Pygmalion: A Play in Five Acts

By Bernard Shaw

Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, United States, 2014. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 254 x 178 mm. Language: English. Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Pygmalion by Bernard Shaw - A Classic Play in 5 Acts - Pygmalion is a play by George Bernard Shaw, named after a Greek mythological character. It was first presented on stage to the public in 1912. Professor of phonetics Henry Higgins makes a bet that he can train a bedraggled Cockney flower girl, Eliza Doolittle, to pass for a duchess at an ambassador's garden party by teaching her to assume a veneer of gentility, the most important element of which, he believes, is impeccable speech. The play is a sharp lampoon of the rigid British class system of the day and a commentary on women's independence. In ancient Greek mythology, Pygmalion fell in love with one of his sculptures, which then came to life. The general idea of that myth was a popular subject for Victorian era English playwrights, including one of Shaw's influences, W. S. Gilbert, who wrote a successful play based on the story called Pygmalion and Galatea first presented in 1871. Shaw also would have been familiar with...

Reviews

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-- Prof. Lavern Brakus
When George Bernard Shaw wrote "Pygmalion" more than a half century ago, it seemed unlikely that his little play would eventually be converted into one of the great musicals of our time, "My Fair Lady," and a motion picture that captured numerous Academy Awards. Yet such popularity should not have been surprising since succeeding generations of readers and playgoers find continual relevance in the story of a speech therapist who successfully converts an untutored flower girl into a dahl. This final act brings together many of the themes that we have examined in the other acts, such as what constitutes the determinants of social standing, the fault of taking people too literally, or for granted, the emptiness of higher English society, etc. With regard to the first of these themes, Eliza makes the impressively astute observation that "the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated." One can see this whole play as an intentional deconstruction of the genre of Romance, and of the myth of Pygmalion as well. Previous section Act IV Next section Analysis. Test your knowledge. Take the Act 5 Quick Quiz. Take a study break. Every Shakespeare Play Summed Up in a Quote from The Office. Take a study break. Every Shakespeare Play Summed Up in a Quote from The Office. The characters in the play: 1. Henry Higgins â€“ Pygmalion, a Prof. of Phonetics. 2. Colonel Pickering â€“ A student of Phonetics, studied the dialects of Sanskrit. 3. Eliza Doolittle â€“ The flower girl, the student of Prof. Higgins. 4. Alfred Doolittle â€“ the father of Eliza. 5. Mrs Higgins â€“ the mother of Prof. Higgins. 6. Freddy Hill â€“ the lover of Eliza 7. Mrs Pearce â€“ the housekeeper of Higgins. 8. Mrs Eynsford Hill â€“ the mother of Freddy and Clara. Now we will study the story of the play in detail. We will try to analyse each act. The play falls into five acts. The first act functions as a prologue to the play. It reveals the main theme of the play: i.e. education. The succeeding acts develop the action. They are related to Elizaâ€™s education, her two tests and her rebellion. ACT I It was a rainy night in London. Need help with Act 5 in George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion? Check out our revolutionary side-by-side summary and analysis. The play questions such attitudes, without coming to any definitive answer. Active Themes. Eliza tells Pickering that she is grateful to him for teaching her proper manners, unlike Higgins, who set a bad example for her. Pygmalion â€“ a play that deals with class, education and womenâ€™s rights â€“ is underpinned by Shawâ€™s socialist politics. The play questions such attitudes, without coming to any definitive answer. Active Themes. Eliza tells Pickering that she is grateful to him for teaching her proper manners, unlike Higgins, who set a bad example for her. Pygmalion â€“ a play that deals with class, education and womenâ€™s rights â€“ is underpinned by Shawâ€™s socialist politics. He regularly wrote speeches and pamphlets, like this one, for socialist political think tank, the Fabian Society. View images from this item (4). Audiences expected Pygmalion, especially given its subtitle â€“ A Romance in Five Actsâ€™, to conclude with a marriage. In a way it does, although the marriage in question is that of Elizaâ€™s father Alfred to his common-law wife â€“ rather than that of Professor Higgins to Eliza. Shaw was always adamant that a marriage between Eliza and Higgins would not only compromise Elizaâ€™s independence but also be a plain travesty.