



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: VII	Department: ENGLISH	Date of Submission: January, 2020
STUDY NOTES	Topic: To Be a Lady - George Bernard Shaw	Note: Reference

Pygmalion is a play in five acts by George Bernard Shaw, was performed in England in 1914, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Eliza Doolittle. The play is a humane comedy about love and the English class system.

To Be a Lady is an act adapted from G.B. Shaw's most popular play *Pygmalion*. Shaw was a major critic of his times. He was sensitive towards the issues ailing the British society, often making his characters speak about them in his plays. In *Pygmalion*, he tackles the issues of class-divide prevalent in the Britain of his days.

THE MYTH OF PYGMALION

This story was told by the Roman poet Ovid in a book called *Metamorphoses*. Pygmalion was a prince of Cyprus, a hater of women, and a very talented sculptor. Resolving that he would never marry, Pygmalion created a marble statue of a woman so beautiful that no living woman approached her allure. Pygmalion called his statue Galatea, which means "sleeping love". He kept it on a bed of the softest blankets and pillows, where it looked so alive that he could hardly believe it wasn't human. Pygmalion then decided to visit the altar of the goddess of love, Aphrodite to make a request. He brought gifts to please Aphrodite and asked her to give him a wife who was just like his statue. In response, Aphrodite caused the flame on the altar to flare up three times into the air. After Pygmalion left the altar, Aphrodite decided to visit Galatea. She went to Pygmalion's home, and was very pleased to discover that Galatea resembled herself. To reward Pygmalion for his creation, she brought Galatea to life. When Pygmalion discovered that Galatea was alive, he decided to marry her. They were rewarded with a long and happy marriage.

PREFACE TO PYGMALION

Shaw ultimately wrote a preface to almost all of his plays that he considered important. In one of his prefaces, he comments that most dramatists use the preface to expound on things that have little or no importance to the drama. Here, Shaw's preface does not comment upon the drama that is to follow, but instead the play deals with phonetics, and the character of Henry Higgins is based largely upon a man named Henry Sweet. He uses this preface to comment upon the absurdity of English spelling in connection with English pronunciation.

SUMMARY- ACT II

The next day, Professor Higgins is demonstrating his phonetics equipment to Colonel Pickering as both men relax at Higgins' laboratory in Wimpole Street. Mrs. Pearce, Higgins' housekeeper, announces the arrival of a young woman. Thinking he can show Pickering how he makes records of his subjects' voices, Higgins asks Mrs. Pearce to admit the visitor. Cleaned up yet still obviously poor, Eliza enters the study. Higgins tells her to leave, but Eliza insists that she is there to pay for voice lessons so she can be a lady in a flower shop instead of a street corner flower girl. Mrs. Pearce admonishes Eliza for her ignorance and poor manners, but Higgins begins to consider Eliza's proposal. Pickering offers to pay for the lessons and all expenses if Higgins can fool the party-goers at the Ambassador's garden party and present Eliza as a lady. Higgins agrees excitedly and orders Mrs. Pearce to get Eliza cleaned up. Eliza balks at this new development, and Mrs. Pearce warns Higgins that he knows nothing about Eliza's family, nor has he thought about what to do with Eliza when the experiment is complete. Mrs. Pearce shows Eliza to a lovely bedroom and bath, and scrubs her roughly despite Eliza's protests. Meanwhile, Higgins assures Pickering that he has only a professional, not a personal interest in Eliza, as he believes that romantic relationships are too troublesome. Mrs. Pearce warns Professor Higgins that he must watch his language and manners now if he wishes to serve as a proper

model for Eliza. Pickering is much kinder and considerate of her feelings, even going so far as to call her "Miss Doolittle" and to offer her a seat. Pickering is piqued by the prospect of helping Eliza, and bets Higgins that if Higgins is able to pass Eliza off as a duchess at the Ambassador's garden party, then he, Pickering, will cover the expenses of the experiment. It is agreed upon that Eliza will live with Higgins for six months, and be schooled in the speech and manners of a lady of high class.

CHARACTER SKETCH:-

Professor Henry Higgins

Higgins is a forty-year-old bachelor who specializes in phonetics and who is an acclaimed authority on the subject of dialects, accents and phonetics.

Eliza Doolittle

She is an uneducated, uncouth "guttersnipe," the flower girl whom Higgins decides to transform into a duchess. A cockney flower girl of around 18 or 20 years of age, Eliza is streetwise and energetic whose goal in life is to leave her life on the streets and run her own shop. She is not educated by traditional standards, but she is intelligent and a quick learner.

Colonel Pickering

A distinguished retired officer and the author of Spoken Sanskrit. He has come to England to meet Professor Henry Higgins. He is courteous and polite to Eliza, and he shares his ideas in Higgins' experiments, also in teaching Eliza to speak as a duchess. Courteous and generous, as well as practical and sensible, he never views Liza just as a flower girl and treats her with due respect as a lady of society.

Mrs. Pearce

Mrs. Pearce, a middle-class woman who is Professor Higgins' housekeeper of long standing. She is the one who first sees the difficulty of what is to happen to Eliza after Higgins and Pickering have finished their experiment with her. Mrs. Pearce, by sheer force of will, enforces a semblance of order and propriety in Higgins' house. Very practical, she can be severe and is not afraid of reproaching Higgins for his lack of social graces. She is conscious of proper behaviour and of her position, and quite proud. She is taken aback by the seeming impropriety of Liza coming into the Higgins household but quickly develops a bond with the girl, often defending her from Higgins.