Chapter V

Drama from 1911 to 1918.

Shaw: Fanny’s First Play (1911)
   Pygmalion (1913)
   Heartbreak House (1916)

Galsworthy: The Eldest Son (1912)
   The Little Man (1913)

H.G.Barker: Minor works.

The third repertory experiment at the Duke of York’s Theatre backed by the American impresario, Charles Frohman collapsed in a theatrical slump following the death of Edward VII in June, 1910. Despite such productions as Galsworthy’s Justice, Shaw’s Misalliance and Granville-Barker’s The Madras House and some lighter contributions, the repertory failed on account of mounting financial losses. But it took only a short time to give a new push to the theatrical activities of London, for in 1911 the Barkers happily moved to the gracious little Theatre in the Adelphi which was ‘blitzed’ in the second great war and not replaced. Barker first directed some of the Anatol short plays by Arthur Schnitzler which he had adapted and in which he acted. But to cater to the growing demand of the audience for plays with some social themes he had to turn to the great master Ibsen whose The Master Builder he then announced in the programme. Next came Shaw’s light and lively Fanny’s First Play. This proved immensely popular, gave G.B.S. his first long run in the West End, and evoked his comment that "The New Drama has found its ‘Charley’s Aunt’.".

- I -

In Fanny’s First Play, Shaw exposes a particular aspect of social justice, e.g. the emancipation of women. Composed in 1910, the play refers to topical events that concern the woman’s
emancipation movement in England. In 1910, when the play was written, the suffragette movement entered into an increasingly militant phase, of which Shaw was well aware and which he supported in the newspapers. There is a striking resemblance between Margarete's tale of her prison experiences and the narratives of the suffragettes suffering in jail (1). When 'Darling Dora' in the play describes her exit from prison, it is exactly like the reception that the suffragettes received from their friends in the movement when they had been released. This can, in fact, be seen in a newspaper photo in The Daily Mirror, 22 August 1908 (2). Darling Dora's and Margarete's descriptions are topical but pale compared to contemporary events, the treatment in prison of militant suffragettes. Lady Lytton is a name mentioned in Shaw's play; She was in reality a famous and courageous suffragette who in 1910 was put in the Third Division of a prison, the severest treatment, and suffered irreparable heart-damage as a result of forcible feeding when hunger striking. Protests were raised by 100 M.P.'s, by University Staffs and by a number of organisations abroad, where the rumour about the treatment of hunger striking women had spread. A protest containing the signatures of such famous persons as Madame Curie, George Brandes, Ellen Key, Maurice Maeterlinck and Romain Roland was presented to the English authorities.

One of the most horrible cases was that of Emily Wilding Davison, who in 1909, after the hideous procedure of forcible feeding, barricaded herself in her cell. The magistrate ordered a hose-pipe to be turned on her through the window. The prisoner, who had sustained five days' hunger-strike, gasped for breath when

the heavy stream of water began to fill the cell. At last the magistrate resinded his earlier order and ordered the cruel procedure to be stopped and the victim to be taken to a hospital. The authorities were declared guilty of a 'grave error of judgement'. Among other colleagues, Dr. Forbes Ross stated in The Observer that the methods employed for forcible feeding were "an act of brutality beyond common endurance". In fact, it brought many women to complete collapse, as was the case with Mrs. Pankhurst, "the greatest public figure" of the suffragettes, a cultivated lady who was sent to prison fourteen times. Some methods of great cruelty were the use of handcuffs day and night; forcible stripping of clothes; 'frog-march' (mentioned in Fanny's First Play), that is, the carrying of the victim face downwards, by hands and feet; besides the use of the feeding tube with its sharp point of steel. (1) Shaw protested in the Manchester Guardian and declared that the vote must be given to women and serve as the road to the Parliament. "The only decent government is a government by a body of men and women..... I have sat on committees both with women and without them, and emphatically I say that there ought always to be women on public bodies. Demency demands it". (2) When world war I broke out, the militancy stopped, and the suffragettes volunteered as nurses or factory hands.

Such was the social and political situation of English women at the beginning of the twentieth century. The relationship between Shaw's drama and the Suffragette movement, as well as his support of it, is evident. Fanny O'Dowda, the alleged author of the play within Fanny's First Play and its heroine Margaret, Fanny's alter ego, are delineated against a background of such contemporary events. They too, rebel against their conventional environment, according to Shaw's advice in the Preface to Young

1. Pankhurst, PP. 385, 390-91.
2. "G.B.S. and a Suffragist", Tribune, 12 March 1960 P.1,
people: "Do something that will get you into trouble". That would teach them how life is led among common people, whom they otherwise would know nothing about, as outward respectability and conventional behaviour counted more than individual integrity and self-respect for women. Such new experiences, Shaw maintains, over-stepping the bounds of class-distinctions and even decorum, would develop them into thinking and compassionate fellow-men and fellow-women.

Fanny O'Dowda rebels against an old fashioned environment and her escapist eccentric of a father by writing and producing a play that gives him a severe shock. Fanny is a modern radical undergraduate at Cambridge, testing her ability as a playwright with her play that introduces an entirely new heroine, Margaret Knox, who sharply accuses the old generation of always putting respectability before everything else—"pretending, pretending"—instead of facing realities. After her prison stay she has found that reality can be brutal, filthy and revolting, and her new experience has released her from inhibitions that were due to her environment and education. Her enlightenment now includes realities of which her parents are ignorant. She had been set free from all the silly pretences of her former life and is ready to start a new, independent life with a man who, like her, has experienced a new environment that has developed him. Some of the suffragette spirit is found in Margaret. Like many suffragettes, she rebelled against an old-fashioned society in which a young woman was not allowed to choose her own way of living.

It may be somewhat surprising that, loyal as Shaw remained to the democratic principle of equality between men and women and a keen advocate of women's education and emancipation that he was, Shaw should have restricted himself to using the suffragette movement merely as a background for his heroines, instead of using the highly dramatic subject matter that contemporary events afforded.
in a serious play. He may have found the situation too complicated and painful to handle. The only play he wrote about the suffragettes was the burlesque Press Cuttings. But whereas there is a message about another kind of emancipation—the emancipation of young girls—in Penny's First Play, there is only high comedy in Press Cuttings.

Pygmalion is Shaw's last play before the outbreak of war in 1914. The play was first produced at the Holburg Theatre in Vienna on 16 October, 1913. On the following day an anonymous critic said in Neue Freie Presse that the play "has the power of stimulating thought in the audience while entertaining them at the same time". (1) Shaw triumphantly proclaimed in the Preface:

I wish to boast that Pygmalion has been an extremely successful play all over Europe and North America as well as at home. It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else.

The play is didactic. It is calculated to stimulate in the audience thoughts on education of women, abolition of class-discrimination and the crime of poverty.

Shaw takes as his subject the story of Pygmalion told in the ninth story of Book-X of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Pygmalion, the royal artist and misogynist, fell in love with the ivory-statue of a woman made by himself and married the statue after it had been transformed into a live woman by the goddess Venus at his request. This is assuredly a good subject well-suited to Shaw's fashion of

1. The English version quoted in M. Morgan's The Shavian Playground.
holding romance upside down and giving social purpose to art.

The social question that the play sets out to examine can be formulated in Higgins's terms: What creates the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul. Taking more than a hint from Dickens's novel, Our Mutual Friend, Shaw has worked out two hypotheses: in the fantasy of the girl taken from the gutter and given a superficial education—a veneer of culture and fashionable manners—and the second fantasy of her father, the dustman, suddenly endowed with wealth. In Doolittle, he presents a conflation of two Dickensian characters: Boffin, the honest servingman who inherits a vast fortune made out of dust, and the villainous Silas Wegg, parasite and self-styled philosopher; the expansive humour which makes Doolittle finally an attractive character is Shaw's own contribution, and the value it represents in the play can hardly be over-estimated. In Our Mutual Friend, Boffin himself plays Pygmalion's part in the ingenuously contrived education of Bella Wilfer into a true lady, on the principle of "gentle is as gentle does". It is an education of the heart which the more humbly born Lizzie Hexam, in the same novel, does not need; and the seal is set on Lizzie's natural virtue by her ultimate marriage, across all class barriers, with the regenerated Eugene, formerly a wealthy idler.

In the character of Eliza Doolittle Shaw shows, in the first place, that class distinctions are absurd and man-made and it lies in differences in pronunciation and accent. Originally, a vulgar cockney-speaking flower-girl, Eliza is transformed into a lady of duchess-like cultivated manner of speech by learning to speak the King's English and at the same time acquiring good manners and a superficial education—all in six months. It is the flawless pronunciation and perfect style of conversation that win for a girl emerging from the slums, the esteem of the aristocratic members of the reception party. Few members of twentieth
century audience are now likely to be surprised to see that if a flower-girl is taught to speak like a duchess she will be mistaken for a duchess. As Shaw points out, the transformation happens everyday. The actual class-barrier which Eliza overcomes, therefore, appears as old-fashioned as the views of military glory held by some of the characters in *Arms and the Man*.

Shaw who regarded the proper pronunciation of the English language as a serious instrument of social change and left in his will funds for research in phonetics, had serious views about this question and projected some of these views in this play. The idea that the correct articulation of consonants and vowels establishes the social identity of the speaker, is a central idea of the play. The point that social distinctions are only skin-deep after all and that "the difference between a lady and a flower-girl is not how she behaves but how she is treated" is brilliantly driven home by the action and it is firmly held in place by the complementary idea that the social graces have to be supported on a comfortable economic base. So Eliza says to Pickering:

I shall always be a flower-girl to Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower-girl and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady and always will.

Eliza voices the sentiment of Shaw, the champion of social justice. Shaw's point here is that the difference between man and man, the distinction that one is respectable and the other is lowly or vulgar is man-made. A man's position in society is mostly determined by how he is treated by others. It has been customary to look down upon the poor and ascribe all defects of food, dress, habits and temperaments to the depraved taste of the lower class people. But given proper education and viewed with unprejudiced outlook, a very humble person may turn out to be a decent gentleman. It requires only a bit of humanity, some generosity and broadness of heart that can ensure social justice. Henry Higgins
realises this when he says:

The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls; in short behaving as if you were in Heaven where there are no third class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

In the second part of the play Eliza Doolittle is an illustration of Shaw's idea of a liberated woman fashioned after Ibsen's Nora. From a flower-girl of the gutter she has been elevated to the position of a fine lady. So long as she is under Professor Higgins's training, she behaves like a doll with wonderful natural genius and ability to learn. But after her successful performance as a duchess she becomes too wise to be content with only a ration of food and clothes and with what Mrs. Higgins calls "advantages". Her realisation in this respect is expressed in Mrs. Higgins's summing up:

The advantages of that poor woman who was just here now! The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income.

Hence by throwing the slipper at Higgins she violently rejects her place in the Doll's house.

Eliza. I can do without you: don't think I can't.
Higgins. I know you can. I told you could.

A woman must have right to choose her own career and should never be a mere appendage to a man; she must be treated as a person with a soul and not as a slave and slipper-fetcher, torn upon as dirt and abused in bad language by a man with an uncontrolled temper. Eliza realised that she must get some education, but what in reality, were the chances of education for Eliza and those like her? A poor girl in the slums did not get more than a minimum of the elementary stage and possibly a basic training in housewifery. Through the education Act of 1870, attendance at
elementary school was made compulsory. Still there were many children who either did not go to or spent a very short time at school because of the poverty of their family. There was a great difference between the standard of teaching and subject taught at school the poor children attended and those attended by children of wealthy parents. This was roughly the situation for poor girls as it existed when Shaw wrote Pygmalion. The play thus provides the climax of Shaw's pleading in his plays for the education of women.

Shaw's first literary achievement, My Dear Dorothea, was actually an epistolary presentation of the twenty-two-year-old author's views on women's education. In Eliza Doolittle he creates a heroine who is energetic and intelligent enough to take the opportunity to improve herself in the hope of becoming an assistant in a florist's shop and thus living an independent existence. There is also a minor character who is that sort of a woman: Clara, the upper class girl who finds satisfaction in work in an old furniture shop, according to Shaw's 'epilogue', instead of the futility of the idle genteel-life with its husband-hunting. Eliza's progress in society is balanced by Clara's and Freddie's unwilling descent of the social ladder—a sample of the class-circulation that Shaw recommends here as in Fanny's First Play, implying the abolition of class discrimination and the crime of poverty.

In order that his audience should not mistake Eliza's story for the story of Cinderella, Shaw has given us the story of her father Alfred Doolittle, who does really imitate Cinderella in his sudden progress from poverty to wealth. Wannafeller has left Doolittle three thousands pounds a year on condition that he delivers six lectures to his moral reform Society. This transformation of Doolittle from an underserving dustman to an equally underserving gentleman provides an occasion for ventilating the dramatist's views on middle-class morality and the problem of the parasites in society. Doolittle describes himself thus:
I am one of the undeserving poor; that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up against middle class morality all the time. If there's anything going, and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: "You're undeserving; so you can't have it". But my needs are as great as the most deserving widow's that ever got money out of six different charities in one week for the death of the same husband. I don't need less than a deserving man; I need more. .......what is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything. Therefore, I ask you, two gentlemen, not to play that game on me. I am playing straight with you. I aint pretending to be deserving. I'm undeserving, and I mean to go on undeserving. I like it; and that's the truth.

Doolittle is used to the moral disapproval of society. He has no time for what he calls "middle-class morality" which insists that he obeys the norms of polite society. His natural human instincts, however, do not seem to include a feeling of responsibility for anyone's welfare except his own. Concern for no one's welfare but one's own is a coherent and logically consistent attitude to life which has charms for all of us, although we are usually prevented by middle-class morality, from admitting them. Doolittle's is what George Orwell once called the voice of the belly:

His tastes lie towards safety, soft beds, no work, pots of beer and women with 'voluptuous' figures. He it is who punctures your fine attitude and urges you to look after Number One, to be unfaithful to your wife, to bilk your debts, and so on and so forth. Whether you allow yourself to be influenced by him is a different question. But it is simply a lie to say that Don Quixote is not part of you either, though most of what is said or written consists of one lie or the other, usually the first. (1)

It is a lie to deny that Doolittle's attitudes are a part of common humanity.

Doolittle ceases to be one of the undeserving poor. He has become rich, but is still undeserving because he does not earn his money by the six lectures a year that he has to deliver on morals. Shaw's point of attack is that there is no way of distinguishing between those who did little and were poor, and those who did equally little, but happened to be rich because they possessed unearned income. For Shaw, the hiatus in the world was not between rich and poor, nor that between socialists and capitalists, but between those who did some honest work in the world and those who did nothing or little. And whatever the attraction of doing nothing, Shaw believed that the business of the world depended, in the end, on people caring about and respecting the interests of their fellow human beings. Indeed, he believed and often said that the urge to care for others was not only a moral human instinct, but one of the great passions of the world.

Shaw, however, makes a distinction between the morality which insists that one should work and live for others and not for oneself, and the middle class morality which is represented in the play by the Eynsford Hills and in which system both Doolittle and Eliza feel trapped. For, the essence of middle class morality was that the world was divided into ladies and gentlemen and the rest. The distinguishing feature about ladies and gentlemen was that they did not actually do anything to earn their living. Now that Eliza is a 'lady', she cannot sell flowers; she can only, like Clara Eynsford Hill, attempt to sell herself in the marriage market. The problem is not particularly acute for Doolittle. Since he has his unearned income, he can pass from the idleness of the undeserving poor to the idleness of the undeserving rich, and the only price that he has to pay is 'respectability'—which in his case means paying out a certain amount of money and restraining some of his natural instincts. For Eliza, the problem is far more acute. Her transformation has educated her in doing nothing and has not provided the necessary cash for graceful
idleness. The question, then is, "What is Eliza to do?" and this question is asked with some force in the last scenes of the play.

Unlike his friend William Morris who revived the old myth in a lyric, Shaw dismisses any possibility of marriage between Pygmalion-Higgins and Galatea-Eliza. Nor does he recommend the union of the 'artist man' and the 'mother-woman' in the manner of Jack Tanner and Anne Whitefield. Shaw is interested in the evolution of the character of Eliza. She has passed two stages—devoted learning and triumphant acting in the role of a duchess. Two more stages are shown in the last two Acts. Act-IV shows the stage of rebellion: Eliza's feelings are wounded because after the reception Higgins talks of her as a guinea pig. Eliza has acquired finer feelings. It indicates the birth of a soul. But to be born is not enough. One must also grow up. Growing up is the fourth and last stage of Eliza's evolution. This consummation is reached in the final discussion with Higgins where Eliza reveals herself an independent, self-sufficient human being with a number of choices for her way of life. Even if she marries Freddy, she will not be the traditional wife, dependent on and submissive to her husband. Since she is far more practical and competent than Freddy, she will most likely play the dominant role and be the bread-winner in the family. The self-assurance with which she departs from Higgins is a strong indication that she no longer needs anyone to prop up her new personality. She is a sample of the New woman in Shaw's sense. She is an advocate of social justice which ensures for women a dignified, independent existence in domestic as well as social life.

Shaw's interest in social and economic problems is continued in Heartbreak House, begun in 1913 and completed in 1916 but not
published till 1919. Its theme is, not particular aspects of a society whose continuance is assumed, but society itself and its total disintegration. It is, this consciousness of the collapse of capitalist society responsible for manifold social injustices, that lifts the play above those that followed Major Barbara.

Shaw describes Heartbreak House as "A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes", and in the Preface acknowledges his debt to Tchechov, a number of whose plays had been produced in London not long before the war. No summary can convey the play's peculiar atmosphere. Shaw himself, when asked what it meant, replied, "How should I know? I am only the author".

The action takes place at a country house in Sussex on a fine September evening. It is Captain Shotover's house where his eldest daughter Mrs. Hushabye lives with her husband Hector and their children. Mrs. Hushabye has invited to the house her young friend, Ellie Dunn, her father, Mazzini Dunn and her fiance, Mr. Mangan. There also arrives, straight from abroad, Ariadna, Mrs. Hushabye's younger sister, wife of Sir Hastings Utterwood. Randal Utterwood, Sir Hastings's man-about-town brother, turns up uninvited, and another unexpected guest is a burglar. Mrs. Hushabye wants to break off Ellie's engagement to the financial magnate, Mangan, because he is too old. She finds Mangan ready to make love to her, and finds too that her husband Hector had already courted Ellie. The complication of the personal relations provides sufficient action for the play's development. When out of a clear sky a bomb from an enemy plane falls upon Mangan and the burglar, the play ends with our gaining some conviction of the existence of justice in the heavens.

As surely as Major Barbara, Heartbreak House is about money and power. Dialogue and action review the possibilities: to make money, to save money, to marry money or to steal money. Mangan, the capitalist represents financial success; Mazzini Dunn, the
liberal humanist, is a gentle failure. But this simple pattern of opposition is complicated by the fact that Mazzini's daughter, at the beginning of the play is to marry Mangan, and by the gradually revealed ambiguousness of the business relations between Mangan and Mazzini. Shotover and his daughters seem only marginally concerned with money; they need a modicum of it to maintain their hand-to-mouth existence; but their real quarry is power. Like Undershaft in Major Barbara, Shotover is possessor of the latent dionysiac energy symbolised by dynamite. In his cultivation of the 'seventh degree of concentration' in order to discover "a mind's ray that will explore the ammunition in the belt of (his) adversary", he is the traditional philosopher-mage, a Faustus, or a Roger Bacon, or a Prospero, seeking that mastery of the material world and physical forces that the scholar or contemplative, apparently renounces.

There is an attempt in the play to dissolve capitalism, like all other social patterns, into unreality. It also infects Boss Mangan with a sense of religious nightmare meaninglessness; he begins to tear off his clothes, as he had ceased to be a capitalist and were only naked man. And in the end he, like everything and everybody, else, turns out to be a fraud; he has no capital; he lives on a swollen expenses account. Thus to reduce capitalism to its pettier parasitism and to make the capitalist so susceptible to a sense of the absurdity of existence that he frenziedly strips off his lendings, is to win a victory in a mock fight.

Therefore, the play softens the conflict symbolised in the main substance of the plot— the proposed marriage of Ellie Dunn, daughter of a fighter for freedom, to the capitalist Mangan. She says to Shotover:

It seems to me quite fair. He wants me for one thing;
I want him for another.
Captain Shotover. Money?
Ellie. Yes.
Shotover impresses upon her the truth that her soul is more important than money, but she attempts to justify her mercenary intention by declaring that a soul is a very expensive thing to keep:

It eats music and pictures and books and mountains and lakes and beautiful things to wear and nice people to be with. In this country you can't have that without money; that is why our souls are so terribly starved.

There is no sounder or more uplifting wisdom anywhere in Shaw's works than in Shotover's reply to this. The climax of his protest to Ellie is only one of the many memorable passages, here and elsewhere in Heartbreak House:

I see you, the younger generation turning from their romance and sentiment and snobbery to money and comfort and hard common sense. I was ten times happier on the bridge in the typhoon, or frozen into Arctic ice for months in darkness, than you or they have been. You are looking for a rich husband. At your age I looked for hardship, danger, horror and death; that I might feel the life in me more intensely. I did not let the face of death govern my life; and my reward was, I had my life. You are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life, and your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live.

Captain Shotover tells Ellie to remember that

Your soul stick to you if you stick to it; but the world has a way of slipping through your fingers.

Shaw is not speaking of the soul in Barbara's mystical sense, but in the meaning of integrity. And the play states plainly that integrity is lost unless the capitalists are fought. Captain Shotover asks:

Are we to be kept forever in the mud by these hogs to whom the universe is nothing but a machine for greasing their bristles and filling their snouts?

He goes on (he is speaking to Hector Hushabye, his son-in-law):

There is enmity between our seed and their seed.
They know it and act on it, strangling our souls. They believe in themselves. When we believe in ourselves, we shall kill them.

Hector protests that he is making too much of his enemies.

Hector. They are too stupid to use their power. Captain Shotover. Do not deceive yourself: they do use it. We kill the better half of ourselves everyday to propitiate them. The knowledge that these people are there to render all our aspirations barren prevents us having the aspirations. And when we are tempted to seek their destruction they bring forth demons to delude us, disguised as pretty daughters and singers and poets and the like, for whose sake we spare them.

It is the weakness of the play that it does not hold this truth. It is the failure to fight the Mangans that makes life poor and empty; but the play suggests that there is in the whole of life an inherent meaninglessness, under which the Mangans suffer no less than those whose souls they kill.

The Perfect Wagnerite offers a more directly illuminating introduction to this play than the discussion of Horseback Hall in the actual Preface. Shaw has, of course, often been criticised for treating Wagner’s Ring of the Nibelung as a socialist parable. Heartbreak House which resets the economic argument in a context of myth and symbol, testifies, as Widowers’ Houses does not, to the imaginative depth the fable had at least gradually acquired for him. The scheme revealed in his allegorical interpretation of Rhinegold has many features in common with the play. Hesione’s view of Mangan, which is recognised even by Mazzini Dunn as ‘romantic’, is a portrait of the capitalist as Alberic. "Look at the brute!" she directs, while Mangan sprawls in his hypnotic trance:

Think of poor weak innocent Ellie in the clutches of this slave-driver, who spends his life making thousands of rough violent workmen bend to his will and sweat for him! a man accustomed to have great masses of iron beaten into shape for him by steam-hammers! to fight with women and girls over a half-
penny an hour ruthlessly! Are you going to fling your delicate, sweet, helpless child into such a beast's claws?

Her terms echo Shaw's earlier interpretation of the dwarf:

...at work wielding the power of the gold. For his gain, hordes of his fellow-creatures are thenceforth condemned to slave miserably, overground and underground, lashed to their work by the invisible whip of starvation. Wotan and Loki plunge into the mine where Alberic's slaves are piling up wealth for him under the invisible whip... This gloomy place need not be a mine; it might just as well be a match-factory.... where human life and welfare are daily sacrificed in order that some greedy foolish creature may be able to hymn exultantly to his Plutonic idol: Thou mak' st me eat while others starve... (1)

The two extracts expose in equally forceful language, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, which perpetuates social injustice. In both cases Shaw's attack is directed on the leisured middle-class people who hated politics and did not wish to realise utopia for the common people. When they could, they lived without scruple on incomes which they did nothing to earn. Heartbreak House was an idle house inhabited by those who did not know how to live.

Shaw, however, is attacking the lack of purpose rather than mere idleness or wealth. He is attacking the cruelty, inhumanity, callous financial competition and political destructiveness engendered by nineteenth century science and economics, with their doctrines of limited wealth and struggle for existence. He is attacking the lack of religious motive which resulted in the 'half-century of the drift to the ayes; bringing Europe to the First world war, from the effects of which Europe will not escape until the people of all the nations desire life rather than death, and learn to be masters of their own destiny. The captain in Act-III answers Maximi Dunn's complacent reference to an over ruling Providence by saying:

1. The extract is from "The Perfect Wagnerite", Major Critical Essays, P-172.
Every drunken skipper trusts to Providence. But one of the ways of Providence with drunken skippers is to run them on the rocks.

A few minutes later Hector Hushabye asks: And what of this ship we are all in? This soul's prison we call England? The captain is in his bunk, drinking bottled ditch water, the old man declares, "and the crew is gambling in the forecastle. She will strike and sink and split. Do you think the laws of God will be suspended in favour of England because you were born in it"? When Hector inquires what he is to do about it, the captain answers:

"Learn your business as an Englishman".
"And what may my business as an Englishman be, pray?"
"Navigation. Learn it and live; or leave it and be damned".

Dropping metaphor, Shaw urges that before politicians set up as statesmen, they should learn the business of state craft—i.e. the skilled management of men and their institutions. The fulfilment of such duties by the leaders of the country, Shaw believed, would ensure justice for all classes of men in society.

Apart from its significance as a social document, *Heartbreak House* is a great work of art. Though used as symbols and types, the characters of the play are brought to life as three-dimensional characters upon the stage. They stand on their feet, breathe and move and think and feel, laugh and weep, love and hate, and sin and do good; in short they behave as men and women behave in common experience and inspire in us the attractions and repulsions that men and women inspire. Captain Shotover is one of the great characters in English drama. His eccentricity, so cunningly devised by the author that it appears in grain with the old man's nature, gives Shotover the quality of strangeness needed to raise him to more than ordinary stature and to turn his superficially crazy saying into the oracular deliverances of a prophet. Mazzini Dunn is another of Shaw's right-minded, orthodoxly virtuous characters—a successor of Praed in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*—who,
through their lack of scepticism and of aggressive moral vigour, connive in the deliberate wickedness of others and the evils of society. Again there are people like Mangan who seek first their own profit from their exploitation of others. About the doings and sayings, the thoughts and beliefs of characters in a play we may not care at all, if they reach us as abstractions or are mou­thed by puppets. But in *The Heartbreak House* we meet with people—real men and women of our common experience.

With *Heartbreak House*, a change is evident in the theme of Shaw's plays as well as in his attitude or mode of treatment. There is a change of theme from the particular to the general, from the contemporary scene to the future, and of attitude from satiric and destructive to the philosophic and constructive, from the materialistic to the mystic.

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Galsworthy continued his crusade against social injustice in *The Eldest Son*, written and published in 1912. It repeats in a slightly different manner the theme already dwelt upon in his first play *The Silver Box* e.g. social discriminations operating against the less fortunate. Here the caste-feeling or class prejudice of a county family comes into clash with morality and basic sense of human responsibility.

Sir William Cheshire who comes of an old county family and is proud of his lineage is in his advanced years. He is a man of choleric and conservative temper as is the wont with the class of landed aristocracy. "Unless we are true to our caste and prepared to work for it, the landed classes are going to go under to this infernal democratic spirit in the air"—is the guiding principle of his life. In this he resembles John Anthony of *Strife*. He gets
very angry with Dunning, his under-keeper, when he discovers something is wrong between this servant and a young woman, Rose Taylor, and makes him marry the young woman although there is little love between them. On the other hand Sir William's eldest son, Bill has a similar scandalous affair with his mother's maid, Freda Studdenhum. The whole family gets panicky about it. If Bill happens to marry Freda and leaves for Canada, his next brother Harold would inherit the estate; which is not however, accepted as a possible solution. Therefore, Sir William's wife consults Freda and says to her, "Put yourself in my place", to which Freda promptly replies, "Put yourself in mine". Freda cannot be hushed up because Bill is determined to stand by her.

When Sir William comes to know of the situation, he gets angry, and forbids his son's marriage with Freda with the clear threat that he shall be disinherited in that case. As for Freda, he does not think that she has much honour to defend. Freda's father is an old servant in the house of Sir William Cheshire. He comes to know that Bill does not really care for Freda and concludes that marriage between them is not desirable. He takes Freda by the shoulders and walks out of the house with the following words to Sir William:

Don't be afraid Sir William. We want none of you. She will not force herself where she is not welcome. She may have slipped her good name, but she will keep her proper pride. I'll have no charity marriage in my family. Well ? She is not the first this has happened to since the world began, and she won't be the last. Come away, now, come away.

The pungent remark of Miss Dot, the second daughter of Mr. William Cheshire, aptly indicates the moral of the play: "Morality in one eye and your title in the other". A man of strong moral sense Sir William holds a very stern view of the moral turpitude of his under-keeper:
I cannot have a keeper of mine playing fast and loose in the village like this....we can't have open scandals in the village.

So he gives the ultimatum:

If he wants to keep his place, he must marry at once.

The old man is conscious of the 'unwritten law' in these matters. Summoning the young man before him he refers to the custom of the country and threatens him with not only a sack but also 'no character' that would make it hard and impossible for him to find out an employment elsewhere. He turns a deaf ear to Dunning's appeal that his old mother depends solely on him and to lose employment will mean extreme hardship for the mother and the son. Thus he forces his servant into a marriage with the village girl. The poor servant is left no choice of his own with regard to his marriage only because he did some wrong to a girl in an unguarded moment.

Yet Sir William Cheshire may be given certain allowance to do all this as a conservative old gentleman. But then the dramatist puts the old man into an ordeal which he passes through in a completely different manner. He comes to know of his own eldest son Bill's attachment and engagement with the maid Freda. He finds his facile philosophy turned against himself. His towering, smooth-sailing rhetoric is torpedoed by one fact. He threatens his son to leave the girl on pain of disinheritance. Like old Barthwick in *The Silver Box* he comments adversely on his son's ways of life:

It's time you took your position seriously, instead of hanging about town, racing and playing polo and what not! I've paid your debts twice, Shan't pay them this time unless I see a disposition to change your mode of life.

But when the sharing of the blame is concerned he finds more the hand of the girl in this scandal than his son's. He accuses the girl of base ingratitude and lack of a sense of decorum in entra-
pping his son. To his wife he says:

This girl who was born on the estate, had the run of the house—brought up with money earned from me—nothing but kindness from all of us; she has broken the common rules of gratitude and decency—she lured him on, I haven't a doubt!

When Dunning was concerned, he did not find fault with the girl. The hypocrisy and double-dealing of the old man are betrayed in what he says to his wife for serving the relationship between his son and the maid:

Sir William. I utterly forbid this piece of madness. I'll stop it.
Lady Cheshire. But the thing we can't stop.
Sir William. Provision must be made.
Lady Cheshire. The unwritten law!
Sir William. What! (Suddenly perceiving what she is alluding to) You're thinking of young—young—(shortly) I don't see the connection.

Here lies the irony of the situation. When Lady Cheshire pointed out to her husband that perhaps it would not be right to force Dunning and Rose into marriage, her husband cut her short by saying, "there's an unwritten law in these matters". But when it is his own son he does not see the connection. Now there is no question of morality. "It's not a question of morality. Morality be d—d!" What weighs with him most now is his own position: "Good bye to my prestige, political, social or anything". The grain in him—his aristocratic breeding, his power and pelf prevent him from extending an approval to a marriage between his son and a maid-servant:

I've the misfortune all my life to believe in our position here,— to believe that we counted for something—that the country wanted us. I have tried to do my duty by that position. I find in one moment that is gone—smoke—gone. My philosophy is not equal to that. To countenance this marriage would be unnatural.

Here Cheshire resembles old Barthwick taking a serious view of the
Another's fault but looking very leniently at his son in order to safeguard his own honour. Again like John Anthony, Cheshire is in love with his class, his culture, his social status and his sentiments. Both are impervious to any socialistic ideas believing firmly in class-distinctions. Sir William says to his wife:

There are plenty in these days who will be glad enough for this to happen, plenty of these d—d socialists and Radicals, who'll laugh their souls nut over what they haven't the bowels to see's a tragedy.

This seems to be an echo of John Anthony's statement before his co-directors:

This middle class sentiment or socialism, or whatever it may be, is rotten. (Strife, Act-III)

A similar situation occurs in Barker's The Marrying of Ann Leete. Ann's choice of the poor gardener Abud for a husband was not approved by her aristocratic and conservative father and grandfather. But while they were not so stubborn and mean as to take any coercive measure against either Ann or Abud, Sir William has recourse to every possible means to foil the marriage between his son and the maid-servant. The instinct of preservation of class-prestige outweighs all claims of money and concession, humanity and justice.

Lady Cheshire, not so hard and adamant as her husband, tries to take a more sympathetic view of the affair. But she has no personality to exert her will upon her husband's menacing attitude. At first she tries to dissuade her son from this love-pursuit by pointing out how it will jeopardise their family-prestige and social status.

Have you realised what an awful thing this would be for us all? It's quite impossible that it should go on. She tries to bring home to Bill the significance of marriage. With her upper-class conviction of the distinction between classes, she holds that marriage cannot and should not take place between a man
and a woman with different manners and different souls.

All such marriages end in wretchedness. You haven't a
taste or tradition in common. You don't know what mar­riage is. Day after day, year after year. It's no use
being sentimental— for people brought up as we are to
have different manners is more than to have different
souls.

She is persuasive and threatening by turn. She points out the prac­
tical difficulties of this marriage. "Besides, it's poverty. Your
father will never forgive you and I've practically nothing. What
can you do? You have no profession. How are you going to stand
it; with a woman who— ?"

But when she finds her son unbending she goes to Freda. With
all tenderness of a mother's heart she speaks to the girl. "I know
well enough how love comes. I don't blame you. Don't cry. But you
see it's my eldest son. (Freda puts her hand to her breast) Yes.
I know. Women always get the worst of these things. That's natu­
ral!" The conversation that follows throws much light upon the
selfishness of the rich people who are too conscious of their own
interests to ignore all claims of social justice.

Lady Cheshire. ....I only ask you to try and put your­
self in our position.
Freda. Ah, yes!
Lady Cheshire. You ought to know me better than to think
I'm purely selfish.
Freda. You like to put yourself in my position?
Lady Cheshire. What?
Freda. Yes. Just like Rose.
Lady Cheshire. (In a horror-striken voice) Oh!

The outspoken repartee of the maid-servant is meant to act like
the blow of a hammer to drive at the gross injustice that the
richmen are to do to serve their own purposes.

Among the younger generation there are some who share the
prejudices of the aristocratic class. They are as exasperating in
uttering their vituperations against any breach of morality as
their elders are. Christine, the eldest daughter, her husband Ronald Keith, the Reverend John Latter engaged to the youngest girl Joan—all of them strongly denounce Dunning's decision not to marry the girl he once loved. But when it is one from their own circle they vehemently oppose the idea of a marriage between Bill and Freda. Christine ejaculates "It's ridiculous—monstrous! It's fantastic"! Her husband says, "I am not saying Bill ought to marry her. She's got to stand the racket". Later describes the incident as "most unfortunate". Harold, the younger son of the family discovers in his elder brother only a typical English youngman.

There are thousands of fellows who'd never dream of sticking to the girl, considering what it means.... I could tell you of at least a dozen men I know who've been through this same business, and got off scot free.

The most sane and rational attitude is maintained only by Dot, the second daughter of Sir William. Of all the men and women in the play she alone looks at things with a spirit of tolerance and sympathy. So she objects to a forced marriage between Dunning and Ross. She voices her protest before her elder sister.

Dot. If they are tired of each other, they ought not to marry, and if father's going to make them—
Christine. You don't understand in the least. It's for the sake of them.
Dot. Out with it, old sweetness!

It is the old lie, the pretext of morality by which society perpetuates injustice of which many people become helpless victims. Dot's protest—the protest of the dramatist for that matter—is against a morality devoid of humanitarian considerations. When Bill's affair is known she describes her father's stand as "awfully funny" and hints at the dilemma of the old man by saying "Morality in one eye and your title in the other". Her upper class breeding did not make her either cruel or careless of those who are low-placed in life. She values the essential man or the woman, Though placed in the station of a domestic maidservant Freda was
in no way inferior to a fine lady. Dot's estimate of Freda has a touch of sympathy in it. "Freda's just as much of a lady as most girls. Why shouldn't he marry her, and go to Canada. It's what he is really fit for". She does not hate Freda's father, old Studdenham because he is the head keeper of her father. On the other hand she likes the oldman for his simplicity. Compared with the snobbery, the social envy and jealousies of the rich, the frankness of this man is welcome. So she says, "Old Studdenham's better than most relations by marriage".

Desertion of women by callous lovers has been condemned by Galsworthy in the person of Bill. He condemns the aristocratic vice of satisfying the lust of the body on women less favourably placed in life. Romantic love may be tempestuously strong and intoxicatingly sweet for a time. But when it runs counter to powerful caste-prejudice, it proves a devastating and destructive passion and it is almost inevitably bound in the end to give way at the cost of intense suffering and loss, to the force of class-feeling and dominating social interests. Bill wanted to marry Freda not out of love but out of a sense of pity and sympathy for her. The old father discovers the truth and with the sanity of an old man who has seen much of life forbids his daughter to marry.

"If the young gentleman has tired of her in three months, as a blindman can see by the looks of him—she's not for him!"

He takes leave of his masters and goes out with his daughter saying, "I will have no charity marriage in my family".

The same theme appears in the novels of Galsworthy. In The Country House (1907) when George Pundyce gets into a similar trouble with Mrs. Bellow, his father takes an uncharitable and hostile attitude to a recognition of the woman's right. The plot of The Patrician (1911) also turns on the same conflict as between morality and honour or tradition.
We may now consider Galsworthy's one-act play *The Little Man*, in which he takes up the theme of social justice in the form of man's duty to others in society. The play was written in 1913, the year before the beginning of the First World War. In this one-act play Galsworthy tried to portray the terrible bankruptcy of basic social and human values during the years preceding the Great War. From the point of view of this objective, his choice of theme has been remarkably appropriate and effective. The accidental separation of the baby from its mother provides an excellent situation through which the dramatist has expressed his views on social relationship. The American, the German, the English couple and the Dutch youth—all are representatives of the essential characteristics of their respective nations.

The Little Man's address to the Waiter as 'Her ober' (Mr. Head Waiter) occasions among these men assembled at a buffet in an Austrian Railway Station a good deal of discussion on man's duty to others. The American tries to gauge the sentiments of the company in this respect.

"Would you step out of your way to help them when it was liable to bring you trouble?"

The German promptly retorts, "Hein, Hein! That is stupid". He is a self-centred person who cares little for others. He upholds Nietzsche and would not have anything to do with Tolstoy's "universal brotherhood". He believes that "man should express himself. He must push—he must be strong". At this point a conflict of characters starts when the Little Man raises a mild protest against the German's view. He refers to St. Francis d'Assisi and St. Julien l'Hospitalier who laid down their lives in the service of the poor and the distressed. The American welcomes this faith in the essential goodness of man.

"I like your sentiments. I feel kind of brotherly".
He speaks eloquently on the virtue of universal brotherhood, and sympathy for 'the weak and the diseased'. He claims that people of modern age will, in near future, realise the great Christian ideal of universal brotherhood. He claims that he as well as others present there would act like a real hero whenever the occasion arises.

In this year of grace 1913 the Kingdom of Christ is quite a going concern. We are mighty near to universal brotherhood. The colonel here (he indicates the German) is a man of blood and iron, but give him an opportunity to be magnanimous, and he'll be right there.

He is fully aware of the change in man's outlook and of the gradual fading away of 'social distinctions and barriers'.

"We have grown kind of mild—we don't think of self as we used to do".

Indeed, this kind of sentiment prevailed at that time among a section of the people in Europe and particularly in America. Since 1880 or so, the western world had been going through a period of almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity. Besides, the fabulous spread of general education led to the emergence of a politically-conscious public in each of the advanced countries. Democratic ideas and ideals became the order of the day. "This is an epoch of equality and high-toned ideals" the American says. Like a pious Christian he hopes that a day will come when quarrels and battles will be done away with resulting in a happy universal brotherhood. He emphatically says that a final destruction of all self-interest is near at hand. "There's about to be a holocaust of selfish interests".

The situation now takes a dramatic turn with the announcement by the station official that the train is coming. Everybody rushes for the train. The mother who cannot manage her baby and two bundles cries for help. The American with all his 'heroism' and universal brotherhood continues to run, turning a deaf ear to her
appeal. All others follow him. But the Little Man picks up her ba-
by and one of the bundles. Together they run towards the platform.
The Little Man jumps into the train with the baby in his arms. The
train starts. The mother is left behind. Galsworthy has stuffed
the play with enough of action and suspense.

The terrible loss of all human values and social bonds has
been portrayed most vividly in the second scene of the play. The
American, the German, the English and the Dutch—all reveal them-
selves as unfeeling monsters who have little sympathy for people
in distress. They laugh and jeer at the Little Man because he is
trying to protect the baby to the best of his abilities. They lea-
ve the compartment as soon as they come to the conclusion that the
baby has been suffering from typhus.

By a master-stroke of dramatic craftsmanship Galsworthy shows
how men are deceiving themselves by professing things they cannot
practise. The American reveals himself as a 'hero' in words and a
'coward' in deeds. He praises the Little Man's noble disposition
in nursing and protecting the diseased baby, but he himself avoids
contagion for the Little Man.

American. (gravely). This is the most sublime spectacle
I have ever envisaged. There ought to be a record of
this.
(The Little Man looks at him wonderingly)
You are typical, Sir, of the sentiments of modern
Christianity. You illustrate the deepest feelings in
the heart of everyman.
(The Little Man rises with the baby and a move-
ment of approach)
Guess I'm wanted in the dining Car. (He vanishes.)

Thus in this play, Galsworthy has shown how selfishness and
lack of concern for others had become the order of the day in the
Europe of the Pre-war period. But this is not all. With all the
power at his command he rises in protest against this callous in-
humanity, this loss of social and human values and this all-perva-
ding spiritual bankruptcy. His eloquent protest finds expression
in the character of the Little Man.

The Third and last scene of the play is devoted to establishing the goodness and greatness of the Little Man. The American here voices the sentiment of the dramatist. It is this ebullient gentleman who literally raises the Little Man to the stature of a saint. Of all the characters it is he who understands the courage of the Little Man in handling a baby who has an infectious disease. He explains to the station official—

"Here we have a man giving his life for that old baby that's gor no claim on him. This is not a baby of his own. No, Sir, this is a very christ-like proposition in the gentleman".

Even when the officer seems not to understand the American's English, he uses gestures to speak out the selfless service of the Little Man.

American. Well just watch my gestures. I was saying (he points to the Little Man, then makes gestures of flying), you have an angel from heaven there. You have there a man in whom Gawd (he points upward) takes quite an amount of stock.... The Little Man has a heart of gold. (He points to his heart and takes out a gold coin).

It is tense drama when at the opening of the third scene the station official on the strength of a telegram wants to arrest the Little Man for snatching away another's baby. In spite of the American's repeated attempt to prove the contrary, the officer is very rigid and unflinching in the performance of duty. Thus a hue and cry is raised and travellers gather round the place. The dramatic tension rises to the peak when the officer in a bid to snatch away the child from the close-grasp of the Little Man, suddenly learns that the baby has typhus; he stands bewildered. The resolution of the crisis is achieved at this point by the sudden arrival of the mother and her revelation that the baby is quite sound. Everybody praises the Little Man. Once again the mouthpiece
as the mouthpiece of the dramatist, declares the magnanimity of the man. Through him we hear of the Public Service that the play was intended to render e.g. that good men and good deeds have not altogether vanished from the earth.

American. "I guess we shall all go home and treasure the memory of his face as the whitest thing in the museum of recollections. .....I am inspired with a new faith in mankind".

Galsworthy is not merely an unconcerned portrayer of reality. He is an optimist too. He has a strong faith in the future of mankind. He dares to raise his voice of protest against the all-pervading loss of social and human values. In his struggle against the prevailing social injustices he creates in this play a character which inspires us with a faith that all these lost values are bound to be recovered in the near future. Galsworthy eagerly looks forward to the golden days when there will be a holocaust of selfish interests and the principles of social justice will be properly dispensed by men. Equality, Democracy, universal brotherhood, heroism—all these will then no longer remain 'Cants' or hollow talks only. Perhaps in those happy days the American or the German will not grudge the waiter to be addressed as "Herr Ober".

- VI -

Always a slow and painstaking writer, Barker did not, in fact, succeed in bringing one serious imaginative work of any length to completion between 1910 and 1923. He wrote three one-Act plays: the farce, Rococo, in 1911, skilful enough, and incidentally a surprisingly realistic presentation of a lower-middle class domestic background, but of little general significance; Vote By Ballot, in 1914; and Farewell to the Theatre, in 1916. Among Barker's unpublished manuscripts there also survive from this period a short
sociological study, The Bigamist, some notes towards a play called The Committee, and a much more substantial body of notes, including two completed Acts, for a long play, originally entitled The Village Carpenter and later, The Wicked Man (1).

A brief discussion of some of these works of Barker will show that his mind was still preoccupied with the problems of contemporary society. Vote by Ballot is concerned with fantasy as it operates in the lives of ordinary, apparently conventional people. This little play demonstrates Barker's idea of what the one-Act play might appropriately do. It is a product of the period which gave us those classics of the form, Hankin's The Constant Lover and Barrie's The Twelve Pound Look, and in its range and manner it shows likenesses to both.

It is fundamentally a conversation-piece, an exposition of the main character's point of view, but it is diversified by being written for four voices. An actual social context is implied: the provincial English society that sees the success of the local manufacturer, puts him into Parliament and takes his eventual elevation to the peerage as a compliment to itself; it is a setting in which town and country, like plebs and squirearchy, graduate imperceptibly into each other.

The play is social criticism only in the most general sense: a comic revelation of the foolishness of social assumptions, and especially the assumption that categories and conventions can express all the diversity of individual men. Mr. Torpenhouse has acted as chairman of committee to the liberal candidate (regularly elected) for thirty years, only to reveal, when at last Lord Silverwell's son and successor loses the election by a single vote, that he has always assuaged his private conscience and kept his idealism bright by voting Tory; though he protests: "Mine is hardly

the official Tory mind. Why should it be?"

The political allusion in the title and the context of local politics are strictly relevant to the human nature shown in this play. Torpenhouse is the modest hero appropriate to a democratic age, no weakling, but one who takes his tone from the moderation and compromise amid which he lives. His integrity is paradoxical but it is also admirable; the comedy of it is inseparable from the limited sphere of its operation: the voting booth, which is the sole field of valour.

For The Bigamist, only the typescript survives in a folder labelled: "Prison Studies/No. 1 (1910)/The Bigamist". It is doubtful whether any more studies in this projected series were written. The date supplies a hint that the example of Galsworthy's Justice, and even possibly a direct suggestion from Galsworthy, may have had something to do with the composition of this piece. "Barker has paid much attention to these prison matters", commented Wilfred Scawen Blunt in his Journals, in April 1910. (1) The Bigamist however, as the title suggests, is more concerned with an offender than with his punishment. It purports to give the reflections of a convicted criminal while serving his sentence. The point is certainly made that imprisonment for bigamy, far from remedying a social wrong, foolishly inflicts a greater wrong, but it is overshadowed by interest in the motives and psychology of the imagined criminal.

Entering into the mind and sensibility of his character, assuming his social background Barker excludes the possibility of objective critical comment; for there is no second character to right the balance as in a play. Instead of an argument, it is a plea for sympathy which is presented; yet not a mawkish one, as it is not based on present sufferings but on a revelation of the adventuroussness, the natural protest against the futile-seeming monotony of

1. Vide M.M. Morgan's A Drama of Political Man, P-189.
respectiveable life, to which the legal offence is ultimately traced. Considering his home and the time he spent there, the 'I' of the study concludes:

......it was as nice as could be. But it grew that sometimes I'd sit there wishing the end of the world would come just for a change.

His way of escape is fantasy: he imagines himself to be somebody else; and the account turns into something very like a study of the histrionic impulse. The day dreams of Prunella, the poetry of State, the art of Jessica Madras have their simple counterpart here in the irresponsible make-believe that gives release from the sameness and narrowness of circumstances, the sameness and limitations of the self:

......you could n't call it lying because it had nothing to do with facts at all.

Against the character's will("I didn't ever want to get rid of the missus.....any more than I wanted to chuck my job in the factory"), and under new social pressures, the chosen fantasy begins to turn in to another prison, curiously reminiscent of the first, before the law and the custodians of its actual prisons arrive on the scene.

The relationship that leads to the bigamous marriage is presented as nothing out of the ordinary in degree or kind; the motives of easy-going affectionateness and compromising weakness, which determine it, are precisely those which make thousands of decent legal marriages. Evasion under cover of conformity is the way of an average man, who is the concern of the social reformer. This particular bigamist is extraordinary only in the context to which he has let his imagination run away with him. The consciousness that has created him and evoked the mixture of the grotesque and pathetic that is his imaginative life, is not far from that conveyed through Philip Madras: implicit in The Bigamist, as in The Madras House, is a sense of the inadequacy of idea and vision as substitutes for the creativeness that gives freedom.
The Plays I have discussed in this chapter amply illustrate the interest of the playwrights in social questions of the time. Two of Shaw's plays written in the period under reference—Fanny's First Play and Pygmalion—highlight the most prominent problems related with the issue of Social Justice, namely, the position of women in Society vis-a-vis the movement for emancipation of women and class distinctions based on such external features as speech, dress and habits. These are domestic comedies with added farcical paraphernalia enacted by some common figures in whom the dramatist breathes new life so that they become likeable, lovable and understandable. Heartbreak House is a fantasia, not so much in the Russian manner generally or in the Tchekov manner specifically, as in the Shavian manner, a basically despairing yet irrepressibly jocular study of Social and human disaster. The play prophesises the destruction of capitalism and the wholesale correction of the established Church at one end of its scale and at the other delivers a brisk little lesson on infant care. It demonstrates the vastness of the range of Shaw's imagination. Galsworthy, however, continued to pinpoint the sores of social life with an ardent wish that they should be cured by the soothing balm of sympathy and tolerance in social intercourse. In The Eldest Son he shows how romantic love is bound to give way, at the cost of intense suffering and loss, to the force of class-feeling and dominating social interests. In the Fugitive, a play composed in 1913 (I have not discussed it in detail because there is a similarity in theme between this play and The Eldest Son), Clare, a good soul, because of a romantic disposition comes to clash with an unfeeling world and deteriorates. In another play, The Pigeon (1912) Galsworthy exposes the inadequacy of a personal kindness and benevolence of an individual like Mr. Wellwyn, the generous painter, as well as of the unfeeling, institutional approach of a few busy bodies and so-called social reformers, like Canon Bartley, Professor Calway and Sir Thomas Huxton.