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S. No 24 B.A.Part-3 English (Hons) Topic: Title of the play *Pygmalion*

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Justify the title of the play *Pygmalion*.

G.B. Shaw took the title of the play from an ancient Greek legend about a sculptor named Pygmalion. This story was originally told by Ovid. The young sculptor was a woman hater. He resolved never to marry. His art, he told himself, was enough for him. This sculptor carved and molded a statue of a girl. It was so beautiful that Pygmalion fell into love with it. Then the goddess of love, Venus, turned the statue into a living woman, named Galatea, Pygmalion married her.

In Shaw's play Prof Higgins stands for Pygmalion and Eliza stands for Galatea. Pygmalion molded the statue. Like Pygmalion Prof Higgins turned Eliza into the form of a modern lady from a flower girl. She was taught to use correct grammar, proper vowel sounds, careful pronunciation and pleasing tone of voice. In three months he made the flower girl to talk like a duchess. Higgins made it possible for a poor girl to go among cultured aristocratic people betraying her poor social background.

In this play, Prof Higgins is like a sculptor. He has made Eliza a fashionable girl. If Higgins is the sculptor, Eliza is the statue made by him. Here Higgins works as an artist, who transforms Eliza from a flower girl into a lady looking like a duchess. He did this work for the sake of the experiment, without any sentimental attachment to her. Eliza was, before transformation, like a lifeless statue. Higgins turned her into the form of a refined lady with the desire of a better civilized life.

Shaw borrowed this idea of transformation from the ancient Greek legend. He takes the Greek legend of Pygmalion and Galatea and turns it into something different. In Shaw's play Eliza is like Galatea and

Prof Higgins is like Pygmalion. Like a sculptor Prof Higgins changes Eliza from a flower girl into a refined lady and so the title is justified.