finish her work, Ann shows up the next morning only to capture Tanner and have him as a sexual partner with whom she could produce the Superman.

'The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion' is Tanner's book which he claims in Act I that he has written, and which Ramsden throws in the waste-paper basket. Shaw included it in the published work as an appendix. Gibbs argues that the 'The Revolutionist's Handbook' 'should strictly be called "The Evolutionist's Handbook"' (*Art* 132). This is true because while Tanner appears in the main play as a socialist who believes in revolution as a means for improving society, the Handbook shows that he is more an evolutionist than a revolutionist, for he believes in eugenics as the only means for improving humanity, and such unsocialist thinking contradicts his radical socialist beliefs. In the play, Tanner associates social reform and revolution with destruction as opposed to construction, that is reforming society by non-revolutionary means: 'I have become a reformer. . . . I shatter creeds and demolish idols. . . . Construction cumbers the ground with institutions made by busybodies. Destruction clears it and gives us breathing space and liberty' (550-51). The Handbook reflects Shaw's views rather than Tanner's because it takes eugenics as its main subject, whereas Tanner in the main play never

expresses any eugenist or evolutionary views; he only acknowledges the influence of the Life Force on him at the end of the play.

The Handbook covers a variety of topics, including evolution, marriage, religion, and history. Shaw's optimism rises when he speaks of evolution. He believes that the only hope for progress is 'the replacement of the old unintelligent, inevitable, almost unconscious fertility by an intelligently controlled, conscious fertility,' and the replacement of 'the man by the superman' (3: 702-3, 723). This is the bottom line of Shaw's theory of Creative Evolution. Therefore, it can be argued that the part of the Handbook which precedes this statement is merely a justification for Shaw's strong belief in evolution and his disbelief in the feasibility of other approaches; and that what comes after is an explanation of the method of evolution. What supports this presumption is that the last chapter of the Handbook, entitled 'The Method,' is, in fact, concerned with the methods for obtaining evolution and breeding the Superman. In this chapter, Shaw gives a number of suggestions to make the evolution of man and society possible. First of all, he stresses the importance of exercising the will in order to live better: 'As to the method, what can be said as yet except that where there is a will, there is a way? If there be no will, we are lost. . . . [W]e have still energy enough to not only will to live, but to will to live better' (3: 725). Next, he advocates the necessity of repudiating 'institutions and public authorities' because they stand in the way of the human free will (3: 725). Then, he suggests that a woman should be encouraged to produce healthy and efficient children 'by careful selection of a father, and nourishment of herself,' and that she should be given a reward for such achievement to further encourage her to participate in another experiment (3: 725). He finally emphasises the importance of freedom of choice of spouse without any external intervention, either from the parents or the state, in order to make the previous method work.

Chapter Conclusion

The theoretical part of this chapter focuses on why and how the Superman, according to Shaw, should be produced. As explained earlier, the motive behind Shaw's interest in and advocacy of the improvement of species, which came as a result of his reading of Lamarck, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, is mostly political. Shaw's

disappointment in men for being unable to improve the world (i.e. to eliminate poverty and inequality and increase productivity) by political means made him consider the idea of replacing men by Supermen, that is, a species with better skills and capacities. This biologically-based solution requires the following conditions: wilfulness, repudiation of duty and authority, conscious fertility, and free choice in marriage. All these factors facilitate the process of Creative Evolution and the workings of the Life Force towards creating the Superman. All things considered, the aspects of eugenics which deal with advocating eugenic solutions to social ills seem disturbing and irrational, while the ones which deal with improving the health and welfare of the population are perhaps plausible. Leaving the social engineering aspects aside, the Superman is an ideal that is unlikely to be attained, though the idea itself offers a sense of hope and optimism; Shaw's Creative Evolution is part of his Socialist Utopia.

By applying Shaw's theory of Creative Evolution to *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman*, this chapter gives a good insight into how the Superman could be produced by giving examples from both plays of young couples serving evolution by submitting to the Life Force. The two plays depict the way in which the Life Force pushes man and woman into marriage despite occasional resistance based on ideological principles, such as that of Gloria in *You Never Can Tell* and Tanner in *Man and Superman*. The fact that both plays end with marriage shows that the power of the Life Force is irresistible. Although the Life Force is irresistible and Creative Evolution is inevitable, as portrayed in the plays, there are some things which impede the evolutionary process and others which facilitate it. What impedes human evolution is one or both partners' ideological objection to marriage and parental objection to their offspring's choice of partner. From Shaw's point of view, the solution of the former case is love chase and of the latter is rebellion against parents. As Meisel points out, '[i]n Shaw's creative-evolutionary philosophy, the love chase became a metaphor for the relation of male and female principles in the universe' (181). In the love chase, it is the wilfulness of the woman which escalates the relationship to marriage. This implies that Shavian dramatic daughters in this chapter are represented as the Life Force's primary vehicle for achieving its ends. Being potential mothers, they act as regenerative agents. They give hope for the birth of a new generation of Supermen and the rebirth of civilisation, two things Shaw craved.

This reveals two important things: one is that Shaw's creative evolutionary ideas are blended into his dramatic writings. The other thing is that the possibility of reading Shaw as a feminist cannot be sustained because unmarried young women in this chapter are reduced to being merely a means to an end; in other words, they are simply the mothers of a great future race. However, as the next chapter will reveal, Shaw paid much attention to the education of young women and the nurturing of their minds. This brings into question whether Shaw's belief in the importance of educating daughters emerges from a feminist thought, or an understanding of their role as the mothers of improved offspring, who represent the hope of the future. The answer to this question will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Children and Education

Introduction

The education of the younger generation was of great importance to Shaw. This was consistently shown in his writings, beginning with his first didactic treatise, *My Dear Dorothea* (1878) and ending with his last political treatise, *Everybody's Political What's What?* (1944). Most of Shaw's political and dramatic writings reflect his belief that education and the acquisition of knowledge are essential for the development of the child's mind and character and thus should begin in early childhood and continue throughout life. However, Shaw thought that some types of education were more effective than others. He constantly attacked formal education and described schools as prisons: '[I]f school taught me nothing except that a school is a prison and not a place of teaching, the conclusion is that pedagogy is not yet a science' (*Self Sketches* 103). In fact, Shaw in this quotation says more than school is a prison. He views pedagogy in his time as having nothing new to offer, suggesting that pedagogy should be developing. While Shaw opposed formal education, he favoured liberal education and self-education (each of those types will be explained in more detail later).

Another type of education that Shaw seems to advocate in some of his plays is the education provided by the parent, which is represented in Shaw's plays but not discussed in depth in his political writings. It should be noted, however, that when comparing Shaw's views on this particular kind of education with the way it is represented in his plays, there appears to be some ambiguity as to the role of the parent in the child's educational attainment. In his 'Treatise on Parents and Children' (1914) (Shaw's preface to *Misalliance*, which is more related to the subject of education than the play itself), Shaw argues that the interference of the parent, or anyone else, in the process of the child's education and the development of its mind and character can sometimes be destructive. He, therefore, recommends leaving children alone, for they are capable of knowing what is best for themselves and finding their own way: '[Y]ou had much better let the child's character alone,' says

Shaw. 'You are assuming that the child does not know its own business, and that you do. In this you are sure to be wrong' (*Prefaces* 50). However, the role of the father as an educator in *Major Barbara* (1905) and *Pygmalion* (1912) is constructive and even necessary for the child's development. J. Ellen Gainor in *Shaw's Daughters: Dramatic and Narrative Constructions of Gender* (1991) indicates that *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* also reflect Shaw's conception of himself 'as an instructor in his private life' (160-61). This suggests that Shaw might have viewed himself as both an instructor to his audience and a parent to his dramatic children. Hence, the first part of this chapter will be an examination of Shaw's views of the education of the young as presented in his non-dramatic writings, mostly in *My Dear Dorothea*, 'Parents and Children,' and *Everybody's Political What's What?*—with special emphasis on the types, methods, and goals of such education for Shaw. The second part of the chapter will explore the impact of the father-as-teacher role on the daughter in *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*. This should lead to a better understanding of Shaw's views on the education of the rising generation and how those views are reflected in plays written about education and for the purpose of education.

The plays discussed in this chapter are concerned with fathers and daughters. However, Shaw's treatment of the father-figure in these plays, namely *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*, differs from that found in his other plays. In these two plays, Shaw offers a different kind of teaching and a different set of relationships (the father as teacher, the teacher as father, and the daughter as pupil). In doing so, Shaw seems to be trying out the father/teacher parallel, taking the possibility of the father as teacher seriously. Moreover, Shaw in *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* undermines the authority of both the father-figure and the teacher-figure, making the father/teacher daughter/pupil relationship distinctively different, as will be demonstrated in this chapter.

Education was the most appealing and acceptable idea for improving society and the 'condition of the people,' offered by middle-class reformers in the late-nineteenth century, as it is non-revolutionary, practical and in tune with notions of 'rationality, improvement and progress' (Harrison 199). Shaw believed that school was one of the institutions that needed to be radically reformed in order to bring

about social change. His thought was part of a more general concern for the education of children in the nineteenth century which developed into the ‘child-centred’ educational movement in the twentieth century—a movement which, according to Harold Entwistle, was part of a larger movement to extend the idea of human rights to include the ‘underprivileged’ (18). The child-centred movement focused on the child’s learning and aimed at substituting traditional education with a more progressive one. Progressive or child-centred education can be said to have started with Rousseau (Entwistle 11); important figures identified with this kind of education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, John Dewey, and Maria Montessori. Although each had his or her own conception of the child and education, almost all of them denounced ‘traditional child-rearing methods which were couched in the language of morals’ (Entwistle 18). Probably the most fundamental principle in their philosophies, which Shaw certainly accepts, is the liberty of the child.

There is, indeed, a similarity between Shaw’s educational outlook and the outlook of progressive education. Louis Simon argues in his book *Shaw on Education* (1958) that Shaw’s insistence on the importance of understanding the child’s need for, and right to, liberty anticipates the ideas of modern progressive education (266). Yet, Simon seems to overlook the fact that Pestalozzi and Froebel were early-nineteenth-century educationalists whose ideas on education are expressed before Shaw’s time. Moreover, Simon has not mentioned that ‘Parents and Children’ demonstrates Shaw’s knowledge of Pestalozzi, Froebel, Mason, and Montessori, and that Shaw in this work refers to them by name, which suggests that he might have been influenced by their ideas. Therefore, it is likely that Shaw had their ideas in mind when he discussed education in his works, not the other way around.

In contrast to Simon, A. S. Neill, an educator known for his ideas about child education and psychology, argues in ‘Shaw and Education’ that Shaw’s views on education expressed in 1944 in *Everybody’s Political* are the same as those expressed in 1910 (in *Misalliance* and its preface), suggesting that Shaw’s views on education were out of date (146). Neill explains that this might be because Shaw was incapable of seeing any other child but ‘the child Bernard,’ emphasising the

influence of Shaw's boyhood experiences on his own educational views (141-47). Neill concludes that Shaw holds unrealistic views regarding the abolishing of schools and asserts that Shaw was merely 'a writer,' not an educationalist (149). Despite this, many of Shaw's views are in agreement with those of modern educationalists, especially his idea that the child should be at the centre of the educational process, and thus all the educational methods should adapt to its own needs and interests. Furthermore, while it is true that some of Shaw's views on education

and schooling are radical and unrealistic, and that Shaw is a person whom Entwistle would describe as 'adopt[ing] the extreme view that any manifestation of teaching is a threat to the child's integrity as a person' (16), there are some positive aspects of his educational views: the emphasis on the child's right to liberty and independence; stressing the importance of training children to be critical, independent, and self-sufficient; and the emphasis on the active role that children play in their own education and development. All of these views, which clearly indicate Shaw's concern for both children's rights and their education, will be explored in more detail in this section.

One of Shaw's objections to the traditional education system is that it restricts the freedom of children. In *Everybody's Political What's What?*, Shaw argues that children are deprived of their freedom by being locked in schools where they are prevented from 'mov[ing] or talk[ing] in class except to order' simply to keep them from 'plaguing and exhausting their parents' (69). Moreover, he calls schools 'prisons' and 'hells,' which are never based on 'the need for education' (68). With regard to the content, its corruption, in Shaw's view, extends from elementary schools to universities. The problem, Shaw argues, is that children are told lies when they ask for reasons, and sometimes their questions are simply not answered (70-71). In *The Intelligent Woman's Guide*, Shaw describes the knowledge of those who receive what is called 'a complete education' as 'false' and even 'more dangerous than the untutored natural wit of savages' because they 'are taught so many flat lies' (64). Therefore, the real danger of education, Shaw explains in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, is that the students at public schools and universities are given large

'doses' of false doctrines, and they are so large that [t]he normal student is corrupted beyond redemption' (482). Shaw's argument implies that the corruption of school is not surprising since it cannot work in isolation from capitalist society (and Shaw's contempt for capitalism is well known). The solution would be to rebel against the existing institutions and demand social, political, and economic reform. However, this would be difficult to achieve as long as capitalist society's education tends to produce slaves instead of rebellious individuals: 'We are all brought up wrongheaded,' Shaw admits, 'to keep us willing slaves instead of rebellious ones' (*Intelligent* 64). In addition, Shaw argues in 'Parents and Children' that schools and universities produce 'a grown-up schoolboy or schoolgirl, capable of nothing in the way of original or independent action' instead of 'a self-reliant, free, fully matured human being' (77-78).

Shaw thought that there should be a solution to the aforementioned problem. Hence, he suggested some changes to the methods by which education is practised. First of all, he argues in 'Parents and Children' that schools should not be based on compulsion, but on liberty and the recognition of the individual's rights (74). Consequently, the system of imposing education on the young should be abolished. If this happened, children would become capable of self-reliance, independence and originality. Moreover, they would want to learn and would enjoy learning. This kind of learning is what Shaw called 'liberal education,' which, Shaw maintains, 'cannot be acquired without interest and pleasure' (*Sham* 301). This implies that neither liberty nor interest or pleasure can be acquired through compulsory schooling. Hence, people are not to blame for being unable to bring about any social change; they are the victims of a faulty system of education, or, in Shaw's words, 'the victims of . . . misdirection' (*Prefaces* 102). One of the destructive effects of the existing education system, as Shaw notes in 'Parents and Children,' is to educate people 'not into manhood and freedom, but into blindness and slavery,' so the result is that '[t]hey do not want liberty. They have not been educated to want it' (102). Whereas under a liberal education system, people would learn to appreciate liberty and reject slavery. And since Shaw considered thoughtless conformity to conventions a kind of slavery, it seems that he hoped that convention would be challenged by the newly liberated graduates. But in order to be free, people should

be educated to 'want' freedom and trained to be free from childhood, which is potentially paradoxical.

Shaw also believed that students should be trained to criticise and accept criticism. This 'freedom of controversy and criticism,' would implement liberal education; 'for dogmatic instruction,' as Shaw states in *Everybody's Political*, 'is worse than useless as an instrument of liberal education' (70). Thus, the exchange of diverse opinions and opposing viewpoints will contribute to the student's mental growth. In Shaw's view, one of the dangers of the educational system is when the students are satisfied with what they have been taught and take it for granted. Change involves questioning and reflecting upon things which even the majority of people consider right. But this method of education, Shaw asserts in *Everybody's Political*, is suitable for adults, not children, for it is too early for a child to be 'bothered with controversy' (70). This is, in fact, one of the few instances in which Shaw differentiates between adults' and children's education. He usually suggests that there is no difference between a child and an adult in learning and gaining knowledge and that education is a never-ending process. 'Education,' Shaw argues, 'is not confined to children: in fact liberal education is mostly adult education, and goes on all through life in people who have active minds instead of second hand mental habits' (*Everybody's* 69). Although what Shaw says about liberal education being 'mostly adult education' indicates that it is age-dependent, his particular reference to people with 'active minds' suggests that the real criterion of effective education is continued mental growth rather than age. Shaw himself supports this view when he notes in *Everybody's Political* that '[s]ome children are older mentally than their parents, and some septuagenarians younger than their grandchildren' (72). Shaw's definition of an adult as someone whose mind is fully grown can be traced back to *My Dear Dorothea*.

Shaw wrote *My Dear Dorothea* in 1878, and wanted Sir Edward Burne-Jones to illustrate the book. However, Burne-Jones died in 1898, before Shaw could meet him. Forty-eight years later, Shaw gave the manuscript to Mrs. Clare Winsten, and it was published in 1956 as a book with her own illustrations. Although it is not considered one of Shaw's most important works, it could be argued that it is in this work that he provides the basis for his ideas on the education of the young; those

which he spent much of the rest of his life developing. The treatise is intended to teach a child how to behave when surrounded by adults, and how to act like an adult. It takes the form of advice to a young girl from one who feels for her, as Shaw puts it, ‘the romantic affection of a parent, tempered by the rational interest of an experimental philosopher’ (52). Shaw, indeed, plays the role of the parent and the educator in this work. The two things he most encourages Dorothea to develop are self-sufficiency and self-education. In Shaw’s view, both are important for the development of the child’s mind and character.

Shaw takes advantage of children’s desire or tendency to act like adults to show the importance of developing children’s self-sufficiency. He encourages Dorothea to be self-sufficient so that she can act like an adult: ‘Always strive to find out what to do by thinking, without asking anybody. If you continually do this, you will soon act like a grown-up woman.’ He continues saying that, on the other hand, ‘[f]or want of doing this, a very great number of grown-up people act like children’ (15). In other words, Shaw asserts that self-sufficiency is one of the qualities which establishes someone as an adult. He describes adults to Dorothea as people who ‘have grown up completely in mind and body and are therefore expected to take care of themselves’ (11). Another characteristic of maturity, Shaw explains to Dorothea, is the ability to maintain self-control. Thus, Shaw advises Dorothea not to cry and not to lose her temper (44). Shaw also encourages Dorothea to maintain her independence and self-control because they are two other qualities of the adults and both will lead to her growth and development. He suggests that she should not take advice from others unless she has to, for this will teach her independence (15). The way Shaw encourages Dorothea to be independent is unconventional for a Victorian child, who was taught to do as he or she was told (Gainor 165). Hence, the letter shows Shaw’s own rebellious attitude towards authority as well as his advocacy of free will. Laura Tahir argues that ‘the foundation’ of Shaw’s ‘life’s purpose’ can be seen in this work (19). Indeed, the work depicts Shaw the educator, the parent, and the creative evolutionist. Moreover, while the work provides evidence of Shaw’s commitment to his progressive purpose, as Tahir suggests, it marks the change in the medium through which Shaw educates his audience, i.e. from a non-dramatic to a dramatic medium.

Another important thing Shaw encourages Dorothea to undertake, and constantly advocates in his writings, is self-education. Shaw suggests that it is the most fruitful kind of education and thus is better than that offered in state schools. Shaw assures Dorothea that all books are ‘fit’ for her, and therefore she can read everything she likes except what she finds ‘tiresome’ (22). Shaw’s use of the word ‘fit’ suggests that schools and parents might censor Dorothea’s reading; something Shaw believed should not be allowed to occur. There is one book Shaw highly recommends: *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Shaw urges Dorothea to read it before she is ten years old. Whereas *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is the only book Shaw mentions in the treatise, there are other books he recommends in his article ‘The Best Books for Children,’ as already mentioned in the introduction. Moreover, while both treatise and article encourage children to read, ‘The Best Books for Children’ pays more attention to the quality of children’s reading choices. ‘[F]irst rate fiction,’ Shaw argues, ‘will teach the future man how to dream’ (27-28). Shaw’s recognition of the importance of dreaming suggests that he might consider it an engine for social change. This further suggests that there is a strong relationship between dreaming and Shaw’s utopian vision. In fact, Lyman Tower Sargent, in ‘What is a Utopia?’ (2005), defines ‘utopianism’ as ‘social dreaming,’ that is, ‘dreaming about a better way of life’ (154-55). Accordingly, Shaw seems to give the private experience of dreaming a social dimension because for utopian socialists like himself, there must be a link between action and dreaming, public and private, society and individual. In other words, from Shaw’s perspective, imagination serves as a catalyst for social and political action.

Another method of self-education is simply to gain experience and be more involved in life outside home and school. Shaw’s emphasis on experience as a necessary condition for education can be seen in his autobiography *Sixteen Self Sketches*, where he asserts the importance of experience in learning and the futility of ‘academic degrees’ without ‘living experiences’ (71). Moreover, in the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw gives an example of how a cat would clean itself without being taught, which illustrates the point of gaining experience through involvement in a certain situation: ‘[I]f you want to see a cat clean, you throw a bucket of mud over it, when it will immediately take extraordinary pains to lick the mud off, and finally be cleaner than it was before’ (482). Although this kind of learning seems to

be suitable for adults rather than children, Shaw advises the young daughter of a friend, Edith Beatty, in a letter to withdraw from Mrs. Hunter's Notting Hill School, educate herself, and become more involved in life (*Collected Letters 2*: 133-35).

In sum, when Shaw develops his argument on education, he seems to place a special emphasis on two points: the first one is that education never ceases and can never be confined to a certain age or a certain place. He stresses this idea more than once in works such as *The Intelligent Woman's Guide* and *Everybody's Political*. 'Education,' Shaw says, 'is not concerned with childhood alone. I am in my 88th year, and have still much to learn even within my own very limited capacity' (*Everybody's* 177). This point may justify Shaw's presentation of adult offspring instead of young children in his plays on education. It seems that he believes that education is as important for adults as it is for children. In other words, he sees no difference between children and adults in this regard. The second point Shaw emphasises in his writings on education is that whereas the methods of education are different, the goals are the same. Shaw wants the new generation to be properly educated and thus qualified for their part as agents of progressive change. Thus, it can be seen that Shaw's political, evolutionary, and educational ideas are strongly related to each other. As Simon has pointed out, Shaw's socialist and evolutionary ideas would determine, to a great extent, the goals of education for him (134). Hence, there seems to be a direct relation for Shaw between education and social progress. Education for him is an instrument of social change in the sense that it can bring about a change in the outlook of the existing social order and prepare individuals for their social roles.

Inherent in Shaw's plan to produce active individuals capable of bringing about social change is the belief that the child should be given the freedom to develop in its own manner. In this case, the child would be an active instead of a passive learner. It is clear that such a view is against the view of moulding the character of the child, which, as Neill points out, had been accepted by the majority in 1910 as a means of education (140). In 1902, Shaw wrote: 'The vilest abortionist is he who attempts to mould a child's character' (*Revolutionist's Handbook* 733). Shaw here uses strong language as the word 'abortionist' is associated with death or killing. It is as if he were saying that he who attempts to mould a child's character

kills him or her. John L. Childs in 'Education and Morals' criticises Shaw's opposition to moulding children and claims that this moulding is an integral part of the nurturing and development of the child (97). While it is true that Shaw was against moulding and shaping the child's mind and life, he was not against nurturing the mind of the child. As discussed earlier, Shaw paid great attention to the education that would contribute to the child's mental growth. It seems that the moulding that Shaw objected to was that which intended to control and enslave the mind of the child rather than to nurture it. Childs, however, makes a good point when he suggests that the real problem is not whether to mould or not to mould the child, but how to discover 'the means by which the nurture of the child can be made a process of enrichment and liberation, not one of exploitation and enslavement' (97). This point indeed summarises the whole purpose of Shaw's argument regarding the education of the young. It further justifies Shaw's suggestion of various methods for education. Perhaps Shaw was experimenting with different educational methods that would, in his own words, 'produce the just man made perfect: that is, to make humanity divine' (*Prefaces* 47).

One important educational method Shaw was experimenting with was drama. In his preface to *Three Plays for Puritans* (1900), Shaw advocated what he called 'the drama of edification' as opposed to 'the drama of romance and sensuality' (705). And in a letter to Ellen Terry, Shaw writes: '[I]t is clear that I have nothing to do with the theatre of to-day: I must educate a new generation with my pen from childhood up—audience, actors and all' (*Collected Letters* 2: 97). The tone of the letter is teasing and ironic, for Shaw is absolutely involved in the theatre of the day but claims that he stands outside it, that he is not in tune with it, and that he has got to build up his own audience. It is a dogmatic thing to say that he has to create a new audience for his plays, but it is also a rueful acknowledgement of how he stands beyond conventional theatre. Theatre for Shaw is a pedagogical method. However, it is imagination that he wants to invoke as an educational tool, for imagination, in Shaw's view, can fire up the brain and provoke thinking. In other words, Shaw wants his plays to produce and provoke thinking and rationality. In addition to the reflective rational response, Shaw wants his plays to produce a physical response, i.e., to provoke people to think differently as well as to act differently. Therefore, it can be argued that Shaw is provocative in terms of thinking, being, and doing. What

is more, Shaw is trying to instil a new sense of what theatre is. His comment is not only about educating the audience and directing them to act and think in particular ways, but it is also about what theatre can do. It also suggests something about Shaw's overwhelming ambition, and, perhaps, arrogance.

Having explored Shaw's concern for the education of the younger generation and the reason for his concern, it is now necessary to determine to what extent his views on education are reflected in his 'drama of education.' Thus, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* will be the focus of the next section of this chapter, for the theme of Shavian education seems best manifested in those two plays. But before examining *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*, it is important to explore the last, but not the least effective, method of education, which is parental instruction. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Shaw does not say much about the role of the parent in education. But there are a few instances where he talks about the parent in relation to the education of the young, or vice versa. For example, in his discussion of marriage in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw concludes that 'the responsibility for the maintenance and education of the rising generation is shifted from the parent to the community' (33). This suggests that the community educates the child, and perhaps can educate the child better than its parent, and that Shaw sees himself as part of that community. Accordingly, the playwright can be part of the community which educates the child and shares the responsibility of educating the 'rising generation.'

In many places in 'Parents and Children,' Shaw alludes to the destructive effect of parents' interference in the education of their children. He criticises the attempt of some parents, whom Shaw describes as 'ignorant and silly enough to suppose that they know what a human being ought to be,' 'to force their children into their moulds' (50). The reason for Shaw's opposition to moulding the character of the child becomes clearer in the section 'The Experiment Experimenting' where he asserts that neither the schoolmaster nor anyone else should experiment on the child, for it is an experiment of the Life Force alone. This suggests that the parent would have little or no influence at all on the education of the offspring from the Shavian education perspective. As to Shaw's idea of the child's character, it is, as Neill argues, 'something deeper and better and freer than any moulded character' (141). It has implications for his political and evolutionary theories. But what Neill claims to

be Shaw's 'big message' which is to '[p]ut this civilization in order and then talk about educating children' does not seem quite right; the opposite is more likely to be true, that is, children should be educated for the purpose of putting this civilisation in order.

Shaw indicates in *Everybody's Political* that his own parents did not have the 'parental competence to guide, educate, and develop children' (76). This statement reveals something important about Shaw's view of the role of the parent in education: his suggestion that parental competence is a requirement for the guidance, education, and development of the offspring. In this case, the interference of a competent parent in the child's education process would have a constructive effect. There are two examples of fathers playing a constructive educational role in Shaw's plays: one is Andrew Undershaft in *Major Barbara*, and the other is Professor Higgins in *Pygmalion*, though the latter is a surrogate father. Undershaft and Higgins are not really deemed competent parents; however, their usefulness lies in the former's worldly knowledge and wisdom and the latter's linguistic knowledge and teaching methods, as will be seen.

Unlike the subversive parent-child relationship in the first chapter, the parent-child relationship in this chapter is portrayed as natural and conventional in terms of the role of the parent as a nurturer and educator and the role of the child as a pupil. What is unconventional here is Shaw's depiction of the father-figure, who represents the older generation, as promoting social change. Although the second chapter too, in particular *You Never Can Tell*, shows that the existence of the parents in the lives of their offspring can facilitate the evolutionary process, the parental influence is different in each case. Whereas the parental influence in the second chapter is indirect and serving evolution unintentionally, it is in this chapter more direct and conscious through providing the younger generation with purposeful education. In *Major Barbara*, the father nurtures the mind of the daughter with facts about life and directs her to a path that leads to social progress. In *Pygmalion*, the father-figure teaches the daughter the kind of speech and manners that will allow her to cross social class barriers.

The fact that the teacher-pupil relationship in the previous plays is a father-daughter relationship has been interpreted by some Shavian scholars as having

implications for Shaw's feminist views. Gainor argues that Shaw's representation of the father/teacher daughter/pupil relationship suggests that it is necessary to prepare the daughters to live in a patriarchal society through acquiring some of their fathers' masculine qualities (163). Similarly, Lenker in *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (2001) notes that, in general, Shaw used the father-daughter relationship to 'interrogate gender' (2). With regard to education in Shaw's plays, Lenker argues that the goal of the education of the daughter provided by the father in *Major Barbara* is to achieve 'gender balance' (114-15). Such views, though reasonable enough, seem to disregard Shaw's portrayal of the discarded father and the mother's educational role in *You Never Can Tell*. The children in this play are able to assert their independence and exercise their own will by virtue of their mother's intellect and education as well as eliminating the influence of their father. Furthermore, the claim that *Major Barbara* addresses gender issues is questionable, for the play ends with Barbara clinging to her mother's skirt in a childlike manner, asking for her opinion on which house to take in the village. Such an ending undermines Shaw's feminist credentials, and may even have anti-feminist implications. Yet, regardless of what this scene may suggest, the education of daughters theme as dramatised in *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* has implications for his views on the liberation of daughters from whatever restricts their freedom and impedes their progress, as the following section will illustrate.

Major Barbara

Not only is *Major Barbara* one of Shaw's major and most popular plays; it is also one of his most didactic. Shaw called it 'A Discussion in Three Acts,' drawing the audience's attention to his first deliberate experiment in the discussion technique, which he admired in Ibsen's drama. Martin Meisel in his book *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theater* classifies the discussion play as 'a genre in its own right' (290). The novelty of this genre is that the focus is on thought rather than action. As Anthony S. Abbott points out, the theme of Shaw's early plays was rebellion against convention, and since 'parody and satire have their limitations as vehicles for philosophical thought,' new dramatic forms are needed to convey those new thoughts (43). Indeed, Shaw found the discussion play convenient to express his philosophical thoughts and achieve his educational goals. Shaw's philosophy here is

in many ways complex and controversial. It was intended to provide a better understanding of the world; however, it has often been misunderstood or misinterpreted, as will be shown later.

Before analysing *Major Barbara*, it is necessary to explore its theme. The play is about the education, disillusion, and conversion of a daughter, Barbara. Michael Holroyd in his biography of Shaw questions whether what happens to Barbara is a conversion and prefers to call it 'a growing-up' (*One-Volume* 312). It is true that Barbara's education leads to her growth; however, it also leads to her conversion to a new religion. This religion could be Shaw's Creative Evolution, or, as Berst puts it, 'a new religion [that is] based on social fact as well as on idealism' (173). Other critics agree that what Barbara undergoes is a conversion; however, they tend to view it as something different from religious conversion. According to Abbott, the conversion of Barbara 'results from the rational imposition of one ideology upon another' (44). Although Undershaft ultimately succeeds in making his daughter Barbara accept his materialist ideology, this is not likely to be achieved through 'imposition,' but rather through a kind of education that leads to Barbara's recognition of the importance of material reality. Margery Morgan argues that Barbara's conversion 'is essentially conversion to the acceptance of wealth' (150). This is true, but it should be noted that Barbara accepts wealth only as a means to an end, not an end in itself, as will be seen.

According to Andrea Adolph, Barbara's education, provided by her father, further leads to the acceptance of hierarchies and patriarchal values (69). But Barbara rather seems to temporarily exploit hierarchies and patriarchal values, represented by her father, to achieve a humanitarian and spiritual purpose. Such an interpretation is supported by an examination of Shaw's evolutionary and educational philosophies, both of which stress the importance of the child's independence, and Barbara's declaration at the end of the play that she will use her father's armaments factory for the purpose of salvation 'through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God' (1: 445). According to Shaw's evolutionary thought, the child should be independent of its parents. As to his educational philosophy, it suggests that the pupil should be independent of the teacher. Accordingly, since Undershaft plays the role of the father as well as the teacher, Barbara should be

independent from him and his thought. This brings into question how the pupil can learn from the teacher and yet remain independent of him. Other questions to be raised are: what is the role of Undershaft as a teacher, and what is the value of his lessons if Barbara is already a strong-willed, independent daughter? The next section attempts to answer these questions.

Not only does the relationship between Barbara and her father matter; the relationship between her parents is also important because, when compared and contrasted with her relationship with her fiancé Adolphus Cusins, it shows Shaw's attempt to address the problem of social inequalities through his representation of marriage. Barbara's parents have been separated since she was young. The main reasons behind the couple's separation are: differences in social class, differences in moral standards (resulting in a disagreement over the origin of Undershaft's money), and, more importantly, Undershaft's refusal to let their son, Stephen, inherit the armaments factory. Undershaft's intention to disinherit his son upsets Lady Britomart, Barbara's mother, because she finds it outrageous and unacceptable to break the aristocratic tradition of blood inheritance. Through the relationship between Undershaft and Lady Britomart, Shaw ridicules the idea of inheritance as well as the aristocratic form of marriage. The aristocratic Lady Britomart marries Undershaft who is an illegitimate foundling instead of marrying someone of her own class. The failure of the Undershaft-Stevenage marriage questions the possibility of inter-class marriage. Nevertheless, the good relationship between Barbara and her fiancé promises a successful inter-class marriage. Like Undershaft, Cusins is a foundling. He falls in love with Barbara after seeing her working for the Salvation Army, and thus the couple become engaged. Unlike her mother, Barbara has no consideration for class differences. As Louis Crompton points out, '[o]nly in their third child, Barbara, has the Undershaft-Stevenage marriage justified itself as an evolutionary experiment in the crossing of types and classes' (108).

Thus, even though Barbara is brought up by her mother only, she is not influenced by her mother's upper-class snobbery. In fact, she differs from her mother in many ways. She does not feel ashamed of being married to a foundling who is considered classless in the traditional view of class distinctions. In addition, she has turned away from the life of the upper classes and has become closer to the lower

classes by working in the slums as a Salvationist, giving her help and love for the poor. Another thing she does which is in conflict with upper-class norms is that she behaves in an unladylike manner, which upsets her mother (*Major Barbara* 127). Given these points, it can be said that the parental influence on Barbara occurs mostly from the side of her father, and in an astonishingly short time.

Nevertheless, Lady Britomart's influence on Barbara should not be underestimated. Shaw insists in his letter to Theresa Helburn that 'the clue to a great deal of Barbara is that she is her mother's daughter' (Laurence, *Theatrics* 180). This mostly applies to the end of the play, which most of the critics found surprising, as will be discussed. One of the similarities between Barbara and her mother is that they both tend to treat adults, especially men, as children. Stephen always complains about the way his mother treats him: 'For Heaven's sake either treat me as a child, as you always do, and tell me nothing at all; or tell me everything and let me take it as best I can' (1: 347); and '[m]other: there must be an end of treating me as a child, if you please' (1: 413). Likewise, Barbara treats her fiancé as if he was a child addressing him by the pet name of 'Dolly' and sometimes 'Silly baby Dolly,' or 'my dear little Dolly boy' (1: 443-45). Another resemblance between the daughter and her mother is their tendency to have their own way and to 'order people about' (1: 351). On the other hand, Barbara has special qualities different from those of her mother and sister: she is intelligent, thoughtful, and energetic. Those qualities are probably what attract her father to her and why he chooses her as his successor; as he remarks: 'I shall hand on my torch to my daughter. She shall make my converts and preach my gospel' (1: 388). The word 'torch' connotes light and energy.

Barbara's life changes under the influence of her father, who reappears in her life after her mother calls on him to support her daughters in their marriages. *Major Barbara* thus has something in common with *You Never Can Tell* in that the reappearance of the father who has long been absent from his children's lives results in a crisis for his eldest daughter after which this daughter's affiliation with him becomes greater. Lady Britomart has distanced her children from the harmful influence of their father. She tells her son that if his father had been in the house, he and his sisters, 'would all have grown up without principles, without any knowledge of right and wrong' (1: 349). Therefore, Lady Britomart has found it necessary to

keep her children away from their father while they were still young because she believes that young children can easily be influenced and misled, especially as they liked Undershaft, and as she tells Stephen, ‘he took advantage of it to put the wickedest ideas into their heads, and make them quite unmanageable (1: 349). Her plan to make her children reunite with their father only after they have become adults suggests that she no longer fears Undershaft’s malign influence on her family, but the course of the play proves her wrong.

The effect of the reappearance of Undershaft on his children is more than Lady Britomart had expected. In addition to the powerful impact of his education on them, mainly on Barbara, their affiliation shifts from mother to father. Lady Britomart considers the fact that she has become marginalised after all the years that she has spent in teaching her children about right and wrong as unjust:

LADY BRITOMART. . . . That is the injustice of a woman’s lot. A woman has to bring up her children; and that means to restrain them, to deny them things they want, to set them tasks, to punish them when they do wrong, to do all the unpleasant things. And then the father, who has nothing to do but pet them and spoil them, comes in when all her work is done and steals their affection from her. (1: 364)

It seems that through this speech, in particular, and the representation of the mother-figure in this play, in general, Shaw wants to clarify two points. The first is that teaching is the father’s specialty. Although the mother-figure does appear as educator in some of Shaw’s plays, like *You Never Can Tell* and, to some extent, *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, her lessons are shown to be a negative influence on the progress of her offspring. Gloria would not have been in the grip of the Life Force and thus engaged to Valentine had she not abandoned her mother’s feminist beliefs; and Vivie would not have been free and independent had she not rejected her mother’s ideas regarding duty and money. The second point Shaw tends to clarify in *Major Barbara* is that Lady Britomart’s teaching methods are wrong. Ignoring young children’s interests and punishing them as a means of teaching them right and wrong can be damaging to their character development. Moreover, the ‘perfect freedom’ Lady Britomart claims to have given to her children in adulthood is not freedom at all: ‘I have always . . . allowed you perfect freedom to do and say

whatever you liked, so long as you liked what I could approve of' (1: 347). The reason is given in the preface to this play; if someone's freedom is conditioned by the approval of his 'moral character,' it is not considered freedom, for freedom should not be dependent on the judgement of others (130). Accordingly, since Lady Britomart's children are free to do and say what they like on condition that they like what she can approve of, it can be said that they are deprived of their freedom.

Nevertheless, the effect of Lady Britomart's educational methods differs from one child to another. Barbara has proved to be the most resistant to her mother's tyranny because of her innate strength and vitality. And we are not told much about Sarah, except that she is 'slender, bored, and mundane,' but she is represented as more subdued than Barbara. Of the three children, only Stephen is more likely to be the victim of his mother's educational method. He has grown up naïve, immature, dependent on his mother, and influenced by her views on right and wrong. He says to his mother: '[H]ow can they [people] differ about right and wrong? Right is right; and wrong is wrong; and if a man cannot distinguish them properly, he is either a fool or a rascal: that's all' (1: 349). The fact that Stephen's values are in contrast with his father's is not an issue in the play; the real issue is that he has grown up with a weakness in his character and an inability to argue and question traditional values, at least in the way required by the 'freedom of controversy,' one of Shaw's instruments of educational and social change (*Everybody's* 70).

Lady Britomart is, thus, represented as less qualified to be a mentor for her children than Undershaft. She is possessive and domineering, a tyrant according to Shaw's definition of tyranny in 'Parents and Children.' 'And my family, thank Heaven,' she boasts, 'is not a pig-headed Tory one. We are Whigs, and believe in liberty. Let snobbish people say what they please: Barbara shall marry, not the man they like, but the man I like' (1: 344). In addition to the Shavian irony contained in this speech, Lady Britomart's tyranny is clearly shown in her final comment. Moreover, Lady Britomart is a slave of conventional morality and of her class prejudices, although she pretends she is not. This is why she cannot provide her children with proper education, one which, in Shaw's view, is based on reality not ideals, because the education she herself had received was sham and superficial.

Nevertheless, Lady Britomart's education of Barbara has proved to be useless rather than harmful, compared to Stephen. It does not help Barbara change herself or her society in the way Shaw expects from an agent of the Life Force. Barbara is able to do so only after being influenced by her father's lessons. In contrast to Lady Britomart, Undershaft was self-educated by means of experience gained in his youth when he was poor himself, and this gives a value to his education. He, as Shaw indicates in the preface in the section on 'The Gospel of St. Andrew Undershaft,' had learned that religion and morality served to keep the poor in poverty by preaching to them the virtues of poverty, using phrases like 'Poor but honest' and 'the respectable poor' (118-20). He was, therefore, able to realise that there was nothing good about poverty, and that the belief that the poor are good and the rich are evil impedes social progress. This is shown in his reply to Peter Shirley, a man who is proud of being poor: 'Poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of' (1: 380). Undershaft is, therefore, more qualified to be Barbara's mentor and nurturer because of his knowledge and wisdom.

Through the relationship between Undershaft and Barbara, Shaw represents a conflict of opposites such as good and evil, morality and immorality, realism and idealism, and body and soul. The opposition between the father and daughter is obvious from the beginning of the play. Barbara is an idealist who believes in her role as a saviour and is committed to saving souls. The doctrines she follows are those of the Salvation Army. On the contrary, Undershaft's doctrine is that salvation is only possible through 'money and gunpowder' which, in his view, have the power to redeem and change humanity (1: 384). In fact, he makes a religion of money and gunpowder, as indicated in his reply to Barbara's question, 'what is your religion.' He says: 'My religion? Well, my dear, I am a Millionaire. That is my religion' (1: 380). By making a religion of money and gunpowder, Shaw seems to emphasise 'their great social importance' rather than 'their holiness' (Berst 164). Undershaft's materialist belief is based on hard facts and experience. 'I moralized and starved,' Undershaft admits, 'until one day I swore that I would be a full-fed free man at all costs . . . [and] I became free and great' (1: 435). As a result of his experience of life, he came to believe in two things: first, that money was the source of power and freedom; and second, as Shaw himself believed, that poverty was 'the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes' (*Prefaces* 40).

Therefore, *Major Barbara* is similar in many respects to *Mrs Warren's Profession*. As a matter of fact, it could have been entitled *Andrew Undershaft's Profession* in line with *Mrs Warren's Profession*, as indicated by Archibald Henderson, but Shaw wanted to avoid repetition (*Life* 378). The two plays are similar in the sense that poverty is portrayed as the source of all evils. It is what makes Mrs. Warren resort to prostitution and Undershaft to the armaments business. However, as Berst puts it, Shaw in these two plays 'is promoting neither prostitution nor arms manufacture per se' (161). He rather argues that Mrs. Warren and Undershaft should not be blamed for choosing professions that society considers immoral, for society itself did not offer them an alternative to starvation. And by society, Shaw means capitalist society. Thus, individuals like Mrs. Warren and Undershaft have no choice but to exploit capitalism to gain economic security. It is this fact of life that Shaw wants to convey to the audience, and which is presented in the arguments between the parent and daughter in *Major Barbara* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*. This leads to another similarity between the two plays which is that the parent convinces the daughter, who rejects her parent's profession for moral reasons, of the necessity, even the morality, of this profession (Ganz 155). By providing the daughter with worldly, materialistic education, the parent helps the daughter to reevaluate her understanding and to come to terms with him or her. But in *Mrs Warren's Profession*, the reconciliation is only temporary followed by a revolt on the part of the daughter.

The father-daughter relationship in *Major Barbara* takes the form of the teacher-pupil relationship. Undershaft's role as a father-teacher is to destroy the obstacles to Barbara's development as an agent of change. Those obstacles are of two kinds: external and internal. The external obstacle which stands in the way of Barbara's progress is the Salvation Army. Undershaft has to break its hold on Barbara's life and thought; thus he plans to 'buy the Salvation Army' (*Major Barbara* 1: 389). He does succeed in doing so by making a generous donation, which Mrs. Baines, the Commissioner of the Salvation Army, gladly accepts. Barbara believes that her father's money should not be accepted because it is tainted. However, Mrs. Baines is more practical than Barbara in thinking that there is no other way to save the shelter from closing. The effect of this on Barbara is tragic and results in her disillusionment: 'Drunkness and Murder! My God: why hast thou

forsaken me?’ (1: 403). Shaw here seems to question the idea that there is tainted and untainted money, for he mentions in the preface to this play that it is an unpractical idea that charities should not accept tainted money simply because all the money in the country comes from questionable sources (124). Barbara does not realise this fact, and it is the role of Undershaft to help Barbara overcome the inner obstacles which prevent her from seeing the truth.

Therefore, despite Barbara’s strength of character and desirable qualities such as intelligence, leadership, and wilfulness, which would qualify her for the role of agent of the Life Force, there are some limitations or psychological barriers to her progress. Perhaps the most serious one is her non-materialistic vision of life and her belief in the importance of feeding men’s souls rather than their bodies. Furthermore, she makes the mistake of thinking that the denial of material needs leads to spiritual power and freedom (Zimbardo 11). The truth about the importance of material needs is established when Barbara visits her father’s armaments factory and starts arguing with him. At this point, her heart is still broken, and she has almost lost her faith, as her following words show:

BARBARA. . . . I stood on the rock I thought eternal; and without a word of warning it reeled and crumbled under me. I was safe with an infinite wisdom watching me, an army marching to Salvation with me; and in a moment, at a stroke of your pen in a cheque book, I stood alone; and the heavens were empty. (1: 432)

Some critics argue that what Barbara has experienced is spiritual death, and this gives rise to the birth of her new soul. In her introduction to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Major Barbara* (1970), Rose Zimbardo points out that ‘within the very breaking [of Barbara’s heart] is the promise of renewal and rebirth’ (13). Similarly, Arthur Ganz in *George Bernard Shaw* (1983) compares what Barbara experiences with resurrection, in the sense that Undershaft raises his daughter to a new life after the death of her old one (156). Ganz also suggests that Undershaft may well be ‘engaged in the greater task of raising society to a higher level’ (156). Such interpretations seem quite plausible and assert that Undershaft is as much involved in the great work of the regeneration of society as his daughter.

Accordingly, Undershaft can be considered an agent of the Life Force, and thus be the first such agent of the older generation. Shaw in his preface to this play notes that Undershaft is an 'instrument of a Will or Life Force which uses him for purposes wider than his own' (128). Several references in the play suggest that Undershaft is an agent of the Life Force. Probably the most important one is his assertion that he has no power in the management of his factory, for he is driven by a 'will' of which he is only 'a part' (1: 431). In addition, Undershaft refers, in more than one context, to his freedom and the importance of freedom for the individual, such as when he talks about his experience of overcoming poverty and starvation and how he eventually became 'free and great' (1: 435). He associates poverty with slavery and wealth with freedom. Moreover, Undershaft's interest in social development, and his revolt against established institutions and social systems is one aspect of the workings of the Life Force or the will which manifests itself in him. Another aspect, as explained in Shaw's 'Parents and Children,' is seeking immortality through the constant process of death and rebirth of an improved individual until the goal of evolution is achieved through the birth of the Superman, an immortal being and 'a being that cannot be improved upon' (45). Undershaft, of course, does not give an explanation as such for this aspect of Shaw's evolutionary theory, but he alludes to it when he mentions that Barbara shall preach his 'gospel' of 'money and gunpowder; freedom and power; command of life and command of death' (1: 388). In the 'command of life and command of death,' there is a reference to Shaw's aforementioned idea that the elimination of death is one of the goals of Creative Evolution. The freedom of the individual from his mortal body is probably the highest level of freedom and power for Shaw and an indication of perfection. On the other hand, for a creative evolutionist like Shaw, death gives him a sense of incompleteness, unfulfilment, and imperfection.

Thus, Undershaft being an agent of the Life Force himself has the competence to guide and educate his daughter. His lessons qualify Barbara to take part in the evolutionary process and even be a more effective agent than himself. After breaking the delusive image Barbara had of her role in serving religion, she becomes ready to learn about something else and finds herself another role in life. She says to her father: 'Well, take me to the factory of death; and let me learn something more. There must be some truth or other behind all this frightful irony' (1:

420). Her soul is still troubled; but it seems she is trying to find a bridge between spirituality and materialism, the past and the future. Undershaft tries to console and at the same time inspire his daughter:

UNDERSHAFT. Come, come, my daughter! Don't make too much of your little tinpot tragedy. . . . Well, you have made for yourself something that you call a morality or a religion or what not. It doesn't fit the facts. Well, scrap it. Scrap it and get one that does fit. . . . If your old religion broke down yesterday, get a newer and a better one for tomorrow. (1: 432-33)

Inspired by her father and the power his factory represents, Barbara recognises her new role in serving humanity, but only at the end of the play after her fiancé accepts Undershaft's offer to be his successor in the armaments business. She allies herself with Cusins in making 'power for the world,' but she insists that this power 'must be spiritual' (1: 442). Speaking to Cusins, she expresses her new understanding of religion: 'Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work he had to create us to do because it cannot be done except by living men and women' (1: 444). If we take into consideration Shaw's belief that 'there is no God as yet achieved, but there is that force at work making God' (*New Theology* 5), then Barbara's comment may refer to the Shavian Life Force, especially the way in which it uses men and women as instruments to fulfil its evolutionary purpose. Barbara's assertion that 'the way of life' lies 'through the raising . . . of man to God' may provide another clue (1: 445), if understood in terms of Shaw's definition of the Superman, in *Man and Superman*, as 'a god' (3: 626).

The union of Barbara and Cusins, thus, has many indications of being a powerful superhuman union. Cusins is represented as an agent of the Life Force who is qualified to contribute to the development of humanity. Besides the fact that he is a professor of Greek, which means that he is educated and intellectual, he is strong-willed and determined, as his following words indicate: 'whenever I feel that I must have anything, I get it, sooner or later' (1: 387). One of the things which he is determined to achieve is his marriage to Barbara, and this reveals two additional qualities of the young professor. Shaw notes in the stage directions that Cusins is a realist, for he is not blinded by 'the illusions of love,' and that his attachment to Barbara is driven by 'some instinct' (1: 352). The role of instinct in bringing this

couple together confirms the evolutionary purpose of their union. Another quality of Cusins which affirms his role as agent of the Life Force is his recognition that he is driven by a will and his submission to that will. Speaking to Undershaft about his marriage to Barbara, Cusins says: '[W]hy should I waste your time in discussing what is inevitable?' (1: 387). In addition to his description of his marriage to Barbara as 'inevitable,' he later describes himself as 'possessed' (1: 401). This shows that he is impelled by a power stronger than himself and a will beyond his own. Nevertheless, he needs to be provided with the means to make power for the world and to make social progress possible. Cusins' qualities, though attractive to Undershaft, are not enough to make him eligible to be his successor. The Undershaft tradition requires passing on the business to 'a man with no relations and no schooling' (1: 412). When Cusins announces at the end of the play that he is a foundling, the first condition is satisfied. However, the fact that he is an educated man constitutes an obstacle, but is eventually overcome.

Shaw seems to exploit the idea of the Undershaft tradition to ridicule the social customs and manners of the upper classes as well as the English education system. He ridicules the former by Undershaft's insistence to Lady Britomart that she 'had better find an eligible foundling and marry him to Barbara' if she wants to keep the factory 'in the family' (1: 412). This is completely at odds with the norms and traditions of the upper classes. And he ridicules the latter by Undershaft's insistence that the foundling who is to be his successor should be a man with no schooling because schooling for him is a failure for the following reasons:

UNDERSHAFT. Every blessed foundling nowadays is snapped up in his infancy by Barnardo homes, or School Board officers, or Boards of Guardians; and if he shews the least ability, he is fastened on by schoolmasters; trained to win scholarships like a racehorse; crammed with secondhand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that he is fit for nothing but teaching. (1: 412)

The language Shaw uses in this speech is sarcastic and reveals his own views on the education system at the time. For example, when he says that the foundling or the student is 'fastened on by schoolmasters,' there is a reference to his idea that

schoolmasters deprive students of their freedom by preventing them from ‘mov[ing] or talk[ing] in class except to order’ (*Everybody’s* 69). Moreover, the word ‘racehorse’ together with the phrase ‘crammed with secondhand ideas’ reflect Shaw’s view that the graduate schoolboys or schoolgirls are ‘capable of nothing in the way of original or independent action’ (*Prefaces* 77-78). The word ‘crammed’ also expresses Shaw’s contempt for teacher-centred education, as implied in his non-dramatic writings discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as his approval of the child-centred education. The points stated by Undershaft altogether show Shaw’s attack on school as one of the institutions that impedes the individual’s growth and development. Shaw’s criticism of the English education system appears once more, but this time in the speech of Cusins when he ensures that he is eligible for Undershaft’s business. Cusins claims that the effect of education on him is constructive and not destructive, for Greek ‘has nourished’ his mind, but this is not meant to defend the English education system. He gives two reasons for such a constructive educational outcome: first, he is a genius by birth, for, as he says, ‘[o]nce in ten thousand times it happens that the schoolboy is a born master of what they try to teach him’; and second, he ‘did not learn it [Greek] at an English public school’ (1: 428).

The fact that the play ends with Undershaft’s triumph, his passing on the business to Cusins, and Barbara’s joining Cusins in making power for the world has been a matter of controversy. This is mainly because it indicates the triumph of evil, violence, and destruction in a way that challenges Shaw’s humanist values and socialist beliefs. G. K. Chesterton asserts that *Major Barbara* is against Shaw’s faith because it suggests the victory of environment over will (199). Similarly, Harold Bloom argues that Undershaft ‘raises the fascinating question of Shaw’s own ambivalence toward the socialist ideal’ (12). However, such views seem to be an oversimplification of Shaw’s complex theory of progress which involves the use of different means, whether radical or gradual, to achieve the end of world betterment.

The totalitarianism that is evident in Shaw’s advocacy of potential mass destruction as a way of clearing obstacles to progress is also controversial. Nicholas Grene, though he acknowledges Shaw’s totalitarian position in *Major Barbara*, does not consider it problematic. He describes Shaw’s position as ‘one of innocent

totalitarianism [owing to Shaw's] impatience with the ineptitude and ineffectiveness of conventional political and moral idealism' (139). Shaw's enthusiasm for socialism and achieving social and human progress may give him an excuse to express some radical ideas. However, it should be noted that such radical ideas were put into practice by totalitarian dictators in the twentieth century and resulted in unspeakable horrors and crimes against humanity. Therefore, as already mentioned, this thesis discusses Shaw's political ideas within the family/education context and in terms of their application in the plays, and not in terms of their application in other places.

Assuming that Shaw's political ideas are innocently provocative, it can be said that money and gunpowder are significant for Shaw only as a means and not as an end in themselves, as Undershaft states: 'Choose money and gunpowder; for without enough of both you cannot afford the others' (1: 385). They are important for their power and ability to bring about change. As Berst points out, armaments to Barbara are not an end, but 'a vehicle for spiritual growth' (172). In addition, the desire of Barbara and Cusins to make power for the world through arms manufacture gives hope for social improvement because, hopefully, the destruction will pave the way for progress, as Cusins' words to Barbara suggest: 'You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too' (1: 442). Thus, Shaw seems to suggest that the solution to the negative use of money and power is placing them in good hands like Cusins' and Barbara's, or, in other words, people who know how to control that money and power. Speaking to Barbara about the power of armaments, Cusins insists that 'Man must master that power first' to avoid any undesirable destruction (1: 443). It seems that Cusins and Barbara are willing to exploit money and gunpowder for good rather than submit to them and make a religion of them like Undershaft. Hence, social improvement is more promising via Cusins and Barbara than via Undershaft, for the young couple appear to be morally and intellectually superior.

Undershaft's role as educator is vital to the growth and development of Barbara and thus to the optimistic end of the play, from a Shavian perspective. Barbara in her education is like a child who grows through different developmental stages into mature adulthood. Bloom thinks the opposite, that Barbara's conversion, caused by the education she has received from her father, 'destroys her as an adult,'

and that her reconciliation with her father makes her become like ‘a child again’ (17). Bloom seems to understand Barbara’s conversion as a defeat and not as a prelude to a better future and a better understanding of her role in life. Speaking from a creative evolutionary perspective, when Barbara has completed her education, she has been able to realise her full potential as a life-force agent. She has been able to recognise that ‘the way of life lies through the factory of death’ and ‘through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God’ (*Major Barbara* 1: 445). Therefore, it is not quite plausible to suggest that Shaw has reduced Barbara’s role at the end of the play. Moreover, Undershaft’s educational role is constructive and may well be viewed as an attempt to nurture Barbara and fulfil her own desire rather than control her and interfere with her interests. This view is reinforced by the fact that Barbara is independent from her father and acts of her own will, not his, as indicated in the stage directions: ‘She resumes her self-possession, withdrawing her hands from his with a power equal to his own’ (1: 432). Thus, Barbara is ultimately not inferior, but equal or even superior to her father.

Pygmalion

Pygmalion deals with Shaw’s actual practice as an educator and demonstrates his educational goals more than any of his other plays. In his preface to the play, Shaw confirms its didactic purpose:

It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else. (773)

Thus, the title *Pygmalion: A Romance in Five Acts* is misleading because the work is not really a romance, despite its likeness to the Pygmalion myth and the Cinderella story. Thus, it is one of Shaw’s anti-romantic ironies, especially that the play does not end in a wedding between the hero, Professor Higgins, and the heroine, Eliza; it ends in a commentary. And this is an inversion of the conventional happy ending of romantic comedy. The first English production of the play was directed by Shaw himself in 1914 at His Majesty’s Theatre, London, and featured Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Eliza and Herbert Tree as Professor Higgins. In general, the production

was a success; and the performance of the actors had positive reviews. For example, Mrs. Campbell was praised for being successful in ‘gripp[ing] the character of ’Liza and mak[ing] clear to the audience the gradual mental growth of a woman placed in a position of extraordinary difficulty’ (Mew 504). Egan Mew asserts that Eliza experiences ‘mental growth’ and ‘social evolution,’ but at the same time notes that ‘there is mystery in the play’ (504-5). Another review of the same production, published in *The Observer*, states that Shaw ‘leaves us to guess how much the change in Eliza is to be ascribed to mere pronunciation’ (7). Indeed, the reviews provide evidence that the play is controversial and open to different interpretations.

Shaw claims in his preface to the play that English phonetics is the subject of *Pygmalion* and that the play is meant to show the importance of phonetics and phoneticians (773). Shaw’s interest in phonetics, or the study of speech patterns, goes back to the late 1870s, shortly after he had arrived in London. During that time, Shaw found himself an outsider and different, as he described himself: ‘I was a foreigner—an Irishman—the most foreign of all foreigners when he has not gone through the British university mill’ (Henderson, *Life* 42). Arnold Silver in *Bernard Shaw: The Darker Side* argues that Shaw’s accent and manners ‘marked him as an outsider,’ and that he studied hard to change them (185). As Shaw noted in his preface to *Pygmalion*, one of the phoneticians whom he had met in the late-nineteenth century and admired for his ‘great ability as a phonetician’ was Henry Sweet (771). In the same preface, Shaw acknowledges that ‘there are touches of Sweet in the play’ (772). Those touches are in the character of Professor Henry Higgins.

One of the things that Sweet and Shaw had in common was their interest in phonetic and spelling reform. Shaw starts his preface to *Pygmalion* with a critique of English spoken language, and then points out: ‘The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play’ (771). Higgins is, indeed, represented as energetic, scientific, and, as described in the play’s stage directions, ‘violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject’ (14). Another similarity between Sweet and Shaw is that they both believed in the social role of phonetics. In his *Handbook of Phonetics* (1877), Sweet writes: ‘When a firm control of pronunciation has thus been

acquired, provincialisms and vulgarisms will at last be entirely eliminated and one of the most important barriers between the different classes of society will thus be abolished' (196). Likewise, Shaw believed that human beings by means of learning 'a new speech' can fill up, as Higgins puts it, 'the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul' (46). In fact, Higgins here is making a huge claim. He seems to be saying that people need to find the right language in order to understand each other because if they do not, they cannot connect as human beings nor can they meet soul to soul. But if people find a common language, then the souls of others can be recognised. Therefore, a new mode of communication needs to be found in order to enable people to understand each other better; and that will produce a social and political shift as well, for if people get a different linguistic stimuli, then they can respond differently. Thus, what Shaw seems to suggest is that people should have enhanced awareness and the ability to act on that awareness. For Shaw, it is a question of making people equal in terms of humanity (i.e. the fundamental human right to be treated equally), and not just class. Phonetics can help achieve equality in terms of both class and humanity, but only when conscious awareness and the right language are present.

Class distinctions are shown in the first scene of the play when a group of people from different classes are waiting for the rain to stop in Covent Garden. Among them are a middle-class family living in 'genteel poverty,' Professor Higgins, Colonel Pickering, who is another phonetician specialising in Indian dialects, and Eliza, a lower-class flower-girl. In this scene, Shaw depicts the differences in social class and manners between members of British society by contrasting the pronunciation of the upper classes and their concern for propriety with Eliza's Cockney accent and her vulgarity. Higgins finds Eliza's accent distasteful and annoying, but he thinks it can be improved by teaching her 'proper' English. And by teaching her good manners as well, he believes that he can make a duchess of her. Eliza agrees to become Higgins' experiment for two reasons. The first, which Eliza herself states, is that she wants to obtain a job as a lady in a flower shop instead of selling flowers on the street. Eliza is aware that proper speech is a requirement for employment: 'they wont take me unless I can talk more genteel' (722). Shaw here presents one of the issues resulting from class and social differences, which is judging and classifying individuals according to their class,

speech, and appearance. This constituted a problem for him because it is at odds with the principles of equality. The second reason why Eliza agrees to be a student of phonetics is that, as Berst puts it, she ‘seeks the knowledge and power of the upper classes’ (202). This is made clear from the beginning of the play, but that she also seeks a certain kind of power, which is that of self-control, becomes clear towards the end of the play, when she says: ‘I was brought up to be just like him [Higgins], unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didnt behave like that if you [Pickering] hadnt been there’ (1: 269). Thus, Eliza seeks the power of self-control over words and actions. It is worth noting, then, that what represents power in this play is education and learning, whereas in *Major Barbara* what represents power is arms.

In *Pygmalion*, Shaw presents the problem of social inequality and at the same time interrogates the nature of class and social barriers. The fact that Eliza is able to become a lady and pass as a duchess at an ambassador’s party in only six months exposes the artificiality of those barriers. Shaw states in his preface to the play that ‘the change wrought by Professor Higgins in the flower-girl is neither impossible nor uncommon’ (773). He seems to suggest that the real difference between classes lies in money, an issue which, in Shaw’s view, will be solved by redistribution of wealth and income so that the class divisions will be abolished. Differences in class can also be overcome through education, and so are differences in speech and manners. Eliza’s transformation occurs as a result of her learning the speech and manners of the upper classes as well as being influenced by Colonel Pickering’s manners. Therefore, in *Pygmalion*, phonetics, and education in general, play a role similar to that of socialism in the sense that both are a means to achieve social equality.

The course of the play does show that the importance of phonetics lies in its ability to bring about change on the social and personal level as well. In other words, the play shows that this kind of scientific education can play a role in bridging the gap between upper and lower classes and in the formation of one’s character. To illustrate the first point, English society will gradually become classless, as Shaw seems to advocate, through a unified spoken language since the apparent difference between classes is in speech. With regard to the second point, education helps the

individual, especially the woman, become independent and qualified for better careers, and thus expands the opportunities for a better life. However, it should be noted that Eliza's fundamental character does not change, but rather it develops as a result of what Higgins teaches her. From the beginning of the play, Eliza is able to assert herself and show her economic independence: 'I'm come to have lessons, I am. And to pay for em too: make no mistake,' and 'I can buy my own clothes' (1: 212, 217). However, she appears less emotionally independent and less intellectual than at the end of the play.

Hence, education serves in the play as a means by which women gain independence, self-confidence, and self-respect. Eliza in the earlier part of the play appears weak and naïve with a desire for tenderness and affection from Higgins, who is both her teacher and surrogate father. However, at the end of the play she becomes independent and free of his influence. She tells Higgins that she would not marry him if he asked her, and she chooses to gain independence by being a teacher of phonetics, which puts her in a position equal to Higgins: 'I'll have independence,' Eliza says, 'I'll teach phonetics' (1: 279-80). Eliza here seeks economic as well as emotional independence from Higgins. She makes it clear that she can do without Higgins and that she does not need him anymore. Eliza's independence could be viewed as an independence of a woman from men, a daughter from her father, and a student from her teacher. All of these interpretations are applicable to this play. It seems that Shaw argues that society puts Eliza in a position inferior to that of Higgins because she is poor and a woman and that her education raises her above her social position. In fact, education has given Eliza a new social identity.

Eliza's new identity and character is created by Higgins as Eliza has been the subject of his experiment in teaching. In this experiment, Eliza is like a child and is treated like one, such as when Higgins talks with Pickering, his partner in the experiment, and Mrs. Pearce, his housekeeper, about Eliza as if she were not present or capable of understanding (Gainor 231). Another example is when Pickering insists that Eliza must understand the nature of the experiment and her role in it, Higgins replies: 'How can she? She's incapable of understanding anything' (1: 220). Higgins assumes that a rational discussion with Eliza would be useless and prefers to deal with her in another way. He lures her with 'chocolates' and 'tak[ing] rides in taxis'

as if she were a young child (23). Higgins' treatment of Eliza as a child reflects his dual role as a teacher and a surrogate father. It also shows the influence of class as the upper classes treat the lower classes as children to be governed. Eliza too regards herself as a young girl instead of a grown-up woman, for she repeats throughout the play: 'I'm a good girl, I am,' a comment which also has sexual implications. Higgins' experiment with Eliza and Eliza's description of herself as 'a child in [Higgins'] country' recall Shaw's idea of the child as an experiment in 'Parents and Children,' discussed in chapter two (1: 271). Shaw argues that the Life Force alone has to make the experiment on children and that no one has the right to interfere in this process. This is repeated more than once under the headings: 'What is a Child,' 'The Manufacture of Monsters,' and 'The Experiment Experimenting.' Under the first of the aforementioned headings, Shaw writes: 'And you will vitiate the experiment if you make the slightest attempt to abort it into some fancy figure of your own: for example, your notion of a good man or a womanly woman' (47). The addressee here is anyone who attempts to interfere with the experiment of the Life Force by moulding the child's character. However, Shaw, in the section on 'The Experiment Experimenting,' gives a special warning to schoolmasters. He says: '[I]t is the Life Force that has to make the experiment and not the schoolmaster; and the Life Force for the child's purpose is in the child and not in the schoolmaster' (71). Hence, Shaw opposes moulding the character of the individual whether young or old because he assumes that the individual knows better than anyone else what is good for him since the Life Force works through him. However, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* show that there are exceptions to Shaw's claim. Undershaft and Higgins, who are both represented as father/teacher figures, know best what is good for Barbara and Eliza and what is best for society as well. As mentioned earlier, Shaw made Higgins a phonetician with an interest in reform and improvement. Higgins admits that he cares for Eliza because he cares 'for life, for humanity' and she is 'a part of it' (1: 276). Moreover, Higgins declares in a cancelled passage of *Pygmalion* that he has devoted his life 'to the regeneration of the human race through the most difficult science in the world' (qtd. in Crompton 148).

While both Undershaft and Higgins have the same educational purpose, which is presumably to bring about social change, they differ in their methods of teaching. Whereas Undershaft's method is to nourish and guide, Higgins uses two

different methods. The first one, which seems traditional and old-fashioned, is that of reward and punishment. Higgins explains this method to Eliza and Pickering saying:

HIGGINS. . . . Eliza: you are to live here for the next six months, learning how to speak beautifully, like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs Pearce with a broomstick. (1: 220)

This teaching method is similar to Lady Britomart's in *Major Barbara* when she claims that she has taught her young offspring right and wrong by 'punish[ing] them when they do wrong' (1: 364). Higgins here also appears as a parent to Eliza treating her as if she were his young child, which could be an effect of his own mother's treatment of him as a child and her controlling him, not in an aggressive, but in a gentle way. The childlike treatment of Higgins can be observed throughout the play and inferred from his following comment: 'I've never been able to feel really grown-up and tremendous, like other chaps' (1: 224).

The old-fashioned method of punishment makes Higgins' scientific education questionable. Moreover, it makes him no better than Eliza's illiterate father, Alfred Doolittle. Hence, Eliza notices the similarity between Higgins' and her own father's treatments of her. When Higgins threatens to beat her with a broomstick if she does not stop snivelling, Eliza replies: 'One would think you was my father' (1: 214). Higgins at this point seems to have stepped out of his role as a teacher into the role of the father, or perhaps confirms his dual role as a teacher and a surrogate father: 'If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you' (1: 214). But Higgins' threats and intimidations are not serious, as none of them are carried out. He is sometimes portrayed as someone playing with Eliza as if she were his doll. Ganz describes Higgins as an immature child playing the role of a father to a doll: '[A] child playing at being a parent, a boy who has somehow become the father of a mechanical doll' (184). Nevertheless, the reason for regarding Higgins as immature does not seem to be that he is irresponsible and unaware of the consequences of his experiment, though he is irresponsible and childish in his mother's view. Rather, it is

because he cares about Eliza's brain and articulation but not her soul and feeling. What is more, he assumes that she does not have any feelings that need to be taken seriously:

PICKERING. [in good-humored remonstrance] Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

HIGGINS. [looking critically at her] Oh no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. [Cheerily] Have you, Eliza?

LIZA. I got my feelings same as anyone else. (1: 218)

The way Higgins treats Eliza, as some kind of a doll or a machine instead of a human being with a soul, is a flaw in his character and a defect in his methodology, as some critics have already argued, or may be a new and unfamiliar method of teaching, as will soon be explained. According to Morgan, Higgins is selfish for 'educating Eliza to suit his own convenience . . . and treating her as an unpaid servant' (173).

Similarly, in addition to what Ganz says in the earlier quotation, he describes Higgins as someone who is 'dangerously possessive' (186). It is true that there are some moments in the play when Higgins appears possessive: when Eliza tells him in the last scene that she will marry Freddy, he replies: 'I'm not going to have my masterpiece thrown away on Freddy' (1: 279). His possessiveness here can be interpreted as ownership in the sense that he views Eliza as his own creation and something that belongs to him, as his words 'my masterpiece' suggest. And it can also be interpreted as jealousy and fear of losing Eliza to another man. However, both interpretations are unlikely because Higgins is very pleased at the end of the play with Eliza's rebellion and independence, as will be shown later. Higgins' comment can also be seen as part of the irony and humour of the play.

It can be said that Higgins' other teaching method, which is never stated but implied, is to induce and provoke. As an example of this method, Higgins tells Eliza: 'A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere—no right to live' (1: 206). Although Higgins, here and elsewhere in the play, appears to be insulting Eliza in showing no respect and concern for her, it seems that he attempts to provoke her into changing her language and her life, in general. Another example is when he says, 'I have created this thing [Eliza] out of the squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden,' which hurts Eliza's feelings as she

decides to leave saying, 'Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf' (1: 269). This method, though it seems inappropriate for teaching, does work in the end, for it helps Eliza change herself into an emancipated, self-confident woman. Perhaps this scenario is made by Shaw on purpose to show that science and feelings do not go together and that there is no room for emotions in social reform. Higgins is described in the stage directions as 'energetic, scientific' and at the same time 'careless about himself and other people, including their feelings' (1: 209-10). And in the last scene, he explains to Eliza how he separates his personal feelings from work: 'I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us' (1: 277). Practicality is, thus, Higgins' strong point while sentimentality is Eliza's weak point.

The absence of love and care in the relationship between Higgins and Eliza makes the play different from the myth in which the creator, Pygmalion, falls in love with his creation, Galatea. Hence, as Gibbs points out, '*Pygmalion* is a play not about the growth of love between master and pupil, but about the pupil's regaining, through struggle, of her identity and independence' (*Art* 173). This is true though 'regaining' may not be the right word here as the identity and independence gained are so different to those Eliza had previously. In fact, Eliza's independence lies in her ability to become detached from Higgins and to liberate herself from her love for him, which only happens near the end of the play. Furthermore, in the prose sequel to this play, Shaw describes the idea of a marriage between Eliza and Higgins as 'unbearable, not only because her little drama, if acted on such a thoughtless assumption, must be spoiled, but because the true sequel is patent to anyone with a sense of human nature in general, and of feminine instinct in particular' (1: 282). By making Eliza marry Freddy instead of Higgins, Shaw breaks away from the conventional romantic comedy and gives the play a feminist twist: Eliza's rejection of Higgins is a rejection of slavery and domination of woman by man. Shaw states in the sequel that one of the reasons why Eliza chooses to marry Freddy is that he is 'not her master, nor ever likely to dominate her in spite of his advantage of social standing' (1: 284). Thus, unlike the mythical Galatea who remains speechless, having no access to language, and having no freedom as she is entirely curtailed by Pygmalion, Eliza has been given life, freedom, and speech. She seems to have enjoyed her freedom so much that she does not want it to be threatened by her marriage to Higgins because although she has learned how to be free and

independent, Higgins is always likely to be in a position of authority over her, whether he acts as a teacher, a father, or a husband.

It is worth noting that Eliza's liberation is the result of not only linguistic education, but also another kind of education, similar to that in *Major Barbara*, which is based on experience and exposure. For Shaw, this kind of education is effective, as already mentioned earlier in this chapter, and more important than official education. Higgins exposes Eliza to a different lifestyle by making her live in his house for six months. In so doing, she is introduced to people from a different class to her own and with different accents and manners, and she has the opportunity to deal with different real-life situations. Indeed, Eliza herself claims in Act IV that it was Pickering's treatment of her as a duchess and his good manners that made a lady of her rather than Higgins' speech lessons. In the following quotation, she tells Pickering what began her 'real education':

LIZA. [stopping her work for a moment] Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me. [She resumes her stitching]. And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors. (1: 270)

Thus, Pickering's treatment of Eliza has given her a sense of dignity, confidence, and self-respect. Of course, Pickering did not mean to teach Eliza good manners, for good manners, as Eliza observes, 'came naturally to' him. Thus, Shaw seems to be playing around with the idea of the father-as-teacher figure. Pickering is neither a teacher, like Higgins, nor a father, like Doolittle, to Eliza; he is just being himself—kind, courteous, and genteel. Yet, Eliza recognises him as the greater teacher. Shaw seems to argue that education is bound neither to a particular teaching or familial relationship nor to a formalised education. Rather, it can come 'naturally,' and from a variety of sources.

In addition to Pickering, Eliza becomes acquainted with Mrs. Higgins, Higgins' mother, through whom she gets to know the Eynsford Hills. Mrs. Higgins is one of the most interesting Shavian mothers. She loves her son but always rebukes him for his lack of manners. She is wise and intelligent and is considered to be

Higgins' ideal of 'candor, good manners, sophistication, and kindness' (Berst 213). She represents an ideal example for Eliza too. Although she belongs to a higher class, she does not treat Eliza in a snobbish and superior way, but rather in a kind and humane manner. At her tea party, Eliza is given the opportunity to sit and talk with the Eynsford Hills. It is Eliza's first public appearance after learning proper speech and manners. She succeeds in making a good impression on Freddy and his sister, Clara: Freddy falls in love with her, and Clara appears to be fascinated and is described in the stage directions as 'devouring her [Eliza] with her eyes' (1: 242). Mrs. Eynsford Hill, the mother of Freddy and Clara, is a well-bred lady who pays great attention to manners and gentility despite, or perhaps because of, her lack of money. Freddy is a simple but naïve man who has neither money nor occupation. He is, as Berst puts it, 'socially above entering trade and economically below obtaining the gentleman's education which would qualify him for something better' (213). Neither Freddy nor Clara had received 'any serious secondary education,' as Shaw states in the sequel (1: 286). They are, as Nicholas Grene points out, 'educated to do nothing and given nothing to do it on' (139). In the sequel Shaw also mentions that Freddy and Eliza's flower shop did not succeed because Freddy 'like all youths educated at cheap, pretentious, and thoroughly inefficient schools, knew a little Latin . . . and nothing else' (1: 291-92). Both Freddy and Eliza lacked the necessary knowledge of business, and, 'business, like phonetics, has to be learned' (1: 292). Given that Eliza and Freddy had to educate themselves in financial and business matters, it could be said that phonetics may help individuals to cross social and class barriers but not necessarily to succeed in achieving their goals, although it does indirectly as they need that class mobility to succeed. However, education in general can contribute to achieving one's goals. Hence, phonetics is important in itself, but it is also an example of the way in which education, more broadly, can make a difference. With regard to Clara, she is represented in the play as pretentious though poor and as someone who attempts to become advanced and sophisticated though ignorant. In short, Shaw's representation of the Eynsford Hills serves as a social and educational criticism of Edwardian society. Furthermore, the family serves as a contrast to Eliza in the sense that their proper accent and manners make them, in the view of society, superior to her, although they are poor, and Eliza's wrong accent and manners, before her transformation, make her inferior to them.

The inclusion of Doolittle, Eliza's biological father, in the play reinforces Shaw's ridicule of the class system in contemporary English society and his interrogation of the meaning of social class. Doolittle provides an example of a social transformation parallel to that of his daughter Eliza. He is transformed from a dustman into a gentleman. However, in contrast to Eliza, his transformation occurs as a result of his gaining a large sum of money, a bequest from Ezra D. Wannafeller, and not learning the right accent. He is able to transcend all social boundaries without any training, unlike Eliza who worked very hard to improve her social status. Doolittle can also be contrasted with the Eynsford Hills because he does not have the proper accent, but he does have the proper amount of money to allow him to consort with the upper classes. Although Doolittle has enough money to make him financially secure and not worried about class and social differences, he recognises the significant role of speech in determining social identity and asks Higgins to teach him a middle-class accent: 'I'll have to learn to speak middle class language from you,' Doolittle says to Higgins (1: 264). Ironically, while Higgins speaks proper English, he has no manners. Therefore, by comparing and contrasting Eliza and her father, the Eynsford Hills, and Higgins, Shaw seems to question what determines one's social class and what makes the real difference between the upper and lower classes. In society's view, it is speech and manners, but in Shaw's view, it is money. To reinforce the idea that the factors which determine one's social status, other than money, are superficial, Shaw suggests through his comic representation of Doolittle in Act V that a person can be accepted into the upper classes merely by wearing the appropriate clothes. The new appearance of Doolittle and the way he is dressed make Mrs. Higgins' parlourmaid refer to him as 'a gentleman':

THE PARLOR-MAID. A Mr. Doolittle, Sir.

PICKERING. Doolittle! Do you mean the dustman?

THE PARLOR-MAID. Dustman! Oh no, sir: a gentleman. (1: 261)

The parlourmaid recognises Doolittle as a gentleman because he is wearing a particular set of clothes, and thus gives him a new status. It is not one that Doolittle would be awarded by the other characters, which emphasises how difficult it is to describe someone's class.

Doolittle and Higgins can also be compared and contrasted in terms of their relationship with Eliza. While both of them may be regarded as misogynists according to the scene in which they treat Eliza as property to be bought and sold, Higgins proves to be different from Doolittle. Unlike Doolittle, he is not the sort of man who likes to keep women subjugated and dependent. In fact, he encourages women's independence by means of education and training, and what he does to educate Eliza and create a new identity for her is an example of this. In contrast, Doolittle gives Eliza no education whatsoever, as Holroyd points out: 'he [Doolittle] provides positively no education at all for his illegitimate daughter "except to give her a lick of the strap now and again"' (*Pursuit* 326). The reason has more to do with his belief in the uselessness of the education that attempts to improve one's mind than with his inability to provide education for his daughter. This can be inferred from his advice to Higgins that the only and the most effective method to have 'Eliza's mind improved' is 'with a strap' (1: 233). Shaw's portrayal of Doolittle as an oppressive father shows that Eliza is a victim of both her father and society. The education she receives from Higgins provides a means for her to liberate herself from physical as well as social oppression.

The ambassador's garden party does show that Eliza is transformed into a lady; however, this transformation is only outward. Inwardly, she is still the same 'silly girl,' as Higgins always calls her. She is looking for more than merely education from her teacher and surrogate father; she is looking for his affection and attention. She is represented as weak, sentimental, and subordinate; as she tells Higgins: 'You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her' and 'I notice that you dont notice me' (1: 275-76). Higgins' phonetics lessons for Eliza cease at that point of the play; however, his lessons about life and the worth of the individual do not. In fact, they become more explicit and directed towards the end of the play. Higgins reveals to Eliza his dissatisfaction with the slave-like image of women: 'I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight. . . . No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave?' (1: 276). Higgins' speech reflects Shaw's feminist sympathies and his aversion to the slavery of women. This, together with the fact that the play does not end in a marriage between the hero and heroine, allows for a feminist reading of *Pygmalion*. Higgins, in fact, shows no interest in the love of

women and assures Eliza that he does not and ‘won’t trade in affection’ (1: 276). Unlike the mythical Pygmalion, Higgins does not love his creation but rather loves the science that brought her into being. He has a passion not for women but for phonetics. When Eliza fails to understand his message, he responds with words like: ‘You were a fool,’ ‘you’re an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you’ (1: 276).

Eliza’s true transformation occurs only near the end of the play when she is no longer a slave to Higgins’ will and to her own emotions. The new Eliza is represented as rebellious, strong, independent, and indifferent to Higgins. She tells Higgins: ‘If I can’t have kindness, I’ll have independence,’ and ‘I’m not afraid of you, and can do without you’ (1: 279-80). Furthermore, she defies Higgins, in particular, and social expectations of a woman in her position, in general, refusing to be passive and submissive: ‘I’ll let you see whether I’m dependent on you. If you can preach, I can teach. I’ll go and be a teacher’ (1: 279). Eliza does not feel inferior and subordinate to Higgins anymore; she rather views herself as equal to him, socially and intellectually. According to Berst, the education Eliza has received from Higgins has provided her with a means to express herself linguistically, intellectually, and emotionally:

The refinements of language and manners and the dignity of being treated as a lady have provided a means through which her intellectual and emotional being can put its discordant jumble of half-thoughts, half-ambitions, and half-feelings into an order that has not only exterior polish but interior subtlety. (216)

Eliza is, indeed, like a child who becomes able to express his or her thoughts properly after he or she learns the right language. Higgins does not get irritated by Eliza’s strength of character and her showing emotional and economic independence. On the contrary, he admires her new personality and takes it as a sign of growth and development: ‘By George, Eliza, I said I’d make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this. . . . Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you’re a tower of strength: a consort battleship’ (1: 280). Higgins is pleased because he considers his ability to make a new woman of Eliza a victory and a success of his experiment. He asserts that she is now equal to him and to Pickering:

‘You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl’ (1: 280). Higgins’ offer for Eliza to be part of a fellowship with him and Pickering suggests that she has gained social acceptance in the world of the higher classes and could be interpreted as a sign of class and gender equality, two things Shaw had long advocated. However, it could have another interpretation based on the very ending of the play when Higgins orders Eliza to buy him ‘gloves’ and a ‘tie’ as she is leaving and expects her to obey his order, saying to his mother: ‘She’ll buy em all right enough’ (1: 281). This conduct together with his ‘chuckl[ing] and disport[ing] himself in a highly self-satisfied manner,’ as described in the stage directions, may suggest that he does not regard Eliza as an equal and a potential partner, but as an inferior and a subordinate.

Despite his intentions, Higgins succeeds in making a new Eliza who is both free and independent. Eliza refuses to buy the items and responds ‘disdainfully’: ‘Buy them yourself’ (1: 281). Eliza’s response is a break-down of the idea of class because she is claiming for herself equal status with Higgins in saying ‘[b]uy them yourself’, but the language she uses is not the language Higgins would have taught to her, or the response he would have authorised. It is really breaking down and challenging the idea of class definitions. In a way, Higgins is teaching Eliza a proper language, which gives her the appearance of equality, but he does not give her the language to give such an uncouth response; and that is where she makes herself equal. Eliza has to break out of the language Higgins has given her, the language of gentility, in order to assert herself in ways that the existing class system would not condone. It is, indeed, a claim for equality, but not necessarily class equality. It brings back the notion mentioned earlier regarding the ways in which human beings see themselves differently because they have got a new class. It is as if Eliza is saying to Higgins: see me as a human being equal to you, but not equal in a class sense.

Chapter Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine Shaw’s views on the education of the younger generation as presented in his non-dramatic writings and represented in two of his plays, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*. The chapter has also demonstrated

Shaw's belief in the importance of education as a means of improving individuals and society. As is the case with Shaw's political and evolutionary views discussed in the first two chapters, Shaw's ideas on education are motivated by a desire to improve the world. Hence, it can be argued that socialism, evolution, and education for Shaw are different means to one end; and that end is world betterment. Shaw's understanding of education as an instrument for bringing about social change led him to believe that the younger generation should be given the best possible education, which, in his view, is not formal education. Formal or official education, Shaw believed, is not yet equipped to produce qualified graduates who are free and independent. Its effect is more likely to be destructive to the students. Therefore, Shaw suggests other methods to develop the minds and character of the young. The first method is based on self-learning and self-exploration. The other method, however, requires the help of a facilitator, someone who assists and guides the younger generation into developing themselves and their own understanding of the world and who removes any internal or external obstacles which may prevent them from progressing. This facilitator is represented in *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* by the father-figure (excluding Doolittle). However, this is rather exceptional and subject to the father's competence as an educator and the child's need for education.

The relationship between education and social change and the role of the father as a facilitator of social change are more evident in Shaw's plays than in his non-dramatic writings. In *Major Barbara*, Undershaft provides his daughter Barbara with a utilitarian education which leads her to accept material reality, and hopefully would enable her to use money and gunpowder for good ends. The fact that the play ends with the agreement of Barbara and her fiancé to 'make power for the world' and have it 'for good' promises social change (*Major Barbara* 1: 442). Undershaft also plays a significant role in removing the obstacles, mostly internal, from Barbara's way. Likewise, Higgins in *Pygmalion* helps Eliza overcome some external barriers to her progress, which are accent and manners. The education he provides Eliza with is a means for her to improve herself and her social position. Eliza's declaration of independence from Higgins, her marriage to someone from a higher social class than her own, and her having her own flower shop prove that her learning experience as a student of Higgins has been fruitful and empowering. Hence in *Major Barbara*, we are asked to hope that the worldly knowledge Barbara gets

from her father will lead to social change by means of a good use of money and gunpowder, but in *Pygmalion*, we witness Eliza's transformation on the personal and social level. However, it is still to hope that the linguistic knowledge will lead to social equality and the abolition of class, and to some extent gender, discrimination.

Thus, in both plays, the father-as-teacher figure is represented as a mentor whose role is to guide and nurture rather than to control and dominate the daughter. Moreover, Shaw seems to undermine the assumption that the teacher is a figure of authority, especially in *Pygmalion* where the pupil rebels against the teacher's authoritarian practices. The daughter is represented as a child whose education is an important element of her growth, development, and independence. The two plays, therefore, provide examples of two cases in which the interference of the parent and/or the teacher in the child's education process may have a constructive effect. This suggests that Shaw's non-dramatic writings which demonstrate his opposition to the attempt of the parent or the teacher to mould children or interfere in their education process contradict the ideas expressed in his plays. However, it can be said that whereas Shaw's non-dramatic writings include general comments about the education of the young, his plays provide a more detailed and explanatory description of how to make such education a process of empowerment and liberation. In other words, Shaw in his prose writings gives a rule without exceptions, but the exceptions are well-presented in his drama to provide a complete understanding of the types and methods of the education he advocated for the rising generation, the hope of the future.

Chapter Four

Children and the Family as a Social Institution

Introduction

This chapter delves deeper into Shaw's treatment of the family and children in his dramatic and non-dramatic writings, and is thus a continuation of the previous chapters. Shaw's ideas regarding the challenge to authority discussed in chapter one are echoed in this chapter. Moreover, there is some similarity between this chapter and chapter three in the way Shaw viewed school and the family as two social institutions that needed to be reformed for the welfare and development of the young. Shaw sought to undermine institutions that attempted to control children's behaviour and thoughts. For this reason, parents and schoolmasters are usually under attack in Shaw's writings because they represent authority in those institutions. It should be noted that Shaw's preoccupation with the institution of the family was not only motivated by his political ambition to establish a socialist state (in this case, the family for Shaw is more like an analogue for the state), but also by his interest in social reform. Therefore, the first part of this chapter tends to explore how Shaw viewed family life; why the family, in his view, needs to be reformed; and what means and methods for achieving the reform he suggested. Shaw's affectionate treatment of children and his opposition to their exploitation will also be discussed. The second part of the chapter will examine how Shaw's views on the family and the relations between parents and children are reflected in his representation of the parent-child relationships in *Misalliance* (1910) and *Fanny's First Play* (1911).

Shaw's concern with the institution of the family was a result of his belief in its necessity for the regeneration of society and the raising of a generation of improved human beings. In his preface to *Getting Married* (1908), Shaw notes that since the system of marriage and family life cannot 'produce something better than we are, marriage will have to go, or else the nation will have to go' (7). Shaw seems to suggest that marriage and family as they are constructed according to the laws and customs of his time need to be reformed to serve the progressive purpose he had in mind. Hence, Shaw considers the family the building block of improved society and

children the building blocks of a better future. Having this outlook, it is not surprising that Shaw believed that ‘the greatest social service that can be rendered by anybody to the country and to mankind is to bring up a family,’ and that ‘[t]he most important work in the world is that of bearing and rearing children’ (*Intelligent* 25, 326). Reasserting the importance of the rearing of children, Shaw points out in *Everybody’s Political What’s What?* that ‘[p]arentage is a very important profession; but no test of fitness for it is ever imposed in the interest of the children’ (74). Thus, Shaw seems to argue that the welfare of children is paramount and is considered a barometer of an improved society.

Shaw believed that the family as constructed in his time was not yet considered to be a good and happy place for children. In a letter to Margaret Mackail, written in 1933, Shaw writes: ‘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?’ (*Collected Letters* 4: 355). Shaw’s strange suggestion, or rather extreme articulation of dissatisfaction, represents the misery of children’s lives, and that children are so miserable that they would actually be happier dead. Michael Holroyd believes that this letter reveals what Shaw ‘felt about his own childhood’ (*One-Volume* 37). Shaw felt miserable and unhappy when he was a child because of his parents’ neglect and lack of love and care. Since Shaw suffered in his own childhood, it is not surprising that he views death as a way to avoid children’s sufferings. Grace Matchett, though acknowledging the influence of Shaw’s childhood experiences on his playwriting, argues that the extent to which they influenced ‘the subjects of his writing is impossible to determine’ (267).

Perhaps Shaw’s concern for children springs from two things: his affection for them and his belief that they are the hope of the future. Many examples of Shaw’s affectionate treatment of children are mentioned in Dan H. Laurence’s *Shaw’s Children* (2005). Playing with the infant of Ellen Pollock, later an actress and president of the Shaw Society for many years, Shaw blew soap bubbles and chased after a rubber ball (23). Also, Shaw never ignored letters sent by children; he usually responded to them almost immediately (24). Moreover, he ‘subscribed generously to

the Actors' Orphanage,' and he took children to pantomimes and to the Regent's Park Zoo (25).

Shaw's kind treatment of children is also testified to in Allan Chappelow's *Shaw the Villager and Human Being: A Biographical Symposium* (1961). Mrs. L. M. Harding who used to live in Wheathampstead, a village near Ayot St. Lawrence, remarked that Shaw was known for his kindness and generosity to children: 'He used to give every child in the village a shilling on his birthday, which was quite a lot in those days,' she said. Moreover, Mrs. Harding's married daughter, Mildred Tate, acknowledged Shaw's kind and affectionate treatment of her when she was young and his referring to her as 'my little friend' (93). In fact, the examples which show Shaw's concern and love for children are too numerous to mention.

This concern also led to him excluding young child characters from his plays for fear that they might be exploited. Shaw was against child labour, in general, and the use of children under ten in theatre, in particular. He strongly opposed parents or the theatre proprietors making money out of children (Laurence, *Shaw's Music* 1: 707). He referred to this exploitation as 'an infamous thing' (Laurence, *Shaw's Music* 2: 124). And he called the use of children on the London stage in the late-nineteenth century 'a sort of epidemic of child exhibition' (*Dramatic* 2: 457). Not only did Shaw hate to see children commercially exploited, but he also hated to see them kept up late for evening performances (*Dramatic* 2: 457-8). This serves as another example of his concern for the welfare and rights of children.

Shaw believed that children deserved a good and happy life inside and outside the home. But unfortunately for them, Shaw thought, a happy home life is only an ideal that did not yet exist. In *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw indicates that '[t]he family as a beautiful and holy natural institution is only a fancy picture of what every family would have to be if everybody was to be suited' (21). When it comes to reality, the institution of the family, in Shaw's view, is a failure. 'The flat fact,' Shaw states in the preface to *Getting Married*, 'is that English home life today is neither honorable, virtuous, wholesome, sweet, clean, nor in any creditable way distinctively English. It is in many respects conspicuously the reverse' (7). Shaw also states that home life is 'no more natural to us than a cage is natural to a cockatoo' (*Prefaces* 8). Moreover, Shaw in 'Parents and Children' continues his

criticism of the family unit stating that ‘it is an error to believe that the family provides children with edifying adult society, or that the family is a social unit. The family is in that, as in so many other respects, a humbug’ (52). In this quotation, Shaw suggests that the family, as he knew it, is superfluous, if not harmful to children.

It is necessary to clarify what kind of family Shaw was criticising. The object of his criticism is the ‘modern small family’ in which ‘children [are] “brought up at home,”’ as Shaw puts it. Such children, Shaw continues, ‘are unfit for society’ (93). This family is characterised by strong emotional closeness and domestic unity between parents and offspring. The ‘home’ becomes the privileged place for the protection of children from the outside world. This aspect of the family constitutes a disadvantage for Shaw, as his following remark indicates: ‘the homelier the home, and the more familiar the family, the worse for everybody concerned’ (*Prefaces* 93). Shaw seems to suggest that children in the modern small family are more dependent on their parents for care, guidance, and support and less exposed to the outside world in which children can interact with different people, learn by experience, and most importantly, gain autonomy and independence. He perceived this as a problem because he believed that the parents mostly have a negative effect on their offspring, and thus the less their influence the better for the children. Shaw even claims that parents are the worst guardians of children, as he wrote to Nancy Astor in 1943: ‘William Morris used to say that it is very difficult to judge who are the best people to take charge of children, but it is certain that the parents are the very worst’ (qtd. in Holroyd, *One-Volume* 6). Shaw might be reflecting on his own parents’ behaviour during his childhood. Moreover, it can be inferred from Shaw’s writings, in general, that the reason why he regards parents as the worst guardians is that he perceives them as authoritarian, incompetent, and unable to understand their children’s needs and interests. The misunderstanding and the conflict of interests between parents and children is dramatised in *Misalliance* and *Fanny’s First Play*.

Shaw claims that children are victims of improper child-rearing practices. He often views those practices as authoritarian in which parents impose their will and control over their children with little or no regard for their children’s preferences. In ‘Parents and Children,’ he assimilates parents and children to two different ‘classes’

and assimilates parental power to ‘political power.’ Not only that, but he also describes the two classes as in conflict and with unequal power: ‘[C]hildren and parents confront one another as two classes in which all the political power is on one side’ (47). Such a political relationship, Shaw argues, involves a denial of children’s rights—which he calls a form of ‘slavery’—and domination of one class over another, i.e., parents over children (47). William Irvine argues that in both *Misalliance* and its preface, Shaw ‘speaks of the conflict between parents and children in a way that reminds one a little of Marx’s class struggle and a little of Milton’s warfare between the good and bad angels’ (281). Indeed, Shaw in his writings depicts the generational struggle between parents and children as if it were a conflict between a dominating and an oppressed class, an exploiting and an exploited class. Nevertheless, Shaw’s dramatic treatment of this conflict reverses audience expectations in that it portrays children as almost always victorious, and even dominating. Yet, it is hard to determine whether children represent the ‘good’ or the ‘bad’ because they are often manipulative and never innocent. They assert their rights to independence and self-determination either in a harshly assertive way, like Vivie and Richard, in a manipulative way, like Ann and Hypatia in *Misalliance*, or in a way that challenges both the parents and the law, like Fanny and Margaret in *Fanny’s First Play*.

For Shaw, to limit children’s freedom and to break their will is to halt their development and hence that of society as a whole. However, Shaw thought that the family was not the only institution to blame; the school was also guilty. According to Shaw, the system in both institutions is wrong for the following reason: ‘[T]he whole tendency of our family and school system is to set the will of the parent and the school despot above conscience’ (*Prefaces* 80). Furthermore, Shaw accuses parents and schoolmasters of inculcating in children ‘a routine of complaint, scolding, punishment, persecution, and revenge as the natural and only possible way of dealing with evil or inconvenience’ (73). Thus, the problem is not only to do with the breaking of children’s will, but also with the way of rearing and treating children in general. Shaw argues that children are oppressed and will remain so as long as their rights are denied. Taking into consideration William Irvine’s point that ‘by the early twentieth century the English school had long since ceased to be cruel and morbid,’ it could be argued that Shaw’s views on education and schoolmasters are out of date

and that he could be reflecting on his own educational experience (279). However, Shaw's points surely refer to the concept and practices of any school, even the most benign one. His objection is to the rationale justifying compulsory schooling, not the iniquities of poor schools.

Shaw continues his discussion of the effect of poor child-rearing practices on a certain group, namely Englishmen. 'The grown-up Englishman,' Shaw states, 'is to the end of his days a badly brought-up child, beyond belief quarrelsome, petulant, selfish, destructive, and cowardly' (73). There are different interpretations of Shaw's use of the 'grown-up Englishman' instead of 'adult.' Shaw, as a pro-woman writer, may be working against particular ideas of masculinity. Instead of associating men with strength and courage, he rather portrays the grown-up man as someone who lives in fear, which is very childlike. This could have implications for Shaw's Irishness, as his critique could be made on a national or imperial basis. Lauren Clark argues that the 'reappropriation of power,' which Robin Bates describes as a feature of Irish writers in the first part of the twentieth century, is important for the 'understanding of Shavian child freedom' (5-6). Bates discusses the effects of the empire-colony relationship in the works of Irish writers, including Shaw, and notes that 'Irish writers [in the first part of the twentieth century] simultaneously write against British constructions of themselves and reappropriate the character and images used in those constructions while writing their way towards an independent experience for themselves' (1). Nevertheless, that Shaw is criticising English society as an outsider rather than looking at it from within remains a grey area and a subject of controversy. However, it can be argued that this is one of many instances in which Shaw's tone uses provocation to encourage the audience to respond and to reconsider their own practices.

Shaw expands on his explanation of the negative effect on society and civilisation of the authoritarian way of bringing up children. In 'Parents and Children,' he claims that the 'inculcated adult docility wrecks every civilization . . . [and] is inhuman and unnatural' (*Prefaces* 79). No wonder Shaw believed that thwarting the will of individuals destroys civilisation because he thought that the will is what makes and keeps a civilisation advanced. As already mentioned in chapter

two, Shaw, like Schopenhauer, believed in the importance of the will and that the whole universe is a manifestation of the will:

The strongest, fiercest force in nature is human will. It is the highest organization we know of the will that has created the whole universe. . . . What corrupts civilization . . . is the constant attempts made by the wills of individuals and classes to thwart the wills and enslave the powers of other individuals and classes. The powers of the parent and the schoolmaster . . . become instruments of tyranny. (*Prefaces* 80)

Thus, Shaw asserts over and over in his non-dramatic writings that the human will has the power to change the world, but only when this power is released and the will is exercised. In his view, the people who are more likely to either enforce or diminish the human will are parents and schoolmasters. He considers thwarting the will of individuals a 'tyranny' not only because it denies personal freedom, but also because it thwarts progress and development.

There are other reasons for Shaw's attack on the institution of the family, as he explains:

Its [home life's] grave danger to the nation lies in its narrow views, its unnaturally sustained and spitefully jealous concupiscences, its petty tyrannies, its false social pretences, its endless grudges and squabbles, its sacrifice of the boy's future by setting him to earn money to help the family when he should be in training for his adult life . . . and of the girl's chances by making her a slave to sick or selfish parents, its unnatural packing into little brick boxes of little parcels of humanity of ill-assorted ages, with the old scolding or beating the young for behaving like young people, and the young hating and thwarting the old for behaving like old people, and all the other ills, mentionable and unmentionable, that arise from excessive segregation. (*Prefaces* 8).

Shaw views the family as an unnatural institution. He presents different forms and examples of oppression and exploitation, but perhaps the most crucial problem for

him is that the offspring have neither independence nor free will. He believed that the child, like any other human being, has rights which must be recognised. He sums up those rights in 'the right to live' (*Prefaces* 62). Steven W. Orvis rightly points out that Shaw's criticism of the family is 'a necessary prelude to reform,' and that this accounts for the recurrence of such criticism in Shaw's writings (12). It seems that what Shaw attempts to do in his polemical writings is to provoke the audience to think about the extent to which control is legitimate or not. Shaw's strategy of provocation is the first step towards social reform.

The question that arises is how the family can be reformed and be made more efficient. Many of Shaw's suggestions for family reform were made to emancipate children and secure their right to live and be free. Shaw considered the attempt of parents, schoolmasters, and society to thwart children's will a major problem. Accordingly, his suggestion that England could be made 'a paradise' only by reinforcing the will of individuals from childhood should not be surprising:

It would be quite easy to make England a paradise. . . . There is no mystery about it: the way has been pointed out over and over again. The difficulty is not the way but the will. And we have no will because the first thing done with us in childhood was to break our will. (*Prefaces* 74)

In addition to reinforcing the will of children, it is necessary to grant them independence. Shaw in 'Parents and Children' suggests that the departure of children from the parental home should be 'normal' and natural: 'a shattering break-up of the parental home must remain one of the normal incidents of marriage' (92). Moreover, he suggests that the family members should be 'as independent of one another as possible' (92).

Shaw wanted children to be rebellious and wilful because submissiveness is an obstacle to reform and progress. In Shaw's view, the development of the whole society depends on the will of individuals who decide whether to do or not to do what they ought. For this reason, Shaw argues that 'the progress of the world depends on your knowing better than your elders' (*Prefaces* 78). Thus, to make progress possible, the younger generation should have better knowledge and

recognition of their role in society than the older generation. Hence, if there is a direct link between the development of the child's mind and character and the development of society, then, from the Shavian perspective, proper child-rearing practices can facilitate world betterment.

Not only does Shaw's attack on the family institution have implications for his utopian aspirations, but it also reflects the twentieth-century socialist views of family relations. In *A History of the Family as a Social and Educational Institution* (1919), Willystine Goodsell indicates that socialists' interest in 'the reconstruction of the family' is due to the fact that the institution of the family 'was an outgrowth of private property and because it admirably illustrates in their eyes the evils inseparable from such an economic system' (498). This justifies Shaw's questioning and challenging of the family, and the need for its reform. The revised version of Goodsell's book, published as *A History of Marriage and the Family* (1934), explains how the situation of the twentieth-century family almost represents Shaw's hopes and aspirations. Goodsell argues that the twentieth-century family is characterised by 'its instability . . . a group of clashing wills, [and] an association of highly individualized persons, each asserting his rights and maintaining his privileges' (481). Unlike Shaw, Goodsell views this situation as problematic. Goodsell explains the price of the independence of family members: 'it would seem that in some instances it [the family] has paid for the independence of its members the costly price of its very existence' (482). Goodsell suggests that the increasing independence of family members could lead to its extinction. This is almost exactly what Shaw advocates in his writings, in general, and in *Misalliance*, in particular, such as when Mr. Tarleton says: 'Let the family be rooted out of civilization!', to which Hypatia responds happily: 'Oh yes. How jolly! You and I might be friends then' (4: 199). It seems that for Shaw, the family institution is a threat to its members, not the other way around.

It is only in *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play* that the relationship between parents and children constitutes the main theme. The same view has been maintained by C. B. Purdom who has classified Shaw's plays according to 'the predominant theme of each play' (101). The plays which fall under the theme of 'Parents and Children' are *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play*. Shaw wrote a long preface to

Misalliance entitled 'A Treatise on Parents and Children'; however, it is not quite on the same subject as the play itself. It is more concerned with children's rights and education whereas the play is more about the relations between children and parents or, more broadly, between youth and age. Nevertheless, there are some ideas that are both expressed in the preface and dramatised, as will be shown in the next section of this chapter. One would expect that Shaw would express his ideas about parents and children in his lengthy preface and present those ideas in the form of a play full of incidents that indicate the difficulty of maintaining good relations between parents and children since the title is *Misalliance*. However, the play is full of extended dialogues, which are subordinate to incidents. This was done for two reasons: first, Shaw intended this play to be part of his experiment in the Discussion Play. Second, as Christopher Innes points out, 'Denying audiences' expectations of visual spectacle or physical excitement is of course one of Shaw's standard techniques' (169). Indeed, Shaw seems to have followed the same strategy of thwarting audiences' expectations he used in *Pygmalion*. However, neither this strategy nor the disquisitory technique are used in *Fanny's First Play*, written nearly a year after *Misalliance*. It can be described as a 'play within a play.' Regardless of the differences in form between *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play*, both plays reflect Shaw's views on family life and the upbringing of children.

Misalliance

The preface to *Misalliance* is very long, even longer than the play itself, but it does not mention anything about the play. On the other hand, the title of the play alone summarises the main argument of the preface, which is that there is a fundamental breakdown in the relationship between parents and children in Shaw's time. There is more in the play to relate to the preface than just its title, as will be seen in the subsequent discussion. Arthur Ganz considers *Misalliance* to be one of a group of Shavian plays which he describes as 'appendages to lengthy prefaces' (173). This suggests something about the relationship between Shaw's prose writings and his dramatic writings. Shaw's plays mostly demonstrate ideas stated in his prose writings; thus they are not distinct documents. The disquisitory technique used in *Misalliance* and in some other Shavian plays seems to have allowed Shaw to present his ideas rather than represent them in a way similar to that of prose, but in the form

of comedy. This is done through long speeches and intellectual arguments, notably in ‘Don Juan in Hell,’ *Major Barbara*, *Getting Married*, and *Misalliance*. However, in *Getting Married* and *Misalliance*, Shaw was more explicit about the disquisitory nature of his plays, promising his audience before the opening of *Getting Married* in 1908 that ‘[t]here will be nothing but talk, talk, talk, talk, talk – Shaw talk’ (Holroyd, *One-Volume* 365), and having Hypatia, in *Misalliance*, replicate almost the same words: ‘It never stops: talk, talk, talk, talk’ (4: 137).

It may be that the disquisitory nature of *Misalliance* is one of the reasons why it has been undervalued by critics. The play was first produced at the Duke of York’s Theatre in 1910 as part of the Frohman Repertory season, and almost all the critics agreed that it was not one of Shaw’s best plays. Max Beerbohm, for example, wrote in his notice, ‘Mr Shaw’s “Debate,”’ in the *Saturday Review*: ‘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’ (qtd. in T. Evans 202). Although Beerbohm criticises Shaw’s disquisitory technique, he does not consider it the main reason for the play’s lack of success, as his following remark indicates: ‘I wished he would have more conscience in organising his own art. I do not mean to decry his present fashion of writing “debates” for the stage instead of plays. But a debate, to stand the test of the theatre, must be treated as an art-form’ (202). Beerbohm’s point about form and the appropriate treatment of ideas on stage suggests that *Misalliance* is an unsuccessful treatment of a debate. Beerbohm does not suggest that debates and ideas should not be on stage, but that they ought to be made stageworthy. And when he says, ““debates” . . . instead of plays,’ he makes a distinction between debates and plays, which both, in his view, could be art-forms. The uncertainty in regarding *Misalliance* as a play can also be seen in Lilla Perry’s discussion of the play in 1914 as ‘rather a series of scintillating dialogues’ (115). Not only was the form of the play criticised, but also its content. Beerbohm describes the play as disorganised, saying that ‘*Misalliance* is about anything and everything that has chanced to come into Mr Shaw’s head’ (qtd. in T. Evans 202). Perry views the play as both disorganised and ambiguous: ‘Back of all his random violence striking first at us and then at his own conclusions till we cry out dizzily, “What would he have us do? What is he getting at?”’ (115). Another review of the play’s production at the Duke of York’s Theatre

in 1910 says: 'Its telling introduces various arguments and remarks upon a number of subjects dear to the heart of the author, but of little interest to the man in the street' (238). Such reviews indicate that what makes *Misalliance* disorganised and aimless is that the dialogues are incoherent and inconclusive; and, perhaps, what makes it dull and less appealing is Shaw's reduction of physical activity on stage in favour of discussing his own ideas.

Indeed, the play, as its sub-title 'A Debate in One Sitting' indicates, is certainly what Shaw intended it to be, i.e., a debate. Shaw deliberately wrote *Misalliance* in the form of a debate perhaps to enable him to convey whatever he wanted to say about parents and children more effectively. One of the characteristics of the disquisitory play is that the dialogue is given priority over the plot and action; and this is exactly what Shaw did. *Misalliance* is full of dialogues that are both intelligent and funny. What the critics perceived to be disorganised and vague ideas might be intended by Shaw so that the play, as Eric Bentley puts it, 'demonstrates the diversity and mysteriousness of family relationships' (*Bernard* 93). The play is a series of expressions of the different views, desires, and attitudes of multiple characters which makes the whole scene look like a family quarrel. The debate is mainly about parents versus children, the old versus the young. Nevertheless, a number of other issues are subsumed within the overall parents and children debate, such as marriage, education, and class.

The fact that the play is centred on discussion should not imply that it is plotless. The play does have a plot and is full of twists and turns: the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tarleton, Hypatia, is engaged to a man whom she does not love. She finds her life boring and wishes for some adventure to drop from the sky. Hypatia's wish comes true, for an airplane carrying the man of her dreams, Joey, crashes into the Tarletons' greenhouse. Hypatia starts pursuing the attractive Joey while the other men in the play are attracted to Lina, Joey's passenger. A total of eight marriage proposals are made in one afternoon. The questions to be answered are: Who will marry whom? Which marriage is an alliance, and which marriage is a misalliance? This raises the famous Shavian observation in the words of one of the characters in the play: 'if marriages were made by putting all the men's names into one sack and the women's names into another, and having them taken out by a blindfolded child

like lottery numbers, there would be just as high a percentage of happy marriages as we have here in England' (4: 195). Therefore, it can be said that the play is as much concerned with the subject of marriage as it is with the subject of parents and children. In fact, the two subjects are closely related—children are the fruit of marriage. A good marriage produces good offspring and leads to a happy family life.

The play introduces different forms of misalliance: in addition to those between husband and wife and parent and child, there are misalliances between members of different classes, people with different abilities (e.g., intellectual versus physical abilities), and people with different behaviours and characters (e.g., talkers versus doers). The misalliance between classes, which Shaw had already presented in *Major Barbara*, is manifested in the coupling of Bentley and Hypatia. Bentley, the son of the ex-colonial governor Lord Summerhays, is a member of the aristocratic class. He has the title but not the money which makes his marriage to Hypatia, who, in contrast, has the money but not the title, a means to enable him to get hold of money and maintain an aristocratic lifestyle but at the expense of declassing himself. On the other hand, Hypatia and her father, John Tarleton, represent the bourgeoisie. Tarleton has acquired great wealth through the underwear business. The marriage of his daughter to Bentley will give his family an opportunity to enhance their social position. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that this marriage is a misalliance, as Bentley reveals: 'this is the man who objected to my marrying his daughter on the ground that a marriage between a member of the great and good middle class with one of the vicious and corrupt aristocracy would be a misalliance' (4: 128). It seems that Tarleton objects to inter-class marriage as a concept, but does not object to Bentley as an individual. However, as Martin Meisel notes in *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theater*, the match is an alliance '[f]rom Shaw's social viewpoint,' for the brains of Bentley and the vitality of Hypatia are what is needed for social reform (308).

Bentley does not mind being involved in this kind of exchange; however, Hypatia is not satisfied with such a betrothal. The reason is that she does not see in Bentley her ideal mate, that is, a man with both brains and good looks. Bentley is represented as someone who is intellectually strong, but physically small and weak. Speaking about himself, he says: 'I came out all brains and no more body than is

absolutely necessary' (4: 111). He is contrasted in the play with Johnny, Hypatia's brother, whose ability is physical and not intellectual or, as Bentley describes him, 'all body and no brains' (4: 111). Neither of them enjoys the company of the other; and the play opens with the two quarreling in a humorous scene in which Bentley screams and runs away from Johnny in fear, but is finally protected and comforted by Hypatia and her mother.

The very beginning of the play reveals not only the contrast between Bentley and Johnny, but also the contrast between them and Hypatia. Hypatia is viewed as more mature than both her fiancé and brother, though her brother is older than her. Nonetheless, all the three children are portrayed as child-like, perhaps, to show that this is the effect of the treatment of their parents and their lack of outside experience, which plays an important role in their growth and progress. Bentley's childish talk and behaviour can be observed in the quarrel scene, such as when he defies Johnny's threat to beat him the next time he calls him 'a swine,' saying: 'Oh you beast! you pig! Swine, swine, swine, swine, swine! Now!' (4: 113). Similarly, Johnny, even though he is around thirty years of age and physically strong, has a dependent and childlike relationship with his mother. But unlike Bentley, his dependency and childishness are attested to by other characters rather than observed. For example, when Hypatia describes him as a fool, Mrs. Tarleton objects and defends her son, calling him 'my Johnny.' Hypatia replies: 'Oh, I say nothing against your darling: we all know Johnny's perfection' (4: 124). Perhaps what is more evident is his being the object of Lina's ridicule near the end of the play. Lina mocks the idea of a marriage between her and Johnny: 'now comes your Johnny and tells me I'm a ripping fine woman, and asks me to marry him. I, Lina Szczepanowska, MARRY him!!!! I do not mind this boy: he is a child: he loves me: I should have to give him money and take care of him' (4: 201). Lina's attitude towards marriage, in general, and marrying Johnny, in particular, shows her independence as much as it shows Johnny's dependence.

Lina, like Vivie Warren, is an example of the free woman who is economically and emotionally independent. She is a good-looking, adventurous acrobat who lives her life on her own terms. She is wanted and pursued by men, and she receives many propositions for marriage, all of which she refuses. She is not

bound by social conventions; rather, she is bound by something else—the family tradition that every day some member of her family risks his or her life. For this reason, many critics do not consider Lina a New Woman. Rodelle Weintraub, for instance, believes that Lina is ‘far from the [Shavian] ideal’ and a person whose ‘independence and self-sufficiency turn out to be only slavish devotion to upholding the family tradition’ (173). Thus, it seems that Lina cannot be Shaw’s ideal dramatic daughter or woman, that is, one who is economically and emotionally independent from both her family and men, because she devotes herself too much to her family. Moreover, she takes her responsibility to her family as a matter of course. This is inconsistent with Shaw’s ideas about the freedom and independence of offspring from their families. In ‘Parents and Children,’ Shaw advises against ‘unnecessary affection and responsibility which we should,’ he says, ‘do well to get rid of by making relatives as independent of one another as possible’ (92). This quotation, as well as some of those mentioned earlier in this chapter and chapter one, expresses Shaw’s exaggerated views regarding the independence of offspring and the necessity for their rebellion against familial and social expectations and responsibilities. For Shaw, total freedom is necessary for the development of children; and such freedom should be gained by rebellion when it is not granted, as demonstrated in chapter one.

Lina and Hypatia are both represented as rebellious, but each undergoes a different kind of rebellion: Lina rebels against society’s expectations, while Hypatia rebels against her family’s expectations of her as a good daughter. Gladys Crane believes that Hypatia, like Lina, also rebels against the expectations of the role of the woman but notes that her rebellion is ‘primarily on the verbal level, whereas Lina expresses her rebellion in action’ (487). Crane provides a suggestive way of looking at the two kinds of rebellions and indicates that there are two types of characters in the play: talkers and doers. Accordingly, whereas Lina is a doer, Hypatia is a talker, even though she wishes to be ‘an active verb,’ as she tells Lord Summerhays: ‘I want to be; I want to do’ (4: 142). The purpose of Hypatia’s rebellion seems to articulate her longing to escape from the influence of her parents and family life rather than society’s expectations of the role of women, as her words to Summerhays indicate: ‘Oh, home! home! parents! family! duty! how I loathe them! How I’d like to see them all blown to bits!’ (4: 143). Hypatia’s words here and elsewhere, together with her attempt to secure a husband, show her helplessness and surrender to the situation

as a woman, unlike Lina who expresses her rebellion in action as well as in words, such as when she says: ‘Your women are kept idle and dressed up for no other purpose than to be made love to’ and, ‘I, Lina Szczepanowska . . . take my bread from his [the Englishman’s] hand, and ask him for pocket money, and wear soft clothes, and be his woman! his wife!’ (4: 201). However, the aggressive, unfeminine, and untraditional way in which Hypatia pursues Joey, and her attempts to ensnare him could be regarded as a rebellious act.

Part of Hypatia’s verbal rebellion is the rude and disrespectful way in which she speaks to her father and answers him back. The following conversation between the two of them reveals Hypatia’s rebellious and scornful attitude along with her passive acceptance of her life in her parents’ house:

HYPATIA. . . . You see what living with one’s parents means, Joey. It means living in a house where you can be ordered to leave the room. I’ve got to obey: it’s his house, not mine.

TARLETON. Who pays for it? Go and support yourself as I did if you want to be independent.

HYPATIA. I wanted to and you wouldn’t let me. How can I support myself when I’m a prisoner?

TARLETON. Hold your tongue.

HYPATIA. Keep your temper. (4: 198)

It is clear that Tarleton exercises his authority as a parent over his daughter by giving her orders and imposing his will on her, which is tyrannical, according to Shaw’s definition of tyranny in ‘Parents and Children.’ The word ‘prison’ indicates that Hypatia is held in her parents’ house against her will. She is already emotionally independent from her father, but to be economically independent, she has to get a profession or get married. A girl like Hypatia would be expected to choose the latter option. However, surprisingly, Hypatia at the end of the play becomes economically dependent on her father more than ever. Rather than using marriage as a means to gain financial independence from her father, Hypatia uses her father’s money as a means to make her marriage to Joey possible by asking her father to ‘buy the brute’ for her (4: 194). This suggests that Hypatia’s desire for a satisfying marriage is greater than her desire for economic independence. Therefore, it can be argued that

marriage for Hypatia is both an end in itself and a means to move away from her parents, which suggests that she knows very well what she wants, and she goes for it. She seems to be turning the tables on her father and controlling him, indeed. She provokes him into losing his temper and manipulates him into agreeing to ‘buy’ Joey for her, while keeping her self-control, and even showing ‘superior emotional control’ (Crane 485). It is not that Tarleton seeks his daughter’s happiness in this marriage, but that he wants to get rid of her trouble: ‘Youre willing to take that girl off my hands for fifteen hundred a year: thats all that concerns me’ (4: 197). Hence, Hypatia is acting as a Shavian child should. As already mentioned in chapter three, Shaw recommends that parents not try to control children and should leave their character alone, for they know best (*Prefaces* 49-50). Hypatia proves that she knows best, and that she is intelligent, for she uses her father to get exactly what she wants.

Marriage for Hypatia is also viewed as a means to escape the boredom of her family life. Hypatia complains that her life in her parents’ house is boring and routine, for it involves nothing but talk:

Oh, if I might only have a holiday in an asylum for the dumb. How I envy the animals! They cant talk. . . . It never stops: talk, talk, talk, talk. Thats my life. All the day I listen to mamma talking; at dinner I listen to papa talking; and when papa stops for breath I listen to Johnny talking. . . . If parents would only realize how they bore their children ! (4: 137)

Hypatia here does not only describe the talkative nature of her family members, but also the talkative nature of the play itself (i.e. the focus on talk), which suggests that the form of the play is very much related to its content. J. L. Wisenthal argues that ‘Hypatia is functioning here as a critic of the play itself (anticipating the onstage critics in Shaw’s next full-length work, *Fanny’s First Play*)’ (215). Of all the characters in the play, Hypatia is the most critical and complaining character. Suffering from boredom and frustration, no wonder Hypatia is waiting for something to happen that will break the monotony of living in her parents’ house.

Before Joey appears in Hypatia's life, she feels obliged to carry on with her engagement to Bentley not because he is good enough for her, but because he is the best available suitor, as she tells her mother:

It's true. He is a little squit of a thing. I wish he wasn't. But who else is there? Think of all the other chances I've had! Not one of them has as much brains in his whole body as Bentley has in his little finger. . . .
What's a girl to do? I never met anybody like Bentley before. He may be small; but he's the best of the bunch: you can't deny that. (4: 125)

Shaw seems to use this long conversation between Hypatia and her mother, in which they freely discuss marriage, not merely to bring out laughter, but more importantly, to criticise the expectations of women in middle-class society. This becomes more obvious when Hypatia answers Mrs. Tarleton's question as to why she needs to marry Bentley since she does not love him. 'What better can I do?' Hypatia replies, 'I must marry somebody, I suppose. I've realized that since I was twenty-three. I always used to take it as a matter of course that I should be married before I was twenty' (4: 126). Hypatia represents middle-class views of marriage, family, and home as the natural vocation of women. Her occupation is to find a suitable mate, one with a privileged social status and/or a satisfactory income; love is not necessary to the union. As a practical, middle-class woman, Hypatia agrees to marry Bentley even though she does not love him, which surprises her romantic mother. Shaw seizes this point to criticise women's slavery to men using Hypatia as his mouthpiece: 'I remember three girls at school who agreed that the one man you should never marry was the man you were in love with, because it would make a perfect slave of you. There's a sort of instinct against it, I think, that's just as strong as the other instinct' (4: 125). The kind of slavery Shaw is referring to here is not economic slavery, but the emotional and sexual slavery of women. Shaw discusses 'sex slavery' at some length in his preface to *Getting Married*. According to Shaw, sex slavery is one form of men's exploitation of women and is one of the reasons for women's revolt against marriage and, as Shaw puts it, 'against its sordidness as a survival of sex slavery' (12). According to Shaw, the revolt against marriage is also a revolt against 'its sentimentality, its romance, [and] its Amorism' (12). Shaw

apparently objects to anything that could lead to the objectification and exploitation of women in the name of marriage and the family.

However, the sexual ‘instinct’ Hypatia talks about in the above quotation is referred to in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, when Shaw expresses his aversion to ‘self-surrender’ as an essential aspect of the ‘true womanly love.’ Shaw suggests that self-surrender has a ‘repulsive effect’ on both sexes which can be seen in ‘the infatuation of passionate sexual desire.’ ‘Everyone,’ Shaw continues, ‘who becomes the object of that infatuation shrinks from it instinctively’ (32). Thus, it seems that Hypatia’s views of marriage are complex and unpredictable. Hypatia’s infatuation with Joey and her determination to marry him instead of Bentley at the end of the play adds even more to the complexity of her character and her views of marriage. She chooses to be in a marriage that is economically advantageous for the man, and emotionally advantageous for her, which makes it more akin to a bargain. Even when Joey explains that he cannot marry because he cannot provide for a wife, she does not draw back. On the contrary, she becomes more determined to marry him, or ‘buy’ him, as she tells her father. She does not feel insulted nor does she react to Joey’s provocative remarks, such as when he admits that his marriage to her is ‘purely a question of money’ and that she ‘will do as well as another, provided the money is forthcoming’ (4: 195-96). Crane argues that ‘Hypatia’s insensitivity to what others might consider her insulting remarks is matched by her own comic lack of response when insulted’ (484). Joey’s indifference is met with a great enthusiasm from Hypatia whose response to Joey’s aforementioned remarks is ‘Oh, you beauty, you beauty!’, which makes the scene comical (4: 196). Giving up her chance for acquiring a title by marrying the aristocratic Bentley and for economic independence from her father by marrying someone rich, it turns out that Hypatia puts her own pleasures above all else. Her self-centeredness and disregard for the needs, interests, and expectations of her family probably makes her a better Shavian daughter for Shaw than Lina.

Whereas Hypatia’s relationships with Bentley and Joey are important in understanding Shaw’s depiction of her as a daughter and a prospective wife, her relationship with her father is more important in this respect. Hypatia resembles her father more than her mother, and both she and her father are aware of this. Tarleton

describes Hypatia saying: 'Shes active, like me' (4: 145); and Hypatia admits: 'I'm my father's daughter' (4: 163-64). Furthermore, Hypatia states that one of the reasons why she has accepted Bentley as her mate is that he is clever like her father: 'living with father, Ive got accustomed to cleverness' (4: 124). Hypatia also admits that she has been well brought up and, as she puts it, 'fed up with nice things: with respectability, with propriety' (4: 142). Nevertheless, she does have her own opinions and values which are in conflict with those of her parents, especially her father. She thinks respectability and propriety are nice but useless in her case as she does not want to be a lady 'doing nothing but being good and nice and ladylike' (4: 143). She simply does not want to be confined to domestic roles and have her life wasted on domestic chores, as she tells Summerhays, whom she finds it easier to talk to than her father:

HYPATIA. Girls withering into ladies. Ladies withering into old maids. Nursing old women. Running errands for old men. Good for nothing else at last. Oh, you cant 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. (4: 143)

What Hypatia describes as the 'sacrifice of the young' to the old recalls Shaw's critique of the family as an oppressive institution acting against boys' and girls' self-determination: 'Its grave danger to the nation lies in its . . . sacrifice of the boy's future by setting him to earn money to help the family when he should be in training for his adult life . . . and of the girl's chances by making her a slave to sick or selfish parents' (*Prefaces* 8). Hypatia rejects such a sacrifice and would rather escape from this oppressive life, or the slavery of the young, as Shaw describes it, in which women are reduced to being merely maids. Therefore, she wants to join her father's business, but she is not allowed to. Tarleton, in spite of his admiration for Hypatia and his acknowledgement of her vitality, has chosen his eldest son Johnny to run the family business, which raises questions of gender and patriarchal practices. Hypatia is obviously not as bold and determined as Vivie Warren to have her own career and live an independent life away from the family and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, her only option is to move from one domestic life into another that is less

miserable, that is, from her life in her parents' home into a life with a husband of her own choice where she can no longer be under the influence of her parents, or the old in general. Indeed, the unconventional and unladylike manner in which Hypatia chooses and chases her mate, Joey, challenges the social limitations imposed on women, especially middle-class women, and may also have some implications for gender equality as Hypatia claims the right to express her desires and preferences just as a man does. Michael Holroyd, however, interprets Hypatia's willingness to marry Joey as 'the biological method of serving the Life Force' (*Pursuit* 249), which gives the couple's union an evolutionary purpose, rather than a personal and a social purpose. Although Holroyd's interpretation might be correct, Hypatia's desires seem more personally motivated and socially influenced than motivated by evolutionary concerns, perhaps because she does not appear to be conscious of evolutionary thinking.

Since Hypatia's relationship with her father is the central relationship in the play, Tarleton deserves further discussion. There are obvious disparities between Tarleton's theories and his practices. For example, he asserts that '[w]e are all human: males and females of the same species. When the dress is the same the distinction vanishes' (4: 151), while at the same time, he discriminates among his children. Another example has to do with the way Tarleton perceives Hypatia's upbringing as successful and satisfying:

TARLETON. I think my idea of bringing up a young girl has been rather a success. Dont you listen to this, Patsy: it might make you conceited. Shes never been treated like a child. I always said the same thing to her mother. Let her read what she likes. Let her do what she likes. Let her go where she likes. Eh, Patsy? (4: 145)

Tarleton's ideas here regarding children's upbringing are very similar to Shaw's ideas in 'Parents and Children.' However, Tarleton claims things which we know from Hypatia's complaints and frustrations are not true: his success in bringing up his daughter, his treatment of her as a grown-up person and not as a child, and his giving her the freedom to do what and go where she wants. In fact, Tarleton does treat his daughter as a child calling her 'Patsy,' a diminutive of Hypatia, all the time. He expects her to be innocent, dependent, and obedient. Hypatia is annoyed at the

way her father treats her, saying to him: 'If only I could persuade you I've grown up, we should get along perfectly' (4: 196-97). Johnny is also treated as a child by their father: 'It's no use my saying anything [to my father]. I'm a child to him still: I have no influence' (4: 118). This kind of disparity or misunderstanding between parents and their offspring leads to generational conflict, or the misalliance between parents and children, the play's main theme.

The parent-child relationship in this play is used to show the generation gap between parents and children, or youth and age in general, which Shaw believed could not be bridged. The generation gap is best expressed in the dialogue between the two fathers in the play, Tarleton and Summerhays, who, in spite of their differences in class and ideology, have the same views on parent-child relations:

LORD SUMMERHAYS. . . . It's really a very difficult relation. To my mind not altogether a natural one.

TARLETON. . . . Fact is, my dear Summerhays, 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, it's all up with the relation between parent and child. You can't get over the fearful shyness of it. . . . I tell you there's a wall ten feet thick and ten miles high between parent and child. . . . [T]he relation between parent and child . . . can never be an innocent relation. You'd die rather than allude to it. Depend on it, in a thousand years it'll be considered bad form to know who your father and mother are.
Embarrassing. (4: 146-47)

Both fathers agree that the parent-child relation is difficult and unnatural. However, Tarleton goes so far as to claim that this relation can never be 'innocent.' Few writers have attempted to explain what Shaw could possibly mean by such a statement. Rodelle Weintraub argues that the speech of Tarleton 'calls attention to the Freudian elements in the play' (183). A similar interpretation is that of Grace Matchett who states that Shaw 'is making a sexual reference to the relationship when he says that,' and she quotes the words of Tarleton above (250). Viewing the parent-child relation from the Freudian perspective and giving it sexual implications is a plausible idea, especially as such an interpretation is reinforced by Hypatia's identification with her father and Johnny with his mother. However, what is more

likely is that what makes the parent-child relation not an innocent one, from the Shavian perspective, is that it is an exploitative relation, and this exploitation is not necessarily sexual; it could be financial and/or duty-based exploitation. The consequences of this unnatural relation is that the gap between parents and children becomes bigger and bigger until the relation itself dissolves, and parents and children become strangers. This becomes Tarleton's wish at the end of the play when he is enraged by his daughter's behaviour and disappointed to realise that she does not live up to his expectations of her: 'Parents and children! No man should know his own child. No child should know its own father. Let the family be rooted out of civilization!', to which Hypatia replies, 'Oh yes. How jolly! You and I might be friends then' (4: 199). This concurs with Shaw's next idea in the preface: 'Pending such reforms and emancipations, a shattering break-up of the parental home must remain one of the normal incidents of marriage' (92).

The idea of the dissolution of the family and the destruction of the parent-child relationship is reinforced in the play by the fact that each father finds it easier and more comfortable to talk to the other's offspring. Tarleton states it frankly to Summerhays: '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' (4: 147). This suggests that the parent-child relationship is distorted by formality, commitment, and obligation which constitute a barrier to intimacy, openness, and frankness between parent and child, which in turn makes such a relationship problematic and unnatural in the view of the two fathers in the play, and Shaw as well. The influence of Dickens on Shaw is obvious and evident in *Misalliance* when Tarleton recommends Summerhays to '[r]ead Dickens. . . . I dont mean his books. Read his letters to his family' (4: 146), so that he can see how reserved Dickens was in his correspondence with his family.

This leads to the conclusion and the overall meaning of the play which is that a good and effective parent-child relationship is only a sham, for the real one is ineffective and unsatisfying for both parents and children, but mostly for children. Desmond MacCarthy asserts that the general meaning of the play is that 'the relation between parents and children is a mistake, and had better be scrapped, [which] is not very helpful' (161). Indeed, it is Shaw's general principle that anything that cannot be reformed should be removed and discarded, and this very much applies to the

institution of the family in light of his own views on the subject. In addition, Shaw believes that children are capable of independence from their parents and of learning from experience what is right and what is wrong, which justifies his belief that parents and the family are unnecessary. For Shaw, children's misbehaviour, like Hypatia's for example, and their getting into trouble are acceptable as long as they lead to their education and growth, a point which will be elaborated in the following section. Such an idea is alluded to in *Misalliance* when Hypatia expresses a desire for escaping the parental home and acting wickedly, '[t]he wicked escape. . . . I can be wicked; and I'm quite prepared to be' (4: 143). In *Fanny's First Play*, however, the idea is put into practice, as will be explained shortly. From this perspective, it can be argued that *Misalliance* is a prelude to *Fanny's First Play*.

Fanny's First Play

Shaw referred to *Fanny's First Play* as a 'potboiler' that 'needs no preface' (*Prefaces* 138). Nonetheless, he wrote a very short preface that leads the audience directly to the theme of the play, unlike his practice in *Misalliance*. Shaw perhaps thought that *Fanny's First Play* did not need a preface as, besides being a potboiler, it was another play about parents and children, a theme which had been already discussed at length in the preface to *Misalliance*. Shaw begins his preface to *Fanny's First Play* with a warning against trivialising the play by asserting that 'its lesson is not . . . unneeded' (138). Defending his own works and confirming their importance, Shaw tells Hesketh Pearson: 'I do not waste my time writing pot-boilers: the pot must be boiled, and even my *pot au feu* has some chunks of fresh meat in it' (*Modern* 19). Shaw, thus, stresses the importance of treating his plays with more seriousness and encourages his audience to look beyond the surface meaning of the text in order to explore larger 'chunks' of meaning.

Having considerable chunks of ideas and meaning, *Fanny's First Play* is indeed important, and its importance lies in the fact that it acts as a criticism of both parent-child relations, and dramatic critics. Some critics, such as Peter Gahan in 'Ruskin and Form in *Fanny's First Play*,' have focused on the form of the play rather than its content. In an attempt to learn more about the way in which Shaw writes his own plays, Gahan examines the formal strategies of *Fanny's First Play*

and how Shaw uses simple pairs of similarities and contrasts to build up ‘complex structures of meaning’ (86). Others have paid more attention to the content of the play but are more interested in its function as a criticism of drama criticism than a criticism of the family, such as Archibald Henderson in *Man of the Century*, William Irvine in *The Universe of G. B. S.*, and Barbara Fisher in ‘*Fanny’s First Play: A Critical Potboiler?*’. Henderson is impressed by Shaw’s satirical treatment of the dramatic critics and considers it as evidence of Shaw’s ‘wholesomeness’ and ‘good humor’ but totally ignores Shaw’s treatment of the family in both the frame and Fanny’s play (*Man* 612). Irvine also shows more interest in the dramatic critics than the parents and children in the play. He says very little about the inner domestic piece and nothing about Fanny and her father. Fisher, on the other hand, provides a more balanced discussion, but still seems to pay more attention to the way in which the critical function of the frame acts as ‘a Criticism of the Criticism’ (189). The frame of the play provides Shaw with an opportunity to poke fun at the dramatic critics, criticise himself as a playwright, and criticise Fanny’s play. Through his representation of prejudiced critics, Shaw was able to reveal some of the critics’ attacks on his plays to date. Although both aspects of *Fanny’s First Play*, whether formal or thematic, are undoubtedly important, the latter, and in particular, the view of the play as a criticism of the family, will be the focus of this section.

Fanny’s First Play was an entertaining and successful comedy which ran for almost two years, and was thus the first Shavian play to have a long run. It was first produced at the Little Theatre in 1911, was revived in 1915, and has had many performances since. P. J. in his review of the play in 1911, after its authorship was revealed, admits that *Fanny’s First Play* was not one of Shaw’s best works, but he ‘never enjoyed a play of Mr. Shaw more keenly’ (483). Like *Misalliance*, the play deals with a variety of themes woven around the parent-child relationship, such as middle-class notions of respectability and propriety, class, religion, and politics. However, unlike *Misalliance*, it consists of two plays: an inner play, which can be considered as the main play, and an outer play, which works as a frame. The frame consists of an Induction, or a prologue, and an Epilogue, which centres around the authorship of the inner play. *Fanny’s First Play* was first produced anonymously because, as Shaw states in the preface, ‘[t]he concealment of the authorship, if a *secret de Polichinelle* can be said to involve concealment, was a necessary part of

the play' (*Complete Plays* 6: 88). Shaw, thus, purposefully concealed the authorship of the play from both the real and the fictional critics. His purpose, as suggested in the preface, was to demonstrate his ability to write plays that showcased his skills, and to force his critics to put their prejudices aside and judge the work for itself. Shaw had a reputation at that time as a writer whose plays were full of debates and paradoxes and could hardly be described as works of dramatic art. For Shaw, this method proved to be, as he put it, 'effectual, [and] it operated as a measure of relief to those critics and playgoers' (*Complete Plays* 6: 88). It is indeed an effective strategy for dealing with critics and one which shows Shaw's careful and purposeful planning of his plays.

Thematically speaking, the play in general, and the inner play in particular, are about the awakening of the souls of the young and their rebellion against their parents and their own upbringing. The preface clarifies the theme and the essence of the play's meaning: 'the young,' Shaw says, 'had better have their souls awakened by disgrace, capture by the police, and a month's hard labor, than drift along from their cradles to their graves doing what other people do for no other reason than that other people do it' (138). What Shaw represents in the plays previously discussed in this thesis is stated very clearly in this short preface to *Fanny's First Play*: the young can learn a great deal from experience, and that experience is the real teacher, not the parent. But in order to learn from experience, Shaw suggests, a departure from the parental home is necessary. Shaw expects the young to experience some hardships along the way, which are part of real life as opposed to their sheltered lives in their parents' homes. Those hardships are what make them stronger and wiser. For Shaw, the real obstacle to the growth and development of the young, as mentioned in the quotation above, is 'doing what other people do for no other reason than that other people do it,' that is, thoughtless conformity to the conventional norms and rules of conduct. Such an idea can be traced back to J. S. Mill, especially his essay *On Liberty* (1859) which Shaw claimed to have read (*Collected Letters* 2: 486). Shaw admired Mill and may have very well been influenced by his ideas on blind conformity to custom and conventional ideas, and how Mill regarded it as an obstacle to progress, although Shaw's political thought is not as rigorous as Mill's. Children's rebellion against conventional rules of conduct and conventional family life is, indeed, the theme of *Fanny's First Play*, as will be shown. To make the

analysis easier to grasp, the two parts of the play, the outer part and the inner part, will be discussed separately and consecutively.

The outer play concerns Fanny, who has written a play and wants her father, Count O'Dowda, to see it. The Count is a rich Irishman who has been living in Venice as he could not stand 'industrial,' 'ugly and Philistine' England (*Fanny's* 6: 95). He arranges for a private performance of the play at his house as a present for his daughter's birthday. Savoyard, a theatrical agent, is entrusted with the task of supplying the producer, the actors, and the critics. It seems that Fanny's purpose is to show her father how much her life and her way of thinking have changed since she left his home in Italy and went to England to complete her education at the University of Cambridge. She has become a Fabian socialist and a Suffragette. Lagretta Lenker acknowledges the educational aspect of *Fanny's First Play* and argues that both Fanny and the heroine of her play, Margaret Knox, intend to educate their fathers about "'modern life"—the new ways that they, as representatives of the younger generation, embrace' (*Fathers* 128). This is the case, and suggests a reversal of the conventional relationship of parent/teacher and child/pupil, discussed in chapter three. Moreover, it provides an example of Shaw's very explicitly demonstrating his belief in drama as a political and educational force. The coupling of Fanny and Margaret as two independent daughters with common characteristics is noted by a number of critics, such as Lenker, Sonja Lorichs, and Judith Evans. According to Lorichs, Margaret is 'Fanny's "alter ego," and the play recapitulates Fanny's own experiences as an active member of the Suffrage Movement' (124). Similarly, Evans believes that Margaret is Fanny's 'spokeswoman'(75).

There is a good deal in common between Fanny and Margaret; both daughters rebel against their parents and conventional family life. Fanny's father is described in the play's stage directions as a 'handsome man of fifty, dressed with studied elegance a hundred years out of date' (6: 93), and the play shows that the Count is 'out of date' in ideas as much as in clothing. Furthermore, he has a strong aversion to everything 'modern,' and is unwilling to recognise the twentieth century. When Savoyard corrects him, saying, '[t]he twentieth,' as an attempt to remind him that they are in the twentieth century, he replies: 'To me the century I shut out will always be the nineteenth century, just as your national anthem will always be God

Save the Queen, no matter how many kings may succeed' (6: 94). The count seems to be still living in the past and expects Cambridge, the university he himself attended, still to have 'the atmosphere of the eighteenth century' (*Fanny's* 6: 98). As Gahan points out, 'Cambridge is associated for the Count with eighteenth-century values, and for his daughter with socialism and suffragism' (6: 93). This kind of ideological rift between the father and his daughter is what creates the generation gap. It is also what gives the father a shock at the end of the outer play after seeing the play his daughter wrote and knowing that she was put in jail for joining the woman suffrage deputation, of which she is proud. This is another similarity between Fanny and her fictional hero, Margaret; both daughters spend some weeks in jail. Fanny knew that her play would shock her father, as she states in the Induction:

I dont mind this play shocking my father morally. It's good for him to be shocked morally. It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date. But I know that this play will shock him artistically; and that terrifies me. (6: 104-05)

Fanny's speech reflects Shaw's belief in the unity of form and subject-matter. Just as Shaw's plays are unconventional in terms of form and content, Fanny's play is both morally and artistically shocking. Fanny seems to follow Shaw's principle, stated in *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, that '[e]ven if the public really knew what it likes and what it dislikes . . . the true master-dramatist would still give it, not what it likes, but what is good for it' (1: 267-8). Fanny, thus, finds it good for her father to be shocked; however, she makes a distinction between the effects of the moral shock and the artistic shock on her father and suggests that her father can tolerate the subversion of morality, but not the subversion of art. Such a distinction marks the Count as an aesthete, one who places more significance on the form and style of art than the subject matter.

Fanny, unlike her father, is aware of the differences between them in views and values. Thus, she plans to 'shock' him, which recalls Shaw's quotation that, 'the more young people shock their elders and deride and discard their pet institutions the better for the hopes of the world' (*Perfect Wagnerite* 77). However, Fanny's intention is not to reject her father and discard her relationship with him in the way

Vivie and Richard do. She only wants to make him ‘up to date,’ instead of being romantic and artistic. She wants him to admire plays that are more socially oriented than artistically oriented, which makes her appear a representative of Shaw’s views, expressed as follows: ‘It is not my fault, reader, that my art is the expression of my sense of moral and intellectual perversity rather than of my sense of beauty,’ and “‘for art’s sake” alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence’ (*Prefaces* 671, 165). Such statements together with Shaw’s consistent opposition to ‘art for art’s sake’ (as expressed in his prefaces to *Man and Superman*, *Three Plays by Brieux*, and *Farfetched Fables*) have made a number of critics describe Shaw as a devotee of ‘art for life’s sake.’ John Gassner argues that whereas most of Shaw’s contemporaries ‘were interested in “well-made” plays, Shaw was interested only in alive ones,’ and that he was careless about the structure of the play ‘[f]or the sake of reality’ (520). Similarly, Michael Goldman argues that Shaw ‘tends to dismiss formal or aesthetic analysis, of his work, preferring to emphasize its content instead’ (Bloom 146). Like Shaw, then, Fanny focuses on the content of her play and succeeds in shocking her father with a realistic, modern up-to-date piece so much that he laments, ‘She [Fanny] will never return to Venice. I feel now as I felt when the Campanile fell’ (6: 170). The Count’s reference to the collapse of the Campanile in 1902 makes the horror of his situation both dramatic and absurd. It may also suggest a collapse of his relationship with Fanny.

The inner play, or Fanny’s play, is a domestic piece about two respectable middle-class families: the Knoxes and the Gilbeys. Mr. Knox, the father of Margaret, and Mr. Gilbey, the father of Bobby, are shopkeepers who are business partners. Margaret and Bobby are engaged to each other, as it is their parents’ plan to keep the business within the two families. However, it turns out that Margaret and Bobby have other ideas. The revolt of children against the plans, attitudes, and ideas of their parents as well as the latter’s concern for respectability makes up the plot of the play. Therefore, whereas there is only one revolt in the outer play, that of Fanny, there are one minor and two major revolts in the inner play. Margaret and Bobby’s revolts can be considered as major, and Juggins’, the Gilbey’s footman whom Margaret falls in love with, as minor. In contrast to Fanny’s ‘aesthetically based revolt,’ the revolts of Margaret and Bobby are ‘ethically based’ (Gahan 86). Both Margaret and Bobby get themselves into trouble, are captured by the police, and sent to prison. Nevertheless,

the experience of each of them is different in its nature and outcome. Margaret's experience is more significant, enlightening, and liberating than Bobby's and thus will be the focus of the subsequent discussion. Moreover, the relationship between Margaret and her mother is the most important parent-child relationship in the play, through which the rebellion of the offspring is mostly manifested.

Juggins' revolt against the conventions and traditions of his family and class has been slightly overlooked in the criticism of the play. Juggins is a brother of a duke disguised as the Gilbeys' footman. He has joined the servant class and has been instructed on how he should behave as a servant in an attempt to atone for a sin he had committed during his life as a nobleman. His sin was insulting and dismissing a sincere Christian servant. Hence, in contrast to Eliza Doolittle, he deliberately moves down the class hierarchy. He is to some extent similar to Margaret in attempting to achieve realism. However, his sincere and honest nature can be contrasted with the hypocrisy of Bobby, in particular, and that of the Knoxes and the Gilbeys, in general. In humbling himself to serve others and renouncing notions of respectability and gentlemanliness, he follows his own conscience rather than conventional morality. Indeed, both he and Margaret provide good examples of liberation from conventional morality and rules of conduct.

Margaret, the respectable daughter who is known for her good conduct in school, is arrested and sentenced to jail for a month or a fine for breaking the law—something she has never planned or expected. This is because after attending the Salvation Army Festival at the Albert Hall, she is so taken by the swinging hymns that she does not want to go home in a bus, for she wants 'more music—more happiness—more life' (6: 127). She gets out of the bus looking for excitement and enters a music hall, where she sees a Frenchman, Duvallet, standing and smoking. She dances with Duvallet and drinks champagne and has the most enjoyable time in her life, as she tells her mother later. However, her enjoyment does not last long, for a riot has taken place in the hall between the police and the drunken undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge after the University boat-race. Both Duvallet and Margaret assault the police, described in the play as being 'brutal' towards the students: Duvallet knocks down one of the policemen, and Margaret gets in 'one good bang on the mouth' of another policeman (6: 129). St. John Ervine describes Margaret

punching the policeman in the face as being ‘inflamed by champagne and piety’ (432). Indeed, it seems that Margaret is unable to control herself because she is under the effect of alcohol and conflicting forces within herself, piety and pleasure seeking, as well as the distractions from outside. It is her first experience of this kind, whether inwardly or outwardly. As the daughter of pious parents, she has been brought up to seek inward peace and happiness, not outward pleasure. However, the moment she experiences outward pleasures, such as dancing and drinking, for the first time, her piety and beliefs are challenged. She is unable to resist such pleasures, and she admits that she ‘never enjoyed anything so much’ (*Fanny* 6: 128). The conflict in her experience and expectations acts as a trigger for her to question beliefs, and eventually to achieve her liberty.

Bobby’s experience is similar to Margaret’s in that he also gets himself into trouble and is sentenced to a fine or a month’s imprisonment as a result of his pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment of life. However, unlike Margaret, he has not committed any offence. He has merely got himself involved with a young prostitute called Darling Dora, who assaults a policeman by knocking his helmet over his eyes. Consequently, both are arrested for being ‘drunk and disorderly and assaulting the police’ (6: 115-16). Like Margaret, this is Bobby’s first experience in prison. Since he has no money to pay the fine, he is sent to gaol. Dora proves to have a good nature, for, after being released from a fortnight’s imprisonment, she tries to help Bobby pay the fine and get released by seeking help from his parents. The appearance of a prostitute in this play may remind us of *Mrs Warren’s Profession*. The prostitute figure is used here mainly to satirise respectability and the desire to keep up appearances and to show the contrast between different kinds of upbringing. Dora, for instance, criticises Bobby’s upbringing in front of his parents, saying: ‘You see youve brought Bobby up too strict; and when he gets loose theres no holding him’ (6: 114). Moreover, when she talks to Margaret, who happens to be her cell mate, she pokes fun at Bobby’s attempt to keep up appearances and maintain his respectability in front of his mother: ‘men have to do some awfully mean things to keep up their respectability. . . . Ive met Bobby walking with his mother; and of course he cut me dead. I wont pretend I liked it; but what could he do, poor dear?’ (6: 142).

Shaw's satire on middle-class respectability is reinforced and made more explicit by his comic depiction of the obsession of the Knoxes and the Gilbeys with respectability and their attempt to hide the shame of their situation from each other. Each family finds its child's misbehaviour and imprisonment shocking and too horrible and shameful to be told to the other family for fear that this will result in a loss of its respectability and social standing as well as a break-up of Bobby and Margaret's engagement. Gilbey laments: 'The disgrace of it will kill me. And it will leave a mark on him [Bobby] to the end of his life' (6: 116). Likewise, Knox fears the shame and disgrace brought about by his daughter's wrongful actions and that would destroy his family's reputation if the news spread: 'But is she going to ruin us?', Knox asks his wife, '[t]o let everybody know of her disgrace and shame? To tear me down from the position I've made for myself and you by forty years hard struggling?' (6: 132). Knox feels as if the whole world has turned upside down, and thus tries to make the situation less threatening and less harmful by begging Margaret not to tell anyone. However, Knox's efforts are in vain, for Margaret, with a new rebellious spirit and a heart as hard as stone, replies: 'I'll tell everybody' (6: 132). This marks Margaret's rebellion against her parents and convention and her transformation, as Fisher puts it, 'from the docile child . . . to the emancipated young woman' (195).

Indeed, Margaret is a good example of the rebellious Shavian child who is the opposite of the 'docile' child discussed in 'Parents and Children.' Examples of practices that lead to children's 'docility,' in Shaw's view, include teaching the child 'to be respectful, to be quiet, not to answer back, to be truthful when its elders want to find out anything from it, to lie when the truth would shock or hurt its elders, to be above all things obedient' (*Prefaces* 78). Shaw perceives the docility of children as a problem, for, it 'wrecks every civilization,' and prefers instead the 'healthy' rebellion of children, adults, and nations (*Prefaces* 78-79). Margaret is obviously not docile; on the contrary, she is wilful and determined to rebel against the idea of being respectful, in which she succeeds. Moreover, she does not lie to her respectable parents to spare them the shock of learning the truth. She speaks freely about her experience and answers back, such as when she replies rudely to her father in response to his request to keep the whole thing secret: 'Don't hope for that, father. Mind: I'll tell everybody. It ought to be told. It must be told' (6: 132). Knox's

response is the same as that of Tarleton in *Misalliance* when provoked by Hypatia: ‘Hold your tongue,’ says Knox; and adds, ‘you young hussy’ (6: 132). This brings up another important point for Shaw, which is the cruelty, indifference, and insensitivity of children to their parents. In ‘Parents and Children,’ Shaw says:

Children are extremely cruel without intending it; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the reason is that they do not conceive their elders as having any human feelings . . . cannot conceive the parent as a fellow creature [and] . . . [t]he child cannot conceive that its blame or contempt or want of interest could possibly hurt its parent, and therefore expresses them all with an indifference which has given rise to the term *enfant terrible*. (88-90)

By discussing children’s indifference to the feelings and sufferings of their parents, Shaw, probably for the first time, seems to take the side of the parents and show a little sympathy and consideration for the parents. It is an interesting exception to his general attitude in regard to parents and children. However, it is worth noting that Shaw seems to be sympathetic to the parents without quite blaming children. What is more, he seems to be defending children when he says, ‘without intending it,’ as if he sees children’s cruelty and indifference as part of their nature. By using comedy, Shaw is able to depict the cruelty and indifference of children to their parents in a way that is not tragic or sad. This is represented in *Fanny’s First Play* through Fanny and Margaret’s relationships with their fathers and in *Misalliance* through Hypatia’s relationship with her father. All three daughters show no concern whatsoever for their fathers’ feelings and have no consideration for what their fathers think. They also shamelessly shock their fathers with unconventional and provocative behaviour.

Margaret’s rebellion against her upbringing is expressed when she narrates her experience to her shocked mother. She tells Mrs. Knox in detail what happened at the music hall, and how she was brutally dragged by the police ending up in ‘a filthy cell,’ where she ‘cursed’ and ‘called names’ and ‘wasnt ladylike’ (6: 126). Mrs. Knox finds the incidents shocking; however, what is more shocking to her is the way Margaret views the whole experience as enlightening and liberating. One important thing Margaret has learned is that respectability is a sham and a pretense: ‘Whats the good of pretending? Thats all our respectability is, pretending,

pretending, pretending. Thank heaven I've had it knocked out of me once for all!' (6: 131). Margaret here accuses her parents of hypocrisy and pretending instead of facing and dealing with reality, and thus her speech appears as an exposure of their own hypocrisy and that of the middle class. Moreover, by saying '[t]hank heaven I've had it knocked out of me once for all!', Margaret seems to regard respectability as an obstacle to her freedom and progress and thus rebels against it. She announces herself as 'a heroine of reality'; the reality her parents try to avoid, and which she describes as 'pretty brutal, pretty filthy, when you come to grips with it' (6: 130).

Margaret is rebelling against respectability and things she used to take as a matter of course, due to her upbringing. In Shaw's words when interviewed by Raymond Blathway, 'Margaret did not revolt until she suddenly discovered by accident that the world was not a bit like what she had thought it was, or what she had been brought up to believe it was, and what her parents had always pretended to believe it was' (Kalb 320). Indeed, Margaret's imprisonment was the trigger for her emancipation and her realisation that she had a false picture of reality. Margaret comes to realise that everything she has been educated and brought up to regard as right and proper is inconsistent with reality, which shocks her mother. Mrs. Knox, bewildered by her daughter's attitude and remarks, tells Margaret how she has tried to bring her up to learn 'the happiness of religion,' which is, as Mrs. Knox says, 'within ourselves and doesn't come from outward pleasures' (6: 131). She also tells Margaret that she has prayed again and again that her daughter 'might be enlightened,' in answer to which Margaret makes one of the most important statements in the play:

You've 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. I've 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 haven't found that happiness of yours that is within yourself; but I've found strength. For good or evil I am set free; and none of the things that used to hold me can hold me now. (6: 131)

The tone and the way Margaret speaks to her mother show her new strength, determination, and independence. In addition, the statement shows the discrepancy

between Margaret's views and those of her mother. For instance, enlightenment to Mrs. Knox is a spiritual experience through which one finds inner happiness, whereas enlightenment to Margaret is a physical and social experience through which one finds strength and liberation; and in such experience lies Margaret's happiness and satisfaction. Another reason why Margaret regards her experience as liberating and satisfying is that, as indicated by Ervine, '[h]er experience has released [her] from her repressions' (432). Her parental home, or, as Margaret puts it, the 'silly little hole of a house,' is to be blamed for keeping her repressed and shielded from reality. In short, Margaret's experience has provided her with new ways of seeing the world that challenge her upbringing and the authority of her parents as well as their notions of right and wrong.

Similar to Margaret, Bobby has been shielded and sheltered from the realities of the outside world with all its temptations, wickedness, and violence. Gilbey has thought this to be the duty of the parent towards the child, as he says when he learns about his son's imprisonment and entanglement with Dora: 'I've done my duty as a father. I've kept him sheltered' (6: 117). For Dora, parental overprotection and strictness are what lead to children's misbehaviour and loss of control when exposed to real-life situations outside the home, as she says in the already cited words, '[y]ou see you've brought Bobby up too strict; and when he gets loose there's no holding him' (6: 114). Dora's opinion is the same as Shaw's, for Shaw himself describes Bobby as someone who due to 'domestic restriction' has learned to develop 'a habit of evading it by deceit' (6: 133). It is ironical that a young prostitute figure like Dora is represented as having more wisdom and understanding of the world than Margaret and Bobby's parents. Shaw's representation of Margaret and Dora as having more worldly knowledge than their elders serves as a reminder of his claim in 'Parents and Children' that 'the progress of the world depends on your knowing better than your elders' (78). Shaw's portrayal of the younger generation lecturing the older generation with wisdom and showing a realistic knowledge of the world occurs in other plays as well, such as *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Pygmalion*, and *Misalliance*.

Indeed, the older generation is portrayed as less knowledgeable and experienced than the younger generation. In addition to the reason above, it is Shaw's intention, as stated in his interview with Blathway, to show that even

respectable people who claim 'to have notions of right and wrong, and to possess principles, suddenly discover they have nothing of the sort at all, and the moment they are put out of their groove they are at a loss what to do' (Kalb 321). Shaw successfully depicts this issue in *Fanny's First Play* and exposes the ignorance of the parents and their blind conformity to convention, which makes them by the end of the play reconsider everything they have understood as right and proper, including their child-rearing practices, as Mrs. Knox eventually says:

MRS KNOX. . . . I've noticed it all my life: we're ignorant. We don't really know what's right and what's 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. . . . We find out then that with all our respectability and piety, we've no real religion and no way of telling right from wrong. We've nothing but our habits. (6: 153)

Mrs. Knox here shows a better understanding of herself and the world. She finally realises that conformity to customs and traditional practices is a mistake that should be rectified. In the preface to this play, a corrective for such a mistake is implicitly offered, which is the substitution of conscience for custom (138). Shaw argues that one should act according to one's own conscience and conviction, and not according to the conscience and conviction of others. This is the lesson Margaret has learned from her experience, and what other characters have to learn. It can be said that Mrs. Knox is enlightened by Margaret in some respects and is transformed from a passive into a more critical individual. Mrs. Knox is able to achieve wisdom and insight which Mr. Knox lacks. This brings into consideration the difference between Shaw's representation of the mothers and his representation of the fathers in this play. The mother figures are represented as more flexible, more permissive, and less reactionary than the father figures. Mrs. Gilbey and Mrs. Knox, in particular, have a positive energy which Mr. Gilbey and Mr. Knox lack. Moreover, whereas the fathers are concerned about themselves, prestige, and public appearances, the mothers are more concerned about their children. The reason could be that the mothers have better connection with their children and spend more time with them than the fathers.

This can be seen more clearly in the relationship between Margaret and her mother. The play shows that Margaret is closer and more connected to her mother than to her father. It also shows that Mrs. Knox is more involved in the bringing up of Margaret than Mr. Knox.

The parents in the play, both mothers and fathers, eventually learn to break with tradition and think more independently and rationally, but only after they know about the disgrace of each other's children. The result is that they change their attitudes towards their children. Gilbey, for instance, starts to boast about 'what a dog' his son is after he used to 'boast about what a good boy Bobby was' (*Fanny's* 6: 149). And Knox admits that he was at first horrified to hear his daughter telling people about her imprisonment; 'but,' he says, 'it goes down better than her singing used to' (*Fanny's* 6: 149). Thus, not only do they become indifferent to conventional morality, but they also begin to admire their rebellious children, accept their misbehaviour, and talk about them with pride and joy. In other words, they begin to accept change. This indicates that the rebellion of children against their parents and upbringing is successful in the sense that it has led the latter to reconsider their beliefs and attitudes towards their children. Bobby pairs off with Darling Dora, and Margaret pairs off with Juggins. The union, which results in Dora's class mobility, argues for social equality, even though Dora's following remark at the end of the play may suggest it does not: 'Dont fret, old dear. Rudolph will teach me high-class manners' (6: 163). Similar to Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, Dora recognises the significance of learning the proper language and manners that will enable her to cope with higher classes. The ability to be taught the proper language and manners is itself a form of social equalising.

The inner play was, therefore, a modern realistic play for its time, since it deals with rebellion against expectations, authority, and convention. However, it could be regarded as less radical than Shaw's previous plays because it was written and produced at a time when women were more careless of conventionality and respectability. As mentioned earlier, Fanny's father finds his daughter's play shocking and radical because he is out of date, and so are his views. He objects to the moral of the play and to the way the characters speak to one another, saying: 'People could not talk to one another as those people talk. No child could speak to its parent:

no girl could speak to a youth: no human creature could tear down the veils' (6: 164). Furthermore, he admits that he is deeply wounded, and that the play does not do justice to parents. Therefore, whereas the inner play depicts the change of the parents and their reconciliation with their children and suggests a move towards a better understanding between the two generations, the outer play portrays a father who is resistant to change and whose conflict with his daughter is not resolved and even results in their separation. Accordingly, while there are signs in the inner play that the generation gap could be bridged, the outer play indicates that the gap remains. The question that could be raised here is: what is the function of the two plays and the gap between them? Shaw presents two separate plays different in content, yet similar in theme and function. One important function of the two plays is to educate the audience (both the real and the fictional). The gap between the two plays represents the difference between reality, represented by the frame, and fiction, represented by Fanny's play. The gap can also represent the generation gap. In both cases, it is difficult to bridge the gap.

Chapter Conclusion

While the parent-child relationship in the previous chapters is used by Shaw to interrogate political, social, evolutionary, and educational issues, it is used in this chapter to interrogate mostly familial and generational issues. By exploring Shaw's views of the parent-child relationship and the family as a social institution, this chapter demonstrates Shaw's dissatisfaction with the family as constructed in his time. Knowing the importance of the family for the regeneration of society and the raising of children, Shaw takes it as a major subject in his writings, as his dedicated treatise on 'Parents and Children' shows. This chapter reveals Shaw's radical criticism of the institution of the family, which outweighs his advocacy of the improvement of such an institution. Shaw seems to believe that his criticism of social institutions and practices provokes people to question them, and this is the first step towards social reform. The chapter has shed light on Shaw's criticism of certain aspects of family life and child-rearing practices. It also shows that Shaw's criticism of the parents outweighs his sympathy for them, which should not be surprising as Shaw almost always takes the side of the young. Overall, Shaw suggests that for the sake of producing strong and independent offspring and

enabling social progress, the family should be rendered unnecessary and parental authority should be rejected. In Shaw's view, children are capable of self-learning through exposure to real-life experiences, a point illustrated in chapter three as well as here.

The central action in both *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play* consists of a revolt on the part of children, especially daughters, against their parents. Whereas the focus of the plays in chapter one is on children's rejection of authority and duty, both practically and ideologically, the focus of the plays in this chapter is on children's rebellion against parental expectations and the way in which those children are brought up. Although the two rebellions are different in nature and purpose, both show the importance of releasing the child from the negative influence of the parent (or parents) who limits its freedom and impedes its progress. Hypatia in *Misalliance* revolts against her parents and their expectations of her as a decent, obedient, and dutiful daughter. Such expectations restrict Hypatia's behaviour and freedom and make her life dull and adventureless. Thus, she rebels verbally, by expressing her disgust at traditional home life and showing disrespect to her father, and physically, by pursuing her lover and making advances to him in a shameless untraditional way. Similarly, the offspring in *Fanny's First Play* rebel against their parents and against custom and convention. Margaret's rebellion is even more daring and adventurous than that of Fanny and Hypatia as it involves not only breaking through parental control and tradition, but also breaking the law. The revolt of those offspring is driven by the way they were raised.

Such rebellion of the offspring brings traditional child-rearing practices and parental expectations into question. Shaw in 'Parents and Children' describes the family system in his time as one which 'does unquestionably take the natural bond between members of the same family . . . and superimposes on it . . . altogether unnecessary affection and responsibility' (84). This suggests that what Shaw perceives as a problem with the family system, namely accepting it as unquestionable, is a common problem in other social systems and institutions. Shaw claims that commoners and 'less cultivated' people do not discuss, for example, religion and politics and take them 'for granted' whereas the 'ablest and most highly cultivated people continually discuss religion [and] politics' (*Prefaces* 60).

Accordingly, social change, in Shaw's view, begins with questioning the unquestionable. Indeed, the act of questioning and being inquisitive is helpful and a good thing in itself, a point which is stressed in Shaw's plays and prose writings. As already demonstrated in the theoretical part of chapter three, Shaw believed that questioning leads to real learning and reconsideration of assumptions. The same idea is represented in a number of Shaw's plays, but perhaps more clearly in *Fanny's First Play*. The plays altogether suggest that the three steps of change for Shaw seem to be in the following order: questioning, rejection, and substitution of old and traditional ideas with new ones as well as removal of anything that seems like an institution. It should be noted that the three steps are not necessarily represented in one play. In *Fanny's First Play*, for example, there is a depiction of the questioning and substitution of ideas. Both parents and children in the inner play are made, after an act of rebellion on the part of children, to question respectability and to reconsider their assumptions about right and wrong. And in the outer play, Fanny attempts to help her father substitute his traditional ideas with modern ones. In *Mrs Warren's Profession*, both acts of questioning and rejection are represented. Vivie questions her mother, just before she rejects her: 'Are you my mother? . . . Then where are our relatives? my father? our family friends?' (3: 63). Finally, in *Major Barbara*, only the act of questioning is portrayed when Barbara seems to question her religious beliefs, saying: 'My God: why hast thou forsaken me?' (1: 403). As can be seen, the step which recurs most frequently in Shaw's plays is that of questioning, which indicates that it is the most important step towards improving social institutions, in general, and the institution of the family, in particular.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored Shaw's attack on the institution of the family as constructed in his time, and his rejection of parental authority. It has also identified the reasons and motives behind his attempt to dissolve the family and give children total freedom. In doing so, Shaw was going against the mood of the time, which emphasised the importance of the family and the parental role. Shaw's opposition to parents' interference in the education of the young in his non-dramatic writings is an attack on the parents' natural right to make decisions about their children's upbringing and education. Shaw's concern for children's protection and education and his strong opposition to child labour represent the growing concern for children's rights and education during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Children certainly occupy an important place in Shaw's broad political outlook and socialist beliefs, which support social, political, and economic reform.

Shaw regards the rebellion of children against authority and duty as well as their challenge to the conventional parent-child relationship as a promising starting point for social progress. His portrayal of the rebellion of children against their parents in *Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Devil's Disciple* as being necessary for their emancipation and progress echoes what he suggests in his non-dramatic writings: that revolution, the overthrow of authority, and the discarding of established institutions are necessary for social progress. Moreover, Shaw's shifting and varied views on the means of bettering the world are reflected in his plays, just as they are in his prose writings. His idea of the production of a new improved race is to some extent a product of his disillusionment with the revolutionary means of improving society and humanity. Shaw's plays *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman* show that human evolution is possible if the younger generation chooses to submit to the will of the Life Force. In this case, the older generation should not act as an obstacle to a eugenically-motivated marriage.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a contrast between Shaw's plays and prose writings with regard to the education of the young: the former stress the importance of the role of the father in the education of the offspring, while the latter view such a role as unnecessary and even undesirable for the child's education and development.

My Dear Dorothea, 'Parents and Children,' and *Everybody's Political What's What?* reinforce the importance of self-learning and self-exploration, and undermine the role of the parent in the process of the child's education and development. On the other hand, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* reinforce the role of the father as a mentor, nurturer, and facilitator of the child's growth and development. The relation between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings in this case could be said to be one of contradiction. However, it should be noted that in his non-dramatic writings Shaw focuses more on the shortcomings of the existing education system and what should be avoided to make the education of the young efficient, while in his plays he concentrates on how to make the education of the younger generation a process of liberation and empowerment. Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings together provide a thorough understanding of the varying types, methods, and goals of the education of the young.

Having examined diverse writings by Shaw on children on and off stage, this thesis shows that Shaw's concern for the welfare of children is unquestionable. Children for Shaw are important both in themselves and as a means of a better future. In the middle period of his dramatic career, Shaw continues to represent wilful, rebellious offspring, such as in *Misalliance* and *Fanny's First Play*, who challenge parental expectations and traditional child-rearing practices. Once more, there seems to be a contrast between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings, in particular between *Misalliance* and its Preface. There is a thematic discontinuity between the two, for the play focuses on the relations between parents and children while the preface focuses more on children's rights and education. Nevertheless, both pieces foreground the importance of challenging the institution of the family and conventional family life.

Despite my attempts to study the relation between Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings as well as the relation between Shaw's writings and ideas, and to discuss Shaw's plays according to their destructive and constructive aspects (suggested in Charles A. Carpenter's *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Destroying Ideals*), it is difficult to argue that there is a coherent pattern in Shaw's thinking and writing. It can be argued that inconsistency is part of the nature of agitators and propagandists like Shaw, and thus cannot and should not be resolved. In addition,

inconsistency could relate to genre. In *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett*, Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr deals with the ‘paradox’ in Shaw. Although Shepherd-Barr discusses the idea of Shaw’s ‘wrong-headedness and contrarianism’ rather than the inconsistency of his ideas and writings, she arrives at an important conclusion: ‘The fact that we are still so divided over him—feminist or misogynist? theatrically innovative or hopelessly unplayable? backward looking or visionary?—indicates his ongoing vitality and relevance’ (144). Shepherd-Barr’s observation provides evidence of Shaw’s success and popularity. Thus, despite (if not because of) Shaw’s paradoxes, he is still relevant. Brad Kent in *George Bernard Shaw in Context* (2015) also confirms Shaw’s importance to his day and his relevance to ours (xxvi).

Shaw does seem to be consistent in his didactic purpose and instrumental use of drama. A study of a wide range of Shaw’s prose writings (including prefaces, treatises, letters, and essays) and eight of his plays has helped clarify the importance of education for Shaw as a means of personal and social development. The great attention Shaw gives to the education of children might make us consider whether enough attention has been given to the education of the present and future generations, and whether society has sufficiently emphasised the need for using drama and entertainment for educational purposes. But Shaw did not only use drama to educate the ‘new generation,’ as he claimed in his letter to Ellen Terry (2: 97), he also used drama as a means of expressing his own views. Considering Shaw’s early and middle plays, it can be argued that the parent-child relationship is Shaw’s primary vehicle for articulating his ideas of social progress, evolution, education, and the institution of the family. Shaw seems to exploit the family unit, the parent-child relationship, and the domestic sphere in his plays to act as a synecdoche for the larger picture of society. In other words, in his plays Shaw makes a connection between individual and society, private and public affairs.

One might wonder why Shaw uses the parent-child relationship to dramatise his own views. Shaw takes upon himself a parental role, as he does in *My Dear Dorothea*, and, as his following comment suggests: ‘If it were possible, I should put forward all my plays anonymously, or hire some less disturbing person, as Bacon is said to have hired Shakespeare, to father my plays for me’ (*Complete Plays* 6: 88). This comment, from the Preface to *Fanny’s First Play*, suggests that Shaw sees

himself as a father-figure to his plays and dramatic children. Shaw wants to suggest something about the structural quality of the parent-child relationship. The experience of being a child or a parent or both is not the most important thing, but that kind of structural relationship is really important, and it extends out beyond the actual physical parent and child into something bigger. Thus, the actual physical or biological parent-child relationship is irrelevant. Shaw seems to be interested in its conceptual structure, emotional structure, and the structure of responsibility. And it derives from what he sees as being a biological parent-child relationship, but, importantly, it is not bound by that; it actually exceeds it. Shaw is not setting up the parent-child relationship as a model. He is using it as a starting point, and explaining how he can make it better.

It seems clear that the theatre which Shaw hoped to create was a theatre which served social and political purposes. Therefore, Shaw was one of those who used drama as an educational tool as well as a social force. As has been discussed, Shaw wrote polemical essays, treatises, reviews, and letters; however, he clearly also felt that the stage was appropriate as a venue for his views. As Roxanne Sadovsky points out in her review of *Mrs Warren's Profession*, performed in the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, 'Shaw believed that theatre has a responsibility to encourage its audience to explore the society it has created.' Shaw had the urge to better the world for almost his whole life, and he thought that the first step towards this goal was to raise public awareness of social problems. It can be said that his career as a playwright was a continuation of his socialist mission via a new dramatic means, especially as when Shaw turned to theatre he was already a member of the Fabian society, and its spokesman in the press. Besides, he was socially and politically committed to the socialist cause and, as I have already noted, he believed that all art should be didactic. Accordingly, it should not be surprising that Shaw sought to challenge established institutions and beliefs and promote change on a variety of fronts; one of those fronts is theatre. Lenker affirms the importance of theatre for Shaw as a vehicle for portraying and interrogating social problems: 'Shaw was extremely serious about the value of theater, and one of his abiding goals was to make it important to the nation as a social organ, a vehicle for interrogating society's problems and opportunities' (*Fathers* 103). Shaw's utilisation of drama to achieve

social, political, and evolutionary goals is best seen in his plays written in the pre-war period.

Whereas Shaw's early plays are revolutionary and reflect Shaw's radical thinking, his middle plays reflect the Fabian goal of achieving social change through permeation. In his interview with Percy L. Parker (1896), Shaw defines permeation as 'the policy of propagating Fabian ideas outside the Society wherever there was a human brain for them to lodge in.' 'Our idea,' Shaw continues, 'has not been to reform the world ourselves, but to persuade the world to take our ideas into account in reforming itself' (Gibbs, *Interviews* 67). The motto of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation was 'Educate, Agitate, Organize.' However, Shaw and other Fabians substituted 'permeate' for 'agitate,' thus reflecting Fabian gradualism (Carpenter, *Fabian* xvii). Nevertheless, Shaw believed that 'if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything that does not trouble them' (qtd. in Carpenter, *Fabian* 76-77). Shaw, thus, believed in the importance of provoking the audience into thinking and questioning by means of irritation. As Carpenter perceptively states, the Shavian motto might also have been 'Educate, Permeate, Irritate' (*Fabian* xviii). Shaw's plays, discussed in this thesis, reflect his irritating ways to provoke the audience into thinking. Moreover, they function as a pedagogical tool to encourage people to learn and to think differently, that is, to activate thinking.

Thus, my research confirms that there is a link between Shaw's progressive views and his plays: his plays dramatise the roots of his socialist and progressive ideas. By using drama as a venue and the parent-child relationship as a means, Shaw provokes consideration of the problems of authority, class inequalities, and the injustices of capitalism as a whole. The Shavian message is compatible with the Fabian message: it is important to free individuals from the obstructing effect of social ills; and to convey such a message to audiences is the purpose of Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings. Whereas Shaw's non-dramatic writings explain Shaw's thoughts and aspirations, his plays demonstrate how his ideas could be put into practice.

Shaw has long been controversial, and often misunderstood. It has been argued that he failed as a socialist playwright and as an artist as well. Nicholas

Greene, for example, in 'Bernard Shaw: Socialist and Playwright' argues that 'Shaw's plays are not self-evidently those of a socialist. It is not only that, in advancing the theory of the Life-Force, the religion of Creative Evolution, he abandoned the underlying materialist ideology of socialism' (135). As I have already indicated in chapter two, Shaw's Creative Evolution and his socialism are complementary. And both provide different means of improving humanity and bettering the world. This could justify why Shaw's dramatic and non-dramatic writings on Creative Evolution do not reflect the materialist aspect of his socialist ideology, namely his advocacy of equality of income. Not only does Tracy C. Davis, in *George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre*, suggest that Shaw's drama did not successfully convey his socialist politics, but she also claims that Shaw failed as a socialist playwright because his plays did not change social consciousness nor lead to social action (57-145). Even if Shaw's plays did not lead to social action, they certainly nurtured an awareness of social issues. As Anthony Jackson points out, if the audience 'can at least be provoked into fuller consciousness of the issues as problems that touch their own lives in the real world, the playwright will have largely succeeded' (55). Accordingly, the success of the playwright depends on his ability to achieve his aim of writing plays and not necessarily on the conversion of his audience's awareness into action; and this is what Shaw seems to have achieved.

Moreover, Shaw's plays did very effectively convey his socialist politics, as has already been demonstrated. Gilbert Wakefield in his review of *The Devil's Disciple* in 1930 confirms the influence of Shaw on English drama and members of English society:

It is remarkable how little the work of Mr. Bernard Shaw has influenced the English drama. . . . Now, I have described him in the title of this article as "a devil with no disciples." But, of course, I do not intend to suggest by that phrase that his plays have made no converts; I mean simply that he has no disciples among those who write the plays which are produced in the commercial theatres of England. He stands to-day, not only intellectually head and shoulders above all other British playwrights, but apart from them. Naturally he

has influenced them; he has influenced almost every living Englishman, writers and readers alike. (313)

By 'influenced' in this general sense of the word, Wakefield seems to refer to Shaw's intellectual and artistic influences. Wakefield's article also indicates that Shaw was successful in achieving his purpose of writing didactic plays and that '[i]t has been his later style, his impudently undramatic "discussions," that have put his plays, and so his philosophy, in the limelight' (313). In addition, Wakefield uses Shaw as an example of how to convey advanced ideas by means of drama, praising him for his intellectual and artistic achievements. Similarly, David Clare in *Bernard Shaw's Irish Outlook* (2016) confirms Shaw's influence on modern thought and his success in making 'reverse snobbery a commonplace of Anglophone art and public discourse during the twentieth century' through his dramatic representation of English and Irish characters (7). The charge that Shaw was not an artist, but a mere political propagandist was also refuted by Eric Bentley and Charles A. Carpenter. Bentley asserts that Shaw was 'a special sort of propagandist: an artist in propaganda' (*Bernard* 17). In *Bernard Shaw as Artist-Fabian*, Carpenter argues that Shaw was successful both as a Fabian and an artist and implies that Shaw would not have been successful in writing plays with propagandist and didactic purpose if he was not an artist (46-47).

In short, Shaw's dramatic children reflect his experiments in 'world betterment' by means of rebellion, evolution, and education; and his plays in general reflect his experiments with dramatic form. Hence, it can be argued that drama itself was an experiment for Shaw, which did work. Shaw was right in choosing drama as a vehicle for his views because of all the sites in which he chose to convey his ideas, his drama is the genre which has survived best, and which gained much success and popularity, even though his plays are less shocking and less revolutionary today than in his time. The plays still convey Shaw's message and ideas to the audience, and they still inspire thinking and provoke laughter. Shaw is not only using the play as a vehicle for debates which reflect his own view, but is turning the play itself into a debate. The way Shaw uses debates, represents wilful and rebellious children, and actively experiments with the depiction of children and the parent-child relationship makes him distinctive indeed.

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