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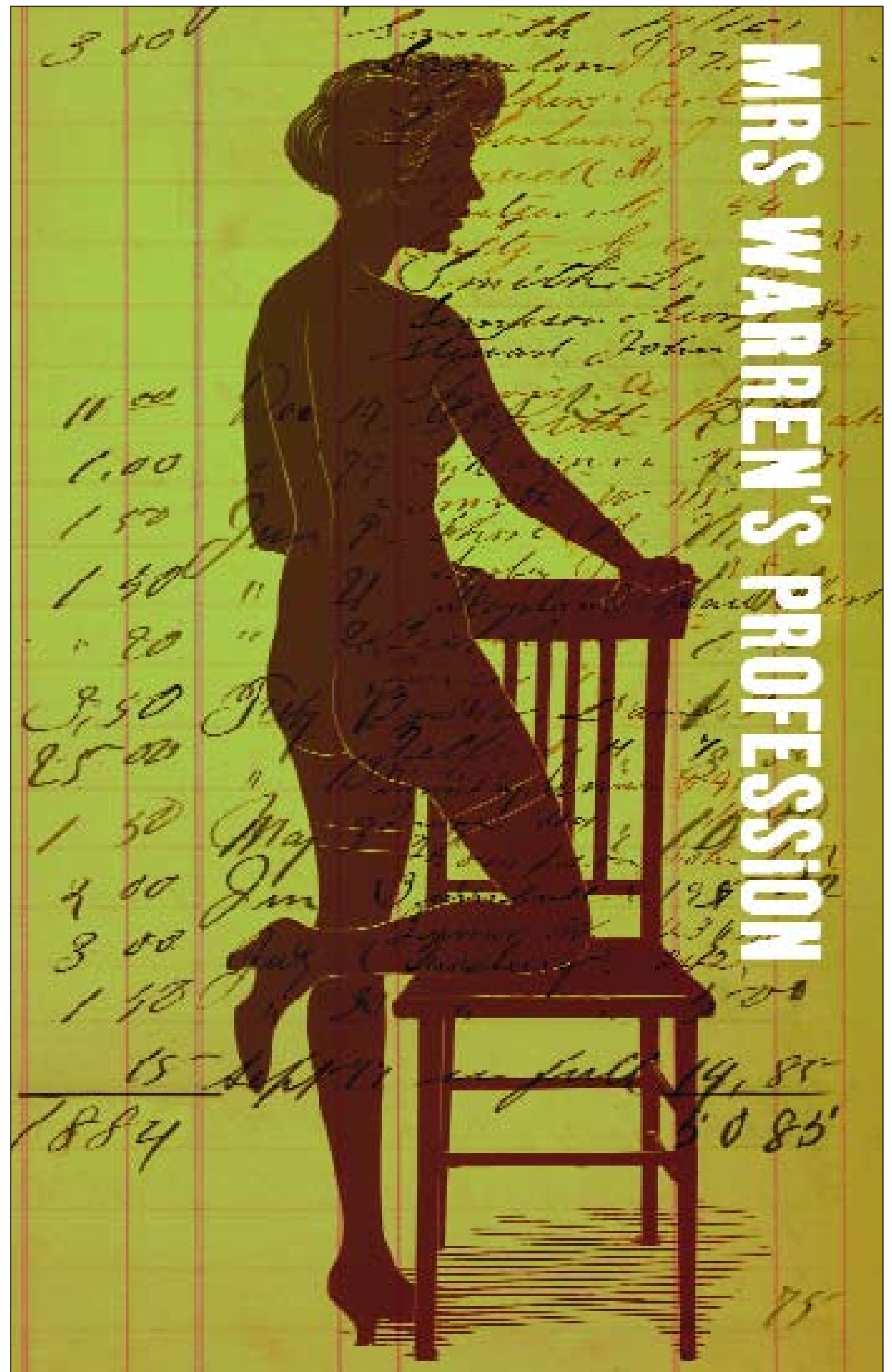

ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT MCKOWEN

Mrs. Warren's Profession

by George Bernard Shaw

Directed by Bruce K. Sevy

March 15 - April 21

The Space Theatre

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Jeff Hovorka .... Director of Media & Marketing
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Tina Risch .... Community Services/Group Sales Manager
Seth Holt.. Designer

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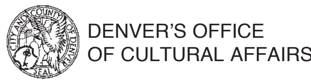

SYNOPSIS

MRS.WARREN: What is any respectable girl brought up to do but to catch some rich man's fancy and get the benefit of his money by marrying him?—as if a marriage ceremony could make any difference in the right or wrong of the thing! Oh, the hypocrisy of the world makes me sick!
—Mrs. Warren's Profession, Act II

Mrs. "Kitty" Warren, the central character of Shaw's remarkable play, is a successful practitioner of what Kipling called the oldest profession in the world. But Kitty is a believer in respectability and so has had her daughter Vivie raised in boarding schools and has given her the best education money can buy—without telling Vivie where the money has come from. When they finally meet in a country cottage near Haslemere, Vivie is home from Cambridge and curious to get to know her mother. But there's not much opportunity for mother-daughter talk, for they are soon joined by neighbors and friends of Mrs. Warren. These include the Reverend Samuel Gardner, a pretentious preacher; Sir George Crofts, a brutal businessman and man-about-town; the architect Praed, a lover of beauty and a sort of Greek chorus to the drama, and Reverend Gardner's son Frank, a good-looking good-for-nothing who is attracted to Vivie. But the cunning Crofts lays siege to Vivie, too, and thus begins the action of the drama.

In a highly witty play, Shaw presents us with his arguments on equality for women, education, respectability and the hypocrisy of society.

VIVIE: No: I am my mother's daughter. I am like you. I must have work and must make more money than I spend. But my work is not your work and my way not your way. We must part....
—Mrs. Warren's Profession

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Glossay of Selected Terms from *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

actuarial calculations: calculations for insurance and annuity premiums, reserves and dividends.
anarchist: one who rebels against any authority, established order or ruling power.
assizes: periodical itinerant court sessions in English counties at which London judges heard civil and criminal cases too difficult or significant for local magistrates.
attitudinizing: assuming an affected mental attitude, a pose.
baronet: the British titled class was divided into two groups, the peerage (dukes, earls, marquesses, viscounts) whose titles were hereditary; and, below them, the gentry, at the top of which were baronets, a kind of upper middle class of their time.
battle royal: a heated dispute, where the last one standing is the winner.
beneficed clergyman: a clergymen who receives the revenue from an endowment.
boarded out: placed in the care of someone else, such as a foster family or boarding school.
broomsquires: broom makers associated with superstition and the supernatural.
cant: trite opinions or sentiments, especially the insincere use of pious words.
cheek: nerve, gall, *chutzpah*.
church school: schools established by the Church of England to ensure that poor children could read the Bible.
conveyancing: drawing up deeds, leases or other writings for transferring the title to property.
croakers: people who talk forebodingly, dismally.
dash it: slang euphemism for "damn" or similar curse.
devilling: generally working for another who takes the credit and remuneration; the lowest apprentice on the totem pole in a printer's office is called a devil.
Duke of Beaufort: this dukedom is one of the most highly respected in Britain.
Duke of Belgravia: the head of a highly placed family; Belgravia is one of the most exclusive parts of London.
Duke of Wellington: Arthur Wellesley Wellington (1769-1852), best known for defeating Napoleon at Waterloo. He was also prime minister from 1828-1830.
ecclesiastical commissioners: members of the Church of England principally responsible for the distribution of revenue.
facer: a sudden, often stunning check or obstacle.
Freemasonry: in this case, a natural fellowship based on some common experience.
Gypsies: nomadic people found throughout the world with a shared ethnic origin and language.
gov'nor: informally, one's father, address to a strange man, a superior or an employer.
greenhorn: an inexperienced or unsophisticated person.
high Cambridge degree: after women received permission in 1881 to take exams at Cambridge University, the next step was to give titles for the degrees women achieved as opposed to just the certificate from the school.
magazine rifle: a gun with a supply chamber to hold cartridges.
***mater*:** mother, from the Latin; chiefly a British usage about 1859.
moiling: working hard, implies taxing physical labor.
M.P.: Member of Parliament.
off my peck: not hungry; peck is slang for food or grub.
***pater*:** father, from the Latin pater; chiefly a British usage; to an old man, it's a respectful form of address.

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patrimony: inheritance from one's father.
Philistine: a person disdainful of intellectual or artistic values.
Phillipa Summers: possible reference to Phillipa Fawcett, the Newnham student who in 1890, was ranked above the senior wrangler, i.e., the top male student in the mathematical tripos (or exams—see "tripos" below).
plump out: abruptly; openly.
public house: a tavern or house whose primary business is selling alcohol on the premises; also from the 18th-century definition of a brothel.
Purgatory: place or state of temporary suffering or misery.
rap: the least bit (derived from a very small coin; "without a rap").
razzle-dazzle: a frolic, a spree.
Gread law: study law.
rector: a clergyman of the Church of England in charge of a parish and entitled to all the tithes from the parish.
Roman father: the one part of the Anglican Church, especially during the 19th century, that followed the Roman rites very closely, except as they related to the Pope. They were often made fun of because of their close association with the Roman Catholic Church liturgy.
rooks: a common European bird, similar in size and color to the American crow.
scullery maid: girl who worked in the area of the kitchen where dishes and cooking utensils were washed and stored; the very bottom of the servant hierarchy.
siphons: bottles with a siphon that hold carbonated water to make whisky-and-sodas.
The Standard: an earnest, progressive newspaper of its day.
stay him out: outstay; stay longer than.
temperance restaurant: a restaurant where alcohol was not served.
three score and ten: 70 years old.
TRIPOS: honors exams introduced by Cambridge University early in the 19th century in order to establish higher academic standards; they were named after the three-legged stools used at disputations, the oral defense of a thesis.
turned a hair: given a sign of distress or disturbance.
two pins: slang for cares very little or cares not at all.
whitelead: a heavy poisonous basic carbonate of lead that is marketed as a powder or as a paste in linseed oil, has good hiding power and is used chiefly in exterior paints.
workhouse: the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 provided for the building of workhouses for the poor that were harsh and hostile, so that only the truly destitute would seek refuge in them.
wrangler: the name for the style of argument used in the oral defense of a thesis; one who engages in argument or debate. First and third wranglers in this case would be among the top honors students in math at Cambridge. The senior wrangler would be the best of the best.

Lupu, Michael, ed. *Mrs. Warren's Profession Study Guide*. Minneapolis: Guthrie Theatre, 2003.

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Notes on Victorian Currency

farthing	1/4 of a penny	copper
pence	penny	silver
tupence	two pennies	silver
sixpence	six pennies	silver
shilling	12 pence (also known as a "bob")	silver
crown	five shillings or 60 silver pence.	
pound	20 shillings gold (or notes)	
sovereign	240 pence.	
guinea	21 shillings gold (or notes)	

one and sixpence: one shilling and six pennies = 18 pence.
four shillings: approximately 10 pounds ($16) today.
nine shillings: approximately 23 pounds ($36) today.
pound: value of the pound as of October 23, 2006 was $1.87.

Places mentioned in the Play

Cambridge: university in Cambridge, England, established by students who left Oxford in conflict with townspeople in the early 13th century.
Chancery Lane: street running north-south between Fleet Street and Holborn, the two major east-west thoroughfares in London.
down from London: Haslemere is about an hour south of London.
Fitzjohn's Avenue: street popular with artists in Hampstead, a northern borough of London.
Haslemere: city about an hour south of London; the healthy air and lovely countryside attracted numerous artists, writers and scientists.
Holborn Viaduct: waterworks which served South London; created in the 1860s to improve the approach to the city from the west.
Horsham: the largest town in a beautiful rural area in southeast England about 50 miles from London.
Lincoln's Inn: the oldest of the four Inns of Court near the western boundary of London that housed barristers and their law offices as well as dining halls for the barristers and their law students.
the Mint: the Royal Mint was near the Tower of London at Tower Hill in London.
Monmouthshire: a county in southeastern Wales bordering England to the west.
National Gallery: holds a national collection of Western European painting from the 13th to the 19th centuries, on show 360 days a year, free of charge.
Newnham: a college for women at Cambridge established in 1871.
Ostend: a popular port city in Belgium, developed as a fashionable seaside resort during the 19th century.
Primrose Hill: a sloping meadow with hilltop views of London purchased from Eton College in the early 1840s.
Redhill: a town in Surrey; during the late 1830s, the main London to Brighton railway was built running directly through what is now Redhill Town Centre.
Surrey: a largely residential county of southeast England.
Tintern Abbey: founded in Monmouthshire by Cistercian monks in 1131 A.D., the abbey was enlarged in the next century. It was dissolved in the 16th century and is pretty much a ruin today. It was also the subject of a poem by William Wordsworth.
Verona: a city in northern Italy of architectural interest because of its Roman Arena and theatre—and its connections to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* that is set in Verona.
Waterloo Bridge: a bridge across the Thames originally intended to be named Strand Bridge, but changed to commemorate Wellington's victory over Napoleon in 1815.
Waterloo Station: a train station opened in 1848 on the south bank of the Thames in Lambeth.
Winchester: this former capital of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex, the city remains prominent in Britain as a center of learning. It contains one of the world's great cathedrals which dates to shortly after 1066.

Lupu, Michael, ed. *Mrs. Warren's Profession Study Guide*. Minneapolis: Guthrie Theatre, 2003.

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The History of Prostitution

prostitution (pros-ti-**too**-sh*uh*n)
noun. the sale of sexual services for money or other kinds of return

It has been thought that prostitution (at least in the modern sense) cannot have emerged before the use of money, which can only have taken place after the beginnings of several trades. As for its claims of being "the oldest profession," hunting, midwifery, gardening or teaching may outrank it.

In the ancient world a type of religious prostitution was practiced in Cyprus (Paphus) and in Corinth, where the temple counted more than a thousand prostitutes (*hierodules*), according to Strabo, a historian. It was widely used in Sardinia and in some of the Phoenician cultures, usually in honor ot the goddess 'Ashtart.' The Phoenicians probably carried it to other ports of the Mediterranean Sea, in such areas as Sicily, Asia Minor and Syria.

Prostitution was common in ancient Israel, despite being forbidden by Jewish Law. Some prophets, such as Hosea and Ezekiel, strongly fought it. The religious cults of Canaan, where a significant portion of prostitutes were male, were likely a great influence. In Jericho a prostitute named Rahab assisted Israelite spies and eventually married a Jew. Her claim to fame was that she became the great-great-grandmother of the famed King David.

In ancient Greek society prostitutes were independent and sometimes influential women who were required to wear distinctive dress and pay taxes. Some similarities have been found between the Greek *hetaera* and the Japanese *oiran*, complex figures that are perhaps in an intermediate position between prostitution and courtisanerie.

Some prostitutes in ancient Greece, known as the *Lais,* were famous for their beauty as well as their company and charged extraordinary sums for their services. In the 6th century B.C., Solon instituted the first of Athens' brothels and, with the earnings from this enterprise, built a temple dedicated to Aphrodite Pandermo, patron goddess of this commerce. The Greek word for prostitute is *porne,* derived from the verb *pernemi* (to sell), with the evident modern evolution.

In ancient Rome, while there were some commonalities with the Greek system, as the Empire grew prostitutes were often foreign slaves caught, bought or raised for that purpose. Enslavement into prostitution was sometimes used as a legal punishment against "free" women who committed criminal acts. A large brothel found in Pompeii, called the Lupanar, attests to the widespread use of prostitutes around Rome and its vicinities. Life expectancy for prostitutes was generally low, but some managed to get free and establish themselves as practitioners of folk medicine.

During the Middle Ages prostitution was commonly found in urban areas. Although all forms of sexual activity outside of marriage were regarded as sinful by the Roman Catholic Church, prostitution was tolerated because it supposedly prevented the greater evils of rape, sodomy and masturbation. Augustine of Hippo held that prostitution was a necessary evil: just as a well-ordered palace needed a good sewer, so a well-ordered city needed brothels.

After the decline of the Roman Empire, many prostitutes were still slaves. However, religious campaigns against slavery and the growing market economy turned prostitution back into a business. By the High Middle Ages town governments permitted prostitution outside the city walls. beyond the jurisdiction of the authorities. Indeed, in France and Germany certain streets were set aside for this practice. In London the brothels of Southwark were owned by the Bishop of Winchester. Still later, it became common in the major towns and cities of Southern Europe to establish civic brothels, while outlawing any prostitution taking place elsewhere. In much of Northen Europe a *laissez-faire* attitude seemed to predominate.

By the end of the 15th century, attitudes hardened against prostitution with the advent of the Protestant Reformation. Many German towns closed their brothels to eradicate prostitution and the sexually trans-

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mitted diseases it fostered. In some places, prostitutes had to distinguish themselves by particular signs, such as having very short hair, no hair at all or wearing veils. In some cultures prostitutes were the only women allowed to sing or act in theatrical performances.

In the 19th century, legalized prostitution became a public controversy as France and then the United Kingdom passed the Contagious Diseases Acts, legislation that mandated pelvic examinations for suspected prostitutes. Many early feminists fought for their repeal, either on the grounds that prostitution should be illegal and therefore not government regulated or because it forced these degrading examinations upon women.

This legislation applied not only to the United Kingdom and France, but also to their overseas colonies.

Originally, prostitution was widely legal in the United States. It became illegal in almost all states between 1910 and 1915, largely because of the influence of the Women's Christian Temperance Union which frowned upon drug and alcohol use. In 1917 the legally defined prostitution district of Storyville in New Orleans was closed down by the Federal government despite local objections. Prostitution remained legal in Alaska until 1953 (though not yet a U.S. state) and is still legal in some counties of Nevada.

With the discovery of HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s the penalties for prostitution increased from a misdemeanor to a felony, with maximum sentences ranging from 10 to 15 years. Mrs. Warren would have some difficulty getting her profession going in this century and in this country.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiiki/Prostitution#History

The word prostitution should either not be used at all, or else applied impartially to all persons who do things for money that they would not do if they had other assured means of livelihood.
—Shaw, note at the end of his novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, 1886.

Cultural Context: Perspective on Prostitution at the Turn of the Century

Men of education tell us that the social evil (prostitution) is a necessity….If gentlemen who have nothing better to do than to eat and drink and enjoy themselves, believe that evil to be a necessity, we working men do not believe it.

—Anonymous working man, letter quoted in Josephine Butler's, Social Purity, *1879.*

I read some paragraphs taken from the report of a debate in the House of Commons, which made me doubt my eyesight, with respect to the age at which female children should be answerable for their own ruin….I did not think we were so low as this…that one member should suggest that the age of these innocents should be heightened to 14, and that another suggested it should not be so high. Another that it should be reduced to 10 and, oh my God, pleaded that it was hard for a man—HARD for a man!—having a charge brought against him, not to be able to plead the consent of a child like that. I would not tell what, but for the grace of God, I should feel like doing to the man who brought that argument to bear on on my child….

—Catherine Mumford Booth, *"The Iniquity of State Regulated Vice"* speech, 1884.

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Man has in all times and climes regarded the use of prostitutes as his natural and exclusive right. All the more strictly and severely does he watch over and judge every woman outside the pale of prostitution. He does not trouble himself with the consideration that a woman has precisely the same impulses as a man.

The trade in Women's Flesh has assumed enormous dimensions. It is carried on with an admirable organization, on a most extensive scale, without attracting the attention of the police, in the midst of all our culture and civilization. A host of brokers, agents, carriers of both sexes is engaged in the business with the same cold-bloodedness as though it were a question of any other article of sale. The price depends, as in the case of other wares, on the quality; and the different categories are sorted and sent to different places and countries according to the tastes and demand of the customers.

—August Bebel, *"Prostitution, a Necessary Social Institution of the Bourgeois World," Women in the Past, Present and Future*, *1885*

It is one of our many hypocrisies to pretend we do not see things that are plainly put before us every day, and also to assume a fastidious disgust and horror when told of certain "barbarisms" still practiced in Europe, barbarisms which we consider we have, in our state of ultra-civilisation, fortunately escaped. One of these "barbaric" institutions which moves us to shudder gracefully and turn up the whites of our eyes, is slavery… It is an absolute grim fact that in England, women—those of the upper classes, at any rate—are not today married, but bought for a price. The high and noble intention of marriage is entirely lost sight of in the scheming, the bargaining and the pricing."

—Marie Corelli, *"The Modern Marriage Market,"* 1898.

It is easy to ask a woman to be virtuous; but it is not reasonable if the penalty of virtue be starvation, and the reward of vice immediate relief. If you offer a pretty girl twopence-half-penny an hour in a match factory, with a chance of contracting necrosis of the jawbone from phosphorous poisoning on the one hand, and on the other a jolly and pampered time under the protection of a wealthy bachelor, which was what the Victorian employers did and what employers still do all over the world when they are not stopped by resolutely socialistic laws, you are loading the dice in favor of the devil so monstrously as not only to make it certain that he will win, but raising the question whether the girl does not owe it to her own self-respect and desire for wider knowledge and experience, more cultivated society, and greater grace and elegance of life, to sell herself to a gentleman for pleasure rather than to an employer for profit…. In short, Capitalism acts on women as a continual bribe to enter into sex relations for money, whether in or out of marriage; and against this bribe there stands nothing beyond the traditional respectability which Capitalism ruthlessly destroys by poverty, except religion and the inborn sense of honor which has its citadel in the soul and can hold out (sometimes) against all circumstances. It is useless to pretend that religion and tradition and honor always win the day….

—George Bernard Shaw, *"Women in the Labor Market,"* from *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism,* 1928.

I think that the power and the contemporary resonance of this play both come, not from any shock value, but from its deeply penetrating, tireless question: 'What after?' What after tearing off all the masks, appearances, lies, illusions? With a passion equal to that of Nietzsche, Shaw demands from us a crystal-like, merciless self-knowledge and self-critical courage, of the kind that Vivie searches for throughout the play. Shaw's passion rejects any compromise and so, consequently, does Vivie. Admirable, no doubt. Yet at the same time we cannot help agreeing with Mrs. Warren: "Lord help the world if everybody took to doing the right thing!" Uncompromising morality, however heroic, becomes hopelessly abstract when it cannot allow for the contradictions and imperfections of human

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nature. There is something basically inhuman in a daughter rejecting her own mother, no matter how sinful the mother might be. Is then the desperate honesty of Vivie—and of Shaw himself—only Utopian extremism? Shaw ends his play with an irresolvable disharmony between the world of values (to which "the Gospel of Art" belongs) and what we consider the real world ("the Gospel of Getting On"). We cannot believe, as Praed does, in the Gospel of Art: romantic illusion may touch with its naieveté, but no one today can treat it seriously. In our secular world, then, does the Gospel of Getting On reign universally, unthreatened, unchallenged, leading us to exactly the same point where Shaw leads his Vivie, our contemporary? Her questions become our questions. How can we live honestly, deprived of all illusions, in this brutal world? If we reject any Utopia as illusion, does this make us all accomplices of Sir George Crofts? Does it mean our approval of Crofts' principles and Mrs. Warren's practices, our approval of all the evil aspects of the Gospel of Getting On?

—Bradecki, Tadeusz. Program Notes to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Niagra-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada: The Shaw Festival, 1997

Background on *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

> MRS. WARREN: …Why shouldn't I have done it? The house in Brussels was… a much better place for a woman to be than in the factory where Aunt Jane got poisoned.
>
> —*Mrs. Warren's Profession*

In the early 1860s concern was raised about the danger to the British military forces of sexually transmitted diseases, so a concerted effort was made to curtail street prostitution. Therefore, Parliament passed a series of Contagious Diseases Acts (1864-69) that decreed that any woman suspected of plying her trade in garrison towns and sea ports could be taken to a hospital for a medical examination and treatment—by force, if necessary.

For Josephine Butler and Harriet Martineau, two Women's Advocates, this legislation was egregious. It seemed to sanction prostitution by regulating it and simultaneously victimizing the prostitute, while excusing her male clients. The legislation, besides being duplicitious, was seen as "big" government because each succeeding Act extended the area of regulations. Shaw, himself, saw these laws as containing a double standard. In the Preface/Apology to *Mrs. Warren's Profession* he wrote: "The medical gentleman would compulsorily examine and register Mrs. Warren, whilst leaving Mrs. Warren's patrons… free to destroy her health and anybody else's without fear of reprisals." [1.] Thus, the Contagious Disease Acts were repealed in 1886.

Josephine Butler, along with W.T. Stead (the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette)*, Bramwell Booth (son of Salvation Army founder William Booth), and Rebecca Jarrett (a former prostitute), were anxious to expose the Continental traffic in teenage prostitution going on mainly between England and Brussels and Vienna, where brothels were legalized in 1870. They persuaded a 13-year-old girl, Eliza Armstrong (and her mother), to pose as a prostitute for the purpose of selling her wares abroad. The young girl's age was significant, for on the Continent the legal age of consent was 21. while in England it was only 13. Subsequently, the government raised the legal age to 16 in Great Britain. But W.T. Stead of the *Gazette* made a scandal out of it, inferring that Eliza was part of the "White Slave Traffic." (Actually she was quite safe in France.) The story caused a public outcry and Shaw, writing book reviews for the *Gazette*, threw his support behind Stead.

Besides his personal experience, the play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, could be viewed as a response to this outcry, for in the Preface/Apology he identifies her profession with the "White Slave Traffic." Shaw also said he wrote the play "to draw attention to the truth that prostitution is caused not by female depravity and male licentious-

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ness but simply by underpaying, undervaluing and overworking women so shamefully that the poorest of them are forced to resort to prostitution to keep body and soul together." [2.]

Though Shaw was interested in depicting the woes of prostitution, he was examining the arguments as to how a decision to enter the sex trade could be legitimized. Mrs. Warren says it was her best chance of keeping food on the table and was the only solution to the dilemmas she faced as a young woman. She declares: "It can't be right, Vivie, that there shouldn't be better opportunities for women. I stick to that"

Shaw's knowledge of London prostitution came partly from books such as Charles Booth's great study of the London poor and W. T. Stead's sensational articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." But his personal slant on the subject came from living with his mother in Fitzroy Square. Living precariously on the borders of London's underworld of sex, Lucinda Shaw, at the age of forty three, found herself needing to support herself and two children on a separation allowance of one pound a week from her alcoholic husband. She might have turned to the singing teacher, Vandeleur Lee, whom she had followed to London—most of Dublin supposed she had done so long ago. Instead, she found work teaching singing at the North London Collegiate School for Ladies, supporting herself and her difficult son until, in his forties, he became wealthy enough to support her. In later years, Shaw admitted to friends that Mrs. Warren was based in some respects on his mother.

Shaw knew that the only dramatic moment in a career of prostitution was the moment of decision, to choose such a life or not. Artfully, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, without bringing a working prostitute onto the stage, presents that moment three times: when Mrs. Warren tells the story of her life, when she explains why she still runs her chain of brothels, and when she makes clear to her daughter Vivie that this empire is hers if she wants it.

Vivie, too, is partly based on Lucinda Shaw. Refusing her mother's offer, Vivie rejects the world of carnality that makes that empire possible, family affections and all. One of the best things about the play is that Shaw makes us see this rejection as tragic. Living at 29 Fitzroy Square, he knew that there was no frontier beween vice and virtue; they were both faces of the same city.

1. Shaw, p. 184.
2. Allett, p. 25.
3. Wikipedia, p. 1.

Larson, Gale K. *Shaw and History. Vol. 19.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.
Allett, John. "*Mrs. Warren's Profession* and the Politics of Prostitution."

Shaw, Bernard. *Preface to Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin, 1982.

http://en. wikipedia. org/wiki/ Mrs._ Warren's_Profession.

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Some Perspectives on the Character of Mrs. Warren's Daughter

> VIVIE: You explained how it [your profession] came about.
> You did not tell me it is still going on.
> —*Mrs. Warren's Profession*

The quotation above shows Vivie is shocked by her mother's continuing practice of running brothels. This reaction would not fit the critical view that Vivie is a liberated woman; to some, it might suggest the opposite opinion: that Vivie is the Unwomanly Woman and somewhat of a prig. While Shaw was writing *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, he was probably unaware of Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalytic writings, but he was aware of the motivating influences of human nature. Vivie seems to be a product of her upbringing.

Early on we learn of Vivie's institutional schooling when she tells Mr. Praed all about her childhood in boarding schools. Vivie's impersonal upbringing is very important to her as it is uppermost in her thoughts. In addition, it seems she has trouble forming strong relationships. In *War and Children* (1943), the authors Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham observe that: "The ability to love…has to be learned and practiced. When this opportunity is missing in childhood, all later relationships will develop weakly, will remain shallow." [1.]

In a later study titled *Infants and Families*, Freud and Burlingham contend that children raised in institutions, without an early attachment to a mother, "cease to search for a mother substitute and fail to develop all the more highly organized forms of love which should be modeled on the first pattern." [2.]

Another connection between children raised in institutions and specific personality traits is cited by William Goldfarb. He suggests that "institution children present a history of aggressive behavior." [3.] Vivie smokes cigars, lifts heavy chairs and shakes hands so firmly that grown men wince. In addition, her reaction to her returning mother is apathetic, if not hostile. She refuses to go meet her mother's train and greets her with a less-than-affectionate, "How do, mater."

Shaw recognized the wrongs of institutional upbringing when he wrote *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928). "We ought to know that an institutional treatment of children is murderous for infants and bad for all children."[4.]

As a protagonist in the play Vivie begins in a state of ignorance and "progresses through a series of temptations which educate her and clarify and purify her vision," suggests critic Charles Berst.[5.] Thus, she rejects religion, marriage, aesthetics, romance, idealism and passion, for they are all a dodge from reality. Berst writes that Vivie finally finds peace in "facts, in hard, cold, mind and in work, work, work. The active mind dealing in tangibles becomes the basis of her salvation." [6.] Therefore, Berst feels the ending of the play is a tragedy in that Vivie finds refuge in the mundane—and not the spiritual. She passes judgment on all the various temptations because they require an emotional commitment which means she must "give up pure rationalism and rigid self control. Hers is the 'Gospel of Getting On.'" [7.]

The irony of the play is how Vivie and Mrs. Warren are so alike. Both hate wasters, admire character and have a compulsion to work. Both have romantic illusions; Mrs. Warren in motherhood, Vivie in her work. "Both desire to tell the truth about prostitution; both condemn hypocrisy…and each sees it in the other." [8.]

> MRS. WARREN: …I was a good mother, and because I made my daughter a good woman, she turns me out as if I were a leper.
> —*Mrs. Warren's Profession*

1. Freud and Burlingham in Wasserman, p. 170.
2. Freud and Burlingham in Wasserman, p. 171.
3. Goldfarb in Wasserman, p. 171.
4. Shaw in Wasserman, p. 172.
5. Berst, p. 11.
6. Berst, p. 11.
7. Berst. p. 14.
8. Berst, p. 17.

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Can This Relationship Be Saved?

Oh, my son's my son till he gets him a wife,
But my daughter's my daughter all her life.
—Dinah Maria Mulock Craik (1826-1887).
Young and Old

Kitty Warren is ready to assume her role as a mother by going about and giving orders to adults as if they were nursery school children. "Come! sit up, George, and take your stick out of your mouth!" or her response to Praed's suggestion that she treat Vivie with more sensitivity: "Respect! Treat my own daughter with respect! What next, pray!" Kitty assumes that the act of childbirth automatically makes a mother and she is confident that mother knows best. Her experience as a child was so harsh that she was deceived into thinking parents own their children. "She imagined she could impose her will on a young woman she had done everything for to make her independent and self-sufficient." [1.] In her ambition for respectability, she has disregarded nurturing and has never physically bonded with her daughter.

Thus, the mother-daughter conflict is one of the themes of the play. Vivie's argument is not about her mother's past, but her present—that she continues her profitable profession under the veneer of respectability.

Many critics have been perplexed by Vivie's coldness, even cruelty, at the end of the play. Shaw felt compelled to explain her behavior as an "unthinking, purely emotional reaction to her mother's past neglect, to which she now responds in kind."[2.] Eric Bentley, in his biography of Shaw, suggests that, in this final scene, Shaw was subconsciously rejecting his own neglectful mother whom he blamed for his feelings of desolation.

Later Shaw would condemn Vivie's profession as capitalism's "anarchical scramble for money." [3.] Vivie's profession of actuarial work is not free from hypocrisy. It is not a safe, moral business because Shaw compares it to gambling and gambling for Shaw "is a moral evil worse than prostitution, where bookmakers play the odds in order to try to get other people's money without working for it." [4.] To Shaw, actuarial work might be considered a form of risk calculation.

The separation between mother and daughter at the end of the play exudes a sense of loss. Shaw seemed to have no resolution for this conflict and was never to write "*Kitty and Vivie's Excellent Reunion*." Thereafter, while the battle of the sexes raged in his plays, he never allowed any of his heroines a retreat to a corner office.

Into this breach march two women, Barbara McFarland, a psychologist, and Virginia Watson-Roulin, a free-lance writer. In their book, *My Mother was Right* (1997), they divide daughters into three categories: 1. the "Wandering Daughter," 2. the "Prodigal Daughter" and 3. the "Untraveled Daughter." We will discard the Untraveled Daughter because she has never had any conflicts with her mother and loves and respects her for everything.

The Wandering Daughter experiences anger and resentment over early childhood slights; consequently, they cling to negative and painful emotions that prevent them from seeing their mothers in any positive light. Their mothers probably lacked the nurturing skills necessary to care for their children and it is "this deficit that deserves the anger, not so much the mother." [5.]

Prodigal Daughters discounted their mothers, their words, how they lived their lives and vowed to be nothing like them. They have experienced anger, guilt and disapproval but are now allowing themselves to talk about a way back home: forgiveness. Vivie fits in both these categories but is nowhere near forgiving.

Both sets of daughters remember pieces of advice their mothers gave them. One Wandering Daughter recalls her mother saying: "You don't need a man if you have your own career." Other smart advice given was: "Stand on your own two feet;" "Look out for yourself;" "Nobody will take as good care of you as you do for yourself;" and "Finish your education and then be self-reliant and don't depend on anyone except yourself."

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The authors' remedies, sadly, were not available to Miss Vivie. These include counseling; women's discussion groups, such as coffee klatches, book clubs, etc. which can help to alter a woman's take on her mom. It is best to keep these conversations positive, so we can see our mothers as human beings with human limitations. The focus of all this conversation is to forgive our mothers. In doing that, "we are shifting to a new consciousness, one that has begun to embrace and truly value our feminine nature, yet maintain a reasonable appreciation… of the qualities of rationality, competition, independence and achievement… We become free to appreciate and support all women, regardless of their choices: whether it's to stay at home and raise children or to be a corporate CEO." [7.] By acknowledging the feminine nature we share with other women, we truly come home.

1. Gilmartin, p. 146.
2. Allett, p. 34.
3. Allett, p. 35.
4. Allett, p. 35.
5. McFarland and Watson-Rouslin, p. 9.
6. McFarland and Watson-Rouslin, p. 53.
7. McFarland and Watson-Rouslin, p. 213.

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