

A Liberal Feminist Analysis of George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

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Abstract

The patriarchal society gives legal rights, economic power, and proper education only to men so that women are financially dependent on men for a living. When women demand freedom and legal rights, the basis of feminism appears. This study applies liberal feminist approach to George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893) to analyse the gender roles in terms of patriarchal ideology of separate spheres. Not receiving proper education to acquire a profession in the patriarchal society, the main character, Mrs. Kitty Warren, becomes a prostitute and then a brothel mistress to gain economic power in a public sphere. She is conventional at heart, like women in a private sphere because she wants her young daughter, Vivie, not to work in the public sphere but to marry the rich, middle-aged Crofts, who is her business-partner of brothels. Being grown up in boarding schools, Vivie Warren, representing the 'New Woman' type, shakes hands with men, smokes cigarettes, has knowledge of mathematics, graduates from Cambridge, and has the physical strength and intelligence to work in the public sphere. Therefore, she refuses her mother's money and marriage proposals. This study asserts that women and men have no innate difference in terms of mental capacity, but women face prejudices imposed by the patriarchal society. Women are not allowed to take the same education as men to acquire a profession in the public sphere, and by this way, they are imprisoned in the private sphere.

Keywords: Liberal feminism, women's position, separate spheres, George Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'UN BAYAN WARREN'İN MESLEĞİ ESERİNİN LİBERAL FEMİNİST BİR ANALİZİ

Öz

Ataerkil toplum, kadınların erkeklere ekonomik açıdan bağımlı olmaları için sadece erkeklere yasal haklar, ekonomik güç ve iyi bir eğitim verir. Kadınlar özgürlük ve yasal haklar talep etmeye başlayınca feminizmin temeli atılmış olur. Bu çalışma, liberal feminist yaklaşımı George Bernard Shaw'un *Bayan Warren'in Mesleği* (1893) adlı eserine uygulayarak ayrı alanların ataerkil ideolojisi açısından toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini analiz eder. Adı geçen tiyatro eserinde ataerkil toplumda meslek edinebileceği iyi bir eğitim alamayan ana karakter Bayan Kitty Warren, kamusal alanda ekonomik güç kazanmak için bir fahişe ve ardından bir genelev patroniçesi olur. Özel alandaki kadınlar gibi özünde gelenekseldir çünkü genç kızı Vivie'nin kamusal alanda çalışmasını değil, genelevlerde iş ortağı olan zengin, orta yaşlı Crofts ile evlenmesini ister. Yatılı okullarda yetişen ve 'Yeni Kadın' tipini temsil eden Vivie Warren, erkeklerle el sıkışır, sigara içer, matematik bilgisine sahiptir, Cambridge mezunu olup kamusal alanda çalışacak fiziksel güce ve zekaya sahiptir. Bu nedenle, evlilik tekliflerini ve annesinin

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parasını reddeder. Bu çalışmada kadın ve erkeğin zihinsel kapasite açısından doğuştan bir farkı olmadığını ancak kadınların ataerkil toplum tarafından dayatılan önyargılarla karşı karşıya olduğunu ileri sürer. Kadınların kamusal alanda meslek edinebileceği erkeklerle aynı eğitimi almasına izin verilmeyerek özel alanda hapsedilmeleri sağlanmış olur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Liberal feminizm, kadının konumu, ayrı alanlar, George Bernard Shaw, *Bayan Warren'ın Mesleği*

INTRODUCTION

The roots of women's problems and women's rights have history of about two centuries. In this sense, for the phenomenon of feminism¹, women's position has to be mentioned in the historical process. During pregnancy and child rearing periods, women were dependent on men in hunting communities (Lerner, 1986). After human beings had moved from hunting to farming, motherhood became more than just a biological factor because being a family and owning a property had importance. When human beings adopted a settled life, they kept women at home (Michel, 1993). In the context of private property, human beings left women alone at home because they held women responsible for homecare (Beauvoir, 1962). As time passed, men considered women their own property and gave them only the reproduction role. By making women weak, the patriarchal society gave power merely to men (Rich, 1995). The patriarchal society gave legal rights and economic power solely to men so that women were subject to men (French, 1983). Consequently, women were convinced that only through marriage they could take place in the society.

In the Middle Ages, a married woman's economic existence belonged to her husband who also represented her legal entity (Cannon, 1999). Women were forced to spend all their energy and time to daily chores (Mohl, 1933). The ordinary woman was not expected to be intellectual, but to be a virgin or chaste when married (Gies, 1980). In the Renaissance period, a woman was expected to do the housework and obey her husband's authority (Michel, 1993). In the seventeenth century, women were considered not to understand the complexities of public affairs because of weakness of intellect (Boulding, 1976). In the Age of Enlightenment, according to Isaac Newton, things that are irrational are secondary, insufficient, fanciful, and 'other' (qtd.in Donovan, 1988). Since men thought that women lacked reason, they believed they could rule women. As an important thinker of Age of Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau thinks that women cannot be guided by their own minds, so he gives women the role of motherhood and childcare (1987). According to Immanuel Kant, women are not convenient for academic studies which require reasoning because women are timid and weak by nature, so they are in need of the protection of men (qtd.in Schott, 1996). In the eighteenth century, girls received narrow education pursuing the purpose of marriage (Schreiner, 1911). Adopting the role of a wife and mother, women's education only included

¹ The feminist approach is retrieved from the book chapter by Alkan, Halit. (2019). "A Structuralist Analysis of Women's Position in George Eliot's Middlemarch." *Academic Studies in Philology-2019/2*. Ed. Zehra Göre. Cetinje: IVPE. 53-74. <http://www.uakb.org/2019-eylul-kitaplari> Access 17.08.2021; and from the article by Alkan, Halit. (2020). "A Liberal Feminist Approach to Bobbie Ann Mason's Shiloh." *Euroasia Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 7 (3), 99-109. Doi:doi.org/10.38064/eurssh.54 Access 15.08.2021

fulfilling their responsibilities for family and home, and it provided skills for domestic crafts, prudence, productivity, care and good governance (Barker, 2005). Consequently, women's basic duties were to give birth and do daily chores in the traditional structure (Doğramacı, 1992).²

In the nineteenth century, women had to represent good morality and raise their children as virtuous individuals (Comte, 1853). In the social hierarchy, there are separate spheres for men and women; a public sphere stands for rationality and men, whereas a private sphere represents sensuality, morality and women (İmançer, 2002). Therefore, women are assumed as the 'angel at home' (qtd.in Peterson, 1984). A woman who is imprisoned at the private sphere is expected to improve spiritually and emotionally so that she can relieve her husband's stress in the public sphere. In terms of traditional conception, young girls are convinced that marriage is the unquestionable purpose of their lives (Reed, 1975). For this reason, the patriarchal society claims men's superiority over women as a natural right, and therefore, women are only given duties such as housework and childcare (Millett, 1970).

Women are convinced that marriage is the only way to maintain their social position and have a comfortable life (James, 1879). Unfortunately, after marriage, women become the property of their husbands. A woman who commits adultery is unquestioningly labelled as a fallen woman (Palmer, 1837, 1910). The patriarchal society enforces double standards to women in marriage because men wander in the public sphere while women are kept in the private sphere (Asena, 2004). Therefore, sexual ignorance for women and sexual privilege for men must end (Caine, 1997). Since women are financially dependent on men for a living, their sexual intercourse turns to be an economic relationship, and so marriage prevents women's freedom and equality (Gilman, 1966). Traits such as submissiveness and sexual passivity are imposed on and embraced by women (Greer, 1970).

Women's position about education, marriage and profession related to separate spheres is reflected in George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893). In terms of liberal feminist approach, this study analyse the gender roles in terms of patriarchal ideology of separate spheres and it tries to find out whether women can escape the imposed private sphere or not. The play is about women, prostitution and morality in the late Victorian period. Mrs. Kitty Warren is a prostitute whereas her daughter Vivie has graduated from Cambridge University. Vivie rejects the private sphere imposed by the patriarchal society because she works in the public sphere.

METHOD

The emergence of feminism is spontaneous with women's demand for freedom. Feminism refers to the women's liberation movement (Kayahan, 1999). Liberal feminism indicates women's freedom and equality with men (Çaha, 2003). By determining the subjection that women have experienced and explaining their causes and consequences, feminist theories and approaches seek to find new policies and strategies for the emancipation of women (Tong, 2006). Liberal feminism is based on equal opportunity in education, women's access to the public sphere, and economic equality (Çakır, 2009). Equal opportunity in education means that there is no difference in

² Quotations from Turkish references were translated into English by the author of this study.

intellectual capacity between men and women. Without making any distinction, opportunities of equal education have to be provided for girls and boys (Arat, 1991). Women can escape imprisonment in the private sphere when they receive a good education, and can work in the public sphere (Walters, 2005). When women earn a living and gain power to determine their own lives, they can get rid of being dependent on men (Dikici, 2016).

As liberal feminists, Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill argue the problems of and demand the rights of women. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft considers women as a rational being and demands an education that develops their thought (1988). According to Wollstonecraft, gender discrimination can be ended by giving women the same education as men. In *The Enfranchisement of Women* (1851), Harriet Taylor criticizes that women are deprived of professions and are forced to do their maternal duties as wives and mothers. Taylor states that the reason can be explained as “it is so because men want so” (1994, p. 192). Thus, women’s dependence is not based on biological or physical reasons, but patriarchy. According to Taylor, women should receive education equally as men and be allowed to take role in the labour force (qtd.in Seiz and Pujol, 2000). In *The Subjection of Women*, John Stuart Mill states that he wants to make certain full equality between women and men (Mill, 1869). These thinkers and writers emphasize that women should get equal opportunities in education and gain economic freedom by accessing in the public sphere (Alkan, 2018). Thereby, they claim equality in education, human rights and political process (Ramazanoğlu, 1998).

Apart from the feminist scholars, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) who is an important playwright of the Victorian period pays attention to women’s position in the patriarchal society. As a moralist and satirist of behaviour, Shaw defends working class and wants social reform by criticizing the artificial morality of middle and upper classes. He expresses women’s low status by criticizing double standard of education, sexuality, and marriage against women in the patriarchal society. In his play *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893), he deals with the woman question by challenging the typical Victorian female character and portraying the ‘New Woman’ type. The term ‘New Woman’ is coined by Sarah Grand (Showalter, 1993). ‘New Woman’ means a well-educated woman criticizing traditional roles. This type of woman claims equal education for women and wants men to be as chaste as women. According to Watson, Shaw’s writings support the women’s struggle as follows: “He was constantly creating dramatic images of women whose ability was combined with great personal charm. The New Women of Shaw’s creation are all ultra-feminine feminists” (1964, p. 179). As a playwright, Shaw supports the women’s liberation movement and equal rights: “The Women’s Movement is in fact a great Moral Movement. It means the lifting up of woman to be the equal of man in the eyes of the whole nation” (Kent, 1990, p. 217).

A LIBERAL FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF MRS. WARREN’S PROFESSION

George Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (MWP, henceforth) focuses on Mrs. Kitty Warren and her daughter Vivie Warren, who struggles against the norms of the patriarchal society. After graduating from Cambridge, Vivie Warren returns home at the age of 22. In a cottage

garden in summer afternoon, a middle-aged man Mr. Praed, a friend of Vivie's mother, comes over to be introduced to Vivie. When he comes, Vivie throws her book on the chair, gets down from the hammock, extends her hand and takes his hand warmly. Vivie takes a hard garden chair forward with one swing. Being anarchist and hating authority, Mr. Praed is happy that Mrs. Warren has not strained her authority to make Vivie very conventional because when he was the same age as Vivie, "young men and women were afraid of each other; there was no good fellowship" (*MWP*, p. 9). Mr. Praed, who is an architect, is fascinated to meet Vivie because her spectacular achievements at Cambridge are a thing unheard of in his day. Vivie tells him about her skills in mathematics:

I'm supposed to know something about science; but I know nothing except the mathematics it involves. I can make calculations for engineers, electricians, insurance companies, and so on... I shall set up chambers in the city, and work at actuarial calculations and conveyancing. Under cover of that I shall do some law, with one eye on the Stock Exchange all the time. (*MWP*, p. 10)

When compared to conventional female type who is considered weak of intelligence to understand the complexities of public affairs in Victorian period, Vivie who has graduated from Cambridge and knows mathematics very well represents the 'New Woman' type. Since her childhood, Vivie has lived in England under the charge of paid people at boarding school or college. Her mother lives in Vienna or Brussels, but she has never allowed Vivie to visit her. Vivie sees her mother only when her mother comes to England for several days. When Sir George Crofts and Mrs. Kitty Warren arrive there, Vivie takes Crofts' hand and gives a squeeze. Vivie is not shy, like typical Victorian female characters. Mrs. Warren has not told anyone who Vivie's father is. Crofts feels attracted towards Vivie, but as a former lover of Mrs. Warren, he is confused whether he might be Vivie's father. Frank Gardner, who is 20 years old handsome man, comes and meets Vivie. Frank, who is not smart and rich, wants to marry Vivie because "she has what amounts to a high Cambridge degree; and she seems to have as much money as she wants" (*MWP*, p. 17). In the patriarchal society, when a woman gets married, she becomes her husband's property. In other words, her husband owns what his wife owns. Frank's father, Reverend Samuel Gardner, comes after his son. Frank reminds his father about his sin of 20 years ago by which he offered the barmaid money for the letters he wrote to her. That barmaid turns out to be Vivie's mother.

After Vivie and Mr. Praed go for a walk in the evening, Reverend Samuel states that Vivie cannot get married to his son Frank because there are reasons that he could not tell anyone. Crofts also opposes the marriage because of the reason he expresses as follows: "I suppose you don't want to marry the girl to a man younger than herself and without either a profession or a few pennies to keep her on" (*MWP*, pp. 21-2). In the patriarchal society, since women are not allowed to get a good education providing a job in the public sphere, they are expected to get married to men who have professions or money so that they can maintain their lives in the private sphere. Mrs. Warren declares her decision to Frank: "If you have no means of keeping a wife,... you can't have Vivie" (*MWP*, p. 22). As a conventional woman, Mrs. Warren wants to marry her daughter to a rich man. When Vivie and Mr. Praed come back, Mrs. Warren wants Vivie to let her know when she goes out, and forbids her to go out in the evening. However, representing a 'New Woman'

type, Vivie ignores her mother's warnings. When Mrs. Warren and Crofts are alone, Crofts tells Mrs. Warren that he wants to marry Vivie and makes an offer as follows: "Look here, Kitty: you're a sensible woman; you needn't put on any moral airs... I'll settle the whole property on her; and if you want a cheque for yourself on the wedding day, you can name any figure you like...within reason" (*MWP*, p. 25). Mrs. Warren accepts Crofts's offer because marriage in the patriarchal society is like a business in which women present their body to secure their future. Crofts and Mr. Praed go to Reverend Samuel's house and spend the night there. When Mrs. Warren and her daughter are alone, Mrs. Warren suggests Vivie to marry Crofts, not Frank, but Vivie rejects both of them: "I'm afraid poor Frank is at a thorough good-for-nothing. I shall have to get rid of him... That man Crofts does not seem to me to be good for much either" (*MWP*, p. 26). In the patriarchal society, a woman raises her young daughter with the belief that her life's unquestionable purpose is marriage. However, Vivie is grown up at school and college, and so she does not want to be imprisoned in the private sphere through marriage. With the conventional authority of a mother, Mrs. Warren states that she will not send Vivie to college again and expresses that Vivie's way of life will be what Mrs. Warren pleases. Vivie wants to know her father and her mother's profession. Mrs. Warren swears that none of the men Vivie has met is her father. Mrs. Warren tells about women's status in the patriarchal society that she has not able to choose her own way of life, has not the chance to go to college and has been left only with the choice of becoming a prostitute. However, Vivie opposes her mother as follows:

Everybody has some choice, mother... 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. (*MWP*, p. 29)

Vivie believes in shaping one's destiny. However, Mrs. Warren tries to convince her daughter about the fate of unlucky Victorian females that led her to experience such path. Mrs. Warren's mother was a widow and had a fried-fish shop. Mrs. Warren and her sister, Lizzie, who were both beautiful, had two half-sisters, who were ugly but hard working and honest. One of their half-sisters worked in a white lead factory for twelve hours a day for a few shillings a week until she died of lead poisoning. Her other half-sister married a government labourer and kept his room and the children neat and tidy for a few shillings a week until he took to drink. Mrs. Warren and Lizzie go to church school from where Lizzie escapes one night. Later, Mrs. Warren becomes a waitress working "fourteen hours a day serving drinks and washing glasses for four shillings a week" (*MWP*, p. 30). There, she meets with her lost sister, Lizzie, who is in a better financial situation. With the help of her sister, she enters the prostitution business so that she can save enough money to buy a house in Brussels. Finally, she becomes a brothel mistress who is conscious of the period's social conditions and survival. Mrs. Warren states that none of her girls have ever been treated badly as she was treated before. She supports women who have suffered in the patriarchal society. In fact, Mrs. Warren exploits her fellow creatures to gain economic power in the public sphere. Thus, Mrs. Warren collapses normative social spheres. As a part of the public sphere, prostitution which is a profession available to women is typically the domain of men. Mrs. Warren keeps her profession as a secret in order not to be considered a fallen woman by the

patriarchal society. Nevertheless, Mrs. Warren is a conventional woman because she wants her daughter, Vivie, to marry the rich middle-aged Crofts, who is her business-partner of brothels. After telling the social truth of the Victorian period, Mrs. Warren tries to justify her past decision to Vivie: "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" (*MWP*, p. 30). Mrs. Warren says that if a woman wants to earn a decent kind of money, she should be a prostitute in order not to be exploited by the manager. Mrs. Warren says that if you cannot marry a gentleman, you become a prostitute, so she has kept her self-respect by being a brothel mistress. Vivie tries to understand the difficult conditions for women in the Victorian period, in which her mother, who cannot be a singer or a journalist or an actor, is victimized by the patriarchal society. Her mother has only her beauty to please men as a prostitute. According to Frederick Jr. Marker, the play is "concerned with social corruption (in this case prostitution), and is determined to fasten the blame for such vice not on the individual (the brothel madam) but on a (male, capitalistic) social system that fosters it" (1998, p. 115).

In the next morning in the rectory garden, Frank learns that his father, Reverend Samuel, told Crofts to bring Vivie Warren and Mrs. Kitty Warren over there when he was drunk the evening before. Frank reveals that as a clergyman, Reverend Samuel also buys sermons. When Frank's mother and sister, Bessie, learn that the Warrens will come to her house, they go to town because they would not stand Mrs. Warren for a moment. As fellow creatures, Frank's mother and sister do not want to establish dialogue with Mrs. Warren, who is unquestioningly labelled as a fallen woman. When the Warrens arrive, Reverend Samuel tells them that his wife and daughter have gone to an ill relative. When Crofts and Vivie are alone, he reveals that he is the business-partner of her mother. Although Crofts is 25 years older than Vivie, he tells her that he has a lot of money, wants to marry her and leave her a rich widow. The patriarchal society subjects women on men for a living, so the sexual relationship becomes an economic relationship, and marriage influences women's development negatively, thereby restraining their equality and freedom (Alkan, 2020). Vivie rejects his offer as follows: "I quite appreciate the offer...the money, the position, Lady Crofts, and so on. But I think I will say no, if you don't mind, I'd rather not" (*MWP*, p. 39). In order to convince her, Crofts tells Vivie that he is still her mother's business-partner and that her mother is still a brothel mistress in managing brothels in Vienna Brussels, Ostend, and Budapest. Although Crofts, who is an upper-class member, gains money from prostitution by running a public-house, he says that prostitution is immoral. This situation portrays the hypocritical aspect of males in the patriarchal society. Vivie expresses that her mother has done everything because of poverty. On the other hand, Vivie criticizes Crofts who runs a public-house for the sake of earning more money. Vivie realizes that this dirty money has paid her education and clothes. Nevertheless, she rejects Crofts' marriage proposal because she does not consider him worth thinking: "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" (*MWP*, pp. 41-2). Vivie criticizes the corrupted society and the double standard of the

patriarchal society. Crofts realizes that he has no chance to marry Vivie. When he sees that Frank is attracted to Vivie, he states that she is half-sister of Frank.

On Saturday afternoon at Honoria Fraser's chambers in Chancery Lane, Frank visits Vivie, who works there. Frank, who has won gold by gambling poker, invites her to music-hall and then to dinner. Vivie refuses the offer because she has to do a lot of work in the office after becoming a business-partner of Honoria whom she has sent for a fortnight's holiday. When Frank wants to talk to Vivie, she, representing 'New Woman' type, lights a cigarette and listens to Frank, who considers her smoking a nasty womanly habit. Frank is convinced by his father that he is sure there must be some mistake about the matter of Frank and Vivie being half-siblings. Frank tells Vivie that he is still attracted to her. Mr. Praed, who comes to say good-bye to Vivie, wants her to accompany him to Italy for saturating herself with beauty and romance. However, Vivie rejects his offer because she is ready to take life as it is by struggling in the public sphere as an unromantic single businesswoman: "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)" (*MWP*, p. 48). Women are imprisoned in the private sphere because the patriarchal society believes that women do not have the intelligence to make important decisions and the physical strength to struggle in the public sphere. Men are seen as strong and governing in the public sphere, whereas women are considered weak and obedient in the private sphere. However, Vivie believes to have the physical strength and intelligence to work in the public sphere. When Vivie thinks about her mother's profession, she blames the patriarchal society that is responsible for not allowing women to get a good education providing a job in the public sphere. When Frank and Mr. Praed learn the truth about Mrs. Warren's occupation, they consider Vivie very courageous and they will take the secret to the grave. Vivie tells them that she will leave her mother. Frank does not want to marry Vivie, who has no money because he does not want to be a burden to her. He writes a note for Vivie telling his decision. After Mrs. Warren comes in, Frank and Mr. Praed leave the office.

Mrs. Warren tells Vivie that people are not right and proper as Vivie is taught at school and college, and that while Vivie is very rich because of her mother's money, she does not need to work from early till late hours for nothing. Mrs. Warren tells Vivie that she cannot give up her profession because she is fit for it and likes making money, which provides a certain power for Vivie as a respectable female in the patriarchal society. Since her mother is still in the brothel business with her free will although she does not need it, Vivie refuses her mother's money earned from social abuses, and she takes a stand against her mother: "From now on, I go my own way in my own business and among my own friends. And you will go yours" (*MWP*, p. 52). Vivie, who is aware of the pretended morality, refuses her mother's money because she does not want to be worthless, does not want a conventional mother at heart, and does not want a husband. Mrs. Warren leaves Vivie without shaking hands. When Vivie sits at the writing table, she sees Frank's note, reads it quickly, throws it in the wastebasket, and then, goes at her work.

In the end of the play, Vivie refuses not only her mother but also her money, and she decides to stay single and earn her own money. In the late Victorian period, while Mrs. Warren struggles to survive as a prostitute and a brothel mistress, her daughter, Vivie, represents the 'New

Woman', who chooses her independence instead of marriage. According to Purdom, Vivie portrays "the passion for conscience, for work, and for a cause" (1966, p. 128). According to Greco, Vivie's qualifications go beyond stereotypical conventional female characters: "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" (1967, p. 94). Dan H. Laurence considers Vivie as Shaw's forerunner female type: "Shaw in his play had created his first significant woman, Vivie Warren, defying Victorian pretensions, strong, determined, and apart" (2004, p. 43). In this sense, when a woman is allowed to get a good education, she will be able to acquire a profession in the public sphere ensuring her economic freedom.

CONCLUSION

In the patriarchal society women are allowed only the role of being a wife and a mother in the private sphere. Since Mrs. Kitty Warren is not allowed to receive a proper education, she becomes a prostitute and then a brothel mistress to gain economic power in the public sphere. She keeps her profession as a secret in order not to be considered a fallen woman by the patriarchal society. As a part of the public sphere, prostitution which is a profession available to women is typically the domain of men. Nevertheless, she is conventional at heart, like women in the private sphere because she wants her daughter, Vivie, not to work in the public sphere but to marry the rich middle-aged Crofts, who is her business-partner of brothels. On the other hand, Vivie Warren shakes hands with men, smokes cigarettes, has knowledge of mathematics, is glorified for being able to graduate from Cambridge, and has the physical strength and intelligence to work in the public sphere. Therefore, she refuses marriage proposals and her mother's money. Shaw's independent female character, Vivie, fights for her position in the society, represents the 'New Woman' type and challenges the stereotypical conventional female characters of the Victorian period (Öğünç, 2017). When a woman, who is imprisoned in the private sphere, receives a good education, she will be able to work in the public sphere, ensure her economic liberty, meet different men, and get experienced. This study asserts that women and men have no innate difference in terms of mental capacity, but women face prejudices imposed by the patriarchal society. Women are not allowed to take the same education as men to acquire a profession in the public sphere, and by this way, they are imprisoned in the private sphere.

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