

Eliza, 1966

Like the Eliza of Pygmalion fame, it can be made to appear even more civilized, the relation of appearance to reality, however, remaining in the domain of the playwright.

Weizenbaum, "ELIZA," 36.

HIGGINS. Well, it's like this. She's a common flower girl. I picked her off the kerbstone.

MRS. HIGGINS. And invited her to my at-home!

HIGGINS. [*rising and coming to her to coax her*] Oh, that'll be all right. I've taught her to speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behavior. She's to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health—Fine day and How do you do, you know—and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

MRS HIGGINS. Safe! To talk about our health! about our insides! Perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

HIGGINS. [*impatiently*] Well, she must talk about something. [*He controls himself and sits down again.*] Oh, she'll be all right: Don't you fuss. Pickering is in it with me. I've a sort of bet on that I'll pass her off as a duchess in six months. I started on her some months ago and she's getting on like a house on fire. I shall win my bet. She has a quick ear; and she's been easier to teach than my middle-class pupils because she's had to learn a complete new language. She talks English almost as you talk French.

George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*, in *Androcles and the Lion, Overruled, Pygmalion* (1914; New York: Brentano's, 1916), 159–60, [HathiTrust](#).

At this writing, the only serious ELIZA scripts which exist are some which cause ELIZA to respond roughly as would certain psychotherapists (Rogerians). ELIZA performs best when its human correspondent is initially instructed to “talk” to it, via the typewriter of course, just as one would to a psychiatrist. This mode of conversation was chosen because the psychiatric interview is one of the few examples of categorized dyadic natural language communication in which one of the participating pair is free to assume the pose of knowing almost nothing of the real world....

The idea that the present ELIZA script contains *no* information about the real world is not entirely true. For example, the transformation rules which cause the input “Everybody hates me” to be transformed to “Can you think of anyone in particular” and other such are based on quite specific hypotheses about the world.

Weizenbaum, 42–43. The Chicago psychologist Carl Rogers’s *Client-Centered Therapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951) codified a client-led form of talk therapy.