Module-4

Unit-1 ❑ George Bernard Shaw: *Pygmalion*

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4.1.0 Introduction

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), born in a humble lower-middle class Protestant family in Dublin, remains one of the most revered pioneers of modernist British drama. Known for his radical political ideologies and satirical style, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925. The Shavian coterie is marked by an innovative and seamless blending of social consciousness with sharp satirical comedy.

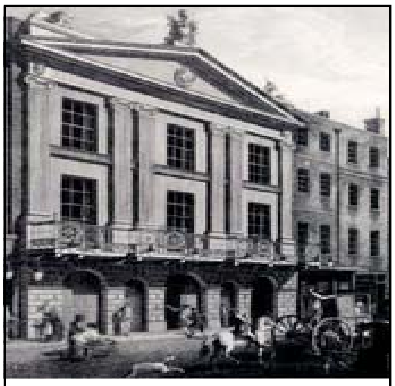
Throughout his extensive career spanning more than sixty years, Shaw has exhibited remarkable diversity in his plays. While studying Shaw's drama, you will notice certain key themes which appear recurrently in his works, such as, socialism, the hypocrisy of war, class conflicts within contemporary British society and a unique treatment of women characters. *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Mrs. Warren's*

Profession (1902), *Man and Superman* (1903), *Major Barbara* (1905), *Pygmalion* (1913) and *Heartbreak House* (1919) are among his notable works.

In this unit, you will learn about Shaw's modernism, his dramatic style and his incessant engagement with sociopolitical issues of his day through the detailed reading of one of his most celebrated plays, *Pygmalion*. In a nutshell, the main objectives of this unit are:

- To briefly acquaint you with the historical trajectory of the development of English drama since the 18th century
- To prepare a comprehensive study on the modernist philosophies of George Bernard Shaw, with special references to the influence of Henrik Ibsen on him
- To help you understand the basic tenets of the dramatic ethos of George Bernard Shaw
- To offer you a detailed textual analysis of *Pygmalion* and critical readings of the diverse themes dealt with in the play
- To equip you to handle a variety of questions on the play by providing you with a detailed questionnaire
- To enable you to interrogate further into the various complex socio-cultural issues explored in the text – such as problems of language, class conflicts, gender roles and construction of identity etc. - by offering a list of selected secondary texts

4.1.1 Developments in English Drama since the 18th century



Drury Lane theater, 1775

After the prolific outpourings of sentimental and domestic dramas of the 18th century, Britain saw a waning in the dramatic output in the early 19th century. The rise of Romanticism redirected the collective literary effort of the nation towards poetry and, to a certain degree, to prose. However, that does not imply there was no dramatic production at all. In fact, the early 19th century saw a rising demand for entertainment. Under **the Licensing Act of 1737**, Drury Lane and Covent Garden were the only two theaters in London which were allowed to stage plays (*legitimate drama*). However, numerous non-patented (unauthorized) theaters cropped up and became immensely popular. The plays produced by such theaters were called *illegitimate drama*. The Romantic age saw a considerable rise of burlesque and melodrama, which were often accompanied by musical interludes. However, in the aftermath of the War of Independence in America (1776) and the French Revolution (1789), the real impetus behind the notable dramatic productions of the early 19th century was driven by socio-political agendas. Political censorship and control over the theaters also greatly contributed to this decline in drama in the early 19th century. Celebrated Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats produced plays and lyrical dramas that were distinctly influenced by these historical events. William Wordsworth, for instance, wrote *The Borderers* (1796-97) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote *The Fall of Robespierre* (1794) in collaboration with Robert Southey. Both the plays were inspired by the French Revolution. Coleridge's next play *Osorio* (1797) was, incidentally, not approved for performance by R. B. Sheridan who was the manager of Drury Lane Theater. P.B Shelley's 1819 plays *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci* were also similar products of the poet's deep faith in the ideals of democracy, equality and liberty upheld by the French Revolution. While *Prometheus Unbound* was a **closet drama**, *The Cenci* was specifically written for the stage. However, it was rejected by Covent Garden Theater. Neither Coleridge nor Shelley saw much success as dramatists, though they produced plays throughout their career. John Keats produced historical plays such as *Otho the Great* (1819) and *King Stephen* (1819). Among the great Romantic poets of the time, only Lord Byron had direct

The Licensing Act, 1737 granted the Lord Chamberlain executive right to exert control over the Theaters, Companies and, consequently, the dramas staged in the playhouses. The Masters of Revel, or the official supervisors of all court entertainment, became direct subordinates of the Lord Chamberlain, who reserved the right to censor any plays produced during this time.

CLOSET DRAMA refers to the plays that are not intended for the stage. They are designed to be read (by a single reader or a group of readers) rather than enacted. Some celebrated closet plays are *Samson Agonistes* (1671) by John Milton and *The Dynasts* (1903-08) by Thomas Hardy.

professional theatrical connections, as he was a part of the management committee at Drury Lane. However, while he produced successful poetic dramas like *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821), he did not create plays intended for the stage. Overall, there was a distinct preference for closet dramas during the Romantic age, as they were often utilized as poetic vehicles for the authors' revolutionary political and social ideologies.

Drama revived its popularity in the Victorian age (1837-1901). The infamous Licensing Act of 1737 was relaxed in 1843, but not repealed until 1968. This period saw the rise of great playwrights like Oscar Wilde, J.M Synge and George Bernard Shaw. This era is also marked by the pivotal Irish Literary Renaissance and the establishment of the famous Abbey Theater by Lady Gregory, W.B Yeats and Synge. There is a shift from the historical and closet dramas of the earlier decades to a more naturalistic mode of writing. The plays of this time often exhibit incisive social satire which reflects the modernist philosophies and social consciousness of these writers. Comedy and slapstick melodrama continued to attract its niche audience, though the stage was now being set for a new kind of drama for a new modern world.

4.1.2 George Bernard Shaw's Modernism and Influence of Ibsen

In Module 1, you have already learned about the historical context of the rise of modernism and the key aspects associated with the art produced during the modernist era. To understand and appreciate the developmental trajectory of modern theater, in particular, you need to know about the three great authors of the late 19th century: the Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906); the Swedish dramatist - August Strindberg (1849-1912); and the Russian writer, Anton Chekov (1860-1904).

Some Important Influences on Shaw

- Henrik Ibsen
- Karl Marx
- Henri Bergson
- Jean-Baptiste Lamarck
- Nietzsche

This trio of literary geniuses heralded the advent of modernism in Europe, which was later taken up by British writers such as George Bernard Shaw, J.M Synge, Sean O'Casey and John Galsworthy. Ibsen, in particular, has been lauded by John Fletcher and James McFarlane as "the origin and impetus" of modern drama. A reading of the Shavian canon requires a close study of Ibsen's modernism, which exerted a foundational influence on Shaw. Ibsen's insistence on social freedom through individual emancipation created radically subversive and rebellious characters. In Toril Moi's assessment, his plays use theatricality to highlight the moral and philosophical ambiguities of the modern society.

Shaw's utilizes Ibsen's brand of social realism for his own creative purposes as he attempts to understand and express the uncertainty of the modern world, rising from the fractured remains of the old order. Shaw's plays served as the model for dramatists throughout the modernist period and continued to exert significant influence even after his death. One crucial aspect of Shaw's modernism was, of course, his "Ibsenism". Incidentally, William Archer, a Scotsman and one of the earliest translators of Ibsen's plays, was a close compatriot and mentor of Shaw and played a critical role in his early career as a playwright.

In his 1891 essay, *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, Shaw pays tribute to the great modernist stalwart through a detailed critical reading of Ibsen's works. Another interesting instance of his fascination with Ibsen is witnessed in his play *The Philanderer* (1893), where he brings in two opposing groups of characters - "Ibsenites and non-Ibsenites" – and manipulates them into a novel and comic confrontation. In fact, along with *Quintessence of Ibsenism,* Shaw authored two other critical volumes on Ibsen's works: *Our Theatres in the Nineties* and *The Prefaces*. Though it was Edmund Gosse, an English author and translator, who introduced the Norwegian playwright to the English readers and audience, critics like Javier Ortiz recognize Shaw as the "authentic exponent of Ibsen's message to the British public." By the 1890s, Ibsen's works gained favor with a group of English and Irish writers who were the proponents of the avant-garde 'New Theatre' of the 1880s.

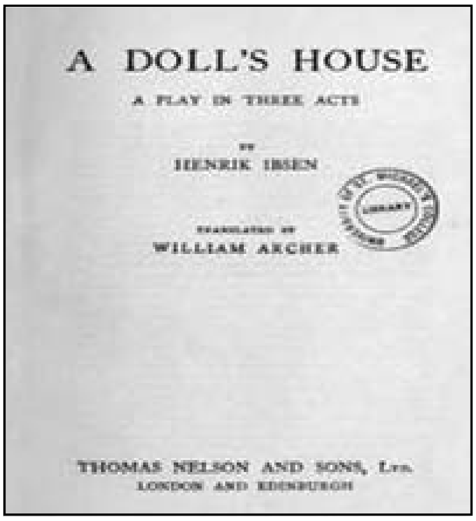
Ibsen's "message" was one of progressive social remaking, assisted by his feminist and socialist ideologies. Shaw drew inspiration from Ibsen and re-hauled the romantic tropes of the conventional "well-made plays" English theater into his own innovative "theater of ideas". You can clearly discern Ibsen's influence in several key aspects of Shaw's drama. Take the example of *Candida*, for instance. It is clearly a counter-narrative to *A Doll's House*. Candida represents the Shavian version of the New Woman, which both draws from and contrasts against Ibsen's emancipated women characters such as Nora Helmer (*A Doll's House*, 1879) and Rebecca West (*Rosmersholm*, 1886).

Critically influenced by Marx, Shaw's socialist ideals, along with his affiliation with the Fabian Society from 1900-1913, firmly established him as an iconoclast who prioritized utilitarianism over aesthetics. Shaw's socialist realism in his plays, therefore, had a very definite purpose. He sought positive and progressive social reforms. In 1976, Shaw famously claimed, "For art's sake alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence." Furthermore, Shaw invested his plays with the Irish disdain for class hierarchies, as evidenced by his ardent socialist and Fabian philosophies.

Shaw believed in a "scientific religion" - a post-Darwinian vision that he developed from the combined ideologies of significant 19th-century thinkers such as Henri Bergson ('Creative Evolution') and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (theory of Functional Adaptation) along with Schopenhauer ("will") and Nietzsche ('Superman'). Combining these various strands of thoughts, Shaw appropriated Bergson's idea of *élan vital* or life force and awaited the arrival of an ideal Nietzschean Superman (*Ubermensch*). For Shaw, the life force exists both within and without human beings, and it is by harnessing the energy of the *élan vital* through the collective "universal will", that man can evolve into the Superman, who would replace God and herald a perfect world where all moral, social and metaphysical problems would cease to exist. This Shavian ideology is most prominently portrayed in *Man and Superman*.

4.1.3 Shaw's Theater of Ideas

In this section, we will talk briefly about Shaw's theater and the context in which it was created. William Archer's 1889 translation and production of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* had already violated the complacency of the bourgeois English audience with its iconoclast heroine, Nora Helmer. Nora ruptured the Victorian ideal of the "angel of the home" by rejecting her husband and children in her quest for self-betterment. As you have learned in the earlier section, Shaw's 'theater of ideas' was born from this radicalization of the traditional English theater of "well-made plays" of the 19th century (French: *la pièce bien faite*). It discarded dramatic conservatism in favor of a new kind of narrative that would accommodate the artist's growing need to express the problems



A DOLL'S HOUSE
A PLAY IN THREE ACTS
BY
HENRIK IBSEN
TRANSLATED BY
WILLIAM ARCHER
THOMAS NELSON AND SONS, Ltd.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

of a rapidly changing world. Similarly, in *Pygmalion* (subtitled "A Romance in Five Acts") Shaw employs and subsequently deconstructs the conventional ideas and expectations associated with the term 'romance'. He creates a clever narrative where appearance and reality are often manipulated and used interchangeably.

Shaw's early plays can be broadly grouped into two categories. He published seven plays in two volumes, entitled *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant* in 1898. The first volume contained the 'Plays Unpleasant'. It was comprised of *Widowers' House* (1892), *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (written in 1893, but not performed until 1902 due to censorship) and *The Philanderer* (also written in 1893 and performed in 1902). Of these, *Widowers' House* most directly exhibits Ibsen's influence on Shaw. These morbidly satirical plays were followed by a second volume of four pleasant plays, namely *Arms and the Man* (the first of the 'Pleasant' plays), *Candida* (1897), *The Man of Destiny* (1897) and *You Can Never Tell* (1899).

The Plays Pleasant are marked by a gentle manner of narration and more or less 'happy' plot resolutions, as the name suggests. The 'Unpleasant' plays, on the hand, delivered a stringent critique against what Shaw perceived to be hypocrisy of the British audience, through his exploration of contemporary social problems. Originally, the early 'pleasant' plays intended to attract and appease the producers and audiences who were offended by his more caustic satires. Yet, in both cases, laughter is constantly threatened by a sense of unease; an unnerving quality pervades Shaw's theater that reminds the audience of the inherent ambiguity in Shavian humor.

4.1.4 *Pygmalion*: Introducing the Characters

- **Henry Higgins:** Higgins is a scion of an upper-class family and a professor of phonetics who plans to conduct a social experiment involving Eliza Doolittle, a brash and impoverished flower girl. He resolves to transform the boisterous cockney girl into a fine lady fit for high society by teaching her to speak like one in three months. He is seen as an ardent academician who views people only as viable subjects for his theories and experimentations. He diligently documents his research with photographic materials. Higgins is the creator of Higgins' Universal Alphabet, a phonetic tool with which he can identify different dialects. Though he belongs to a wealthy family and is a member of the high society, Higgins is, nevertheless, extremely critical of the rigid rules of polite society. His undertaking of Eliza Doolittle's transformation can be seen as a mockery and transgression of such aristocratic social codes. He is presented as a rude, at times immature, but well-meaning man. Higgins' preoccupation with his experiment blinds him to his own desire for Eliza and he is only brought to the realization when Eliza finally leaves him. He is the Shavian recreation of the mythic Pygmalion. [Refer to section **4.1.7: Themes and Issues**]

- **Eliza Doolittle:** Eliza Doolittle is a loud-mouthed cockney flower-girl, who catches Higgins' eye at the opening of the play while selling flowers on the streets of London on a rainy night. She does not fit the conventional mold of the romantic heroine. Her character serves as a foil to the romantic traditions of the "well-made plays" which is a significant aspect of Shaw's theater. She is a sassy, unpolished young woman who aspires to work in a flower shop but cannot get hired because of her unkempt appearance and flawed speech. She approaches Higgins and requests him to train her so that she can correct her speech. Initially, her character serves as a tool for Higgins' experiment. She retains some part of her old self by holds on to her sassiness but gradually loses her sense of identity as her transformation proceeds. She is often casually bullied and belittled by Higgins, but still desires his attention and admiration. Paradoxically, she gains respect in Higgins' eyes only when she finally becomes a self-sufficient woman who no longer requires him in her life. She is the Shavian version of the mythic Galatea. [Refer to section **4.1.7: Themes and Issues**]
- **Colonel Pickering:** Colonel Pickering is a retired military officer belonging to the upper class. He is a friend and colleague of Henry Higgins and shares the latter's love and talent for phonetics. He has authored a book called *Spoken Sanskrit*. He is a gentlemanly, sociable and compassionate man who serves as a foil to the unsocial, domineering and churlish Higgins. He is uniformly civil. His behavior to Eliza is courteous, even when she is a lowly flower girl. He participates in Higgins' experiment by betting money on it. He promises to cover the entire expense of the experiment if Higgins succeeds in transforming Eliza into a fine lady. However, while Higgins imparts the technical knowledge of phonetics to correct Eliza's flawed speech, it is Pickering's respectful attitude towards her that helps her gain a sense of self-worth and dignity.
- **Alfred Doolittle:** Alfred Doolittle is Eliza's father and an elderly but energetic man of lowly birth. He works as a dustman and speaks with a welsh accent. He is shown to be a rapacious and greedy man, devoid of conscience. He accompanies Eliza when she arrives at Higgins' house and

proposes to sell her to Higgins for five pounds so that he may buy alcohol. His excesses, brashness and unapologetic greed appeal to Higgins' sense of humor and he laughingly asks Alfred to become a lecturer on moral reform, since he is an expert on middle-class morality. While, Alfred's lack of a moral compass is evident from his apathetic attitude to his daughter, he is peculiarly honest about himself. He lacks the trappings of civilized language and, therefore, lacks the deception and hypocrisy that is born of polite language.

- **Mrs. Higgins:** Mrs. Higgins is the mother of Henry Higgins, who loves her son but is not blind to his vagaries. She is a highborn woman and often dissuades Higgins from visiting her when she entertains guests. She disapproves of the Eliza Doolittle experiment and often treats Higgins and Pickering as thoughtless juveniles. She is clearly dubious about the outcome of the experiment and is justifiably worried about Eliza's future. Henry Higgins clearly sees his mother as a model of female excellence. While Higgins lacks self-awareness as he is immersed in his illusions of greatness, Mrs. Higgins is shown to be highly perceptive and practical.
- **Freddy Eynsford-Hill:** Freddy is a pleasant but weak-willed young man, who is dominated by his mother and sister. The Eynsford-Hills are of genteel birth. But with their dwindling finances, they are struggling to uphold their image of gentility in order to fit into the upper-class society. Henry Higgins summarily dismisses Freddy as a "fool". He falls in love with Eliza and courts her when she enters the polite society. In Shaw's controversial prose sequel, he marries Eliza. [Refer to section **4.1.8: Pygmalion in Performance**]
- **Mrs. Pearce:** Mrs. Pearce is Henry Higgins' housekeeper. She is charged with Eliza's care when she first arrives at his house. She is clear-sighted and intelligent and foresees the problems that would arise for the Eliza after the experiment is over. She is sympathetic to Eliza from the very beginning.

4.1.5 *Pygmalion*: Plot Summary

A group of people take shelter at St. Paul's church in Covent Garden on a rainy summer night where Eliza Doolittle, an impoverished Cockney girl, is selling flowers. Mrs. Eynsford-Hill is present, along with her daughter, and she is waiting for her son, Freddy, who has gone to call to a cab. Eliza enters into an altercation with Freddy who has bumped into her and scatters her wares. Colonel Pickering enters. She tries to convince the Colonel to buy flowers. He politely declines but offers her some money. Eliza is warned by bystanders that there is a man behind her who is noting down everything she says. The man turns out to be Henry Higgins, a famous professor of phonetics. He is capable of figuring out people's birthplaces from their accents. Higgins boasts that he can transform the sassy and graceless Eliza into a lady within months, by helping her acquire polite speech and social graces that can fool the London society into believing that she is a duchess. It turns out that the Colonel, himself a noted linguist, has come to London with the sole purpose of meeting Higgins.

The next day, Eliza comes to Higgins' home and requests him to give her lessons which would improve her speech and help her get a job in a flower shop. Higgins makes fun of her, but eventually agrees, as the idea of remaking Eliza into a 'duchess' intrigues and challenges him. Colonel Pickering also excitedly participates in the project by wagering that he would bear the expense of the experiment if Higgins can fulfill his claim within the stipulated time. He instructs Mrs. Pearce to give Eliza a bath and get her new clothes. Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's greedy and alcoholic father, comes to Higgins' house and offers to trade Eliza to him for five pounds which he intends to spend on drinks. Higgins, amused by the man's caustic views on life and society, gives him the money after bantering with him for a while. While leaving, Doolittle sees Eliza, who is now bathed and clean, but cannot recognize her.

Eliza's training begins. After a few months of learning proper ways of speaking, Eliza faces two trials. In the first, she is formally introduced to the Eynsford-Hills at Mrs. Higgins' house on her 'receiving day'. Freddy is immediately attracted to Eliza, though he does not recognize her as a flower girl he had bumped into at Covent Garden. Her painstakingly correct yet inappropriate speech causes some bewilderment as well as amusement among the assembled guests. In this humorous episode, Eliza narrates the death of her aunt in rigidly correct English, but it contains explicit details that belie the apparent politeness of her speech. Mrs. Higgins, who disapproves of the Eliza Doolittle experiment, warns Higgins and Colonel Pickering that Eliza is not ready for society.

The next phase of the plays opens with the two gentlemen returning from a party with Eliza. They are in high spirits and in a self-congratulatory mood as they have successfully passed off Eliza as a Duchess at the Ambassador's garden party. This was the second trial. They contribute their success solely to their knowledge of phonetics and ignore Eliza's own efforts in the matter. Eliza realizes that since the experiment is now over, her future is uncertain. She fears that she will have to return to her previous pitiable existence. She becomes angry at Higgins and throws his slippers at him. Higgins does not understand the cause of Eliza's anger and suggests that she may now marry someone. Eliza returns all her clothes and jewelry and Higgins assures her that they all belong to her now.

Next morning, Higgins arrives at his mother's house to look for Eliza who has run away. He is extremely worried. An enraged Alfred Doolittle follows Higgins. It is revealed that Higgins had falsely boasted to someone about Mr. Doolittle's aptitude as the "most original moralist" and a deceased millionaire had left all his money to him in a trust. Mrs. Higgins is hiding Eliza from Higgins and Colonel Pickering and scolds them for their cavalier treatment of her feelings. Eliza enters the drawing room and warmly thanks Colonel Pickering for his respectful behavior to her. She is, however, unforgiving towards Higgins and threatens that she would abandon him to work for a rival phonetician. Higgins tries to convince her to return with him. But she declines. In the end, however, it is uncertain which path Eliza would follow, since she has been inducted into the ways of the upper-class, has a newly gained sense of self-respect and independence and also a prospective groom in the besotted Freddy.

4.1.6 *Pygmalion*: Detailed Act-wise Summaries

✓ Act 1 Summary

On a stormy summer night in London, several people are caught in the heavy rains and gather under a portico of St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden. Among the assembled people, are Mrs. Eynsford-Hill, her daughter, Clara and her son, Freddy. Freddy is a weak-willed young man, who is bullied by his mother and sister into looking for a taxi for them in the rain. He bumps into a flower girl and scatters her wares. Surprisingly, the young woman addresses him by his name and exclaims: "Nah, then, Freddy: look wh'y' gowin', deah." Mrs. Eynsford-Hill is morbidly curious to find out how a lowly flower girl knows Freddy's name. The flower girl – Eliza – demands recompense for the ruined flowers, and Mrs. Eynsford-Hill pays her despite Clara's protests. It is then revealed that Eliza calls all men by generic names like Freddy or Charlie.

Eliza encounters Colonel Pickering – "an elderly gentleman of amiable military type" – who has arrived under the portico for shelter, and tries to sell her flowers. He refuses to buy them, as he has no change. Eliza persists. At this point, a nearby hawker brings Eliza's attention to a strange man who had been taking note of all that she does and says. Afraid of being mistaken as a prostitute soliciting a prospective client, Eliza self-defensively exclaims: "I am a good girl, I am." Her loud claims that she is allowed to sell flowers there draws the crowd's attention. The man taking notes interjects at this point and asks Eliza to "shut up". He is Professor Higgins, an expert on phonetics, and the notes he had taken is a shorthand transcript of Eliza's cockney speech.

Colonel Pickering and the other people present begin to question Higgins about the specifics of his talents. Higgins demonstrates his aptitude by accurately identifying the birth place and residence of people based on their accents. The Colonel reveals himself as an enthusiast of phonetic skills and languages, and claims that he trains people in proper speech so that they may elevate their social ranks. Higgins then boasts that he can transform Eliza into a duchess in three months: "in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party." Colonel Pickering then introduces himself as the author of *Spoken Sanskrit* and as "a student of Indian dialects" to Higgins, the author of *Universal Alphabet*. It turns out that they are admirers of each other's works and that Pickering has come to England specifically to meet Higgins and the latter had planned a journey to India to meet the colonel. As they are about to depart together for supper, engrossed in their mutual interest, Eliza interrupts them and asks for money for rent, Higgins is skeptical about her claim but nevertheless pays her with some coins. This unexpected gain allows Eliza to take the taxi brought by Freddy, only to find that his mother and sister have abandoned him.

✓ Act II Summary

The second act opens at Higgins' laboratory at Wimpole Street at 11 a.m. next morning. Higgins discusses his work with Colonel Pickering, demonstrating the use of various recording devices and phonetic tools for scientific experimentations such as a phonograph, laryngoscope, 'tiny brogan pipes with bellows', as Shaw specifies in his stage directions to the scene. Colonel Pickering admiringly compliments Higgins' on his work. At this point, Mrs. Pearce interrupts their discussions to inform Higgins that a young woman has come to meet him. She refers to the woman as

“quite a common girl […] Very common, indeed.” She chidingly reproves Higgins: “but really you see such queer people sometimes—you’ll excuse me, I’m sure, sir.”

Eliza, the flower girl, enters in an odd, but moderately clean outfit. Higgins dismisses her from the outset and asks her to leave. Eliza refuses to be bullied. Higgins’ recognizes her and is irritated by her presence. He rudely claims that “She’s of no use” as he has already learned all about her “Lisson Grove lingo”. His behavior to Eliza is contrasted against Colonel Pickering’s sympathy. Eliza had been struck by Higgins’ claim that he can transform her into a duchess and wants to take speaking lessons from him so that she may get a job at an upscale flower shop and be “a lady”. Higgins’ dismissive attitude to Eliza can also be attributed to the fact that he makes no distinction between classes or genders, as Shaw mentions in his stage direction.

With innate politeness, Colonel Pickering respectfully addresses Eliza as “Ms. Doolittle” and offers her a seat. She offers Higgins a shilling (twenty-five cents) an hour for lessons. This is a very small sum of money, but Higgins realizes that, for Eliza, the amount is indeed significant. He considers her request. Colonel Pickering is also intrigued and wagers that if Higgins can fool the high society into believing that Eliza is a duchess at the Ambassador’s garden party, then he will bear all costs of the experiment. The scene vacillates between the conversations among these three characters as Higgins alternately berates and makes fun of Eliza, she threatens to leave him and Colonel Pickering tries to mediate. Higgins offers to host Eliza at his home for six months, where she will be trained in proper speech and polite manners. He instructs Mrs. Pearce to take her for a bath and provide her with clean clothing. Higgins estimates that he can turn Eliza from a “draggletailed guttersnipe” into a Duchess in “six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue.”

Mrs. Pearce asks Higgins to be conscious of his manners as a young woman is staying with them. She wonders what would befall Eliza at the end of the experiment. Colonel Pickering, concerned for Eliza’s virtue, conscientiously, inquires after Higgins’ motives and intentions. Higgins reveals that he has never had many private interactions with women because they become a bother and a “damned nuisance” when they enter a man’s life. He claims to be a “confirmed old bachelor”.

At this point, Alfred Doolittle arrives to purportedly save his daughter from ruining her honour. However, instead of protesting, Higgins tells Doolittle to take away Eliza at once. Alfred Doolittle is flustered since he does not want her back but only intends to extort money from Higgins. He wants five pounds to spend on alcohol. When Colonel Pickering berates him for having no morals, he says: “What’s a five-pound note to you? What’s Eliza to me?” He identifies himself as one of the “undeserving poor” and cynically expounds on middle-class morality. Doolittle’s Welsh accent and his brash dishonesty fascinate and amuse Higgins. He gives him the money.

Eliza enters wearing a clean blue kimono. Alfred cannot recognize his daughter and is surprised to find her look so good. Eliza warns the men that her father must have come for money that he would waste on drinks. She wants to show off her new clothes to the neighborhood but is chided by Higgins for her vanity. The men agree that they have undertaken a tough job.

✓ Act III Summary

The scenes open in Mrs. Higgins’ drawing room. Higgins visits Mrs. Higgins, his mother, on her receiving day or “at-home day”. Mrs. Higgins is displeased with Higgins’ sudden arrival as she deplores his lack of polite graces and social manners. “Nonsense,” Higgins impatiently remarks, “I know I have no small talk; but people don’t mind.” In fact, Higgins had promised his mother that he would not appear before her guests. Higgins explains his wager with Colonel Pickering. He tells Mrs. Higgins that he has invited the subject of his experiment - a girl he had “picked up” – and wants her to observe how and what she speaks. Mrs. Higgins is reluctant to receive an impoverished commoner in her drawing room. Now, do you remember the Eynford-Hills from Act 1? The parlor maid enters and informs them of Mrs. Eynsford-Hill’s arrival, along with Miss Clara Eynsford-Hill. Higgins vaguely remembers their accents from their encounter at Covent Garden but cannot exactly recall them. They are soon followed by Colonel Pickering and Freddy Eynsford-Hill. Higgins is excited to get a large audience to showcase and gauge Eliza’s improvement.

Eliza is announced by the parlor maid. She greets everyone with painstakingly accurate “How do you do”-s. She proceeds to make torturously pedantic conversation: for instance, in response to “Do you think it will rain?” she replies, “The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.” She exhibits her carefully-tutored speech with great success until Mrs. Eynsford-Hill brings up the topic of influenza which propels her into an involved diatribe about an aunt’s death from flu. Her old cockney accent re-emerges and she inadvertently reveals embarrassing details of her past life such as Alfred’s alcoholism. Freddy, already besotted with Eliza, mistakes her stilted attempts at genteel conversation as the "new small talk" and is deeply impressed by her.

Freddy offers to walk Eliza home, but she intends to take a taxi. Like Freddy, his sister Clara is also extremely impressed with Eliza and attempts to emulate her unusual speech. After the guests have departed, Mrs. Higgins scolds Higgins, saying that Eliza would never learn to be genteel if she lives in his crude and graceless company. She inquires after Eliza's living situation with him and sarcastically calls the two men "a pair of pretty babies playing with [their] living doll". After Higgins and Colonel Pickering have left, Mrs. Higgins angrily mourns their idiocy and exclaims "men! men!! men!!!" in an exasperated expletive.

✓ Act IV Summary

The act opens in Higgins' house at midnight after the ambassador's garden party where he has introduced and convincingly passed Eliza off as a duchess to the assembled attendees with resounding success. The scene opens as Higgins and Colonel Pickering congratulate themselves on the successful completion of the experiment, though Pickering has lost their original bet. They are excited about their triumph. Eliza enters the room. She is well-dressed but "she is tired: her pallor contrasts strongly with her dark eyes and hair; and her expression is almost tragic." She is "brooding and silent." Her depressive mood goes unnoticed by Higgins and Colonel Pickering as they continue to talk excitedly about the garden party. Higgins looks for his slippers and Eliza silently goes out of the room to bring them. She places them at his feet. Higgins is surprised by the sudden appearance of his slippers, as he has not noticed Eliza returning with them. It is almost as though he doesn't even register her presence. Higgins exclaims, "Thank god, it's over", which causes Eliza to flinch "violently; but they take no notice of her".

They ignore Eliza completely and discuss her performance without including her in the conversation. When Colonial Pickering claims that Eliza didn't seem nervous at all at the party Higgins says:

> "Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No, it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadn't backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore."

As Higgins goes on complaining to Colonel Pickering about how tiresome the whole duration of the experiment has been, “Eliza’s beauty turns murderous.” Colonel Pickering, however, expresses his enjoyment in the charade and Eliza’s competence in carrying it off successfully. He decides to retire for the night, followed by Higgins.

Eliza loses her temper at their dismissive attitude towards her and throws herself on the floor in anger. Higgins re-enters looking for his slippers. Furious, she hurls them at him. Shocked at this burst of violence, he pulls her up from the floor. Eliza angrily calls him a selfish brute and asks - “Why didn’t you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it’s all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you?” Argument ensues. Eliza expresses doubt and fear about her future now that the experiment is over. She asks: “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?” Higgins callously dismisses her concerns: “What does it matter what becomes of you?” Then he tries to pacify her by saying that she can either get married or she may open a flower shop. Eliza tells Higgins that she wishes he had left her where she was.

Eliza eventually calms down and asks if her clothes belong to her or Colonel Pickering who has paid for them. She says that she does not want to be accused of thievery if she keeps them for herself. Higgins tells her that everything except the jewels (which were rented) belonged to her. She takes off her jewelry and gives them to Higgins for safe-keeping. She also returns a ring Higgins has gifted to her. Enraged, he throws it into the furnace. Eliza, frightened, covers her face and implores him to not hurt her. Higgins feels wounded and angry at her behavior and he leaves the room after calling her a “heartless guttersnipe”. Eliza is triumphant in achieving this small victory over Higgins.

✓ Act V Summary

The scene is set in Mrs. Higgins’ house. The parlor maid announces the arrival of Higgins and Colonel Pickering and informs Mrs. Higgins that they are telephoning the police downstairs. Higgins enters, frantic and “in a state”. He is looking for Eliza who has left his home without informing him and has come back to collect her clothes in the morning. Higgins is upset at Mrs. Pearce for letting her leave without his knowledge. Mrs. Higgins supports Eliza’s right to leave if she wishes so, and Higgins counters by saying that he cannot find anything since Eliza took care of his appointments and such.

Colonel Pickering enters. He informs Higgins that the police inspector is suspicious of their motives and has “made a lot of difficulties” instead of helping them. Mrs. Higgins reprimands them for their childishness and for thoughtlessly setting the police after Eliza.

The maid announces the arrival of Alfred Doolittle. He enters, dressed magnificently in fashionable clothes. Alfred is enraged at Higgins and accuses him of having ruined his life and for having “Tied [him] up and delivered [him] into the hands of middle-class morality”. It is revealed that Higgins had jokingly referred to Doolittle as “the most original moralist at present in England” to a wealthy American who wanted to donate five million pounds to Moral Reform Societies. On Higgins’ reference, he contracted Doolittle to speak on moral matters for the Wannafeller Moral Reform World League for an annuity of three thousand pounds. He claims his life has been burdened with “middle-class morality” and has forced him to discard his careless, irresponsible ways. Higgins and Doolittle quarrel as each claim ownership over Eliza. Mrs. Higgins summons Eliza and asks Doolittle to step outside on the balcony so that she is spared the shock of seeing her father so transformed.

Eliza enters. Colonel Pickering pleads with Eliza to return. She thanks him for his courteousness towards her. She claims that it was his gentlemanly and chivalrous behavior that taught her to respect herself and to become more ladylike. He contrasts Higgins dismissive attitude with the Colonel’s attentive politeness:

> “[…] the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she’s treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.”

Higgins warns that she will “relapse” in a matter of weeks without his guidance. Doolittle enters. Eliza is deeply shocked by her father’s altered appearance. He informs Eliza that he is going to St. George’s church to marry her stepmother, who has also fallen victim of middle-class morality. Doolittle invites Mrs. Higgins and Colonel Pickering to attend his wedding as well. They leave to get ready.

An argument ensues between Eliza and Higgins. He claims that he is equally rude to everyone and therefore cannot be particularly accused of treating Eliza badly. He offers to adopt her as his daughter or, alternatively, to marry her off to Pickering. His blindness to Eliza’s true feelings angers her and she disclaims any wish to marry

Pickering and even Higgins, who is closer to her age. Eliza casually refers to Freddy who regularly sends her love letters. Higgins is annoyed. She further enrages him by claiming that she'd marry Freddy and take up a position as an assistant with Professor Nepean, who is Higgins' professional rival. Perversely, Higgins is deeply impressed by Eliza's show of spirit which attracts him more than her submissiveness:

"You damned impudent slut, you! But it's better than sniveling; better than fetching slippers and finding spectacles, isn't it? [Rising] By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this."

Mrs. Higgins comes to take Eliza to the wedding. Before leaving, Higgins reverts back to his old self and asks her to order some ham and cheese, a pair of reindeer gloves and a tie to "match that new suit". She responds by rudely asking him to buy them himself and leaves. The play ends with Higgins jovially informing his mother that "she'll buy 'em all right enough". However, it is uncertain whether Eliza will ultimately follow his directive (which will indicate her reconciliation with Higgins) or not.

4.1.7 Themes and Issues

- **The Title of the Play:** The title of the play is famously derived from the tenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which features a sculptor from Cyprus named Pygmalion. He crafts an ivory statue of a woman which embodies his vision of ideal femininity and beauty. Pygmalion is so enamored by the perfection of his own creation that he falls in love with it. He passionately prays to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, who is moved by his devotion and brings the statue to life, in the form of a beautiful woman. Pygmalion names his beloved Galatea and marries her. They later bear a son named Paphos. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*Pygmalion*, 1770; a play), Johann Wolfgang Goethe (*Pygmalion*, 1767; a poem) and Franz von Suppé (*Die Schöne Galathee*, 1865; an opera) have also utilized the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea in their works.

Shaw appropriated the myth to serve certain very specific purposes. While Alfred Doolittle remains Eliza's biological "creator", she is presented in the play as Higgins' "creation" - in the sense that he gives "birth" to a new/better version of her. This betterment is, of course, a social elevation, achieved through stringent lessons in polite speech and manners. Unlike the classical myth, the characters do not find happiness in love and matrimony. Instead, it is Higgins' treatment of her that drives Eliza away and propels her to seek self-respect and independence. Eliza, incidentally, is truly brought to life, only when she rejects the control and authority of her male creator, Higgins. These digressions from the classical Greek myth allow Shaw to create a narrative that subverts the traditional expectations of a romantic comedy or a fairy tale, by implicating both the creator and creation in the complicated questions surrounding ownership and agency.

- **Romance:** In section 4.1.3, you have already briefly learned about Shaw's Theater of Ideas and the subversive treatment of 'romance' in his plays. Shaw's *Pygmalion* is subtitled 'A Romance in Five Acts'. The term 'romance' is used to highlight the play's deviations from the traditional ideas associated with the label. In his infamous prose sequel to the play, Shaw claims that the term indicates an improbable or a fantastical situation (such as Eliza's transformation from a commoner to a lady) and has nothing to do with love.

Unlike, Ovid's myth, the play does not end with matrimony, nor does it offer a satisfactory resolution of the conflict between Shaw's Pygmalion (Higgins) and Galatea (Eliza). The traditional fairy tale structure is disrupted in the end as Eliza's love for Higgins is left unspoken and unfulfilled. While there are clear indications in the play about Higgins' affection towards his "creation", he makes no discernible effort to establish a romantic relationship with Eliza. Though he tries to lure her back with promises of adopting her as a "daughter" and even quarrels with Alfred Doolittle about his ownership over Eliza, he never confesses his love for her.

Higgins is no perfect hero: he is harsh, unfeeling and lacking in empathy. He is a "confirmed old bachelor", conspicuously devoid of social graces. Similarly, Eliza, with her brash tongue and lowly antics, disrupts the stereotype of a romantic heroine. She is enraged by Higgins' dismissal of Eliza's own effort at re-creating herself and assumes that hertransformation is a product of his genius only. Moreover, her active pursuit of socio- economic advancement also belies the passivity associated with women protagonists in traditional romances. Thus, while the 'rags to riches' story does have elements of a fairytale romance, the uncertainty and poignancy of the ending operates as a discordant reminder of Shaw's infamous ambiguity about love and marriage. The title sets up the audience for failure. The matrimonial expectation suggested by the title is thwarted in the ending as Eliza destroys the masculine fantasy of a silent, submissive helpmate.

- **Women and Gender Roles:** The Shavian heroines are notorious for subverting masculine expectations by conforming to the traditional tropes which attempt to appropriate women as the stereotypical ‘angels of the hearth’, who are perpetually submissive and silent. The evolution of Shaw’s women characters, from Elizabeth Warren to Candida to Eliza Doolittle to Joan of Arc, show an increasing demand for greater social mobility and freedom. Shaw championed the cause of women’s liberation by creating heroines who reject the institutional imposition of inferiority by challenging prescribed gender roles. From Raina’s naïve romanticism and hero-worship, Candida’s marital compromise with Morell to Eliza Doolittle’s vocal rejection of male patronage and domination, the development of Shaw’s heroines clearly exhibit his impatience with the unequal institution of marriage.

Critics believe that Shaw’s attitude towards women had been coloured by his complex relationship with his mother. Disappointed by her husband’s alcoholism and the overall financial struggles of the Shaw family, Lucinda Elizabeth Shaw withdrew emotionally from both her husband and her son, lavishing her affections on her two daughters instead. Shaw’s eagerness for his mother’s approval and love and her emotional distance from his affected own history with women. Shaw’s mother, incidentally, left her husband and her unhappy marriage to settle with a music teacher named Vandeleur Lee. Eliza, too, leaves Higgins and her doomed love for him in search of a more fulfilling future. Shaw’s cynicismtowards women is reflected in Higgins’ misogyny: “I find that the moment I let a woman make friends with me, she becomes jealous, exacting, suspicious, and a damned nuisance.” Higgins’ relationship with his mother is indicative of this autobiographical influence as Shaw molds his women according to the model set by his mother. Interestingly, in Act III, Higgins says to Mrs. Higgins: “Oh, I can’t be bothered with young women. My idea of a lovable woman is something as like you as possible.”

Reportedly, Shaw wrote the character of Eliza Doolittle specifically with Mrs. Patrick Campbell in mind. He was, at the time, romantically involved with the actress. However, there is much controversy regarding Shaw’s sexuality, since, despite his many high-profile love affairs, his forty-five-years long marriage was chaste and devoid of sexual contact. Shaw’s rejection of sexual relationships can be seen as an inherent distrust or fear of women. This is borne out by his treatment of women in his plays as well his tendency to idealize women. He envisioned his ideal woman as “the huntress”, suggestive of a kind of predatory femininity that preys on men. His wariness about sex is clearly exhibited in the following remark by Shaw:

"The quantity of Love that an ordinary person can stand without serious damage is about 10 minutes in 50 years." Nevertheless, Shaw remains staunch in his support for women's progress and liberation.

It is interesting to note that Eliza's own sense of self-hood and identity is a product of her induction into the masculine realm of "proper speech" by Higgins, who trains her to be "a lady". Moreover, even her nascent but strong sense of self-respect is a product of male validation, derived from Colonel Pickering's politeness towards her. However, Higgins' attempt to establish his ownership over Eliza as his self-proclaimed 'creation' ("I'll make a woman out of you") is rejected by her and she embarks on a quest for independence and self-validation. Eliza's own strength of character is made evident in her choice to utilize her polite education to create an identity for herself. She leaves her 'creator' behind and becomes her own creation. Furthermore, Eliza volubility thwarts the masculine fantasy of female submission and silence represented by Ovid' Galatea as well as the matrimonial expectation suggested by the deceptively innocuous title.

- **Class and Social Hierarchies:** Class is a defining element in *Pygmalion.* You have already read about Shaw's socialist ideologies in the earlier segment on Shaw's modernism. Socialism is a political ideology that envisions and aims to achieve a classless society. Shaw's own plays reflect the deeply segregated social system and class hierarchies of Victorian England. Higgins attitude to the characters shows him to be equally dismissive of all characters. Colonel Pickering, in contrast, is equally polite to all. Higgins, Mrs. Higgins and Colonel Pickering represent the moneyed upper class. Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins parlor maid represent the servant class.

However, the main difference between the classes, as portrayed in *Pygmalion*, seems to be language and money. The rapid industrialization since the 18th century had already led to the growth of a middle class, who held considerable economic power. Birth was no longer enough to ensure a person's status. The Eynsford-Hills are representative of the declining genteel class, struggling to survive on the fringes of upper-class society. Alfred Doolittle's elevation from a low born dustman to a rich middle-class man is achieved solely through an influx of money and the assumption of a mantel of morality. Eliza's own transformation, on the other hand, leaves her oddly stranded without a particular class she could belong to. Her lack of finances does not allow her to fully become an upper-class lady and her newly acquired civility and social know-how leaves her unfit for the lower class. While both Alfred

Doolittle and Eliza gain a social mobility, through money and language respectively which allow them to climb the social ladder, they are no longer comfortable in their own skin and are unsure of their own identities. Eventually, Eliza realizes that her transformation has only isolated her and robbed her of a sense of belonging. This is the crux of Shaw's piercingly ironic take on class in *Pygmalion*.

4.1.8 *Pygmalion* in Performance

Pygmalion was first performed in German (translated by Siegfried Trebitsch) at Hofburg Theater in Vienna in 1913. It premiered in London in 1914 at His Majesty's Theater with Herbert Beerbohm Tree playing Henry Higgins and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Eliza. Eliza's unpolished language and lack of respectability created quite a stir among the audience. *Pygmalion* was undeniably a hit. However, Tree, who was also the stage manager, subsequently altered the ending without consulting Shaw, to appease the audience. He portrayed a more romanticized resolution between Eliza and Higgins. Shaw vehemently protested the alteration of the ending and fought to reinstate his original ending till 1938, when *My Fair Lady* was being filmed. Shaw was reportedly horrified and enraged at Tree's alternate ending during the 100th screening of the play in which Higgins throws a bouquet of roses to Eliza from a window. He had angrily exclaimed: "Your ending is damnable; you ought to be shot."

From the very first screening of *Pygmalion*, audience and directors alike have disagreed with Shaw and conspired to recreate an ending which would unite the two as lovers. In fact, in order to protect the integrity of the play and Shaw's feminist ideology, he appended a prose sequel to the 1916 edition of *Pygmalion* entitled "What Happened Afterwards". This sequel blasts the audiences' expectation of a marriage between Higgins and Eliza. Shaw explains that the term "romance" in the title indicates the improbability of the events unfolding (such as Eliza's transformation from a flower girl to a lady) and not a fairy tale story of love and romance. He is disinterested in such "happy endings" and will not allow smart, young and beautiful Eliza to end up with Higgins, who is more than twenty years older than her. He does not wish to appease the sentimentality of people.

In Shaw's sequel Eliza marries Freddy who adores her. Colonel Pickering helps them set up a flower shop. The rigid concepts associated with class are challenged here as Freddy, a well-born man, enters trade, which is looked down upon by the upper class. However, due to the young couple's inexperience, the colonel is often obliged to rescue them financially. Higgins spitefully enjoys Freddy's failures. However, they implement new strategies such as hiring help and introducing food items in their wares and, through their perseverance, the business gradually becomes profitable. Eliza remains a regular presence at Wimpole Street and in Higgins' life. Though her interest in Higgins is still there, she maintains a prudent emotional distance from him. Her affection for Freddy and Colonel Pickering remains steady. Her relationship with Higgins and Alfred Doolittle remain strained. As Shaw succinctly puts it, "Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable."

4.1.9 *Pygmalion* in Popular Culture

The earliest cinematic rendering of the play came in 1938. Shaw wrote the screenplay for the film, but the director covertly changed the ending into a romantic uniting of Higgins and Eliza. Ironically, Shaw won an Oscar for this movie. *Pygmalion* has inspired multiple theatrical and cinematic spin-offs, the most well-known being the 1956 eponymous Broadway musical featuring Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews which in turn inspired the equally famous 1964 Audrey Hepburn starrer film *My Fair Lady*. Both these productions had opted to forego Shaw's intended ending, replacing it with reconciliation between Eliza and Higgins. Both these adaptations were immensely popular. In fact, the musical went on to set a record as the longest running show in the history of musical theater.

4.1.10 Summing Up

Pygmalion remains one of the most beloved and frequently staged plays among Shaw's coterie. As the play's controversial production history proves, there was a general discomfort about the ending of the play which points towards the deep-rooted gender bias in society that Shaw was targeting. The image of a woman rejecting the attractions of romance and the comfort of a marriage was a subversive statement that did not sit well with the majority of the audience. At a time when women still did not have the right to vote, the idea of a heroine like Eliza, who rejects the life of silent obedience and compromise expected from women and chooses to prioritize her self-respect over love, caused considerable discomfort. The alteration of the ending by subsequent directors and actors shows a repeated attempt to transform Shaw's feminist vision of women's liberation into a lukewarm, fairy tale "romance".

- *Pygmalion* recounts a low-born, impoverished woman's journey to personal and economic freedom.
- Though the title of the play emphasizes the role of the male creator – "Pygmalion" – it is Shaw's Galatea who is the true protagonist of the play.
- Eliza Doolittle escapes the shackles of class and conventional gender roles to emerge as a stronger individual who does not require masculine validation or support (in Shaw's sequel, Freddy and Eliza remain equal partners in their business and marriage).
- The root of disparity among classes is shown as being mainly economical. As Alfred Doolittle's elevation from a poor dustman to a wealthy moralist proves, in matters of social mobility, money trumps birth and familial lineage.
- Eliza carries the echoes of Ibsen's Nora. She embodies the Shavian ideal of the strong and spirited 'New Woman', who eschews the burden of societal expectations and, thereby, subverts societal oppression.

4.1.11 Comprehension Exercises

● Long Answer Type Questions-20 Marks

1. Describe Eliza Doolittle's character with reference to her evolution in the course of the play.
2. Examine the character of Henry Higgins. Comment on his relationship with Eliza Doolittle.
3. Examine the character of Colonel Pickering. Comment on his relationship with Eliza Doolittle.
4. Comment on Shaw's treatment of gender roles in his play *Pygmalion*.
5. Critically comment on the title of Shaw's *Pygmalion*. How does Shaw appropriate Ovid's myth in his play?

● Medium Length Answer Type Questions-12 Marks

1. Analyze Henry Higgins' role as 'Pygmalion' in Shaw's eponymous play.
2. Examine and analyze two minor women characters in *Pygmalion*. Critically discuss their reaction to and effect on (if any) Eliza.
3. Comment on the character of Alfred Doolittle?

4. In Act V, Alfred Doolittle says that he has been ruined at "the hands of middle-class morality". Discuss the significance of this statement.
5. Comment on the ending of Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

- **Short Questions: 6 marks**
  1. Where did the Eliza, Higgins and Colonel Pickering first meet?
  2. What is the subtitle of Shaw's *Pygmalion*?
  3. Can *Pygmalion* be categorized as a 'romance'? State reasons for your answer.
  4. Who does Eliza finally marry? Why do you think Eliza marries this person?

4.1.12 Comprehensive Reading

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