

A brief summary on the play pygmalion



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Brief Summary of Pygmalion One of the main strengths of Pygmalion is Shaw's ability to show the intricacies of human nature, societal prejudices and expectations along with the power of transformation. He does so using dialect and strong, solid word choices.

Even though the central plot of Pygmalion is Liza's transformation, the sub-plots of myth, gender relations and social identity create a powerful piece of writing. His ability to interweave these social issues into the central theme is impressive.

Another of Shaw's strengths is not only the comparison of language and dialect, but his actual use of it in the play. When Higgins reveals he can tell where someone is from based on his or her dialect, a secret is revealed, but even Shaw's language and use of words tells the reader a lot: "Simply phonetics. The science of speech. That's my profession: also my hobby. Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby! You can spot an Irishman or a Yorkshireman by his brogue. I can place any man within six miles. I can place him within two miles in London. Sometimes within two streets."

Shaw's use of dialect illustrates how accents differentiate people, and how an accent can mark you as a certain heritage and class. It is interesting how the note taker wrote down her words in such a gibberish manner that even she could not tell what it said. Shaw uses this to show that we don't see ourselves as others see us.

Shaw's description of social classes is fascinating, as well. Not only does he use social structure as a medium for showing that class can be taught versus being bred, he shows the inner workings of various classes. By using social structure as a medium for showing that class is taught rather than bred,

Shaw opens the reader to the possibility of eliminating pre-set judgments. He teaches that we are all equals.

Not only does Shaw focus on social classes, but gender classes as well.

Doolittle makes it clear when he says, “ Listen here, Governor. You and me is men of the world, aint we?” By doing so he implies that they are in a similar class as men. That man is superior to woman simply because of association.

Shaw’s subtle use of so few words to convey such a strong opinion is impressive.

Another strength in Pygmalion is the way the play shows the power of another’s influence. It shows how others’ opinions or expectations influence others: That when someone projects their impression upon another, the person internalizes and accepts the behavior as true.

Showing the extremes of society is a powerful way in which Shaw shows the duality of human nature. How most people only show one face to the world, but in reality, we all have both sides in our nature. When Higgins tells Doolittle he is either an honest man or a rogue, Doolittle replies, “ A little of both, Henry, like the rest of us: a little of both.”

One aspect of the play that could be considered negative is the ending. The ending draws a lot of criticism for the lack of a “ happy ending”. Some critics feel that the lack of romanticism in the ending was done by Shaw as a spiteful measure. Still, Shaw shows the reality of human existence and that artistic rules can be broken.

The only other possible negative aspect of the play was that it was not quite as complex as some of Shaw’s other works. Still, Pygmalion is a complex, meaningful work.

The entire play is thought provoking. Shaw’s ability to use the power of the

<https://assignbuster.com/a-brief-summary-on-the-play-pygmalion/>

word, both through his writing, and through dialect creates a piece of work that teaches as well as entertains.