 Year 12 English Standard

Pygmalion scene analysis table: Act One – ‘Pickering meets Eliza’

| The Theme  (Conveyed by the composer) | Identify  (An event that highlights this theme) | Explain  (A quote(s), with a technique, that supports the theme. What is the purpose, function and role?) | Analyse  (How is it working to support the theme? What is the effect and impact?) |
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| Conflicting cultural worlds (education, social-class and gender) | Eliza meets Pickering and the ‘note taker’ for the first time. As she discovers they are scholars of dialects, they proceed to brazenly critique her Cockney language | Allusion and Simile  “Remember that you are a human being with a soul 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”  The note taker’, Higgins alludes to well-known authors and texts to highlight the contrast between class distinctions of that era. As a scholar of dialect, he proclaims that the speech and etiquette of such distinguished authors assists in preserving class distinctions. He further satirizes middle class morality by comparing the behaviour of Eliza to a ‘bilious pigeon’. | Shaw highlights the conflicting cultural worlds of ‘Pygmalion’ by drawing attention to the class distinctions of nineteenth century England through language. He further satirizes the shallowness of middle class morality by comparing the behaviour of individuals who are in a ‘lower class’ to the behaviour of animals. Higgins initial cultural assumption of Eliza is affirmed through her cockney accent and language. As a result, this exemplifies the superficial nature of the upper class whose sole judgment relies upon language and presentation. |
| Evolving and transformative identities |  | Symbolism  “A birdcage hangs in the window; but its tenant died long ago: it remains as a memorial only” |  |
| Education and language as a means for individual growth/ development |  | Metaphor  “You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days” |  |