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A character study of Eliza Dolittle in Bernard Shaw's 'Pygmalion'

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Shaw's comparisons of himself to Shakespeare and his frequent and often extravagant criticisms of Shakespeare are a prominent part of his critical writings. However, critics have, for the most part failed to notice that same kind of criticisms which are often indirectly expressed in Shaw's plays through his handling of characters and situations. These characters and situations are often similar to those found in Shakespearean plays, but which the great master had handled in a different manner. In many plays, Shaw's characters in themselves or in their situations are so similar to those of Shakespeare that it is difficult to believe that Shaw's depiction was not consciously or unconsciously suggested by Shakespeare's. In these cases similarities of depiction establish the relationship between the two plays but the differences in treatment illustrate criticism of Shakespeare in a major way, which Shaw has explicitly made elsewhere in his writings.

Two plays which illustrate fundamental difference in the approach of two playwrights to a similar situation are *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Pygmalion*. Indeed Shaw's working out of the central situation of the two plays is so diametrically opposed to that of Shakespeare that Pygmalion seems deliberately designed to challenge and contradict Shakespeare's handling of the central situation.

The similarities in the two plays are readily apparent. In both the plays a man accepts the taskof transforming a woman to another kind, whose nature is radically different. In both plays the man who undertakes this task is an overbearing bully. Petruchio consistently plays the role of a bully in his relationship with Kate, and it is, indeed, the means by which he transforms her from a quarrelsome shrew to a sweet – tempered and obedient wife. Not only does he frustrate her every wish, but he subjects her to mental anguish in the humiliation brought upon her by his attire and behaviour at the time of their wedding and to physical abuse in causing her horse to dump her in the mud, in preventing her from sleeping night after night, and in keeping food away from her with the declared intention of starving her into submission.

Character Sketch of Prof. Higgins

Though Higgins does not subject Eliza to physical abuse, except for a moment in the last act when he completely loses control of himself as a result her taunts, he nevertheless does bully Eliza in every other way, ordering her about in a very brusque manner without the slightest concern for her feelings and uttering threats of physical violence which in their early stages of their acquaintance she takes quite seriously. In Act II at an interview In his flat, when Eliza has first come to inquire about taking elocution lessons from Higgins, his treatment of her is extremely rude and abusive. He orders her "peremptorily" to sit down, and when she does not do so immediately he repeats the order, "thundering" it at her. When she interrupts his speculations about the price she has offered for the lessons, he barks out, "*Hold your Tongue*" (Act: II), and when as a consequence of those speculations and of his rudeness, she begins to cry, he threatens, "*Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling*" (Act: II). As soon as Higgins decides to undertake the challenge to transform Eliza into a duchess, he begins to issue orders to Mrs. Pearce to give Eliza a bath, disinfect her and burn all of her clothes. In all these, he does not consult Eliza at all, as though she had nothing to say in this matter. As a result Eliza begins to protest and Higgins gives further instructions to Mrs. Pearce, *"If she gives you any trouble, wallop her"* (Act: I). Pickering's objection to Higgin's rudeness- *" Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings ?"* (Act: I)- elicits the quite serious reply from Higgins, *"Oh no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need to bother about."* (Act: I) Subsequently Higgins adds that Pickering ought to realize from his military experience that there is no use of trying to explain matters to Eliza, who is too ignorant to understand any such explanation, and that therefore the proper treatment of her is simply to *"Give his orders: thats enough for her"*. Furthermore, in Act V Higgins calls Eliza, among other things, one of the *"squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden"* (Act: V) and *"damned impudent slut,"* (Act: V) and instead of inviting her to come back to Wimpole Street he orders her to do so: *"Get up and come home; and don't be a fool"* (Act: V). Thus he demonstrate that his tendency to bully Eliza has not changed in the course of the play, though she has by that time changed into an entirely different person from what she was at the beginning of the play.

Petruchio and Higgins are alike, then, in being bullies, though they are different in that Higgins does not resort to physical abuse and his motivation behind his bullying tactics is different! Petruchio has deliberately adopted such tactics in order to "tame" Kate in the same way that he would tame a falcon. On the other hand, Higgins' bullying treatment of Eliza is merely his natural way of behaving towards people and is not a special behaviour adopted in connection with the task of transforming Eliza. On the contrary, as he insists to her, his behaviour towards all people in the same.

The attitudes towards woman - and towards man are reflected in the differences between Shaw's working out of the *Pygmalion* plot and Shakespeare's working out of the plot of *The Taming of the Shrew*. These differences are principally in the methods by which the woman is transformed and in the final attitudes of the man and the woman towards each other. At first glance it may seem that a comparison of the methods used to transform the women cannot be valid since the qualities requiring transformation were not of the same kind in both

cases, Kate's case involving a change of such psychological qualities as temper and temperament and Eliza's involving changes in qualities which seem much more superficial- speech, dress and awareness of the of the rules of etiquette. Although Eliza was not shrewish at the beginning of her play, she was completely lacking in self - control, very quick to take offence, and very short tempered in her reaction to offence, real or imagined. So that a mere change in speech, dress and superficial manners could not have transformed her into a lady. Like Kate, she too has to learn self – control and consideration for others. Once she has successfully made all the changes necessary to transform her into a woman who can pass for a duchess, Eliza herself recognizes that the acquiring of self-restraint is by far the most important of these changes. She speaks slightingly of Higgin's accomplishment in teaching her to speak correctly maintaining that *"it was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it"* (Act: V), and tells Pickering that *"real education"* comes from him because he has provided her with the example of self – restraint and consideration for others:

> *"You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there"*. (Act: V).

This speech expresses a direct repudiation of the method by which Shakespeare allows Petruchio to "tame" Kate, because it asserts that the example of bad tempered, uncontrolled behaviour can only bring about behaviour of the same kind in the learner, not a change to sweet - tempered reasonableness such as Kate exhibits. Furthermore, as Eliza continues her indirect attack on Higgins' method through her praise of Pickering's treatment of her, she insists to Pickering that the real beginning of her transformation comes with *"Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self – respect for me"* (Act: V). This statement is a criticism of Higgins, who calls her *"Eliza"* from the first – that is, when he is not calling her this *"this baggage"*, *"presumptuous insect"* or the like - but it also recalls the fact that Petruchio, on first meeting Kate, calls her *"Kate"*, though, except for her sister, her family and acquaintances all call her by the more formal *"Katherina"* or *"Katherine"*. In addition, Kate herself rebukes Petruchio for calling her "Kate", asserting that *"they call me Katherine that do talk of me"*, whereupon he replies with a speech in which he uses the name "Kate" eleven times in six lines:

> *You lie, in faith, for you are called Plain Kate,*
> *And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst,*
> *But Kate, the Prettiest Kate in Christendom,*
> *Kate of Kate – Hall, my super dainty Kate,*
> *For dainties are all Kates – and therefore, Kate,*
> *Take this of me, Kate of my consolation:*
> (*The Taming of the Shrew*, Act : II Sc : I)

This perverse insistence on using the familiar informal name which she has asked him not to paralleled in *Pygmalion* as well. Eliza requests Higgins to call her *"Miss Dolittle:"* to which the latter replies: *"I'll see you damned first"* (Act: V pg: 122) Thus Eliza criticises Higgins' method of dealing with her which is actually an indirect criticism of Petruchio's way of handling Kate.

Moreover, a repudiation of physical abuse as a means of dominating a woman's spirit is implied by the fact that in *Pygmalion* physical abuse plays no part in transforming Eliza, but instead appears in the play solely as the feeble, ineffectual and unintentional response of Higgins to Eliza's attempt to free herself from his domination. When Eliza realizes that Higgins will never treat her as she wants to be treated, she starts searching desperately for some means by which she can free herself from dependence on him. She hits on the idea of becoming an assistant to a teacher of phonetics whom Higgins considers a quack. On hearing this, Higgins lays hands on her to strike her, but is however deterred from doing so due to her spirit of non – resistance. Thus instead of being the means to domination, as it is in *The Taming of the Shrew*, in *Pygmalion* the resort to physical abuse is an admission of defeat, a reaction of frustrated rage for the failure to dominate.

In addition to these differences in the method by which the transformation of the woman is achieved, the other major differences in the working out of the plot by the two playwrights are in the final attitudes of the teacher and the learner to one another Kate's final attitude to Petruchio is shown not only by her instant obedience to him, but also by the speech which Shaw Criticized as "degrading", a speech in which she says that in a marriage the husband is the "Lord", "King", "Governor", "Keeper", "Head" and "Sovereign" of the wife and wide owes the husband "such duty as the subject owes the princes", and in which she consequently urges her sister – in – law to follow her example by placing their hands below their husbands' fee as a token of their willingness to obey their husbands. Eliza's final attitude to Higgins is the direct opposite of Kate's to Petruchio. She exults in having achieved her freedom from his domination:

> *Aha! That's done you, Henry Higgins, it has. Now I don't care that (snapping her fingers) for your bullying and your big talk.…oh, when I think of myself crawling under your feet and being trampled on and called names, when all the time I had only to lift up my finger to be as good as you, I could just kick myself.* (Act: V)

Certainly, at the conclusion of *Pygmalion*, there is a deliberate repudiation of the idea of male dominance over the female which underlines the theme of *The Taming of the Shrew.* Higgins has never consciously desired to make Eliza subservient to him, where as Petruchio has, of course, openly declared that the whole purpose of his strange and violent behaviour is to make Kate subservient to him. Indeed, Higgins brands the conventionally expected acts of subservience on the part of women toward men as "Commercialism", attempts to buy affection. After Eliza has declared her independence of Higgins, he says:

> *You damned impudent slut, you! But its better than sniveling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it?….. By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you;and I have. I like you like this.* (Act : V)

At the conclusion of *Pygmalion*, both Eliza and Higgins reject the concept of male dominance over women, a concept which is not only supported but actually exalted by the conclusion of *The Taming of the Shrew*. In *The Taming of the Shrew* Shakespeare, was, of course, supporting the conventional morality of his own day, and in rejecting this concept in *Pygmalion* Shaw was rejecting the conventional morality, of his own day and substituting it by an original view of morality. Thus Shaw clearly used his play not only to repudiate the male chauvinism of his day and Shakespeare's and to support women's liberation, a cause for which he was an early pioneer, but also to voice a criticism which was fundamental to all Shaw's complaints about Shakespeare- that Shakespeare failed to create and espouse an original morality in opposition to the conventional morality of his time.

Character Study of Eliza Doolittle

Dramatically, *Pygmalion* repeats patterns and techniques that Shaw used consistently in his earlier plays. He delighted in irony, especially in denying audience expectations by inverting material. A *Pygmalion* who does not marry his creation is a rather mild departure from the expected, compared to may previous Shavian ironies, such as a hero who retreats, a minister who turns revolutionary, a world conqueror who abhors violence, a Don Juan who is pursued by a women, and a doctor who kills. Eliza also is typical of many of Shaw's female characters. By leaving Higgins, she joins a long line of Shavian women who reject marriage to likely candidates.

The most obvious mythic source is underlined by the title. Henry Higgin's re–creation of Eliza Doolittle parallels many details of the Greek myth in which an artist, Pygmalion, disenchanted with the women around him, sculpts a statue of his ideal woman. The artist falls in love with his own creation and prays to Aphrodite to give his ivory maiden life. When the lover's plea is answered, Pygmalion marries his creation. Along with the Greek myth, Shaw's *Pygmalion* also contains many elements of the Cinderella folk tale. Just as the poor and mistreated Cinderella becomes a princess through the intervention of her fairy god - mother, Shaw's flower girl is elevated briefly into the aristocracy and permanently into the middle class.

A critical difference between these stories and Shaw's play is that Eliza does not marry Henry Higgins at the end of the play, nor does she continue to live with him as the servant, secretary and protégée the roles Higgins wants her to play. In the last scene, Eliza announces that she wants more out of life than mere companionship. Higgins offers her, and she threatens to marry Freddy Hill. Remembering, at last subconsciously, that the Pygmalion myth and the Cinderella folk tale end in the marriage of the principal characters, audiences expect Shaw to end his play similarly. Despite the expectations of its audiences, Shaw's intention for the ending of *Pygmalion* is quite clear. Realistically, as Shaw explains in the epilogue, Eliza cannot marry Higgins. True, they are both very charming, very bright and very strong characters who engage our affection and administration; and the match making part in all of us wants to see these two likeable personalities joined in lasting connubial bliss. But common sense should tell us otherwise. Higgins, after all, is a confirmed bachelor who can love only one woman, his mother. He wants her independence and his work. A compromise between these strong characters is a unlikely as it is undesirable.

Shaw's story, simply stated, portrays an expert linguist who accepts a challenge to re–create a poor, uneducated young woman by teaching her how to speak properly. Linguistic knowledge and skills are the great weapons which Higgins used to defeat evil and improve society. When he first meets Eliza, he notes that her Kerbstone English will keep her in the gutter. She is in the clutches of the monster of poverty, which was to Shaw the greatest modern demon. Higgins cannot kill this monster, but he can use his power to free Eliza from its grip. Just as the classical hero received help from gods, friends and benevolent spirits, the Shavian hero receives necessary assistance from his mother and from Colonel Pickering. Higgins supplies the technical skill and the discipline, but his assistants give Eliza the necessary qualities of common sense and humanity.

The most satisfying mythic understanding at the ending of the play does not come from an examination of Higgins as hero of *Pygmalion* as romance. Although the play is the story of a modern hero with modern powers, it is likewise the story of a modern hero with modern powers, a story not only of liberation but also of transformation.

Eliza begins the play as a poor flower girl who is ignored by Freddy Hill and family and is easily intimated by Higgins. With much work and the help of Higgins and company she begins to change. Her success at the Embassy Ball marks one stage in her growth, but it is hardly the climax or the great victory that the film – makers would have us believe. It is after the ball that Eliza shows her new powers: She has charm enough to keep a man, who in Act I never noticed her, at a constant vigil near her doorstep, and she has money enough to secure a cab to drive about through out the night, an experience that is impossible for the flower girl. Most importantly, Eliza shows her new strength and independence when she walks out on Higgins, a decision that she confirms in the final scene. Here Eliza explains to Higgins that she does not want to live in his house and be treated as a maid or a personal secretary. She does not wanted to be treated as an equal, as *"one of the boys"*, the way Higgins treats everyone he respects. She has no interest in the *"higher life"*. Eliza does want *"a little kindness"*, the simple love and affection that only Freddy Hill can supply. This revelation upsets Higgins, who tries to bully Eliza into submission. At this point, the real climax of the play, Eliza shows that she is no longer the flower girl who was tempted by chocolates or intimidated by threats. Announcing that she is as good as he is, that she has her own dreams and ideas, Eliza firmly establishes her independence. Higgins himself is forced to admit that she can make it without him that he will miss her. He is forced to admit that she is finally a total person – her transformation is complete. The core of the *Pygmalion* myth and the Cinderella folk tale is the transformation, not the marriage; while Shaw does not use his sources as a prescription of his plot, he does preserve the fundamental pattern common to both stories. In this sense, he does not invert myths so much as he reveals them.

The reappearance of Alfred Doolittle in the last act of *Pygmalion* further reinforces that marriage is not the main emphasis of the play, but transformation. The dustman too has been transformed with the help of Higgins. The poor worker with few obligations has become the middle – class between with many responsibilities. His impending marriage, unimportant in itself, is another indication of the drastic change in his life style. Doolittle, himself is basically the same characters: his change is largely economic. In contrast, Eliza's

change is largely spiritual: she is a new person inside out. Shaw thus gave the first part of the play to Higgins but reserved the last for Eliza. She was not the reward for the hero, but a women equal to the hero. The flower girl was changed into a strong and independent woman, and although we may respect and applaud Higgins' powers, in the end the triumph is Eliza's. Depicted as emerging from poor people in the slums, she is a representative of the New Woman in Shavian sense and joins the ranks of the other strong female characters such as Vivie Warren, Candida Morell, Ann Whitefield and Barbara Undershaft in standing up to Higgins and taking an active role in deciding her own destiny.

Pygmalion also serves another purpose- it preaches the importance of the education of women. It is no doubt the most out spoken of Shaw's plays as concerns women's right to have an education and to become independent human beings. A woman must have the right to choose her own career and should never be a mere appendage to a man; she must be treated as a person with a soul and not as a slave and slipper – fetcher, trod upon as dirt and abused in bad language by a man with an uncontrolled tempered. Eliza realizes that she must get some education, but what in reality were the chances of education for Eliza and for those like her? A poor girl in the slums did not get more than a minimum of the elementary education at the time when Shaw was writing the play. Through the Education Act of 1870, attendance at elementary school was made compulsory. Still there were many children who either did not go to or spent a very short time at school, because of the poverty of their families. There was a great difference between the standard of teaching and subjects taught at schools that poor children attended and those of primary and secondary schools attended by children of wealthy parents. This was roughly the situation for poor girls as it existed when Shaw wrote *Pygmalion.* For all its farcical entertainment, its didactic purpose is evident: *Pygmalion* provides the climax of Shaw's pleading in his plays for the education of women.

The interaction and conflicts of emotions is one of the most suitable subjects for drama. But Bernard Shaw is never at home in the region of affections and emotions and he relegates the discussion of this all important subject to a postscript. In the drama, the professor is shown only as a specialist in phonetics with an utter insensibility to all kinds of deep emotions. He declares that he does not like young women on the ground that they have an irresistible rival in his mother, but this idea has not been dramatized. Shaw has not shown how the specifically sexual impulses aroused by a girl like Eliza conflict with the noble idealism with which old Mrs. Higgins inspires her son. The stormy protest of Eliza against Higgins' callousness and the tempestuous search of the professor have, according to Shaw, no deep emotional background. They like each other, they looked after each other, they grew accustomed to each other, they are pleasant to each other, but they do not fall in love. There is no doubt that Eliza was deeply moved when she left the Professor's place and it is equally certain that Higgins was in a feverish excitement when he went out in search of her. Shaw here creates a situation charged with deep emotional possibilities, but as he has a distaste for emotions, he stops to remind us that it is only a desire for a little kindness or a little fun that is at the root of the whole affair. The explanation however is totally inadequate. A dispassionate study of the drama suggest that she chooses Freddy Hill only because she cannot get Henry Higgins. Indeed, she begins talking about Freddy only after the estrangement from Professor Higgins is complete. When Eliza finds that a little kindness is not enough to make life worth living, she leaves the Professor for the *'weak and poor'* Freddy Hill. Old Mrs. Higgins who knows mush about women, says that it would have been all right, if he (Professor Higgins) had thanked her, petted her, and told her how splendid she had been. However, Eliza's emotions are mush deeper than a mere desire for a little petting, and when she tells Higgins that she would not marry him even if he had asked her, as she is not a coquette; neither does she announce a well considered decision. It is only when the Professor has made the insulting proposal that she should marry Colonel Pickering that she looks fiercely round at him and says, *"I would not marry you if you asked me; and you are nearer my age than what he is"* (Act: V). This decision is a part of her rebellion against the tutelage of a professor who has looked upon her only as his "master piece".

At the outset Eliza has neither a 'flower girl style' nor a 'cockney style'. Infact she has no style at all. She merely makes vernacular noises to indicate her wants and fears. Through Higgins she acquires a style too bloodless and too correct. Yet her will and spirit enhance her, override her unnatural perfection of manner. Interestingly enough, what Eliza's self – determining will seeks, is not in the service of the Life Force but is just a flower shop. Shaw never suggests that the shop is only a steeping – stone to a husband. The tests she undergoes are means to a bourgeois not a creative evolutionary end, and a husband is more or less an after thought. In standing up to Higgins and in winning the support of his mother she asserts that she has ends of her own for which Higgins' ends are only means. But Eliza's self definition as lady in flower shop is common place and what makes her appealing is her resolve to define herself at all in such circumstances. Shaw implies that the important thing is to get people to treat you as you wish to be treated and this Eliza achieves.

Eliza is Shaw's own dream, not, of course, of a girl he wished to obtain, but of the relation between the individual personality and society as a whole. Shaw's dream concerned the superficiality of social distinctions and conventional honours. He saw advancement in society as mainly a matter of luck, knavery, posturing, relentless propagations of one's ownself and, often enough, acquired some variety of elegance. The last is Eliza's chief or only method. More appropriately we ought to bear in mind that the exquisite shape of Galatea emerged from a shapeless chunk of ivory. Thus the development of Eliza rests upon Shaw's assumption that craft or technique is almost all the battle. Eliza marries Freddy Hill on the convincing grounds that Higgins is not *'biologically attractive to a degree that overwhelms all her other instincts'* (Sequel). She marries the weak and pursuable Freddy, for life with Higgins would be a weary struggle.

The comic and optimistic machinery of *Pygmalion* revolves around the assumption that the whole personality may be assimilated to manners (as represented through Eliza). And that was very nearly Shaw's own solemn belief. Shaw was exceptionally aware of many of the problems a real young women of Eliza's class would face and what sort of person she would be before an actual teacher began his work. Shaw's Eliza is a filthy smelling creature who has slept in the same set of underclothes for long enough. Her *'Lisson Grove accent'* is nearly impenetrable and her one room is a slum. She is illegitimate and her father tries to sell her at the slightest opportunity. It is characteristic of her to jump to the conclusion in Act I, that Higgins is a police spy and that he throws money

at her because he is drunk. She is distrustful, untrustworthy and generally low in character as in social station. If anything, Eliza is a rather prudish girl. The type of women who rose in English society at the turn of the century, did so just not by additional means like Eliza's, but by other amoral:

> ……*She has a hat with three ostrich feathers, orange, sky – blue and red. She has a nearly clean apron and the shoddy coat has been tidied a little.* (Act : II).

She is not an actress, a scholar, a fortune hunter or at this early stage, a business woman. She achieves her ends exclusively by learning pronunciation, grammar, etiquette and by *dressing – up*. The process is a matter of changing or acquiring manners, and that indeed was Shaw's whole point.

The Shavian woman is a paradox by herself. If she is to fulfill her primary duty, according to the life force theory, she has to pursuer man and has to depend on him at last for serological reasons, whereas Shaw would very much prefer woman to be independent of man socially and economically. Whereas Shavian women like Vivie Warren, Eliza Doolittle and Joan are independent, women like Blanche, Raina, Gloria and Ann Whitefield are pursuing women fulfilling the dictates of the Life Force. As an artist, Shaw has created both types of women as individuals, making use of his acute observation and fertile imagination. Though Eliza Doolittle is depicted by Shaw as an independent woman, she is not educated like Vivie Warren. The resemblance in social background for both the girls, however, is striking. Neither Vivie nor her mother knows who Vivie's father is, while Eliza's parents were never married. While Vivie is discussed as an institution child, Eliza has to be discussed as an orphan, since her drunken father deserts her. While Vivie feels that she and her mother belong to two different worlds, Eliza and Alfred Doolittle move into two different worlds, during the course of the play.

Eliza Doolittle, being a typical example of Shavian "independent woman" thrives and improves herself against odds. The flower girl meets Higgins with the intention of learning pronunciation so that she might start a flower shop. She being an intelligent girl, picks up not only pronunciation but also manners and a refined world. Shaw effectively brings out the contrast between the two positions of Eliza through stage directions and her style of language:

> *THE FLOWER GIRL (picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket): Theres menners f yer! Te –*
> *oo banches o voylets into the mad.*…… (Act: I)

While the style of speech reveals Eliza's social position of a flower girl, the stage direction reveals her poverty.

While Eliza is thankful to Higgins for having taught her phonetics, she is all gratitude for Pickering for having always treated her like a lady. She has by now acquired a fine sensibility and a sense of independence. She tells Pickering how she feels after his transformation; in a refined style which itself is a change:

> ……*the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.* (Act : V)

Humiliated by line lack of appreciation on the part of Higgins, after having been presented as a lady, Eliza declares that she can do without him. Her education is complete and she has acquired intellectual independence which is symbolically marked by her hurling slippers at Higgins. As the play progresses, we can see gradual growth of Eliza's character and personality. In the first act we see the results of her poverty – her coat is shoddy, her shoes worn out, and her filthy hat may never have been cleaned at all. Her no' of dressing up for a special occasion, we see in the costume description for Act II consists of wearing cheap, gaudy accessories and cleaning up only somewhat:

> ……*She has a hat with three ostrich feathers, orange, sky – blue and red. She has a nearly clean apron and the shoddy coat has been tidied a little.* (Act : II)

During the play, however, she learns not only directions but dress and deportment, and her later cleanliness is all the more striking because of the early dirtiness. It is crucial that Eliza has acquired a sense of independence at the end of the play, for her transformation is now complete. She has now a mind of her own and can take decision independently.

Sonja Lorichs, in her work *The Unwomanly Woman in Bernard Shaw* fairly sums up Eliza's character: *"In Eliza, Shaw created a modern, energetic and enterprising woman, intelligent and receptive, eager to learn and be educated for a career of her own. She intends not to be a man, but his companion and loving wife…. Thus she becomes one of Shaw's most successful stage characters, combining some of the best qualities of an Unwomanly Woman with a Womanly Woman's emotional temperament and sensibility"*.

Though its background is phonetics, the main theme of *Pygmalion* is human relations; in particular, love, as all about a philosopher- scientist who creates an image that falls in love with him, and what to him is a scientific experiment later turns out to be an exercise in the natural affection of the human heart. The play is meant to speak for itself; and not without significance that Shaw wrote one of his shortest prefaces to it; but he also wrote a fairly long epilogue containing a sequel, as though the play were incomplete. Its plot is simplicity itself, but its theme is the creative element and the bones of the plot are well clothed and moved by intelligence personified chiefly through Professor Higgins and Eliz Doolittle. Shaw's *Pygmalion* does indeed create (or recreate) a women. But the essential sign of her coming to life is that she is no longer a doll like projection of her creator's will. Indeed, in the middle of the play Eliza is presented as somewhat a docile person. Her movement upwards in the social scale has involved not an increase but a diminution of freedom. In that respect her career is like that of Doolittle, whose social ascent leads to unwelcome imprisonment:

> *"who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy, I was free"*, he complains. (Act: V)

In Eliza's case is not so much the imprisonment of class, but imprisonment by her 'creation' from which she needs to escape. Her words closely echo Doolittle's:

> *"Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give It up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes"*. (Act: V)

But at the end of the play Eliza has gained self ownership and freedom of choice. *"I'm not afraid of you, and can do without you"* (Act: V). Her defiance of Higgins elicits from him the wondering comments:

> *"By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have ……. Five minutes ago you were like a millstone round my neck. Now you are a tower of strength: a consort battleship"*. (Act: V)

Thus *Pygmalion* is a play not about the growth of love between master and pupil, but about the pupil's regaining, through struggle, of her identity and independence.

The story of *Pygmalion*, on the face of it was that of an artist who turns a live girl into a work of art, and then by a considerable effort of self control refrains from falling in love with her! Like all good comedies, it is full of criticism of life; in this case criticism of social barriers and distinctions, of the disinterested yet ferocious egotism of artists, of genteel standards, of the disadvantages of responsibility, of the contrast between man's sense of values and women's, and of the complexity and misunderstanding which a difference of sex introduces into human relations, however passionately one of the two may resolve to sink the 'He' and 'She'. During the course of the play, light (and some times it is a penetrating ray indeed) - is thrown into all these above mentioned aspects of life.

Acts II, III and IV, during which Eliza was being moulded into a lady, were not the miracle, but merely the chipping of the statue itself from the rough block. But in Act V she gets a soul and therefore the play is really over. The last act, crucial as it is, is not a love scene. Pygmalion – Higgins like other Shavian protagonists, is running away from passion, last the floods of irrational emotion should be released in himself… The experiment is over; it has been a triumph of his art as a professor of phonetics; Eliza has passed through the stage of talking like a flower girl with a mechanical meticulous pronunciation (Act III); she has became, both in the matter as well as the manner of her conversation, indistinguishable from a born lady; Higgins has won his wager. Eliza had run away from him because she has found his tyranny intolerable and is hurt by his total disregard for her as a human being with feelings (Act IV). All along she had shown a spaniel like docility and gratitude which he had never thought of recognizing. He had fagged her about right and left. She had became useful, almost necessary to him in practical ways; but the more she tried to please him, the more harshly impersonal he became. But when she ran away, Higgins was frantic to get her back. The question is – on what terms? He would not offer her anything more than he gave her before and did not understand first that she only wanted to be treated like a human being. Then she turned on him; threatened to his dismay to go off to his rival with all secrets of his art. In short, Eliza manages to shake him off and stands her own feet as an independent human being. The statue has became alive; during six months hard training she had acquired the outward signs of self-respect, but she never had the inward reality till this moment. Henceforth she is a person he can reckon upon, and his fear disappears. It is at that point Eliza Doolittle becames a 'New Woman', an independent- minded Shavian Heroine.

Conclusion

Shaw's Eliza-Galatea appears before the readers as astonishingly real character. With her instability of emotion, vacillations, changes of mind and inconsequence of thought, this charming Shavian heroine has successfully impressed the readers for several decades in the past will continue to do so in the many more years to come.

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