

THE NEW WOMAN AND THE OLD PROSTITUTE: WOMEN AND THE PROFESSIONS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Patricia E. Johnson

This paper focuses on the cliché which defines prostitution as “the world’s oldest profession” and its appearance in the late nineteenth century in Rudyard Kipling’s short story, “On the City Wall” (1888), and George Bernard Shaw’s play, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893). Behind the cliché lie two significant late Victorian controversies about the social status of women – the debate about the legal status of prostitution itself in the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and in the social purity movement, and discussion of the New Woman and her entry into the middle-class professions. These two topics are, in some ways, very separate from one another. For one thing, they focus on two different classes of women: working-class prostitutes – the “unskilled daughters of the unskilled classes” (Walkowitz 15) – and educated middle-class women, ambitious to enter new fields such as law and medicine. For another, prostitution was seen by many observers as a necessary aspect of human societies from time immemorial while the New Woman, as her moniker announces, was a recent phenomenon, never seen before. But, despite these contrasts, there are underlying connections, of course, especially focused on the problematic of women stepping outside the domestic sphere and the implications of this for the larger society. To begin to call prostitution a profession at just this historical moment, then, suggests both an indirect linkage between the two topics and a commentary on them.

The use of cliché, in and of itself, raises a number of interesting questions about the representation of women and paid work in the late nineteenth century. In “The Politics of Cliché: Sex, Class, and Abortion in Australian Realism,” Nicole Moore argues that, while readers often ignore the political functions of cliché, in fact clichés are often narrative moments when a number of highly conflicting impulses “coalesce” (70), struggling against one another to represent something that is both forbidden and commonplace. In the specific instance of Australian fictions about abortion, Moore points out that clichés encode conflicted attitudes toward sex and class. Similarly, the late nineteenth century phrase “the oldest profession” is laden with unspoken, contradictory assumptions about sex and class. As Moore’s analysis suggests, while clichés are often shrugged off with a laugh or assumed to be unrevealing stereotypes, in fact, they need to be read as complex; in order to interpret them fully, one needs to be sensitive to the “conflicted relation between

euphemism and cliché, revelation and taboo" (71). Applying her insights to the late nineteenth century, it can be argued that the clichéd reference to prostitution as a profession allows Kipling and Shaw to address the tabooed topic of prostitution in new ways and to create images of prostitutes who do not fit older Victorian models of the prostitute as passive victim. Yet, at the same time, these representations are euphemistic and periphrastic, calling attention to their subject matter with a sly wink at their audiences. Kipling and Shaw also use ellipsis at significant moments in order to gesture at what they cannot directly name. When so much is left unsaid, it is not surprising that unspoken implications overwhelm their actual representations of the prostitute.

The phrase "the world's oldest profession" is used to avoid saying "prostitute" or "whore" and is often treated as a pleasant joke. Tracing its history back to its uses in the late nineteenth century, however, underscores the idea that this joke has a number of serious implications. In *The Sexual Contract*, feminist political theorist Carole Pateman argues that modern democracies conceal unaddressed conflicts over women's citizenship by acting as if inequality can be addressed by simply extending the classic social contract to women. By contrast, Pateman posits the pre-existence of "a sexual contract" which guarantees men the right of sexual access to women (2). She argues that this pre-existing sexual contract undergirds marriage and distinguishes it from other kinds of social contracts, and that it "both establishes orderly access to women and a division of labour in which women are subordinate to men," thus assuring patriarchy (51). Pateman's critique includes a chapter on prostitution where she comments on the phrase "the world's oldest profession" saying, "One of the most persistent claims is that prostitution (like patriarchy) is a universal feature of human social life, a claim summed up in the cliché, 'the world's oldest profession'" (195). She challenges this idea of universality by pointing out that it is usually achieved by collapsing a number of significantly different activities, ranging from temple prostitution to "white slavery," into the one term, prostitution. Pateman's argument suggests that Kipling's use of the phrase "the most ancient profession in the world" and Shaw's description of Mrs. Warren's work as "a profession" at the historical moment when women were winning access to middle-class professions and were agitating for the vote is a way of reminding them of their place, a surreptitious wink at the primacy of "the sexual contract."

I

The connections between prostitution, the New Woman, and the idea of professions for women have their roots in earlier developments and controversies in industrial England. In the 1880s and 1890s, as middle-class women entered the workplace and demanded training in the professions, they met some of the same objections that earlier in the century had been levelled at working-class factory workers and miners. In the 1830s and 1840s the presence of working-class women in sexually mixed

workplaces excited fears of gender anarchy. That anarchy was imagined in contradictory ways as unsexing women by making them like men and as also unleashing uncontrolled sexual promiscuity. Investigators like Peter Gaskell described factories as hotbeds of sexual vice while Parliamentary commissioners like Jelinger Symons compared mines to brothels. During the 1844 debate over the Ten Hours Bill, Lord Ashley spoke of “the appalling progress of female labour,” drawing a graphic picture of a world turned upside down where “the females not only perform the labour, but occupy the places of men; they are forming various clubs and associations, and gradually acquiring all those privileges which are held to be the proper portion of the male sex” (*Hansard*, Series 3, 15 March 1844, Vol. 10, cols. 1088, 1099).

Similar anxieties were provoked by the New Woman. In *The Feminine Political Novel in Victorian England*, Barbara Leah Harman argues that a central argument against middle-class women’s entry into the professions was the danger of sexual impropriety: “Promiscuous mingling of the sexes” was seen as leading to sexual licentiousness, and the factory girl’s reputation for sexual immorality is reconstructed for ambitious middle-class women in images like the following description of the fate of a female doctor from *Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1862:

A married female M.D. must of course be prepared to sally forth at any hour of the night, if summoned by a patient. What husband would submit to such a gross infringement of the connubial contract? Nay, it may be questioned whether he would feel gratified by the information that his wife had been selected by some notorious debauchee as his confidential medical adviser. If a maiden, the case is even worse. No daughter of Esculapius would be safe for a moment if, under professional pretexts, she might be decoyed into any den of infamy. Nor would the public sympathy be largely lavished upon the victim of such an outrage. (qtd in Harman 5)

In 1891 Eliza Lynn Linton attacked the New Women in her article, “The Wild Women as Social Insurgents,” in terms that parallel Ashley’s earlier fears about working-class women, complaining that they made absolute personal independence their ideal and viewed themselves as the equals of men. Her central accusation against these wild New Women is “the translation into the cultured classes of certain qualities and practices hitherto confined to the uncultured – and savages.” She goes on to picture such a woman as she “smokes after dinner with the men; in railway carriages; in public rooms – when she is allowed,” and asserts that “her prototypes” are “the stalwart cohort of pitbrow women for whom sex has no aesthetic distinctions” (597). Mining as an occupation for working-class women was even more shocking than factory work. When Parliamentary bluebooks revealed women

working below ground in 1842, the first law restricting adult labour was passed because of the uproar. While women were forbidden to work underground, a number were still employed as pitbrow lasses, sorting coal at the top of the mines. Their work remained controversial, as male miners and the press repeatedly stirred up controversy, attempting to have their work outlawed (John). Linton's comparison of the New Woman with pitbrow workers draws on this powerful imagery from the ongoing controversies over working-class women's occupations. Thus, the New Woman – who sought equality with men and invaded middle-class workplaces and professions – shares a number of elements with such earlier unsuitable women as factory girls and pitbrow lasses, who were seen both as assuming masculine roles and as highly sexualized. She could be tarred with the same brush: a number of traits associated with working-class women were projected upward. For example, Vivie Warren, the pattern New Woman of Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, is physically aggressive, smokes cigars and drinks brandy. And, even more significantly, the play unfolds around the revelation that the New Woman's mother follows the "profession" of prostitution, hinting at the fate that may await the New Woman, just as its image was made to haunt the factory girls and women miners.

II

Kipling's and Shaw's uses of the word "profession" in relation to prostitution also point to developments in the long-running Victorian debate over "the great social evil." Mid-century commentators such as William Tait, William Acton, and W.R. Greg named prostitution directly in their discussions and used such terms as "employment," "livelihood" and "trade" to describe it. Tellingly, they did not, however, use the word "profession." The reasons for this become clear when they describe their assumptions about the reasons women turn to prostitution. In *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*, Amanda Anderson argues that in the mid-century the prostitute was defined as one who lacked character and who was, therefore, unable to exert agency. She is marked by "her inability to exert control over the circumstances that come to define her" and, in fact, tends to have no direct consciousness of those circumstances and, thus, is unable to make any kind of social critique (61). Those critiques must be made for her. Another negative trait associated with the prostitute was laziness. In *London Labour and the London Poor* Henry Mayhew covers prostitutes in his volume on "Those Who Will Not Work" while the surgeon William Tait lists "Indolence" as one of the "Natural Causes" of prostitution in his 1840 study, *Magdalenism* (qtd in Nead 102-103). London magistrate Cecil Chapman claimed that prostitution was caused primarily by "idleness and a refusal to earn a living by honest labour" (93). These descriptions of the prostitute all underline her weak and passive character.

Therefore, when Kipling and Shaw use the word "profession" in relation to prostitution, they are redefining it in significant ways. The word "profession" itself

has connotations that connect it with special knowledge, training, respectability and hard work, all elements completely opposed to the earlier ideas about prostitution. The word "profession" also has class implications since it was habitually used to distinguish the three learned professions of divinity, law and medicine from less skilled occupations in business and trade. Finally, "profession"'s root meaning, "to profess," points to someone who publicly avows a certain vocation, a highly ironic element, given that Kipling and Shaw employ the word so as never to have to name prostitution. So, far from being a passive victim who cannot control her circumstances or even define herself, the figure of the prostitute in Kipling's "On the City Wall" and Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* becomes self-defining and powerful, though within certain carefully defined limits.

It should be noted, too, that Kipling's and Shaw's prostitutes stand in contradiction to what was happening historically in prostitution in the late nineteenth century. Judith Walkowitz's *Prostitution and Victorian Society* establishes that one of the consequences of the Contagious Diseases Acts was precisely the professionalisation of prostitution, but not in a positive sense of the word. Before the Acts, working-class prostitutes had lived among their own class and moved in and out of prostitution with relative ease. In addition, the business was dominated by lodging-house brothels which tended to be female-run. But the Contagious Diseases Acts, as well as the social purity campaigns of the 1880s, changed the situation by publicly listing prostitutes' names, legislating lodging-house brothels out of existence, and bringing about much greater police surveillance and, thus, putting male pimps and protectors in power. By the late nineteenth century, prostitutes were a caste apart, no longer able to live dispersed among the working-class population or easily moving to other types of employment. Thus Walkowitz describes the professionalisation of Victorian prostitution, but it is neither an old nor a positive development.

III

A version of the cliché, "the world's oldest profession," appears in Rudyard Kipling's 1888 short story about an Indian prostitute, "On the City Wall." The story's first line states that its heroine, Lalun, was "a member of the most ancient profession in the world" (296). Kipling's use of this phrase is no accident, especially given his sympathetic identification with the rank and file Tommies who served in India. He had been outraged by the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, seeing it as interfering with one of the few pleasures the men had available to them. Though the acts had been repealed in England in 1886, the colonial government in India continued its policy of running regimental bazaars in which inspected prostitutes were made available to British soldiers. When this situation came to the attention of repeal campaigners such as Alfred Dyer and Josephine Butler, they launched a new phase of the campaign directed specifically at India (Petrie 266-67).

The opening paragraph of "On the City Wall" suggests part of Kipling's response to this, commenting that "[I]n the West, people say rude things about Lalun's profession, and write lectures about it, and distribute lectures to young persons in order that Morality may be preserved" (296).

The phrase, "the most ancient profession in the world," implies that prostitution is a natural, social necessity that should be accepted as such. Further, the use of the specific word "profession" indicates that prostitution – far from being unskilled or manual labour – is a craft acquired by a particular set of people. And, finally, to employ the word "profession" in 1888, just when middle-class women are entering "the professions," also carries the implication that women's first, "most ancient," and natural profession is to serve men sexually. The story's opening paragraph goes on to describe Lalun's profession as inherited:

Lilith was her very-great-grandmamma, and that was before the days of Eve as every one knows [. . .]. In the East where the profession is hereditary, descending from mother to daughter, nobody writes lectures or takes any notice; and that is a distinct proof of the inability of the East to manage its own affairs. (296)

So Lilith is the first woman and, apparently, the first prostitute. The story includes other evidence of prostitution's ancient lineage as well: its epigraph is a quotation from the Old Testament Book of Joshua about the harlot Rahab who, like Lalun, lived in a house on a city wall. Lalun's house on the wall is presented as a *salon* where educated men of all nationalities – the English narrator, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Afghan mullahs – gather to be charmed by her beauty and amused by her wit. One of her Muslim admirers, Wali Dad, declares that the Athenians were right to seclude their women "who were fools" while they enjoyed "the glorious institution" of the *hetairai*, courtesans of ancient Athens, "who were amusing and *not* fools" (311). All of these references – Lilith, Rahab, the Athenian *hetairai* – collapse various categories of behaviour in order to present a seamless history for prostitution. In a final erasure of difference, Lalun's adoring client Wali Dad comments to his English friend, "it is curious to think that our common meeting-place should be *here*, in the house of a common – how do you call *her*?" (311).

The introduction of this blank to be filled in, this ellipsis in the discussion of the prostitute, points to all the questions about prostitution that the story's description elides. The paradox is that Lalun professes an occupation that cannot be named in polite society. While the story's opening paragraph plays with euphemism and mocks the CD campaigners' efforts to suppress state-supported prostitution by suppressing the word, here the story turns to the flip side and encourages the reader to fill in the blank mentally with an unprofessional word – "the house of a common" *whore*. This is particularly ironic because other descriptions of Lalun demonstrate that she is an uncommon whore, at the very least. In fact, "On the City Wall" finally

reveals that Lalun uses her *salon* as a cover for anti-British activity, and Lalun herself is a kind of early version of Mata Hari: she engineers the escape of a Muslim leader wanted by the British. She is also clearly an atypical example of what was happening to Indian prostitution under British imperial rule. She is not a prostitute in a regimental bazaar, subject to the CD Acts, but a wealthy, well-educated woman who holds brilliant gatherings in her house for India's multicultural elite. The story never names her a devadasi or temple dancer, but, like them, Lalun is described as having inherited her position from her mother. As Shannon Bell points out, ancient sacred prostitutes combined intellectual and sexual qualities (19-39). Similarly, in traditional Indian society, devadasi were sacred, their dances a necessary part of many rituals and important celebrations. Like Lalun, they were well-educated and sophisticated, and their caste had many privileges that were off limits to other women, not only freedom from marriage and the right to choose their sexual partners but also to inherit property and to bequeath it to their daughters. In precolonial India there had been no stigma attached to being a devadasi, but British colonialism had effectively desacralized her and had brought about a collapse of categories where prostitution is concerned, so that now devadasis were viewed as common whores, even by many Indians (Paxton 85-89). Therefore, the ahistoricism of the story's descriptions of prostitution obscures both the impact of the CD Acts and British colonialism in India.

IV

George Bernard Shaw approaches the topic of prostitution from a different angle to that of Kipling. He was sympathetic to the campaign against the CD Acts and his generally progressive politics position him against Kipling's conservatism. There are, thus, many differences in their treatments of the issue, yet their uses of the word "profession" also suggest some surprising affinities. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* never names prostitution but constantly gestures to it through cliché, euphemism and ellipsis. Because the play is set in England, however, where people write lectures about prostitution, and because it directly addresses the Woman, not the Indian, Question, Shaw's play shocked contemporary sensibilities as Kipling's story did not. Written in 1893, the play did not receive a legal public performance in England until 1926. While its title announces that it is about Mrs. Warren's "profession" and contains her eloquent defence of prostitution, the play mocks Victorian propriety by never actually using the word "prostitute." *Mrs. Warren's Profession* also makes it clear that prostitution and professions for women are related to one another. Mrs. Warren, who began her career as a member of "the profession" and is now proprietor of a chain of brothels, is the mother of Vivie Warren, New Woman exemplar who tied the third wrangler in mathematics at Cambridge and is destined for a career in accountancy and law.

The play focuses on the relationship of prostitute/mother and New

Woman/daughter and their attempt to come to terms with one another. Vivie Warren has been raised apart from her mother and given the best, most modern education. Now that she has completed it, Mrs. Warren expects to be a part of her life. When she reveals the unvarnished details of her past to Vivie, she persuades her that prostitution is a reasonable career choice for a poor girl and arouses Vivie's affection and admiration for her struggles. It is important to note, however, that the play's defence of prostitution is not, as Kipling's was, based on nature. The play never uses the word "oldest" to describe Mrs. Warren's profession. Instead, her eloquent defence of her career to her daughter is couched in the libertarian terms of social contract theory. In *The Sexual Contract* Pateman outlines contractarian defences of prostitution, defences which, she argues, ignore the sexual contract and try to read prostitution as just another form of social contract. Thus social contract theorists take the position that prostitution is a job like any other and the prostitute merely a wage labourer. Following that parallel, it can be argued that there is nothing wrong with prostitution that is not wrong with other forms of work, that the prostitute is the owner of property in her person, and that she contracts out the use of her services in a free exchange with her client, which is like any other employment contract (Pateman 190-91).

A hard-headed capitalist, Mrs. Warren argues in precisely the same way. She and her sister, Liz, were born poor and pretty and grew up observing what happened to the women around them. One of their sisters became a factory worker and died of lead poisoning; another married a poor man who took to drink, and ended up miserably struggling to feed a growing family on little cash. The two remaining sisters assessed their situation and recognised their capital – their good looks – and their market – the appetites of men – and went to work. When Mrs. Warren describes how she and her sister saved their money to buy a "house" for themselves in Brussels, Vivie asks, "why did you choose that business? Saving money and good management will succeed in any business." Mrs. Warren explains it as a problem of capital: "where can a woman get the money to save in any other business? [. . .] all we had was our appearance and our turn for pleasing men. Do you think we were such fools as to let other people trade in our good looks by employing us as shopgirls, or barmaids, or waitresses, when we could trade in them ourselves and get all the profits instead of starvation wages?" (1784). When Vivie asks, "Come now, mother: frankly! Isn't it part of what you call character in a woman that she should greatly dislike such a way of making money?", Mrs. Warren counters by comparing prostitution to other jobs:

Why, of course. Everybody dislikes having to work and make money; but they have to do it all the same. I'm sure I've often pitied a poor girl; tired out and in low spirits having to try to please some man she doesn't care two straws for – some half-drunken fool that thinks he's making himself agreeable when he's teasing

and worrying and disgusting a woman so that hardly any money could pay her for putting up with it. But she has to bear with disagreeables and take the rough with the smooth, just like a nurse in a hospital or anyone else. (1785)

And the profession has been good to Mrs. Warren and her sister. Mrs. Warren is now a wealthy co-owner of a number of "hotels" in the various capitals of Europe while her sister has taken her money, retired from business, and now lives as a respectable rich widow in an English cathedral town. In sum, Mrs. Warren's profession appears to be an inspiring story of individual enterprise and success.

Mrs. Warren's specifics here, though drawn from parallels with other jobs for women, do have the advantage of underlining the fact that prostitution is work. Like Kipling's character, Lalun, her description's most striking aspect is the way it confronts and overturns the mid-century assumptions that prostitutes were lazy and without character or agency. Mrs. Warren argues, "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 a thing I hate in a woman, it's want of character" (1785). Before she learns her mother's history, Vivie is generally contemptuous of what she sees as the lifestyle of her mother's set, commenting "If I thought I was going to be like that – that I was going to be a waster, shifting along from one meal to another with no purpose, and no character, and no grit in me, I'd open an artery and bleed to death without one moment's hesitation" (1778). After hearing her mother's story, however, and her way of triumphing over adverse circumstances, Vivie is converted to admiration. This is certainly one of the achievements of the play, and it foreshadows late twentieth-century debates about redefining prostitution as sexwork in interesting ways. For example, in "Screwing the System: Sexwork, Race, and the Law," feminist Anne McClintock argues that one reason that prostitution has been so stigmatised is that it foregrounds "the historical contradiction between women's paid and unpaid work" (105). McClintock reasons that renaming prostitution as sexwork would remove its stigma and allow prostitutes the same protections that other workers receive. While *Mrs. Warren's Profession* makes the radical argument that prostitution is like other work and, in fact, that, given their choices, it provides a good option for working-class women, its euphemisms and ellipses allow it to escape a full investigation of the implications of this argument. Enacting this movement, almost as soon as Vivie accepts her mother's past and embraces her, she discovers that her mother is still involved in the business and rejects her. She can accept her mother as a former prostitute, now reformed, but not as a presently practising brothel madam. Apparently, distance is necessary when dealing with the issue of sex for money, whether that distance is achieved through time or cliché.

Thus, like Kipling, Shaw's portrayal is finally shot through with silence and

ambivalence. In "A Whore in Every Home," Germaine Greer attacks Shaw's representation of the prostitute, commenting that "what is bad about Mrs. Warren's profession is as efficiently repressed as its unspeakable name. Shaw refrains from making his spectators desire his heroine, but the whole structure of the play relies upon their prurience for its interest" (162). Like Kipling, he invites the audience to fill in the blank several times, having the male characters mentally, although not vocally, call Mrs. Warren an old whore. Finally, the play's turning point, the moment in the last scene when Vivie needs to explain to her suitor, Frank, why she can never associate with her mother or take any of her money, centres on an ellipsis. For this crucial communication, Vivie writes two words on a piece of paper, shows them to Frank, and then tears the paper up, destroying the last bit of evidence about Mrs. Warren's profession. Should it think beyond cliché, the audience might be left to wonder what exactly are the two words Vivie writes – "former whore," "brothel madam"? What is it about Mrs. Warren's profession that is finally unspeakable, even to her daughter? The play does not address that issue and leaves its audience comfortably protected by its clichés and incomplete suggestions.

Shaw's portrayal of Mrs. Warren's career also contains echoes of the social purity campaigns of the 1870s and 1880s. The fact that Mrs. Warren and her sister open their first brothel in Brussels points back to the first major success of the social purity movement, Alfred Dyer's revelation in 1879 that English girls were being held captive in Brussels brothels (Petrie 209-11). The career of Mrs. Warren's sister, who retires from business to a cathedral town where she lives as a respectable widow, echoes that of Mrs. Travers, another focus of the social purity campaigners in the early 1880s, who, during her career as a procurer of young children, managed to save money and contribute to many religious charities, until retiring with her fortune intact (Petrie 238-41). But despite these parallels, any suggestion of the exploitation or violence that were the themes of the social purity campaigners are denied in Mrs. Warren's story, who claims that her girls are treated much better than factory workers and presents them as, for working-class women, doing well as beneficiaries of the free market.

The play also establishes a close relationship between the prostitute and the New Woman. Not only is Mrs. Warren Vivie's mother but their personalities have a great deal in common: Vivie reveals herself to be a similar hard-headed businesswoman. In the last act of the play, however, Vivie's behaviour indicates that the New Woman is attempting to define herself differently from the old prostitute by opting out of the sexual contract. By the conclusion, Vivie has severed herself not only from her mother but also from men and ensconced herself in her friend Honoria Frasier's law office. When her mother revealed her past, Vivie had abandoned what she calls "the conventional superiority of the respectable woman" and embraced her. She had accepted that past and the implicit fact that prostitution had paid for her upbringing and education. But the idea of prostitution as an on-going concern taints not only her relationship with her mother but also the whole concept of marriage for

Vivie. The implication is that the sexual contract is at the base of all relations between men and women, and Vivie's only choices are to accept that fact or try to separate herself completely from them. The play's last ambiguous glimpse of Vivie shows her breathing a sigh of relief at being rid of both men and her mother, and joyfully plunging into her work. It seems this New Woman rejects "the sexual contract" and, along with it, Shaw suggests, every social relation except the economic. The final isolation of Vivie indicates an underlying concern that, if women reject the necessity for prostitution and, more significantly, the need for male sexual satisfaction that prostitution implies, social and sexual relations between men and women will come to an end.

The challenges of reading texts in which cliché and euphemism compete with revelation are complex. In *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*, Shannon Bell argues that "modern discourse on prostitution was part of a broader discursive production of female sexuality which separated the female body into the reproductive body and the un(re)productive body" (41). On the one side, Bell suggests, were respectable women whose sexuality was controlled within marriage; on the other side were disreputable women whose sexuality was uncontrolled and whose ability to reproduce, therefore, did not serve the end of patriarchal heredity. These dichotomies, and the apparent separation between respectable and disreputable women in Victorian culture, however, belie the complex ways in which such categories are produced and maintained. In the late nineteenth century, the redefinition of prostitution as a profession, however tongue-in-cheek its intention, allowed the idea of the prostitute to shadow and police the New Woman, as she had earlier shadowed working-class women who were outside the domestic sphere, such as the factory girl. Under the pressure of the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and the emerging women's movement in England, Kipling and Shaw produce new representations of the prostitute that, in part, demonstrate how she is a necessary part of the patriarchal system, in which British soldiers must be served and capitalism must flourish. But Lalun and Mrs. Warren also partly escape their assigned functions, Lalun through her political commitments, Mrs. Warren through her self-aware critique of the system that produced her. Further, the use of the word "profession" in relation to their work adds another dimension and opens a new front, as it gestures to unfolding developments in women's social and political roles. The close connection between old prostitute and New Woman, both of whom challenge women's traditional domestic role, is represented in the mother/daughter drama of Mrs. Warren and Vivie. *Mrs. Warren's Profession's* final ambiguous image of Vivie at work in the law office is an emblematic moment in late nineteenth-century culture, commemorating a shift away from prostitution as "the great social evil" toward the unclear implications of new freedoms for women.

Works Cited

- Anderson, Amanda. *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993.
- Bell, Shannon. *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute Body*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1994.
- Chapman, Cecil. *The Poor Man's Court of Justice: Twenty-Five Years as a Metropolitan Magistrate*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925.
- Greer, Germaine. "A Whore in Every Home." In *Fabian Feminist: Bernard Shaw and Woman*. Ed. Rodelle Weintraub. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State UP, 1977. 163-66.
- Hansard*. Series 3. House of Commons. Session: 5 February-14 August 1844, vol. 10.
- Harman, Barbara Leah. *The Feminine Political Novel in Victorian England*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1998.
- John, Angela V. *Coalmining Women: Victorian Lives & Campaigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Kipling, Rudyard. "On the City Wall." In *The Barwash Edition of the Complete Works in Prose And Verse of Rudyard Kipling*, Vol. 2, 296-325. New York: Doubleday, 1941.
- Levine, Philippa. *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Linton, Eliza Lynn. "The Wild Women as Social Insurgents." *Nineteenth Century* (October 1891): 596-605.
- McClintock, Anne. "Screwing the System: Sexwork, Race, and the Law." In *Feminism and Postmodernism*. Eds. Margaret Ferguson and Jennifer Wicke. Durham: Duke UP, 1994. 103-28.
- Moore, Nicole. "The Politics of Cliché: Sex, Class, and Abortion in Australian Realism." *Modern Fiction Studies*, 47.1 (Spring 2001): 69-91.
- Nead, Lynda. *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract*. Palo Alto, CA.: Stanford UP, 1988.
- Paxton, Nancy L. *Writing under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1999.
- Petrie, Glen. *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine Butler*. London: MacMillan, 1971.
- Shaw, George Bernard. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. In *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. 2. 5th ed. Ed. M.H. Abrams, et al. New York: W.W. Norton, 1986. 1762-1808.
- Walkowitz, Judith R. *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.