

Swarthmore College

Works

English Literature Faculty Works

English Literature

2004

Truncated Love In "Candida" And "Heartbreak House"

Harold E. Pagliaro

Swarthmore College, hpaglia1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Let us know how access to these works benefits you

Recommended Citation

Harold E. Pagliaro. (2004). "Truncated Love In "Candida" And "Heartbreak House"". *SHAW*. Volume 24, 204-214. DOI: 10.1353/shaw.2004.0014

<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit/38>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by . It has been accepted for inclusion in English Literature Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

TRUNCATED LOVE IN "CANDIDA" AND "HEARTBREAK HOUSE"

Author(s): Harold Pagliaro

Source: *Shaw*, Vol. 24, DIONYSIAN SHAW (2004), pp. 204-214

Published by: Penn State University Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40681690>

Accessed: 16-08-2017 13:45 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Penn State University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Shaw*

Harold Pagliaro

TRUNCATED LOVE IN *CANDIDA* AND
HEARTBREAK HOUSE

Shaw's imagination as it is revealed in the plays is intensely and complexly heterosexual. My claim is obviously supported by such works as *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, and *Misalliance*, where the Life Force works remorselessly until it triumphs. But Shaw's heterosexual couples are not confined to those the Life Force has thrown together imperiously, "intending," as it were, to promote its evolutionary mission through them. Among these other couples, some marry (reproduce) only generally prompted by Evolution to do so, like Violet and Malone or the Collinses, the Tarletons, and the Utterwords. Others develop a relationship because they are drawn to each other or because they are brought together by circumstance, only to conclude that it should not lead to marriage, like Vivie and Frank or Lavinia and the Captain or Lesbia and the General.

One may regard these relationships as failures of the Life Force, as in some sense they are. But one may also think of them as experiments whose biological truncation enables Shaw to display in dramatic terms a range of heterosexual configurations. For example, Marchbanks, Higgins, Lavinia, Lina, and Cicely (with help from Brassbound) end a heterosexual relationship or resist allowing it to come to sexual fulfillment for essentially artistic, religious, or intensely held private reasons. Ellie, Vivie, and Lesbia do so too, but for them at least part of the reason is that society has failed to give the Life Force a setting they find acceptable. All these and other Shaw characters share an obvious common ground—they think and feel about a possible sexual partner, even if they do so only negatively, as Vivie does of Crofts.

Shaw's invention is varied enough that the psychosexual dynamic at work between potential partners is individually engaging, inviting separate critical attention. Here I shall confine myself to looking at the heterosexual dynamic of two plays, *Candida* and *Heartbreak House*. In both, Shaw

proposes couplings that are unlikely to come to happy endings—young Marchbanks and mature and married Candida, young Ellie and mature and married Hector, young Ellie and mature and unattractive Mangan, young Ellie and very old Shotover. The Life Force is sometimes at a disadvantage in the mating game.

Candida is a difficult play because all three principals, especially Candida, seem to invite fixed appraisals, when in fact they are complex characters.¹ The hardest by far to read is Candida, who is not simply an intelligent, liberated, frank, and beautiful maternal comforter (the Virgin Mother); she is also self-indulgent, cruel, narrow in her interests, and less sound in “instinctual intelligence” than she thinks she is. Marchbanks is not only a Shelleyan-sensitive poet who sees into the human heart with unerring accuracy, but he is also sexually immature and so maladroit socially as to be dangerous. Finally we may see Morell as Candida and Marchbanks do—as an overly indulged windbag, utterly dependent on his wife—when in fact he has won the remarkable Candida’s love to begin with, and despite his fear of losing her, deliberately leaves her and Marchbanks alone to bring their amatory gymnastics to a head.

It is possible, of course, that Shaw himself was ambivalent about his characters, especially Candida and Marchbanks, giving the title and the first two acts, more or less, to her, and the remainder, especially his mission-heavy departure into the night with an important secret, to him, not having known at first that Marchbanks was to become radically independent of Candida. But I think Shaw had a thorough artistic grasp of their characters from the start, however unconsciously. Candida had to be attractive enough to take possession of Marchbanks’s perceptive young mind. And Marchbanks had to be vital and intelligent enough to choose, finally, an independent life; but early on, he had to be immature enough to be engulfed by Candida.

A look at Shaw’s stage directions describing Candida on her first appearance may help to clarify this claim about Shaw’s control. He says of Candida, “she is like any other pretty woman who is just clever enough to make the most of her sexual attractions for trivially selfish ends; but Candida’s serene brow, courageous eyes, and well set mouth and chin signify largeness of mind and dignity of character to ennoble her cunning in the affections” (*Bodley Head Shaw*, 7 vols., ed. Dan H. Laurence [London: Max Reinhardt, 1970–74], I, 532. Hereafter I locate quotations by volume and page number in the *Bodley Head* edition). Candida’s sphere is the affections, where she works with “ennobled cunning,” Shaw tells us—a strange formulation, suggesting that in human affairs Candida is capable of wide-ranging, independent behavior. Shaw himself says of his heroine, “Candida is as unscrupulous as Siegfried: Morell himself sees that ‘no law

will bind her.’”² Shaw also makes it clear that Marchbanks is responsible for the contrasting view of Candida as the Virgin of the Assumption.³

We are also given an alternative to the almost universal male approval of Candida; it is a woman’s view, Prossy’s. Fed up with Lexy the Curate’s praises of Candida, she yells, “Her eyes are not a bit better than mine: now! And you know very well you think me dowdy and second rate” (I, 523). Half accusing, half apologizing, Lexy says, “I had no idea you had any feeling against Mrs Morell.” To this Prossy answers with Shavian assurance, “I have no feeling against her. She’s very nice, very good hearted: I’m very fond of her, and can appreciate her real qualities far better than any man can. . . . You think I’m jealous? . . . It must be so nice to be a man and have a fine penetrating intellect instead of mere emotions like us, and to know that the reason we don’t share your amorous delusions is that we’re all jealous of one another!” (I, 523–24). Shaw’s varied representations of Candida suggest not his gradual recognition and control of the character he wants her to be, but the display of her complexity.

Candida’s initiatives are important. She decides not only what she will do but in large measure what the men will do. There is plenty of evidence that Morell is an effective clergyman socialist by profession, but it is largely as Candida’s husband that the dramatic action gives him to us. Similarly, Marchbanks is unmistakably represented as an aristocrat and a poet, but it is largely as Candida’s lover that we get to know him. Shaw generates and controls Candida’s emotional centrality as a means (among other things) of developing the characters of the men as lovers.

The second act opens with a curious scene between Marchbanks and Prossy, during which she tries to maintain a conventional reticence about her fantasy love life, and Marchbanks insists upon demonstrating that the primal activity of all human minds is amatory longing. He is remorseless, hitting Prossy with the claim until she finally breaks down, protecting herself only with the promise of denial should Marchbanks divulge her secret.

PROSERPINE. [*suddenly rising with her hand pressed on her heart*] Oh, it’s no use trying to work while you talk like that. [*She leaves her little table and sits on the sofa. Her feelings are keenly stirred*]. It’s no business of yours whether my heart cried or not; but I have a mind to tell you for all of that.

MARCHBANKS. You needn’t. I know already that it must.

PROSERPINE. But mind if you ever say so, I’ll deny it. (I, 550)

The longish scene serves several dramatic purposes, telling us more about Prossy than we knew and especially more about Marchbanks. We learn that he is both aware of his compulsive dwelling on love and that he is convinced that such mental behavior is normal in that all except wicked

people enjoy and endure an interior life very like his own, the wicked being those who have no love to give and no power to receive it (I, 549). In the world of the play, heterosexual love is humanity's chief interior activity. Love is also its chief social activity.

But the scene does an even more important thing. It provides Marchbanks and us with vital information about Morell. We already know that Morell, Marchbanks, and Lexy—"all" the men—love Candida. But we have not yet been made to see that Morell is sexually a very attractive man. Indeed the exchange between him and Marchbanks that ends the first act seems to go dead against him in that regard, with the young intruder and Candida, arm in arm, leaving the desolate husband on the ropes. "I am the happiest of mortals," Marchbanks says. To this Morell adds, "So was I—an hour ago" (I, 546).

But we soon learn that Marchbanks still thinks of Morell as a dangerous rival. For it turns out that his seduction of Prossy into sexual self-revelation leads him to an overwhelming question that he may not have consciously intended to ask at the outset.

MARCHBANKS. No: answer me. I want to know: I must know. *I cant understand it. I can see nothing in him but words, pious resolutions, what people call goodness. You cant love that.* (I, 552)

But Prossy resists Marchbanks. She has admitted her interior preoccupation with matters of the heart, but she has not of course identified her lover. Marchbanks will not let go.

MARCHBANKS. . . . [*Determined to have an answer*] Is it possible for a woman to love him?

PROSERPINE. [*looking him straight in the face*] Yes. [*He covers his face with his hands*]. (I, 552)

Despite his self-confidence in most matters, Marchbanks regards the husband as a rival almost to the end. As I have said, Morell arranges for Marchbanks and Candida to be alone while he and the others attend a meeting of the Guild of St. Matthew. Inevitably, the two men confront each other later. But before Marchbanks makes it clear that he and Candida were lovers in spirit only, he is compelled to inquire about Morell's credentials as lover: "The man I want to meet is the man Candida married" (I, 577). Morell assures him that the man she married stands before him—"the same moralist and windbag [he was then]," he adds ironically (I, 578).

Shaken as he is, Morell shows courage in bringing matters between Marchbanks and Candida to resolution. He is a good man, even by Shav-

ian standards. We meet him well before we meet Candida, and we learn that he sees through and easily manages the greedy reprobate Burgess, his father-in-law. If not quite the Unofficial Bishop of Everywhere, Morell is an effective Anglican priest, and an ardent socialist who may speak as well as Shaw himself. And like Marchbanks, he too is attractive, to Candida, Prossy, and all the women who have ever watched and heard him in the pulpit or on the platform. If Marchbanks is ultimately the stronger man, it is in the sense that he will not play Tanner to Candida's Ann.⁴

What does Candida mean by saying she will choose the weaker of the two? Her last long speech of the play is an extravagant explanation of Morell's lifelong dependence on women—first his mother and sisters and, later, Candida and the Prossys, who have worked for him. If one accepts what Candida says, Morell is reduced to a nullity, except as the sire of her children. But dramatic actions are synergies. We do better to locate her last long speech in the context of her behavior toward Morell throughout the play. Her first serious exchange with him takes place soon after Marchbanks has told Morell that he loves Candida, and pointed out to him in brutal language his disqualifications as her husband. Candida thereafter finds him looking "very pale, and grey, and wrinkled, and old," and acts as if she wants to comfort him (I, 561). But she soon tells him that he gets too much love and Marchbanks too little; she derides Morell's work as nothing but an aphrodisiac, inducing "Prossy's complaint" among London's women. Then she confides that Marchbanks is falling in love with her, without realizing it. Her unintended irony reminds us of Marchbanks's brutal treatment of her husband just a short time before: it has left him looking "very pale, and grey, and wrinkled, and old," just the state that has moved Candida to comfort him. Comfort indeed. But she is yet to deliver the hammer blow. This she does by candidly telling her husband that if she slept with Marchbanks, she would save him from the terrible fate of finding out about love from "bad women" (I, 565).

Candida is genuinely "amazed" that Morell does not "understand" her suggestion and is confounded that when she kisses him he is outraged. She asks, "My dear: whats the matter?" To this he replies, "[*frantically waving her off*] Don't touch me" (I, 566). If Candida is Morell's chief mainstay, she is also his emasculator, perhaps unconsciously.⁵ Can she really believe Marchbanks does not realize he is in love with her? Or does she know, and does she decide to be coy about it, intending to save Morell's feelings? If her aim is to spare his feelings, how can she possibly say it might be a good idea to sleep with Marchbanks to save him from bad women? If Candida wants to sleep with him, can she really believe it is to save him from bad women? Whatever the answers, she is being either wantonly cruel to her husband or improbably inept, not to say stupid. Candida has unintentionally warned us not to take her appraisals of Morell at face value.

But the best demonstration that Candida's willingness to spill this interior baggage is destructive is not my argument. It is Marchbanks's appraisal of what she has done and his reaction to it. He and Burgess enter just as Morell says, "Don't touch me," and waves Candida off. And she, insensitive to her husband's pain, says, "greatly amused," pointing to Morell, "look at him! Just look!" (I, 566). Moved by Morell's pain, Marchbanks urges, "Oh, stop, stop. . . . You have made him suffer frightfully. I feel his pain in my own heart" (I, 567). Marchbanks is both the most mature and the most immature of the three principals. He sees people and things with great clarity. Nevertheless, his actions are sometimes disastrous because of his lack of experience. But he is a quick study; indeed he matures before our eyes.

Let me now return to Candida's last long speech of the play and its complex ending. Candida is surely an attractive person—energetic, loving, and generally constructive. But she also overestimates her insight into the interior lives of others, and she underestimates her husband's ability to stand alone if he must. Could he, in a pinch, do the work of the Reverend Anthony Anderson? Morell needs the mother-sister-wifely presence of his Candida, on whom he has fixed an abiding love. He also needs her in the deep sense that he is a strong heterosexual male who would be a very uncomfortable celibate. Recall that very early in the action Candida tells Marchbanks not to accept an invitation to lunch upon their return from her three weeks away, obviously anticipating that Morell will want to make love immediately. Recall, too, that Marchbanks quite misses the point even after Morell explains the matter. When finally he gets the message, he is "horrorstricken" (I, 538–39).

In the final scene, Candida plays the role of mother-wife to the hilt, scorning Morell's notion that she must choose between the men, detailing with extravagant self-justification his dependency on her (and yet "leaning forward to stroke his hair caressingly at each phrase" [I, 593]), expressing solicitude for the young and lonely Marchbanks, and finally choosing the "weaker" of the two men as soon as she requires Marchbanks to admit what she may already know. Morell gives her the chance.

MORELL. You are my wife, my mother, my sisters: you are the sum of all loving care to me.

CANDIDA. [*in his arms, smiling, to Eugene*] Am I your mother and sisters to you, Eugene?

MARCHBANKS. [*rising with a fierce gesture of disgust*] Ah, never. Out, then, into the night with me! (I, 593)

The young poet's secret is that he has come to understand the reality of domestic life, and he instinctively knows it is not for him. An aspect of this

recognition is his sense that Candida's strength is a direct function of her husband's dependency. She needs him (or someone like him) as much as he needs her (or someone like her). They are mutually dependent heterosexuals, whatever Candida (or Morell) may suppose. Moreover, Marchbanks knows that Candida is capable of cruelty, consciously or not. And, of course, so is he, working over the same victim (I, 539–46). But however human she may show herself to be, Marchbanks cannot conceive of her in sexual terms—she remains the Virgin Mother until the moment before he leaves, accepting a farewell kiss on the brow while he kneels. Spiritually far better endowed than that other poet, Ricky Ticky Tavy, who has what Ann calls “an old maid's temperament” (II, 727), Marchbanks has yet to come to terms with his sexuality. Candida has tried (not quite in earnest) and failed to seduce him. While she waits placidly, and then impatiently, he reads poetry, missing the main chance, feeling noble in matching the nobility of the husband, who has given them their opportunity to be alone. Maybe Marchbanks's noble feeling is a mask for his fear of sex. By play's end, he may have chosen celibacy and work; he has certainly rejected the mutual dependency of a protracted heterosexual love. Up to this point at least, the Life Force has failed to work through him.

Heartbreak House is a play with a strong social message that works out its warning about humanity's socioeconomic disarray largely in the terms of failed human relations, with a strong emphasis on heterosexual relations. I do not mean to say that Shaw uses a human relational code with explicit social equivalents, but rather that he uses unsatisfactory relations between people, and especially between the sexes, to represent the uncertain foundations on which society is structured.⁶ “Heartbreak House” is obviously a complex metaphor standing not only for Western Europe, with emphasis on England, but for the whole world, as Shaw in several instances has his characters suggest and, in at least one instance, make explicit. It is in the response to Mangan's question to the Captain, “Am I in [Hesione's] house or yours?” (V, 88).

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. You are beneath the dome of heaven, in the house of God. What is true within these walls is true outside them. Go out on the seas; climb the mountains; wander through the valleys. (V, 88)

I shall argue that “what is true within these walls [of Heartbreak House]” is expressed preponderantly in the terms of heterosexual relations.

The play gives us a few good relations between the sexes, but they are in the past. All the many others in the play are unfulfilling or destructive or both. The exceptions are Captain Shotover's two-year marriage in Ja-

maica to a black woman, who redeemed him (V, 89); Mazzini Dunn's love-match with his wife, which he says accounts for Ellie's being lovely (V, 120); and the Hushabyes' marriage during the early years, when they were in love (V, 98). But even these exceptions are marred. The Captain's West Indian wife may still be alive (V, 148), and we are left to wonder why he left her; and we know nothing of his second, presumably bigamous marriage nor of Hesione's and Addy's mother. Does each have a different mother? Mazzini admires his wife, but she accepts his inability to earn money with resignation, so that he feels inadequate (a "footling" person) (V, 118). No longer in love, the Hushabyes make liberal use of their sexual powers of attraction in a continuing round of barren flirtations.

The play has no character like Caesar or Undershaft or Don Juan, who are all (allowing for obvious differences) quintessential Shavians, in possession of insights that guide them and may serve as lessons to others. It is a clear possibility that Ellie may become such a person, for she matures as we watch her; but we are left uncertain because the play seems to imply that all its characters have unresolved problems of identity.⁷ Captain Shotover comes closest to being a Shavian hero, but he is seriously limited. He is very old, and yet no Ancient, having failed to reach the seventh degree of concentration (V, 100). He refers to former times when he did inspired work, but he himself tells us his ideas are only echoes of the past (V, 176). He identifies his sense for his own status by saying of Heartbreak House, "It is not my house: it is only my kennel" (V, 171). He drinks rum, not to get drunk but to keep from dreaming, a dangerous escape from reality in his view (V, 147). And forgetting that we are members of one another, he vents his frustration with life as he knows it by saying he wants his "seed" to destroy "hogs" like Mangan, "for whom the universe is nothing but a machine for greasing their bristles and filling their snouts" (V, 100).

What is wrong with Heartbreak House? Near the very end of Act I, Shotover begins a weird chant that Hector and Hesione conclude. "I builded a house for my daughters, and opened the doors thereof / That men might come for their choosing, and their betters spring from their love; / But one of them married a numskull; / The other a liar wed; / And now must she lie beside him, even as she made her bed" (V, 105).

The daughters chose husbands badly, and betters seem not to have sprung from their love. The Hushabye children are not youthful, Shotover tells us (V, 68). And there is nothing to suggest that the Utterword children are at all remarkable. Shotover says "gloomily," "Youth! Beauty! Novelty! They are badly wanted in this house" (V, 68). But there, only restless, flirtatious adults display themselves as flawed lovers, as if they had failed to generate a sound biological future and were vainly trying to do so, unconsciously it seems. Their restless dissatisfaction reminds one of

the basis of Lilith's hope at the end of *Back to Methuselah*—dissatisfaction is promising for the future of the race (V, 630). But what those in Heartbreak House feel is better represented by Hesione: "When I am neither coaxing and kissing nor laughing, I am just wondering how much longer I can stand living in this cruel, damnable world" (V, 123).

The chief flirtations revolve around Hesione and Hector, and they make up much of the fabric of the play. They are obvious enough to need no special attention. Hector, playing a latter-day white Othello with bronze mustaches, has moved Ellie to fall in love with him before the action begins. He starts his other flirtation, with his wife's sister, Addy, strenuously kissing her; but he regrets the move, calling himself fool and goat (V, 97–98). Having discovered that Hector is married, Ellie is broken-hearted, and she says that Hesione has stolen her babies (V, 126). At one level, her maternal sense of loss may seem childish, but at another it suggests the primal nature of her wound. Men and women in Shaw's world fall in love once only. Ellie's one turn with Hector has proved barren. Hesione feels sorry for Ellie and does not want her to marry middle-aged Boss Mangan; mistakenly assuming that her father, Mazzini, is behind the marriage plan, Hesione flirts with him to move him to her view of things. He resists her, having known the real thing with Ellie's mother. Hesione also flirts with Mangan, to pry him away from Ellie, and succeeds in making him fall in love with her. Mangan, like Ellie, suffers a broken heart. Despite Hector's conquest of Ellie and Mazzini's resistance to Hesione, the women seem to control the flirtations in the world of the play, including Addy's long-standing, apparently unconsummated affair with Randall and Ellie's and Captain Shotover's mutual (limited) seduction.

This complicated sexual relation is begun by Captain Shotover.⁸ It takes place in a context of the Captain's repudiation of conventional marriage, of which the following statement by him to Randall, whom he believes to be Addy's husband, is but an example: "You have been boiled in bread and milk for years and years, like other married men. Poor devil!" (V, 90–91). He makes a similar statement to Hector: "[Hesione] has used you up, and left you nothing but dreams, as some women do" (V, 102).

The Captain has reservations not only about marriage, but about the company of women generally. To Mangan, who wants to leave Heartbreak House, he says, "Go, Boss Mangan; and when you have found the land where there is happiness and where there are no women, send me its latitude and longitude; and I will join you there" (V, 131). Nevertheless, the old man is drawn to Ellie at first sight, we learn in the opening scene, where he refers to her as "A young and attractive lady" (V, 62); and he acts on this attraction throughout the play. He makes China tea for her, leaving Nurse Guinness and Hesione amazed at his attention (V, 68); he chooses Ellie's room (V, 69); and he discards her bed's damp sheets and

replaces them with clean ones, pointedly leaving Addy to shift for herself⁹ (V, 72). Beyond that, he tells Mangan, probably quite sincerely, not to marry Ellie because he is too old (V, 87). And when Ellie asks him whether she should marry Mangan, he argues strenuously against her doing so, again, probably sincerely (V, 142–47). Ellie responds to the old man with trust and affection, not only asking his advice about her planned marriage, but confidently holding on to him when he wants to take one of his many trips to the pantry for a glass of rum. She tells him, “You shall not run away from me. . . . You are the only person in the house I can say what I like to. I know you are fond of me” (V, 145). As Hector says of her influence over the Captain, “That’s an extraordinary girl. She has the Ancient Mariner on a string like a Pekinese dog” (V, 149).

The Captain thinks well of Ellie because she is a young and attractive woman in a house that needs someone like her. But we see that he has reservations about his perception of her, afraid that he is romanticizing what she is. Nevertheless, he is too old to resist the happiness she promises.

CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I am too weary to resist or too weak. I am in my second childhood. I do not see you as you really are. I cant remember what I really am. I feel nothing but the accursed happiness I have dreaded all my life. (V, 148)

For her part, Ellie is up against it in the love game. She would have had wonderful babies with Hector, and she would not have turned him into a house pet, as she says Hesione has done (V, 125). She can marry Mangan, though she has some trouble keeping him to the bargain after he falls in love with Hesione. But he is not at all attractive, in body or spirit—just the kind of bad seed Shotover would like to destroy. She has no good choices. In giving her “broken heart and strong sound soul to its natural captain, my spiritual husband and second father” (V, 168), she is settling for an affectionate celibacy—the end of the road for begetting and the end of the road for Heartbreak House. Their marriage, such as it is, may be amiable, but it is the grotesque symbol of sexual failure for both of them. The Life Force seems to have abandoned Heartbreak House.¹⁰

Notes

1. For example, Eric Bentley, *Bernard Shaw* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1947), thinks of *Candida* as a capable unromantic woman (167), and of Morell and Marchbanks as

"the two halves of Shaw's nature: his outer, glib, and confident half, at once socialist and social, and his spiritual, lonely, artistic half, the half that puts him beyond the pale of society" (204–5). He also believes that at play's end Morell is "crushed and speechless" (137); that Marchbanks is "strong enough to leave the homestead and live with himself and his vision" (205); and that Candida is immensely stable: "[She] really assumes that she has inherited the earth" (206–7). But in regarding Candida as unchangeable, Bentley means to praise her, not to suggest that she has overestimated her "mastery" of the two men. For an interesting early (and still representative) fixed opinion about the play's principals, see Arthur H. Nethercot, *Men and Supermen* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 7–17.

2. Shaw's comparison of Candida to Siegfried occurs in a letter to James Huneker, 6 April 1904. See *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters*, 4 vols., ed. Dan H. Laurence; vols. I and II (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1965, 1972); vols. III and IV (New York: Viking, 1985, 1988). The letter to Huneker is in II, 414–16. Margery M. Morgan, in *The Shavian Playground* (London: Methuen, 1972), reviews various appraisals of *Candida*, including some of Shaw's own. We learn that she has been regarded as everything from Virgin Mother to unscrupulous manipulator to seductress to sentimental prostitute (72–73).

3. Though in a letter to Ellen Terry, 6 April 1896, Shaw refers to *Candida* as the Virgin Mother, his bantering tone suggests less that he shares the early-Marchbanks view of her than that he was immensely proud of his creation, and was trying to interest Ellen in the play, which he offered to read to her (see *Collected Letters I*, 623).

4. The very idea that *Candida*'s choosing is significant is open to question. Nethercot (10) identifies *Candida* as a spiritually "static Philistine." In an essay in progress, I argue that *Candida* is spiritually her father's daughter, like many of Shaw's heroines; there I return to the value of her choosing.

5. In a letter to William Archer, 24 January 1900, Shaw refers to *Candida* as "mother first, a wife twentyseventh, and nothing else" (*Collected Letters II*, 137).

6. A. M. Gibbs, in *Heartbreak House: Preludes of Apocalypse* (New York: Twayne, 1994), offers an excellent and thorough treatment of the play. He makes the point (e.g., pp. 61–69) that marred human relations comprise a metaphor representing the dissolute state of society.

7. Gibbs observes, "It can be argued that Ellie Dunn's progress through the play is a process of emancipation; but her portrayal is also deeply ambiguous" (34).

8. See Gibbs, *Heartbreak House*, pp. 38–40, for an interesting connection between the Ellie Dunn–Shotover and the Erica Coterill–Shaw relations.

9. Shotover responds to Addy with varied emotions during the course of the play. Almost certainly recognizing her at once, he pretends not to know her. He sends her to her former bedroom, which turns out to be a "little hole" (V, 72). But he feels compassion enough for her that when she says, "Papa: don't say you think I have no heart," he comforts her: "If you had no heart to break how could you want to have it broken, child?" (V, 141).

10. What the bombing that ends the play may portend is ambiguous. It may signify the end of things altogether. Or it may be the necessary obliteration of what is—the failed *Heartbreak House*—for the sake of what is to come. See Gibbs, *Heartbreak House*, pp. 86–110, for an interesting discussion of the play's ending.