Chapter II:
Manifestation of Evil in
Unpleasant Plays:
Widowers' Houses,
The Philanderer,
Mrs. Warren's Profession.
Section One: *Widowers' Houses* (1892)

This chapter offers an analysis of Shaw's *Unpleasant Plays*, which is a collection of three plays; they are *Widowers' Houses, The Philanderer, and Mrs. Warren's Profession*. He wrote these plays at the beginning of his career in which he displays the most destructive social evils prevalent in society. Shaw tackles in an objective manner some of the social and capitalistic evils which are dangerous to man's body and soul. He not only projects the objective observations in his own country but he truly and genuinely depicts other people's remarks, keeping on record as social and historical documents. These plays focus on social evils and the sordid reality of society.

Shaw's plays are called 'unpleasant' because these plays discuss and treat unpleasant subjects like prostitution, exploitation, and above all, the abundance of supreme principals and moral values. Most important is the fact that the audience and the readers watching and reading these plays are held responsible for these evils, feeling that they are convicted and condemned. These plays focus on revealing some immoral facts about modern capitalistic societies in which evils stretch. As the plays present ideas and incite the audience to discuss their subjects, critics believe that throughout his attacks against capitalism, Shaw advocates socialism. But the reality is that Shaw just attacks social evils and leaves the audience to think of the actual option for people to live a contented and joyful life by using lawful means and not by selling their own bodies and principals. The plays provide a truthful depiction of grave practices prevalent in the society, for example, a very poor man is hard-pressed to adopt illegal means of getting money; this shows “how man is severely tied to social order and cannot fix to moral ideals and values holding, them causes great material loss.”¹
Unpleasant Plays, do not represent heroes or villains in the traditional way, but they depict characters who are evil, each finds himself right from his own point of view. At the end of the plays, the evil characters are left without punishment because they are not held guilty; but are left for the spectators to decide. These plays illustrate how the economic circumstances determine man's personality. They are ideological attacks against the evil of capitalism and explorations of moral and social problems. Instead of the romance, Shaw emphasizes social and economic issues. The dramatic power of these plays which Shaw describes as 'unpleasant' is used to oblige the audience to see and realize the unpleasant facts about life. In these plays people are confronted, not only with the comedy or tragedy of man's personality and fortune, but with those social evils that threaten man's life, especially poor people who dream for better life but the reality is completely different. In his letter to Bright, Shaw states that:

My first three plays, Widowers' Houses, The Philanderer and Mrs. Warren's Profession were what people would call realistic. They were dramatic picture of middle class society from the of view of a socialist who regards the basis of that society thoroughly rotten economically and morally.\(^2\)

In the same letter, he adds illustrating the act of the protagonist in each play which is immoral:

In Widowers' Houses you had the rich suburban villa standing on the rent of the foul rookery.... In Mrs. Warren's Profession you had the procuress, the organizer of prostitution, convicting society of her occupation. All three plays were criticism of a special phase of modern organization and their purpose was to make people thoroughly uncomfortable whilst entertaining them artistically.\(^3\)
*Widowers' Houses* is Shaw's first play, written in 1892. It is about slum land-lordship, preoccupied by the new woman. It reveals “the class possessed natural world of Victorian England and its heartlessness towards the poor who struggle to improve the lives of their families.”  

Shaw presents a slice of life which represents middle-class society, with a specific reference to slum landlordism. The play shows how individual people like Sartorius are obliged to employ unlawful ways to overcome the miseries of social ills and poverty. In a capitalistic society, money is regarded the uttermost concern if individuals follow moral values they do not give them food. It is the kind of world where man either exploits or is exploited. So, in this play the main factors that affect character and action are related to environment and circumstances.

In a letter to R. Golding Bright, Shaw says that from his point of view as a socialist, his first three plays “present dramatic pictures of the society of the middle class which is completely corrupted both morally and economically.” Furthermore, he declares that his *Plays Unpleasant* indicates unpleasant subjects because it reproaches the capitalism of the world. Patric Braybrooks shows that the play is composed by a dramatist who comprehends human nature, which he considers identical with hypocrisy. He also shows that point of view presented in *Widowers' Houses* displays a problem “as to how far we are idealists when the idealism interferes with the materialism.” Shaw's biographer, Archibald Henderson, explains that this play “projects the kind of life lived by ordinary people of the middle class of modern society.”

John Gassner considers this play the first naturalistic English drama in which the dramatist tries to show how middle class society feeds and fattens on slum tenants. He also shows that “in a corrupted social order everything is defiled by the same pitch, and there is no chance for
individual salvation except in the cleansing of society."\(^8\) According to Allardyce Nicolle, Shaw depicts in this play the complexity of our modern civilization. Allardyce Nicolle traces the causes that have paved the way for the appearance of slum landlordism and other capitalistic institutions. To him, the play is something beyond the atrocious landlords and the poor as some romanticists may believe; he says that in order to reform society one “must go to the roots of society itself, for society is considered responsible for the flourishing of such evils like slum landlordism.”\(^9\)

The hero of this play is Dr. Harry Trench and his father in law Sartorius. The heroine, Blanche, is the spoiled and violent tempered daughter of Sartorius to whom Trench is engaged. The high point of the story is when Trench discovers that the income of Sartorius is derived from slum tenement and his income is also from the same source. The first discovery makes Trench refuse any money from Blanche's father; as a result she breaks the engagement. The second discovery bitterly humiliates Trench and enables Blanche to bring him back through stimulating advances; his return to her, exhibits ugly temper which seems highly improbable. Shaw comments that neither Sartorius nor Trench nor any other individual is at fault; society is meant to be the villain. This play is an attack upon society, not upon individual. He asserts in his ‘Preface’ to \textit{Plays Unpleasant} that “Sartorius is not a villain, nor Trench a hero, rousing speeches for a forthcoming battle of good against evil remain unmade.”\(^10\) The main theme of this play is the problem of conscience in a society that does not have it. Sartorius is a man convinced that his actions are logical, and honest. But the reality is that, he is wicked, malicious, and against his conscience which forced him to utter the devilish sentiments.
Trench is weak willed, a fool, a hypocrite, a dupe, instead of being held up to ridicule these qualities he receives the young lady and large profit as reward. The young lady Blanche is opposite to him, she has stronger will power and is more dominating than the foolish doctor, when he has seen the terrible results of the slums, his only response is, “It used to make my blood boil to think that such things couldn't be prevented.”

Blanche is aggressive, domineering, fiery tempered and vicious to boot, for like father like daughter. She is just as uncompassionate towards the slum dweller as her father, she remarks: “I hate those dirty, drunken, disreputable people who live like pigs. If they must be provided for, let other people look after them.”

The devil is a landlord who comes in all shapes and with all sorts of manners. Blanche is the offspring of slum landlordism cultivated by its profits, a product of the way of life it finances. Her brutality towards her maid parallels her father's towards Lickcheese who is a young man, innocent, but coward. When Sartorius fired him, he begs Trench to speak on his behalf for he believes that Sartorius never appreciates nor understands his hard and difficult circumstances. This shows that both Blanche and her father have power and they use it whenever it suits their purpose. According to Patrick Braybrooke, *Widowers' Houses* tackles the question of the source of money. Moreover, he believes that “there are many people who will be shocked when they are acquainted with the fact that they contribute in one way or another to the nefarious and cruel deeds of society.”

Martin Meisel observes that this play depicts a picture of the capitalistic corrupted society in which money and the hands that deal with it are tainted and “in
which the pernicious alternatives were to receive the taint or perish.”

Capitalism contains within itself contradictions, schisms, and ruptures; that create a condition of alienation which can be adept as painkilling and it enforces a set of social and economic practices that are inhumane, and destructive. The horror of economic struggle under capitalism and the degradation suffered by those who are poor eventually leads to the destruction of the society. Capitalism caused the psychological and social deformations which expressed through the horror genre's preoccupation with violence, dissolution, and its mood of severity and oppression that is real evil.

Capitalists are greedy, selfish and think only about what is better for themselves rather than others. Many writers portray capitalism as the cause of all evils in society, because of its horrors that destroy society. Upton Sinclair in his novel, *The Jungle*, attempts to show that capitalism is a “system of chattel slavery and the working class is subject to the whim of an every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers.” He uses the hardships faced by the family to demonstrate the effects of capitalism on working people. The purpose of his novel is to depict capitalism as an economic and social system that ignores the dilemma of the working class and only cares for the wealthy. For him socialism is the cure for all the problems that capitalism creates. He sees capitalism as a system in which the wealthy exploit the working class for their material benefit. By turning to socialism, Upton Sinclair wants to show the evils of capitalism and illuminate how socialism can rectify those evils. In the system of capitalism,
much of the working class lives in poverty, not because they do not have the ability to improve their condition, but because they do not have the opportunity. Upton Sinclair describes capitalism as a system that is, “relentless, remorseless, and cruel, and if someone tried to get in its way, it would cut his throat and watch him gasp for life.”

The play is both ‘didactic’ and ‘realistic’ and constitutes a savage attack on slum landlords who make money by exploiting the poor. Shaw declares its theme to be “middle class respectability fattening on the poverty of slums as flies fatten on filth.” Should you feed off the ills of society when you feel powerless to change it? This is one of the questions that reverberate in Shaw’s play Widowers’ Houses. Shaw addresses large social issues, such as housing for the poor and urban renewal, but basically the play is about money. Shaw’s socialist convictions concerning economic basis of society began in this play, which exposes the evils of landlordism. The powerful landlord applies all his power to exploit the poor for his interests.

In this play, the behavior of Sartorius has become offensive and rigid because during his youth he has faced difficult circumstances. Besides, Lickcheese, Sartorius's rent collector has been forced to work for the capitalists because when he was poor and weak, he was humiliated and dismissed from his job; but when he began to feed on capitalism, he is no longer weak or poor. While commenting on Widowers' Houses, Shaw declares that besides the tragic and comic aspects of life, he tackles certain social horrors inherent in the English people who appear to be cruel and savage no matter how much mild and honorable they may seem to be. He further comments that the English man is apathetic to “the most villainous abuses if remedy
threatens to add another penny in the pound to the rates and taxes which he has to be half cheated, half coerced into paying.”

A. C. Ward advocates the truthfulness of Shaw's depiction of contemporary society, he comments that: “He held up a mirror to his age and also showed many aspects of humanity in all ages.”

Blanche's features are similar to her father's for she like him is strong-minded, full of life and energy. Like her father she is irritated at the thought of the church; she does not show her respect towards churches, demanding not to “bother about any more churches, Papa, they're all the same. I' m tired to death of them.”

It seems that both Blanche and her father have no respect for religion, this reveals the influence of the materialistic world firstly on Sartorius and then the influence of the father’s way on the daughter. We can conclude that Blanche and her father's hate to churches are due to the environmental influences on both of them. Mr. William de Burgh Corkane is Trench's friend, “probably over forty, possibly fifty: an ill nourished gentleman, with affected manners: fidgety, touchy, and constitutionally ridiculous in uncompassionate eyes.”

Although, Corkane has vague manners, he highly exaggerates, proud of what he tells Trench to be his skill. He uses parasitical behavior as he tries to gain certain advantages when introducing himself and Trench to a rich man like Sartorius.

Environmental and circumstantial factors are some of the shaping elements of Corkane's character. His environment is conducive to the appearance of snobbish and parasitical persons like him. Again, the evil influences of the capitalistic society are evident in this character, Corkane fattens on such evil. He believes that Trench is having no tact when dealing with people; of course, it is the kind of tool relevant to nefarious elements. He thinks that persons like Trench can depend on
men like him. Therefore, as in actual life, these are evil characters that can play the evil role for those, who are unable to do so.

Trench wants to marry Blanche, but her father, Sartorius, though he shows his interest, wants the consent of Trench's family in order to guarantee his daughter's life in the aristocratic society, “anything about your family, for example? You do not anticipate any objection on their part, do you?” Sartorius asks for the consent of Trench's family only to assure that his family will not turn its back on the newcomer, who they might think is not good for them. From this one can understand that the class differences are very important to Sartorius who is a slum landlord. His income is derived from the rent of houses in London; similar to Trench's income. It is also unfolded that the social and economic circumstances allow Blanche to continue her higher education and to live in a cultured environment.

Sartorius dismissed his money collector Lickcheese, who humbly asks Trench and Cokane to talk on his behalf to Sartorius. Poverty leads to humiliation and frustration, which may lead to committing social evils, as in the case of Lickcheese. He has to undergo humiliation and bitter experience because he is very poor, and has four children to feed. He is fired from his job and left with his children to starve. He declares the reason why he has been dismissed as he says:

and because I charged him four-and-twenty shilling to mend a staircase that three women have been hurt on, and that would have got him prosecuted for manslaughter if it had been let go much longer, he gives me the sack.  

Shaw makes references to newspapers of that time which published facts from society, especially facts about slum landlordism.
He quotes an article published in a newspaper named *The Star*, in 1893 stating:

> A dangerous staircase was proved fatal to Elizabeth H…… aged 40, a charwoman, of X Buildings. The evidence at St. Gile's Coroner's Court on Saturday showed that the deceased was found lying at the bottom of the stairs at her lodgings on Tuesday morning, at half-past twelve, in an insensible condition. Shaw was carried up-stairs and put to bed, but died the same way.\(^{24}\)

Thus, the play can be taken as a document which records bitter facts about modern contemporary society, especially that slice of life which comprises of landlordism and poverty. In this connection Shaw attaches to the Preface another document taken from the Coroner's office: “The stairs are very dangerous at night. They are insufficiently lighted. Dr. Brennan deposed that death was due to extensive fracture of the skull. He said he found that stairs were dark and slippery. A hand rail was needed.”\(^{25}\)

The Coroner's office reports similar facts:

> Over a hundred families live in those building. The jury, in returning a verdict of accidental death, added the subjoined rider: The jurors, having heard in evidence that the staircases leading to X building are insufficiently lighted, and that there are no handrails, would call the attention of the landlord.\(^{26}\)

These documents not only condemn modern society and landlordism but, they are also regarded as documents to substantiate and assert the facts that the play deals with the subject matter that is closely related to contemporary life. Because of the broken staircase three women are hurt. Raymond S. Nelson said that Sartorius like any other businessman wants to gain money only. In spite of the laws, the government is not capable of making the landlords improve the conditions of the tenants; adding that what Lickcheese has reported
were the actual facts in slum London. He does not exaggerate the state of affairs. He describes his daily experiences in getting money from the wretched people. For Raymond S. Nelson, all the characters, Trench, Sartorius, and Lickcheese are representatives of “several intricately meshed elements operating in the economic and social machinery of modern society.”

Trench becomes very angry when Lickcheese tells him that the money he collects from Sartorius is tainted which means that “Sartorius gets his money from tenants, let from week to week by the room or half room, or a quarter room” emphasizing that the love of money is the root of all evils. Lickcheese reveals that Sartorius prefers for himself a good house whereas he lets people live in unclean ones. Now Lickcheese wishes to be similar to Sartorius, referring to the importance and necessity of the social and economic circumstances in affecting man’s act and personality. He envies Blanche of being a rich daughter; other young girls are in the street having nothing, forced to live a simple and humble life. If she might have been a daughter of a poor man, she might face the same destiny like those poor girls; living in the street, suffering the pangs of misery, or might become a prostitute.

Trench expresses his hatred towards the evils of society and his vulnerability to amend the condition of society:

It's a damnable business from beginning to end; and you deserve no better luck for helping it. I have seen it all among the out-patients at the hospital; and it used to make my blood boil to think that such things couldn't be prevented.

Man is known to be a brutal creature; devoid of most of his humane qualities. This is expressed in Lickchee's conversation with Trench,
when he reminds him the fact that he is supposed to take his share after marrying Blanche.

At the end of Act II, Blanche refuses what Trench tells her that he would not get any money from her father after marriage; deciding to live on his income only, which means that they will become poor. By listening this, her father becomes very angry. Her refusal reflects the fact that she is like any other middle class woman who is looking forward to get some support from her father if she marries a poor man. In her negative response, she shows her father's passions, strong mindedness and cruelty in addition to his way of thinking.

Trench accuses Sartorius that he does not provide the poor proper residence and compels them to live in dirty place. Because of these bad and degrading circumstances, they would commit sin or do evil. Sartorius justifies his bad treatment to the poor; saying if he repairs the dwellings the poor will soon devastate them, confirming that man has no ability to change the state of society:

When people are very poor, you cannot help them, no matter how much you may sympathize with them. It does them more harm than good in the long run. I prefer to save my money in order to provide additional houses for the homeless.  

He insists that his work is for the benefit of the poor as he provides them shelter.

In the ‘Preface’ to *Widowers' Houses*, Shaw announces that “Sartorius does not show his concern to the defects existing in society, the defects that give rise to a poor social group.” He wants to say that the poor are the product of either their social system or the product of the environment in which they live. Margery M. Morgan points out that “the social order is made motionless and simple determinism in the
minds of any idealists who believe themselves disconnected to reform.”

Although the circumstances, the environment and the character of Trench and Lickcheese vary from each other, they realize that they are part and parcel of the social order from which they cannot get out. Moreover, both of them including Sartorius know that the present social order is inevitable and the individual is helpless in the society, disapproved by true-minded people. The individual is powerless and submissive to the existing social order which cannot be changed and he must adapt himself to it.

Lickcheese has many children and his poor social and economic circumstances hinder him to live a comfortable life. In addition to that he is fired from his job. This increases his suffering and makes his situation worse. His wretched and miserable condition makes him look humiliated, but later on it changes his behavior and his social and economic state; as he is no more poor for he works with Sartorius. This reflects the fact of modern society; in which money means power. Now Lickcheese is no longer acquiescent to Sartorius and the latter starts to respect him because he has became rich. Sartorius encourages everyone to increase his wealth therefore he feels so exhilarated to Lickcheese's idea of raising his prosperity. This shows the reality of modern society; the rich gain high respect and regard while the poor do not.

Blanche like her father changes her attitude towards Lickcheese as he becomes rich, while at the beginning of the play she hates the poor and considers them unequal to her position. Her father reminds her of the fact that she also has descended from a very poor family:

Sartorius:……But do you know Blanche that my mother was a very poor woman, and that her poverty was not her fault? Blanche: I suppose not; but the people we want to mix with now don't know that. And it was not
my fault; so I don't see why I should be made to suffer for it.³³

From this dialogue, we can understand that Blanche and her father do not take the responsibility of the evils in society; both of them insist that it is the fault of society and not theirs.

Sartorius remembers the offensive circumstances which he faced during his early life and how his mother worked hard for many hours almost all the day in order to earn some money for their living. Shaw accuses society for not giving Sartorius any other better choice but that nasty work. Society is responsible for the actions of man and not him, as there are forces away from his power that urge him to do so. Eric Bentley commented that in this play “the system not the individual is responsible for the individual's guilt; rather all individuals should be guilty.”³⁴ He adds that:

> to present a struggle between the capitalists and the socialists is not Shaw's concern in this play, for Shaw's purpose is to deal with human situation as he found it and not simply as he desired it.³⁵

After discovering the bitter reality of modern society, Trench accepts to marry Blanche, which means that he is going to join Sartorius's system in exploiting the poor in order to get much more money from the same source he has once rejected. He is no longer idealist trying to adopt himself to the economic and social circumstances. At the beginning he refuses to marry Blanche as the source of her money was from exploiting the poor, but he is shocked after discovering that his money is also from the same source. Trench's ideal concerning money vanished into the air as he begins to recognize the materialistic world very well. Patrick Braybrooke points out to the
truth that “many people would have preferred to do what Trench did if they are in his place.”

*Widower's Houses* angrily criticizes the capitalistic system and society which are responsible for the emergence of social groups to invest their money gained after attempting to exploit the poor. Raymond S. Nelson said that all the bad characters in the play who practice evil acts are not responsible for the social defects; they symbolize “numerous men who are drawn in human being exploitation, as long as society insists that the poor cannot be helped, no matter how much you sympathize with them.”

Margery M. Morgan believes that:

> the aristocratic and middle class make a plan against the poor or low class in society and this plan is shown clearly through the deal between Sartorius and Trench which allows the latter to be one of the aristocratic men in society.

Most of the characters in this play are the outcome of their environment, for example Sartorius is a landlord who flourished upon the poor due to poverty in his early life. Lickcheese rises to an upper middle class and Trench changes into a brute after realizing the fact that he is weak to alter the economic social system.

The play shows that man is the victim of his environment and circumstances. This is shown clearly by Blanche's ill-treatment to her maid, she treats her very badly and violently. She even tortures her physically; despite that, the victim remains helpless. Margery M. Morgan declares that in the play there is;

> a hint of the foolishness of society's victim in their passive, washed brain submitting to the violation done to them. And Trench has been the victim of Blanche's rage and then he turns to a submissive lover.
At the beginning of the play, Lickcheese appears to be the victim of his circumstances; nevertheless he has the power and the ability to disclose the reality that he starts to get polluted money for the sake of his family. He wants them to live a comfortable life like other people regardless of the source of this money. Like Trench he loses his ideals of siding with the poor when this costs him too much, means the better life for his children. He learns the fact that society has offered him no alternative other than exploiting the poor. Thus, similar to Sartorius he becomes a member of the capitalistic system; if not, his children will have nothing to eat. There are powers that affect his behavior and personality; on one side these powers are called environment, and on the other side they are called social and financial conditions.

Exploitation is a major problem in the world and money is the biggest reason for exploitation. Rich people use the poor to increase their money. Therefore as long as there is poverty and greed in the world, there will be exploitation. On one hand, the poor agree to do any work just to get a little amount of money that will be enough for their children. They may accept to work as a prostitute, abused laborer, or a servant. On the other hand the exploiters become richer and richer on the account of these miserable people. In the case of exploitation, there is a person who is getting rich or making a lot of money and someone else who is doing all the work and gets a little or nothing.

Slavery was widespread in ancient world, especially in Greece and Rome, slaves were generally used as herdsmen, housekeepers, guards in prison, etc. They were mercilessly exploited as a source of entertainment; gladiators for example represent a general ancient outlook. It was the practice of buying human beings and making them do work by force. Slavery has been described as a “social institution
defined by law and custom as the most absolute involuntary form of human servitude." The three main characteristics of slavery are: the people are regarded as property, they are forced to serve through violence, and they are subject to the owner's will. Slavery which is a major type of exploitation sports from economic condition to extreme poverty and helplessness an evil form of human relationship. The system of slavery had emerged out of human needs; the aristocrat utilizing the services of the poor in exchange of some material gain. Another mode of the system of slavery had been the victory of an invader in arms over another territory. The helpless people from the defeated land were forced into slavery. So war and poor social conditions are the main reasons of creating and increasing slavery which is considered as evil. Today slavery is not like the slavery that used to be in the past. Today it is worse. Before, slave owners gave food and shelter, whereas today people are being smuggled across the country and forced into slavery. Poverty is the main cause of slavery. Because people are financially unsound, they are vulnerable to enslavement. As long as poverty exists, slavery will be there in many countries of the world.

Slavery is something that should have never existed, but unfortunately it did. It was the most common form of forced labor in History that was bad and wrong. A slave was treated like property and not like human being. Slavery was the cause of many wars and socio-political disruptions. Poor people were deprived of having a life of their own and going about normal ways because of the greed that consume a society. Oppression and cruelty which were considered evil were just two of the many words used to describe slavery. Innocent people were taken from their homes and separated from their families to be sold as
slaves to the people around the world. Slavery is one of the products of the rise of capitalism, and in turn, it gives a great boost to capitalism's growth. It is the central part of the process which Karl Marx called the primitive accumulation of capital. So it is very important to remember that by neglecting the causes and results of the social evils; the struggle against them will never end.

Shaw emphasizes the idea that all the people in society are responsible for the emergence of social evils. Although the characters of the play do wrong the fact is that they are the product of their miserable social situations; society is presented to be the guilty. This play illustrates obviously the capitalistic society namely the landlords who exploit the poor, under which man is dogged by powers stronger than himself that affect him greatly and he has no free will. Desmond MacCarthy assures that the behavior of Shaw's characters is resolute by circumstances, their education and the way people deal with them:

Mr. Shaw emphasizes that men are the bottom swayed by the same common impulses, and that their behavior is generally what circumstances, education, and the treatment they receive from others at the moment make it; he never fails, therefore, to suggest that society is responsible for their misdeeds as well as for their oddities.41

He also clarifies Shaw's thoughts as a social reformer and as an artist and points out that:

As a social reformer, he has theorized upon and analyzed the effect of this or that social environment on life and character; as an artist he has always been preoccupied with human nature. These two preoccupations, working together, have enabled him to seize with extraordinary quickness the traces which a particular manner of living on personality.42
Shaw declares in the ‘Preface’ to *Widowers' Houses* that he wants to describe life as it is to people who know life very well, and not to those who arbitrate life according to thoughts drawn from literature:

We want a theatre for people who have lived, thought and felt, and who have some real sense that women are human beings just like men, for it is clear that only by holding the mirror up to literature the dramatist can please him[the critic] whereas it is by holding it up to nature that good word is produced.43

The play is anticipated to be an assault against a colossal social evil. Shaw does not blame individuals for their evil acts, as none of them is at fault, society is to be blamed and considered as a villain which allows vice, such as the evil of landlordism to emerge. Both as a man and as a writer Shaw is a sympathizer of the poor; the sight of poverty hurts his sensitive soul so much that he became a most determined enemy of poverty. All his life he adheres and takes the side of the underdogs of society. This play is considered as a dramatic essay in social realism. It reveals “the human vice and shows the social humiliation of brutal oppression of the poor by slum landlords.”44 These evils still spread all over the world despite of much social legislation. At the same time the play can be described as an economic tract.

**Section Two: The philanderer (1893)**

This comic play was written in 1893, in which Shaw introduces Leonard Charteris, a man determined to remain unmarried. He is a philosophizing philanderer who believes that only conventional people marry while advanced people form delightful friendships not. The protagonist of this play, Charteris, is a man who likes to tell the truth but does not want to hear it. He
confesses that he could love any woman as long as she is pretty. He finds himself in the awkward situation of being romantically involved with two women at the same time; the jealous Julia Craven and a young widow, Grace Tranfield. Charteris's particular dilemma is how to end his affair with Julia. This play is the second of the 'Unpleasant Plays'. Its theme is love and marriage treated as a game between the sexes. It is also a satire upon physical science as it is Shaw's first attack against the medical profession.

Shaw remarked that The Philanderer deals with life especially the 'Ibsen Club' which was common among the well-educated people in the second half of the nineteenth century. He states in his 'Preface' to the play:

In the eighteen-nineties, when The Philanderer was written, not only dramatic literature but life itself was staggering from the impact of Ibsen's plays, which reached us in 1889. The state of mind represented by the Ibsen Club in this play was familiar then to our intelligentsia.45

One of the Victorian sentiments is women's equality; woman has to be independent of man. She has got the right to belong to herself only and not to anyone else. Grace, the young widow is about thirty two years old, “slight of build, delicate of feature and sensitive in expression,” 46 all her thoughts are derived from Ibsen. Charteris believes that woman has got the right to belong to herself only, but he asks questions whether man has the same right to belong to himself too. Shaw is ludicrous of those people who misunderstand Ibsen's ideas about equality. Grace's view of woman's independence does not give the man the right to belong to himself; whereas Charteris believes that Ibsen's idea of independence should be appropriate to both man and woman at the same time. This play is concerned with the “womanly
woman and new woman together with the question of marriage as slavery to be a middle-class ideal” as William York Tindall has observed.

While Grace and Charteris are embracing each other, Julia reaches there “a beautiful, dark, tragic looking woman.” She becomes very angry when she realizes that Charteris is spending his time with another woman, telling her that he belongs to her and she must not belong to anybody else. This clarifies that both Julia and Grace think in a similar way concerning their approach towards man. On the contrary, Charteris believes that both man and woman should have their own independence. Valli Rao says that Charteris tries to defend the appearance of the new independent woman in order to defend man. Valli Rao believes “that Shaw is revealing the fact that man is the doll and not woman, as man is bound to woman by the ties of marriage.” It seems that both Grace and Julia are much influenced by Ibsen's ideas concerning women's equality with men ignoring the idea of men's equality with men, and this is what Charteris is alluding to.

Charteris used to philander with many women as he tells Grace. His philandering is the result of environmental and circumstantial influences upon his character. Because of his philandering, he refuses to marry Julia under the pretext that she is too young for him as he is about forty years old. His views are that woman should be self-governing and that marriage is “a degrading bargains, by which a woman sells herself to a man for the social status of a wife” telling her the reason of his pleasing the philandering only and rejecting the marriage:

If you had married me, I might have turned out a drunkard, a criminal, an imbecile, a horror to you; and you couldn't have released yourself. Too big of a risk,
you see. That’s the rational view: our view. Accordingly, you reserved the right to leave me at any time if you find our companionship incompatible.....I think that was how you put the Ibsenist view ; our view. So I had to be content with a charming philanderer, which taught me a great deal, and brought me some hours of exquisite happiness.51

Charteris believes that if he marries Julia, he will be turned into a criminal. Therefore, the most important fact is that the social conventions and circumstances affected his character, and averted him from marrying Julia. Maurice Valency views that Charteris is strong enough and has the ability to face life as it is with its entire defects better than comply with the society's constraint particularly the subject about marriage. He adds that “Charteris can achieve his shameful desire of the flesh without paying the price for slavery to a family unit which he does not like or prefer. Such type of man has no other choice but to be a philanderer.”52

Marriage is a religious and social bond between man and woman which is authorized in all the social structure:

Marriage is an important social institution. It evolved and developed with the socioeconomic progress of mankind, the basic need of satisfying physical hunger. To the Hindu marriage is not merely an arrangement for a man and a woman to live together, a kind of a social contract. It is a sacrament .... the most important of the 16 SAMSKARAS that govern the life of the Hindu from his birth to his death.53

In his ‘Preface’ to Plays Unpleasant, Shaw illustrates his point of view about the sexual relationship specifically in this play between the hero and the woman which is covered under the law of marriage, stating:
Shown the grotesque sexual compact made between men and women under marriage laws which represent to some of us an institution which society has outgrown but not modified, and which advanced individuals are therefore forced to evade.\textsuperscript{54}

In this play, Shaw has revealed the ugly sexual relation made between men and women under marriage law. Not all the people have the same idea about marriage. Some consider it a political necessity, others a heavenly order, others romantic ideas, others a profession for women and to others an institution which society has outgrown but not modified and which advanced individuals are therefore enforced to avoid.

This play shows that “men like Charteris utilizes their humor to the unskilled women especially those who used the good value of their independence as a temptation for marriage,” \textsuperscript{55} as Maurice Valency observed. One can conclude that the play represents righteous anger towards the New Woman of the time as made known at the Ibsen Club. Charles A. Carpenter remarks that the play deals with “the lofty Victorian ideals of marriage and reason.”\textsuperscript{56} For him, Victorian people consider those men and women who love each other must do all their best to get married because it is a holy relationship; for them reason is more important than passion. Hence, Charteris is pleased with Ibsen's view about equality and freedom not because he prefers it, but because it achieves his intention of philandering; insisting the refusal to marry Julia, as according to him they are rationally unsuited and not well-qualified to make a family.

Julia attempts to convince Charteris of marrying her, nevertheless she never gives up; she even begs him several times but without any success. All her attempts failed as he is so stubborn, refusing the
proposal of marriage. Charteris explains the reasons of not accepting to marry her; as she is too young for him, and by marrying her he will not act freely. Finally the most important reason, he dislikes to marry a traditional woman whose only aim is to get married and have children. He likes the unwomanly woman who looks after herself and not bothers or annoys him; such type of woman is discarded in Ibsen Club unless she has to take care not to behave in a womanly way.

Being a philanderer, Charteris supports spiritually the unwomanly woman for her liberation, for Valli Rao, Charteris is:

not a straightforwardly passive victim of social forces as he tries to use his wit to overcome Julia, Cuthbertson and Craven who believe in conventional ideals. The particular ideals they defend in the play is the ideal of the womanly woman. She is the one who lives in the doll's house, as opposed to the new woman who is emancipated; independent, not bound to marriage or lover.57

Cuthbertson as a critic says that it is natural for people to avert the new ideals and conventions of life because they do not adapted them. It must be noticed that Cuthbertson does not have any sense or feeling of reality. Louis Segal denounces that this man is not intelligent enough to recognize that the change in man is due to the change in life, stating that he is: “simple, narrow-minded, but kind-hearted and good-natured…has been drawn from life.” 58 Grace does not comprehend the reality that social environment persists to look her as a widow. According to Margery M. Morgan, she is different from Julia, as she wants to obtain the distinctive facial appearance and personal qualities in order to endorse self-confidence and normal manners. Whereas in Julia, as Margery M. Morgan sees, the idea of possession dominates her thinking greatly; in addition her personality and action are affected by social forces:
Julia's rages of frustration and jealousy and despair are the signs of a childish helplessness and fear of rejection, the insecurity of a creature who has never learnt independence of others. Like the spoilt child, Julia has acquired the cunning to use the appeal of her helplessness as a weapon of tyranny over others.\textsuperscript{59}

This play presents a slice of life in which relationships are impartially depicted to resemble those in actual life which are indomitable by social surroundings. Act II takes place in the library of the Ibsen Club. Cuthbertson is sitting there reading a journal and Dr. Paramore reads \textit{The British Medical Journal}; he is about forty, "and his dark arched eyebrows....give him a conscientiously sinister appearance...Not at all a happy or frank man, but not consciously unhappy nor intentionally insincere, and highly self-satisfied intellectually."\textsuperscript{60} Cuthbertson asks Dr. Paramore about any new medical discoveries. Dr. Paramore answers that he has discovered a new disease in relation to the liver of a pig which is similar to what Craven suffers from.

Sylvia, Julia's sister, is reading 'a volume of Ibsen', she is beautiful and is eighteen years old. Although she is too young; she wants to be treated as a woman as she is a member of Ibsen Club. She is not a conventional woman opposite to her sister who always rejects and criticizes her behavior. The Ibsen's view concerning the new independent woman affects Sylvia deeply. As a matter of fact, we can recognize that there is disagreement between the old and new principles; disagreement between the old conventions of marriage that compel both the conventional woman and man to get married, and the new conventional one which seeks the freedom and independence of woman. Charteris prefers to have friendship and makes love regardless of any responsibility as he considers the laws of marriage like a
deception. He dislikes marrying a woman he loves, on the contrary he wants only to have relationship with her although she is a married woman. He does not care if the woman he loves marry another man, what is important for him is that the relationship between them should continue. Shaw in this play attacks “the ideal of marriage regarding it a life repression that binds woman and man and which is the result of the economic organism and laws of society,”\textsuperscript{61} as Charles A. Carpenter comments.

History shows that women have fought for equal rights and freedom. They have been stereotyped as being housewives, and nurturers of the children. Nineteenth century is an interesting era because it is a time in modern society when women were still treated as second class citizens. The mid-1800s to early 1900s was the very difficult period for women, as there was a great difference in the treatment between men and women. Women were not even allowed to vote until 1920. They were not allowed to enter such professions as medicine or law. They also had no chances of getting an education because no college or university would accept a female. Women were not permitted to participate in the affairs of the church. It was thought they were totally dependent on men.

Moreover, Shaw in this play presents doctors who are devoid of any sympathy towards their patients, such as Dr. Paramore who cares about the diseases he has discovered more than his patients. One can notice this clearly when he looks pale after knowing that the disease he found proved to be false. The most important thing for him is his prominence and the efforts he had exerted but not the health of the patients which he should take care, like Craven who is very sick. The patients think only how to recover from their sickness; in this matter Dr.
Paramore said: “It's natural for you to think only of yourself. I don't blame you: all invalids are selfish. Only a scientist can feel what I feel now.”

Dr. Paramore tries to defend his situation declaring that he is the victim of the laws of the country: “It is the fault of the wickedly sentimental laws of this country.” He justifies the failure of his discovery by saying that his experiments are not enough because he used only four animals upon which he can study his theory. The severe country laws prohibit him to use many animals which is unlike other countries' laws that allow the scientist to use any number of animals to inspect them for the sake of science and knowledge. Undoubtedly not only Dr. Paramore is the victim of the laws but Craven also. If Dr. Paramore is permitted to get more than four animals, it is sure that the outcome of his experiments will not be different, and even Craven will not think of death.

Gilbert K. Chesterton considers this play as a genuine assault against medical science, he observes that Shaw:

- depicts Dr. Paramore, the young physician, who purportedly discovered a new disease and feels happy when he sees people suffering from it; but is disappointed after knowing that such illness does not subsist at all.

Shaw through the character of Dr. Paramore attacks physicians who concentrate on their science more, than the health of their patients. Nevertheless, it is the fault of the laws of Dr. Paramore's country which hinder his experiments, not his fault. Throughout the character of Dr. Paramore, Shaw presents unscientific, sentimental vivisected man who mistakes himself for the science incarnate; illustrating that our doctors pay attention to their reputation and neglect the most important thing which is humanity. Shaw also claims that by vivisection they have
thrown all their credit away. Dr. Paramore carried out his experiments on animals without any kindness and humanity which shows how cruel man he is, Julia starts to fear her life if she marries him, arguing: “I don't feel I can trust you. If it is right to cut up one live thing for the sake of knowledge, it's right to cut up another.” In reply, Paramore asks rigorously whether she regards that all the doctors are murderers:

Julia: No, our old doctors, who called you in to consult about papa, wouldn't experiment on me because he believes that I have a soul and that a rabbit hasn't. He thinks rabbits were sent by providence for us to eat and experiment on and that to kill a rabbit is no sin, but to kill a man or woman is murder and would be punished by God so I feel safe with him.

'Ibsen Club' is mentioned at the center of the play, new society that advocates the most modern advanced views for its membership the only requirement is that a woman should not act womanly and a man refrains from manly behavior. Shaw admires Ibsen. Both of them share many social concerns. But Shaw develops a sense of humor which leads to create many rivals against him. Julia who behaves like a woman, totally disregarded the precepts of Ibsen's view tearfully refusing to accept that her relation with Charteris has ended. The latter finally turns to Dr. Paramore, the discoverer of a rare and fatal liver disease from which Julia's father is suffering, trying to convince him to marry Julia. Dr. Paramore may be on the brink of ruin as he has just learned that his research is dubious and the disease that bears his name does not exist. The consequence is that Julia's father might now live is a small consolation. ‘I only had three dogs and a monkey to experiment’, Dr. Paramore explains and deplores the backwardness of a nation that “puts the welfare of guinea pigs above the health of human race.”
The philanderer creates illicit romantic possibilities for himself and chaos for others, because women confuse his advance with love and permanence. He is a very exceptional character not because of his wit, his influence upon others, or his talent, but because of the impression he made of being an extremely honest man. During the conversation with Julia, he says, “I confess I am either something more or something less than a gentleman; you used to give me the benefit of the doubt.” It is possible to be both at the same time and that is exactly what he was. On the one hand, the truthfulness of Charteris in his philandering is ethically higher to the code of the conventional gentleman to respect woman, when he knows it, to be a sham. But on the other hand, he feels far below the gentleman in the cruelty of woman with whom he used his cleverness to hurt his victims without their ability to understand what he meant. Physically he is not a coxcomb, his vanity is shallow and trivial; but spiritually he is a cruel coxcomb.

The end of the play presents the facts about human nature; the endless struggle between the old and the new conventions. It is clear that Charteris, Grace and Sylvia represent the new generation, whereas Julia, Craven and Cuthbertson represent the old one. The new ideas, beliefs, and conventions cannot easily take the place of the old ones or substitute them simply for one reason that is the law and the nature of mankind that determined them. It is clear that the old generation is prepared to counter and fight the new generation in order to sustain their old beliefs and principals, so the new generation finds itself drawn in the struggle against the old. Cuthbertson disagreed what happened in the Ibsen Club where women used to smoke, he cannot even endure
seeing this sight; is the best evidence of the struggle between the two generations.

There are two themes in this play, the first focuses on the medical profession whereas the second concerns the philanderer and his thoughts. In the capitalistic society, the doctors behave as if their major concern is to help the patients and recover them from their illness, but the reality is different, they only give importance to their fame and benefits as presented in Dr. Paramore. The most important thing for him is his interest and not the patients. His duty is, he should do all his best in order to save the patients from their illness suffering, but he does the opposite when he knows that the disease he has discovered does not exist at all. As a consequence, he discards the concern about his patients from his life, considering it absent. Because there is no disease, there is no cure for the patients; according to him both of them are missing. The non-existence of disease changes him badly, it causes him material loss; he decides not to look after the happiness of the people as the ideal doctors do. Gilbert K. Chesterton states that:

Shaw is even wiser in his suggestion that this excessive idealism exists nowhere so strongly as in the world of physical science. He shows that the scientist tends to be more concerned about the sickness than about the sick man; but it was certainly in his mind to suggest here also that the idealist is more concerned about the sin than about the sinner.69

Dr. Paramore himself feels that he has lost something important in his life which is money and fame. Gilbert K. Chesterton has observed that “it is really a sharp exposition of the danger of idealism, the sacrifice of people to principle.”70 It is very clear that this is one of the facts of modern capitalistic society where idealism has no place.
Charteris is unconventional man and he likes to marry woman who like him are also unconventional. He decides not to marry conventional woman, preferring to stay bachelor unless he finds a woman whose ideas about marriage are in accordance to his unconventional views. On the other hand, the unconventional women chose to live without marriage, better than selling their bodies to men, or to be under their authority or dominance. Both Grace and Sylvia who are unconventional women reject Charteris' proposal to marry, just for not losing their freedom and independence. By their refusal, Charteris decides to continue his philandering till the end of his life. The philanderer is an egoist and self-absorbed man, who behaves according to his self interest. In order to achieve his desire, he never minds to utilize his funniness and mental power to attract women. For this reason such type of man is not suitable for both conventional and unconventional women. At the end of the play, he is left alone to go on his philandering.

All the characters of the play portray the social system of England during the nineteenth century. The economical and circumstantial factors affect their characters and behaviors and make them victims. Craven is the victim of Dr. Paramore's defective experiment, Julia and Grace are the victims of Charteris who is the victim of marriage laws. The circumstances that disclose falsehood of the disease make Dr. Paramore the victim as it destroyed his aspiration. The Philanderer tackles one of the professional and most dangerous evils in society in which Dr. Paramore has discovered a disease. All his thinking is focused on the disease and fame more than for the patients. It depicts the razor-sharp revelation of the dangers of idealism; the sacrifice of people to principle. According to Shaw:
the excessive idealism can be found nowhere so much as the realm of physical science, but it must be noticed that what is necessary and important for the scientist is the sickness and not the sick man.  

Critics observed that Shaw's main theatrical works focuses on social, economic, and political problems, especially his criticism of the inequalities and injustices of late-Victorians. He concentrates on revealing the realities of middle-and lower class life. In this play he believes that social pressures and artificial social structures results in sexual discrimination.

Section Three: Mrs. Warren's Profession (1893)

This play was written in 1893. It treats a very important subject in society, prostitution, which is the outcome of low payment and bad treatment of women who hardly get an honest livelihood. It examines the problem of prostitution which has increased in capitalistic society. Shaw as a socialist takes up the problem, as a social evil which is very important. For him the most essential thing is the spiritual and moral awakening of the individuals in society in order to bring about the social reform; as his main intention is to accomplish social reformation. He attaches Mrs. Warren's choice of profession with the social structure and demands the call for a change. From Shaw's demonstration of the social system during the Victorian period, it is obvious that “the dishonesty of man is not to be exempt in terms of morals.”  It is the third Unpleasant play in which Shaw has gone straight at the fact that Mrs. Warren puts it, “the only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her.”
The story of this play centers on the relationship between Mrs. Warren, a prostitute and her daughter, Vivie. Mrs. Warren is a middle-aged woman. Her daughter who was educated at Cambridge University is shocked when she discovers that her mother has accumulated wealth by running high class whorehouses. The two strong women make a brief reconciliation when Mrs. Warren explains her poor adolescence, which initially pushed her into prostitution. Vivie forgives her mother until she learns that her mother still practices the same job. Shaw said that the main reason for writing this play is to draw attention of the people to the fact that:

prostitution is caused by underpaying, under-valuing, and overworking women and not by female immorality and male licentiousness; the poorest women are enforced to resort to prostitution in order to keep the soul and the body together.\(^7^4\)

Although this play concentrates on the theme of prostitution, it also focuses on the conflict of the new women and the issues emerging in Victorian time as middle class women require social independence both in works and education. The play was first time performed in 1902. The English people became angry as its content was immoral. But later on it was praised as it showed the corruption of the Victorian society.

The play focuses on Mrs. Warren who because of the economic reality of the nineteenth century was obliged to be a prostitute and later on to run numerous flourishing brothels. Shaw in this play criticizes the corruption and hypocrisy of the high class through the character of Mrs. Warren in addition of revealing the personal consequences of such a profession. Mrs. Warren is a strong and vital woman, Shaw praises her. She has the ability to bear her hard youth and fight to achieve a happy life for herself and her daughter; she has enough courage to neglect the
social force. Her supreme role is of a responsible mother, which she manifests in front of Mr. Crofts when he asks to marry her daughter Vivie and also in front of Vivie when she refuses to condone her mother's choice of such profession. Despite Vivie's behavior towards her which causes her pain, she loves her daughter too much. The life style she used makes her appear;

weak, trying to persuade herself that prostitution is not an awful life for a woman and by employing women with her; she is helping them in order to improve their social conditions and to live a better life. \(^{75}\)

Her daughter obliges her mother to face the reality and acknowledge that her life became comfortable due to this bad profession. The relationship between the mother and her daughter is very strange. At the beginning, Vivie strongly refused her mother's profession but at the same time she sympathizes with her when she knows the horrible circumstances that pushed her into prostitution. Once again she leaves her mother after discovering that she will never give up this dreadful job. By losing the hope that her mother might change and leave this profession, she decides to leave her and return to her work in the university at the end of the play.

Both poverty and hypocrisy of the rich were spread widely during the Victorian period. In his 'Apology', Shaw recognizes that; “as long as poverty makes virtue hideous and the spare pocket-money of rich bachelordom makes vice dazzling, their hand to hand fight against prostitution will be a losing one.”\(^{76}\) Because Mrs. Warren is very poor and there is no other way to get money for her living except this bad means, as the rich can pay countless money. For this reason she is discarded by good society. Sir Crofts is about fifty years old, elegant, and gentle but at the same time he is a very cruel man. His character is
very weak as he does whatever Mrs. Warren orders him to do; to marry
her daughter Vivie. According to him the wealth of upper class is
corrupted. His ferocity appeared when Vivie refuses to marry him as
she is in love with Frank; he tells her that Frank may be her brother.
This character represents all the social hypocrisy that Vivie deplores.
Shaw throw-outs the weakness and strength of normal community in
facing hard social evils, such as the restrictive conventions from which
nineteenth century people suffered.

Vivie is a smart and reasonable woman, she never act as a
traditional woman. Her hard work at university and her affairs with
others strengthen her character. She loves Frank but when she touches
the triviality of his thinking that was covered under his charm, she
decides to leave him. The complexity of the two main characters, Vivie
and her mother creates strain relationship between them. The mother
had spent little time with her daughter when she was child, a critical
time in which the child needs much care from the mother; therefore the
daughter treats her mother coldly. The mother instead of taking care of
her daughter, sent her to boarding school and the nannies take care of
her. The reality is no one can compensate the kindness of the mother,
that's why it is not easy for Vivie to forgive her mother. On the other
hand, Mrs. Warren accomplishes her household tasks as a mother by
providing her daughter a better learning and secure environment in
addition of keeping her away from the disgusting world of her
profession. Both of them “represent the potential for the new women at
the end of the nineteenth century on which many of Shaw’s colleagues
focused.” 77
Many young women especially British women have seen no other way to live a better life except prostitution. In his *Author's Apology* to the play, Shaw has commented:

that many women during his time remain so poor, so independent, so well aware that drudgeries of such honest work are likely enough to lead them eventually to lung disease, premature death, and domestic desertion or brutality, that they would often choose the life of a prostitute over a more virtuous path since both lead to the same end in poverty and over work.\(^\text{78}\)

According to Shaw, prostitution is not the product of moral laxity; instead it is the result of political and economical system that forces large number of people to live in wretched poverty. In writing this play Shaw is not defending prostitution as a moral profession, on the contrary; he insists on the concept that “due to evils of society masses of people are forced to endure miserable life characterized by poverty which is as immoral as any particular vice.”\(^\text{79}\)

All over the world, disparities between the rich and poor are very obvious. There are many issues involved when looking at poverty. It is not simply enough or correct to say that the poor are poor due to their own bad conditions. In fact one could quite easily conclude that the poor are poor because the rich are becoming richer and have the power to enforce any thing to achieve their interests. Poverty is a very serious problem in our society today. It is everywhere and it needs to be reduced so that our economy will be more stabilized and balanced than it has been. Poverty is not something that has just recently become an issue; it has been around for many years. One knows that to reduce the levels of poverty will be a long and slow process. Our lives consist of a series of events that influence not only our behavior and our life
but also the life of our family members. Poverty influences and changes the individual lives within one family.

Poverty arises because of political, and cultural mechanism, and also co-produced through human actions and places. It is obvious that there are ties between crime and poverty, so it is necessary to understand the meaning of poverty, and find solutions to it from the viewpoint of the poor who face greater risks rather than from others, who might be drawn from the upper middle-classes. We have to allow the poor to express their concept of poverty, experience, and perception of the most effective way of tackling their difficult circumstances. We have to shed light on the forces that cause intergenerational poverty, this evil phenomenon has spread in many countries; it is important to find a safe place and to fulfill the simplest needs of the poor. Poverty is the condition of not having enough income to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Due to difficult circumstances, man cannot alter his family condition by himself. We have to eliminate poverty, this social evil which has bad effect on society not only in present, but may also in future.

In his ‘Preface’ to this play, Shaw remarks that “starvation, overwork, dirt, and disease are as antisocial as prostitution. They are vices and crimes of a nation, and not merely its misfortunes.” Mrs. Warren discusses this point of view when she tries to tell her daughter how she became a prostitute. She describes the destiny of her half sister who tried to use the righteous way, but she found an evil factory that provide bad job for poor women only. Because of that Mrs. Warren decides to become part of what was known at that time as the white slave trade instead of working hard to death only to make others have
the benefit of her labor; asking her daughter: “Do you think I did what I did because I like it, or thought it right, or wouldn't have rather gone to college and been a lady if I would had the chance?” Shaw makes Mrs. Warren appear as a crucial well-mannered woman having many good traits in order to support his argument. Her hard work is to guarantee good chance for her daughter to continue her studies. Because she is a prostitute, her daughter Vivie can go to the university and get rightful occupation. To the author, Mrs. Warren represents the victim of social injustice.

When Vivie accuses her mother of escaping responsibility for her actions by blaming circumstances, Mrs. Warren answers straightforwardly, that it is not the work that any woman would do for pleasure. By this job she could survive herself and also her daughter. She worked for their benefit. Vivie was afforded a future much brighter than that to her mother. Shaw does not dehumanize Mrs. Warren as he wants to emphasize the idea that society is evil and at fault, but not the individual. Mrs. Warren contends that there is no authentic distinction between a woman who is a prostitute and other who marries not for love but to protect herself from poverty. She utters a critically and refers at the unfairness, saying:

as if a marriage ceremony could make any difference in the right or wrong of the thing! The hypocrisy of the world makes me sick! Lize and I had to work, save and calculate just like other people; else way we should be as poor as any good for nothing.

Vivie said that she cannot bear to live with a woman who earns her livelihood from prostitution although she knows that such words might break the heart of her mother. Vivie's failure is because she is narrow minded and intolerant, but not hypocrite. Shaw wants Vivie to appear as starchy and cold hearted. Mrs. Warren is not a bad woman
than her decent daughter who cannot endure her. Instead of attacking the social and economic system that has forced her mother to be a prostitute, Vivie feels happy to come back to her work ignoring the social sense of right and wrong that has been awakened by the lesson innate in her mother's troubles.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the family became very important in society. Its principles were based on a gallant idealism and admirable ethics. Although the individual progress was encouraged, the class divisions still existed in society. The society of the Victorian world like other societies gave chance to prostitution to emerge and spread easily. Society deprived woman from any possible means to uplift herself, either by learning in schools or practicing any kind of job. As industrialism progressed, the factories need workers, and the owners of these factories exploited women by making them work all the day in return giving them a very small amount of money that is not enough for their families. This small money is not equal to the hard work and the effort they exerted; there is no comparison between them. Although Shaw justifies Mrs. Warren's choice of this job, this does not mean that he accepts the profession of prostitution. He, like her daughter refuses it totally. The cultural system enraged him as it makes prostitution a substitute to poverty. Mrs. Warren's decision is deadly, either to die physically, out of poverty, or to be rich, and to die spiritually. Thus she becomes the owner of brothels' chain. Perfectly, through Mrs. Warren, Shaw rebukes society, he used Vivie to reproach her mother for her sin.

Shaw believes that any society which desires to build itself on a high standard of integrity of character should organize itself in such away to make possible for all men and women to maintain
themselves in reasonable comfort by their hard work without selling their affections and their convictions. He aptly points out that:

We not only condemn women as a sex to attach themselves to 'bread winner', on pain of heavy privation and disadvantage; but we have great prostitute classes of me, such as lawyers, doctors, politician, and clergymen who are daily using their highest faculties to belie their real sentiments. A sin compared to which that of a woman who sells her body for a few hours. So rich men without words are more dangerous in modern society than poor woman without chastity.  

Rousseau asserts that man, though born free, “everywhere is in chains.” The chains are invisible conventions and traditions that society imposes on man who is ruled by illusions and hard realities. Karl Marx and G. Simmel had presented a social conflict in which the whole of society was divided into basic classes representing the interests of capital and labor. Karl Marx assured that conflict would transform society into paradisiacal one. Whereas G. Simmel emphasizes that hatred in society is destructive observing: “Neither the dichotomous model nor the assumption that conflict would in the end destroy existing social arrangements is valid.”  

Karl Marx's view of capitalist exploitation, states that, the bourgeoisie is the ruling class in capitalist society, having the resources of production, while the proletariat is the working class, whose only product is in its labor power. So to keep the worker under control, the capitalist only provides the worker with the basic requirements to carry on existence, concerning that he claims:
The costs occasioned by the worker is limited almost entirely to the subsistence which he requires for his maintenance and reproduction of his race. The price of a commodity, and therefore of labor, is equal to its costs of production? By giving the worker the minimum one can possibly allow him, only barely enough for the necessities.  

Some American writers exposed prostitution, and considered the prostitute as a corrupter of the nation. They saw prostitution as a source of depravity, and wanted to reform the prostitute and her behavior. The late eighteenth century, shows that during this time, many of the prostitutes were, “born into the poorest sections of the community and acquired few skills while growing up that would allow them to escape the poverty.” as R. Henderson comments. Henderson puts emphasis on those women who became prostitutes because of the economic needs. Prostitutes were born into a poor family and lacked the resources required to overcome their difficult life. By prostitution, woman becomes a futile and rotten member, the outcaste of society, and the bane and ruin of families. To be a prostitute is to deny one's female existence. Thus the prostitute is an undesirable entity in the society. So prostitution is a big and gruesome problem that must be solved. By examining the working conditions and the growing poverty in British society in that period, one can realize that women were victims of exploitation by managers and other industrial administration. Living under such miserable conditions, the lack of rights for women within British society, the fake low wages, and inhumane treatment of women due to their second-class citizenship under British government policy, woman had no other choice but to be a prostitute.
Prostitution is as old as humanity, and for many it is a subject that invokes feelings of disgust, revulsion, and pure evil; especially when young women are involved in such a trade. Money and social life are two of the strongest incentives of pushing a woman to be a prostitute. But many of them feel shame and guilt about selling their bodies for money. Prostitution is often found in the slums of poor cities, where many young women are forced into prostitution because of their poor economic conditions. Although it is immoral and ethical, it is prevalent all over the world. The debate on prostitution is not new; it has been a controversial issue for more than a century. The assumption in the early days was that prostitution was a social evil which could not be countenanced in any way. Though it is not easy to end prostitution from the world, but we have to combat the negative aspects of it.

Prostitution is now identified as a transnational issue requiring global solution. It constitutes a form of violence against women and hence a violation of human rights. During 1830s and 1840s social reformers began to argue that women were victims. It is very necessary to take serious efforts in order to solve this problem. To work towards the eradication of prostitution by providing support to women who are in prostitution, whilst at the same time criminalizing those who make profit from exploitation of others. Prostitution exists in every society. Poverty, war, and economic disruption force many people to take up prostitution, though these individuals are not formally recognized as prostitutes. Many studies have shown that women turn to prostitution when there is no possible alternative to get essential needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and for
their families. Millions of people, and especially women, find themselves with no alternative to survival than engaging in this evil act.

The miserable and dark lives in inter war London, the social characteristics that are associated with many of the women involved in prostitution in the world are the main reasons that push women to practice such humiliating act. As will be seen, prostitution was, in most cases, conscious choice of working-class women to improve their condition. The lives and experience of prostitutes offers a valuable insight into a neglected area of working-class life. We have to understand the social reality of those women in order to find solution for them at least to make them live respectable life. One important reason that pushes women to go into prostitution is poverty. Majority of prostitutes are usually illiterate, poor and from broken families. Economic poverty, social disgrace, and lack of education all these causes women to indulge in such bad and immoral work, as they have no other option available to them. Some women are forced into prostitution for the sake of their families; just to make them survive. The miserable conditions of women in the Victorian period caused many of them to be prostitutes as a means of survival, although they considered prostitution as the ultimate social evil.

The basic anxiety of modern drama is the problem of society and its people, it is like a mirror that reflects reality. Shaw focuses on individual, believing that:

he is the only one who can change the sordid reality of the gloomy society, work hard to find better solution for
that alter and repellent against the social, political, and philosophical uplift.  

Both the plays *Widowers' Houses*, and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, discuss the theme of conscience and reflect the idea of exploitation in which the only losers are the poor, they do not demand for their rights and even the law is against them; whereas the rich exploiters are protected by social laws. Shaw in these two plays intends to make the people aware of the disagreeable realities of society. For him though society is responsible for man's depression, it should not be blamed alone; both of them, man and society have to be blamed and not only society. Consequently, people become partners in the social crimes and evils. In his "Preface" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession* Shaw comments: “It is true that society and not any individual is the villain of the peace: but it does not follow that the people who make offence at it are all champion of society.”

Mrs. Warren remembers the early days of her life with her three sisters, all of them struggled to defeat the strong hold of poverty, but society in Victorian England offered them very limited options. One of her sister was poisoned and died because of her work in a factory. She could not bear the hard and difficult work there. The other one married an alcoholic whereas her sister Lize disappeared. Mrs. Warren stayed alone and she took up various jobs that wore out her fitness and her looks. When Liz returned, dressed in an expensive fur and had money, she convinced her sister Mrs. Warren to work with her and run a brothel; a business that would put Mrs. Warren in both a customary and non- customary position. According to customary position she is obliged to accept this opportunity to be independent in her society. She realizes this paradox when she advises her daughter “the only way for a
woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her.”

Vivie after knowing the horrible circumstances that pushed her mother into such disgusting profession; she glorifies her mother, declaring that her mother is a wonderful woman stronger than all England. But the mother destroys this glorification by her insisting to continue this grimy job. This behavior makes her daughter to say that her mother is unable to get rid of her comfortable and sinful life, which proves that she is only a conventional woman at heart, but in reality she is not. She tells her mother that she does not have the right to determine her future. During the last meeting between them, Vivie decides not to see her mother again. This decision creates inside her the feeling of pity and violence. She realizes that if she takes her mother’s money and spends it stylishly for the rest of her life, “she might be as worthless and vicious as the silliest woman could possibly want to be.”

Samuel Gardner is a preacher but a hypocrite. His hypocrisy is clear when he refuses to allow Mr. Praed to stay at his house, unless he has some vital social position. As a matter of fact this preacher is nothing but a pillar of morality. He is a drunkard and he buys the sermons of Sunday instead of writing them. He declares that when he and Mrs. Warren were young, he got benefit from her professional services. In fact, he might be the father of Vivie. His son Frank, whom Vivie loves, does not so greatly vary from his father. Frank wants to marry Vivie, a rich daughter in order to warranty his future. At the beginning, he ridicules his father, but later on he depends upon him which is another kind of hypocrisy. His beliefs and behaviors are not stable as the hypocrisy dominates his character. He said; “I can't bring myself to touch the old woman's money now.” Before saying that he
offered Vivie a golden coin that he got through gambling which is a vice and not through honest work; one can touch his hypocrisy that is completely obvious here.

Sir George Crofts is another unlikable character in this play; he is nothing except a nobleman. Through him Shaw represents the hypocritical society. Croft appears to be respectable man but in reality, he is worse. He is the one who runs Mrs. Warren's dirty business and shares in its interests. He suspects that Vivie might be his daughter. When Vivie asks him about the source of his money, he defends himself by condemning society and advising her: “if you are going to pick and choose your acquaintances on moral principles, you had better clear out of this country, unless you want to cut yourself out of all decent society.” In other words, Crofts wants to clarify to Vivie that he is no worse than the others and even the church has saloon owners and other sinners among its tenants. It makes use of their gain each month as rent. Also the owners' of factories invest and increase their money on account of starving the girls who work in these factories by giving them very little wages. Crofts adds that society makes this possible by not preventing such type of dreadful behavior, it is kept concealed. Through Crofts, Shaw expresses his belief, as if he is his spokesman, “As long as you don't fly openly in the face of society, society doesn't ask any inconvenient questions; and it makes precious short work of the cads who do.”

The play focuses on “the true nature of morality proved so problematic that the government censors forbidden its manufacture for many years.” Through this play, Shaw attacks severely the social evils which embodied the social hypocrisy that allow such humiliating vice; such as the commercial prostitution. It is a kind of prostitution or evil
practiced on extensive level. This dehumanizing job is spread all over the world. It includes many seller and clients, and it has many branches in important European capitals. The play reveals that the capitalists who exploit the poor by making them work for many hours giving them low salary not enough neither for them nor for their children, are worst than prostitution which is considered as a grave social evil. The play points out that it is easy for prostitution to spread in such society in which man can scarcely find food for his family. This difficult way of living obliges man to go after any social evil just to ensure his requirements and simply to live a good life. No doubt, Shaw condemns both the prostitution of women and the prostitution that existed among those who do not have morals or any ideals. Prostitution in this play is described as a trade experienced on wide scale just like any other trade in a capitalistic society. Shaw observed that society is responsible for making woman a prostitute since it does not show respectability for her. He adds that many English women, who are poor, have known the fact that this work will cause them various illnesses and at the end they will die early. This horrible feeling not only makes them socially isolated but also capable of mitigating the reasons of selecting prostitution as a profession and not any other job: “The promise path to the stony way of virtue, since both, vice at worst and virtue at best, lead to the same and in poverty and overwork.”

In the nineteenth century the theme of prostitution is scornful, this play assaults the prostitution of capitalism in addition to the prostitution of women. The theme of prostitution which is considered social evil is unpleasant not because of its ferociousness but because it refers to the hypocrisy of the illegitimate capitalistic system. Shaw reveals the fact that prostitution is spread all over the world and
various types of people are involved in it, no matter what position they have in society or their job; he remarks:

Prostitution of Piccadilly Circus read not only the prostitution of the journalist, the political lawyer, the person selling his soul to the squire, the ambitious politician selling the soul for office, but much more intimate and widespread idolatries and prostitution of the private snob, the domestic tyrant and the voluptuary, and the individual adventurer.97

Vivie unlike her mother, is well educated. She refuses the way of life her mother lives as it is completely different from hers. By defending the way of life she has chosen, Mrs. Warren tells her daughter that she did not get any opportunity to be a respectable woman in society due to the circumstances that surrounded her. Vivie objects the idea that social and economic forces can determine man's life, asking her mother to tell her the truth of these circumstances. Mrs. Warren goes on telling Vivie that she and her sister Lize had kept on living that way until the latter ran away, and the only news she got about her, that she committed suicide by jumping of Waterloo Bridge. She also informs her the story of her “hard wearisome toil when she worked as a waitress in a bar at Waterloo station for fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses just to get four shilling a week.”98 One night her sister Lize came into the bar, she looked different, she became rich through prostitution. She is the one, who persuaded me to be a prostitute, in addition to poverty and the dark situation of the bar. The social and economic circumstances affect Mrs. Warren greatly. She cannot counter or resist the outer forces that obliged her to indulge in this nasty profession. Shaw emphasizes the fact that a poor woman who cannot get enough food and respectability is pushed into prostitution.
The two plays, *Widowers’ Houses* and *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* explore the reality of man in a capitalistic society where he cannot live a comfortable life and as a result he is driven to use any illegal means in order to improve his situation. Shaw holds the society responsible, which paves the way for man to commit evil in order to fulfill his needs. Thus man is not to be blamed for the evils he commits, but society, as it is guilty, and not man. The individual is influenced by the capitalistic system which helps to increase the social destruction and which is devoid of any good social relationships. Best evidence of that, Mrs. Warren has not seen her daughter for many years. Also Frank used to insult and not respect his father in front of other people. He several times reminds his father of his past unlawful relationship with Mrs. Warren. His love for Vivie is false as he seeks her money only. Therefore, one can say that love, innocence, security, and faith can be found in a capitalistic society, but it is very limited because of the social and economical forces. In other words the capitalistic system does not only affect the individual but also the society. The play shows clearly the state of miserable life in a capitalistic society in which poor women have suffered and poverty is absolutely the product of it that fattens on the inexpensive employment of the poor.

Shaw argues that the construction of society is responsible of escalating prostitution; the society which obliges the individual either to live a life of prostitution or a life of hard work, and exploitation. It is a society that presents only two dissolute choices. For that reason Shaw blames society considering it reprehensible and evil; one would feel a shamed to belong to such society. Furthermore, Shaw exposes prostitution as a prearranged business run for the revenue of capitalists.
He is quite aware that the social and economical forces of society are the main causes of prostitution.

In Act III of the play, Crofts tries to convince Vive that he is enhanced than Frank as a husband for her because he is rich while Frank has nothing. The only thing he has is his money; trying to use it as a means to persuade Vivie to marry him. Vivie knows very well that Croft is her mother's colleague who runs the hotels of prostitution in many places, and without his instruction her mother would get nothing. Moreover, all the money spent for continuing her education is due to the relation between her mother and him. According to Shaw, “the capitalistic society is the reason of making Crofts so gluttony, cruelty and avarice.”99 Vive accuses society of allowing a man like Crofts to harm and exploit people by using illegitimate means just to achieve their benefits regardless of the suffering and the anguish of those people. She laments her condition of being the daughter of a procuress; the product of vicious job. This feeling makes her decide to desert her mother in order not to be worthless, despite of her realization that the rise of prostitution is basically due to poverty. She feels satisfied and pleased by leaving her mother who insists to proceed in the same profession; “Vivie's face relaxes; her grave expression breaks up into one of joyous content.”100

Although, all the characters in the play are involved in evil practices, none of them are neither punished nor blamed, as they are not responsible for their evil acts; they are the victims of the incidental and ecological factors which dominate their lives and future. According to Shaw, the evil society is accountable for the defects and weaknesses of the characters. In this society, man is either to be poor but pure, or be rich but vicious. Throughout the play, the economic conditions of a
capitalistic society have effect on the social relationships in one family and between the people, such as the relation between Vivie and her mother; Frank and his father. The family in such society is devoid of kindness, respect, and compassion. Archibald Henderson observes that “this play shows the aggressiveness of the social system that gives rise to the appearance of such horrible conditions in society.” He further adds that Shaw's intention is to provoke “the responsibility for defective social organization and for those social horrors which can be mitigated and abolished by public opinion, public action and public contribution.”

Louis Segal comments that *Mrs. Warren's Profession* reveals “not the immorality of the vicious profession but also the corruption of society that ascend such brutal career like prostitution.” Shaw as a social reformer focuses on the idea that society should be well structured so that one has many options rather than prostitution in order to secure his life and to be respectable. It is very obvious that the individual cannot be changed unless the society is reformed and reorganized in such a way that it serves the requirement of man. To reform the society, man needs time, effort, and assistance from others. To destroy any thing is easier than to repair it, despite that, one should exert all his efforts and use all the possible and legal means to change the society in a way that everyone who lives in it can find at least security, stability and a comfortable life.
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