

Pygmalion and Collage: A Rupture of Boundary

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Abstract

Collage technique as we generally understand is a sole rubric of painting; and thus, we deny its possibility in other forms of art. This, however, is not the case – collage has become a dominant mode in writing also. Despite this fact, we still emphasize the catch-words like creativity, naivety, and condemn any equilibrium in between the two arts. In such a context, the use of collage technique in literary writings is a fascinating subject of study.

The thrust of this dissertation is to demonstrate collage activity in literary work, more particularly in George Bernard Shaw. My aim, however, is not to negate possibility of creativity and novelty; rather, the objective is to demonstrate the limitations of modern artists. Any writing cannot escape the immense body of literature; one way or the other, the writing of past lurks. Thus, any writer finds enmeshed in the writings of past, consequently the creativity of artist depends on the power to articulate the assembled materials.

Demonstrating the equilibriums of Shaw's *Pygmalion* with some contemporary as well as previous texts and discussing the similarities in strategies of painters and Shaw, my thesis argues that *Pygmalion* may be understood as an instance of rupture of boundary between painting and literature.

Conclusion

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Shaw's *Pygmalion* demonstrates the materialization of collage technique within literature. Within the reinvented legend, incorporation of various motifs is apparent. Ovid's *Pygmalion and Galatea* myth, John Martson's *Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*, Tobias Smollet's *The Adventure of Peregrine Pickle*, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *When We Dead Awaken*, Merry Shelly's *Frankenstein*, and various cotemporary as well as preceding writings provide motifs to the writer.

The way these motifs are handled also demonstrate the vogue of collage in Shaw's writing. Parody to common consensus that language is a class-distinction marker, phago-citation of story and plot, allusion to individual and contemporary events, satire to Victorian idealism of male supremacy and patches of various former writers are apparently visible. The play thus is Shaw's attempt to create an art with 'whatever comes handy' using selection and juxtaposition of prefabricated elements.