



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC
SOLUTIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTERS AND THEMES OF
PYGMALION

Baxtiyorova Ziyoda

Student of TMC Institute

2nd year student

*Supervisor: **Kamola Jumayeva***

PhD, Associate Professor at TMC Institute

George Bernard Shaw was born on 26 July 1856 in Dublin, Ireland. He was an Irish playwright, literary critic and writer. He moved to London in 1876 and started his career as a journalist and critic before becoming one of the best-known playwrights of his time. Shaw wrote more than sixty plays and most of them were to do with social problems, equality, education, and human behavior. He is best known for “Pygmalion” written in 1912. In 1925 he received the Nobel Prize in Literature for his great work in literature. George Bernard Shaw died on November 2, 1950 at the age of 94. One of the main reasons Shaw wrote the piece was not only to tell a story and to point out the problems in society to the reader. His goal was to show that a person’s worth does not depend on their background, social status or the way they speak. Shaw uses the story of the main character Eliza Doolittle to discuss education, equality, self-respect and personal development and to get the reader to think about how society judges people.

I was drawn to Professor Henry Higgins from the very beginning of the play as a phonetician who thinks about human speech and can learn about a person’s background from what they are saying. In the opening scenes he looks at people in the dark and writes down the features of their pronunciation and instantly classifies them based on their accents. I started to think he judged people too soon because of how they spoke. This made me think how much of a lot of people in our society are judged by first impressions and nobody really thinks about them and their personality or their life story. Later on, Colonel Pickering, a polite and kind man who, like Henry Higgins, is interested in phonetics, is the next person we meet. But unlike Higgins, he treats Eliza Doolittle with kindness and respect. Even in the most ordinary of conversations, Pickering speaks to her as a person worthy of respect and not as a poor flower girl. Eliza is a flower seller and struggling to earn money. She is poor and uneducated but she dreams of changing her life and becoming a better person. Her determination impressed me because not everyone is willing to fight for a better future despite many difficulties.

Another interesting character for me was Eliza’s father Alfred Doolittle. At first, it may seem that he agrees to let his daughter stay with Higgins in exchange for money, but I realized that he did not want to keep Eliza in poverty. Instead, he realized that staying with Higgins would give her a chance to improve her life. Doolittle received money from Higgins and spent it immediately on alcohol which is indicative of his irresponsible and





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carefree personality. But I couldn't judge him entirely because he'd grown up in very difficult circumstances and had lived from day to day.

I also liked Henry Higgins's mother, Mrs. Higgins. She was a wise and fair woman. She was very much like her son in that she treated Eliza with respect and understanding from the start as she did not need to be rude to Henry as her son was; she also knew that Henry was rude and didn't care about Eliza, and so she was never afraid of pointing this out. She was there for Eliza at the end and she did what she had to do for Eliza and really loved her. I think people like Mrs. Higgins make people believe in themselves and we all know what we deserve.

And by the end of the play Eliza was no longer the poor young woman we had met in the beginning. Her determination and hard work not only changed how she spoke but also what she thought of herself and her life. She learned to respect herself, become more confident and felt that she was worthy of dignity. And what struck me more was that not only her appearance changed, but her inner world changed as well.

After reading Pygmalion I realized how often we look at one another's appearance and accent, social status without getting to know them. I believe Shaw wanted to show that a person's background does not determine their future. When we do this play made me really proud and showed me that everyone deserves respect, no matter their background or financial status.

I think George Bernard Shaw designed a work that is still relevant today. In Pygmalion, he showed us that a person's true value is not based on class or background but on character, determination and self-respect and that is why this play still forces us to think hard about these values we have in life.

