UNIT 4 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will first analyse Shaw's prose style and dialogues in *Pygmalion* including individual speech rhythms when noticeable of major characters. Subsequently, we shall look at the reception of *Pygmalion* including film versions and significant criticism, observing in the process major critical approaches to the play.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Shaw marshals the resources of his prose to aim at 'effectiveness of assertion." He also recreates the actual speeches of his characters by reproducing their grammar and pronunciation. Within limits he gives distinct speech rhythms to many of his dramatist personae. Literary and musical allusions and verbal humour further contribute towards Shaw's goal.

Shavian criticism has been diverse but a pattern of approaches can be traced there. With the audience, *Pygmalion* itself was a modest success, but its "unauthorised" musical adaptation *My Fair Lady* was an astonishing box office hit. We would like you to keep these in mind as you look at Shaw's style and his reception.

4.2 SHAW'S PROSE STYLE AND DIALOGUES: EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSERTION: RECREATION OF ACTUAL SPEECHES; SPEECH RHYTHMS OF CHARACTERS: LITERARY AND MUSICAL ALLUSIONS; VERBAL HUMOUR

Bernard Shaw in his famous " Epistle Dedicatory to Arthur Bingham Walkley" which serves as his preface of *Man and Superman*, wrote, "Effectiveness of assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none: he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Disprove his assertion after it is made, yet its style remains."[1] Years later, Shaw commented, "I have never aimed at style in my life: style is a sort of melody that comes into my sentence by itself. If a writer says what he has to say as accurately and effectively as he can, his style will

take care of itself, if he has a style."[2] Nevertheless, Shaw strives for this "effectiveness of assertion" in a variety of ways. It is sometime through a sheer abundance of words. Thus he describes Clara in his "epilogue" ("sequel") as follows," she was, in short, an utter failure, an ignorant, incompetent pretentious, unwelcome, penniless, useless little snob" (p.289)[3] Sometimes, Shaw shows an abundance of words of negation. Thus if we look at the first page of the play, we observe negations in the second speech - the Mother says "Not so long"- , the third speech - a bystander speaks, "He won't get no cab not until half past eleven"-, , the fourth speech -the Mother says, "We can't stand here until half-past eleven. It's too bad"-, and the fifth speech -when the bystander retorts, "Well; it aint my fault, missus' (p.197).

Consider the beginning of Shaw's sequel to the play: "The rest of the story need not be shown in action, and indeed, would hardly need telling if our imaginations were not so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs..."(p.281) Let us look at the beginning of Act IV:-

HIGGINS [calling down to Pickering] I say, Pick: lock up, will you? I shan't be going out again.

PICKERING. Right. Can Mrs. Pearce go to bed? We don't want anything more, do we?

HIGGINS. Lord, no! (p.252)

Both the passages are replete with negations.

Ohmann rightly refers to the "pattern of negation that gives structure to Shaw's arguments". They also contain what Ohmann calls "a number of other forms of denial and opposition."[4] Expressions like "too bad" (p.197) and "so enfeebled" (281) cited above illustrate these forms of denial.

Sometimes, Shaw reveals a special fascination for certain sounds. An apt example comes from his description at the very beginning of the play:-

"Covent Garden at 11.15 p.m. Torrents of heavy summer rain. Cab whistles blowing frantically in all directions. Pedestrians running for shelter into the market and under the portico of St. Paul's Church." (p.197) one can notice here the preponderance of |t| and |d| sounds conveying the harshness of rain, the confusion engendered by it and the sad plight of those seeking shelter. Another telling illustration occurs at the beginning of Act III.

> "It is Mrs. Higgins's at-home day. Nobody has yet arrived. Her drawing room, in a flat on Chelsea Embankment, has three windows looking on the river; and the ceiling is not so lofty as it would be in an older house of the same pretension." (p.236)

Here, too, the same sounds are repeated and the effect is one of a prosaic, dry manner. Perhaps it even goes with the personality of Mrs. Higgins, a formidable character.

Shaw paid special attention to the printing of his plays, often carefully using different kind of types and spaces between them for emphasis. Thus, when Higgins asks "The Gentleman" Do you know Colonel Pickering, the author of spoken Sanscrit?" He answers "I am Colonel Pickering" (p.206), emphasising his identity. The speech of Mrs. Pearce categorically telling Higgins not to swear before Eliza and citing instances of his swearing is printed as follows: "what the devil and where the devil and who the devil -" (p.223) Later as Higgins meets Freddy at his mother's (Mrs. Higgins's) at home, he tells him, " I've met you before somewhere", clearly stressing the word "you" (p.240) After Eliza leaves, Higgins asks his mother, "Do you mean

that my language is improper?" (p.247) He is evidently shocked at the possibility of anyone regarding his language, unlike more common people's as improper.

Shaw deviated from the standard spellings of several words, justifying his departures from the conventional "correct" spellings on the ground that he was trying out a more "logical" and "scientific" spelling of the word by approximating to its actual sound. Thus he spells "Shakespeare" as "Shakespeare", "Show" as "Shew", till as "'til". Here one can see the point of "Shakespeare" but not of "Shew". He replaces "you are" with "youre". He also omits apostrophes from such expressions as "haven't" "can't, "wasn't and don't " respectively. Here perhaps Shaw's contentions that in real speech we are not conscious that we are dropping the letter "o" from "not".

Although Shaw acknowledged that his characters had the "power of expression"..." that differentiated me (or Shakespeare) from a gramophone and camera", [5] he in his own way in *Pygmalion* tried in his dialogues to recreate the speeches of people in real life, thus ignoring the "correct" spellings and instead spelling the words as characters pronounce them. An example is the flower girl in Act I saying "Will ye-oo py me f'them?" (p.199) instead of "will you pay me for them?" Shaw goes on to explain. [Here with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London] (p.199) The dialogues also contain expressions such as "I knowed" (p.204), "A Copper's nark" (p.201), "a tec" (p.202), "toff" (203) etc., each one aiming at a recreation of exact speech.

In his attempt to faithfully reproduce the "actual" speeches of characters, Shaw also writes dialogues which are replete with the common grammatical mistakes of spoken English. Thus a bystander tells the Mother at the beginning of the play, "He won't get no cab not until half past eleven" (p.197). The above sentence contains not only double but triple negatives. Double negatives can also be found in Eliza's sentence, "I don't want to have no truck with him".(203) Later on a bystander tells Eliza "of course he aint" and asks Higgins: "what call have you to know about people what never offered to meddle with you?" (203) Eliza also uses the tenses wrongly e.g. "But I done without them" (p.217). She combines double negative with wrong use of pronouns when she talks of her father's drunkenness "It never did him no harm what I could see" (p.244) Her father Doolittle himself uses expressions like "You and me is men of the world aint we?" (p.228), misusing the numbers.

Although, it cannot be said of *Pygmalion* that every character has his own speech rhythm, one can discern certain distinguishing features in the speeches of some of the characters. Thus Higgins - as Mrs. Pearce and his mother coroborate -swears a lot and use expressions that show his peremptory, impatient manner. One of his favourite expressions is "By Georgy" which he utters frequently in his dialogues. To take up a few examples, when he tried to tempt Eliza to learn proper English speech from him in order to pass off as a Duchess, he tells her, "By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before Ive done with you". (p.217) Later when he runs into Eynsford Hills at his mother's place, he finds them useful for experimenting with Eliza's social skills and says, "Yes, by George" We want two or three people. You'll do as well as anybody else." (240) Soon after this, when he suddenly realizes where he had met Freddy, he says, "By George, yes: it all comes back to me! (They stare at him) Covent Garden! [Lamentably] what a damned thing! (p.242) In the very last Act, when his mother tells him, "She says she is quite willing to meet you on friendly terms and to let by gones be by gones," Higgins is indignant and says "Is she, by George? Ho! " (p.267) Just before the end, when he wonders at the transformation in Eliza's personality, he says, "By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you: and I have. I like you like this." (p.280) In all these five examples, culled out of many, "By George" is an exclamation indicating Higgins's surprise or excitement or sense of discovery or anger.

Higgins's expressions are strong, fitful and often exclamatory. Thus after Eliza utters, "Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ow-oo", he responds with "Heavens! What a sound!" (p.206) Earlier, he tells Eliza, "Oh, shut up, shut up. Do I look like a policeman?" (p.201) He is generally quite direct. He tells Mrs. Hill, "Ha! ha! What a devil of a name! Excuse me. [To the daughter] you want a cab, do you?" (p.204) once in a while, this directness turns into picturesque, colourful expressions which describe people vividly e.g. "I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe" says he to Pickering and Mrs. Pearce (p.215).

Higgins generally prefers simple and compound sentences to complex ones. He tells Pickering "simply phonetics. The science of speech. That's my profession: also my hobby' (p.205). When Eliza comes up to his house, he simply exclaims, "Be off with you: I don't want you." 9p.211) He says to his mother, when his is looking for Eliza, "Of course. What are the police for? What else could we do?" (p.261) soon after, as Doolittle surprises him with his accusation, he retorts, "Youre raving. You're drunk. Your mad." (p.263). However, Higgins can be longwinded or complex, when he wants to be e.g. he tells Eliza, "And you shall marry an officer in the Guards, with a beautiful moustache: the son of a marquis, who will disinherit him for marrying you, but will relent - when he sees your beauty and goodness (p.219) His rhetorical manner can easily include a sentence like "I should imagine you won't have much difficulty in settling yourself some-where or other, though I hadn't quite realized that you were going away." (pp. 256-57)

In contrast, Pickering tends to have more indirect and convoluted expressions. e.g to the notetaker (HIGGINS), "Really, sir, if you are a detective, you need not begin protecting me against molestation by young women until I ask you" (p.202) The indirectness usually indicates his courtesy and politeness. Thus he asks Higgins, "May I ask, sir, do you do this for your living at a music hall?" (p.203) When Eliza uses the word "bloody", Pickering talks about "something to eliminate the sanguinary element from her conversation." (p. 247)

Eliza with a different background has another "mode of speech". Sometimes, her lingo is extremely colourful e.g. when talking about the death of her aunt at Mrs. Higgins's "at-home", she says, "my father he kept ladling gin down her throat till she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon." She continues, "What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What became of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in." Immediately Mrs. Eynsford Hill has to ask, "What does doing her in mean?" (p.243)

As an assertive person, Eliza invariably repeats certain words and phrases for emphasis e.g. she says to Higgins, "your a great bully, you are .... I never asked to go to Buckham Palace, I didn't. I was never in trouble with the police, not me." (p.221) she ends this speech with "I'm a good girl-" a statement that she must have repeated several times in the play. In fact in Act II, Higgins gets so exasperated with her that he has to say, "Eliza, if you say again that youre a good girl, your father shall take you home." (p.233).

Her father, Doolittle, on the other hand, can be quite rhetorical as Higgins points out by saying "this chap has a natural gift for rhetoric" (p.226) He tells Higgins and Pickering "What am I, Governors both? I ask you. What am I? I'm one of the undeserving poor: that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up agen middle class morality all the time. ... I don't need less than a deserving man: I need more. I don't eat less hear hearty than him; and I drink a lot more. I want a bit of amusement, cause I'm a thinking man. I want cheerfulness and a song and a band when I feel low. ... Will you take advantage of a man's nature to do him out of the price of his own daughter what he's brought up and fed and clothed by the sweat of his brow until she's growed big enough to be interesting to you two gentlemen? Is five pounds unreasonable? I put it to you; and I leave it to you: (pp.

229-30) Andrew Kenney refers to Shaw's "Comic-didactic bravura speech for a 'ventriloquist' like Doolittle...."[6] Shaw himself compared Doolittle's oration on middle class morality to Falsteff's speech on honour.[7]

However. when Doolittle gets very excited, he uses like Higgins very short sentences e.g.
... see here! Do you see this? You done this.
HIGGINS. Done What, man?
DOOLITTLE. This, I tell you. Look at it. Look at this hat.
Look at this coat.
PICKERING. Has Eliza been buying you clothes?
DOOLITTLE. Eliza! Not she Not half! .Why would shy buy me clothes?" (p.262)

Pygmalion, like many plays of Shaw, is replete with literary allusions, in fact references to not only literature but other arts as well. Thus Higgins, who admires Milton and writes "a little as a poet on Miltonic lines," quotes from Milton when he tells Pickering about Alfred Doolittle, "observe the rhythm of his native woodnotes wild" (p.226) In his "epilogue" or "afterward" to the play, Shaw, when referring to H.G.Wells writes, "Age had not withered him, nor could custom stale his infinite variety in half an hour" (p.291) The allusionhere to Cleopatra of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleoptra* not only describes Wells but also parodies Shakespeare. A comparison with the captivating Cleopatra shows how Wells looks by contrast and it also deflates Cleopatra, the last phrase "in half an hour" clearly adding a touch of bathos to the entire description and undermining both. Pickering talking of Eliza's perfect musical ear, alludes to Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Monckton (p.249). Here he not only refers to Eliza's sensitivity but also enriches the texture by bringing in the context of musical history. A similar effect is produced when at the beginning of Act IV, after returning from the successful party, Higgins "begins half singing, half yawning an air from Le Fanciulla del Goden West"- (a piece by Puccini) (p.252). A little different is the description of the response of the Director of the London School of Economics to the appeal of Elizaa and Freddy to "recommend a course bearing on the flower business." Shaw writes, "He, being a humorist, explained to them the method of celebrated Dikensian essay on Chinese Metaphysics by the gentleman who read an article on china and an article on Metaphysics and combined the information. He suggested that they should combine the London School with Kew Gardens" (292-93). Here the added dimension from Dickens, not only enriches the texture but also mildly deflates the Director. The fact that the original is comic certainly reduces the possibility of parody but it does not altogether abolish it.

As briefly mentioned in unit 3.3 a great deal of humour in our play is verbal and Shaw exhibits great ability to play with language to evoke laughter. To take up a few examples, when Mrs. Pearce tells Higgins not to "swear before the girl," the dialogue proceeds as follows:-

HIGGINS [indignantly] I swear! [most emphatically] I never swear. I detest the habit. What the devil do you mean? MRS. PEARCE [stolidly] That's what I mean, Sir. You swear a great deal too much. I don't mind your damning and blasting, and what the devil and where the devil and who the devil- HIGGINS. Mrs. Pearce: this language from your lips! Really!" (p.223).

Then she indirectly tells him not to continue using the word "bloody."

MRS. PEARCE. Only this morning, Sir, you applied it to your boots, to the butter and the brown bread.

HIGGINS. Oh, that! Mere alliteration, Mrs. Pearce, natural to a poet." (223)

In Act III, when Higgins opens the door violently and enters his mother's drawing room, Mrs. Higgins scolds him, "what are you doing here to-day: you promised not to come" (p. 237) The humour here arises from someone being told that he is not welcome on the at-home day. A little later, when Eliza begins talking of the weather, she says "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."

Responds FREDDY "Ha! Ha! How awfully funny!" (p. 243) [8] In fact, Eliza's reference to her father pouring gin down her aunt's throat and then her drinking gin like "mother's a milk" makes the entire conversation extremely humorous. Freddy "is in convulsions of suppressed laughter" (p. 244) A little later, after Eliza leaves, Higgins and Pickering talk about her to Mrs. Higgins:-

> "PICKERING. We're always talking Eliza.
> HIGGINGS. Teaching Eliza.
> PICKERING. Dressing Eliza.
> Mrs. HIGGINS. What!" (pp. 248-49)

In the last Act, as Doolittle condemns Higgins for writing to Ezra D Wannafeller about his (Doolittle) being "the most original moralist at present in England" and thus making a gentleman of him, he says: "And the next one to touch me will be you, Henry Higgins. I'll have to learn to speak middle class language from you, instead of speaking proper English." (261) Higgins, reacting to his mother's view that Doolittle can now look after Eliza, exclaims, "he can't provide for her. He shant provide for her. She doesn't belong to him. I paid him five pound for her". (p. 265) He implies that he could buy an adult female for five pounds! Soon, as Mrs. Higgins tells her son, "If you promise to behave yourself, Henry, I'll ask her to come down. If not, go home;"... He replies, "Oh, all right. Very well. Pick: you behave yourself". (267) Obviously, Higgins cannot realize that he is the only person whose behaviour is improper. After Eliza comes down, he tells her "Don't you dare try this game on me. I taught it to you; and it doesn't take me in. Get up and come home; and don't be a fool." (p.268) His mother responds, "Very nicely put, indeed, Henry. No woman could resist such an invitation." (p.269) She of course uses irony. Interestingly the media personalities, the audiences, the critics have been unable to resist the invitation to respond to *Pygmalion*.

4.3 CRITICAL APPROACHES TO SHAW AND SCREEN RESPONSES TO *PYGMALION*

There have been phases in the reception of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*: if we ignore many theatre reviewers and journalistic critics, much of whose criticism was ephemeral, rather than long lasting, we encounter first of all eminent contemporaries: men of letters, theatre personalities and social, political, ethical thinkers writing on his plays. They are followed by more "academic" critics. Later, there were two revivals of Shaw, one after his death and the other at the time of his centenary. The more recent criticism has been more ideological, embracing Feminist and Post-colonial approaches as well-much of it following the publication of Holroyd's monumental biography of Shaw.

The major contemporaries writing on Shaw included G.K. Chesterton (1909) and Frank Harris (1931). A detailed account of the early criticism can be found in T.F. Evans, ed. *Shaw: The Critical Heritage* (1976), which traces critical responses to Shaw over a period of time. In the 30s and 40s the notable studies were by H.C. Duffin, *The Quintessence of Bernard Shaw* (1920; rev.ed. 1939) Maurice Colbourne, *The real Bernard Shaw* (1930) which approaches him from a performer's angle.

S.C.Sen Gupta, *The Art of Bernard Shaw* (1936) and Edmund Wilson, "Bernard Shaw at Eighty," *Triple Thinkers* (1939). Slightly later appeared Eric Bentley, *Shaw: A Reconsideration* (1947), C.E.M.Joad, *Shaw* (1949), A.C.Ward, *Shaw* (1950). A.C.Ward also edited and wrote useful introductions to many Shaw plays.

The significant biographical studies written before Shaw's death were by Archibald Henderson *Shaw: His life and Works* (1911) *and Bernard Shaw: Play boy and Prophet* (1932) and Hesketh Pearson, *Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality* (1942). William Ervine's *The Universe of G.B.S.* (1949) is a worthwhile critical biography.

There was a spate of studies following his death and later his centenary. To begin with the relevant biographical studies, Archibald Henderson added to his earlier writings *George Bernard Shaw: Man of the Century* (1956). Hesketh Pearson brought out the enlarged edition in 1961. St. John Ervine's *Bernard Shaw: His Life, work and Friends* (1956) was received as a standard life. These book admirably supplemented Shaw's autobiographical work Sixteen Self-Sketches which appeared only a year before his death. Stanley Weintraub not only came out with *Private Shaw and Public Shaw: A Dual Portrait of Lawrence of Arabia and GBS* (1956) but also edited *Shaw: An Autobiography 1856-1898* (1969). A fine study of Shaw in his historical, social, political background was by Ivor Brown *Shaw in his own Time* (1965)

Major books on Modern Drama that contained chapter's -often perceptive chapters - on Shaw included Eric Bentley's *The Playwright as Thinker* (1946), Ronald Peacock, *Poet in the Theatre* (1946) Francis Ferguson. *The idea of a Theater* (1949), Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (1952) revised as *Drama from Ibsen to Brechtin* (1968) T.R.Tenn *The Harvest of Tragedy* (1956), J.L. Styan, *the Dark Comedy* (1962) and Robert Brustein, *the Theatre of Revolt* (1964). However, many of these have not even touched upon *Pygmalion*, let alone devoted a few pages to the analysis of our text.

The significant full length studies of Shaw's drama to appear during this period included L.Kronenberger *George Bernard Shaw: A Critical Survey* (1953), H. Nethercot, *Men and Supermen: The Shavian Portrait Gallery* (1954) - a discussion of Major Shavian characters, Richard Ohmann, *Shaw: The style and the Man* (1962) - an analysis of his style as the vehicle of his attitudes and goals, Martin Meisel, *Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theatre* (1963) - a landmark study, Audrey Williamson, *Shaw: Man and Artist*-1963, R.M. Roy, *Shaw's Philosophy of life* (1964). Colin Wilson's *Bernard Shaw: A reassessment* (1968), a remarkable study of his life and works analysed him to an extent from an existential perspective.

The most important critical anthology of the 50s and 60s was R.J. Kaufmann's *G.B.Shaw: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1965) in the 20th Century view series. Among the contributors, it had the playwright Bertolt Brecht, the psychologist Erik H. Erickson and distinguished critics like Eric Bentley and G.Wilson Knight.

R. Mander and J.Mitchenson's (edited) *Theatrical Compansion to Shaw* (1954) provides perspectives on Shaw on stage. C.B. Purdom's *A Guide to the Plays of Bernard Shaw* (1963) performs a similar function, although it is written by only one author. In addition to describing the life and Time of Shaw, it also summarises and comments on individual plays.

This generation of Shaw criticism ended with Leion Hugo's *Bernard Shaw: Playwright and Preacher* (1971) and Maurice Valency's *The Cart and the Trumpet: The Plays of Bernard Shaw* (1973). The new studies that emerged with novel approaches comprised of Margery Morgan *The Shavian Playground: an Exploration of the Art of George Bernard Shaw* (1972). Alfred Turce, Jr; *Shaw's Moral Vision : The Self and Salvation* (1976), Robert F. Whitman, *Shaw and the Play of Ideas*

(1977), C.D. Sidhy, The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Bernard Shaw and J.L.Wisenthal, the Marriage of Contraries: Shaw's Middle Plays (1974). A separate mention must be made of Rodelled Weitraub, ed. *Fabian Feminist: Bernard Shaw and Women* (1977).

Later on, the Feminist Approach to Shaw was continued in J.Ellen Gainer's *Shaw's Daughters: Dramatic and Narrative Construction of Gender* (1991) and Sally Peters, *Bernard Shaw: The Accent of the Superman* (1996) - a biographical study. However, the monumental biography of Shaw was Michael Holroyd's Bernard Shaw in four volumes, Bernard Shaw 'The Search for Love' (I), Bernard Shaw 'The Pursuit of Power' (II), Bernard Shaw 'The Lure of Fantasy' (III), The Last Laugh which also forms part of Vols IV and V *The Shaw Companion* (1988-92).

The other major books from new perspectives were Arthur Ganz, *George Bernard Shaw* (1983) and David J.Gordon, *Bernard Shaw and the Comic Sublime* (1990). Among the seminal critical anthologies were Harold Bloom, *George Bernard Shaw: Modern Critical Views* (1987), Daniel Leary, ed. *Shaw's Plays in Performance* (1983) and Christopher Innes, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw* (1998) - the last one including articles also from the perspectives of Feminism and Post-Colonial Theory. Tracy C. Davis *George Bernard Shaw and the Socialist Theatre* (1994) locates the plays in the wider social, cultural, historical and ideological context. The critical response, to Shaw, as we have seen, has remained alive and vibrant and there may be a spurt as we approach the Fiftieth year of his death.

Written in 1912, *Pygmalion* was first staged (in German) on Oct 16, 1913 at the Hoftburg Theatre, Vienna. It was first presented in England on April 11, 1914 by Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's Theatre, London. The play had several revivals in both England and the U.S. The cast at one time included Mr. Patrick Combell (Stella) as Eliza. In later years, it was produced in 1974 at the Albert Theatre, directed by John Dexter with Diana Rigg and Alec Mccown in the title roles. In the early 1980's Peter O'Toole's "theatre of comedy series included *Pygmalion*. It has also been produced at the Annual Shaw festival in Niagera on the Lake.

There have also been many film versions of *Pygmalion*. It was first screened in Germany on September 2, 1935 at Berlin with Erich Angel as the Director and Heinrich Oberlander and Walter Wassermann as the screenplay writers. The first dutch screening was at Amsterdam in March 1937. Ludwig Berger directed the play and also wrote the screenplay. Shaw was unhappy with both the versions as they hinted at Higgins and Eliza romantically coming together at the end. The first English screening was at London on October 6, 1938 followed by the New York screening of December 7, 1938. This Gabriel Pascal production was directed by Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard and the screen play was by Shaw himself (with additional dialogues by W.P Liscomb and Cecil Lewis). Arthur Honegger composed the music, Wendy Hiller played Eliza and Leslie Howard acted Higgins. The film was a great success and it bagged several Academy awards. Shaw was given the award for the best screenplay, the film was adjudged the best film of the year. Later Alan Howard and Frances Barber staged a "complete representation" of *Pygmalion* "conflating the theatre and film" at the Oliver.

When Franz Lehar proposed a musical version of *Pygmalion* to Shaw, he firmly refused. As holroyd points out, he rejected all appeals to 'downgrade' *Pygmalion* into a musical. In 1948, he wrote "I absolutely forbid any such outrage."[9] However, *Pygmalion's* musical adaptation *My Fair Lady* (cockney slang for "Mayfair Lady") opened at the Mark Hellinger Theater on Broadway on March 15, 1956. It contained fifteen numbers composed by Frederick Loewe with lyrics by Alan J. Learner, and it was directed by Moss Hart. Julie Andrews played Eliza, Rex Harison was Higgins and Stanley Holloway acted as Alfred Doolittle. An astonishing hit with songs like "Wouldn't it be Lovely," With a Little Bit of Luck" and "I Could Have Danced All Night," the musical had 2,717 performances on Broadway over six and a half years.

At the Drury Lane Theatre London where it opened in the spring of 1958, it had a run of six years encompassing 2,281 performances.

First screened in October 1964 at New York by CBS/Warner, the Film Version retained Rex Harrison as Higgins, but replaced Julie Andrews by Audrey Hepburn as Eliza. Alan J. Lerner wrote the screenplay. For the film, Oscars were presented to Andre Prev in for his musical adaptation of the original score by Frederich Lowewe, to Rex Harrison for the hero's role, to George Cukor for direction and to Cecil Beaton for costumes. Thus ironically, Bernard Shaw acquired enormous posthumous wealth and popularity through a musical, he did not want to be produced.

4.4 PASSAGES FROM THE PLAY FOR ANNOTATION

ACT I

"THE NOTETAKER. Simply phonetics. The science of speech. That's my profession: also my hobby. Happy is the eman who can make a living by his bobby!" (p. 205).

"THE NOTETAKER. A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere - no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a should and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible: and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon." (p.206)

ACT II

"Women upset everything. When you let them into your life, you find that the woman is driving at one thing and you're driving at another." (p.221)

"Here I am, a shy, diffident sort of man. I've never been able to feel really grown-up and tremendous like other chaps." (p.224)

"I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you." (p.226)

"What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything." (p.230)

ACT III

> "A few good oil paintings from the exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery thirty years ago (the Burne Jones, not the Whistler side of them) are on its walls. The only landscape Cecil Lawson on the scale of a Rubens. There is a portrait of Mrs. Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful Rossettian Costumes" (p.236)

"MRS. HIGGINS. Well, you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five. When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?" (p.237)

"But you have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul." (p.248)

ACT IV

"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?" (p.256)

"I'm only a common ignorant girl: and in my station I have to be careful. There can't be any feelings between the like of you and the like of me." (p.258)

ACT V

"DOOLITTLE. No: that aint the natural way, Colonel: It's only the middle class way. My way was always the undeserving way." (pp. 271-72)

"The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or nay other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls:" (p.274)

THE EPILOGUF (THE SEQUEL)

"If an imaginative boy has a sufficiently rich mother who has intelligence, personal grace, dignity of character without harshness, and a cultivated sense of the best art of her time to enable her to make her house beautiful, she sets a standard for him against which very few women can struggle, besides effecting for him a disengagement of his affections, his sense of beauty, and his idealism from his specifically sexual impulses." (p.283) "Eliza has no use for the foolish romantic tradition that all women love to be mastered, if not actually bullied and beaten." (p.284).

"But when it comes to business, to the life that she really leads as distinguished from the life of dreams and fancies, she likes Freddy and she likes the Colonel: and she does not like Higgins and Mr. Doolittle. Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable." (p. 295)

4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, as we analysed facets of Shaw's prose style and dialogues, we noticed his abundance of words, especially words of negation, use of harsh consonants, leaving space between letters for emphasising certain words, modifying spellings to make them more "phonetic" and reproducing faulty grammar and pronunciation of characters. Higgins, Eliza, her father and even Pickering are given within limits their own speech rhythms. Literary and musical allusions enrich the texture of the play by bringing in another context and sometimes, they serve a parodic purpose. The style is also embellished by abundant verbal humour.

Shavian criticism had different phases: There was a gradual development from the somewhat impressionistic reviews of the earlier period to the more theoretical and ideological approaches of the 1980's and 90's. On the stage, although *Pygmalion* was only a modest success, it was screened and after Shaw's death, the musical *My Fair Lady* proved to be an extraordinary commercial hit.

4.6 QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of Shaw's "pattern of negation" in any dialogue or stage description in *Pygmalion* (other than the ones cited here)

2. Do you find Shaw's "spacing" of letters in words an effective device for emphasis?

3. Is it justifiable on Shaw's part - to reproduce the wrong grammar and pronunciations of his characters or should he use only "correct" English? Is his habit especially relevant to a play about phonetics?

4. It has been said that Shaw's characters are mouthpieces, who sound alike. Can you distinguish Mrs. Higgins's speech rhythms from say Mrs. Pearce's?

5. Do you enjoy literary allusions in Shaw, or do you find them irritating? Justify your answer.

6. Is Shaw's verbal humour only funny, or is it also instructive? Give reasons for your answer and provide suitable illustrations from the play.

7. How did the critical response to Shaw change over the years (actually decades)?

8. Why do you think *My Fair Lady* has been so popular with the audience when *Pygmalion* was never a great commercial success?

9. How is *Pygmalion* an early 20th century English play set in England meaningful to you in India at the end of the millenium?

4.7 SUGGESTED READING

Out of a few hundred books written on Shaw, it was difficult to separate the major ones from the less seminal ones. From our select list, I give below a smaller bibliography of books especially important for you and I add the names of few journals.

References

1. George Bernard Shaw, *Complete Plays with Prefaces* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962) Vol. III 514. As mentioned in Unit 3, all the references to the text of Shaw is from this edition and page numbers are indicated in parentheses (*Pygmalion* is included in Volume I).

2. George Bernard Shaw's "Preface" to *Immaturity* (1921) *Prefaces* as quoted in Andrew K.Kennedy, *Six dramatists in search of a language: Studies in dramatic language* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1975) 47-48 note 15.

3. Richard M. Ohmann refers to "one of these Colossal series... The syntactical heaping up... such superabundance... the language of exaggeration...Hyperbole... the Shavian catalogue "Shaw's purpose is to "smother the audience and confront the opposition" As he further says "Shaw frequently compounds the structure of a whole piece from a set of negations" See "Born to set It Right: The Roots of Shaw's Style," from *Shaw: The Style and the Man* (Middletown, Coon: Wesleyan University Press, 1962) rapt, in R.J. Kaufmann, ed. *(G.B.Shaw: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.;Prentice -Hall, 1965) 33.

4. Ibid - 34-35.

5. Shaw's letter to Alexander Bashky (1923) published in *The New. York Times*, 12 June 127 as quoted in Andrew K Kennedy, *Six dramatists in search of a language* 53.

6. *Six dramatists in search of a language*. 54.

7. *Shaw on Theatre*, ed. E.J.West (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1956) 132 as cited in Andrew Kennedy, *Six dramatists in search of a language* 54.

8. Andrew Kennedy says, "In Eliza's mechanical parroting of the cliches and noises of upper-class speech there was just a suggestion, within the comedy of manners, that social speech is synthetic, laboratory induced." See *Six dramatists in search of a language* 78.

9. Michael Holroyd, *The Shaw Companion* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992) 56-57.

Books

Entley, Eric. *Shaw: A Reconsideration* (1947)
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Innes, Christopher *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw* (1998)
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Meisel, Martin, *Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theatre* (1963)
Pundom, C.B. *A Guide to the Plays of Bernard Shaw* (1963)
Valency, Maurice *The Cart and the Trumpet: The Plays of Bernard Shaw* (1973)
Weintraub, Rodelle ed. *Fabian Feminist: Bernard Shaw and Women* (1977)
Wisenthal, J.L. *The Marriage of Contraries: Shaw's Middle Plays* (1974)
Wilson, Colin *Bernard Shaw: A reassessment* (1968)

Journals

The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies, ed. Stanley Weintraub.
Modern Drama 2 (Sept 1959) - A Shaw number
The Shavian
The Shaw Review