

YORK NOTES

NOTES
ON

PYGMALION

SHAW

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of Stirling) & Professor Suheil Bushrui (American
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Bernard Shaw

PYGMALION

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Part 1

Introduction

Shaw and Ireland

The richness and variety of English literature, especially dramatic literature, owes much to Irish writers. George Bernard Shaw belongs to this company. He was born on 26 July 1856, in Dublin, the city which was to become the capital of the Irish Free State. Ireland still had a largely rural economy and a feudal social organisation: the population was mostly divisible into peasants and landlords, the latter often absentees from their estates, living in Dublin or England. The terrible famines of the 1840s had left a lasting mark: a million Irishmen had died of starvation and the other hardships of extreme poverty, and there had been a mass emigration to America. Right to the end of the nineteenth century and beyond, Ireland had little to offer the hopeful and ambitious. Some stayed, or returned from America, and gradually built a political movement out of romantic patriotism, demanding Home Rule and independence from England. For many others Ireland remained a country to leave, if possible; and Shaw was among these. At the age of twenty he followed his mother and sisters to London and made his home in England for the rest of his life.

One reason for this move was the uneasy social position of the Shaw family in Ireland. The population of Dublin was mainly Roman Catholic in religion and associated Protestantism with the wealthy governing class (traditionally known as the Protestant Ascendancy), on the one hand, and with the more industrial Northern province of Ulster, on the other. Both these groups were pro-English for various reasons. The Shaws were Protestant, the family having long ago gone from Scotland to Ireland; yet they were far from wealthy. Although G.B. Shaw's father was only an unsuccessful corn-dealer, he—and his wife even more—claimed to belong to the gentry, or small land-owner class, and they thought themselves superior to the petty tradespeople and artisans among whom they lived. Their son learnt to see Irish Catholics as ignorant and superstitious as well as poor and coarse-mannered. The path to a belief in equality was not simple and easy for him.

Relationship with mother and father

G.B. Shaw was never called by his first name of George, which he shared with his father. George Carr Shaw not only failed in business, but offended his intensely self-respecting wife by becoming a habitual drinker and being seen drunk in public. In reaction, his son never drank alcohol and added vegetarianism to this asceticism. Bernard Shaw adored his mother and seems to have adopted her rather contemptuous attitude towards his father. Yet it was from his father that he inherited his sense of humour, his scepticism about romance or high ideals or pretentiousness of every kind, and his feeling that nothing, not even religion, was too sacred to be laughed at. He claimed that it was horror at his father's degradation that led him to repress his emotional nature and adopt the detachment needful for the art of comedy. But his mother was an emotionally detached woman, appearing coolly indifferent to her son, who felt himself unloved and neglected in a household where his sisters were given more of Mrs Shaw's attention. (The younger sister died before reaching maturity; the elder, Lucy, took up a stage career as a singer in light opera.) Though she did not teach him or have him taught music, Mrs Shaw's passion for music communicated itself to her son and stayed with him all his life. She was herself a talented amateur singer who performed a good deal in public, and for a time the eccentric teacher who trained her voice and conducted the concerts in which she sang, George John Vandaleur Lee, lived with the family. When he went to London in the hope of advancing himself professionally, Mrs Shaw followed with her daughters, leaving her son and husband behind. After two years of working as a clerk in Dublin, Bernard left his job and followed her.

Early struggles in London

Mrs Shaw made a living by teaching music, while her son was without regular work and dependent on her for ten years. He had had little continuous or systematic education and did not go to a university. During these years he educated himself by reading widely, going to public lectures and joining some of the debating societies then flourishing in London. He developed an ability to speak in public and, as time passed, he made the acquaintance of a number of people who were to be influential in the shaping of his career. He also occupied himself in writing novels, though he did not succeed in getting them published. William Archer, who was a journalist, social reformer, translator and champion of the great Norwegian dramatist, Ibsen, got Shaw his first journalistic appointment, as art critic to *The World* in 1886. This led to six years of music criticism, first for the new mass-circulation

newspaper, *The Star* (Shaw wrote under the pseudonym of 'Corno di Bassetto'), then for *The World*. It is now generally recognised that in these reviews Shaw's knowledge and judgement as well as the liveliness of his writing raised the whole standard of music criticism in England.

Politics

On his own evidence, Shaw had already been converted to Socialism in 1882, when he heard a lecture by Henry George, author of *Progress and Poverty*, and he followed this up by reading a translation of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*. He became a street-corner orator for the Marxist Social Democratic Federation, which brought him into contact with William Morris, the artist and craftsman whose theories became influential across Europe, and with Marx's daughter, Eleanor, among others. But in 1884 he and Sidney Webb, who was to be a lifelong friend, joined the recently formed Fabian Society. Together with Webb's extremely able wife, Beatrice, they were to make this Society a powerhouse of ideas, based on research, which they endeavoured to pass on to the parliamentary parties (Tory and, more particularly, Liberal, before the emergence of the Labour Party). Shaw's experience in a street demonstration in 1887, when the crowds were easily routed by the police, convinced him that Socialism had no chance of success through revolution in England at that time. The way had to be prepared by hard planning, patient teaching and reform by parliamentary means wherever possible.

The Fabians formed a middle-class intelligentsia detached from the trade union movement. They were effective in promoting some of the main advances in social legislation in Britain in the first half of this century and could claim to be the architects of the Welfare State established by the Labour government after the second world war. Though his views underwent modification in detail, Shaw remained loyal to Fabian principles to the end of his life, and his major works of political education, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* (1928) and *Everybody's Political What's What* (1944), were thoroughly Fabian in their nature and tendency. He was involved with the Webbs in founding a famous journal, *The New Statesman*, and in establishing the London School of Economics.

Ibsenism and feminism

In 1890 Shaw was asked to talk about Henrik Ibsen in one of a series of lectures on 'Socialism in Contemporary Literature', arranged by the Fabian Society. He later expanded and published his lecture as *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. The context in which it was originally given

partly accounts for the over-emphasis on social criticism in Ibsen's plays and the neglect of their poetic qualities for which Ibsen scholars from William Archer onwards have blamed Shaw. In particular, he presented Ibsen as an enemy of idealism, intent on destroying illusions and revealing the truth about society. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* had scandalised European audiences by its attack on conventional bourgeois marriage. His *Ghosts* was reported to be even more shocking, and English intellectuals were eager to have it performed in London. Under the conditions of theatrical censorship then prevailing, there was no chance of public presentation of a play that referred to such taboo subjects (unmentionable in ordinary or polite society) as venereal disease and incest—apart from the fact that Ibsen in questioning the value of the family was challenging the whole basis of Western society. So a club was formed, calling itself the Independent Theatre, and a production of *Ghosts* was arranged for its members in 1891. It caused a storm of protest in the newspapers and divided literary and fashionable society into conservative Ibsen-haters and progressive Ibsenites.

In particular, the growing band of campaigners for Women's Rights saw Ibsen as a champion of their cause. In the later nineteenth century, progressives concentrated on changing the laws to give women more personal freedom, allowing them to hold and manage property, to separate from their husbands on due cause, and to have a voice in the upbringing of their children. They also favoured the trend, among middle-class women, towards higher education and employment outside the home. It was at the beginning of this century, especially with the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903, that the women's campaign became militant and concentrated on a demand for political power, specifically the right to vote.

As a socialist Shaw certainly supported the emancipation of women, but his private attitude on this issue is not easy to define. One clue to it was his statement that his play *Candida* (1894) was an English version of *A Doll's House*, showing that in England the man, not the woman, was the doll within the marriage relationship. It would be a mistake to connect this view, and the long series of dominating women characters in his plays, exclusively with his personal family experience. It is at least equally a reflection on an ideal of woman widely held in the Victorian period: 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world' was a popular summing up of the enormous power that women as mothers, confined to the home, were supposed to exert indirectly as shapers of character and guardians of morality, in the age of imperialist expansion. One of Shaw's best known plays, *Man and Superman* (1903), borrows ideas from the German philosophers Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and Nietzsche (1844–1900) who saw the female Will struggling against the male power of Intellect. Elsewhere he mocks at old-fashioned

sentimentalists who want a society divided into the extremes of 'womanly women' and 'manly men'. In fact, he seems to have been working out his ideas about women and their place in society throughout most of his novels and plays, and it is unsafe to generalise about them.

The theatre as Shaw knew it

Shaw had developed the habit of theatre-going in Dublin where, for very little money, he had been able to see a wide variety of entertainment, much of it rather old-fashioned by London standards. He went to operas, performances of Shakespeare, sentimental melodramas (a lower-class version of tragedy, accompanied by background music that worked on the audiences' feelings), comic burlesques, pantomimes and farces. As long as they were well done, he enjoyed even the least intellectual forms of entertainment: the physical, knockabout humours of farce; the performances of clowns in the harlequinades, or pantomimes. When he saw the classic plays of Shakespeare, they were drastically cut, altered and mangled, in a manner usual in the nineteenth century, to show off the talents and personality of star performers who commonly did not even trouble to rehearse with the supporting actors. One such star greatly admired by Shaw was Barry Sullivan, a tragic actor whose style was typical of the period: exaggeratedly passionate, heroic and rhetorical, such a style as was necessary to impress audiences in the large nineteenth-century theatres, where most people were a long way from the stage. When it was transferred to a smaller, more intimate theatre, the absence of subtlety in this style, and its remoteness from the manners and behaviour of everyday life, showed up. So it came to be ridiculed as 'ham' acting.

Indeed, since the eighteenth century, another form of entertainment had flourished which mocked at the heroic style. This was burlesque, which aimed to arouse more or less critical laughter in the spectators. Eighteenth-century burlesque, especially as written by Henry Fielding (1707–54), was sometimes an instrument of political satire, and this had led to the introduction of the system of censorship that continued to operate until after Shaw's death. In fact, there was very little actual censoring of plays on political grounds in all this time. Instead, it was almost universally accepted throughout the nineteenth century that the stage was not a proper medium for serious comment on politics, religion, or sex. The arrival of Ibsen's plays challenged this state of affairs.

Some of the visits Shaw made to theatres in London during his early years in the city are recorded in passages of his novels. Then, following his time as a music critic, he was appointed to be drama critic for *The Saturday Review*. The three-volume collection of the pieces he wrote for this paper, published under the title of *Our Theatres in the Nineties*,

is a most valuable guide to what the London theatre was like in the last decade of the century. Certainly his experience of it sickened him of the most fashionable sort of play: the 'well-made play', translated or imitated from French originals, combining shallow feeling and superficial cleverness, treating rather sensational subjects in a mechanical and basically conventional manner.

Play writing: the first phase

The first of Shaw's plays to be performed, *Widowers' Houses* (1892), was written (on the basis of an earlier, abandoned attempt) in response to the need of the Independent Theatre for suitable material to present after *Ghosts*. In this and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, written soon afterwards, Shaw dealt with serious topics of a kind discussed by the Fabians, and employed a dramatic form and general style owing much to Ibsen's social plays. It was soon evident that he would have even more difficulty getting these publicly performed than he had had in trying to get his novels published. So he altered his style and wrote further plays along the lines of burlesque (as in *Arms and The Man*) or romantic melodrama (as in *The Devil's Disciple*), but twisting the conventions so as to express his serious and unconventional themes. Theatrical managements remained uninterested or hostile, so Shaw collected the dramatic works he had written and published them at his own expense under the titles, *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* and *Three Plays for Puritans*. For this purpose he added to the text lengthy and often amusing descriptions of settings and characters, thus making the plays easier and more attractive to readers. This time the device succeeded, and the texts were enjoyed in the study before they received a fair trial on stage.

Marriage

Shaw had found time in his busy life for a long series of flirtations with interesting and able women, including the actress, Florence Farr, and Annie Besant, the social reformer who was to become the leader of the Theosophical Movement and, ultimately, a President of the Indian National Congress. He conducted a particularly charming flirtation entirely by letter with the most celebrated English actress of the age, Ellen Terry. Then in 1898 he married a wealthy upper-class Irishwoman and fellow Fabian Socialist, Charlotte Payne Townshend. It was a celibate marriage for companionship and it turned out very happily. Henceforth Shaw's domestic existence provided a stable, peaceful and orderly background to his career as a writer. He no longer needed to work as a journalist and, in addition to having his plays printed, he was able to lay out money for theatrical presentation of them to a general

public. (But he engaged in a further, most famous flirtation with Mrs Patrick Campbell before she played Eliza in *Pygmalion*.)

Towards a National Theatre

From the time of his association with the Independent Theatre group, Shaw had remained in touch with the pioneers who wanted to break the stranglehold of commerce on the British theatre. Nearly all the fashionable theatres in the West End of London were controlled by men who looked on them as money-making businesses and had very little interest in drama. The result of this was that low standards of acting and production were common, and plays were chosen on the basis of what had drawn large audiences in the past; and audiences used to nothing better had become poor judges of quality. The remedy was seen to lie in getting, first, wealthy individuals and, ultimately, the Government to subsidise theatrical enterprises that aimed at artistic excellence. In 1894 Florence Farr put on Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in a short season at the Avenue Theatre, London, financed by Miss Annie Horniman who later endowed an Irish National Theatre. The Stage Society, the most important of the play-producing societies, working for the cause of a new, better quality drama, was founded in 1899 and gave a few private performances of several Shaw plays. At about this time Shaw's friend, William Archer, was working with a young actor, Granville Barker, towards the publication of *A Scheme and Estimates for a National Theatre* and, in 1904, Granville Barker took the Court Theatre to give a demonstration of what such a theatre could offer. The greater part of the money for this undertaking came from Charlotte and Bernard Shaw. The experiment was a triumphant success. Barker trained a fine company of actors and directed them with great skill. Shaw himself came in to help in directing his own plays, eleven of which were presented at the Court Theatre within the next three years. At the end of this time he was generally recognised as the leading dramatist of his day and the most considerable British dramatist since the eighteenth century.

The battle for an English national theatre was not won until the end of the second world war, when the setting up of the Arts Council ensured subsidies from public funds to theatre companies all over the country which were concerned with quality and originality in their productions. Shaw continued to advocate a national theatre until the end of his life, but the fate of his own plays was no longer so dependent on the breaking of the commercial monopoly. It had been established that Shaw's drama was entertaining and that audiences were eager to see it. So two well-known actor-managers, (Sir) Herbert Beerbohm

Tree and Mrs Patrick Campbell, relying on the combination of their reputations and Shaw's, put on *Pygmalion* in 1914. It was extremely popular and made a lot of money for all concerned.

The First World War and after

The conditions of the war which broke out later in 1914 seemed to undo all the efforts of the theatre reformers. Most of the younger men volunteered for the Army, or were conscripted into it. Granville Barker was one who never went back to his old profession. All that anyone now seemed to want of the theatre was the provision of bright and cheerful entertainment for soldiers home on leave; nothing which made people think, or even raised perplexing questions, had any chance of presentation in London's West End. Shaw himself was considerably over the age for joining the Army; but the general war hysteria, the destructive futility of the entire conflict, and particular stupidities of its conduct by politicians and military commanders, outraged his clear-sighted, rational approach to life. (Perhaps his Irish origins helped to keep him detached, too.) He published his criticisms as an 80-page supplement to *The New Statesman* under the title of 'Common Sense about the War' (1914). As a result, he was regarded as a sort of traitor by many people who had not read what he actually wrote. The play that he was writing in 1914 when the war began, *Heartbreak House*, was not produced until 1918, and the work he went on to, *Back to Methuselah*, is evidence of how his expectation of stage production receded. For, as he wrote, this work turned increasingly into a series of lengthy philosophical discussions in dialogue, paying slight attention to the practicalities of actual performance.

Shaw won his public back with *Saint Joan* in 1924. By this time he was in alliance with (Sir) Barry Jackson, a wealthy theatre enthusiast who established and financed a theatre in Birmingham along the lines laid down previously by Granville Barker. For the rest of his life, Shaw could count on Barry Jackson to give a showing of the new plays he wrote; and in 1929 Jackson set up an annual festival at Malvern, a country town in the West Midlands, devoted to the presentation of plays by Shaw and the music of Sir Edward Elgar. (After some years when the only Shaw festival in the world was held in Canada, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Malvern Festival was revived in 1977.) From 1912 onwards, Shaw generally arranged for the very first performance of each of his new plays to be given outside England. This helped to spread his fame and ensured that, when each work was seen in England, foreign critics had already established its reputation. For he continued to believe that English critics were biased against him.

He visited Moscow and had an audience with Stalin in 1931. In view of his own political commitment, it was natural that he should be

sympathetic towards the problems of the USSR and ready to recognise its achievements. He was always tempted to take the opposite side to majority opinion on any matter, and there was a great deal of antagonism towards Russia in the England of that time. He championed Mussolini and even defended Hitler as examples of efficiency which the lazy and blundering English might profitably study. So he brought upon himself the charge of admiring dictators, hardly dispersed by his caricatures of them in one of his last considerable plays, *Geneva* (1938).

Charlotte Shaw died in 1943, to her husband's great grief. He lived on in the house at Ayot St Lawrence where they had received many visitors from all over the world. (Among these had been T.E. Lawrence (1888–1935), 'Lawrence of Arabia', whose admiration for the older man led to his using the name, Shaw, when he wanted to conceal his identity, during his service in the Royal Air Force). Bernard Shaw continued writing almost until his death at the age of ninety-three, in 1950.

On principle, he had always refused public honours: titles, honorary degrees and even the highly exclusive Order of Merit. However, he did accept the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1926, giving his prize money for the publication of translations of Swedish drama into English. His own work has been translated into very many languages. A number of his plays have been turned into films, and Shaw himself co-operated in the filming of some, including *Pygmalion*. The fortune he had amassed was swelled after his death by royalties from the musical show and film, *My Fair Lady*, based on this same play. He had wished to leave his money for the establishment of a new alphabet, but realised that there might be little support for this. In fact, the other beneficiaries he named in his will have profited most: three public institutions, the British Museum, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and the National Gallery of Ireland.

Shaw's beliefs

Before leaving Ireland, Bernard Shaw had already rejected Protestant Christianity for Free Thought. His mocking disbelief in supernatural forces led him to accept Naturalism, a favourite philosophy among literary men of the late nineteenth century in Europe and America. He expressed his point of view in the Preface to his collection of *Plays Pleasant* (1898):

To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences . . . of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history.

Despite his enthusiasm for the scientific attitude, Shaw was unhappy about accepting the fatalism that might be inferred from Darwin's

account of the evolution of species through natural selection; and, as a socialist, he was especially unhappy with the development of Social Darwinism, which fastened on the notion of the survival of the fittest to justify unbridled free competition and the worst excesses of capitalism. He found a way out through the doctrine of creative evolution as developed by Samuel Butler. This emphasised the importance of a non-individual will, such as appears in the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, in bringing about biological adaptation and development. *Back to Methuselah* with its attendant Preface (1921) presents Shaw's fullest statement of this idea. In his plays, he usually associates this intuitive, non-conscious will with women characters, for example: Ann Whitefield in *Man and Superman*, the heroine of *Major Barbara*, and Joan of Arc—whom he describes as possessing 'vital genius', a term related to the concept of *élan vital* developed by the philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941), the spirit of life itself. *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*, which Shaw wrote while travelling in Africa in 1932, shows all religions, all human ideas about the nature of God, as gropings after truth which reflect the degree of ignorance and savagery to be found in the believers. God, he suggests, is the end towards which human life may move, as it is attracted towards something greater than itself. Though he described himself, in his later life, as a deeply religious man, the articles of Shaw's faith are expressions of the values he held rather than abstract dogmas. After the first world war he found it harder to be optimistic about the future, but he continued to insist that mankind must accept self-responsibility.

The plays

All Shaw's plays are comedies, employing laughter as their medium for critical attacks on various kinds of error or foolishness. They all provoke thought as well as offering pleasurable entertainment. But they are certainly not all written to one formula: some are tightly constructed, while others are sprawling and unpredictable; the settings are sometimes contemporary, sometimes historical, sometimes fantastic; and Shaw's character-drawing varies from realistic to allegorical. The extent and nature of the laughter they arouse are equally variable. Shaw was widely read, and a great many influences from his reading were assimilated into his work, alongside the influence of the forms of theatrical entertainment he enjoyed in his youth. He claimed descent from the great classic authors of comedy, notably the Greek dramatist Aristophanes (c450–375BC) and France's greatest dramatist, Molière (1622–73), and from the Elizabethan dramatist, Ben Jonson; he also confessed a large debt to the nineteenth-century novelist, Charles Dickens. Among younger dramatists, Granville Barker successfully imitated some of Shaw's techniques in his own very different plays; but

Shaw's truest follower was the leading German playwright of this century, Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), especially in his later plays.

A note on the text

Shaw wrote *Pygmalion* in 1912. It was first performed in German in Vienna in 1913, and the German translation was published in the same year. The English text first appeared in two American magazines, *Everybody's* (New York) and *Nash's Magazine*, in 1914.

Though the play was first performed in England at His Majesty's Theatre, London, in April 1914, the text was not published there until 1916, when it appeared in a single volume together with *Androcles and the Lion* and *Overruled*, published by Constable. It was issued on its own in 1918 by the same publisher, with a title page describing it as: 'a Play in Five Acts: by a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature'. (The ending used in the performance was changed in the printed text, and the specially written Afterword was added.)

Shaw made some alterations and wrote additional material for Gabriel Pascal's film of *Pygmalion*, first shown in October 1938, and later editions of *Pygmalion* were based on a selective version of the film script with a revised text of the Afterword. Penguin Books (New York and Harmondsworth, England) first published this in paperback form in 1941, with the description 'A Romance in Five Acts' on the title-page, and with illustrative drawings by Feliks Topolski; it has been reprinted many times since.

The dramatist himself supervised the printing of Constable's limited Collected Edition (1930–32) and Standard Edition (1931–37, and 1937–49) of his plays and also the one-volume *Complete Plays*, Odhams Press, London, 1931, 1934–8, 1950, taken over in the final enlarged form and re-issued by Paul Hamlyn, London, 1965. The screen version of *Pygmalion* was substituted for the stage version in the Standard Edition and *Complete Plays* after 1940. The screen version without the drawings is included in *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw: Collected Plays with the Prefaces*, IV, edited by Dan H. Laurence, Max Reinhardt, The Bodley Head, London, 1972. (This is the authorised edition which has replaced the Constable Standard Edition.)

Shaw's American publishers issued an edition of *Pygmalion* in: *The Theatre of Bernard Shaw. Ten Plays*, edited by Alan S. Downer, Dodd, Mead, New York and Toronto, 1961. A printing of *Pygmalion* in the special Shaw alphabet was published by Penguin Books in 1956 to mark the centenary of the author's birth. Following the great success of the musical version of the play, *My Fair Lady*, Alan J. Lerner's adaptation of *Pygmalion*, with his lyrics for Frederick Loewe's music, was published by Max Reinhardt; Constable, in 1958, and then by Penguin Books in 1959.

The present notes take account of both the original stage play and the film text of *Pygmalion* with its additions and variations, which is now the most easily available form of the work. They do not take account of the Alan J. Lerner adaptation.

Shaw's typography

Shaw dealt directly with the printer of his plays and insisted upon faithful reproduction of his own preferences in matters of punctuation and spelling. In particular, he objected to the ugly appearance of apostrophes in words like 'don't', 'haven't', 'I've', which might occur frequently in any passage of dialogue that attempted to reproduce colloquial speech. So, where there is no possibility of misunderstanding, such words appear without the apostrophe as 'dont', 'havent', 'Ive', etc. Examples of his personal spelling system are: the use of an older *e* instead of *o* in 'shew'; a preference for the American-style *-or*, rather than *-our*, in such words as 'honor', and a more extensive use of *-z-*, rather than *-s-*, than was usual in English texts of his day (for example in 'apologize'). When he intended any word to be spoken with special emphasis, he followed the continental European system of letter spacing (for example 'y o u') and italicised only single-letter words such as '*I*'. All the authorised editions of Shaw's plays have followed these practices, except that some later reprints of the Standard Edition use larger type instead of letter spacing for emphasis. Shaw occasionally used phonetic script to represent Cockney dialect in the text of *Pygmalion*.

The stage directions

It was Shaw's regular practice to leave blanks in his notebooks when writing the dialogue of his plays and to go back and fill these with descriptions of settings, characters, etc., before sending the text to the printer. All this material was printed in italic type, and it has become customary to refer to all the italicised passages in a Shaw play as 'stage directions'. The term is strictly applicable to a fairly small proportion of the whole. The rest was intended to make the play more easily readable by people who were used to reading novels, but not dramatic texts. Of course much or all of what Shaw supplied verbally in printed directions would be seen, or otherwise conveyed, in a stage performance.

You should look at your own copy of *Pygmalion* and see whether it gives the original stage text, or the film script, and you should also look at the dialogue for examples of some of the following colloquial contractions: 'don't', 'haven't', 'ain't', 'weren't', 'what's', 'that's', 'let's'. Does your text keep to Shaw's peculiar system of typography?