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Pygmalion: Problems and Emotions Critical View

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ABSTRACT

One of the well-known plays of George Bernard Shaw is Pygmalion. Eliza's Cockney vernacular creates crisis in her life. Throes and sufferings of Eliza's emunciation and mostly the love of Eliza was not familiar by Higgins are dealt by Shaw's Pygmalion. One can describe Pygmalion as a feeling of love but it is noteworthy that the major part of it revolves around problems, about love, class prejudice and finally results in a unhappy ending. The rude Higgins divests the love of Eliza, a poor flower girl. Shaw called this play as 'romance' but it is actually a trouble play. The problem of education and the problem of the sounds of the English Literature are presented in the play.

Keywords: Cockney, throes, prejudice etc.

INTRODUCTION

According to A.C. Ward, the problem of education is a world problem. The horizon of a student is widened by Education which gives him scholar, ethical and devout enlightenment. He gets a higher level of thinking and feeling. And then the teacher leaves him free to experience as he has become sophisticated and has higher opportunity from life. He is unable to return to his old life and remain happy. Needs and ambitions which cannot be fulfilled are developed by him. Irritation and restlessness is the final outcome of it. The same happens in the life Eliza. Due to Higgins teaching her ways to speak correctly; and Pickering's training her to move and perform in a refined manner, her mind advances and her taste is refined. And after that, the teachers leave her free to chase her path of life on her own. She is unable to go back to her old life, and on the other hand she is not established in the higher society for which her teachers have trained her. Confused and unhappy. Finally, "What have you made me fit for?" She asks. She was happy in her unawareness and dirt. Education and improvement have made her dissatisfied. She tells her teacher, "You never thought of the nuisance it would make for me." In reply Higgins says, "Would the world ever have been made if its Maker had been afraid of making trouble?" Teachers who teach students from the lower stratum of society face this problem predominantly. The sounds of the English language are the second problem accessible in the play. The language of Shakespeare and Milton i.e. English Shaw possess great love and esteem. The harsh manner in which many Englishmen spoke the language disappoints him. The inexpert people of London, for example, do not open their mouths and mispronounce all the words. This was the cockney language of Eliza. People mispronounce English words because of the substandard English alphabet in which the letters do not stand for explicit sounds. Dissimilar sounds in different words are produced by the same letters. The English spellings are very confusing. As a result only men and women of the higher classes, who have been learned in good Schools and universities, can speak and write correct English. If a person tries to speak a word as it is written he is bound to be wrong. The English people are very familiar to the way in which a person speaks the language. A person who is able to speak with the correct intonation and elocution he is considered high classes. Shaw came to conclusion that a person is hypothetical as to belong to the higher classes because of his accent and intonation and not because of any essential merit or worth. Eliza was considered "low class" because she spoke the cockney dialect. The designer flower-shops were unwilling to employ her. But after she has been trained to speak correctly, this illegitimate low class girl is regarded as a princess. If, the glaring disparities between different classes will fade away if the problem of words is solved. Shaw opined that the English alphabet should be made phonetic. Each letter or symbol should stand for a specific sound. If that is applied in practical everyone will be able to pronounce English words appropriately and class distinctions based on language will vanish permanently. Spelling reform is also advocated by him. The world problem of education which leads to dissatisfaction, and the British problem of the sounds of English which leads to class distinctions the two problems accessible in Pygmalion.



HANDLING OF EMOTIONS IN PYGMALION

The main theme of Pygmalion is the conversation of emotion. He chose the story in which Pygmalion finally marries his creation, Galatea. He wanted depict it as a wrong understanding of human emotions. A creator is always unable to love and carry his own establishment. The Pygmalion can live in close companionship with his Galatea but cannot have any sexual feeling for her. Shaw's own story has incredible romantic possibilities. Higgins picks up a flower-girl and works hard with all his labour and art to transform her into a Duchess. He is a bachelor and a phonetician, whereas, she is youthful, good-looking, intellectual and hard-working. She responds wonderfully to his teaching. It is a fact that she has a better ear for sounds than him. He appreciates her accessibility and her talent. They live with understanding and within six months he becomes wholly dependent on her for his clothes and his activities. The probability was that he should have fallen in love with her as per human nature. He is awfully upset after she leaves the house, and he along with Pickering run about to find her and even calls the police. At his mother's place he wanders about frantically and says, "I cannot find anything. I do not know what arrangements I have." And then he says vigorously, "But we want to find her." Shaw does not realize the feelings of his own characters, otherwise he should have tacit that Higgins was in love with Eliza and the play should have ended with their marriage. That would have been the correct ending of the play. But Shaw suspected the emotions and had a fear of happy endings. That is why he ends the play in a doubtful anticlimax. Eliza, after the Ambassador's Party residential a personality of her own, and did not act as an unresponsive plaything of Shaw. Her designer did not recognize her feelings at all. She in aggressive revolt against the unemotional, dehumanized position of Higgins for Shaw it was because she wanted gentleness petting and esteem is wholly wrong. She was in love with Higgins. Shaw forces Higgins not to marry her only because of that she marries Freddy. Shaw makes much of her declaration to Higgins, "I would not marry you if you asked me." It must be noted that she said this furiously after he had made the insulting proposal that she should marry Pickering. The Life Force in her impel her to marry Higgins. But as she could not have him, she married Freddy who was weak and helpless and had no temperament. In his „Sequel" Shaw explained the reasons of Higgins's behaviour of not paying attention by young girls and why Eliza decided that Higgins would not do as a husband. He have to explain this Perhaps because he realized himself that the readers and audiences would consider the end of the play as implausible and so he had to explain to them why the events took this turn. We come to the conclusion that the anti-sentimental theories of Shaw overpowered the dramatist in him and forced him to end the plays in an unromantic anxious atmosphere. As A.C. Ward has said, "In his determination to make the romance unromantic, Shaw has twisted Pygmalion from what would have been, by the principles of drama, its natural end."

THE PROBLEMATIC PLAY

By nature Shaw was apprehensive of the emotions. Though, he called this Play Pygmalion but he firm that his play must not end according to the Pygmalion Galatea story. He did not wish to end with the marriage of Higgins and Eliza. The characters that he shaped started behaving in a way different from his planning. The creations of great dramatists develop a life and individuality of their own. They sometimes decline to act in the way the dramatist wishes them to behave; the readers start sensation that it is improbable if he forces an action on them. The same thing happens to Eliza after the Ambassador's Party. She had lived with Higgins for six months. He had imparted his best training to her and was very satisfied of her achievements. Eliza had a prediction in her mind that after she had won his bet, he would propose to her. But after the party he only thanked God that it was every one over. For him it had been only an „experiment". Her feelings and her future was none of my business. That is why she reacted most aggressively and threw his slippers on his face; she shocked him by returning the jewels and even the ring and left the house. If she had not met Freddy she would have jumped into the river and have ended her life. She was moved so tremendously. Shaw's illumination in the mouth of Mrs. Higgins is that she would have been happy if Higgins and Pickering had thanked her, petted her and told her how impressive she was at the party. But this is suspicious. She anticipated love and not kindness. Shaw, as the anti-sentimentalist, would not accept this. It is true that Eliza tells Higgins, "I would not marry you even if you proposed to me." She says she is surprised at his audacity in suggesting that she should marry Pickering. Shaw's consideration that she felt from heart that she should not marry Higgins, do not appear probable in the play. Audience can see in the play that she

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does not think of marrying Freddy till that inevitable night. Only after she becomes sure that Higgins would never marry her, she considers about Freddy who had been in love with her for a long time. About Freddy she says, "And if he is feeble and unfortunate and wants me, maybe he would make me happier than my betters that bully me and do not want me." So it is natural that as Higgins bullies her and does not want her then she wants to marry Freddy. Shaw has made his character unlikely by forcing his anti-sentimental theory on Higgins. A young professor should not fall in love with a guiltless, brilliant and good-looking young girl with whom he has lived on terms of familiarity for six months seems absurd. Though Shaw calls him a life-giving professor of phonetics, he makes him a lifeless statue because of his attitude.

Moreover there is a storm in Wimpole Street at the time when it is exposed that Eliza has bolted. If Shaw had not prohibited him Higgins would have confirmed his love for Eliza when she was found.

CONCLUSION

Play should have been an Eliza- Higgins romance judging from the situations and the nature of the characters the natural end of this. It would have been a better match than that between Eliza and Freddy. He has perverted the play and spoiled it in his purpose to make the romance unromantic. The problems and emotions in Pygmalion made this play romantic and unromantic tragic end.

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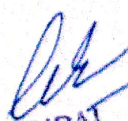
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