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**THE RISE AND FALL OF RANU MONDAL ALONG WITH ELIZA OF  
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW'S *PYGMALION***

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**Abstract:**

*An artist is not born but is created in the world by the glory of his/her artistic glamour and attraction. However, hard they work, if they can win the heart of the society, they rise into fame achieving numerous accolades. If they cannot withstand the pressures and the turmoil of society, life shivers down their spines making it difficult to tolerate themselves to withstand the rest of the society. In this paper we will discuss the rise and fall of two different characters of a different era – one of them belongs to the pen of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* named as Eliza Doolittle and the other a struggler who lost his fame at the latest half of his career and is named as Ranu Mondal.*

**Keywords:** Artist, Society, Rise, Fall and Characters, etc.

An artist delves in his/her artistic zone of excellence and creates perfectness through imperfections. However, hard the society torments the artist; still, they rise and when they walk everyone becomes spell bounded by their aura of silent noise. Their apt love for humanity enkindles every heart with kindness and love. However, the era of their golden time does not last long and they fail to project their talent and couldn't stand up to their respective feet and are penned through the stories of history books.

One such living character who got the opportunity to face the threshold of singing is none other than a beggar named Ranu Maria Mondal. Ranu Mondal became an overnight star at Ranaghat Railway Station after singing one of Lata Mangeshkar's songs, "Ek Pyaar Ka Nagma Hai". Ranu Maria Mondal is a lady of 61 years of age who was brought to the limelight by a 26-year old engineer, Atindra Chakroborty. By sharing her song on Atindra's Facebook account, she became viral in the year 2019.

**The Pygmalion Myth:**

In Book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who worked tirelessly to build a statue. His carving statue made of ivory was so beautifully and majestically presented that he had named the statue as Galatea and Pygmalion had madly fallen in love with the statue of Galatea. His only prayer from the Greek Goddess Aphrodite was to give life to the statue so that he could enjoy those golden moments with the living Galatea. Goddess Aphrodite has listened to her prayers and immediately the statue came into life and Pygmalion fell in love with the living Galatea and they married together and lived happily ever after then.

However, George Bernard Shaw has brought some changes in the Pygmalion myth in his play *Pygmalion: A Romance in Five Acts*. In Shaw's play *Pygmalion* the character Henry Higgins, the Professor of Phonetics, plays the role of Pygmalion. Eliza Doolittle, a poor flower-girl, who sells



flower-girl at Covent Garden stands for Galatea. Through the magic wand of education, Henry Higgins taught Eliza Doolittle and she gained proper knowledge and wisdom from her hands. However, Henry Higgins didn't have the slightest indication of marrying Eliza Doolittle. It was Freddy who was completely on toes when she meets Eliza in the first act of the play. As Nicholas Grene points out,

What Higgins endows her with is the confident articulateness that allows her to withstand him (129). She can "talk back" to him, and her decision to marry Freddy as soon as she was "able to support him" reveals that she is quite ready to take charge of her life. In this way, when Grene remarks that "Shaw reworks the Ovidian legend into a feminist fable", he is bringing into focus the fact that a sense of self-worth and confidence in addition to being able to speak well is critical for an individual to attain full humanity.

#### **The rise of Ranu Mondal:**

Even Bollywood Music Director, Himesh Reshammiya understood her depth in her singing talent and recorded four songs in his film Happy Hardy and Heer (released on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2020). 'Teri Meri Kahani', 'Aashiqui Mein Teri 2.0', 'Aadat' and 'Keh Rahi Hai Naazdeekiyan' are some of the songs from the film Happy Hardy and Heer which was sung by Ranu Mondal. From a beggar to a Bollywood playback singer was a spectacular turnaround for Mrs. Mondal. The song 'Teri Meri Kahani' was in the second position of Google's most search song of 2019 in India. Soon, after the release, the song was trending on TikTok and it was hash tagged more than 80 million times on that platform (Wikipedia).

#### **The Slow Progress of Eliza Doolittle:**

In George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion Mr. Higgins had taken a bet to Colonel Pickering "to pass her (Eliza) off as a duchess in six months. Eliza was brought to her first test in upper-class society and delivered her speech before Mrs. and Miss. Eynsford Hill. When Mr. Higgins asks whether Eliza was presentable, Mrs. Higgins replied: You silly boy, of course she's not presentable. She's a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker's (III).

Mr. Higgins and Colonel Pickering were extremely serious about Eliza this time. Proper lessons were taught to Eliza and both the men thought that Eliza should be taken to Shakespeare's exhibition at Earl's Court. Eliza created a sensation there and she was the showstopper over there. The host and the hostess were terrified by the way she said. The hostess declared her as princess. Nepommuck, a former student of Henry Higgins exclaimed: She pretend not to know the difference between Hungarian and French. Impossible: she knows both. (III)

Liza was quite tired of the whole thing that went through her and couldn't bear the process for a continuous period.

Liza: The people all stare so at me. An old has just told me that I speak exactly like Queen Victoria. I am sorry if I have lost your bet. I have done my best; but nothing can make me the same as these people. (III)

#### **The Problem of Education:**

Ranu Mandal is one of the shining stars in India whose flavor bloomed for a few days in the Bollywood industry. Coming from a pathetic poor background, her arrogance and her inflated ego and most especially the proper courtesy of education eradicated her from the industry.

Eliza, on the other hand, got a proper educational fruit and her education transformed her into a lady much like the Pygmalion myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. However, in Shaw's Pygmalion after gaining the seed of education from her master Henry Higgins, Eliza was in such a position where she couldn't even meet the regular dire needs of the Covent Garden society. She could neither mix up with



the people from the upper-class background nor could she go to her earlier profession and could sell flowers like other poor ladies. This complexity arouses in her mind and she couldn't at all come out easily from this labyrinthine juncture. Now you've made a lady of me. I'm not fit to sell anything else, I wish you'd left me where you found me. (IV)

The problem of education is a significant aspect of Ranu Mondal's life. From her early childhood, she had neither been to school nor college which is a negative aspect for a lady of about 61 years of age. If a lady or a gentleman is not educated in her/his childhood days, there might be probably many aspects in Life that can teach her/him to be a good human being in eternity. Fighting poverty was the basic turmoil she has to face throughout her life. Much like Eliza of Pygmalion, Ranu Mondal could return to her earlier phase but the hardest question arises do we have a different ending to it? Time is the best answer for the time being.

Proper communication could have been sorted out and could make matters as easily as possible. However, if one is not interested to clear things out, matters become difficult and things become as hard as much as possible. Once, Ranu Mondal was extremely arrogant to her fans when someone was about to take a camera selfie with her. Back in November 2019, the singer was behaving extremely rudely with a fan who wanted to take a selfie. In the video, a woman can be seen approaching Ranu from behind and tapping her on the shoulder to get her attention for a selfie during an event. However, an irritated Mondal does not take kindly to the gesture and taps the woman's shoulder in return asking 'What is this?' in Hindi. She did face criticism from her fans and others for her behaviour. Many blamed her quick rise to fame as the reason for the celebrity attitude. *The Rise and Fall of Ranu Mondal - The Overnight Internet Star*.

### **The Problem of loss of Identity:**

After singing some songs in Himesh Reshammiya's movie, Ranu Mondal is nowhere to be found in the Bollywood music industry. What happens to be a dream for Mrs. Mondal once turned up into a shattering nightmare in reality. Her rude attitude and behaviour became the slave of her own destiny. Neither of her family members was there to back her up and she remained an internet's troll for many trollers, unfortunately. Her dream of singing fell like a fall of cards and fortunately, she could return to her home unlike Eliza of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

In George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Eliza Doolittle is confronted with the loss of identity and alienation. Eliza had to search for her own place in the new social environment. Eliza even angrily asks Higgins after she was successful: What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me? (IV)

Eliza Doolittle could very well understand after being successful, unsuccessful and unsatisfactory questions rattle in her mind which seems a puzzle for Henry Higgins to answer at the moment. Being successfully presented as a mouthpiece for Mr. Henry Higgins, she is not happy in the first place. Shaw's mastery in creating the characters of Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins is outstandingly phenomenal.

Some of the other characters in the play *Pygmalion* could understand what could have to be done with Eliza after the teaching as well as the experiment is over like the lady figures like Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins. Mrs. Pearce. Will you please keep to the point, Mr. Higgins. I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little. (II)

When Eliza was not found at Mr. Higgin's home and both Colonel Pickering and Mr. Henry Higgins when to Mrs. Higgins house to find Eliza Doolittle, Mrs. Higgins was vexed at both of the gentlemen. 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 of her



class. Well, it seems that when the great 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. (V) In the words of A.C. Ward, *Pygmalion* is not a romance, as it could rightly have been called if Higgins and Eliza had fallen in love and married. It is a problem play, and it goes much deeper than the bare story told in *Pygmalion*.

In the latest uploaded video uploaded on YouTube on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2022, by Fly n Fun Channel, we could observe the visitors arriving Ranu Mondal's home at Ranaghat. The video is played in Bengali language. Mrs. Mondal in a state of her own self demands something so that she could give her interview on her channel. All through her conversation, we find an element of hatred as well as an element of surprise. We must keep into tune that she does not have a proper attitude to communicate with her audiences because of her upbringing. That element of foil didn't let her sing and show a chirpy face at the end of the video clip. Some may watch the video and remark it as complete madness and unless the madness does not lie on the lady, people from different places do not come and shoot video with her. Some people can only rise people up and we can only throw them down the drains. Why do they do it then?

Strikingly both the ladies came across the vistas and vices of the upper-class society. Unfortunately, both of them could not hold a position of themselves in their fast-growing world of society. Both of them could not mix up with the people of the society and thus led to a huge conflict within them. Both of them are artistic in their own fields of life but somehow, their artistic flavour and taste fall extremely trivial in their super-fast modern world of their own. Thus, their artistic charm and their warmth of mixing with people crumbled into pieces but their names are still be remembered in the memories of the readers and explorers.

People do make fun of those who are weak and trivial. They show cast their worth by their tall talks and mostly by showing their state of snobbery towards the weak people. Does disrespecting someone for their imperfectness a sign of an educated person? Does blaming someone for their "deficiency" in whatever the field of life a sign of a wise person? Does hurting a person and mocking them by trolls and lots of extra-curricular activities makes our hearts purified and rich? Imagine if the same situation goes with us, then can we face the catastrophe of those hard boomerangs selflessly?

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