



Title	Male Homosocial Desire in John Bull's Other Island : An Imbalanced Triangular Relationship of Two Misogynists with a Woman
Author(s)	松本, 承子
Citation	言語文化共同研究プロジェクト. 2017, 2016, p. 15-26
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/62089">https://doi.org/10.18910/62089</a>
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# Male Homosocial Desire in *John Bull's Other Island*:

—An Imbalanced Triangular Relationship of Two Misogynists with a Woman—

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## 1. Introduction

In George Bernard Shaw's work in the Edwardian era, he sometimes depicts misogynists, for instance, John Tanner in *Man and Superman*, Tom Broadbent in *John Bull's Other Island* and Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion*. He further illustrates a triangular relationship of two misogynists with a woman. In this paper, I would like to compare *John Bull's Other Island* and *Pygmalion* to consider why Shaw depicts misogynists in this period and what the triangular relationship means from the feminist, gender and sexual perspectives vis-à-vis Eve K. Sedgwick's theory of "Male Homosocial Desire"<sup>1</sup>, which means men desire to strengthen the bond between men and exploit women to do so.

Most studies on this work focus on Home Rule or the solution of the Irish question<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, few studies have properly investigated the love story woven into the play. This play was bitterly and repeatedly criticised as being "not a play" or "not a love-story" in 1904 (Evance 19). Furthermore, Desmond MacCarthy asserts, "It is a play with hardly any story, with no climax, without the vestige of a plot, and without anything like an ending, in fact without one of the qualities of the 'well-constructed' play; yet it is nevertheless an absolute success" (73). According to Brad Kent, "it is strikingly odd that very little commentary has been developed to its Irish women" (73). Thus, I also would like to reconsider the love story and the Irish heroine Nora.

## 2. The strong bond between men

The main characters of this play are Englishman Thomas Broadbent and Irishman Laurence Doyle. The former is "a robust, full-blooded, energetic man in the prime of life, sometimes eager and credulous, sometimes shrewd and roguish, sometimes portentously solemn, sometimes jolly and impetuous, always buoyant and irresistible, mostly likable, and enormously absurd in his most

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<sup>1</sup> "'Homosocial' is a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual,' and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual.' In fact, it is applied to such activities as 'male bonding,' which may, as in our society, be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality" (Sedgwick 1).

<sup>2</sup> For different points of view on this play concerning Home Rule, see Peter Gahan and Kathleen G. Ochshorn.

earnest moments” (70). He is also a person who professes to be Liberal. The latter “is a man of 36, with cold grey eyes, strained nose, fine fastidious lips, critical brows, clever head, rather refined and goodlooking on the whole, but with a suggestion of thinskinness and dissatisfaction that contrasts strongly with Broadbent’s eupeptic jollity” (75).

Doyle has not gone back to his hometown of Rosscullen in Ireland for 18 years. The two men live and work together as partners in a house on Great George Street, Westminster, “being bachelors and bosom friends” (69). They have a strong bond between them, which Doyle’s childhood friend and Broadbent’s future wife Nora Reilly also notices, prompting her to comment on Doyle’s love to Broadbent:

NORA. You seem very fond of Tom, as you call him.

LARRY. Yes: I’m fond of Tom. (146)

Their bond is so strong that Nora, who has loved Doyle for nearly two decades, is jealous of it. In addition, Doyle worships Broadbent so much that he concedes to Broadbent, “I should never have done anything without you” (83). Doyle, however, sometimes criticises Broadbent’s business tactics the way a son sometimes defies his father while continuing to respect him. Their bond is so strong that there is no room for women to enter between them. Essentially, they purposely exclude women from their society because they are misogynous from the bottom of their hearts.

### 3. Misogyny

Marianne Dekoven argues, “Many literary texts by male Modernists contain the same kind of painfully misogynist writing” (178). Shaw also depicts the misogynistic Broadbent in this work as “the undecidedly contradictory juxtaposition of a fearful misogynist response to the New Woman”, which Dekoven finds in the *oeuvre* of William Butler Yeats (177). Moreover, she elucidates one of the reasons why male Modernists portray misogyny:

The radical implications of the social-cultural changes feminism advocated produced in Modernist writing an unprecedented preoccupation with gender, both thematically and formally. Much of this preoccupation expressed a male Modernist fear of women’s new power, and resulted in the combination of misogyny and triumphal masculinism that many critics see as central, defining features of Modernist work by men. This masculinist misogyny, however, was almost universally accompanied by its dialectical twin: a fascination and strong identification with the empowered feminine. The result was an irresolvable ambivalence towards powerful femininity that itself forged many of Modernism’s most characteristic formal innovations. (174)

In the sense that misogynists who are afraid of women's new power, both protagonists are clearly misogynists as are other Shaw characters, such as Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion* and John Tanner in *Man and Superman*. Neither Doyle nor Broadbent have had a relationship for a while, and their single status is conveyed by the shabby state of their room, which possibly repels women. The stage directions indicate, "It is a room which no woman would tolerate, smelling of tobacco, and much need of repapering, repainting, and recarpeting" (69). Despite the squalor, they have had relations with women as a sexual release.

As far as women are concerned, Doyle looks at only their body, comparing Nora's eating habits and body to those of English women (114). He prefers women totally different from those Broadbent prefers: "Larry's taste is just the opposite: he likes [th]em solid and bouncing and rather keen about him. It's a very convenient difference; for weve [*sic*] never been in love with the same woman" (150). Doyle's type of woman is a meat-eating and acute woman like a wolf but still a sylph, quite different from Nora. Believing that London is a real world and the centre of the world, asserting "real life and real work and real cares and real joys among real people: solid English life in London, the very centre of the world" (154), Doyle accepts as true "[a] wife isnt [*sic*] an angel, and she despises you because [a husband is] not a hero" (81). However, Doyle "think[s] every Englishwoman an angel" (113) because he likes strong, sturdy and eager English women rather than passive, subordinate and static Irish women such as Nora, whom he is fearful of and who is one of the main reasons he could not go back home, though he "was romantic about he" a long time ago.

Broadbent's ideal type of woman has tendency to be maternal as a misogynist who worships his own a mother. According to Chizuko Ueno, mothers are the Achilles' heel of misogynists. While misogynists loathe women, they cannot despise their own mothers. If they do so, it would mean that they abhor their own origin. In fact, misogynists have another aspect of worshipping women, especially their own mothers (42). Similarly, Higgins worships his mother. As Heinz Kosok notes, "Broadbent is a multifeatured character, contradictory in himself but full of life and immediately credible" (188). In spite of his contradictory, his ideal type is obvious: a maternal woman. This does not mean, however, that he wants a woman like his mother (who incidentally does not appear in this play, and it cannot be known whether he had a mother at all). The absence of actual mother characters in this play may help maintain an ideal image of women with maternal traits. Besides, before Broadbent meets Nora, he had relationships with English women. But they are "mostly married already" (150). That means he prefers homely or maternal women who accept his selfishness and sacrificially devote themselves to him, and he seeks out married women for sexual relations with no involvement expected. In this way, he keeps them at arm's length as sexual objects. Thus, Broadbent has never had a steady relationship, though he is a "robust, full-blooded, energetic man in the prime of life" (69). He does not like English women, declaring, "the English woman is

too prosaic for my taste, too material, too much of the animated beefsteak about her. The ideal is what I like” (150). What he means it is that English women are too independent and strong for him to control. Further, they are not angelic like the wives in “Angel in the House”<sup>3</sup> who are passive and obedient women whom men fancy or desire and do not embody the ideals of the New Woman.

In the advent of the New Woman, one response by men is misogyny. Barbara Helm explains, “While women were full of joyful force and determined to abolish male privilege over them, men were weary and developed resentments against women....Males often admitted that they perceived ‘new women’ as a threat to their psychic balance” (70). She goes on to assert that “their response to ‘new women’ offers an instructive example of their fear of publicly acknowledging female liberties” (76). To retain men’s superiority, they desire “women’s deplorable character traits...and hence men did not wish them to change....male “practical egotism” of desiring women for personal pleasure; and a need for self-assertion through feelings of superiority” (70-71). Similar to the men mentioned above, to keep his “psychic balance” and male superiority, Broadbent abandons England and its New Women and begins his journey to unearth a woman who is like an “Angel in the House” on another island.

#### 4 . Place for homosocial garden city

Broadbent and Doyle visit the latter’s home country to foreclose a mortgage as a business of the Land Development Syndicate. Broadbent believes that the English race is superior to any other and should control others with their capacity, boasting, “We English must place our capacity for government without stint at the service of nations who are less fortunately endowed in that respect” (82). They hope to develop an estate in Ireland for the Land Development Syndicate, such as Garden City, which Ebenezer Howard created <sup>4</sup>(73) because “now that South Africa has been enslaved and destroyed, there is no country left to [Broadbent] to take an interest in but Ireland” (72). Broadbent hopes to develop “a jolly good place for a hotel and a golf links” (152) there.

Ireland is a place of imagination, which Doyle hates. He despises the Irish because they imagine things and do not see reality, stating, “An Irishman’s imagination never lets him alone, never convinces him, never satisfies him; but it makes him that he cant [*sic*] face reality nor deal with it nor handle it nor conquer it” (81). Doyle as a civil engineer hopes “to join countries, not to separate them” and “want[s] Ireland to be the brain and imagination of a big Commonwealth” (84).

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<sup>3</sup> Coventry Patmore’s infamous poetic idealisation of Victorian nurturing-domestic femininity.

<sup>4</sup> The Garden City movement in 1898 was inspired by the book, “*Looking Backward*” by Sir Ebenezer Howard. The movement was in reverse being a modern utopia idea. To regain paradise, it helps to have a vision of paradise lost. The founders of the English Garden City movement evoked their future vision from a myth, constructing a green and pleasant heaven to replace an ugly and unhealthy hell. One of the reasons why Howard’s plan was fascinated by middle- and upper-middle-class reformers was that they were afraid of their future such as physical degeneration, class conflict, and democracy (Saler Michael 1-2).

He asserts, "The one real political conviction that our business has rubbed into us is that frontiers are hindrance and flags confounded nuisances" (84).

Broadbent plans to develop and create their homosocial utopia where men can strengthen the bond between them through a woman in Ireland. The men's dreamy heaven is like the Garden City, Edward Howard's ideal "in accordance with an agenda that not only promised physical and social health and harmony but also found its justification in a conservative English past" (Saler 2). They hoped to find 'a real England' again. Alun Howkins states, "what English men and women have for a century or more responded to a real England, which is a rural England, where men and women still live naturally" (6) with 'Englishness' enshrined at the moment when they seemed most threatened by modernity. Social reformers believed that learning from the past and adapting its prominent qualities to the present was necessary. Howard would synthesize town and countryside, marrying them into a new urban form.

Ireland is a perfect place for Broadbent's project because it is full of old-fashioned, patriarchal, manageable and greedy but not cunning people. Doyle's hometown is Rosscullen where an old type of the male-dominated society still exists to totally expel women from it, symbolised in physical form by the Round Towers. It "stands about half an Irish mile from Rosscullen" (102). According to Father Dempsey, who powerfully dominates his parish with absolute authority, "[the Round Towers] are the forefingers of the early Church, pointing us all to God" (98). However, the stage directions suggest "the view that the Round Towers are phallic symbols" (97). Rodelle Wenintraub also notes that "sexual energy of the play emerges" in the symbols of the ancient phallic tower, the road to it and the animals referring to the Freudian dream symbolism (147-9).

It is Father Dempsey who controls a small parish of Rosscullen. "[Father Dempsey] is a priest neither by vocation nor ambition, but because the life suits him. He has boundless authority over his flock, and taxes them stiffly enough to be a rich man....an easygoing, amiable, even modest man as long as his dues are paid and his authority and dignity fully admitted" (96). Father Dempsey is so greedy, he complains that politics take much more money than the Church does and hopes he takes it instead (117). All of the men in Rosscullen obey the priest except Peter Keegan, an expelled priest and philanthropist loving all living creatures. Doyle's father Corner Doyle, a land agent, nationalist and separatist; Patsy Farrell, a young clumsy worker; and Barney Doran and Matthew Haffigan, greedy farmers, obey the priest.

There are only two women characters in this play, Nora and Doyle's 50-year maiden aunt, who is "kindly without concern for others: indeed without much concern for herself: a contented product of a narrow, strainless life" (98). She works busily in the domestic sphere cooking and arranging for the visitors from London. Nora seems so submissive, weak, inert and therefore rather unwise that people find her "ethereal" in the same way Broadbent does, whereas Doyle finds her "helpless, useless [and] almost sexless" (94). She easily accepts Broadbent's proposal within 24 hours after

they first meet although she has been passively waiting for Doyle for almost 20 years. In contrast, Shaw's contemporary critics praised Shaw for creating Nora as a gentle woman in 1904. For instance, it is reported that A.B. Walkley contends in *The Times*, "Mr Shaw has, for once, succeeded in depicting a natural and delightful woman" (Evans 125). Additionally, William Archer states in *World*, "The character of Nora is touched with a delicacy very rare in Mr. Shaw's portraits of women" (128). Perhaps these critics were also subconsciously yearning for a maternal angelic woman.

Kent compares Nora with Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House*, asserting that "Nora might have been named after Ibsen's famous heroine, but she will not live her married life as a mere plaything. Broadbent may regard her as such, but she has already displayed considerably more prenuptial feistiness than her Norwegian counterpart does before she finally closes the door behind her" (86). I do not agree to his opinion. Her waiting for 18 years for her suitor to return does not seem at all feisty but instead weak and passive.

Nora is "a figure commonplace to Irish eye; but on the inhabitants of fatter-fed, crowded, hustling and bustling modern countries she makes a very different impression" (94). Nora is "[f]or Tom Broadbent therefore, an attractive woman, whom he would even call ethereal. To Larry Doyle, an everyday woman fit only for the eighteenth century, helpless, useless, almost sexless, an invalid without the excuse of disease, an incarnation of everything in Ireland that drove him out of it" (94). According to Doyle, because of her naïvete and high pride, "Nora would wait until she died of old age sooner than ask my intentions or condescend to hint at the possibility of my having any" (88). With her 40 pounds per annum, Nora is considered to be heiress and upper class in Ireland. However, Broadbent regards her as lower-middle class in England.

Nora has written letters to Doyle for 18 years, having rarely received replies from him. The last time Nora sends him a letter is in February, about six months earlier. However, she has such high pride that she cannot show how much she loves Doyle to anyone (105). When Doyle comes back home, Nora deliberately goes to the Round Towers at night, hoping that Doyle will be worried about her and pick her up there. However, he does not show up, and she cries but ultimately "she settles herself resignedly to wait, and hums a song" (102). Nora is always passive. When asked why she has not left Doyle's house, she answers "Because nobody sent for me to go anywhere else" (143).

After meeting Nora, Broadbent compliments her beauty, asserting "Miss Reilly is one of the fine types: a type rare in England, except perhaps in the best of the aristocracy" (113). Nora is the opposite of English women; "one of his [Broadbent's] own countrywomen would resent his supposed condition" (106), that of his being drunk and making love to the woman he has just met for the first time. She has such a charming voice that Broadbent loves it and goes as far as proposing to her as soon as he meets her for the first time. Nora is well aware of her status as an old maid and Broadbent's taking advantage of it (149). Broadbent confesses to Nora "I have always thought I should like to marry an Irishwoman" (148), but this confession is dubious. To gain Nora, he goes as

far as showing tears, and this is her first time to see a man crying (149). He finds “Miss Reilly a perfect lady” (89) because her “motherly solicitude” (106). Broadbent has also found there is something divine, “sympathetic indulgence” (106) in her. It indicates that she is perfect for him to control because she tends to accept his selfishness.

Shaw’s image of the maternal angelic woman seems to be women in their early 30s with a “motherly solicitude” (106), like Candida in *Candida*, who is Shaw’s ideal woman. There are, however, differences between Candida and Nora. Nora is much more passive and obedient and apt not to confess her opinions about anything except about class. She believes that as an heiress, she is in the upper class, although she is not. However, Broadbent praises her aristocratic air. Moreover, Broadbent chooses Nora because she is plump and because he desires to “hug her occasionally” (151). Overall, Broadbent’s ideal woman is passive, obedient, pious, maternal and plump. Playing the role of Broadbent’s pleasure doll too well, Nora unfortunately suffers from the stress and strain of being used in such a patriarchal and dictatorial way and cannot break liberation from him. Fortunately for him, Broadbent finds the place where he can wield his masculine power over a woman, and even though he is ostensibly liberal and progressive, he regresses to a world where patriarchy still prevails.

## 5. Heterosexual marriage

For the men to maintain the bond between them, they need Nora. The love triangle of Doyle, Nora and Broadbent is necessarily integrated. According to Sedgwick, “homophobia is a necessary consequence of such patriarchal institutions as heterosexual marriage” (3). Hence, “it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men” (26). Broadbent and Doyle intend to share Nora to make a stable bond between them. Kent states, “one critic claims that Larry ‘has’ lost both Nora and the opportunity to represent Rosscullen in Westminster to Broadbent” (81). Nevertheless, Doyle willingly persuades Nora to marry Broadbent, saying, “But that was the very thing I was going to advise you” (153) after hearing Nora accept Broadbent’s proposal.

Broadbent and Doyle regard Nora as a means to strengthen and enrich their bond as a sexual object and a wife of a future dictator of Rosscullen whom the both men cannot bear no matter how hard they try. According to Catherine A. Mackinnon, the female stereotype represents sexuality:

If you ask, not why do women and men do different physical activities, but why has femininity meant physical weakness, you notice that someone who is physically weak is more easily able to be raped, available to be molested, open to sexual harassment. Feminine means violable.... It is developing a theory that objectification is the dynamic of the subordination of women.  
(118)

Nora exemplifies this stereotype of being fragile, naïve and subordinate, crying easily, compared with English women. She can thus be seen as an easy sexual target for men.

Nonetheless, Kent argues, “Like Shaw and Charlotte’s own relationship, the Irish women of *John Bull’s Other Island* are barren of sexuality” (83). He also hints that “[i]n fact, the men and the women are all bachelors, with marriage only a future prospect between two aging people with little hope of children issuing from the union” (84). Whether the couple can still have children cannot be determined, but the possibility exists of their having an English/Irish hybrid baby. Moreover, Broadbent needs Nora, his new Irish fiancée not only for his election campaign but also for the eternality of his patrilineal gene. Therefore, it is not only Nora whom Broadbent needs but also all Irish women like Nora according to his dream. “Suggesting a purely reproductive role for women in society was misogynous at a deeper level”, as Julius Reiner has noted (quot. in Helm 76). While pretending to fall in love with Nora, importantly, Broadben is not in love with Nora but desperate for her with the aim of making her bear his obedient children. Broadbent flirts with women and has never married one. But for reproduction, he, as “an efficient man”, needs the unmarried woman to be a “decent” candidate for the election.

Every act of Broadbent’s is political to construct his own empire. Broadbent, as for marriage life, hopes “we’re going to have a solid four-square home: man and wife: comfort and common sense” (150). By this, he means that their marriage life is comfortable for him and that common sense is in accord with his own rule. The reason why Broadbent proposes to Nora is that he desires to have her as an aristocrat canvasser regarded as beyond the reach of the lowest of the low, and Nora has never cheapened herself by speaking to them. Broadbent aims to add value to his campaign by wedding the heiress Nora (152). He achieves Rosscullen’s only heiress, the parliamentary seat and the land within 24 hours (155). He lends money to the residents who mortgage their land to him for it (156). He is such a cruel businessman that he divides people according to two qualities: efficiency and inefficiency. He deprives Haffigan, who is the latter, of his precious land and kicks him out (157). He hopes to teach Ireland “efficiency and self-help on sound Liberal principles” (158). Kent claims that Nora becomes strongly influential, stating that “through her campaigning and socializing on her husband’s behalf she could affect the direction of Anglo-Irish politics. Such women were at the fore of the Irish nationalist cause around the time of Shaw’s play” (84). He continues to suggest that Aunt Judy and Nora have political agency behind the scenes, asserting, “But Aunt Judy’s and Nora’s service to the men and their command of the domestic space allow them some political agency” and “Her [Judy’s] power is exerted behind the scenes, in the same way as Larry hints that Nora’s will exerted in London”(85). He also views them as powerful women, stating, “And, more importantly, it points to the transformative potential of women in the domestic and political spheres” (86). Still, both women are depicted as invisible, uninfluential and silent,

without any opinions on politics and confined to the domestic sphere.

It is true that to some extent, “Shaw...was intimately aware of land as a powerful symbol of unity and conflict” as Audrey McNamara suggests (136). But, in this play, the land of Rosscullen symbolises the authority the dictator Broadbent would possess after the fulfillment of his stratagems. As Helm mentions, “Engels and Bebel had both claimed that the subjection of women was a consequent of capitalism” (66). Intimidated by the threat of a rise of women’s power, Broadbent desires to create a heaven of capitalism with the law of the jungle in which women would be subjugated to men and men would feel superior to women fueled by ego and assured of their dominance. For this dominance, he needs the whole of Rosscullen, the seat in Parliament from which to control the residents and the prosperity of his patrilineal gene.

## 6. Broadbent tactics

Broadbent’s tactics have worked well to gradually construct his homosocial society. The future dictator is so good at politics that he will be able to get what he desires in Rosscullen. The men in the small town are looking for a person with capital (120) who “can afford to live in London and pay his own way until Home Rule comes” (117). Thereupon, politically ambitious Broadbent eagerly announces his candidacy for the seat. To cover his dark deeds, Broadbent promises to give the residents many benefits (158). The development, however, requires child labour, described by Keegan as “the little children carrying the golf clubs of your tourists as a preparation for the life to come” (155). Broadbent will exploit not only adult laborers but also children.

Born to be a politician with tactics and talent, Broadbent holds up ideals in favour of the Irish, stating that he would have “an immense reduction in the burden of the rates and taxes” (123) and replace the Union Jack with “a flag as green as the island over which it waves” (124), hoping to secure votes. He also purposely flatters Father Dempsey, who has the most power and influence in Rosscullen, praising “the great and beneficent work which you, Father Dempsey, are doing for the people of Rosscullen” (124). Afterwards, he boasts of his tactics to Doyle, believing that “everyone of those men believes in me and will vote for me” (126).

Doyle describes Broadbent’s tactics as follows: “[T]he Englishman does what the caterpillar does. He instinctively makes himself look like a fool, and eats up all the real fools at his ease while his enemies let him alone and laugh at him for a fool like the rest” (86). With the pig accident <sup>5</sup> Broadbent makes himself a fool on purpose to win the hearts of the Irish and the seat in Parliament, knowing “it has brought out the kindness and sympathy of the Irish character to an extent I had no conception of” (135). Doyle is well aware of Broadbent’s strategy (137). Broadbent regards this world as “a jolly place” (141) because he derives a great deal of pleasure from being on the

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<sup>5</sup> Broadbent meets with a car accident, injures the fingers of Patrick Farrell sitting on the passenger seat and kills a pig that Matthew Haffigan has left and Broadbent has put in the car.

dominant side with a lot of capital.

Believing, “All the capable people in Ireland are of English extraction” (80), Broadbent wishes to produce ‘the most English’ English to construct a world of old English conservatives that patriarchy conquers. Within 24 hours, Broadbent acquires three things: the land, the seat in parliament and Nora. However, Doyle intuitively knows Broadbent’s intention: “You[’]re going on a sentimental expedition for perfectly ridiculous reasons with your head full of political nonsense” (83). Broadbent never mentions to Doyle his plans for a Garden City, which comes to light only when the former becomes the area’s candidate. Perhaps it is because he hopes to prevent any impediments. Broadbent is definitely “the English, so clever in [his] foolishness” (162). Thus, Keegan calls him a “hypocrite”. As McNamara also admits, “Broadbent is a rogue, albeit one who uses his charm to achieve his goals” (136).

Broadbent is a cunning scoundrel, loaning people more than the land is worth foreclosing on a mortgage and finally occupies the land in Rosscullen. He goes as far as to play the fool to achieve his goals. Just as he expects, the residents in Rosscullen raucously laugh at the expense of Broadbent in the final scene. He deliberately lowers himself to make them feel superior to him. Meanwhile, he gains what he wishes: a chance for the seat in parliament.

Nevertheless, his egotistical schemes do not go as planned. As McNamara argues, “Broadbent’s plan for Rosscullen represents a corruption of Howard’s concept” (134). The Garden City movement also failed in reality, partly because garden cities required middle-class residents for financial sustenance. Garden cities also required investors, who preferred to see the communities run by responsible middle-class directors rather than by working-class residents. Shaw also had a skeptical attitude toward Howard’s Garden City, particularly its financial problems. “[He] pointed out that the Garden City needed capital more than capitalists needed the city” (Saler 63).

Admittedly, one might object that Broadbent may succeed in creating his homosocial and patriarchal heaven because the play stops short of revealing the future. It is possible, however, to glean that the future of his planned monarchy would be corrupted from the prophecy of Keegan: “For wicked centuries the world has dreamed this foolish dream of efficiency; the end is not yet. But the end will come” (160). To stop the current of women’s liberation and revert it to the past when men exercised power and enjoyed superiority over women, misogynous Broadbent attempts to build a man’s heaven in Rosscullen. His ideas, however, seem to be disingenuous and rather absurd. As Helm asserts, “Male geniuses faded along with female freedom when women’s subjection was consolidated toward the end of the epoch” (70). Even though Broadbent struggles to go against the current, his efforts would be all in vain because the idea that men are superior to women, an idea to which he clings, is a myth. His stubborn resoluteness in male superiority in fact reveals his inferiority complex. He cannot be confident in himself unless he compares himself with others and makes himself believe that they are inferior to him.

## 7. Conclusion

*John Bull's Other Island* is usually regarded as “a realistic drama” (McNamara 134). Yet, it is truly impossible to say so in terms of the depiction of Nora as a passive woman who accepts anything men order her to do. This kind of woman seemingly cannot actually exist in the real world and remains an ideal to those who believe in male superiority. The play can in fact be considered to be “a realistic drama” in terms of the existence of misogynists who are eager to reestablish, on another island, their homosocial paradise that they have lost in England. With the advent of women’s liberation, men who were fearful of the collapse of their “psychic balance” struggled to preserve the favourable world they created, faithfully applying the myth that men were superior to women.

Broadbent and Doyle desire to develop the homosocial society in which their bond will strengthen. To maintain their bond of homosocial relations, they require an obsolete type of woman like Nora who would not be nuisance to them the way New Women in English would be. Edwardian English society appears to have no viewpoint of a woman like Nora, who seems an impossibly ethereal, passive and subservient to men. Broadbent and Doyle easily take advantage of her and involve her in their love triangle, ultimately preserving patriarchal society’s exploitation of the woman. Nora is regarded as a means to strengthen the bond between the two men and to reproduce the next generation. She, however, never tried to defy them. This suggests that it has been challenging for her to liberate herself from the homosocial society created by Broadbent and Doyle. Shaw depicts the Irish woman who has been caged in the old world where no progress has been made for women and who is passively utilized as a means for men. Nora’s characterisation suggests that she is less eager to be subjective or independent from men. At the same time, because she sacrifices herself for others and has never been selfish, she is shown to be more virtuous than the greedy men. While depicting Nora as an angelic imbecile who wastes her time waiting for a man who has no intention of coming back to her, Shaw displays that a woman who altruistically sacrifices herself for men as if she were their mother is ethically righteous and virtuous for some men, a type of woman arguably rarely seen in England at the time. In Nora, Shaw has nostalgically reproduced an archaic archetypical unreal angel.

The triangular relationship of Broadbent, Doyle and Nora is imbalanced in terms of power. Broadbent as a monarch has the most power among them and control the others. The love story between Broadbent and Nora is feigned. Broadbent lures and deceives Nora with sweet talk to marry her. He exploits her and strengthens the bond with Doyle; yet power in their bond grows unbalanced, favouring Broadbent. Doyle exists like a shadow or a nonperson and merely follows Broadbent. Hence, the triangle relationship functions for the dictator to create and maintain his own patriarchal society in which he can act selfishly.

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