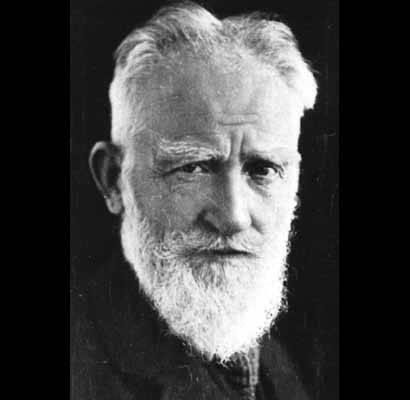
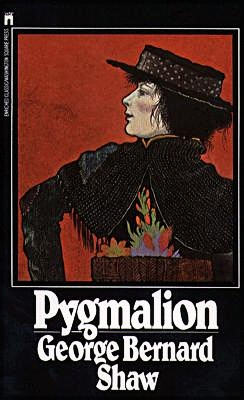
**George Bernard Shaw – Life and Works**

[](http://www.korpisworld.com/quotes/George%20Bernard%20Shaw.htm)[](http://tct.murrieta.k12.ca.us/reading/grade12/core_lit/pygmalion/)

**George Bernard Shaw** (1856-1950) **born in Dublin into a “shabby genteel” Protestant household**. His father, George Carr Shaw, was a civil servant, grain merchant, and alcoholic, a kindly but ineffectual person who inspired Shaw to become a lifelong teetotaler.

Shaw disliked school and left it for good at 15, but he read voraciously and received an excellent musical education at home.

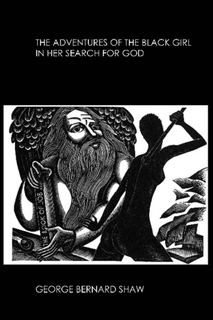
[](http://spartacus-educational.com/Jshaw.htm) Young Shaw—Dashing Rebel let loose on London high society. His first job at 15 was in an estate agent's office, collecting rents, among other things.

At 20, he **moved to London** (1876). After **a painful decade or so of poverty and hardship, when he wrote 5 rejected novels,** he became an **influential critic** of music, theater, and art, helping to launch Henrik Ibsen’s career with ***The Quintessence of Ibsenism*,** 1891.

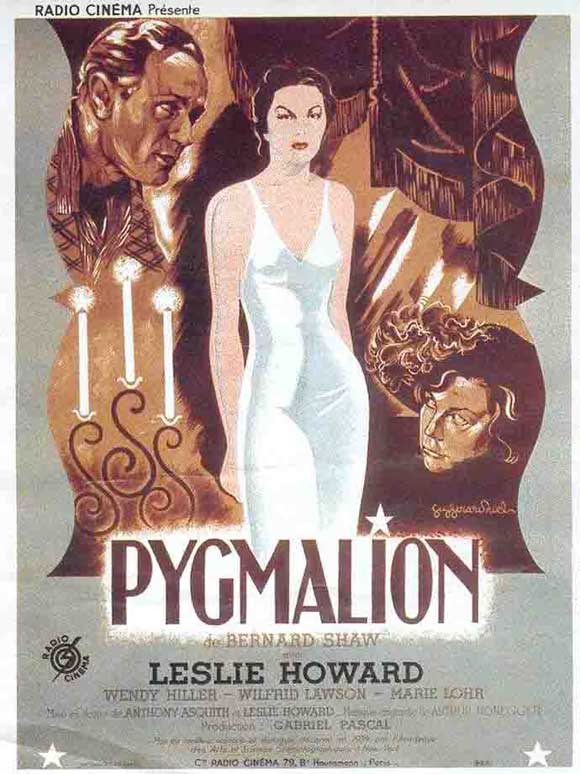
**Fabian Society**-- He achieved further **fame and influence** as a member of the Fabians, a socialist debate society. Overcoming a terrible shyness, he trained himself to be a **devastatingly effective public speaker** and debater, and he wrote their most influential treatises.

[](http://truthforgermans.com/?p=1398) With some fellow Fabians he established the **London School of Economics**, where his portrait in stained glass still hangs. (That’s him in Irish green on the right.)

He **started writing plays** himself to show how it was done. Some of his most famous plays are **Pygmalion**, **Mrs. Warren's Profession** (his prostitution play), **Arms and the Man,** **Major Barbara,** and **Saint Joan** (for which he won the **Nobel Prize**)The Nobel website says “Shaw's **radical rationalism**, his utter disregard of conventions, his keen dialectic interest and **verbal wit** often turn the stage into a forum of ideas,” which continue to be relevant.

[](http://www.lulu.com/shop/george-bernard-shaw/the-adventures-of-the-black-girl-in-her-search-for-god/paperback/product-10804423.html)One of Shaw’s most intriguing but lesser-known works: **Adventures of the *Black Girl in her Search for God***, a novella.

His **most famous and influential play**, by far, is ***Pygmalion*** (1912), whose heroine is a   
Cockney flower girl turned “duchess” through the study of phonetics The multiple-award-winning musical version, **My Fair Lady**, was made after his death. He’d have hated it.

[](http://movienut14.blogspot.com/2013/07/book-vs-movie-pygmalion.html) [](https://edhird.com/2010/07/11/my-fair-lady/)

Shaw's complete works filled thirty-six volumes.

Also, some of his most interesting works are not listed above, including ***Commonsense About the War*** (1915), which made him extremely unpopular for a while.

He also wrote a fun melodrama set during the American Revolution which has been made into a film with Kirk Douglas as the anti-hero: ***The Devil’s Disciple****.*

His Irish plays, ***John Bull’s Other Island*** and ***O’Flaherty V.C****.* (just a one-act play but worth reading) are also not as well known as they deserve.

**Shaw and Ireland**: An excellent anthology called ***The Matter With Ireland****,* collects Shaw’s writings on his native land. Though a Protestant, Shaw was a resolute Republican, continually urging his countrymen to stick together and trust each other.

***Pygmalion*** (the entire film) on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmdPj_XbF30>