

Realism versus Naturalism in Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

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Abstract—This study examines the critical ambivalence surrounding the classification of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* within the frameworks of Realism and Naturalism, two dominant literary movements of the late nineteenth century. While George Bernard Shaw's plays have been unpleasantly generated extensive debate, this particular play has attracted significant attention due to its complex treatment of social issues, characterization, and dramatic technique. Critics remain divided over whether Shaw adopts a predominantly Realistic or Naturalistic approach in representing the causes and consequences of prostitution, class dynamics, and moral conflict. This study adopts a qualitative, analytical, and interpretive approach to examine the interplay between Realism and Naturalism in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by analyzing the play's thematic structure, character development, and underlying social critique. The findings showed that Shaw deliberately integrates elements of both Realism and Naturalism, using each method to reinforce his role as a social reformer. Through this synthesis, Shaw not only exposes the socio-economic forces shaping individual choices but also emphasizes human agency and moral responsibility.

Keywords—Shaw, Vivie, Mrs. Warren, Naturalism, Realism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many definitions and critical studies fail to come up with a decisive and clear-cut distinction between Realism and Naturalism in drama. Both of them appeared and became popular at almost the same time and with similar effects. This can be considered a historical coincidence due to the same principal causes and effects that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe. Our paper provides a summary definition and usage of both of these schools. Realism and Naturalism are entangled but diverse literary movements that arose in the 19th century.

Realism is a theatrical movement meant to revolt against the 18th-century melodrama due to significant changes in the Victorian social, industrial, capitalist, and moral aspects of life. The movement's pioneer playwrights sought to produce down-to-earth themes and characters that represented the public air of the age (Taine, 1900, p. 13).

The features of this movement include realistic dialogue, with no asides to the audience, lengthy soliloquies, or prose to be found. The characters are just normal people. They never used supernatural elements. The conflicts are interpersonal through using psychological inner conflicts rather than being caused by external forces (Taine, 1900, p. 13).

The present paper attempts to give appropriate answers to the questions given below.

- Research Question 1: Does Naturalism interact with Realism in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* in manifesting the causes and effects of the themes given in the play?
- Research Question 2: As a social reformer, does Bernard Shaw succeed in exposing such a crucial theme as prostitution to criticize the Capitalist system of Victorian society?
- Research Question 3: How far does *Mrs. Warren's Profession* criticize the individual and public hypocrisy latent in the mammonist society of British society?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The dramas written by George Bernard Shaw have been causing a lot of controversial writings, whether academic, political, or social. Critical writings have never ceased publication on all these grounds; for, actually, he himself had a controversial character. Moving from social reform to depicting realistic slices from society as a playwright belonging to the school of Realism, to adopting Henrik Ibsen's school of Naturalism, as well as his revolutionary opinions on politics and social injustice.

Like all the other plays listed in Bernard Shaw's Plays Unpleasant, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* scored many critical

essays, some of which dealt with Henrik Ibsen's influence on Shaw like Metwally (1973, p. 93), and Meisel (1963, p. 140), whereas Charles (1973, p. 8) discussed Shaw's artistic method in divulging one of the most morbid social diseases. The same is true of Braybrooke (1959, p. 156), who thought of Shaw as a genius.

Dierkes-Thrun (2006) went through the theme of incest and human trafficking in British society. Carpenter (1969, p. 56) wrote on Bernard Shaw's influence in destroying the fake idols of Victorian society (1969, p. 56). Others like Todd (1993) wrote significant critical essays and books on the newborn of the British and European societies, such as Todd (1993).

A. Realism in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

True portrayal of social problems

Mrs. Warren's Profession undertakes a Realist obligation to challenge real social problems; it stages the economic burdens on females, and insincerity in Victorian ethical standards, snobbery, and class distinction that limit opportunities for poor females. Dialogue and character delineation reflect the Realist aim of honest portrayal, i.e., the free language about prostitution and capitalism puts Victorian decorum at stake (Gassner, 1963, p. 625).

Characterization and psychological complexity

Shaw does not delineate clear-cut moral characters in his plays, particularly in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Mrs. Warren's character, for example, is neither wholly villainous nor victimized like the way characters appear as being good or bad in melodrama; she is a practical businessperson shaped by universal disparity (Gassner, 1963, p. 625). On the other hand, Vivie Warren characterizes a new generation who opposed to the naturalistic concept of heredity.

Naturalism

The school of Naturalism began with the writings of Charles Darwin, such as *The Origin of Species* and *The Theory of Evolution*. Naturalism also began to develop side by side with Realism, which was becoming popular as a parallel movement. Darwin's theories at that time meant to depict the concept that humans entirely belong to nature and are thus determined more by evolutionary forces than by their determination (Gassner, 1963, p. 627).

The major features of Naturalism include using unemotional language, the emphasis on people under stress, and constant depictions of characters' sociopsychological backgrounds and attitudes; i.e. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Shaw's play is frequently analyzed in terms of how it uses both Realist techniques and Naturalist ideologies to engage with social issues, particularly prostitution, class, and gender.

Both Realism and Naturalism sound pretty similar. They aim to reveal the world as it truthfully is, with no fabrication, overstatement, or promising spectacles. When Realism portrays the world reliably from the human perspective, Naturalism goes a step farther and aims to portray the world from a detached and objective perspective (Gassner, 1963, p. 627).

Mrs. Warren's Profession integrates crucial Naturalist

worries. Among these, we understand that:

1. Shaw focuses on the social environment as determinative; i.e., Mrs. Warren's options are exposed in responses to financial adversity and lack of social security
2. Universal criticism; *Mrs. Warren's Profession* proposes that society's buildings, not only personal, create circumstances in which prostitution develops into a reasonable economic option (Gassner, 1963, p. 625).

Shaw's integration of the naturalist understanding of determinism aligns with coexistent social science thought.

3. Social Reform:

After 8 years of censorship and prohibition of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* for being inappropriate for the public taste of Victorian society, Bernard Shaw wrote a "preface" to the 1898 publication of his play. In his "preface," Shaw fervently defends the play against censorship, claiming that prostitution is not caused by ethical corruption, but by the commercial misuse of females in British society. Shaw affirms that society compels depraved women into practicing prostitution by low payment and overwork for the decent female workers, which forces them to seek a better substitute to malnourishment or exhausting slave work (Shaw "Preface, 1975, p. 201). As Khatri puts it, "Throughout his life Shaw dealt with prevailing social problems". He was against the exploitation of the working class. His plots have an artistic beginning, climax, and final denouement (Khatri and Dutta, 2025).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, analytical, and interpretive approach to examine the interplay between Realism and Naturalism in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw. The research is primarily based on close textual analysis of the play, supported by relevant theoretical frameworks and secondary critical sources (Jameel et al., 2022).

The methodology proceeds through several interconnected steps. First, the study establishes a theoretical foundation by reviewing key concepts of Realism and Naturalism as defined by major literary theorists and critics. This includes identifying the distinguishing features of each movement, particularly in terms of characterization, determinism, environment, social conditions, and authorial intent.

Second, a detailed textual analysis of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is conducted. Selected scenes, dialogues, and character interactions are examined to identify elements that align with either Realistic or Naturalistic conventions. Special attention is given to the portrayal of socio-economic forces, moral agency, and the representation of prostitution as a social institution.

Third, the study engages with existing critical literature to highlight the ambivalence in scholarly interpretations of the play. By comparing different viewpoints, the research identifies the main areas of disagreement and evaluates their validity in light of textual evidence (Massoudi, 2023).

Finally, a comparative and synthetic approach is employed

to demonstrate how Shaw integrates both Realism and Naturalism. The analysis aims to show that this combination is not contradictory but rather functional in reinforcing Shaw's broader objective as a social reformer.

Overall, the methodology is descriptive-analytical and interpretive, relying on textual evidence and critical discourse to clarify the play's artistic and ideological positioning.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mrs. Warren's Profession, the third of Shaw's *Plays Unpleasant*, written in 1893–1894, deals with a social theme of prostitution as universal social corruption. The theme is in itself unpleasant, yet the unpleasantness of the play does not only come from the fact that it condemns prostitution as a grave social evil, but also from the fact that other people are worse than prostitutes in a society governed by a capitalist system run by those who are accustomed to exploit the poor through hard work and low wages, which makes it hard for them to maintain their living. The play reflects the notion that prostitution flourishes in a society in which the individual can hardly find food for himself and his children. Thus, the play reflects the fact that the individual is compelled to follow this or that social evil in order to satisfy his needs and to secure a good living for his family. It seems that Shaw not only condemns the prostitution of women, but also prostitution found among those who do not have any principles or moral values.

Regarding the theme of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, it is indicated in the title of the play that the play deals with the profession of Mrs. Warren, namely, prostitution. It seems that Shaw is making a case study out of prostitution to point out in detail the main reasons why a woman is pushed to this vicious way, and at the same time, it is an attack against the capitalistic society that gives rise to such social evils. In his "Preface" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Shaw declares that the main reasons for the emergence of prostitution are low wages, absence of respectability, and heavy work, but not sexual gratification (Gassner, 1963, p. 625).

Mrs. Warren's Profession was written in 1894 to draw attention to the truth that prostitution is caused, not by female depravity and male licentiousness, 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. (Shaw, "Preface" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, p. 201).

Furthermore, Shaw declares that a normal woman could not be a prostitute if society could secure respectability for her, and that she would not marry for the sake of money if she could marry for the sake of love (Gassner, 1963, p. 625). A great number of English girls, Shaw says, who keep on living in poverty, are fully perceptive of the fact that hard, honest labor will only lead them to different kinds of diseases and finally to early death, which is to make them socially deserted or to lead them to savagery, and thus they can be justified in their choice of prostitution. "The primrose path to

the stony way of virtue, since both vice at worst and virtue at best, lead to the same end in poverty and overwork. It is true that the Elementary School mistress will tell you that only girls of a certain kind will reason in this way." (Shaw, "Preface" to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, p. 201).

Furthermore, Shaw believes that Mrs. Warren is rotter than a prostitute is; "She is an organism of prostitution," says Shaw (West, 1958, p. 41). She is the person who manages big houses of prostitution all over Europe, of which her daughter never heard before; her daughter is highly educated and brought up with much respect with the profits of prostitution of which she is completely ignorant (West, 1958, p. 41) The play, it seems, sounds unpleasant because, as Shaw remarks, nobody's conscience is wounded or afflicted "except, I hope, the conscience of the audience".

It is evident that the environment and circumstances of Vivie have had a greater effect on her character. Institutional life which Vivie used to undergo and the absence of her parents make her devoid of any interest in her mother; that is why she does not show any concern for the fact that her mother because she does not show any concern for the fact that her mother is coming to visit her, and at the same time, she does not intend to receive her mother at the station. It is true that Vivie shows a hostile reaction towards her mother: when Praed suggests that they should go to the station to receive Mrs. Warren, Vivie finds no reason why she should go. Again, when her mother comes, she does not show any emotional concern for her.

Another influence on Vivie's character may come from the kind of career she has adopted. She confesses that she becomes "a more ignorant barbarian than any woman could possibly be who hadn't gone in for the tripos." [Final honor for MSc. Degree exams at Cambridge University] Furthermore, she assures Praed of the hard work she has to do at the mathematical tripos: "Do you know what the mathematical tripos means? It means grind, grind, grind for 6–8 h a day at mathematics, and nothing but mathematics," (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 221) and that is the reason why she does not have either romance or beauty in her life. She says that she likes working, and as she gets tired, she prefers "a comfortable chair, a cigar, (and) a little whisky." (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 223).

The stage direction tells us that Mrs. Warren is "[between 40 and 50, formerly pretty... rather spoilt and domineering, and decidedly vulgar, but, on the whole, a genial and fairly presentable old black-guard a woman]." (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 220) This description of Mrs. Warren's character is quite in accordance with her behavior towards her daughter, and this is shown as she asks Praed not to "interfere, Praddy: I know how to treat my own child as well as you do," (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 221) for Praed asks her not to treat Vivie as a little child. Sir George Crofts, an old friend and partner of Mrs. Warren who accompanies her on her visit to her daughter, asks Praed about Vivie's father. He is crooked and cunning as he tries to get the truth from Praed in an indirect way. He tells him that it is impossible, and at this moment, Crofts concludes that Praed must know then who her father is. (Shaw, *Mrs.*

Warren's Profession, act 1, p. 223).

Crofts appears to be very harsh towards Praed as he does not believe what the latter tells him concerning the question of Vivie's father. Throughout Crofts's inquiry about who Vivie's father might be, the audience gets a hint of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* when Praed declares that he has "nothing to do with that side of Mrs. Warren's life, and never had. She has never spoken to her about it." (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 224) Meanwhile, a young gentleman hails Praed, who gets near the gate, and it appears that he is "[pleasant, pretty dressed, cleverly good-for-nothing, not long turned 20, with a charming voice and agreeably disrespectful manners. He carries a light sporting magazine rifle]." (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 225).

At the beginning of the play, it is indicated that Crofts has long been having the desire to be introduced to Vivie Warren, and this is shown as Mrs. Warren tells Praed that Crofts has "been worrying...[her] life out these 3 years to have that little girl of ... [hers] shewn to him; and now ... I've done it" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, p. 222). The hereditary elements transferred into Frank are obvious as his father appears on the stage. It is made clear then that Frank wants to marry Vivie not for the sake of love but for the sake of money.

At the end of Act 1, it appears that the Rev. Samuel Gardner had a love affair with Mrs. Warren, who still keeps his letters in an album. He is certainly confused when Mrs. Warren reminds him of their past, so that he does not know what to say in the presence of his son and other people, for he blushes, and at the same time recalls Mrs. Warren's old name, which the latter does not want to hear any more:

MRS. WARREN [swooping on the Reverend Samuel] Why, its Sam Gardner, gone into the church Well, I never; Don't you know us, Sam? This is George Crofts, as large as life and twice as natural. Don't you remember me?

REV. S. [very red] I really—er—

MRS. WARREN. Of course you do. Why, I have a whole Album of your letters still: I came across them

REV. S. [miserably confused] Miss Vavasour, I believe.

MRS. WARREN [correcting him quickly in a loud whisper] Tch; Nonsense; Mrs. Warren: don't you see my daughter there? (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 1, pp. 229-30).

The opening scenes of the play are seen to be natural; all the events and situations come naturally as if in real life. Thus, at the beginning of Act 2, which starts in Vivie's cottage, Frank tries to woo Mrs. Warren, who declares that he resembles his father. (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Act 2, p. 232). Like his father when he was young, Frank is determined by his natural instincts, trying to convince her to go together to Vienna to enjoy a good time there; but Mrs. Warren, aware of his sexual intentions towards her, treats him at first as a little boy who is not old enough to know "about such things." (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 232) It seems that Frank bears the same sexual passions as his father does:

Frank. Do come to Vienna with me? It'd be ever such larks.

Mrs. Warren. No, thank you. Vienna is no place for you – at

least not until you're a little boy...

Now, look here, little boy [taking his face in her hands and turning it up to her]: I know you through and through by your likeness to your father, better than you know yourself. Don't you go taking any silly ideas into your head about me. Do you hear?

Frank [gallantly wooing her with his voice] can't help it, my dear Mrs. Warren: it runs into the family. (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 232).

But finally, Mrs. Warren is tempted to kiss him, which she pretends as a motherly kiss. (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 232) This reveals that both Frank and Mrs. Warren are biologically determined. It is also indicated that Mrs. Warren is quite aware of Frank's traits inherited from his father.

Samuel Gardner objects to Mrs. Warren's suggestion that Frank is to marry Vivie because of some reasons which he cannot tell, and at the same time Crofts is ready to agree with him, saying that it is impossible for Frank to marry her. Here, Crofts's conduct is quite natural. Crofts's protest is surely reasonable from his point of view, because he himself intends to marry Vivie. Furthermore, he claims that Frank is penniless "to keep her on" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 235). However, Frank declares that Vivie is to marry him due to their mutual love and not for money. Here, in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, love is treated realistically and not romantically

As Vivie is trying to arrange the supper, she has been indifferent to her mother's speech when she tells her that she should not "go off like that without letting me know" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 36). It seems that Vivie has got to know something about her mother's profession from Praed as she has got a walk with him up to the hill (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 236). Hence, Frank expresses his contempt for his father, telling Vivie that his father is more than a fool, and that "he makes a much bigger ass of himself than he really is" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 236). This shows that Frank is a little boy, impulsive and childish.

Vivie tells her mother that she will not be with her anymore because the latter's way of life is completely different from hers. Hence, Mrs. Warren is immediately puzzled at this thought: "Your way of life! What do you mean?" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 243). Mrs. Warren wants her daughter to leave the college and come to live with her, but Vivie expresses her refusal to accompany her, asking her about "that way of life which" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 243). Mrs. Warren invites her to take it. Then, Vivie asks her where her father, family, relatives, and friends are; this time Mrs. Warren is puzzled, "[throwing herself on her knees]," (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 243), and as it is shown in the following extract:

VIVIE. Who was my father?

MRS. WARREN. You don't know what you're asking. Can't tell you.

VIVIE [determinedly] oh yes you can, if you like. I have a right to know; and you very well that I have that right.

(Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 244-45).

The Naturalistic notion of determinism is evident here; the idea that she was forced to take the vile way due to her environmental conditions and having no other alternatives or options save this way to save body and soul. However, Vivie at first objects to the notion that the individual is determined by forces beyond his control, forces like social and economic circumstances, asking her mother to tell her what her circumstances were (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 245). Mrs. Warren then is compelled to disclose to Vivie her past, however hard times she and her sister were facing during their early life. Thus, we know that Mrs. Warren's mother.

Had a friend fish shop down by the Mint, and kept herself and four daughters out of it. Two of us were sisters: that was me and Liz; and we were both good-looking and well made The other two were only half-sisters: undersized, ugly, starved looking... They were the respectable ones. Well, what did they get by their respectability? I'll tell you. One of them worked in a white lead factory 12 h a day for nine shillings a week until she died of lead poisoning... The other was always held up to us as a model because she married a government laborer... and kept his room and the three children neat and tidy on eighteen shillings a week – until he took to drink. That was worth being respectable for, wasn't it? (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 247).

Mrs. Warren goes on telling Vivie that she and her sister, Liz, had kept on living that way until the latter ran away, and the only news she got about her was that she ended her life “by jumping off Waterloo Bridge... [and that Mrs. Warren] was more afraid of the white lead factory than” the river (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 247-8). She also recalls the story of her hard, wearisome toil as she worked as a waitress in a “bar at Waterloo station: fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 248). Then, one night, when Mrs. Warren was very tired and could not keep herself awake, her sister Liz came into the bar “in a long fur cloak, elegant and comfortable, with a lot of sovereigns in her purse” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 245) and explained to her how she became wealthy through prostitution, and at the same time she convinced her to take that profession and contact with her sister who had long been a prostitute, and who urged her to be a prostitute too, and through the influence of the gloomy environment of the restaurant, in addition to her poverty and destitution, she decided to take prostitution as her profession to keep body and soul together.

Hence, the influence of environment, social and economic circumstances upon Mrs. Warren is so great that she – is compelled to choose that vicious profession. Thus, she is forced to do so by forces which she cannot resist. Vivie asks her why she could not save money in any other business than prostitution, but Mrs. Warren's answer makes Vivie quite convinced of her reasons for choosing prostitution. The following extract shows how Mrs. Warren's choice is justifiable:

MRS. WARREN. Yes, saving money. However, where can a woman get the money to save in any other business? Could you save out of four shillings a week and keep yourself dressed as well? Not you. Of course, if you're A plain woman and can't earn anything more; or if you have a turn for music, or newspaper-writing: that's different. However, neither Liz nor I had any turn for such things: all we had was our appearance and our turn for pleasing men. Do you think we were such fools as to let other people trade in our good looks by employing us as shopgirls, or barmaids, or waitresses, when we could trade in them ourselves and get all the profits instead of starvation wages? Not likely.

Vivie. You were certainly quite justified – from the business point of view (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 2, p. 248).

Here, Shaw develops a case study out of the story of Mrs. Warren; it can be taken as the thesis of the play – the study which shows how a poor woman who cannot get enough food and respectability is pushed to prostitution. In other words, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* presents a thesis about how a poor individual placed in a morbid society where she cannot live comfortably is consequently driven to illegal means to provide for herself and her children. The individuals here are forced by social and economic factors to have certain character and conduct. Thus, the scientific method is well expressed in the play. Having in mind *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Valency asserts that Shaw's “art was medical” (Valency, 1973, p. 103). Furthermore, in the case of Mrs. Warren, Shaw has placed the responsibility upon society that clears the way for the individual to commit evil practices to maintain respectability and comfort.

In support of the facts Shaw presents in the play concerning the rise of prostitution, Williamson makes some remarks with regard to prostitution according to her observations which can be taken as documentary facts: she observes that Mrs. Warren.

Is primarily the result of poverty and appallingly low women's wages, in fact the “sweat shop” and the subjugation of women. In the English welfare state, as we know, crime and vice have flourished like the green bay tree, and it has become obvious that many women like the life, and prefer it with its profits and freedom to hard work (Williamson, 1963, p.111).

Shaw proceeds to say that Mrs. Warren's strength, potency and frugality, her power and wisdom to look after her daughter, and her high capacity that makes her and her sister rise from poverty to a high social class “are all high English social virtues” (Shaw “Preface,” 1975, p.201). In the same “Preface” Shaw puts the blame upon society that offers Mrs. Warren the choice of prostitution, declaring that it is disgraceful and shameful of society to offer such an alternative:

It is no defense of an immoral life to say that the alternative offered by society collectively to poor women is a miserable life, starved, overworked, fetid, ailing, ugly. Though it is quite natural and right for Mrs. Warren to choose what is, according to her lights, the least immoral alternative, it is

nonetheless infamous of society to offer such alternatives. The alternatives offered are not morality and immorality, but two sorts of immorality. The man who cannot see that starvation, overwork, dirt, and disease are as anti-social as prostitution – that they are the vices and crimes of a nation, and not merely its misfortunes – is (to put it as politely as possible) a hopelessly Private Person. (Shaw “Preface,” 1975, p. 201-2).

At the beginning of Act III, Crofts makes his advances to Vivie; he tries to convince her that he is better for her as a husband than Frank, for he gets a lot of money while Frank has got none (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 260). Crofts is an old man, and there is nothing in him to attract Vivie. So, he tries to use his money, which is the only way that might make Vivie accept him as a husband. His behavior is, of course, natural; it is quite acceptable from a person like him in actual life:

CROFTS... Pleasant young fellow that, Miss Vivie. Pity he [Frank] has no money, isn't it?

VIVIE. Do you think so?

CROFTS. Well, what's he to do? No profession. No property. What's he good for? VIVIE. I realize his disadvantages, Sir George.

CROFTS. [a little taken aback at being so precisely interpreted] Oh, it's not that. However, while we're in this world, we're in it; and money's money. [Vivie does not answer]. Nice day, isn't it?

VIVIE [with scarcely veiled contempt for his effort at conversation] Very (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 260).

Then Crofts tells Vivie that her mother would not get any money without his help and advice. Moreover, the money spent on Vivie's education comes as a result of his partnership with Mrs. Warren (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 260). Vivie is made aware of the fact that her mother is Crofts's partner who manages hotels of prostitution all over Europe, and that she “always lived on” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 262) them: “It paid for. [her] education and the dress. [she had] on her back” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 260). Thus, the tainted money runs in the blood of Vivie too: “I believe I am just as bad as you,” 107 says Vivie. Crofts tries to persuade Vivie to marry him, telling her that nobody can propose to her the same way he is doing. His attempts, and the way he makes his advances, are seen to be natural. Charles A. Berst thinks that Crofts's offer of marriage is much more a realistic, concrete temptation when he shows his readiness to provide her a high social position and much money if she gives him her consent to be his wife:

The theme of incest is raised in this Act, when the avarice, heartlessness, and greed of Crofts are the product of the environment, namely, Victorian society. As Crofts realizes that all his advances to Vivie are a failure, he tells her in the presence of Frank that the latter is her half-brother, and at this moment Frank tries to shoot him with his rifle; but the bullet “[falls on the turf.]” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 267). At hearing the notion that she is Frank's

half-sister, Vivie decides to leave for “Honor Fraser's chambers, Chancery Lane, for the rest of. [her] life” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 260). Vivie condemns this morbid society and the laws that permit such persons like Crofts to exploit people, as she hears Crofts's own way of getting money through illegal means. Thus, Vivie declares that it is society that is to be held responsible for the evil practices:

VIVIE [quietly] I hardly find you worth thinking about at all now. When I think of the society that tolerates you, and the laws that protect you! When I think of how helpless nine out of ten young girls would be in the hands of you and my mother! The unmentionable woman and her capitalistic bully –

CROFTS [livid] Damn you!

VIVIE. You need not. I feel among the damned already. (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 267).

At Chancery Lane, where Vivie lives now, Frank comes to visit her in an attempt to persuade her to marry him, but Vivie draws his attention to the notion that they may be half-brother and sister, to which Frank does not show any concern (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 270). He announces that his feelings towards her now are much the same as before he hears Crofts's remark. However, Vivie makes her word that it would be better for them to be “brother and sister” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 271). Meanwhile, Praed comes to say goodbye to Vivie, for he is leaving for Italy. He invites her to accompany him on his journey to Italy in order to enjoy “living in such a beautiful world” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 271). Vivie retorts to both Frank and Praed that there are two subjects which she will never take into account:

One of them [to Frank] is love's young dream in any shape or form: the other [to Praed] is the romance and beauty of life, especially Ostend and the gaiety of Brussels. You are welcome to any illusions you may have left on these subjects: I have none. If we three are to remain friends, I must be treated as a woman of business, permanently single [to Frank] and permanently unromantic [to Praed] (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 271).

Then Vivie shows her contempt, indignation and disgracefulness towards her mother's condition as a prostitute, and she expresses her inability to utter the words that “describe what. [her] mother is.; but. [she] can't utter them: the shame of them is too horrible” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 275-6) for her. Thus she “[buries her face in her hands]” (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 275-6) in a very desperate way, trying to write them down on paper:

VIVIE. You shall see. [She writes]. ‘Paid up capital: not less than 40,000 standing in the name of Sir George Crofts, Baronet, the chief shareholder. Premises at Brussels, Ostend, Vienna and Budapest. Managing director: Mrs. Warren’; and now don't let us forget her qualifications: the two words. [She writes the words and pushes the paper to them] (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 276).

Here, Vivie's behavior is appropriate to her state as a daughter of a procuress, and she laments her condition in that she is the product of a vicious profession. Thus, her profession, character, and actions come as a result of influences beyond her control. She turns out to be the product of the capitalistic system, which she hates most.

Mrs. Warren comes to Vivie in an attempt to persuade her to live together, but Vivie refuses to do so, though she sympathizes with her mother as she says, "I'm perfectly aware that if I'd been in the same circumstances as my aunt Liz, I'd have done exactly what she did" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 283). Besides, Vivie expresses her contempt towards false appearances and the luxurious life her mother is trying to draw her to, asserting that she will be a worthless creature if she follows her mother, and she does not "want to be worthless" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 283). She asks her mother why she cannot leave her profession and start a new life as her aunt Liz does, but Mrs. Warren says that she cannot leave her profession because she "must have work and excitement" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 283) and that she likes to make money. Vivie says that she likes making money too, and that she has to work; moreover, she tells her mother that they should part and never see each other. In spite of her pleas to have her daughter with her to take care of her in old age, Vivie refuses to consent, showing "no mercy" (Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, act 3, p. 285) towards her mother.

At the end of the play, one can realize that no character has been punished or even blamed for her or his deteriorating actions, for all participate in evil practices in one way or another. All the characters are set free to do whatever they like. Everyone goes to his concern, so to speak. Nobody is punished or blamed because nobody is held responsible for either his or her actions and personality, for what a character is and what a character does are determined by greater forces – circumstantial, environmental, and hereditary factors. The sole responsible one in the play is society, because it is society that permits illegal practices to exist and to flourish. Shaw puts the blame on society, which is to be held guilty for the defects and weaknesses of characters, which are the result of environment, heredity, and circumstances. Society is held responsible for the individual's actions and character because it permits unwanted environmental, circumstantial, and hereditary influences to take place.

V. CONCLUSION

Mrs. Warren's Profession is both a Naturalistic and a Realistic play. The theme and subject matter with which the play deals are taken from contemporary social issues of nineteenth-century England. It takes prostitution as its theme, which is considered unpleasant in itself. The unpleasantness of the play can also be accounted for by the fact that the guilt of Mrs. Warren is not thrown upon her but upon society, or more particularly upon the audience.

Besides, prostitution is described as a trade like any other trade practiced on a wide scale in any morbid society. The

theme of the play is elaborately dealt with throughout the play. The dramatist, relying on objective observations and objectively recorded reality, has proved his thesis that prostitution is caused by extreme poverty and that nobody is responsible for evil deeds but society. Man is presented as determined by forces beyond his control, and man has no free will as to his choice of profession or his activities: he is determined by circumstantial, environmental, and hereditary factors.

The play presents a slice of life, placing man in his environment, acting or behaving according to the pressure of the moment. Shaw makes a truthful and faithful representation of men and women in an actual environment, relying on documentary facts. The scientific method is made clear throughout the play, and the philosophy of determinism is obvious there. All these elements indicate that *Mrs. Warren's Profession* follows the lines of both Realism and its extension towards Naturalism.

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