ANY SHAW CRITICS feel that Shaw’s portraits of artists in his novels and plays belittle the artist’s role. For example, in the most extensive critical analysis of Shaw’s artist figures, “The Image of the Artist in the Plays of Bernard Shaw,” Judith B. Spink says that “the various fictional forms which Shaw gives to the artist have conspicuously less of heroic stature and more of biting satire, than one has any reason to expect from so inveterate an artist.” She believes that the artists in Shaw’s plays manifest “more of the fool and knave than of the sane and honest man,” and she attributes this to Shaw’s concern for social as well as artistic goals.¹ Other critics find Shaw’s artist figures unimpressive: W. H. Auden says that “the occupational type which [Shaw] cannot draw is his own, the artist”; and J. I. M. Stewart says that Shaw is “almost uniformly unconvincing in the presentation of artists of any sort perhaps because he never very effectively made up his mind about the nature of artistic creation.”² In the following chapters I hope to show that, in spite of Shaw’s tendency to use preachers, soldiers, dentists, pirates, businessmen, outlaws, kings—almost any occupational type rather than artists—as representatives of Shavian ideas, when artists worthy of the name appear in Shaw’s work, they are sympathetically represented, realistically drawn, and clearly conceived.

In Shaw’s first novel, *Immaturity* (1879), the male protagonists are a young clerk, Robert Smith, to whom the title of the novel
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refers, and a mature artist, Cyril Scott. Two of the four parts of the novel (one and four) are primarily devoted to Smith; two (two and three), to Scott. Smith is clearly autobiographical, a portrait of the young Shaw, but he receives a great deal of gentle satire for his snobbishness, his rather fastidious habits, his fondness for big words, and his innocence. Scott is the romantic hero in that he woos and wins the realistic seamstress-heroine; furthermore, he has served his apprenticeship in art and is now beginning to receive a well-deserved recognition for his artistic achievement. Critics note the autobiographical element in the portrait of Smith, but none comment on the likelihood that Scott is the young novelist’s projection of the mature artist he plans to become; and in this sense it is autobiographical. The fact that Shaw’s socialism and his Life Force religion made him become a considerably different artist from Scott may obscure the implicit autobiography, but in 1879 the financially, socially, and artistically secure Scott was no doubt a Shavian ideal. Of all the artists depicted in the novel, Scott is the only one treated sympathetically, and even he receives some satirical treatment for his quick temper and tender sensibility. Immaturity is, however, autobiographical only in that Shaw fragments his character in the portraits of the young, sober Smith and the artistically secure Scott, as well as in the portraits of Musgrave the Radical and Harriet Russell, the outspoken, independent Philistine.

Immaturity contains the germ of the Candida triangle: the practical, businesslike man with a somewhat pedantic turn; the temperamental artist; and the woman fully in control of both. And in Immaturity, as in Candida, Shaw’s attitude toward art is revealed in his portrait of the artist. Cyril Scott is based on Cecil Lawson (1851–82), a landscape painter whose painting “The Hop Gardens of England,” exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1876, had brought him critical attention and some acclaim. Shaw says that Lawson was “very much ‘in the movement’ at the old Grosvenor Gallery” (Preface, Immaturity, p. xli); accordingly, Scott is “an aesthetic pet” of the Grosvenor crowd. Like his prototype, Scott has both Pre-Raphaelite and impressionist leanings. The name of his best-known painting, “Fretted with Golden Fires,” suggests Pre-Raphaelite affinities, and his dress reflects that love of “gray frieze” which according to Ford Madox Ford distinguishes Pre-Raphaelite
dress: Scott "was dressed in a short loose coat of light grey, which he wore unbuttoned. His hat was shaped in the Swiss fashion, and made of felt of the same color as his clothes." Other details than Scott's "certain affectations in dress and manner" suggest a Pre-Raphaelite artist: Scott's most generous critic admits that he is "a clever fellow who might do good work if he only knew how to draw" (the very charge Shaw brought against Rossetti); Scott "withers," as Shaw says Lawson did, "beneath sarcasm, a sort of attack to which his school was peculiarly exposed"; but his earnestness (like Hunt's or Rossetti's) made him "unable to retort in kind" (p. 131). Like the Pre-Raphaelites, Scott advocates a return to nature, saying of the artist Porson's sketch: "It is an honor to be selected as lay figure by Porson. . . . It may suggest to him the advisability of studying nature at last" (p. 188). He also insists that "the nearest unfashionable square" in London is as suitable a subject for the artist "as the bay of Naples, or a sunset at Damascus" (p. 274). Like the impressionists, Scott is noted for painting foggy landscapes. And like both the Pre-Raphaelites and impressionists, he scorns amateurism in art, believing that "it takes a man all his life, working as hard as he can, to get any sort of power to paint."

Scott's combination of Pre-Raphaelite fidelity to nature and devotion to his craft with impressionistic technique and Shavian directness and frankness suggests that he is a composite of the characteristics of the avant-garde artist of the late 1870s, as well as a type of the artist of all ages, a role emphasized by Hawkshaw's greeting to "Raphael Rembrandt Titian Turner Scott."

Scott's temperament is that which Shaw uses in virtually every portrait of an artist in his later works. Scott is, above all, willing to defy convention in his dress, his manners, and his marriage. Nevertheless, he is a social favorite, the first of Shaw's unconventional artists who, like Owen Jack and Trefusis in the novels or Dubedat and Higgins in the plays, are well-loved in spite of their antisocial inclinations. Another characteristic which Scott shares with later Shaw artists is extreme petulance and a kind of childish stubbornness, which causes Scott, like Jack and Higgins in similar situations, to exclaim in the midst of an unreasonable and angry argument, "I am not aware that my temper is a bad one" (Immaturity, p. 211).
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Just as Scott is Shaw's portrait of a genuine artist such as Lawson, Rossetti, or the future Shaw, minor characters in *Immaturity* illustrate Shaw's concept of what an artist is not. Part 2, "Aesthetics," offers a wide range of artistic types to contrast unfavorably with Scott. The visitors to Halket Grosvenor's house, with its "painted, pannelled, padded, tapestried, blue, green, and gold rooms; with peacocks, flamingoes, jays, and other gorgeous birds depicted on the walls" (p. 104), are familiar to readers of *Punch* in the late 1870s and early 1880s: "There were artists with long hair, haggard cheeks, and silky moustaches, eagerly talking to women; and artists with stumpy beards and neglected appearance talking to one another. There were young ladies, funny, but pleasant to look upon, dressed in sacks, blankets, or dresses apparently let fall from the sky upon them, slipping off their shoulders, and decorated with large bows stuck on all to one side. There are fashionable girls tottering on high heels, and squeezed out of human shape to shew off the skill of their dressmakers" (*Immaturity*, p. 107). Among the types briefly introduced are the Ruskin-like "Analysis of Genius man," who discourses on "Far Removed-ness in art"; a long-haired musician, who plays his composition, "a Scandinavian Rhapsody in the form of a study for the loose wrist"; numerous "amateur" singers; a poet "with large glassy eyes, in which intelligence was overpowered by languor," who "caresses" the piano, "seeking for harmonies"; a music academician who tells the poet he was "experimenting with Italian sixths, and resolving them, for the most part, improperly"; the lady novelist, who hates Beethoven and wants music to provide "a delicious narcotic" for "the weary mind"; "a young, clean-shaven, pale clergyman, whose attenuated figure stood out from the background of stained window with an effect which, to judge by his bearing, he was not unconscious of"; and a radical, who argues with the pale clergyman's theology and praises Michelangelo's art because it is truly religious. Significantly, Shaw gives to the radical some of his own views, and uses him later to attack music critics, defend Wagner, and praise the realistic heroine. The aesthetic lady from *Punch* also appears: when Isabella Woodward could not hide her weariness with rouge, "she put on a lace-trimmed white muslin dress with hanging sleeves, and caused her maid to procure a lily, which she placed in her
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bosom. In this attire she descended to the hall with slow steps, and a tristful expression” (p. 186).

Besides Scott, the only artist fully characterized in the novel is Hawkshaw, the “author of Wheat Sheaves, Hamlet, or a Second Book of Revelations, and other travail.” He is introduced by Grosvenor as “a consummate master of the French forms,” but his poetry is, Shaw says, often “little more than rhythmical lists of garden-produce.” Like Swinburne, one of the editors of the “Mermaid Series” of English dramatists, Hawkshaw is an editor of Elizabethan dramatists; he has made a reading of Hamlet for “the Gymnasium theatre,” and he has translated a Greek tragedy, which is set to the music of Mendelssohn and performed. To recall Shaw’s criticism of Elizabethan dramatists, of “redone” Shakespeare at the Lyceum, and of Mendelssohn’s music is commentary enough on his attitude toward Hawkshaw’s artistic abilities. Hawkshaw associates atheism with aestheticism, explaining that “no man who goes in for being aesthetic ever does believe anything nowadays” (p. 270); he finds his inspiration in a brandy bottle, and he wins fame and fortune for “A Song of Bent Branch and Broken Laurel,” a song of disappointed love, the real occasion of which is Isabella Woodward’s demand that he return the jewels he has extorted from her. A few lines of his description of Harriet and Scott will illustrate his stilted, obscure, and circumlocutory style.

She is the very sublime of sordid. Now Cyril, though not free from the brutality of the craftsman, derives his inspiration from the true fount of idealism, the antique myth. His sympathy with nature in her veiled aspect, when all her outlines are dim, and impression takes the place of perception, is apparent in the eternal fog, mist, and storm with which he transmutes canvas into nature and thought. In such a mind, the collision with everything most foreign to it, combined and clothed with a certain measure of beauty and a subtle portion of grace, must necessarily produce a bewilderment amounting almost to spell. The mirage is dazzling. (P. 257)

He is also made to say, like Punch’s aesthetes, “You do everything so consummately, Miss Russell” (p. 276). Harriet accuses him of caring more for the form than the content of his speech, saying to him, “You derive far more pleasure from your own skill in composing pretty phrases than from any gratification which they are
likely to afford me” (p. 278), and Scott damns him as an artist when he tells Harriet that Hawkshaw “studies to conciliate society” and “turns out cheap wares by priming himself up now and then for a desperate fit of working” (pp. 284–85). In short, Hawkshaw is an incipient thief, a sycophant, and an artistic fraud. But Shaw finds some merit even in Hawkshaw (whose name is, after all, half “Shaw”): Hawkshaw is not a snob, and thus he honestly evaluates and accepts Harriet; he is best man at Scott and Harriet’s wedding; he has a better sense of humor than Scott and can laugh at his own absurdity; and he does not pretend to be more than what he is, like Gilbert’s Bunthorne, “an aesthetic sham.”

Another artist in the novel who has lost all artistic principles is Vesey, “a landscape painter, who had cultivated a knack of painting ruins and moonlight until he had become celebrated for his views of Melrose and Muckross, of which he painted as many each year as the dealers would buy. His works were all alike, and were recognized without reference to a catalogue by frequenters of the galleries, to their self-satisfaction, and the advancement of his reputation” (p. 195). Vesey is one of the artistic impostors whom Shaw condemns in The Sanity of Art for abusing the public’s tolerance of impressionistic art by presenting “real absurdities” (Essays, p. 292). Vesey is further worthy of note because he introduces a theme that was to become basic to Shaw’s concept of the artist, i.e., the incompatibility of artist and woman. Vesey describes his own disastrous marriage and warns Scott of the dangers of combining marriage and art.

Nevertheless, Scott does marry, and he marries a woman who is not sympathetic to his art. In her first conversation with Scott, Harriet Russell makes clear her love of Raphael and her dislike for Scott’s “Fretted with Golden Fires,” which she considers affected. Scott objects, basing his argument solidly on Pre-Raphaelite theory: “‘Affected’ means nothing. Is it like nature? If it differs from the blue and white skies you are accustomed to in pictures, is it because it is more truthful or less so?” To this Harriet “resolutely” answers, “The more study it cost, the more ridiculous it is. It is not pleasing. Besides, what is the use of talking about nature? A painter cannot copy nature with a box full of gaudy clays made into mud with oil.” Harriet’s Philistine nature is re-
vealed to the aesthetic initiate when shortly afterwards she declares that she considers W. P. Frith's "The Railway Station" a "splendid picture"; Scott's comment on this is that Frith "found in a railway station a very suitable field for the exercise of his genius." Harriet acts as a corrective to Scott's "artistic" temperament; she criticizes his lack of humor and maintains that an artist's "sensitiveness" is merely the name he gives his impatience. In spite of her Philistinism, Harriet, like Candida, expresses part of Shaw's values, in that she is sensible, practical, independent, and a natural boss. She impresses the outspoken radical, Musgrave, as a woman with "more sense in her bustle than all the other women here have in their bonnets" (p. 311); Lady Geraldine, another commonsense spokesman and a confessed Philistine, also finds Harriet charming.

Smith, the ostensible hero of Immaturity, has little to say about art. But he knows enough about art to praise the modern Pre-Raphaelites over medieval artists, and he confesses to Isabella Woodward that he is an amateur poet. He even makes up a notebook of his poems for her, including his "Lines to a Southern Passion Flower"; this poem, "an unusually florid apostrophe in heroic couplets," written for a music-hall dancer whom Smith once admired, is, he discovers, better than his other poems because of its "having been written warmly about a woman, instead of coldly about an abstraction." Except for his attempts at poetry, for which he is apologetic, Smith is a man of business—an early version of the man of affairs who nevertheless knows something of art, a character type represented in the later novels by Edward Conolly, Cashel Byron, and Sidney Trefusis.

I have discussed Immaturity at some length for two reasons: it is preoccupied with matters of art, focusing on an artist as one of the heroes; and it was written at the height of the Pre-Raphaelite phase of the aesthetic movement. The date of the Whistler-Ruskin trial is 1878; in that year the second series of Swinburne's Poems and Ballads was published, and young Oscar Wilde won the Newdigate prize at Oxford for his Ravenna. In 1879 Meredith's The Egoist, James's Daisy Miller and The Madonna of the Future and Other Tales, and George Moore's Flowers of Passion were published. Popular aestheticism, influenced by thirty years of Pre-Raphaelite exhibits and especially influenced by the success of
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Morris and Company, was receiving widespread advertisement in the pages of *Punch*. In this artistic milieu, it is no surprise that Shaw’s *Immaturity* contains a section called “Aesthetics.” The novel does not, notably, attack all aesthetes. Shaw’s portrait of Cyril Scott, who is, like Cecil Lawson, “very much ‘in the movement,’” reveals Shaw’s sympathies with the sincere, earnest, hard-working artist; and Scott’s few comments on art hint at a theory of art very much like Shaw’s, especially in his fidelity to nature and his craftsman’s pride. The aesthetes whom Shaw despises are the hangers-on and the dilettantes of the sort attacked in *Punch*; they are the ones to whom Shaw undoubtedly refers in *Pygmalion* when, in describing Mrs. Higgins’s portrait, he says that the Rossettian dress was a fashion “which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular estheticism in the eighteen-seventies” (*Pygmalion*, p. 244). The parade of people at Halket Grosvenor’s house, and Grosvenor himself, are the “people who did not understand” Rossetti’s or Morris’s intentions.

Shaw’s second novel, *The Irrational Knot* (1888), opens with a satirical glance at an aristocratic attempt to bring art to the people. The “Parnassus Society,” sponsored by the Countess of Carbury, is giving a musical concert for the working men at Wandsworth. The program, performed by ladies and gentlemen, is inartistic; and the working men are bored by all except Marmaduke Lind’s “negro melody” with banjo accompaniment. It should be noted that Shaw is not here satirizing Morris’s aspirations: the Countess’s concert is an aristocratic gesture to inferiors; it does not feature art, but amateurism of the worst kind. The working-class audience is, Shaw suggests, understandably bored.

At this concert the hero—a practical man of genius, Edward Conolly—meets his future wife, the aristocratic Marian Lind. Although Conolly is not an artist, he has had an aesthetic education superior to that of English aristocrats, who know only what is fashionable, not what is good, in art. He is thus able to distinguish amateurs from professionals and is unable to tolerate any but the best in art; in fact, his superiority to his aristocratic wife in aesthetic matters is one of the reasons his marriage fails. Before he has heard Marian sing, he discerns that she is “a commonplace
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"amateur"; and, after their marriage, his sensitive musical ear disturbs Marian so much that she refuses to sing in his presence.

Conolly's primary interests, however, are in the mechanical and business spheres; the artists of the novel are an actress, a lady novelist, and a Newdigate poet. The actress is Conolly's sister, Susanna, who shares the family genius and is, her lover says, "the cleverest woman in London." She is versatile, intelligent, and independent. Like Conolly, she is indifferent to convention. She has "a horror of marriage" and refuses to marry Marmaduke Lind, though she is willing to live with him. She achieves fame as Lalage Virtue, a music hall entertainer, but her career is wrecked by alcoholism. According to Conolly, her ruin is the result of her enslavement and debauchment by society, which "by the power of the purse, set her to nautch-girl's work, and forbade her the higher work that was equally within her power" (p. 332). This analysis, however, comes as somewhat of a surprise in this novel, which focuses on personal marital problems rather than on socioeconomic ones.

The lady novelist, Elinor McQuinch, is a Shavian spokesman in the novel. Her repressive childhood has not squelched her "stubborn, rebellious, and passionate" nature; her indifference to convention is expressed in her appearance, her admiration of Susanna Conolly's independence and talent, her resolution never to marry, and her desire to earn her own living. She is frank, outspoken, and iconoclastic. She tells Conolly, "I am always stabbing people. I suppose I like it" (p. 120); and she tells Marian, "My disposition is such that when I see that a jug is cracked, I feel more inclined to smash and have done with it than to mend it and handle it tenderly ever after." By the end of the novel, she has begun her career with a novel, The Waters of Marah, which has received favorable reviews, but about which no other information is given.

The aesthete-artist in The Irrational Knot is the pompous Sholto Douglas, who, like Oscar Wilde, has won the Newdigate prize at Oxford. His canon, including a "Note on Three Pictures in Last Year's Salon," some sonnets, and an unfinished drama, indicates that he is incapable of producing a major work of art. He professes an "insensibility to the admiration of the crowd" (p. 121); denounces, as Ruskin did, the "mechanical contrivances" which are
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“crowding and crushing the beauty out of our lives, and making commerce the only god”; and idealizes Athenian life (p. 134). He is pompous and sober, and he worships Marian Lind. His account of his love for Marian illustrates his pedantic and confused style, which also, Marian points out, “dreadfully” mixes metaphors.

I think I walked through life at that time like a somnambulist; for I have since seen that I must have been piling mistake upon mistake until out of a chaos of meaningless words and smiles I had woven a Paphian love temple. At the first menace of disappointment—a thing as new and horrible to me as death—I fled the country. I came back with only the ruins of the doomed temple. You were not content to destroy a ruin: the feat was too easy to be glorious. So you rebuilt it in one hour to the very dome, and lighted its altars with more than their former radiance. Then, as though it were but a house of cards—as indeed it was nothing else—you gave it one delicate touch and razed it to its foundations. Yet I am afraid those altar lamps were not wholly extinguished. They smoulder beneath the ruins still. (Pp. 227-28)

Sholto’s style is like Hawkshaw’s, but his professed seriousness of artistic purpose and his long-suffering love for Marian anticipate the portrait of Adrian Herbert in Love among the Artists. Unlike a genuine Shavian artist, Sholto easily abandons all his lofty artistic ideals for love.

The necessity for the artist to be free from domestic entanglements is a major theme of Love among the Artists (1881). After Owen Jack proposes marriage to Mary Sutherland and is refused, he exclaims, “I have committed my last folly. . . Henceforth I shall devote myself to the only mistress I am fitted for, Music.” He tells Mary that she is right to refuse him, for “I have no business in the domestic world”; later he says, with a sense of the narrow escape he has had, “I hanker for a wife! . . . I grovel after money! What dog’s appetites have this worldly crew infected me with! No matter: I am free: I am myself again. Back to thy holy garret, oh my soul!” (pp. 201-3). When the actress Madge Brailsford declares her love for him, he explains that he creates romance from everything and expresses his passion in his music, that “my art is enough for me, more than I have time and energy for occasionally.” To her question, “And so your heart is dead?” he answers, “No: it is marriage that kills the heart and keeps it dead. Better starve the
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heart than overfeed it. Better still to feed it only on fine food, like music’ (pp. 328-29). The marriage of Aurélie Szczymplića and Adrian Herbert illustrates the correctness of Jack’s advice; Adrian is ruined as an artist because his love for Aurélie supersedes his artistic ambition. He says, “When I think of Aurélie, there is an end of my work” (p. 300). On the other hand, Aurélie knows that her art must come first and, at one point, asks, “What madness possessed me, an artist, to marry? Did I not know that it is ever the end of an artist’s career?” (p. 287). However, she stays married and is not ruined, because she continues to put her music first. She tells Adrian, “I cannot love. I can feel it in the music—in the romance—in the poetry; but in real life—it is impossible. I must content myself with the music. It is but a shadow. Perhaps it is as real as love is, after all” (p. 314). Love among the Artists answers, then, the question about marriage which Cyril Scott asks Vesey in Immaturity. In spite of Vesey’s advice to the contrary, Scott does marry, but he is the last artist in Shaw’s work to concern himself “with the small beer of domestic comfort.” Love among the Artists contains Shaw’s first full statement of the Candida secret: the need of the artist to be free from domestic cares so that he can explore and express the vision of “Tristan’s holy night.”

The artists in Love among the Artists have other traits that identify Shaw’s genuine artists. Like Cyril Scott, all are temperamental, impatient, and at times unreasonable. They also all defy or ignore convention, thereby asserting a superiority that their genius gives them. Aurélie justifies her rudeness to Adrian’s mother with this explanation: “I am an artist, and queens have given me their hands frankly. Your mother holds that an English lady is above all queens. I hold that an artist is above all ladies” (p. 251). This sense of dignity which art bestows on the artist explains as well Jack’s indifference to decorum in dress and manners or Madge’s transformation from a proper English girl to an impressive, independent woman.

The three artists are all professional: they work hard; they do not romanticize or glamourize their roles; they willingly accept pay for their work, though they do not work because of the pay. Echoing Cyril Scott, Jack calls himself “a master of my profession” who has, in spite of public indifference, “never composed one page of
music bad enough for publication or performance" (p. 95). He ridicules the notion that a man must look like Mozart and must love music in order to be a composer: "I do not look like a writer of serenades. . I am no enthusiast: I leave that to the ladies. Did you ever hear of an enthusiastically honest man, or an enthusiastic shoemaker? Never; and you are not likely to hear of an enthusiastic composer—at least, not after he is dead" (p. 96). His advice to Madge, whom he tutors in elocution, is three-fold: master the craft of acting; "no grabbing at money, or opportunities, or effects" (p. 102); and, finally, abandon the art inspired by "a passion for shamming" for an art "inspired by a passion for beauty" (p. 330).

Aurélie Szczympliça has this "passion for beauty." She has both technical skill and what she calls her "fine touch," the touch of genius which finally distinguishes the artist from the nonartist. Ironically, Herbert, the nonartist, explains the truth "that earnestness of intention, and faith in the higher mission of art, are impotent to add an inch to my artistic capacity" (p. 295). Living with Aurélie has convinced him that "faith and earnestness are of no use in [art]: mere brute skill carries everything before it"; he has come to believe that the artist's mission is simply to produce and sell art. He takes Aurélie as "a case in point. Even the Times does not deny that she is a perfect artist. Yet if you spoke of her being a moral teacher with a great gift and a great truth, she would not understand you, although she has some distorted fancy about her touch on the piano being a moral faculty" (p. 296). In his cynicism, Adrian is only half right: Shaw would agree that "there are only two sorts of painters, dexterous ones and maladroit ones" (p. 296); but he would not agree that the sole motive of the dexterous ones is commercial, nor does he believe that art is but a matter of "brute skill." Though Aurélie tells an admirer that she has "the soul commercial within me" and though she looks on her art as "an artist's business," she is not motivated by desire for gain but a desire to reveal her "fine touch." Adrian mistakes Jack's and Madge's and Madame Szczympliça's refusal to romanticize their art for cynical commercialism; and he confuses a willingness to accept deserved pay with artistic prostitution. He also fails to understand Madame Szczympliça's "moral" force, for he confuses good
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intentions and a worship of art with the elevating effect of great art.

Adrian Herbert is Shaw's most detailed portrait of an aesthete-artist. At the beginning of the novel he is painting a Pre-Raphaelite subject, "The Lady of Shalott," in which, he says, he is "aiming at the seizure of a poetic moment" (p. 13). Adrian's work also evidences "the prodigious expenditure of elbow grease" that Shaw found in Holman Hunt's painting. Mary tells Adrian, as Ruskin told Rossetti, "Your sketches have too much work in them" (p. 82); and later, Adrian agrees: "I strove to make up for my shortcomings by being laborious, whereas I now perceive that mere laboriousness does not and cannot amend any shortcoming in art except the want of itself" (p. 295). Though Adrian's Arthurian subject, his earnestness, and his labor suggest a Pre-Raphaelite artist, in reality he is one of those "who did not understand" Pre-Raphaelitism; his work is a failure when compared to genuine Pre-Raphaelite painting. Charlie Sutherland is disturbed by the lady's "deuce of a scraggy collar-bone" and the unrealistic landscape seen through the high window; even Mary, who has been imagining "the river bank, the golden grain, the dazzling sun, the gorgeous loom, and armor of Sir Lancelot," is disappointed in the painting (pp. 12-14). One has only to recall Shaw's description of Hunt's "Isabella and her Basil Pot," in which the "magnificently vigorous woman" and the "joyousness of her abounding strength" belie the catalogue description of the painting as an "expression of her grief," or his praise of Millais's rich color, to know that Adrian's "Lady of Shalott," who has "a certain sadness and weakness about her that is very pathetic," does not measure up. Furthermore, Adrian's aestheticism is but a pose: he willingly abandons art for love. He is what Jack and Madge and Aurélie despise in art—"a duffer," "a humbug" (pp. 148, 149). Adrian's mother accurately states that "he will never paint. I am not what is called an aesthete; and pictures that are generally understood to be the perfection of modern art invariably bore me, because I do not understand them. But I do understand Adrian's daubs; and I know they are invariably weak and bad" (p. 23). However, before his marriage Adrian achieved a kind of success because, Jack says, he is "neither too good for the Academy people nor too bad for the public" (p. 189).
Adrian has an admirer and, for a time, a disciple, in Mary Sutherland; but she has too much common sense to continue to be "an aesthetic daughter of the Man with the Muck Rake" (p. 22). She tells Adrian, "As to Art, I am not exactly getting tired of it; but I find that I cannot live on Art alone; and I am beginning to doubt whether I might not spend my time better than in painting, at which I am sure I shall never do much good. If Art were a game of pure skill, I should persevere; but it is like whist, chance and skill mixed. In future I may sketch to amuse myself and to keep mementos of the places with which I have pleasant associations, but not to elevate my tastes and perfect my morals" (p. 84).

During the course of the novel, Mary has a chance to marry Adrian, the duffer, and Jack, the artist, and refuses both for a Philistine, John Hoskyn.

Hoskyn likes Landseer's paintings and all the paintings that Mary hates. Nevertheless, he is better able than Mary or Adrian to recognize and appreciate Owen Jack's art because he relies on his senses and expresses his honest opinion, whereas Mary and Adrian have their tastes prejudiced by formal training. Hoskyn and Lady Geraldine, the sensible dowager who also appears in Immaturity, present the healthily Philistine point of view, offering satiric comments on even Shavian art, as when Lady Geraldine asks Jack, who has just spoken his mind to her, "Is this the newest species of artistic affectation, pray? It used to be priggishness, or loutishness, or exquisite sensibility. But now it seems to be outspoken common sense; and instead of being a relief, it is the most insufferable affectation of all" (LAA, p. 179).

The subsequent careers of the characters in Love among the Artists are discussed in chapters five and six of Cashel Byron's Profession (1882), devoted to Mrs. (Mary Sutherland) Hoskyn's evening. Mrs. Hoskyn is said to be happy with her Philistine husband; Madame Szczympliça receives more praise for her "enchanted" playing; and Adrian Herbert is once again attacked, this time by Lydia Carew, who says that his pictures "suggest that he reads everything and sees nothing" (the same criticism Shaw offered against Swinburne), and by Cashel, who realistically appraises Adrian's painting and finds it lacking.

Shaw's last novel, An Unsocial Socialist (1883), contains an-
other aesthete-artist, by this time a well-defined character type in Shaw's work. Chichester Erskine is the "author of a tragedy entitled The Patriot Martyrs, dedicated with enthusiastic devotion to the Spirit of Liberty and half a dozen famous upholders of that principle, and denouncing in forcible language the tyranny of the late Tsar of Russia, Bomba of Naples, and Napoleon the Third" (p. 150). Trefusis, the hero of the novel, says that Erskine is "a devoted champion of liberty in blank verse, and dedicates his works to Mazzini, etc." The allusion to Swinburne and Songs before Sunrise and to Wilde's Vera, or the Nihilists is unmistakable. There is also possibly an allusion to William Michael Rossetti's Democratic Sonnets in the king-killing argument, in which Erskine says, "I admire a man that kills a king," and Trefusis, anticipating The Apple Cart, argues that "a king nowadays is only a dummy put up to draw your fire off the real oppressors of society" and deserving of sympathy rather than assassination (p. 199). One of the Democratic Sonnets, "Tyrannicide," begins, "We cannot argue of Tyrannicide. / An instinct in the world avows it just." But Erskine is not, as Scott was not, a purely personal portrait; he has more than topical relevance. He satirizes a type of artist and is a composite of many poets' traits. Like Holman Hunt, he has "made sketches in Palestine." Like Hawkshaw, he drinks for inspiration, and like Sholto Douglas and Adrian Herbert, he says, "I hate business and men of business; and as to social questions, I have only one article of belief, which is, that the sole refiner of human nature is fine art" (p. 165).

His friend, who accompanies him to Palestine and to European art galleries and who is himself the owner of an art collection, is Sir Charles Brandon, a rich dilettante.

He was a little worn, in spite of his youth, but he was tall and agreeable, had a winning way of taking a kind and soothing view of the misfortunes of others, could tell a story well, liked music and could play and sing a little, loved the arts of design and could sketch a little in watercolors, read every magazine from London or Paris that criticized pictures, had travelled a little, fished a little, shot a little, botanized a little, wandered restlessly in the footsteps of women, and dissipated his energies through all the small channels that his wealth opened and his talents made easy to him. He had no large knowledge of any subject, though he had looked into many just far enough to
replace absolute unconsciousness of them with measurable ignorance. Never having enjoyed the sense of achievement, he was troubled with unsatisfied aspirations that filled him with melancholy and convinced him that he was a born artist. (P. 141)

In the novel Erskine and Sir Charles are harmless, but absurd; Trefusis persuades both of them to sign his socialist petition by appealing to their snobbery and pride, convinced that their “hesitation is the uncertainty that comes from ignorance” not from ungenerous, cowardly, or prejudiced motives.

The hero of *An Unsocial Socialist*, Sidney Trefusis, is sometimes assumed to represent Shaw’s repudiation of art. Certainly Trefusis offends the aesthetic sensibilities of other characters in the novel: Erskine is disappointed to find Trefusis absorbed in reading a Blue Book rather than *The Patriot Martyrs*; to Sir Charles’s horror, Trefusis demonstrates how his pistol practice has wrecked the statues and walls of his Graeco-Roman eighteenth-century English manor house. Trefusis also condemns the modern novel. He tells Agatha that a novel is “a lying story of two people who never existed, and who would have acted differently if they had existed.”

Trefusis’s “Letter to the Author” (the appendix to *An Unsocial Socialist*) lectures the author on the folly of writing novels, which are limited by the morality of their female readers and are “only the tail of Shakespear,” who with his “poetry of despair” was “the first literary result of the foundation of our industrial system upon the profits of piracy and slave-trading” (p. 259). Trefusis does, undeniably, repudiate certain kinds of art: specifically, a poetic drama expressing the republican sentiments of a writer whose social conscience does not prompt him to sign Brown’s socialist petition; the pseudo-Greek and Roman statuary of an eighteenth-century manor; the nineteenth-century novel; and, by implication, all “poetry of despair.” Except for his objection to the novel form, Trefusis does not express a change in Shaw’s attitude toward art. As I have indicated above, in all the novels Shaw hates incompetence and sham in art, and he expects art to tell the truth at least insofar as it expresses the vision of the artist and is not a mere imitation of artistic custom or fashion. In *An Unsocial Socialist* the change is in his attitude toward the novel form, at least as he knew it, not toward art.
As a matter of fact, Trefusis is himself a special kind of artist. He says that "the only art that interests me is photography" (p. 159), but his photography is not an impartial reproduction of scenes from life. Like the naturalist, Trefusis photographs the sordid life of the poor, but, unlike the naturalist, he does not attempt objective reporting of the facts. He juxtaposes pictures of the hideous environment of the oppressed with pictures of the luxurious lives of the rich, including their servants' quarters and their stables; accompanying the pictures are comparative figures on incomes, rents, profits, etc. Trefusis, then, organizes his photographs so that they illustrate a thesis, and then he uses them for propagandistic purposes. He shows them to Sir Charles and Erskine in the hope of converting the two to socialism, explaining, "You have seen in my album something you had not seen an hour ago, and you are consequently not quite the same man you were an hour ago. My pictures stick in the mind longer than your scratchy etchings, or the leaden things in which you fancy you see tender harmonies in grey" (p. 207). Trefusis thus separates himself from painters such as Whistler, who paint "tender harmonies" and believe that subject matter and morality are irrelevant in art. Trefusis uses his art of photography in the same way that Shaw later uses his dramatic art: to awaken, to shock, to persuade. It has a message; and, when accompanied by Trefusis's lecture on "Socialism or Smash," it is not a "poetry of despair" but of hope. Trefusis's hope for the future includes a Morrisian vision of beauty as a vital part of everyone's daily life.

An Unsocial Socialist does not, then, reject art. It rejects hackwork, as the other novels do; it rejects novel writing and is significantly, the last novel Shaw completed. It adds to Shaw's concept of the artist the idea that he must work for the reform of society either directly through his art, as Trefusis does, or as a prerequisite for genuine art, as Donovan Brown, the Pre-Raphaelite socialist-artist in the novel, does. In Shaw's last novel, the socialism is new, but the hero is not. As a realistic artist with something vital to express, Trefusis contrasts with the dilettantes, Sir Charles and Erskine, just as in preceding novels the genuine artists—Scott, Jack, Madame Szczympliça—contrast with the ineffectual Hawkshaw and Adrian Herbert. Trefusis's practical side has also been
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anticipated in the earlier novels, each of which has its businesslike, record-keeping, outspoken practical man. Even *Love among the Artists* introduces the sensible, honest, realistic John Hoskyn, who, though a minor character, is the romantic hero of the novel in that he wins the heroine and they live happily ever after. These practical men appear to be hostile to art, but in actuality they are merely hostile to effete art. Young Smith in *Immaturity* knows enough about art to deliver a lecture on it; Conolly in *The Irrational Knot* knows a great deal about everything, including art; Hoskyn, in spite of his Philistinism, appreciates Madame Szczypliça’s and Owen Jack’s art. Trefusis is the culmination of Shaw’s fictional heroes: he embodies the independence and forcefulness of the artist-hero and the business sense of the practical hero; but in place of the earlier artists’ devotion to art and the practical men’s interest in business and work is Trefusis’s devotion to social reform.

With Trefusis as the artist figure in Shaw’s last novel, it should come as no surprise that Shaw’s next creative work, excluding his critical essays and a fragmentary novel, are two of his most overtly propagandistic plays, *Widowers’ Houses* (1885–92) and *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (1893–94), both, like Trefusis’s photography, exposing and explicating social evils. After these “Bluebook plays,” as Shaw called them,15 Shaw changed the focus of his drama; though his plays never lost all social orientation, they became broadened in scope as Shaw’s religion of the Life Force absorbed (without replacing) his Fabian socialism. Accordingly, in *Candida* and his later plays, the artist figure is no longer the socialist reformer but the poet-prophet, a literary descendant of the artists in Shaw’s novels before *An Unsocial Socialist*. Praed, Octavius, and Apollodorus are dramatic variations of the aesthete-artist found in the novels. Likewise Dubedat, Shakespear (in *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*), Henry Higgins, presumably the mature Marchbanks, and certainly the mature Shaw are variations of the type of artist genius found in the novels.

In the novels Shaw contrasts the aesthete with the expressor of Shavian values: Hawkshaw (aesthete) with Scott (artist), Harriet (Philistine), and Smith (man of affairs); Sholto Douglas (aesthete) with Conolly (man of affairs); Adrian Herbert (aesthete) with Owen Jack (artist) and Hoskyn (Philistine); Chichester
Erskine (aesthete) with Trefusis (artist and man of affairs). However, in order to make the contrast favorable to the Shavian spokesman, Shaw gives to the aesthete a set of characteristics which apply more to a hero of popular sentimental drama than to Dante Gabriel Rossetti or Oscar Wilde or Aubrey Beardsley. For example, the aesthete in Shaw is extremely conventional; far from being an outcast from society, he has the approbation of society and is shocked at any breach of propriety. Linked with his social conformity is his aesthetic conventionality, so that he has less real aesthetic sensitivity than the Philistine, who at least can form an independent opinion about art. Though Shaw’s aesthete talks about the sanctity and power of art, he will sacrifice his art either for social approval or woman’s love. Of the characteristics of the aesthete-artist, Shaw’s aesthete has only the trait of affectation, and he is even capable of dropping the pose of aestheticism. Ironically, Shaw’s portraits of true artists draw on numerous characteristics of the genuine aesthete-artist: the Shavian artist is not concerned with conventional morality and, until Trefusis, with any morality except the morality that attends the effective expression of an artistic idea (such as Madame Szczympliça’s “moral faculty,” her “fine touch”); the Shavian artist is an alien to society, his very genius making him different from, and superior to, ordinary men; he is sensitive, at times impatient and angry at the world’s indifference; and, though he does not romantically confuse suffering and creativity, he is devoted to his art, willing to sacrifice worldly happiness for it.