

***AGENT OF SOCIAL  
CLIMBING IN  
“PYGMALION” BY  
George Bernard Shaw***

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# Abstract

- The writer tries to explore about the importance of education as a social climbing agent in “Pygmalion” by George Bernard Shaw. The purpose of this study is to remind how important education is. The theories used are textual, contextual, and hypertextual by using close reading method. The result of this analysis is a discovery relating the importance of education in social climbing process reflected in Pygmalion. To conclude, the writer wanted to tell th value of education by analyze the drama Pygmalion as a proof by using several theories and by close reading method.
- *Keywords: Education, Pygmalion, Social Climbing, George Bernard Shaw*

# Introduction

- Pygmalion is a play written by George Bernard Shaw. The characters of this play are Professor Higgins, Colonel Pickering, Elizabeth Doolittle, Mrs. Pearce, Alfred Doolittle, Mrs. Higgins, Mrs. Eynsford Hills, Clara, and Freddy. The play mainly tells Eliza's transformation from a street flower seller to a lady which succeed through her study under Professor Higgins.

# Methodology

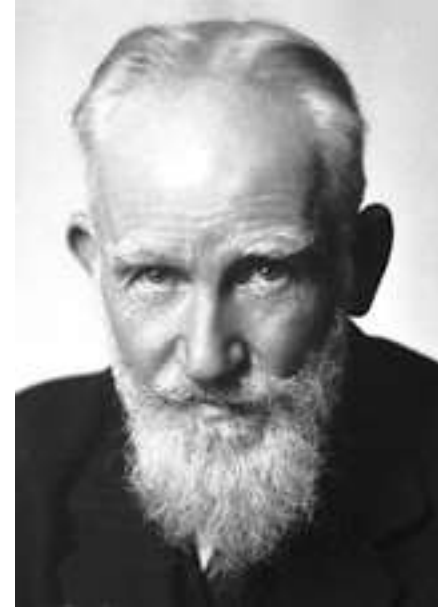
- Analyzing Eliza's transformation from no one to a lady.
- Analyzing the role of education in ascending Eliza's social status.

# Research Object

- The objects of research are sorted into a material and formal object. Material object in this study is *Pygmalion*. While the formal object of the study is *the role of education in social climbing*.

# Biography of George Bernard Shaw

- Lived from 1856-1950
- Very outspoken about politics and often criticized for his radical views
- Won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925
- Believed that the **transformation of the individual** could lead to the transformation of society



# Synopsis of Pygmalion

Eliza, the main protagonist of the play was once a flower girl in Convent Garden. Her life changed one night when it was raining; she met Mrs. Eynsford Hill and her children, Freddy and Clara. Then Freddy got away for a cab so they could go home as fast as they could. Mrs. Eynsford Hill, Clara, Eliza, and another person were sheltering and talked each other, Mrs. Eynsford and Clara were not too sympathetic to Eliza. Professor Higgins, a phonetician, was there too; felt interested in Eliza's dialect, he took note of every saying from Eliza which made him suspected as a detective and that caused some fuss among the sheltering people. After a short explanation from Higgins, and because the rain had stopped, the crowd dismissed themselves. Colonel Pickering, a student of Indian dialects, was interested in the way Professor Higgins explained his job then became an acquaintance with him. Felt that they could get along well; they decided to make a study project together at Higgins' place, leaving Eliza behind. Right after that, Freddy came with a cab for his mother and sister, but they already gone; Eliza took the advantage then seized the cab to take her to Higgins' place.

Next day, at 11 A.M, Higgins and Pickering were listening to phonetic instruments when Eliza came. His housekeeper, Mrs. Pearce brought her up. Eliza was there to offer a deal with Higgins that she would pay Higgins for teaching her how to talk properly. At first, Higgins refused, but right after been challenged by Pickering to transform a common flower girl into a fine lady, he accepted Eliza as a student. He ordered his housekeeper to clean her when Mr. Doolittle, Eliza's father as well as a dust man, came and asked for money, because Higgins and Pickering held his daughter. £ 50 was paid and Doolittle asked for permission when he saw Eliza and together, the three of them exclaimed in surprise. After her father gone, Eliza told that her father only threatened Higgins and Pickering, but they did not mind that, they only wanted to polish Eliza so he could become a fine lady.

After some months of hard training, Higgins visited his mother to ask her to allow Eliza to join her garden party, so Eliza could be presented. At first, Mrs. Higgins refused, but after persuaded by her son, she agreed to allow Eliza. The surprising part of the garden party was the guests; Mrs. Higgins invited Mrs. Eynsford Hill and her children while Higgins wished for more decent guests. Later at the party, Pickering and Eliza joined. The party went well; Eliza talked two common subjects which had been told by Higgins and Pickering, but when she talked off that subject her sayings were a bit odd. Eliza left when Higgins gave her a sign and after her, the other guests were asked for permissions. While only three of them, Higgins, Pickering, and Mrs. Higgins, they began to discuss Eliza's performance. Mrs. Higgins said that the girl must be banished immediately or she would make a trouble for both Higgins and Pickering. Both of them laughed and said that Mrs. Higgins should not worry about that.

After the garden party, Eliza had been taken to several events like a dinner party and to an opera. And by the time, Eliza had been proven that her way of speaking was as fair as any lady. Arrived at their house, Eliza felt irritated because Higgins never praised her for all of her hard works. She complained to Higgins who never treated her well. Those complaints ultimately leaded them into a fight. Higgins felt that he never did wrong to Eliza. She decided to left Higgins then.

Eliza ran away to Mrs. Higgins place after the fight. The next day, Higgins sprung up at Mrs. Higgins place, informed her that Eliza had gone. Mrs. Higgins did not surprise, she scolded at Higgins that he made all of this happened. She ordered Higgins to listen to her and apologized. At the middle of conversation, Mr. Doolittle, Eliza's father came, this time to take Eliza away. Mr. Doolittle became a famous rich man because of his new job at a school of Moral Reform Language. He intended to take away Eliza because he knew that her daughter did not happy. Eliza took her father's invitation to live with him, and as a proof, she decided to come to his marriage that day. Became depressed, Higgins came back to his house.



# Discussion

The importance of education can be seen in when we compare the speech which Eliza uses in the very first act and the act following it. Like in the first act, Eliza uses her cockney accent: “There’s menners f’ yer! Te-oo banches o’ voylets trod into the mad” and slang “I can give you a change for a tanner”. Eliza’s screaming habits in the act two also indicated that she was not educated well: “Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ow”.

Then, in the following act, Eliza seemed talked more properly. For example when she met Mrs. Higgins for the first time, she greeted her, unlike back then when she met Higgins, she did not greet him even she know her inferiority. “How do you do Mrs. Higgins? Mr. Higgins told me I might come”. The education can be seen affecting the people’s way to see the new Eliza.

# Conclusion

To conclude, the play suggests that education can affect people's affection towards other people. We can see it by judging Eliza's transformation and the opinions of people around them. As stated that Eliza turned to be more polite to everyone, for example to Mrs. Higgins who she just encountered at that time. The opinion of the public seemed to be improved after she dressed beautifully and talk properly.

# Reference

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