

**Tribhuvan University**

**Formation of Mother-Daughters' Relational Self in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs.  
Warren's Profession***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, T.U.  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

**By**

**SanishaThokar**

**Symbol No.:280400**

**T.U. Regd.No.: 6-2-0361-0088-2013**

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**April2022**

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Formation of Mother-Daughters’ Relational Self in George Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*”, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by SanishaThokar has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

---

Mr. Pradip Raj Giri

Internal Examiner

---

Dr. Mani BhadraGautam

External Examiner

---

Prof. Dr. Jib LalSapkota

Head

Central Department of English

Date: .....

## Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deep, sincere gratitude to my respected supervisor Pradip Raj Giri, at the Central Department of English, who has been the constant source of inspiration in the completion of this research. This research would not have been possible without his guidance, valuable suggestions, and continuous support.

Similarly, I would like to extend my thankfulness to Department Head Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota, for providing a platform to write this research paper. I am also grateful to my teachers Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Dr. Anju Gupta, Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha, Hem Lal Pandey, Badri Prasad Acharya, and all the teachers of the university who have mentored me throughout my study and motivated me to explore the realm of literature and philosophy.

All in all, I am deeply grateful to my parents Kadam Thokar and Sarita Gole Thokar, for their financial support, appreciation, encouragement and keen interest in my academic achievements. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my friends Smriti Bhattarai and Anju Chhetri for their relentless encouragement and support in bringing this project into completion.

April 2022 Sanisha Thokar

Formation of Mother-Daughters' Relational Self in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs.*

*Warren's Profession*

*Abstract*

*The research paper inquires how Shaw presents the influence of the mother on her daughter till adulthood. Shaw, through the play, portrays the deep mutual identification by presenting two alike bodies, mother and daughter, to depart from the ongoing tradition of father-son dynasties or father-daughter relations. On the foundation of psychoanalytical feminism by Nancy Chodorow, the research investigates the issues that arise out of generational differences to seek mutuality and conflict between mother and daughter. The study argues that Shaw focuses on the ego formation of the daughter, not with the father but the mother plays a vital role in shaping the daughter's ego. However, Shaw urges the audience to reconsider the issue hinting sense of relational self develops in her daughter when there is intense identification with her mother. The research concludes that Shaw's play succeeds in portraying mother-daughter relations built on sameness, continuity, and identification.*

Keywords: gender, selfhood, womanhood, and the relational self

The research deals with the aspects of representation of the mother-daughter relationship in the play *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. It investigates the influence of a mother figure on her daughter throughout the oedipal period and even into adulthood. Shaw uses prostitution and generational differences as the central conflict between the mother and daughter. He explores the maternal beyond traditional subordination to father-son dynasties in the play by focusing on the female as the main character. However, Bernard Shaw intends to distort the ongoing myth about the daughter's ego formation. My attention mainly focuses on the relationship between two female

protagonists, Mrs. Warren or Kitty, and her daughter, Vivie. It focuses on the relational self of the characters through interaction and dialogue in a sequence of surprises and revelations. Shaw uses language and vibrant dialogue to express the thoughts and sentiments of the characters. To be more precise, the paper examines sameness, continuity, and identification. It paints a portrait of contemporary mother-daughter relationships and their experiences as a unique level of mutual identification. To do so, it incorporates theoretical insights of psychoanalytic critics Nancy Chodorow and Adrienne Rich. Especially, it employs Chodorow's psychoanalytical feminism which explores ideas on "sameness", "continuity" "relational self" and "permeable ego boundary" and Rich's idea on individuation.

*Mrs. Warren's Profession* brings forth the issue of the feminine self which is relational. The feminine self in the play is depicted through the beautiful conversation between the mother and daughter. In short, Mrs. Warren and Vivie are the two protagonists who at the beginning of the play have a rare meeting. Vivie has not seen her mother often during childhood as she was kept away from her mother but she was supported financially in her education. It is because her mother is a brothel owner, for which she has to travel frequently. Therefore, Mrs. Warren lacks motherly love and affection toward her daughter. Vivie is initially unaware of her mother's profession and identity. When she tries to find out who her father is, she ends up discovering her mother's story, and she accepts her past since Vivie realizes it contributed to her privileged upbringing and education. She appreciates her mother's struggle and establishes emotional attachment with her mother. Later, she learns what her mother did for a living. In Act IV, Vivie discovers her mother's continual involvement in the business and is the co-owner of multiple brothels on the continent, alongside business partner George Crofts. He informs Vivie after she rejects his proposal for the marriage

that her mother is still working in prostitution and owns multiple brothels in the continent. Vivie does not understand her mother's reasons for continuing to work in brothels even after she is financially stable. As a result, it invites conflict between them. And the play ends with the splitting of Mrs. Warren and Vivie.

Moreover, one of the basic tenets of domestic drama is the character's intimate relationships and their responses to the unfolding events in their family members. Mrs. Warren's ongoing involvement in the running brothel and former prostitution is the unfolding event that problematizes the relationship between mother and daughter. In the relationship between Mrs. Warren and Vivie, particularly the elements like the generational and conventional differences are much more transparent. Despite Mrs. Warren and Vivie being women of the same family, they differently stand for the idea of living their individual life. So, it is their independent spirit that has made their relationship more complicated. Though Mrs. Warren is living a luxurious life in many ways her current life also seems largely affected by her old conventional ideology. It is explicit throughout the play, that she is still mentally stuck to traditions. On the other hand, Vivie, completely like any other modern young woman, with no insight into her mother's traditional approach at first. Therefore, both of them are grounded in entirely different circumstances.

Involvement in business though has granted Mrs. Warren some high level of financial security and happy life compared to her past life, culturally she identifies herself as a conventional woman rather than a modern. However, sadly her conventional insights have been the source of conflict with her daughter and finding her daughter hating her conventional ways disappoints her. Besides, she also wants Vivie to have an understanding of her emotional and conventional aspects. In contrast, Vivie is a typical modern young woman in thinking and mannerism. She doesn't

prefer her mother's emotional and conventional authority. Similarly, Mrs. Warren has also trouble accepting Vivie's free-spirited individual notions. Therefore, this feeling of understanding disparity triggers the relationship and the individual life of both mother and daughter gets into crisis. Vivie sees her mother very authoritative and typical conventional woman. Mrs. Warren sees her daughter as a sort of completely modern woman with no respect and interest for the mother's emotions. Regarding their differences, Crane highlights, "Both mother and daughter have harbored a degree of self-deception; learning from each other, both achieve greater self-understanding" (36). Mrs. Warren understands her self-worth through her experiences whereas Vivie achieves that quality by accepting her mother's struggle to survive in that rigid society. Her educational background is the key quality to polishing her mind and presenting her with respectability in society.

Though there is a disparity between the mother and daughter in the play they both respect, love and learn from each other to establish their identity and bond in the patriarchal world. Vivie learns to fight patriarchal biases by being educated and independent in that rigid society. For this, her mother Mrs. Warren has put a great deal of effort into her daughter by supporting her financially in her education as well as by explaining the challenges she faced in her past days. Thus, the relationship between mother and daughter establishes a matriarchal world. Stephanie Demetrakopoulos, in her essay "The Metaphysics of Matrilinearism in Women's Autobiography: Studies of Mead's *Blackberry Winter*, Hellman's *Pentimento*, Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, and Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*", Demetrakopoulos has given us the concept of the "matriarchal realm". By which she means the influence of the mother figure on the daughter. In this connection she says:

"Matriarchal realm" or "matriarchate" means the home in which a child grows

up, its management and domination by the mother and by feminine values of nurturing, relatedness, progress. . . .the child is, chiefly shaped, especially in the earlier years, by the mother. Throughout a child's life in home, the mother's influence is stronger for a daughter than for a son. (180)

Women have been experiencing this kind of mother-daughter patterning for generations together. It has delineated the importance of the maternal influence on their personalities, whether positive or negative is an integral part of a woman's life.

*Mrs. Warren's Profession*, a controversial play in four-act was written by a Nobel laureate, George Bernard Shaw. Here, he highlights revolutionary ideas, social situations, and psychological aspects of working-class women in Victorian England. The play was published in the play *Unpleasant* in 1898, its public performance was banned until 1926. The play was banned by the censor as obscene by Lord Chamberlin, allegedly for its presentation of sex. But prostitution or brothel was vaguely implied in the play because it was a threat to the Victorian ideal society. Not being a single word uttered could put a strain on our sensibilities. Shaw is able to trace reality through characters' decisions, actions, and dialogues. The play's subject matter is organized prostitution and unconventional because one of the leading role is portrayed as a sex worker. So, Lord Chamberlin denounced the play as immoral and otherwise improper for the stage.

Due to the practice of a rigid capitalist world, traditional Victorian femininity solely depends on the patriarchal domain. Women are bound to home or domestic workshops whereas men were working in factories and in the public sphere mostly. After the start of the Industrial Revolution in England in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, women were also engaged in various works but they are paid less, positioned in unskilled and dangerous occupations like working in white-lead factories. Along with the Industrial

Revolution, there was the flow of feminist activists and women's movement which brings a drastic change in the woman's role, "a reflection of the growing importance of the feminist movement" (McDonald 31). Subsequently, women started to involve themselves in different entrepreneurial activities to establish themselves as financially secured and reputable in the so-called civilized capitalist world. Prostitution and brothel-keeping were the rampant business for women during that era but it was taken as an indictment and major social concern due to the rigidly conventional society. In this regard John Allett writes, it is a fine sense of liberal proprietary rights and further added, "If it is allowed, however, that in some circumstances prostitution might represent a better alternative to working in the white-lead factories"(Allett 27). He provides positive insights towards prostitution because of factory's unhealthy environment and supports for individual rights.

Additionally, Shaw himself writes clearly in the section, *The Author's Apology*, a preface he later attached in the play. He states that he did not like to waste "energies on 'pleasant plays' for the amusement of frivolous people" (Shaw 9). Additionally, he explains that he wrote the play to draw attention to the truth behind prostitution as a booming business during that period. It is a problem play, convincing social commentary to demonstrate Shaw's belief that the act of prostitution is not caused by moral failure but by economic necessity. The play directly attacks contemporary economic issues, and abuse of the female gender especially based on prostitution. The harshness and awkwardness of the subject matter and the directness of its presentation of these plays unpleasant help the reader to see the very obvious social issues that are not directly seen at first sight. He portrays the wrongs in a society which left Mrs. Warren no alternative except for letting her work or body be abused. Stanford writes in his article, *The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies* "Shaw

has systematically and truly examines society's habit of pretending one thing to hide something else" (4). This is why the play seems "unpleasant" and disturbing. Shaw does not defend the morality of his character. But the stem of immorality is the moral society, Shaw achieves to disturb the audience by showing their own doing in the dirty business. The play deals with secrecy, denial, and corruption under the veneer of upper-class civility. Setting and dialogue play a vital role to expose the hypocrisy and capitalistic society of that era.

Shaw's play *Mrs. Warren's Profession* has received diverse criticism from the prominent literary figures who have analyzed it from multiple perspectives since its publication. A preliminary literature review shows that the past studies are primarily focused on the issues of political, economic, and social aspects of the play.

Accordingly, Goldys M. Crane states in his article, "Acting and Meaning in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*", there is a representation of the hypocrisy of society towards women. He writes, "Part of materialism of Mrs. Warren and Crofts is apparent in their coveting of Vivie. They know how to work the system to make substantial profit" (37). It shows both of them desired to control Vivie subconsciously for her intrinsic value to them. It is convincing when Crane further added, "Having invested great deal of money and sentiment in Vivie, she is subconsciously seeking to collect on her investment through her effort to retain her control of Vivie" (37). It is attacked Vivie's liberal views by pointing out that Vivie owes her respectability entirely to her mother's money.

Likewise, Arthur Ganz provides economic, psychological, and theatrical resonances. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the fallen woman was a very commonly used theme but Mrs. Warren is very different from the other examples with her sensibility and plenty of character. She is a convincing woman "practical and hard-headed in her

business, peevish and possessive with her daughter, sensual but realistic with the daughter's young man, proud of her success but commonplace on mind, vulgar but easy-going enough" (Ganz92). Mrs. Warren is possessive towards her daughter because she sees herself in her daughter and prepares her daughter to establish herself individually in society.

Furthermore, John Allett provides a socialist view regarding Shaw's selection of profession for the protagonist to indict capitalism "Capitalist society offers no protected and privileged standpoint from which to judge others" (31). Also, this was especially the case among the lower class who had yet to be afforded the luxury of finger-pointing "the fallen woman" as the "living violation of bourgeois notions of female sexual propriety" (23). Shaw's play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* may be viewed as a response to public outcry "the White Slave Traffic" (182) as mentioned by Shaw himself in the preface "Shaw's analysis requires of capitalists not wide-eyed collusion and evil intent, but mere selective cognizance and truncated sympathy, which is much more plausible understanding of the workings of social power" (33). Allett blames these private enterprises is akin to organized crime. He added "as an attempt ideologically to frame the ensuing debate that took place between reformists on how best to tackle this freshly exposed social issue" (25). Moreover, economic distress as a part of the problem of prostitution, generally "expected prostitutes to be recruited from the most financially hard-pressed sectors of society, they placed even greater stress on the importance of moral education" (27). "Hard-pressed" refers here to the 'ideal Victorian society' which secretly condones the immoral act.

In contrast, Charles A. Berst focuses on didactic aspects of the play and he calls Shaw as a "dramatic propagandist" (390) because he throws a light on the different aspects of play, to ensure how it deals with the societal norms and values. He

says, "An art form which grasps the vital realities of life has more potential as propaganda than a discourse which concentrates on intellectual varieties" (Berst 391). The representation of the mother-daughter bond in the play can be taken as vital realities of life because its discourse presented in the past is debatable and biased. Berst added, "Vivie is not Everywoman, but she is probably Every Woman who tries to make her intellectual talents and instinct for independence meaningful and remunerative in man's world" (Berst393). These intellectual insights provide the space for the discourse which needs to be exposed to change the mentality of the patriarchal world.

Laurence talks about the rhetorical munitions in his article by pinpointing the controversial matter in that rigid society. As the word prostitution is not mentioned in the play. But the revelations have done by the different characters in the course of the play expose the real profession of Mrs. Warren. He writes, "Shaw has the power to overwhelm us with its forceful dialogue" and "remains unique in the English language in his skill of creating a play without visible action, in which the dialogue becomes the action" (45). Prostitution and brothel were vaguely implied, with the actions and dialogues of different characters Mrs. Warren is revealed as the sex worker in the play.

This discussion represents some of the main conflicts in the play. It depicts the conflicts "between the self-deceived and those who perceive themselves accurately; between seeking truth and attempting to preserve illusion by concealing it between conventional and unconventional behavior- and from the several reversals of the parent and child roles" (Crane 34). He states that Mrs. Warren is an affectionate mother who comforts her little daughter Vivie and wants her to be a respectable woman, which she could not achieve to be. She accepts her job's immorality and wants to

have a conventional parent-child relationship with her daughter. In contrast, Vivie's right to live her own life does not alone outbalance her mother's claim on her; it is assisted by particular circumstances. According to Crane, "Vivie's progression from ignorance to knowledge is temporarily detoured by Mrs. Warren's disarming her into believing that she has given up prostitution" (Crane 37). Vivie's awakening to social realities starts with this discussion; however, is not complete yet because of her ignorance about the continuity of her mother's profession.

The studies mentioned hardly analyze to put a great deal of emphasis on psychoanalytical aspects excluding the study carried out by Richard F. Dietrich, he states that "Shavian psychology was parallel in important respects but that ultimately it was an alternative to Freudian psychology" (Dietrich 150). By stating "alternative to Freudian psychology" he evokes the multi-dimensional writing of Shaw. Providing the space to analyze, the present research, which is based on psychoanalytical feminism Stephen Greco in his article, "Vivie warren's Profession: a new look at *Mrs. Warren's Profession*", states, "Shaw ventured out of his traditional realm of ideas into the nether world of emotions" (93). Although very fewer research has been reviewed herewith to assist the present research. Shaw presents his idea about women explicitly by highlighting the female characters as the protagonists. He further added while seeing the play from the perspective of Shaw himself, moreover the female character sketch is solely connected to his mother and sister. In this regard, Greco argues that:

The playwright disliked intensely his mother's relationship with Lee, not only because of its inherent impropriety, but because it served as a constant reminder to him about his questionable legitimacy. That he might have been the son of George Vandeleur Lee and not George Carr Shaw haunted G.B.S.

throughout his life. Hence, the twin themes of doubtful parentage and of hatred of mothers and motherhood became important leitmotifs which pervaded his life and works, Mrs. Warren's Profession not expected. (96)

Due to Shaw's questionable legitimacy, he disliked the relationship between Lee and his mother. In the same way, Shaw is successful to provide twin themes of doubtful parentage in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* where the mother is unmarried and has a daughter. Moreover, Vivie is not a typical daughter for her mother concerning her questions about her father. She asks "Who was my father? (Shaw 62). Though she does not seem to be much interested in who the father could be. She just needs to be assured that she does not "have contaminated blood of that brutal waster [Crofts] in [her] veins" (63). Dietrich added, "This was a case of idealistic critics reading into Shaw their own picture of him" (169). In the same way, Greco writes, "From Shaw's many observations about his mother and sister, one can detect the familiar love-hate pattern commonly expressed by male reared in pre-dominantly female milieu" (94). Here, the love-hate pattern refers to the attachment and detachment of the daughter with the mother during the process of individuation.

In addition, Frank Harris says of the final dialogue: "This isn't mother and daughter, but the realist Shaw unsexing both" (20). Shaw certainly did not spoil the play's unity by 'unsexing' his character, but he did make Vivie the spokeswoman of the second part of his thesis epigram instead of allowing her consistency. Through the presentation of two women's relations in the play, Shaw tries to give a glimpse of turning points in the art sector as well. "The nobility and purity of the morality element elevate the realism and the comedy, giving allegorical scope to the action, while at the same time the realism and comedy pull it down to life" (404). Shaw once proposed, "Women have the ability to bear the responsibility of promoting the

progress of mankind; they should participate in the practice of social change” (Weintraub 75). Of course, Mrs. Warren and Vivie’s character shocks the audience and this method indeed plays a positive role in the development of feminism as well as changes people’s view of the natural status of men and women. It eventually forwards the idea to look at mother and daughter relation as a contemporary issue to be dealt with.

The present research, therefore, has nothing to do with the political, economic, and other aspects of the drama. Standing aloof from the above-mentioned critics and their reviews, this research by using the tool of psychoanalytical feminism answers the most profound question how does a daughter oscillate endlessly between fusion and separation with her mother? and how generational conflict is presented? In this regard, the research explored the individualistic notion tainted by capitalism in the Victorian period when capitalism became a powerful transformation to challenge conventional society, so there is a struggle toward individualism. However, in Mrs. Warren's *Profession*, Kitty Warren does not treat her daughter as a separate being and focused on the conventional pattern of maternal authority to make her daughter aware of the individuation and formation of ego by empowering her with education. Similarly, Vivie disguised herself with her mother’s attitude being a similar gender.

Before delving into the main argument, highlighting Freudian myth shortly is a must. According to him, a continued attachment to the mother appears regressive and endangers the development of female selfhood. His famous essay *On Narcissism* indicated that because a daughter cannot clearly distinguish herself from her mother, no clear sense of self develops in the woman. He theorizes that both males and females identify themselves with their fathers. In his other paper, *Femininity* he argued that the girl rejected her mother for what she saw as her lack. It is because the

girls 'penis envy' forced her to turn to her father. From this time, the mother became her enemy and her rival for the father's affection. This debatable explanation of Freud leads to the misconception about the mother-daughter relationship. Alison Stone writes, in her article, *Mother-daughter Relations and the Maternal in Irigaray and Chodorow*, "Mostly representation of and fantasies about mother and son (Oedipus and Jocasta) or father and daughter (Lear and Cordelia) are central to western culture and philosophy" (45). Therefore, mother-daughter relationships have been curtailed in near-universal silence. It is due to the constructed discourse of patriarchy in society. However, feminist theorists try to undermine the patriarchal discourses to prove the existence of woman and their relationship with the female child.

In a careful analysis of Shaw's play, the study employs psychoanalytical feminism and close reading. The study analyzes Shaw's portrayal of the mother's influence on her daughter till adulthood, more specifically the mother-daughter bond in the course of the play. It follows the main idea of Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) and Rich's *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976). Here, psychoanalytical feminism has a huge emphasis on the shift of allegiance of a mother to a daughter which defines the process of women's development in culture. Therefore, both theorists have sought to rectify Freud's over-emphasis on paternal aspects of male and female development. In contrast, these two thinkers paint a portrait of contemporary mother-daughter relationships and their experience as a unique level of mutual identification.

Chodorow revises Freud's "myth" of human development and explains, that both males and females identify themselves not with their father but with their mother because; they are in most cases, the primary caretaker. As a result, males identify themselves as being different from their mothers and come into their identities quite

early. In contrast, because daughters share the sex of their mothers, females initially identify themselves as being similar to their mothers and, thus, do not develop a separate sense of self until much later. The mother, who is a woman, remains for children of both genders, "the object" (Chodorow 95). The child develops core gender identity together with differentiation, but the process is not the same for boys and girls. She further adds "Masculine personality, comes to be defined more in terms of denial of relation and connection, whereas feminine personality comes to include a fundamental definition of self in relationship" (169). During the Oedipal phase, the boy learns to repress that love, identify with his father and separate himself from his mother. Chodorow says:

Mothers experience their sons as a male opposite. Boys are more likely to have been pushed out of the pre-oedipal relationship, and have had to curtail their primary love and sense of emphatic tie with their mother. A boy is required to engage in a more emphatic individuation and more defensive firming of experienced ego boundaries. (166-67)

We can see that for men, separation from the mother becomes inevitable to acquire a license to enter the patriarchy. Being opposite gender mother unconsciously push their sons towards separation. It is not easier for the son to establish secondary relations with others because of the abandonment of the primary object. As a result, he starts to develop rigid ego boundaries by following the ongoing patriarchal notions. We can take Frank and his father Reverend Gardener relation because they both have the same mentality. Moreover, Gardener advises his son practical ways to abuse a woman in the following exchange:

FRANK. [...] What you actually said was that since I had neither brains nor money, I'd better turn my good looks to account by marrying someone with

both. Well, look here. Miss Warren has brains: you can't deny that

REV.S. Brains are not everything.

FRANK. No, of course not: there's the money—

REV.S. [interrupting him austerely] I was not thinking of money, sir. I was speaking of higher things. Social position for instance.

FRANK. I don't care rap about that.

REV.S. But I do, sir. (45)

This dialogue reveals much about the two men in terms of their approach to women both in the private and public spheres. Reverend Samuel thinks that a woman should bring money, intellect, and social status to marry his "good for nothing" son. This conversation also reveals Frank's real intentions in his wish to marry Vivie. It is not out of love, interest, or admiration. And he has been a parasite on his father all through his life. Thus, boys can identify culturally with the social power of the father.

She explains that mothers treated girls differently from boys because of the link between gender and the mother's own experience of daughterhood. The mother sensed a double identification with her mother and herself through the child, as she could relate to the daughter as an extension of herself. The roles were close and interconnected and, for, some, the daughter was even seen as a substitute mother. The Mother's over-identification with her daughter, was for her to share the parenting responsibility. It helps to retain that primary attachment to their mothers even as they pass into the Oedipal phase. Chodorow believes:

Mothers tend to experience their daughters more like and continuous with themselves. Correspondingly, girls tend to remain part of the dyadic primary mother-child relationship itself. This means that a girl continues to experience herself as involved in issues of merging and separation, and in an attachment

characterized by primary identification and the fusion of identification and object choices. (166)

Thus, the mother-daughter relationship remains central to the process of female individuation. Being a similar gender mother does not push their daughter toward separation which gives space to the daughter to establish mutual relations with the mother till adulthood. After knowing all the hardships and the reason behind her involvement in prostitution, Vivie acts positively toward her mother “she is impressed by the sincerity of her mother’s description of her circumstances” (Crane 35). “In the face of their dependence lack of certainty of her emotional permanence, fear of merging and overwhelming love and attachment, a mother looms large and powerful” (Chodorow 82). This approach elevates the mother in importance. It is revealed by the scene when Frank mocks Mrs. Warren saying “Ever so delighted to see you, Mrs. Warren. This quiet old rectory garden becomes you perfectly” (75). This mockery is understood by Vivie who is more affectionate about her mother at that very moment than she has ever been:

VIVIE. No. I want to give you a warning, Frank. You were making fun of my mother just now when you said that about the rectory garden. That is barred in the future. Please treat my mother with as much respect as you treat your own.

FRANK. My dear Viv: she wouldn’t appreciate it: the two cases require different treatment. But what on earth has happened to you? Last night we were perfectly agreed as to your mother and her set. This morning I find attitudinizing sentimentally with your arm around your parent’s waist.

VIVIE. [flushing] Attitudinizing!

FRANK. That was how it struck me first time I ever saw you do a second-rate thing.

VIVIE. [controlling herself] Yes, Frank: there has been a change: but I don't think it a change for the worse. Yesterday I was a little prig. (76)

This exchange is of importance as it clarifies that the change in Vivie's personality is both realized by Frank and assured by Vivie, herself. From a "prig", she turned out to be a more knowledgeable grown-up woman knowing more about both her mother and life. It shows how her talk with her mother is overwhelmingly attached to emotions as well as it gives her strength to tackle Frank's male chauvinistic mentality. Thus, the formulation of ideas by Chodorow that a girl's core gender identity is positive because it is built on sameness, continuity, and identification with the mother as compared to the boy who must learn his gender identity negatively as not being female. The mentioned dialogue of Vivie, "Today I know my mother better than you do" evokes that emotionally she can feel what her mother was through during that tough time. It is possible because she can relate to her mother being of the same gender.

In psychoanalytical object relations theory, Chodorow argues that growing girls come to define themselves as continuous with others; their experience of self contains more flexible or permeable ego boundaries (169). In the final Act, Vivie has fled from both Crofts and her mother and has entered a business partnership with her friend, Honoria Fraser. And she had an affair with Frank Gardner in the beginning, later she rejects him too exposes "girl usually make a sexual resolution in favor of men, thus retain an internal emotional triangle" (140). Thus, the daughter "has fled from intense identification... Trying to merge herself with anyone other than her mother, all the while expressing her feelings of dependence on and primary identification with this mother" (137). In this regard, Chodorow explained women's lack of autonomy in society which eventually leads to conflict in the mother-daughter relationships. She acknowledged that the daughter wanted to remain close and

become hostile when she saw the mother's lack of power. The girl turns to her father, whom she saw as symbolizing freedom. Due to the lack of a strong connection with her father in her pre-Oedipal period, the relationship with the father was not sufficiently powerful to be able to break her bond with the mother. The daughter, therefore, did not replace the object of the mother with the father and defined herself in a triangular relationship.

However, for a conventional mother like Mrs. Warren, it looks odd that a young woman like Vivie has a personal way of life. Grecco explains “Feminism, our impression of the formidable Vivie is still one of a distinctly masculine girl in both outlook and appearance, who cares little for convention and unabashedly flaunts her anti-feminine posture” (94). Vivie’s self-esteem and confidence drive her mother crazy and she gets a very stereotypical parental criticism because of that. Mrs. Warren criticizes when Vivie wants to pursue her life on her own. She says:

“MRS WARREN. You and your way of life, indeed! What next?[...] Your way of life will be what I please, so it will [...] Do you know who you’re speaking to, Miss?

VIVIE [looking across at her without raising her head from her book] No.

Who are you? What are you ?”(61)

Even though Vivie, changes the topic of the argument very sharply and she does not utter emotional impulses. Mrs. Warren posits herself with strong questions with emotions. It can be visualized not as an argument between mother and daughter who are closest in relation but as an argument between a vulnerable woman and her indifferent husband. Moreover, Vivie is not a typical daughter of her mother because she poses most of the character of her mother. It is because the mother plays a vital role to shape Vivie’s perception as she is raised and given all the needs by a single

mother. Father is absent in her upbringing which helps her to establish attachment with her mother, is overwhelmingly growing and she posits herself with her mother in most cases.

Another theorist Adrienne Rich has delved deep into the intricacies of a daughter's biological connection with the mother. She believes that just a little girl always longs for a mother's tenderness, protection, and care even when she grows up. Factors like associated family roles form the scaffolding in which the child's style of life is developed. The relationship between daughters and their mothers also determines how the daughters are prepared to become a member of the society since mothers are responsible for transferring values and preparing their children to be functioning members of the society:

MRS.WARREN. [indignantly] Of course not. What sort of mother do you take me for! How could you keep your self-respect in such starvation and slavery? And what's a woman worth? Without self-respect! Why am I independent and able to give my daughter a first rate education, when other women that had just as good opportunities are in the gutter? Because I always knew how to respect myself and control myself. Why is Liz looked up to in a cathedral town? The same reason. Where would we be now if we'd minded the clergyman's foolishness? Scrubbing floors for one and sixpence a day and nothing to look forward to but the workhouse infirmary. Don't you be led astray by people who don't know the world, my girl. The only way for a woman to provide herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her. If she's in his own station of life, let her make him marry her; but if she's far beneath him she can't expect it why should she? It would't be for her own happiness. Ask any lady in London society that

has daughters; and she'll tell you straight and she'll tell you crooked. That's all the difference. (67-68)

Mrs. Warren, as can be concluded from the speech above, stresses that every mother loving her daughter could and should suggest her path to their daughters. When Vivie asks if she would suggest staying in Waterloo bar or marrying a laborer if she were in the same circumstances, Mrs. Warren replies with her logical support and decisive manners she gives a very self-confident answer to Vivie, without hesitation. For Rich, it is a mother who transmits to the daughter, the strategies of female survival in a patriarchal world - "a knowledge that is subliminal, subversive, pre-verbal the knowledge flowing between two alike bodies, one of which has spent nine months inside other" (Rich 220). Likewise, Vivie gave the genuine answer that she would stay in the Waterloo bar rather than marry a laborer. It shows both mother and daughter share similar subliminal ideas.

Rich has also analyzed another facet of the mother-daughter relationship and that is "matrophobia". For Rich, this term does not mean "to be afraid of one's mother", but rather she interprets this as the fear that a girl experiences of becoming like her mother. In the conversation with Præd Vivie clearly states that "Now you know the sort of perfectly splendid young lady I am. How do you think I shall get on with my mother?" (Shaw 36). It is because when girls try to develop their selfhood it sometimes leads to rejection of the mother "Vivie's recent six-week stay with her unseen employer, Miss Honoria Fraser, ostensibly accounts in large part for her usual preferences" (Greco 94). Vivie makes it clear that she wants to go away to start a business with her friend. This is not only a physical separation she wants also she rejects the monthly allowance she used to get from her mother. Vivie rejects her mother's maternal authority over her and wants to detach herself from that suffocative

relation. In this regard Rich clarifies with the following statements:

Thousands of daughters see their mothers as having taught a compromise and self-hatred they are struggling to win free of, the one through whom the restrictions and the degradations of a female existence were perforce transmitted. Easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her. But where a mother is hated to the point of matrophobia there may also be a deep underlying pull toward her, a dread that if one relaxes one's guard one will identify with her completely.

(235)

This is especially true in cases of over-involved or over-protective mothers, and cases where the daughter is overstuffed with the mother's nurturance and feels constrained by her possessive control. This attitude of the mother arouses in the daughter the urge to be free from the mother's bondage. Mrs. Warren wants her daughter to adopt conventional notions so that she could control her and be with her until she gets married. In contrast, she "who has rebelled against Victorian inequities and insensitiveness and has survived by adapting instinctively the Victorian capitalist morality of doing what pays best" and due to her over possessiveness she "loses her daughter by falling prey to the debilitating disease of conventionality, which disenchant and alienates Vivie" (Laurence 44). Being an educated woman Vivie rejects her mother's conventional authority that her proposal to stay with her until she gets married.

The "matrophobia" of Rich is similar to Irigaray's theory of the daughter being surfeited with the mother's nurturance. In this connection Rich says: "Matrophobia can be seen as a womanly splitting of the self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mother's bondage, to become individuated and free.

The mother stands for the victim in ourselves, the unfree woman, the martyr" (236). Vivie sees her mother's conventional authority as an over-possessive act that she denied from the beginning and eventually she chose to separate herself from her mother at the end of the play. Berst says, "Vivie finds her soul in mind and work, on the level of the world she loses her soul to cold calculations and a negation of human emotion, inflicting ascetic contraction upon her personality and cruelty upon others" (400). She is in search of her identity and to form an ego by rejecting her mother's emotional being in the final act.

In the play, both mother and daughter's relationship is found disturbed due to differences in characters and thoughts. As Mrs. Warren projects traditional Victorian femininity though she is a self-built woman. In contrast, Vivie is a self-reliant, self-assertive, and businesslike woman. She is uninterested in art, unfeminine, and aspirated for her freedom. Vivie, despite her respectable upbringing, is illegitimate. And who solely denies her mother's ideas based on tradition. These contrasting thoughts on both mother and daughter bring conflict in shaping the ideology. Even though there is a conflict between mother and daughter, there is a similar feminine attribute "a sense of self" (Chodorow, 169) because in the unconscious psyche daughter wants to be like her mother. Vivie at the beginning of the play was inexperienced and immature but she changes during the discussions she is engaged in. And she openly showed her outspokenness, free will, and decision to be an independent woman like her mother, after hearing why Mrs. Warren choose to continue business even though she is financially secure. Mrs. Warren states clearly about her involvement in prostitution:

MRS WARREN. Oh, it's all very easy for Liz: she likes good society, and has the air of being a lady. Imagine me in a cathedral town! Why, the very rooks

in the trees would find me out even if I could stand the dullness of it. I must have work and excitement, or I should go melancholy mad. And what else is there for me to do? The life suits me: I'm fit for it and not for anything else. If I didn't do it somebody else would; so I don't do any real harm by it. And then it brings in money; and I like making money. No: it's no use: I can't give up—not for anybody. But what you know about it? I'll never mention it. I'll keep Crofts away. I'll not trouble you much: you see I have to be constantly running about from one place to another. You'll be quit of me altogether when I die.

VIVIE. No: I am my mother's daughter. I am like you: I must have work, and I must make more money than I spend. But my work is not your work, and my way is not your way. We must part. It will not make much difference to us: instead of meeting one another for perhaps a few months in twenty years, we shall never meet: that's all. (102)

Mrs. Warren shows importance towards her work so does Vivie. She openly states that she is never going to quit her job for Vivie. Like her mother, she wants to be independent on her own and earn enough money for herself. Further, the talk between Praed also projects Vivie's emancipated voice that she cares nothing about "romance or beauty, but only for working and getting paid for it" (93). Chodorow believes that children wish to remain one with their mother as Vivie puts this similarity into words by saying "I am my mother's daughter. I am like you". This openly presents her attachment to her mother. But expect that she will have different interests from her "my work is not your work, my way is not your way" yet, they define development in terms of growing away from her. Daughters come to feel like extensions of their mothers, with little sense of difference but "identified" with their mothers. "In the

face of their emotional permanence, fear of merging, and overwhelming love and attachment, a mother looms large and powerful” says Chodorow (82).

Though mother and daughter in different circumstances create conflict from some kind of complex relationship, one or another way their relationship is guided by some psychological sameness "both mother and daughter have harbored a degree of self-deception; learning from each other, both achieve greater self-understanding" (Crane 36). It helps to analyze the main issues related to the relational role that how Mrs. Warren managed to fulfill her dreams through her daughter by educating and challenging the Victorian tenets of patriarchy. Towards the end of Act II, carries the play to a climatic point. At this point, Vivie also realizes that Mrs. Warren has very meaningful points about very difficult and different conditions for women is opened to Vivie:

MRS WARREN. My own opinions and my own way of life! Listen to her talking! Do you think I was brought up like you? Able to pick and choose my own way of life? Do you think I did what I did because I liked it, or thought it right, or wouldn't rather have gone to college and been a lady if I'd had the chance?

VIVIE. Everybody has some choice, mother. The poorest girl alive may not be able to choose between being Queen of England or Principal of Newnham; but she can choose between ragpicking and flowerselling, according to her taste. People are always blaming circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them. (64)

Vivie believes that everyone has an opportunity of choice in life, but after she hears

the choices Mrs. Warren had, she supports her mother's decision. She experiences the climax of her relationship with her mother. Although most modern readers claim that the climax of the play is regarded as the moment Vivie learns about her mother's profession, the moment she learns about how harsh the world is on the woman. Similarly, Mrs. Warren establishes a mutual relationship with her daughter by revealing the secret part of her life and convinces why herto choosing the profession. She criticizes the limited employment opportunities available for working-class women during that period. In addition, the economic truth that Mrs. Warren puts forward realizing that her daughter is ignorant and naïve about the harshness of the society on poor women, who have no other way but she sanely chooses a lucrative profession rather than respectable drudgery and hunger. . She exposes the hypocrisy of a society that condemns those who are not chaste; but does little to assuage the poverty that leaves some women few alternatives to survive:

MRS WARREN. Yes; or any other point of view. 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! Liz and I had to work and save and calculate just like other people; elseways we should be as poor as any good-for-nothing drunken waster of a woman that thinks her luck will last forever. [With great energy] I despise such people: they've no character; and if there's thing I hate in a woman, it's want of character. (66-67)

The above dialogue presents, that prostitution was the most moral of the immoral choices presented to Mrs. Warren. It was the only way to survive for a woman in a society in which a respectable woman was the one who let her body and soul be

exploited by some men either by marriage or by inhumane conditions of work. Making her own choice and being a successful businesswoman was the way to keep her self-respect for Mrs. Warren. She does not glorify prostitution but she only tries to support her choice by presenting the unjust economic paradigms of the society. At first, Vivie simply ignores her mother's effort, but when Mrs. Warren moves on to a more serious matter Vivie openly resists, and Vivie experiences a kind of epiphany after she learns that her mother had to choose the business and appreciated her wholeheartedly "you are stronger than all England (Shaw, 68). Irigaray suggests that mother and infant daughter undergo a paralyzing fusion-"With your milk, Mothers, I swallowed ice" (Irigaray 60)'. The milk of maternal kindness freezes, stifles the daughter (Stone, 49).

Mrs. Warren explains to Vivie that at the start she was willing to take on any job, except a job in the lead factory due to its dangerous and unhealthy environment. She worked "as a scullery maid in a temperance restaurant" (Shaw 66), "a waitress, and then I went to the bar at Waterloo station: fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week and my board" (65). When her sister Lizzie, who had gone missing a few years earlier, shows up at the bar, dressed "in a long fur cloak, elegant and comfortable, with a lot of sovereigns in her purse" (65)., Mrs. Warren is introduced into prostitution and able to save money for the first time: "all we had was our appearance and our turn for pleasing men" (66). So, she chooses to be exploited in white lead factories or bars. For her, and a lot of other working-class women, there were no other workable alternatives. Likewise, Mrs. Warren was able to accumulate wealth and climb the social ladder, which no other profession could have offered.

Vivie, after listening to her mother who explains under what circumstances

she had to grow up, understands why her mother choose prostitution “from the business point of view” (66). Gladys M. Crane remarks, “Vivie is impressed by her sincerity of her mother’s description of her circumstances”(35). Vivie assumed her mother was no longer involved in the business since she was financially secured: “Tell me why you continue your business now that you are independent of it. Your sister, you told me has left all that behind her. Why don’t you do the same?” (102). The fact that her mother is still active in the business of prostitution and charged with the exploitation of girls is what Vivie cannot accept. Mrs. Warren tries to justify it by arguing that someone has to do it: “If I didn’t do it somebody else would; so I don’t do any real harm by it. And then it brings in money; and I like making money” (102). Further, Crane adds, “ This confrontation between the mother and daughter each defending her right to her own way of life, provides perfect opening for the playwright’s exploration of the part society plays” (35). It highlights their difference in value system is too large to be reconciled according to Vivie and therefore she severs the ties: “We must Part” (103). Both of them have a problem coping with each other which signifies the process of individuation.

*Mrs. Warren’s Profession* solely focuses on the representation of the mother-daughter relationship. It highlights how mother and daughter’s relationship follows a logic of separation and fusion till the end of the play. It shows the ego formation of the daughter in relation to the mother. It is an attempt to challenge and distort the traditional psychoanalytical concepts of a daughter’s ego formation. To achieve that the play focuses on the mother-daughter’s fluctuating relationship and generational differences. The importance of a father in a daughter’s life to individuate her from her mother has been blurred. The concept of “penis envy” constructed discourse of patriarchy is challenged by presenting two alike bodies. It is said that a continued

attachment to the mother appears regressive and endangers the development of female selfhood. Thus, the playwright intends to detour this mythical trait, that traditionally, a daughter's ego formation is studied concerning the father. It curtailed the mother-daughter's relation in near-universal silence. Hence, the characterization of two female protagonists Mrs. Warren and Vivie is limelight to depart from the ongoing tendency of myth related to the ego formation of a daughter. Due to the lack of a strong connection with her father in her pre-Oedipal period, the relationship with the father was not sufficiently powerful to be able to break her bond with her mother but a daughter creates permeable ego boundaries when she realizes her lack of autonomy in society. Likewise, Vivie is overstuffed by Mrs. Warren's nurturance and feels constrained by her possessive control. As a result, this conventional maternal authority creates conflict between mother and daughter. Consequently, this attitude urges the daughter to be free from the mother's bondage. Shaw forwards the idea that the daughter at the end severs the tie with the mother towards individuation.

By showing the disturbing relationship between the two characters, the playwright visualizes the daughter's self is relational to the mother. Having similar feminine attribute, in the unconscious psyche daughter wants to be like her mother, he sensibly characterizes both mother and daughter as an independent woman of that rigid society. To make the audiences realize their relations are valid and important, Shaw takes help from different psychoanalytical approaches like object relation theory, feminine self and ego formation. With this, he vividly paints the existence of woman and their relationship with the female child. He primarily employs the ideas of Nancy Chodorow and Adrienne Rich. Chodorow's idea on sameness and continuity contributes him to stick to his portrayal that the relational self is the result of the mother's contribution to shaping Vivie's identity by educating her to be an

independent woman like her. It provides ample scope for discussing important aspects of the legacies of the mother, and her daughter. Also challenging the Victorian tenets of rigidity towards women is the most influential. Whilst, Rich's idea on individuation enables him to highlight his sense of self in relation to his mother. As a result, Bernard Shaw can show the validation of the mother-daughter's relational self. He is successful in probing the patriarchal mindset in the opening, climax, and ending of the play making the reader critically analyze the process of ego formation of the daughter rather than making general remarks on it.

## Works Cited

- Allett, John. "Mrs. Warren's Profession and the Politics of Prostitution." Shaw, vol.19, Penn State University Press, 1999, pp. 23-39. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/40681591](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40681591).
- Berst, Charles A. "Propaganda and Art in Mrs Warren's Profession." ELH, Vol.33, No. 3, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966, pp.390-404. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2872114>.
- Chodorow, Nancy. "Psychoanalysis and Sociology of Gender". *The Reproduction of Mothering*. No. 75-27922, University of California Press, 1978.
- Crane, Gladys M. "Directing Early Shaw: Acting and Meaning in Mrs. Warren's Profession." Shaw, vol. 3, Penn State University Press, 1983, pp. 29-39. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/40681092](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40681092).
- Demetrakopoulos, Stephanie A. "The Metaphysics of Matrilinearism in Women's Autobiography: Studies of Meads' Blackberry Winter, Hellman's Pentimento and Angelou's I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings and Kingston's The Woman Warrior. Women's Autobiography. Ed. Estelle Jelenik. Indiana University Press, 1980.
- Dietrich, F Richard. "Shavian Psychology". Shaw, Vol. 4, Penn University Press, 1984, pp.149-171. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40681125>.
- Finney, G. (1978). *Women in Modern Drama: Freud, Feminism, and European Theatre at the Turn of Century*. Cornell University Press.
- Ganz, Arthur. *George Bernard Shaw*. Macmillan, 1988.
- Greco, Stephen. "Vivie Warren's Profession: new look at Mrs. Warren's Profession." *The Shaw Review*, Vol.10, No.3, Penn State UP, 1967, pp. 93-99. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40682482>.

- Irigaray, Luce. "Body against Body: In Relation to the Mother". In the Fifth Conference on Mental Health 'Women and Madness'. 1980, May 13.
- Jan, MacDonald. *New Women in the New Drama*, 1990.
- Nelson, S. Raymond. "Mrs. Warren's Profession and English Prostitution". *Jourr Modern Literature*, Indian University Press, 1971/72, pp. 357-366. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30053190>
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. Norton, 1976
- Shaw, George Bernard. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Watchmaker Publishing. 1894.
- . *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Drama*. University of Illinois Publications, London: 1988
- . *Plays by George Bernard Shaw*. London: New American Library of World Literature Inc 1960.
- Stanford, Tony J. "Mrs Warren's Profession the Garden of Respectability" ed. Weintraub. *The Annual of Bernard Shaw studies Vol.2*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982.
- Weintraub, R. *Fabian Feminist Bernard Shaw and Woman*. Pennsylvania State University. 1977.