

Bernard Shaw : Pygmalion

review

For my first home reading this year I read the play Pygmalion, written by Bernard Shaw. It is a drama, which was presented to public at the beginning of the 20th century. I was quite sceptical about liking it, but fortunately I was wrong. The play made me think. It really made me think about stratification in modern society.

There are many people who live »in a gutter« although we do not want to know about them. They have two legs and breathe the same air as everybody else, but still, they are inferior. An exquisite example of such attitude is Mr. Higgins's relation with Eliza. In spite of her open and quick mind, beautiful figure and quite genuine personality he still treats her as he did the very first time they met. He will never change opinion about her. She is condemned to be the flower-girl in his eyes forever. The author's ways in presenting social differences to the reader are amazing.

There are so many unwritten and hidden rules, that apply to every individual person. Perhaps the differences between social classes in our country aren't as distinctive as in England, but they are vital in every society. I was astonished by the fact that Eliza and Freddy did not want to open a florist's shop because that would harm Freddy's sister's pride and render Clara's option of aristocratic marriage. That indicates a strong influence of society on every act of an individual. Even though they were penniless, they could not start with manual labour, because that would reduce their status in society, for which Freddy's family strived for generations. On one hand that is quite reasonable, since everybody wants to be as respected as one could be. But on the other hand, is a person really a respectable member of the society if he can not afford buying new shoes without borrowing money from somebody else?

I found in Pygmalion many aspects points of relations among people that were and still are attractive for debating. I wish the author wrote a sequel. And that is I believe, one of the main good points of a good book, or play in this case.