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## A Critical Assessment of *Pygmalion* & *Pygmalion* as a Problem Play

*Pygmalion* looks like a misnomer. Shaw takes its title from the Greek myth, of a sculptor named Pygmalion who fell in love with a statue of his own making, which represented the beautiful goddess Galatea. Shaw makes use of this classical myth in his drama. The statue has been so skillfully and cleverly prepared that it is considered Pygmalion's beloved masterpiece. The myth shows that the statue is brought to life with the help of Aphrodite. Shaw's *Pygmalion* seems to be identical with this classical myth, for it tells of something similar to it. The myth shows how an artist creates the image of a beautiful girl in the shape of a statue and how he falls in love with it despite the fact that he hates women. The statue symbolizes the perfection and the idealism whereas man's love for the piece of marble reveals the flaw of man's disability to grasp reality. Throughout the employment of this classical reference Shaw manages to give details about, and at the same time criticizes life in general, and the social barriers in particular. Besides, Shaw sheds some significant light on human weakness and moral values and principles. The contrast between man's attitudes towards values and women has been obviously unfolded throughout the entire play. Social relationships and human nature, with all its manifestations have not been overlooked by the dramatist.

*Pygmalion* derives its name from the famous story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which Pygmalion revolted against the shameful lives of the women of his time and decided to live alone and unmarried. Then he created a beautiful statue, the more he looked at her, the more he falls in love with her, until she becomes alive by the help of Aphrodite. Although the play dramatizes the Greek myth, Shaw ignored the original theme which is love and beauty, and turned a girl of slums into a woman of stylish society by giving her only some lessons in phonetics. The beginning of the play shows that "phonetics is a hint to class distinction; generally it deals with the English language."<sup>1</sup>

Shaw sees that this play is "a didactic drama focusing on the power of phonetics and the stupidity of modern social attitudes."<sup>2</sup> According to the bet between the protagonists of the play, Higgins, a professor of

phonetics and spoiled eccentric, and his friend, Colonel Pickering, Higgins promises that he has the ability to change Eliza, a cockney flower girl into a lady within three months, and to achieve that he must educate her. Colonel Pickering has just returned from India where he has been studying speech patterns of the natives. He is different from Higgins, as he is a gentleman and treats all the people with respect. He really does not believe that Higgins and science can create a duchess from a flower girl. Eliza before her accepting this transformation said:

We were above that in convents Garden..... I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you made a lady of me; I am not fit to sell anything else. I am a good girl, I am. <sup>3</sup>

To win the bet, Higgins does all his best to train Eliza how to behave like a duchess and how to speak well in conventional regular pronunciation.

The story of *Pygmalion* centers around three main characters: Eliza Doolittle, Professor Henry Higgins, and Colonel Pickering. Eliza is very sensitive and emotional girl, her qualities are unlike Higgins who is arrogant and his mind is preoccupied with only phonetics. In his life, there is no place for women, as he is very much obsessed with the language. Colonel Pickering is from India, a gentleman and also expert in language. On contrary to Higgins, he treats Eliza with respect.

The play is about transformation. Higgins believes by his extraordinary skill he can transform a flower girl, Eliza, into a duchess. Eliza is the heroine of the play, to change her becomes a challenge to his professional pride. Within six months, this flower girl with the help of Higgins, who trains her has been miraculously transformed into a person of high significance—a lady. Because the flower girl looks so hopeless, she attracts his attention and thus he decides to choose her for his inspired experience of creating something significant out of the insignificant, a poor and dirty girl. He considers his achievement and experience a great professional and scientific success. This is the reason for him to live in an imaginative and ideal world. As a matter of fact, he has accepted to perform this experience in order to preserve his spiritual integrity, forgetting and ignoring the actual life with all its horrors and evil practices.

Hypocrisy, stupidity, and snobbery are dominant forces in social life, which are dreadful as Higgins discovers; and for him civilization is only a mask behind it: "we're all savages, more or less. To express what we really think would break up the whole show."<sup>4</sup> He is well-educated, but his views are against conservative society. For him, any reconciliation with social conventions is considered a treachery against his honesty. He regards these conventions as a prison that enchains man's will and threatens his intellect. In *Pygmalion*, it is something amazing that a flower girl is changed into a duchess and this creation means the creation of a

new character that displays all signs of new manners, new outlook to life, new speech, and new awareness of the world. To create a new character means destruction of the old one. In other words, to create a duchess Higgins has to kill the flower girl.

The story of this play is about the triumph of Professor Higgins in teaching Eliza Doolittle, a Cockney flower girl and slum dweller, to speak and behave like a lady. It is meant basically to satirize the class system. For Shaw even class discrimination is an evil in itself. This also involves issues of women's self-reliance and absolute independence. Shaw wants to point out that it is not just the difference between the rich and the poor, but it is the superficial difference of education and social training, also the desire of the poor to be like the rich in manners. To convert Eliza into a lady means to make her independent,

since a lady is as much a slave of upper-class convention as the flower girl is a slave of poverty; both of them being mechanical wind up dolls full of automatic responses to social stimuli.<sup>5</sup>

According to the myth, Pygmalion created a female statue that came to life and responded to him, this is the essence of the self-fulfilling prophecy; in reality as Robert Rosenthal described in his report the case in which a researcher told the teachers that only the students of high potential could acknowledge the hard program, whereas those of low potential could not. The result is that only those of high potential can gain benefits. Another report explores:

the limits of self-fulfilling prophecy, emphasizing that if one cannot imagine a statue coming alive, he can affect level of act by the level of expectations.<sup>6</sup>

Shaw wants to connect both the myth of Pygmalion and the fairy tale of Cinderella. In the myth, Pygmalion is a sculptor who after creating the statue of a perfect woman, falls in love with her, that is Galatea, then he begs Aphrodite to give her life and then marries her. The Cinderella story also involves the changing of a young girl into new one, that is much better than the reward of marrying a prince. Eliza is then a modern Cinderella as she suffers because of her stepmother, her drunkard father, Mrs. Pearce the house keeper and discourteous Prof. Higgins. Eliza in her serious dilemma decides to leave the house of Prof. Higgins. She meets Freedy outside the house who saves her and gives her emotional support. Although Freedy is not impressive, they happily marry. The modern Cinderella, Eliza with the financial help of Pickering opens a flower shop.

Shaw's play has made the point that a modern Galatea would not come alive until she decides to be by herself and not be the society doll. He concentrates on the quality of change, as a Fabian devoted to the alteration

of England through education; he asks how can socialist movement bring about change as he is not satisfied by what he sees. He seeks a profound change, like the change of nature or character that Eliza finally undergoes, not just a social transformation. The social change is very significant and essential but it might be a change on the surface level just as in the case of Eliza's father. The change must infiltrate into deeper layers and include the way of thinking. When Eliza attends the ambassador party as a duchess the aristocracy is fooled by her artificial new look. Both Higgins and Eliza have the ability to deceive those who live in a world of appearances, where the relations between people are superficial and nobody has the chance to remove the mask and discover the reality behind it. This also unfolds one important fact about the rich; that is, they can easily be deceived by false appearances.

Higgins regards Eliza as a non-living entity, commenting, "The girl does not belong to anybody, is no use to anybody but me,"<sup>7</sup> as if she were a piece of property rather than a human being a slave whom he has bought for five pounds which are paid to her father. He tells her, "no use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave?"<sup>8</sup> These words hurt her and make Eliza yearn for her previous days when she was a flower girl, although now she is a duchess, she feels that she is a slave as she has already lost her freedom. She bitterly blames Higgins for changing her into a false duchess: "why didn't you leave me where you picked me? I am a slave now, for all my fine clothes."<sup>9</sup> Despite her new condition, she decides to flee from his house, refusing to come back again because she does not want to be treated as a slave any more. Higgins is like Satan who gives Eve a chocolate, the symbol of temptation taken from the fruit dish which refers to 'the tree of knowledge.' His ill-treatment causes Eliza to lose her soul which is more important for him than her face or voice. All these make her accuse him of being a devil.

Norbert F. O' Donnell makes some general observations and criticizes the social aspects presented in *Pygmalion*, commenting that the play is a struggle between human vitality and the artificial system of middle class normality. The insecurities of life in the modern society build the structure of this system of bargains. By overcoming her doubts and fears, Eliza gets vitality and courage to face life, but at the same time she has imprisoned herself in the middle class system as she seeks marriage, which is a social convention. Here Shaw does not end the play with marriage of Eliza and Higgins, which is contrary to what the audience may have anticipated. Although the natural solution to Eliza's problem, is marriage with Higgins which does not happen and the problem remains unsolved. Shaw has not provided solution to Eliza's problem. After the experiment on Eliza is complete, Higgins starts to neglect her. Both Higgins and Pickering suggest that Eliza has to marry Freedy. Now she herself must find solution for her problem. In an attempt to illustrate what a comedy provides and how it functions Northrop Frye believes that it is

“designed not to condemn evil but to ridicule a lack of self knowledge.”<sup>10</sup>

Eric Bentley observes that “to condemn evil would be direct, unironic, and therefore uncomic.”<sup>11</sup> In this play, we cannot find evil in the form of human wickedness, but the lack of self knowledge which is the main source of the problem, and confusion is the form of evil. Though Higgins is intellectual, he is snobbish and brute; he uses his language as a weapon of class war and suppression of woman. Shaw is a great social rebel and reformer; he has converted the English theatre from being a place of enjoyment into an important influence on moral actions, monetary situation, and literary admiration. According to him, art has a purpose, he does not believe in art for art's sake. His plays are very important as they are considered a medium of his ideas. His aim is to reveal the defects of the society from an insider's point of view.

The problem play is a new form of drama, called thesis play, discussion play and comedy of ideas. It originated in the nineteenth century in France. Henrik Ibsen, practiced it effectively. Henry Arthur and A. W. Pinero introduced the problem play into England at the end of nineteenth century, whereas Shaw and Galworthy flourished it in the twentieth century. The problem play is a drama concerned with a specific problem which generally has sociological nature, such as prostitution, suffering of the workers, and unemployment. In this type of drama, many problems are presented but without solutions. The writer's duty is just to provoke the readers. *Pygmalion* is a problem play; the most important problem that Shaw sheds light upon, is education. Eliza's education is torment for her and also for Prof. Higgins, but both of them triumph over it. Within six months, Eliza at the ambassador party can pass off as a princess not only as a duchess. By education she becomes a lady, and she has been lifted out of her social environment. But this transformation creates problems for her as she cannot return to her past environment and sell flowers, and at the same time, she does not belong to the middle class to which her education has raised.

*Pygmalion* deals with the problem of education as a central theme focusing on women's education, their status in labour and in society. Although Shaw cannot be seen as an absolute fighter for the rights of women, he tried to encourage the people to change their old social and economic values. Education seemed to be a vital aspect for him to induce such changes. Thus the story of this play forces the readers mind to think about what education really means. He was more interested in the ills of London society, particularly the unequal distribution of wealth, the inherent unfairness of the class system, and the domination of society by man. Eliza's life is miserable as she has to work very hard to earn her living. The conflict of *Pygmalion* is basically the undertaking of teaching Eliza to rise in society. This conflict is most obvious humor in the play; the audience can relate to the use of slang and improper English in their own speech causing Eliza's mistakes to be funny. Shaw uses

the conflict between Eliza and Higgins to express his own thoughts to the people.

Now she faces the problem of loss of her identity and isolation; search for belonging in the new social environment. Her seeking of new social identity and her loss of former identity makes her feel desperate and sad. She needs a sense of belonging in order to achieve happiness which is very necessary. Prof. Higgins has made her a 'new woman'. She now desires for a better life. By her education, she also acquires aspiration and ambitions about her future life, seeking emotional fulfillment as the experiment is over. After the experimental was over, Prof. Higgins, however, failed to realize the change which she had undergone. Eliza for him was only a talking machine. He did not take in trust in her as a living woman. He only made an experiment with her and he thought that he was successful. Higgins and Pickering start to ignore her, she poignantly asks: "What I am fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What to become of me?"<sup>12</sup> She expresses her depression and frustration by throwing slippers on Higgins face. She gives back the jewels and leaves the house. She decides to work out her own solution and to make place for herself in the society.

According to A. C. Ward, the problem of education is very important in the world; to educate means to give new life. A teacher who drives away ignorance and educates his student then leaves him alone, to find a new way of life, is left in the lurch. It is not easy for the student to deal with the new mode of life. The education leads to individual and social turbulence as Eliza complains:

You never thought of the trouble it would make for me? To which Prof. Higgins replies Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble?<sup>13</sup>

Along with this, Shaw has also presented the various dialects of English language as spoken by English people of different localities. In the play Prof. Higgins says, "A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to live."<sup>14</sup> Shaw accuses the English spelling and demands new alphabet with phonetic system that offers symbols for each spoken word. He feels that the unity of language will end the class distinction and make the society classless. Through this play, Shaw highlights the problem of education and the problem and difficulty of pronunciation because there is no one to one correspondence between the spoken and the written form in the English language. He does not provide any solution to the questions raised in the play and leaves the people to ponder over it.

In the history of English drama, Shaw occupies a second position after Shakespeare. He is one of the most unusual and multifaceted

personality who builds his own theatre of ideas. No doubt, all his plays give the impression of artistic influence, working in spontaneous unity. Archibald Henderson states that, "Shaw is a social thinker and ethical teacher, a philosopher concerned for unities and universal objects of life which are so rare and prophetic."<sup>15</sup>

This play is an attack on the British class system, especially that aspect which is relevant to the condition of woman. Throughout the presentation of Eliza among both social classes, the poor, when she is a flower girl, and the rich, when she is a duchess Shaw reveals the reality of society with all its defects and weaknesses, and at the same time he implicitly presents a clear picture of society that illustrates its conflicting ideals. After having been transformed into a duchess, Eliza must be treated as a human being and not as a slave, or a slipper fetcher trod upon as dirt, or abused in bad language by a man with uncontrolled temper. The most important difference between a flower girl and a duchess is "not how she behaves but how she is treated."<sup>16</sup> The reality of her life is poverty, she has no family, only an irresponsible father who has never cared for her; his aim is only how to gain money and that is why he sells his daughter to Higgins in only five pounds.

Mrs. Higgins gives Eliza money to find out how she knew her son's name, shows the mother's fear that her son might be associating with the wrong sort. This act evokes a society whose members have rigid relations with one another. Her son, Higgins treats people like objects and not, like human beings; this shows the emptiness of higher English society. He even talks about Eliza as a guinea pig, which injured her feelings. The act of throwing her slippers on Higgins' face complaining that she means no more to him than his slippers she bursts out, saying; "You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you...not so much as these slippers."<sup>17</sup> From this experiment the most important thing she knows is not how to dress well, or learning the vowels, and the consonants, but the self-respect which is something authentic which do not hinder the growth of an independent spirit. John Ervine comments on her as follows:

It was not a course of phonetics which made Eliza display good manners in a world which was not a social and intellectual slum, but an inward grace which, like a seed hidden in the soil, germinates only when the conditions are right.<sup>18</sup>

In this play, Shaw indirectly pleads for the abolition of class distinction, by making the poor rise in society. He gives a chance to Eliza to improve herself by opening a flower shop and marrying a gentle husband Freddy.

In *Pygmalion* Shaw creates the heroine, Eliza places her in middle-class society and makes her revolt against the conservative community. She is a simple, dirty, crude and rough girl, Higgins accepted the challenge

to transform her into a lady. Higgins teaches her for a period of six months. She begins to speak excellent English with a fine accent. Nobody can recognize her as an ordinary girl. Shaw criticizes the structure of society, which he calls the capitalistic, as it is divided into classes, especially the rich represented by Higgins, the professor and his friend, the colonel, and the poor represented by Eliza and her father. According to his socialist doctrine, "the crime of poverty can be abolished and national capital can be equally distributed; these can be achieved only when we get rid of class discrimination."<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of the play, we find that Eliza is an illiterate and ignorant girl who sells flowers at convent garden and speaks the kind of cockney which no one can understand it except the native people. Here, Shaw not only criticizes Eliza but the whole English community who speak English, he remarks: "The English have no respect for their language, and will not teach the children to speak."<sup>20</sup>

Although the process of Eliza's education in phonetics is difficult but it gives her self-realization. For her it is brutal suffering but she has enough courage, aptitude and determination to face and overcome the ordeal. With the progress of her education, she realizes that the difference between herself and the flower girl is not how she behaves in the society but how the people treat her. She becomes a duchess in the eyes of others, except Higgins. In Act III of the play, Eliza's progress in her education is tested when she goes to Mrs. Higgins's home; she is dressed and behaves like a lady that makes Higgins tell his mother that she talks English almost as you talk French. Eliza is a talented student and has the ability to speak fluently and correctly like a high born lady.

In *Pygmalion*, Higgins refuses to understand that his 'Galatea' is a living person. He considers her as a material that he used to work on, a stupid creature that has no ability to understand his high conversation. Even when she behaves well in the embassy party, he never praises her; this shows clearly the difference between the classes in British society. Although she has changed, she still remains in his eyes an ordinary girl. The class distinctions should be eliminated according to Shaw's socialist ideas.

Shaw clarifies the relationship between money and the social problem, including various social classes; poor and rich, it must be noted that money is considered the most important thing in a capitalistic society. Eliza's father, Mr. Doolittle, expresses the importance of money especially for the capitalistic people, he observes:

When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a prom in the dust cart, he got me of, and got shot of me and got me a shot of him as quick as he could. Same with the doctors: used to choose me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and

nothing to pay. Now they find out that I'm not a healthy man and can live unless they look after me twice.<sup>21</sup>

Shaw in an objective manner tackles some of the capitalistic features which are dangerous and destructive to man's body and soul. He not only depends on his own observations concerning the social life of contemporary capitalistic society but also the observations of other people in this regard. Money in this play permeates everything since it is considered the most important in a capitalistic society. Shaw's characters, especially the poor ones, are capable of changing their class in one way or another. The degree of their independence depends on how much money they can get. He is against woman's dependence on man because it destroys the aim of the life force. For him, though poor woman is not good, she tries hard to be better than rich man in order to ensure economic independence. This play serves an important purpose; it preaches the importance of woman's education and her right to be independent human being. Eliza seeks social and economic promotion. She realizes that knowledge is the key to all the glories in life, but also a bitter fruit, and reality is sometimes very difficult to deal with. From her experience, she emerges a more mature girl. With her self-knowledge she gains self-confidence.

Eliza and her father in spite of being poor manage to change their social class, Bernard F. Dukore in this respect observes:

For Eliza, the ability to earn more money promises to give her more independence. For her father, however, whose social class also changes between the beginning and the end of the play, a small amount of money creates independent spirit, whereas, a large sum of money saps that spirit's independence.<sup>22</sup>

*Pygmalion* is not merely a play about how an artist or a skilful person can create something great out of something trivial. In other words Shaw goes beyond the idea that Higgins manages to create a superior lady out of an inferior one that is a flower girl. Shaw tackles, throughout the episode of the girl, significant issues that not only touch the characters in the play but also mankind. Among the important issue dealt with, in the play is the question of survival. What makes man survive on the earth is money as it is indicated in the dealings of the characters in the play. Money in society can be obtained by many and various means, of which some are like teaching phonetics, selling flowers, borrowing, or selling one's body and soul to the devil.

Money in *Pygmalion* appears to be a major factor with which characters are very much concerned, for man cannot move without money and survive in this world. Many contemporary dramatists have allotted much importance to money as an essential ingredient for survival. For

instance, Torvald Helmer in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was at the edge of death a few years before the play began, and therefore the lack of money meant non survival. In Brecht's *Mother Courage and her Children*, male and female bodies and souls, food, military supplies and the like are sold for the sake of money, which means for the sake of survival. Bernard F. Dukore thinks that the three plays written by three dramatists already mentioned deal with the question of survival and at the same time they are linked to the question of dependence upon money and the independence from it. He puts it in the following passage:

In these plays, Ibsen, Shaw, and Brecht link money the question of survival, and they employ it to the subject of independence. In *A Doll's House*, money is part of the atmosphere of the house, its need and its permeations in society create the conflict that inform the play. It sustains or fails to sustain the home, a social institution suggested by the title. Dependence upon money creates questions about independence from it as well as from individuals and social conceptions of which it is a part. In *Pygmalion*, money means survival, and more of it a means to higher status, which characters try to search and maintain. <sup>23</sup>

In the play there are only two characters who represent the middle class, a nurse and a maid. The other characters are either very rich or very poor, to furnish the social ambience of the play, the garbage collector and the flower girl on the one hand, or the wealthy colonel and society matron on the other. The atmosphere and environment of the play is one of upper-middle-class society. Higgins treats Eliza as an object, a 'live doll' or like 'a lost umbrella.' This remark can be confirmed by Higgins's attitude and behavior towards Eliza. In this regard Higgins is identical with the mythical Pygmalion who made a statue or a large *doll* as it might be sometimes called. The statue of the myth turned to be perceived as a living woman. To recall the story how Higgins decided to create a lady out of a flower girl, it is revealed in the play that Higgins had a very high opinion of himself and said that he will create "this thing," but later he says he has already created a woman.

It is worth mentioning that both Shaw and Ibsen in *Pygmalion* and *A Doll's House* respectively deal with the themes of survival and independence. In both plays woman is treated as if she were an object that is dependent on others in the same way as a slave depends upon his master. But Shaw goes deeper than this and projects the individual as one yearning for changing his/her social status as is the case with Eliza and her father who both try to sell themselves for the sake of survival, independence, and to change their social status. It is vividly clarified by Bernard F. Dukore in the following words:

But Shaw's major concerns include the impermanence

the class system, a bastion of capitalist society, and fact that members of the lower classes can both change their classes and have them changed by others. He therefore treats these themes more explicitly than Ibsen does.... In their initial appearances, the lower-class daughter and her lower-class father try to sell. "How much" does each require for independence? As the play demonstrates, the relationship between money and independence differs for each.<sup>24</sup>

It must be noted that Shaw in *Pygmalion* makes money central to every Act and Scene because, as shown in the play, it is something crucial and fundamental to the continuity and survival of man in a capitalistic society. Money as displayed in the play touches every minute detail of man's daily life. The individual cannot satisfy his/her needs without the adequate amount of money necessary to keep his/her body and soul together besides good living and lodging. Therefore, in a capitalistic society as this, the individual has to endeavor to find out the best source of money for the above-mentioned reasons. Both Higgins and Pickering can afford to live where they please, they tell Eliza that she can live where she likes. In this respect, Sarcastic Bystander says, 'Park Lane, for instance.' Bernard F. Dukore comments on the crucial aspect of money in a capitalistic society he observes:

Since money is a crucial aspect of capitalistic society, it is a crucial element of every act in this play. In the act, which represents a spectrum of society and which lays the ground work for the remainder of the play, it is part of every scene.<sup>25</sup>

Higgins's job is to teach phonetics. Being an individual living in a capitalistic environment, he is quite aware of the socioeconomic factors of his profession. That is, he knows very well how the new capitalists rose from the lower-class society and succeeded to move to a social class that was higher than their previous one, betrayed or acted deceitfully against their origins, and thus his profession as a teacher of phonetics is very profitable. In this connection the Sarcastic Bystander's remark can be recalled – 'Men begin in Kentish Town with 80 [pounds] a year, and end in Park Lane.' Thus in a capitalistic society the individual is greatly concerned with collecting money for the sake of changing his/her social status and living a better life. In such a society respectability is always measured against how much money one possesses.

Another problem presented in the play is the predicament of Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's father. He was a poor dustman who was addicted to drinking. He was contended with his life, society, considered him as an undeserving poor and did nothing for him. Mrs. Ezra D. Wannafeller, founder of Moral Reform Society engages Doolittle with good amount

of money which makes him rich. As a rich man he has to be associated with middle class morality and separate himself from his former class of dustman. Now he must get new social identity and sense of belonging to a higher class. He expresses his problem:

Who asked him to make gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free I touched pretty nigh everybody money when I wanted it, same as I touched you Higgins. I am warranted, and everybody touches me for money.<sup>26</sup>

The middle class morality obliges him to marry his mistress which makes him give up his happiness, at the same time he cannot refuse the money, as it will help him to live happily. So he decides to accept the morals of middle class, though he would lose all his contentment.

Alfred Doolittle in *Pygmalion* narrates some aspects of his life that are illustrative of one bitter fact about the capitalistic environment in which money is considered very important and it is the measure of how much respectable the individual is. He says that he was badly treated by people when he was poor, but now he is treated very kindly and cared for simply because he is rich:

Doolittle...When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a prom in the dust cart, he got me of, and got shot of me and got me shot of him as quick as he could. Same with doctors used to choose me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and nothing to pay. Now they that I'm not a healthy man and can't live unless they look after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself: somebody else must do it and touch me for it.<sup>27</sup>

Through Doolittle, Shaw has expressed the futility and emptiness of environmental morals. Shaw has shown the unhappiness and melancholy of Doolittle for leaving his social environment due to his sudden wealth. He is deprived person and drunker, who can hardly distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. He is an irresponsible father; he goes to Higgins not to ask about his daughter's wellbeing but to take money from him because this is his only profession. He does not marry his mistress because he thinks that after marrying she will dominate him. Doolittle is a spokesman of Shaw's conservative view. Through him, Shaw reveals the injustice and stupidity of unconventional principles of morality. He stresses that the wealth of society should be distributed among its members as they deserve. Doolittle says that he always needs the help but no one assists him, he may not deserve; but true morality means that society should offer him an appropriate work that will make him respectable, honest, and useful member in society. The reality is that nothing of this sort is done and he becomes more undeserving. By the sudden gaining of wealth, Doolittle loses his social identity and gets rid of slum by

Prof. Higgins, who once mentioned him as, "The most honest original moralist at present in England". Despite of gaining large inheritance, Doolittle remains antagonistic to middle class morality, feeling that it will crush his life; his new social condition frightened him. He is unhappy and disconsolate because he is alienated from his earlier social environment. To confirm such a faith, he dresses well as a bridegroom and goes to Church to marry his mistress.

Although Doolittle appears only two times in the play, he is vital and a comic character. Through his characterization, Shaw makes fun of middle class morality. He says that he feels sad because of the sudden acquisition of wealth. Shaw makes a comparison between those who did little work but did it honestly and those who did equally little but become rich because they have undeserved incomes. To share the large dividing line in the world is not between poor and rich nor between socialist and capitalist; it is between those who did some hard labor in the world and those who did little or nothing. Through Doolittle, Shaw criticizes the economic and social moralities. Becoming suddenly a rich man, Doolittle a dustman, is changed into a lion of London city. The play sees this as a romantic story but the reality is that this simple man is changed into a victim of bourgeoisie's morality.

Doolittle: Done to me? Ruined me destroyed my happiness, leave me up and delivered me into a hand of middle class morality.....I will have to learn to speak middle class language from you instead of speaking proper English.<sup>28</sup>

Higgins makes it clear to Eliza that money and changing from one class to another are closely connected to speech. He has taught the nouveaux riches, those people who have already become rich and are ostentatious. Higgins boasts of his ability of teaching the flower girl better English, which will enable her to have more money through a job and social status higher than, what she really has at present. Thus, his boast and his efforts to fulfill his project turn to be right. After Eliza completes her education, she will not only become a lady but her soul will also awaken. She acquires self-confidence and searches for identity and belonging which is the most important problem she has faced after the experiment of Higgins is successfully completed. Shaw always presents serious thoughts, issue or social problem and obliges his readers to think on them. He observed; "I write plays with the deliberated object of converting the nation to my opinion.....I have no other intention to write plays."<sup>29</sup>

Higgins as a mouthpiece of Shaw illustrates the truth that speech which varies according to locality is a great obstacle in social classes. The difference between flower girl and duchess is greater than the difference between the sounds they utter while they are speaking. If a flower girl can be changed into a duchess within six months, the only thing that distinguishes her from a duchess is hereditary, social stature and money none of them she has earned. This message clarifies that every flower girl can be made a duchess by suitable encouragement and aptitude.

Shaw is anti-romantic. Although the transformation of the dirty flower girl into a charming lady is romantic, but *Pygmalion* cannot be considered as a romantic play, for the hero and the heroine do not fall in love and do not marry at the end. Rather the heroine leaves the house and the hero is not at all a lover, he is like a scientist, and all his concerns are to achieve success in his experiment. Shaw makes Eliza marry Freddy an impoverished but devoted man. The play ends with such an unconventional ending. *Pygmalion* is regarded to be a highly critical Shawian drama. This ending is one of Shaw's least successful pieces of writing as he did not give *Pygmalion* a happy ending. Through this determination to make his romance unromantic, Shaw twisted this play from what would have been expected by the standards of drama and made its ending real. Thus *Pygmalion* is not a romance, according to A. C. Ward:

Pygmalion is not a romance as it rightly could have been called if Higgins and Eliza had fallen in love and married. It is problem play. Every teacher who sets out to fight ignorance.....But the element of romance is provided by the creation of Eliza into a entirely new creation and the Eliza and Freddy love story. <sup>30</sup>

Though Shaw uses the term 'Romance' to tell a story of legendary, it does not include love affair. Unlike *Pygmalion*, Higgins has no desire to keep a perfect woman for himself. Also unlike Galatea, Eliza does not choose to share love with her renovator, on the contrary, she shows her independence and declares that she will marry Freddy the man who loves her as soon as she can support him. The tragic flaw of Higgins is that he is just like all of Shaw's heroes, he is not a gentleman. He is very unconcerned about other's feelings and desires. He is self-centered. He is cultured and dazzling but lacks good manners, believing himself to be superior and treats people arrogantly:

Higgins: I find that the moment I let myself make friend with women, I become selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything, when you let them into your life, you find that the women is driving at one way and you driving to another. <sup>31</sup>

At the end of the play both, Higgins and Eliza continue their respective ways of opposites. Higgins' is to better the world through himself, whereas Eliza's purpose is to better herself through the world.

In Victorian England, women were sold; here Eliza is sold by her father to Higgins as if she is his property. This shows that inequality between two sexes is greater than between the classes. It is through independence Eliza has earned her own money as a flower girl, she has molded herself into such a strong woman that she is, able to say what she wants. This independence is taken from her when she becomes Higgins' experiment. Although she has

gained many luxuries, she loses her freedom. For that reason, she refuses to be bought and sold, insisting to fight for her survival. Shaw sympathizes with Eliza who fights to preserve her humanity in the face of Higgins's disgusting use of her as raw material for his experiment. During that time, the belief prevailed that only a man can turn a woman into a lady. This is illustrated in Eliza's helplessness and in the way Higgins treats her and his suggestion that she should marry. She is in a critical situation and has to decide between marrying and going out to work. This reflects the contemporary beliefs that it is undignified for woman to earn her living. Eliza starts to rebel against Higgins by throwing the slippers at him. This can be considered as a way of release to other ladies. In those days, Eliza's behavior might stand for women who were struggling for their rights. That was the time when women were trying to get rid of the Victorian ideals of womanhood and were seeking the right to vote. Here we can see women fighting for their independence. One can say that Shaw's criticism and ideas are expressed in Eliza who becomes independent and self-confident woman.

As a critic, Shaw searches and criticizes logical events, believing that art should be for the sake of life and should not be away from life and its problem. On the contrary it should deal with these problems and solve them. In this play, Shaw has shown the conventional morality and revealed that environment has many things to mould the personality. In addition, he has dealt with the social alienation and its consequences. Shaw's didacticism is brought out through various themes of the play, it is shown from the very beginning. He focuses on the environment as it is the most important and significant factor in modeling the character and behavior of human being. The education of Eliza in phonetics, her new environment and her training to live in middle class style and morals changed her from flower girl to duchess. She informs us the value and significance of environment in learning the language by saying: ".....you knew that when a child is brought to a foreign country it picks up the language in a few weeks." <sup>32</sup>

This play reflects Shaw's socialist views as he is a great advocate of education for the working classes and social equality. As a member of the Fabian Society, he worked to educate the public through seminars, discussions, and lectures. He believed in evolutionary or democratic socialism; the idea that wealth should be gradually redistributed among all classes through public ownership of industry and business. Shaw's political and social reformation is reflected in *Pygmalion*, which is a clever study of phonetics, and a good treatment of middle class morality and class distinction. It is a combination of the dramatic, the comic, and the social reform that gives Shaw's comedies their special taste.

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