***Pygmalion* Program article: Pre-writing and rough outline**

**Overview**: Below is some genuine prewriting that I found in an old file related to the theater program “context” article about *Pygmalion* (posted under “writing for laymen”). I must have had a rough list of sources in the file, because I note some of them in shorthand here (just the author’s last name), but I’m afraid some of the documents in the file have become unreadable—not sure why. Just skim this—no need to absorb details. We will discuss this in class, and I’ll ask you to share your own pre-writing strategies.

**What to include**

* General background on Shaw: biographical and intellectual
* Genesis of Shaw’s idea (classical precedents, Shaw’s own experiences of class snobbery)
* Historical/social context for the play
* Relationship between Shaw & Mrs. Pat
* Wrestling with directors over the ending
* Rewritings for the film version of Pygmalion (1938) Oscar award best screenplay. Before that, a German one and a Dutch. (see Greenhaven book p. 155)
* The launching of a thousand spin-offs (or a lot of them, at least)

Broadway musical 1956, film 1964)

Educating Rita, Pretty Woman, She’s All That, My Fair Gentleman (Chinese), Americanizing Shelly, the German one currently playing in Edinburgh

**Introduction**: Open with a fairly brief anecdote about all of the tensions operating on opening night? The clashing egos of Shaw, Tree, and Mrs. Pat; the recent near-elopement of Shaw and Mrs. Pat the year before (quote from the letter he sends her after she runs away), her sudden marriage to another, younger man during rehearsals for the play, the advance press about The Word that would be uttered on stage, the real flower lady in attendance, Tree’s insistence that it should have a conventional “happy ending,” despite Shaw’s insistence that Liza would never marry Higgins.

Combine **background info on Shaw** with the **key themes of the play**: Shaw’s own struggles with the “shabby genteel” position become the subplot (Freddy); the foolish social barriers—made visible in superficial differences such as speech, hygiene, and clothing--that keep people from developing and exercising their natural gifts, finding their real level (quote from Shaw on how he couldn’t afford to dress properly when he first got to London, but when he finally could, women started running after him); his Fabian experiences grappling with the problems with the hypocritical moralistic charity approach to dealing with poverty (the deserving vs. undeserving poor)—which Shaw believed leads to lazy parasitism at best, selling of daughters into sex slavery at the worst; the Pygmalion Effect that Eliza discovers from Pickering’s treatment of her. Might mention that Shaw’s own story had a happy ending: he rose through his own genius to marry a socialist-reformer millionairess, and went on to become one of the most famous men in the world, a Nobel laureate and an Oscar award winner.

**Historical context**: Play written in 1912, when Shaw was already well established in the world but without high honor in his own land (so the play opens in Vienna, Germany, America first). First British performance in 1914, in the last Edwardian spring-summer before the Guns of August that would change the world forever. (Huggett and Weintraub both make this point). Related to social reform movement of Victorian times, responds to Freudian notion of mother fixation, anticipates labor movement. Film version 1938, again on the brink of a world war, and during a period of strife between the masses who were poor and the few who were rich.

--For the introduction: quotes from the “farewell” letter:

“Very well, go: the loss of a woman is not the end of the world. The sun shines: it is pleasant to swim: it is good to work: my soul can stand alone. But I am deeply, deeply, deeply wounded.” [after a switch of mood] “Bah! You have no nerve: you have no brain [. . . .] you are an owl, sickened by two days of my sunshine: I have treated you too well, idolized, thrown my heart and mind to you (as I throw them to all the world) to make what you could of; and what you make of them is to run away. Go then: the Shavian oxygen burns up your little lungs: seek some stuffiness that suits you. You will not marry George! [George Cornwallis West] . . . . You have wounded my vanity: an inconceivable audacity, an unpardonable crime.

Farewell, wretch that I loved.

G.B.S.

**Details to pin down:**

How long did it run (Stella’s production)? How successful was it financially? P. 165 huggett It cleared 13,000 pounds and could have run longer except that Tree was sick of it. It closed just before “the guns of August” went off and changed Europe forever. Stella went on to perform it in America, huge success. Her final revival of the role was in 1920, in Germany, for the British army of occupation. Huge success. See Huggett p. 187.

How many filmed versions? 1st one was German 1935, then Dutch 1937. (see Carr in Readings on p.155)

How well did the 1938 film do?

The musical, then My Fair Lady: The Lerner & Loewe musical opened in 1956 (with the instigation of Gabriel Pascal, who had also directed the 1938 Pygmalion. Moss Hart directed it). Carr says that “The musical became internationally popular, and four years after it opened on Broadway, it was playing simultaneously in London, Oslo, Stockholm, Melbourne, Copenhagen, and Helsinki.”

Was the BBC film (1973, with Lynn Redgrave) the only one to stick to Shaw’s ending and show his “sequel”?

List enough different versions of the play (especially international ones) to show its versatility and timelessness.

From ImDb

1.http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0141753/) German (1935) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0141753/>

2.[Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0029451/) (1937)

3[Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0030637/) (1938) aka "Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion" - United Kingdom *(complete title)*

http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

4.[Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0294859/) (1948) UK (TV)Ralph Michael, Margaret Lockwood <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0294859/>

http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

5. [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0222304/) (1963) (TV) aka "Hallmark Hall of Fame: Pygmalion (#12.3)" - USA *(anthology series)*with Julie Harris, James Donald <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0222304/>

http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

6. [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0132453/) (1968) (TV) Swedish version <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0132453/>

http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

9 [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1259220/) (1976) (TV). Dutch, but set in England <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1259220/>

10. [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0271135/) (1980) West German (TV) <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0903088/>

11. [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0121664/) (1981) UK (TV) Twiggy as Eliza, Robert Powell as Higgins <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0121664/>http://www.imdb.com/images/b.gif

12.[Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2223886/) (1981/II) Hungarian (TV) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2223886/>

13. .[Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0190673/) (1983) US TV movie with Peter O’Toole as Higgins, Margot Kidder as Eliza <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0190673/>

14. (TV) [Pygmalion](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0160723/) (1999) (4-minute animated short)

From Wikipedia

Non-English language

* *Ti Phulrani*, an adaptation by [Pu La Deshpande](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pu_La_Deshpande) in [Marathi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathi_language). The plot follows Pygmalion closely but the language features are based on Marathi.
* [*Santu Rangeeli*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Santu_Rangeeli&action=edit&redlink=1), an adaptation by [Pravin Joshi](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pravin_Joshi&action=edit&redlink=1) in [Gujarati](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarati_language).
* A 2007 adaptation by [Aka Morchiladze](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aka_Morchiladze) and [Levan Tsuladze](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Levan_Tsuladze&action=edit&redlink=1) in [Georgian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_language) performed at the [Marjanishvili Theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Marjanishvili_Theatre&action=edit&redlink=1) in [Tbilisi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tbilisi).
* [*Man Pasand*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_Pasand)*,* a 1980 Hindi movie directed by Basu Chatterjee.
* [*Ogo Bodhu Shundori*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ogo_Bodhu_Shundori)*,* a 1981 Bengali comedy film starring Uttam Kumar directed by Salil Dutta.
* [*Laiza Porko Sushi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Laiza_Porko_Sushi&action=edit&redlink=1)*, a Papiamentu adaptation from writer and artist* [*May Henriquez*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=May_Henriquez&action=edit&redlink=1)*.*
* [*Gönülcelen*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=G%C3%B6n%C3%BClcelen&action=edit&redlink=1)*,* a turkish series starring with Tuba Büyüküstün and Cansel Elcin

Work this in somewhere:

Shaw’s Nobel Prize for literature (1926), his Oscar for screenplay of *Pygmalion* (1938), his birth-death dates, compare him to Wilde as fellow Dubliner, socialist, and writer of fashionable, witty drawing-room comedies.

List his major works: Man and Superman, Major Barbara, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, Candida, Heartbreak House, Saint Joan,. Put in order of those before Pygmalion and those after.

Maybe mention the contemporary theater festivals devoted to his works: Niagara on the Lake, Shaw Chicago, Washington Stage Guild, Project Shaw in New York, Michael Friend Productions (England),

Cite the wide variety of artists/thinkers who have been inspired by Shaw (whether to emulation or refutation): Walt Whitman, Bertolt Brecht, Karel Capek, Mark Twain, Tom Stoppard, Tony Kushner. Mention some of the odder ones, too: Richard Powers’ novel Galatea 2.2 (1995).

Maybe list some of the great actors/actresses who have starred in Pygmalion or versions of it? Higgins: Leslie Howard, Rex Harrison, Peter O’Toole, Robert Powell, Rupert Everett,

Eliza: Wendi Hiller, Julie Andrews, Audrey Hepburn, Julie Harris, Margaret Lockwood, Twiggy, Margot Kidder, Claire Dains, Lynn Redgrave

List the many different countries where the play has been performed/filmed/adapted: Austria, Germany, Hungary, China, India (versions adapted for Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati), Turkey, Georgia

Maybe end with a return to a discussion of the end of the play? How the Freddy/flower shop ending *almost* made it into the Oscar-winning screenplay but didn’t? How the director of the Lynn Redgrave BBC version managed to get it in there. And maybe discuss the links between the 1938 Pygmalion and the 1941 Major Barbara film? how the Eliza Doolittle actress Wendy Hiller, becomes Major Barbara, stars along with the young Rex Harrison, who would play Higgins in My Fair Lady? A link might be made with the wars: both MB and Pyg were written before WWI, Pyg debuted in England months before the fatal shot in Sarajevo, and MB, which all but predicted a great war by showing how profitable it would be to some powerful industrialists and financiers, was filmed during the Battle of Britain.

Or you could circle back to the immediate context of the Edinburgh festival by noting that Pygmalion was first performed in German (in Vienna), then in Berlin, then in a German theater in NY, before opening in London. Also, the first filmed version was German.