

Conclusion

As a playwright, Shaw is an important figure especially with understanding of the plight of identity seeking woman. He attacks social conventions, Victorian smugness, middle-class attitudes, and the inability of man to see his failures and to correct them. For Shaw, he has an intellectual passion for social justice. In this thesis, I have explored how women find their self-identities in the male-dominated society. Shaw demonstrates the new idea that female characters in *Saint Joan*, *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* can achieve a level of autonomy, self-growth, personal identity, and spiritual awakening. According to Shaw, through self-awareness and self-identity, woman could effectuate a better society and establish a new social order.

In these three plays, Shaw has championed the cause of women's right to be emancipated and independent. In *Pygmalion*, Shaw explores the intersection of male artistic creation and female self-creation. Eliza is, in fact, a poor foolish girl without enough money to afford her basic living expenses, but she expresses a desire to be a lady in a flower shop. A Woman, like Eliza, at first, is seen as an object without identity and confidence. Eliza's future, for instance, is regarded as an experiment, between Higgins and Pickering. During that bet, she feels ignored and she is treated like a senseless doll. How does she become a new woman? In order to seek individual freedom and equality, for Eliza, the first step is to be economically independent by acquiring education. She accepts speech lessons and she sees through the fact that she is merely a doll under Higgins's control.

In order to keep her dignity and respectability, Eliza in the process of learning utter tries hard to defy the dominance of Higgins. Higgins leaves her in the gutter which later becomes her motivation to change and improve her life. Eliza searches for her independence through teaching correct English and, in her view, has the

foresight. Higgins makes her a duchess out of a flower girl, and from “duchess” she becomes a free woman. She has pulled out her life in a slum via language learning to enter her own world. Finally, Eliza is transformed from a poor flower girl to an independent lady.

In *Major Barbara*, Barbara was a passionate Salvationist, but she was ignorant about some of the worldly affairs, for instance, she had an evangelical divine scheme, a vision against the complacency of the upper classes and brutality of the lower. And as a major in the Army, her salvation is achieved not entirely by works, faith, or pain of atonement, but by responsibility to save her people’s souls. Anyone that stands as a wall in a man’s conscience is considered a champion of her opponent. Undershaft’s decision is to open her daughter’s mind. His action reveals the strategic weakness in Barbara’s position: she cannot do it without the support of adequate fund.

Undershaft mentions to her that he saved her soul from the crime of poverty and allows her to become Major Barbara:

I fed you and clothed you and housed you. I took care that you should have money enough to live handsomely---more than enough; so that you could be wasteful, careless, generous. That saved your soul from the seven deadly sins. (141)

No one can rescue a soul without first freeing its body. Undershaft calls “poverty a crime,” as he says:

I had rather be a thief than a pauper. I had rather be a murderer than a slave. I don’t want to be either; but if you force the alternative on me, then by Heaven, I’ll chose the braver and more moral one. I hate poverty and slavery worse than any other crimes whatsoever. (143)

Disillusioned and devastated, Barbara resigns from the narrow world of the poor people in the Salvation Army to enter the real world. She accepts her father's challenge to do good by trying to save the souls of the poor and of his workers, who are neither poor nor hungry. Her solution is not to reject tainted money, but to use it properly. By the end of the play, she earns back her faith in human nature.

In *Saint Joan*, Joan, a peasant girl of sixteen, was divinely inspired to aid France's Dauphin to save France from the English attempt at conquest in the Hundred Year's War (1337-1453). Joan, even though facing the powerful and dominating English, quests for freedom. In addition, she represents courage which appears between the individual and the majority in the play. Yet the situation is bad for her, Joan encourages her fellows and her king, Dauphin to keep God's peace in, and to fight against the enemies at the center of her life. Crucially, however, she, when encountered with the Church, again have her confidence in God and faces the demanding grouped judges by herself, without compromise, and owing to the death of penance is a signal for the release of men:

THE ARCHBISHOP.... There is a new spirit rising in men: we are at the dawning of a wider epoch. If I were a simple monk, and had not to rule men, I should seek peace for my spirit with Aristotle and Pythagoras rather than with the saints and their miracles. (79)

Joan determines to find her own way; therefore, she is not self-seeking; her purposes are good. She has developed a propensity to have her way and command the army. With insight and wisdom, she establishes her world and her values. Besides, she is a symbol of hope in the future. She leads her fellowmen with a belief in the future of an independent France and concentrates on using the troops. She convinces them not to become slavery to the English, France could lead to

independence.

Finally, Joan was canonized in 1920. The play has reached its evolutionary climax. While Shaw endeavors to create a heroine image in a world ruled by men for Joan, and in the reconstruction of Eliza and Barbara to be free woman. In fact, the protagonists, Barbara Undershaft, Eliza Doolittle, and Joan of Arc from Bernard Shaw's plays are unwomanly heroines or "New Women" trying to free themselves from conventional restrictions. Shaw's views on women and the dialectic dramatic forms he adopted and allowed him to reform the dramatic conventions of his day. From these women Shaw created a new type of heroine: one who makes a living for herself, and, most importantly, remains true to her own goals, for all the three female protagonists have been influenced and governed by the patriarchal ideology at their different times.

Therefore, as agents of the Life Force, such women as Barbara Undershaft, Saint Joan and Eliza Doolittle are the most zealous women. Even as these women keep away from the conventional image of the womanly woman and are aggressive, often ambitious, no-nonsense women. They, at last, are not self-serving; instead, they are always working for higher purposes. Major Barbara is a savior of others, as is Saint Joan. Shaw's often aggressive and intelligent women are in their own way. "I have always stood up for the intellectual capacity of women. I like to see the combative spirit in them," Shaw wrote (Patch 63). His drama shows his fervent concern with women's education and emancipation in order to educate them to attain ideal women as independent individuals with the same political and social rights as men (Patch 63). Each of Shaw's women seems innately unfit to the role of a dependent, inferior being. Everyone is put separately in the position of facing the trouble between a full expression of her true abilities and the demanding needs of society. Shaw's women

characters display their liberation primarily through their female independence.

In *Saint Joan*, Shaw depicts Joan as a spiritual and ambitious girl. As she exercises her extraordinary individual will and persists in her private insight, she becomes a heroine of evolutionary thought and behavior. In *Major Barbara*, Barbara displays her persistence and attitude to accomplish her power of mission with her father's support. She has experienced a dark night of the soul when she resigns from the Salvation Army, now renews herself in preparation for her new job at the cannon works. In *Pygmalion*, Eliza undergoes a symbol of the full cycle of life from birth to death to rebirth.

In this thesis, I have employed Michael Foucault's concept of power, and power in Foucault's theories in his *The History of Sexuality* and De Beauvoir's feminism in *The Second Sex* to analyze how each of these three female protagonists establishes her self-identity and fulfill her self-realization. Also, I have adopted the feminist approach as the basic reading strategy to scrutinize the text carefully and found out the three female protagonists in the Victorian age not only set themselves free, but also transformed themselves into eminent women. Contrary to the past history, culture and some religious doctrines often put emphasis on the female's naturally subordinate status, her innate inferiority, and the need for her conformity to male authority. These three female protagonists show their combative attitude to fight against the social problems of life. However the three female protagonists through their awareness and own identities they have found their ways to fight against the patriarchy and to subvert the status quo in life. The fighting against of the fixed identity in patriarchy provides them with spiritual renewal to open up new ways of life.