**On Classic Literature and its Relationship to the “real world”**

**OK, class:** you all looked skeptical when I said Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* is one of those stories that you need to have at least some familiarity with if you want to pass muster as an educated person. Here is some recent evidence that it isn’t just English professors who expect you to pick up on these references. The “Pygmalion” in the title below is a direct reference to Shaw’s play, and Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle are mentioned for those who need a little more help getting the parallel.

For a more obscure play serving the same function (giving us insight into our current political scene), google “The resistible rise of Donald Trump” and see how many pundits are making a connection between Bertolt Brecht’s play about Hitler’s own “Pygmalion project” back in the thirties. And it probably isn’t a coincidence that a Berkeley theater company is reviving a Sinclair Lewis story about how fascism could come to America—*It Can’t Happen Here*.

No matter how you feel about Trump, it will give you an air of sophistication (as well as offering insights into how leaders adapt to their audiences) if you can use literature in this way—holding a mirror up to human affairs, past and present.

**The Donald Trump Pygmalion Project** By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/opinion/editorialboard.html) APRIL 26, 2016



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Tuesday’s primaries in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Maryland, Delaware and Rhode Island could bring Donald Trump close to securing the delegates he needs to win the Republican presidential nomination, though probably not all the way there. After a series of missteps, he seems to realize that he needs to improve the style and substance of his campaign among both Republicans who resist him and the electorate at large.

That’s why Mr. Trump has hired a **Henry Higgins** to work on his comportment. Paul Manafort, Mr. Trump’s new campaign chief and an old-guard Republican strategist, has eclipsed the abrasive Corey Lewandowski and his nonnegotiable “Let Trump Be Trump” approach. Mr. Manafort’s ambition is to turn this **Eliza Doolittle** into a candidate more acceptable to decent society [. . . .]

If you want to read the rest, go to <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/26/opinion/the-donald-trump-pygmalion-project.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-left-region&region=opinion-c-col-left-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-left-region&_r=2>