

CLASS STRUGGLE AS A REACTION TOWARD THE SOCIAL CONDITION IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY AS REFLECTED IN GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'S *PYGMALION*

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Abstract

Class struggle is a collective reaction of the workers toward the inhumane treatments applied by the capitalists. The collectiveness creates group awareness of the workers as an exploited 'class'. This awareness, in turn, stimulates class struggle to oppose the capitalists' pressure and exploitation. Pygmalion – a play of five acts written by George Bernard Shaw – is considered as one of the literary pieces of the early twentieth century that portrays the social condition of British society at the era when capitalism reached its peak. Shaw himself is a socialist who supports the working class struggle through propaganda, public lectures, critical essays, and literary works to attack human exploitation in industrial environment. This is a qualitative research using Marxist criticism which is theorized by various scholars to analyze the struggle of Liza Doolittle – the main character in Pygmalion – as the portrait of the unstoppable struggle of the working class to have their rights which are deliberately ignored by the capitalists. This theory is considered as the most appropriate instrument to analyze Shaw's masterpiece, Pygmalion, since Shaw himself is a well-known British socialist who strive for the social reform indicated by the presence of democracy, the admission of human rights, the just distribution of social welfare, and the reasonable respect to individual freedom. This research found that the social condition in England in the end of 19th century to the early 20th century was mostly affected by the practice of human exploitation in industrial environment. This conditions caused dehumanization and serious poverty suffered by the working class. Class struggle, then, became a spirit that generated the laborers to free themselves from poverty, to release them from the capitalists' oppression, and to gain the admission that they are equal with other human beings in society.

Keywords: *Class Struggle, Capitalist Society, Pygmalion.*

INTRODUCTION

This research discusses class struggle as the reaction of the working class to oppose the oppression done by the capitalist in the end of Industrial Revolution era. Eric Hobsbawm, in the introduction chapter for Frederick Engels' book entitled *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Engels, 1979:12-13), states that actually not all workers are concerned to the struggle to get better condition in life. Regarding to the ways of facing the bad situations in the factory, Hobsbawm divides the workers into three main groups. The first group succumbs to the bad treatment of the factory owner – allowing themselves to be dehumanized. The second group submits passively to their fate and exists as best they can as respectable law-abiding citizens, take no interest in public affairs and thus actually help the middle class to tighten their chains which bind the workers. Finally, the third group is the workers who have real and strong concern to humanity and dignity, who are to be found in the fight against the bourgeoisie in labor movement.

Class struggle which is discussed in this paper is closely related to the struggle of the third group of working class mentioned by Hobsbawm above depicted in the struggle of the main character of Pygmalion, Eliza Doolittle, to fight for better life in accordance with the social conditions she faces. It is assumed that Eliza's reaction to the exploitation and the despotic treatment of Professor Higgins is the portrait of the struggle of the third group of working class due to the class antagonistic conflict between the capitalist and the laborers.

The capitalist-laborer antagonism that is considered as the basis of the modern class struggle is the main casual factor of the many conflicts occurred in British society in the end of 19th to the early 20th century in England.

Pygmalion pictures the class conflict between the capitalist vs. the workers and satirizes the social ignorance in which the labor regulations made by the ruling class and the political economy practiced by the capitalist do not meet with the needs and the aspirations of the working class. Shaw criticizes the effort that is meant to help the workers, yet even in fact, creates a new sort of exploitation. The writer found that class struggle reflected in *Pygmalion* is closely related to the collective efforts of the laborers to oppose the capitalist oppression and domination, and to abolish the class distinction.

It is obvious that the conflict in the drama is between Eliza and Higgins. Basically, it is a kind of domestic conflict between the professor and his student but since the conflict is brought to light due to human exploitation practiced by a man of a higher social class to a girl of lower social class, the writer strongly insists that the conflict symbolizes the class antagonism between the capital holding class and the working class. Eliza voices the struggle that is usually strived by the laborers; that is the struggle to oppose the capitalist oppression and the struggle to be treated equally as human beings.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The conflict that occurs in capitalist society is caused by class antagonism, human exploitation, dehumanization, and poverty. This conditions lead the struggle of the working class becomes a class conflict with the capital holding class (Barry, 1995:156-157). It is the conflict between the oppressed class who experiences the exploitation versus the oppressor class who practices the exploitation and exercises power. The oppressed class does the struggle to be free from the social and economic evils (class distinction, human exploitation, dehumanization and poverty), while the oppressor class struggles to achieve the highest profit and to accumulate as much surplus values as they can.

Draper (1978, 42) states, "The working class moves toward class struggle insofar as capitalism fails to satisfy its economic and social needs and aspirations. There is no evidence that workers like to struggle anymore than anyone else; the evidence is that capitalism compels and accustoms them to do so." This quotation shows that it is the capitalists who cause the working class to do class struggle since they do not have any concern to treat the workers humanely and to satisfy the workers' economic and social needs. As far as the capitalism exists, it is assumed that the implementation of low wage and long working hours will remain at the station that gives economic benefits mostly to the capital holding class only. Thus, class struggle is an effort to enforce the capitalists to impose the average rate of wage to support the workers to live sufficiently.

Citing Engels' statement, Draper (1978, 95) writes that the average rate of wages is equal to the sum of necessities sufficient to keep up the race of workmen in a certain country according to the standard of life habitual in that country. That standard of life may be very different for different classes of workmen. The great merit of Trade Unions, in their struggle to keep up the rate of wages and to reduce working hours, is that they tend to keep up and to raise the standard of life ... The law of wages, then, is not one which draws a hard and fast line. It is not inexorable with certain limits. There is at every time for every trade certain latitude within which the rate of wages may be modified by the results of the struggle between the two contending parties.

The application of capitalist system in industrial environment has inevitably 'produced' – instead of material goods – the new poor slaves and put them into a social hell in which they are beaten, fined, underpaid, starved, left to live in slums, and neglected by the capitalists who regard them as object and not as man, as labor or hands and not as

human beings. Capitalists, supported by bourgeois law, impose their factory discipline, fine the workers and cause some of them to be imprisoned. Very often, the conflict between the capitalist and the workers due to the discipline imposed by the capitalist is brought to the court. Unfortunately, the court always stands on the capitalist's side.

Based on the suffering encountered by the workers, the idea that society should be ruled by the working class and the laboring masses in its ideals to establish a workers' state becomes the cornerstone of worker movement. Its goal is the abolition of private property in the major means of production and an end to the exploitation of labor for private profit. The breaking down of the bourgeoisie who possesses the private property— as the goal of class struggle —can be achieved, Berberoglu, (1994: 46-48) argues, only by the proletariat becoming the ruling class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organizing all the working and exploited people for the new economic system. In this context, then, the proletarian state has a dual role to play: to break the resistance of its class enemies (the capitalists), and to protect the revolution and begin the process of socialist construction. The class character of the new state under socialism takes on a new form and content. This situation directs the capitalists in a crisis of power, and this crisis is not just understood as a breakdown of capitalism but is seen rather as the moment of class struggle when working class self activity undermines capitalist control.

As one of the most respected and prolific figures in the socialism movement, Shaw basically supports the idea of class struggle taught by Marx and Engels, but there is a principle difference between Marx's class struggle with that of Shaw. Marx allows a revolutionary struggle through two arms of class struggle as asserted by Draper (1978, 125) that in the language of the labour movement, it became standard to speak of the trade unions as the economic arm of the working class, the proletarian party as the political arm. In opposing to the way of Marx's class struggle, Shaw chooses an evolutionary way that he promotes with other important early members of Fabian Society such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb. If the soul of people are to be saved, Shaw argues, the only way is to raise the standard of mass-education to a degree at which its recipients will be rendered immune against the grosser forms of exploitation. Together with other Fabians, Shaw persuades that if society has insured for man the opportunity for satisfying his primary needs and his advance in the refinements of social morality the sole way to follow is mass education. What Shaw means with mass education are public meetings, lectures, journals, social intercourse, drama, and opera (Simon, 1958:10).

It is clear to see here the difference between the struggles to the same vision – social and economic reform – between Shaw and Marx. While Marx and Engels suggest revolutionary means as the way to break down the domination of capitalists, Shaw and the Fabians accepted a program of socialism by evolutionary ways. They promote such way of reforms as necessary to the establishment of a socialist state, the final result of a long series of struggle. For them socialism is a new organization of society in which the means of production would be owned by the state. This principle encourages Shaw and the Fabians to help the founding of a separate party that became the Labor Party in 1906 where most of its members in Parliament are the Fabians (Chambers's Encyclopaedia, 1973:465).

Of all means to educate people mentioned above, it is interesting to notice that for Shaw the theater is a means of education. Shaw frequently, as stated by Simon (1958:16), admits that he is a teacher whose aim is the making of better men and better women. He believes that art, particularly dramatic art, is able to improve morals and behavior by destroying stereotyped concepts of life. It is no wonder that he writes so many plays, including *Pygmalion*, to teach people how to struggle against any dehumanized power in society.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Dealing with the three groups of workers stated by Hobsbawm, there are three characters presented by *Pygmalion* who have different way of thinking about the social condition they encounter. The first character is Alfred Doolittle – Eliza’s father – who accepts himself as a dustman without any struggle and complaint. He does his job as a garbage collector and a road sweeper as one of the duties of people who live in the workhouse – a government’s facility for poor people. He is the representation of **the first group** of workers described by Hobsbawm as a group of people who have given up to the bad condition of life and think that they were born to be an undeserving poor along their life as Alfred Doolittle says, “Undeserving poverty is my line. Taking one station in society with another, it’s – it’s – well, it’s the only one that has any ginger in it, to my taste. (Chin, 2000:913). The second character to represent **the second group** of workers is Mrs. Pearce – Higgins’ housekeeper. She has enough audacity to object her master related to the rude remarks or bad treatment her master does to other people but she is so receptive to the station of life she has without striving to change it. She objects that Higgins “can’t take a girl up like that as if (he) were picking up a pebble on the beach” (Chin, 2000:904). She expresses her concern over Eliza’s future and insists that Eliza has a right to know what she is doing if she will entrust herself to Higgins for six months. She does not dehumanize Eliza and in fact she becomes protective of her. The union and the solidarity of Mrs. Pearce and Eliza reflect new strengths and consciousness to arouse workers’ feeling of collectiveness in their class struggle. The third character who deals with **the third group** of workers stated by Hobsbawm is Eliza Doolittle, the main character of *Pygmalion*. While Alfred Doolittle is satisfied to be part of the undeserving poor and rejects the hypocrisy of middle class morality; and when Mrs. Pearce receives her position as a housekeeper as a final station of her life; Eliza wants to escape from her class and is willing to become a member of the middle class. “I want to be a lady in a flower shop ‘stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road”, she says (Chin, 2000:902). In fact this is exactly the reason she has come to Higgins’ laboratory. It is also the real expression that shows her life obsession that must be struggled. *Pygmalion* indicates Eliza’s consistent struggle to fight her poverty and to oppose any oppression upon her.

Eliza’s struggle is supported by some other characters. She gets positive support from Mrs. Pearce (Higgins’ house keeper) – who, in some senses, is very concerned and protective to her; from Pickering (Higgins’ colleague) – who pays for Eliza’s language lesson and who gives high respect to Eliza’s humanity and feelings; and from Mrs. Higgins (Higgins’ mother) – who always pleads Eliza of his son’s rudeness. Mrs. Higgins questions and criticizes the importance of the language project in Wimpole Street laboratory for Eliza’s future and protests the way her son treats Eliza as a live-doll. By presenting all these supports from other characters, Shaw underlines that class struggle should be done in a solid togetherness.

Mrs. Pearce’s is from, more or less, the same class with Eliza. Thus, her support to Eliza’s struggle reflects the support and the solidarity among the workers that later on emerges in the form of labor movements. The workers have experienced hard times, and can therefore feel for those in trouble. It is the experience of exploitation which leads them to feel as one group of people who encounter the same bad treatment due to the oppression of the factory owner. In Marxist terminology, this feeling has aroused in every worker a class consciousness which is described by Drapper (1978, 97) as a consciousness that comes through practical experience of oppression. This class consciousness unifies the workers structurally as one social class in opposition to the capitalist who exploit them in industry. It makes the workers so solid each other and considers every person as human being although they are less than human beings in the capitalists’ eyes. They are more

approachable, friendlier, and less greedy for money, though they need it far more than the capital holding class. It is assumed that this class consciousness has encouraged Mrs. Pearce to show her objection when Higgins asks her to take all Eliza's clothes and put her in the dustbin.

HIGGINS [*carried away*] Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it wont come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

MRS. PEARCE [*protesting*]. Yes; but—

HIGGINS [*storming on*] Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

LIZA. You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

HIGGINS. We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. Youve got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

LIZA [*springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection*] No! I'll call the police, I will.

MRS. PEARCE. But I've no place to put her.

HIGGINS. Put her in the dustbin.

LIZA. Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo!

(Act 2; Chin, 2000: 904).

Mrs. Pearce supports Eliza's struggle by protesting to bad things regarding to the way Higgins treats 'the new student'. Higgins's order to take all Eliza's clothes off and burn them on fire is the first matter that arouses Mrs. Pearce's protest. As to make someone nude is a humiliated matter, Mrs. Pearce humanist feeling is disturbed by the instruction. She objects, "You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You cant walk over everybody like this" when Higgins ask her to put Eliza in the dustbin. Dustbin is a place into which the garbage is thrown away. By putting Eliza into the dustbin, Higgins treats Liza as garbage, not as human being. For Mrs. Pearce, Eliza is a human being. She should be treated in reasonable ways as other humans regardless her social status, gender, appearance, and educational background. By assuming that Mrs. Pearce is also sometimes treated badly in the same way as Higgins treats Eliza, her objection emerges from class consciousness as Goldman (1981,86) describes,

Men living under similar conditions constitute social groups which elaborate a complex of habits and mental structures to resolve their problems. With these elaborations they are able to act in the world, but such habits and mental structures not only govern their behavior but also their intelligence, thought, and emotions.

The similar condition which is experienced by Eliza and Mrs. Pearce reflects the condition that is faced by most workers in England in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is the condition due to the practice of dehumanization in industrial sphere which constitutes two main social classes – the working class and the capital holding class. The condition constitutes not only those classes but also the antagonism between them in accordance with their totally different interest in industry. From the workers' side, the antagonism is related to the inhumane treatment they encounter. Shaw views the inhumane treatment that is applied by the capitalist on the workers as a phenomenon that arises from the concept of man in the capitalist's mind. *Pygmalion* highlights the misconception of the upper class about the working class. They treat the workers more than slaves, because slaves are never put in the dustbin.

If *man qua man* is a recognizable and ascertainable entity; that man can be defined as human not only biologically and anatomically but also psychologically – as defined by Karl Marx in Fromm (1963:24) – so, Mrs. Pearce’s plead toward Eliza represents the struggle of the working class to regain their dignity as human beings. Physically, people wear clothes in order to protect their bodies from natural conditions: heat, extreme cold weather, humidity, and strong sunlight. But psychologically, wearing clothes is meant to wrap some certain parts of human body that may not be exposed to other people based on certain cultural, social and religious beliefs. Thus, putting off Eliza’s clothes and burning them mean denuding Eliza physically and hurting her feelings psychologically. This metaphoric action is deliberately presented by Shaw to reveal an inhumane treatment of the capitalists who have “put all the rights of the workers off” and considered them not as human beings but as waged slaves. The instruction to denude Eliza – that comes from a professor of phonetics – is really absurd, inhumane, and rarely happens in normal situation whenever people give their respect to each other in good ways. When Mrs. Pearce asks Pickering, “Did you ever hear anything like that, sir?” – Pickering answers, “Never, Mrs. Pearce: never.” This is an irony presented by Shaw to criticize the lack of human sense of the capitalist who usually has better educational level; who knows much about what good things they should perform based on their religion moral teaching; who is considered as savage, civilized, and cultured, who knows much about poetry, philosophy, art, and science (as boasted by Higgins in Chin, 2000:921) – but has no good will to practice all those excellences in their factory.

The conflict between master and workers that is metaphorically shown in *Pygmalion* through the confrontation between Higgins and Eliza is constructed deliberately by Shaw. It happens in reality to the workers who are considered as sub-ordinate class to the capitalist. The treatment that is based on the capitalist system is the main cause of the conflict especially the policies related to wages, working hour, and work discipline. The working class struggle is, in fact, the struggle to experience a better treatment and condition of work. In its history, the struggle faces many obstacles from the capitalists who insist to maintain the system on behalf of the high economic benefits they may get. *Pygmalion* reflects this insistence through Higgins who also insists to behave in the same way to everyone in every occasion as he says, “I can’t change my nature; and I don’t intend to change my manners” (Chin, 2000:947). The capitalists defend that every practice is still on the track according to the law related to the workers’ rights. They base their wage system and working hour, for instance, on the Factory Act which allows the children of nine years old to work in the factory and applies twelve to sixteen hours of a day as official length of working hours (Gregg, 1957:127). Yet, this Act has raised many protests from the working class, but the protests do not change the bad conditions of work. The situation even becomes worse and worse since many labor leaders who become parliament members are bribed by some influential capitalists to support the regulations that make the practice of human exploitation in industry imperishable. This fact has decayed the labour movement in England and gives less contribution to the working class struggle. Karl Marx in 1878, as cited by Draper (1978, 131), criticizes this corrupted parliament members as follows:

The English working class has been gradually becoming more and more deeply demoralized by the period of corruption since 1848 and had at last got to the point when it was nothing more than the tail of the Great Liberal Party, i.e., of its oppressors, the capitalists. Its direction had passed completely into the hands of the venal trade-union leaders and professional agitators. These fellows shouted and howled behind the Gladstones, Brights, Mundellas, Morleys and the whole gang of factory owners, etc., in majorem gloriam (to the greater glory) of the Tsar as the emancipator of nations, while

they never raised a finger for their own brother in South Wales, condemned by the mine-owners to die of starvation.

Marx's wife, Jenny, says in Draper (1978: 131) more rudely,

About the English workers' (leaders) á la Mottershead, Eccarius, Hales, Jung, etc., let me say nothing. They are all arch-rascals, up for sale and bought and sold and chasing after an honest shilling by hook and by crook. A really pitiful crew.

The practice of bribery which places money as an effective tool to influence the decision making process in parliament has weakened one of the arms in class struggle, i.e., political arm. Shaw, who becomes one of the midwives in giving birth to the Labour Party in 1906 (Gregg, 1957:391-402), is very disappointed of the practice. He, then, satirizes it by presenting Alfred Doolittle as a father who 'sells' his daughter for only £5 (five pound sterling). Doolittle, who should be a responsible father for Eliza and who should protect her from any practice of human exploitation, even involves in creating another exploitation on his own daughter. He is really "do little" in pleading his daughter. By giving such name to Eliza's father, Shaw criticizes the role of the workers' leaders in parliament who represent the Labor Party but contribute nothing to the workers' aspirations. They are elected by the workers to plead the workers' rights but in fact they also "do so little" to plead their true brotherhood with the working class from the capitalists' greediness and fails in bringing their fellows to a better work condition in industry as Doolittle also fails in preparing her daughter to have a better future.

DOOLITTLE [*to Pickering*] I thank you, Governor. [*To Higgins, who takes refuge on the piano bench, a little overwhelmed by the proximity of his visitor; for Doolittle has a professional flavor of dust about him*]. Well, the truth is, I've taken a sort of fancy to you, Governor; and if you want the girl, I'm not so set on having her back home again but what I might be open to an arrangement. Regarded in the light of a young woman, she's a fine handsome girl. As a daughter she's not worth her keep; and so I tell you straight. All I ask is my rights as a father; and you're the last man alive to expect me to let her go for nothing; for I can see you're one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what's a five pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me? [*He returns to his chair and sits down judicially*].

PICKERING. I think you ought to know, Doolittle, that Mr. Higgins's intentions are entirely honorable.

DOOLITTLE. Course they are, Governor. If I thought they weren't, I'd ask fifty.

HIGGINS [*revolted*] Do you mean to say, you callous rascal, that you would sell your daughter for £50?

DOOLITTLE. Not in a general way I wouldn't; but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.

PICKERING. Have you no morals, man?

DOOLITTLE [*unabashed*] Can't afford them, Governor. Neither could you if you was as poor as me. Not that I mean any harm, you know. But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too? (Act

2; Chin, 2000:912)

This quotation, instead of showing the role of money and what one may do with money, indicates another kind of exploitation conducted by people who are liable for the fate of their fellows. Shaw ironically presents Doolittle as a father who can be bribed for only £5 to satire the fact that there are so many politicians who come from the working class background now become the new oppressors of the workers. No wonder, if Jenny, Marx's

wife, calls them as “arch-rascal” or as it is ‘imitated’ by Higgins who calls Doolittle as “callous rascal”. This fact leads the workers to lay less expectation to the political arm as the alternative to do their class struggle since in the capitalist society of the early twentieth century, politics is subordinated to business. Even economic elite of merchants, financiers, and manufacturers dominated the policy making. With money they collect from the profits of doing their business in the factory, they bribe the parliament members to plead their interest, including the parliament members from the party called Labor Party.

Chirot (1977, 18-27) describes that by 1900 the capitalist world system reigned supreme. Its economic and political power had spread throughout the world. Its influence had changed social, economic, and cultural life as well as political forces within and between countries. How capitalism achieved such supremacy is of great interest to pay attention, which takes for granted the strength of the West at the start of the twentieth century. Among all the benefits contributed by capitalism to the progress of human development, the historical records – especially those made by Marxist followers – always portrays the dark sides of its practice. It is caused by the way the capitalists treat their workers in industries and their greed on the surplus values they get by exploiting the labor power. They are mostly attacked by many labor movements for the long hour of working time, the low wage they pay to the workers, and their inhumane treatment to the workers including women and children labor.

This arm suggests the establishment of trade unions and labour strikes as the means of the working class struggle. It is amazing that the unions of the workers who have the same fate emerge everywhere in England and become strong organizations of workers to struggle for their aspirations. *Pygmalion* reflects the organizations by showing the unions between Eliza and Mrs. Pearce (as women of the same class), the support of Pickering to Eliza’s struggle, and the sympathetic care of Mrs. Higgins who always reminds his son, Professor Higgins, not to treat Eliza as object of his experiment.

Pickering’s involvement in Eliza’s struggle is grasped as the representation of the sympathetic attention of the upper class to the laborers’ struggle. His advice to Higgins to treat Eliza in reasonable way reflects the upper class concern to the fate of the working class who encounter inhumane treatment from the capitalists. As the practice of capitalist system becomes much more revolting, there appear many scholars, politicians, parliament members, journalists, and even individuals from the capitalist circle to plead the rights of the working class. They are, for examples, Frederick Engels, Robert Blatchford, William Cobbett, and Robert Owen. Engels – who comes from a wealthy family of cotton manufacturer (Ermen and Engels) in Manchester – was surrounded by the horrors of early industrial capitalism that encouraged him to react against the narrow and the self-righteous pietism of his home and then involved in the great movements of the British proletariat struggle as the crucial revolutionary force in the modern world (Engels, 1979:7). His acquaintance with Karl Marx brings him to be one of the most prolific Marxist proponents who struggle for society reconstruction. Robert Blatchford, a journalist from Manchester condemns capitalism as a curse, commercial competition as wasteful, cruel and wrong, and the factory system as ugly, disagreeable, mechanical, injurious to health, unnecessary, and dangerous to national existence. He argues that as far as the capitalism exists the country will suffer from low wages, long working hours, unemployment, insecurity, low standards of public health and morality, pauperism, crime, and false ideals (Ausubel, 1955:69). William Cobbett – a journalist, a politician and a socialist – is very concerned to the struggle of the proletariat. Through his writings and speeches, he criticizes the British government who gives less attention to the fate of the working class. He says, as cited by William (1961, 33),

A laboring man, in England, with a wife and only three children, though he never lose a day's work, though he and his family be economical, frugal and industrious in the most extensive sense of these words, is not now able to procure himself by his labor a single meal of meat from one end of the year unto the other. Is this a state in which the laboring man ought to be?

Cobbett contrasts the actual poverty encountered by the working class who even cannot afford for sufficient meals versus the apparent prosperity of the capitalists who live in abundant materials. Robert Owen is a successful manufacturer and one of the nineteenth socialists who has different vision and perception of transforming England. William (1961:43) gives this information,

The real originality that gives value to Owen's work is that he begins from an acceptance of the vastly increased power which the Industrial Revolution had brought, and sees in just this increase of power the opportunity for the new moral world. He is the successful manufacturer, and not the scholar or poet; in temperament and personality he is at one with the new industrialists who were transforming England, but his vision of transformation is human as well as material. As the new generation of manufacturers would organize their places of work for production, or for profit, so he would organize England for happiness.

This quotation shows how Robert Owen gives his attention to the increased power brought by the Industrial Revolution to build a new moral world. This new world must be created by an active and just government underpinned by a national system of education to develop science and technology based on human values. He attacks the manufacturers' policy that regards the employers as mere instruments of gaining economic benefits (William, 1961:44) and strongly criticizes the practice of workers alienation in 'enjoying' the products they make.

The capitalists share the profits in a very small amount of money which the workers receive as wage. In this case, they are alienated by their masters in enjoying the profits of their own work. Shaw indicates this alienation in *Pygmalion* by plotting the ignorance to Eliza's brilliant achievement in the Ambassador's garden party by Higgins. It is told that on returning home after Eliza's successful appearance both in speaking and in dancing, rather than congratulate her on her achievement, Higgins and Pickering congratulate themselves and ignore Eliza while Eliza is there with them. They thank God for the success at the gala as if it is their own achievement or their own hard work. They forget Eliza who realizes all their dreams. This action reflects the reality in the factory whenever the factory owner is very satisfied with the quality and the perfection of the products and moreover if the products can be sold in high price. In this situation he usually forgets the makers of the products.

Eliza escapes from the laboratory at the same night when she is ignored by Higgins and Pickering and hides at Mrs. Higgins' house. She decides to end her relationship with those two old bachelors and determines to seek an independent course for herself. Eliza's escape from the laboratory and her decision to stop her attendance in the language experiment reflect the labor strikes that usually happen in industrial sphere when the workers are frustrated with the capitalists' ignorance of their needs and aspirations. Her struggle is supported by Mrs. Higgins who appears in the play to plead Eliza's rights. It is interesting here to scrutinize what Mrs. Higgins preaches to the two men about the bad things they have done but they are not aware of. Shaw uses the 'sermon' to remind the capitalists to be aware of the practice of alienation they apply on the workers.

MRS. HIGGINS. Just so. She had become attached to you both. She worked very hard for you, Henry! I don't think you quite realize what anything in the nature of brain work means to a girl like that. Well, it seems that when the great day of trial came, and she did this wonderful thing for you without making a single mistake, you two sat there and never said a word to her, but talked together of how glad you were that it was all over and how you had been bored with the whole thing. And then you were surprised because she threw your slippers at you! I should have thrown the fire-irons at you.

HIGGINS. We said nothing except that we were tired and wanted to go to bed. Did we, Pick?

PICKERING [*shrugging his shoulders*] That was all.

MRS. HIGGINS [*ironically*] Quite sure?

PICKERING. Absolutely. Really, that was all.

MRS. HIGGINS. You didn't thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been.

HIGGINS [*impatiently*] But she knew all about that. We didn't make speeches to her, if that's what you mean.

PICKERING [*conscience stricken*] Perhaps we were a little inconsiderate. Is she very angry?

MRS. HIGGINS [*returning to her place at the writing-table*] Well, I'm afraid she won't go back to Wimpole Street, especially now that Mr. Doolittle is able to keep up the position you have thrust on her; but she says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms and to let bygones be bygones.

(Act 5; Chin, 2000:943)

Mrs. Higgins reminds her son – Higgins – and Pickering to realize that they should thank not only to God but also to Eliza since she has worked very hard and performs her speech and dance successfully. She blames those two bachelors that they do not “thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been”. She protests, on behalf of Eliza, the ignorance of one's hard work from which great benefits are accumulated. It is the fact that Eliza's success gives great benefits to Higgins' prospect as language teacher in terms that he will become a prominent expert who can change his student's speaking manner in only couples of months; he will have many students who come from all around the world to learn proper English from him; and he will receive much money from Pickering due to the betting he wins.

Yet, what does Higgins do with Eliza's brilliant achievement? He neglects Eliza and thinks as if Eliza's role is nothing for him. He considers the success merely as the 'product' of his experiment, places Eliza as the 'instrument' to display the new manner of speaking, and uses the garden party as 'the market' to sell his product. This way of thinking has led Eliza to feel so alienated and estranged. What she does then, is escaping from Higgins' laboratory at the same night to show her protest to the unfair treatment. Her son's bad attitude to Eliza has also made Mrs. Higgins very upset as she says, “I should have thrown the fire-irons at you” – more than the slippers thrown by Eliza on Higgins' face for the same reason.

Shaw's sense of humanity is triggered by the practice of alienation in industry. He criticizes the practice of ignoring the workers' role in the process of production and condemns the alienation of the workers. For Shaw, the workers are the producers of the products. They have rights to receive appropriate wages from the profits of selling the products. But in fact, as Eliza is neglected by Higgins after the garden party, Shaw witnesses many workers in factories in England who live in revolting poverty because of that alienation. Living in that kind of situation leads the workers to the labour movement to protest the ignorance. As Eliza 'goes on strike' by bolting from the laboratory, there are also

labour strikes conducted everywhere in England. It is assumed that Shaw underlines the labor strike as one of the many ways the labourers may use to win their struggles. Labour strikes and trade unions are believed as the economic arm of working class struggle that go together with proletarian party as the political arm to force the capitalists to fulfill the workers' demands (Draper, 1978: 125).

Seeing that Higgins will not change his manner, Eliza leaves him after announcing that she will marry Freddy who loves her, and will teach phonetics to support him. Higgins tells Eliza that he cares "for life, for humanity" (Chin, 2000:948) but her objection is that he does not care personally for *her*. When the capitalists state that they care for the fate of the workers by imposing the wage system and the working hours according to the Factory Act, the objection of the workers is not whether their master imposes the regulation or not but the inadequate wage that cannot support their basic needs and the sixteen to nineteen hours of working as if they cannot be exhausted.

On hearing that Eliza is going to marry Freddy, Clara's amiable but brainless brother, Higgins objects, "Can he make anything of you?" He is disappointed at seeing his duchess, so to speak, thrown away fruitlessly. Eliza in her turn finds such a question unintelligible, "I never thought of us making anything of one another, and you never think of anything else. I only want to be natural" (Chin, 2000:949). Starting from this time, Higgins' role to determine Eliza's future has no power anymore. Higgins' persuasion to Eliza to ask her returns to the two men to be one of "three old bachelors together," is refused by Eliza. Here, she wins her struggle of Higgins's oppression by leaving him as "a cruel tyrant" (Chin, 2000: 949-950) and cut off her relationship with her oppressor. This is interpreted as the symbol of the breaking down of capitalism by the labour movement through the two arms of working class struggle: economic and political struggle.

The role of education in class struggle is another issue that is highlighted by Shaw. The language lesson attended by Eliza in Higgins' laboratory for 6 months symbolizes the contribution that education may offer make someone to live better. Shaw insists that education should be conducted for the labour as he shows it in *Pygmalion* that to be free of upper class' oppression Eliza has learnt phonetics which later on leads her to be a phonetics teacher. The image as a street girl of original Eliza as the audience meets in Covent Garden has been changed after a process of education in Wimpole Street laboratory. This education has formed a new Eliza with new dignity and independence. Eliza has now mastered more than the pronunciation of the educated classes and, therefore, has also an audacity to begin a new life as a teacher of phonetics, not as a flower girl anymore. The transformation from a flower girl to a phonetics teacher is done through education. In this respect she becomes a new petty bourgeoisie who has the capability to live independently by utilizing her new expertise in phonetics.

Pygmalion is a play that attempts to place education at the centre of class struggle and social change. For Shaw, there is a close relationship between class struggle and education. Education enlightens the workers' perception and ideals to gain their aspirations through apparent ways and objectives of class struggle. Education is viewed as the way through which the workers broaden their perspectives to judge the cruel and bad treatment they encounter critically and, simultaneously, prepare their future independently. Shaw underlines education as one of the most effective ways for class struggle but he criticizes every inhumane way applied in education that gives less respect to humanity aspect. In *Pygmalion*, he presents the incorrigible and rude teacher – Professor Higgins – as the paradox of what the audience expects of a teacher in real life. He employs the action by showing Eliza as the object of teaching – learning activity that arouses many objections from Mrs. Pearce, Colonel Pickering, and Mrs. Higgins. Instead of admitting Higgins'

service in teaching her phonetics, Eliza asserts she gets the real-education not from Higgins but from Pickering.

In line with Owen's concept of new moral world (Williams, 1961:46) which underlines education as the means to build new society, Shaw maintains that the struggle of lower class to obtain better life should be supported by the standard of mass-education to a degree at which its recipients will be rendered immune against the grosser forms of exploitation. What Shaw means with mass education are public meetings, lectures, journals, social intercourse, drama, and opera (Simon, 1958:10). Yet, he satirized the way in educating human beings. He argues that the students are not objects of education who have nothing to be developed. Educational sphere is something different from industrial environment. And then, being educated, civilized and cultured is a matter of process in which the students are considered as the subjects of learning-teaching activity. This process cannot be conducted mechanically where the students are considered as the raw materials that after passing certain mechanical processes become the 'products' expected by the factory owner.

CONCLUSION

Class Struggle emerges from the class conflict between the capital holding class and the working class in industrial sphere. The conflict occurs whenever the interests of the two classes do not fit each other i.e., when the greed of the capitalist to accumulate surplus value ignores the welfare of the working class and neglects the human aspects of the workers. In practice, the working class is, even, exploited, dehumanized, objectified, and devaluated into the level of economic commodity or production factor.

The long-term social and economic conflict in capitalist system manifests itself in more and more revolting bad treatments from the capitalist to the workers. In line with this situation, class struggle is the way taken by the workers to fight every capitalist policy that causes bad working conditions in industry regarding mostly to the low wage, the long working hour system, and other inhumane treatments implemented in strict disciplines and terrible punishments. The laborers become the victims of the capitalist system, but since the treatment of the capitalist is so despotic they then rise and fight the system through labor movements. Class struggle, thus, is conducted to free the workers from the evils of capitalism and simultaneously to bring them toward better future marked by the existence of the respect to human rights and other humanity values such as freedom, just, equality, and brotherhood.

Pygmalion portrays the social conditions in England in the end of nineteenth century and the early twentieth century and reflects class struggle as a collective reaction to the conditions. *Pygmalion* employs Eliza Doolittle, a flower girl, who wishes to be a lady to free herself from poverty and the stupidity. Eliza, then, attends a speech lesson in language laboratory in Wimpole Street possessed and managed by Professor Henry Higgins as the way she should take to realize her dream. Yet, instead of treating Eliza as the subject of the lesson, Higgins exploits her as the object of his phonetic experiment and the object of his economic benefit. In this sense, *Pygmalion* can be considered as a play that expresses any accurate and comprehensive ideas about the study of the English language but Shaw does not mean to offer to his audience to use the play as the medium to study phonetics. It does, however, make use of some ideas about the English language to make a sort of observation about the nature of capitalist society, and it asks a number of questions about the relations that exist between individuals in such a society.

Pygmalion highlights how George Bernard Shaw has utilized this play to convey his socialist view points. He symbolizes the power exercised by Higgins to Eliza as the power relation applied by the capitalist on the workers, and reflects the support of Colonel

Pickering and Mrs. Higgins to Eliza's struggle as the support of many socialists to the labor movements. Moreover, he encourages every labor movement to win the struggle for better life condition as Eliza has done it in *Pygmalion*.

From the dialogue and the behavior of certain characters, the writer assumes that *Pygmalion* reflects the situation in capitalist society. There is Henry Higgins who is so despotic exploiting Eliza for his interest. There is Mrs. Pearce and Alfred Doolittle who are suffered from a social system that makes them so difficult to be free from their poverty. And there is Eliza who struggles for better life by attending a language lesson. All these facts lead the writer to focus his attention mostly on class struggle in capitalist society.

Although the audience of *Pygmalion* are mostly from the middle class level who have money to buy tickets to watch the play performance, this play is still effective to convey the social reform message. Shaw, for instance, deliberately performs Colonel Pickering and Mrs. Higgins – the representation of the middle class people – who plead Eliza in many occasions of Higgins' despotism. For Shaw, the middle class people have the biggest responsibility to reform the society since they are the people who have caused the most revolting social problems: dehumanization and poverty. Social reformation can only be conducted by persuading the middle class to involve; and the way Shaw uses to 'invite' the middle class to take part in the social reconstruction is through his plays performing. So, besides as a critique medium, *Pygmalion* is also a persuasive performance for the middle class.

The argument about manners is extremely important in *Pygmalion*. Shaw criticizes his society that gives more respect to people from higher social class although their manners are so bad. If Eliza admits that the real education she gets from Pickering, it is merely because Pickering's good manner has become a good example to be imitated. Teaching by giving more good examples, instead of giving 'dry' scientific lesson without any respect to human feelings and rights is considered more effective in nourishing human values. Eliza's point is that it does not matter that Higgins treats everyone alike, if the way in which Higgins actually treats them implies that they do not really exist and that their opinions and feelings may be ignored.

For Shaw, education as the instrument to develop human values and human nature is a central issue in his propaganda. He views education linked with craftsmanship, nature, and religion as an aid in breaking down class distinctions. He argues that even a child must be taught, that men must reform themselves before they reform society, and that the process of education is the most effective way of bettering human nature. Viewing art as means of educating people, he writes some novels and so many plays telling about the evils of capitalism, war, selfishness, money-getters, the future, the family, marriage, sex, the will to grow, etc. Shaw frequently admits that, as Simon (1958:16) informs, he is a teacher whose aim is the making of better men and women. Deliberately pedagogic and propagandistic, Shaw believed that art, particularly dramatic art, must improve morals and behavior by destroying stereotyped concepts of life. Here, he accepts the existence of human nature and believes that the nature must be nurtured continuously along human life. The place to 'nurture' the nature is the society with all of its phenomena. That's why instead of accepting the existence of human nature, Shaw also admits that the development of the nature is the product of existing social, political, economic, and moral institutions.

It is interesting to know here that Shaw underlines the growth of the nature of man and the development of noble faculties as the benchmark of the progress of human civilization. His stance on the human development, as the objective of his movement as a socialist, is so rigid that he objects all forms of human exploitation due to the invention of new technology in industrial society that dehumanize human values.

As Eliza has succeeded in winning her struggle to be free from the upper class

oppression and wins it as the new opportunity to develop her nature as human beings who lives not only for herself but also for others, the writer is convinced that the workers who work in bad conditions, wherever in this globe, are also able to attain better life as far as they succeed conducting the struggle in the way more or less as Eliza has done – unless *Pygmalion* is fruitless.

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