

Pygmalion in Conversation with Pierre Bourdieu: A Sociological Perspective

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Abstract

George Bernard Shaw's masterpiece *Pygmalion* deals with the social function of language and reveals that Linguistic Competence is one of the markers of social status. It presents the story of the social transformation of a flower girl into a 'lady' through linguistic retraining. This work has been analyzed from a variety of perspectives such as Freudian psychology and sociolinguistic perspectives. With regard to the social function of language we can offer two interpretations of the play: a story of successful education and social self transformation, or a failed dream of education in which education not only does not promote the social status of the main character but also results in a crisis of identity for her.

This article aims at exploring the process of acculturation in terms of the sociological theories of Pierre Bourdieu whose concepts of *habitus*, *field*, and *capital* are considered as a significant contribution to the disciplines of cultural studies, anthropology and sociology. In Shaw's play the social positions of different characters change in different ways: through accumulation of cultural capital, especially language retraining, or through gaining economic and symbolic capital. Bourdieu's insights, the writers maintain, can shed some light on the significance and modality of these changes. As such, the paper makes a case for the relevance of Bourdieu in studying Shaw's work.

Keywords: 1. Pygmalion 2. Pierre Bourdieu 3. Cultural Capital
4. Habitus 5. Distinction 6. Symbolic Capital.

1. Introduction

George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is analyzed from a variety of perspectives. Jean Reynolds, for instance, has explored the linguistic transformation presented in the play with regard to Freudian concepts of transference, unconscious and talking cure (2006: 27-33), and Hugo B. Beardsmore has offered a sociolinguistic interpretation of the play (1970: 712-719). Lili Porten suggests that we can have two interpretations of the play: we can interpret it as a story of successful education and social self transformation, or we can read the play as a failed dream of education in which education not only does not promote the social status of the main character but also results in a crisis of identity for her (2006: 69-86). The present paper offers a sociological reading of the play in terms of the theories of the French thinker, Pierre Bourdieu.

Ayvind Ihlen remarks that "The focus of Bourdieu's sociology is uncovering the way in which the social world is structured, constituted, and reproduced through individual and collective struggle to conserve or transform the social world" (2009: 63). He, then, continues that Bourdieu is an important figure in the fields of anthropology, sociology, cultural theory and education. Bourdieu is interested in language and its power (language as symbolic power) and believes "that language structures our understanding of the world and that it is the medium by which these understandings are communicated. Language is both a *structuring structure* and a *structured structure*. In language and language use, traces of the social structure are expressed and reproduced" (Cited in Ihlen, 2009: 63). Bridget Fowler also points to the same idea that Bourdieu's sociology is class conscious and that for him language is a classificatory factor:

But what marks out Bourdieu's work most clearly is his very full conception of class and of culture as a response to class experience. He must think both how the dominant linguistic classifications create a common world for all classes and how these are

distinctively inflected for the subordinate class with its closer experience of material urgencies. (1997: 3)

In what follows we will examine the concepts of class, culture and language in Shaw's *Pygmalion* in the light of Bourdieu's notions of *cultural capital*, *habitus*, and *field*.

Tracing the mythological origin of the tale of Pygmalion, we come to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where he narrates the love tale of Pygmalion, an artist from Cyprus, who created an ivory statue of a beautiful lady, which was brought to life by Venus. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is a version of Ovid's tale, which deals with shaping a social self. Shaw rejects the view that human essence and self is stable, and presents internal and external factors which influence the formation of identity. He replaces the element of supernatural with natural explanations and physical creation with linguistic transformation (Kennell, 2005: 73). Ovid deals with the ontological aspect of the physical creation of Galatea, while Shaw shifts to epistemology and shows how an identity is formed. In the nineteenth-century, it was believed that 'self' is a singular reality, but in the twentieth-century, 'self' is regarded as a multiplicity of roles (Kennell, 2005: 74-75). M.A.K. Halliday states that in society every individual occupies different roles at a time and the combination of these roles which are defined by social relationships indicate a personality (qtd. in Kennell, 2005: 75). Robert N. St.Clair remarks that in society people not only create their own social roles, but also perform these roles (qtd. in Kennell, 2005: 76).

1.1 Review of literature

Some critics note that Shaw's *Pygmalion* is not merely a love story, but a commentary on the state of language in society. Timothy G. Vesonder, for instance, observes "Even a superficial examination of *Pygmalion* will show that the main focus of the play is not erotic involvement but the power of language..." (qtd. in Yan, 2007: 107). In his preface to *Pygmalion*, Shaw himself points that language is his main concern and writes that "The English have no respect for their language,

and will not teach their children to speak it. They spell it so abominably that no man can teach himself what it sounds like.... The reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play" (1953: 213). Shaw has called *Pygmalion* "an advertisement of the science of phonetics" (qtd. in Tauber, 1963: 39). Martin Meisel remarks that nineteenth-century Romantic Comedy "had three characteristic story motifs. The first was misalliance between classes. The second, closely related to the first, was a Cinderella-Galatea motif of transformation and testing. The third was opposition of youth and age" (1963: 161). He, then, observes that Shaw's *Pygmalion* contains these conventions of romantic comedy (ibid). Margery M. Morgan states that "*Pygmalion* examines the assumptions of social superiority and inferiority that underlie the class system, and demonstrates how unconsciously regulated patterns of social behavior (etiquette opposed to more spontaneous manners) help preserve class distinctions" (1982: 77).

It is clear that critics have been attentive to the importance of class and social distinction in Shaw's play. However, we will try to indicate that Bourdieu's concepts provide a finer measure of these concerns in the play.

1.2 Definition of terminology

Before starting the discussion of the play, the present article offers a brief description of Bourdieu's terminology applied in analyzing Shaw's *Pygmalion*. *Habitus* is one of the master terms in Bourdieu's sociology. Ayvind Ihlen remarks that "Habitus can be understood as a system of durable dispositions; that is, as an internalized mental or cognitive structure that functions both consciously and unconsciously and constrains what people should and should not do" (2009: 65). Our knowledge of the world, behavior, desires and values are constructed by our *habitus* and cultural milieu. Though durable, *habitus* is mutable and a social agent's values and behavioral patterns are being constantly modified and reconstructed as the agent moves in society from one field

into another. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as the regulated rules and values which are our cultural heritage and stay with us for ever, and determine our responses to cultural rules and contexts.

Bodily hexis is a concept which has close affinities with the idea of *habitus*. According to Bourdieu *bodily hexis* are "the physical attitudes and dispositions which emerge in individuals as a result of the relationships between particular fields and individuals' habitus" (Webb and Schirato and Danaher, 2002, X). Therefore, *individual* and *self-contained body* or in other words, *individuation* is the product of *habitus*. An individual body is exposed to the world and is shaped by the material and cultural conditions of its environment. The *bodily hexis* of someone from the academic field might be expressed through wearing glasses, as well as serious and thoughtful gestures.

Cultural field is another concept which has received much attention due to Bourdieu's works. According to Jen Webb, Tony Schirato and Geoff Danaher:

A cultural field can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy and which produce and authorize certain discourses and activities.... Cultural fields, that is, are made up not simply of institutions and rules, but of the interactions between institutions, rules and practices. (2002: 21-2)

Capital is the last concept which attracts particular attention. Bourdieu believes that *capital* includes both material and immaterial things such as prestige, culture and social status. He distinguishes four fundamental sorts of capital: *cultural capital*, *economic capital*, *social capital* and *symbolic capital*. *Cultural capital* is defined as a taste for something which is culturally valued, as well as "all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation" (Bourdieu, 1979: 44). An academic degree, for instance, is regarded as *cultural capital* within the field of education. It is also the ability of perception and appreciation of cultural codes. For example, only a person can

understand a piece of music that possesses cultural competence and is familiar with the codes into which it is encoded. Prestige, social status and fame are qualities which are not meaningful by themselves, rather people should believe that someone has these qualities. Such qualities are regarded as *symbolic capital*. *Economic capital* refers to money, land, house and other properties. *Social capital* stands for the durable network of relationships in an institution, and membership in a group which provides the members with collectivity-owned capital and credit. In other words, social capital is a network of relationships of an individual with other significant persons. This network of relationships has two components: first, the size of the network and second, the volume of the capital that a member obtains through these relationships (Ihlen, 2009: 73-74).

2. Discussion

Now this brief familiarity with Bourdieu's terminology and insights might help us examine the social condition of characters in the class-ridden society of England presented in Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Shaw's main concern in this play is to demonstrate the importance of language and speech manner in a class-conscious society. *Pygmalion* opens in Covent Garden, among rain and cab whistles while several people are waiting for taxi. Shaw displays disparity among these people in terms of their appearance and specifically in terms of their language. Therefore, at the very beginning of the play, Shaw presents us with a stratified society in which linguistic competence is one of the indicators of social status. By describing clothing and speech manner, he creates a character named Eliza Doolittle, a flower girl, who "is not at all an attractive person.... She wears a little sailor hat of black straw that has long been exposed to the dust and soot of London and has seldom if ever been brushed.... She wears a shoddy black coat... [and] a brown skirt with a coarse apron" (I. 46-47, 49-50). Apart from her appearance, Eliza's manner of speaking also illustrates that her class and social status is different from that of other ladies and gentlemen in the play such as Henry Higgins and

Colonel Pickering. When Mrs. Eynsford Hill, for instance, asks Eliza how she knew her son Freddy, Eliza responds: "Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy athaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f them?" (I. 55-57). Linguistic competence, in Bourdieu's term, is a cultural capital, thus it can be a suitable factor in distinguishing different classes of people from one another. Such non-standard and ungrammatical speech clearly manifests that Eliza lacks linguistic competence and belongs to a social class different from that of other characters'.

The importance of language is further brought into view when Eliza comes across Professor Higgins in the street, a proud phonetician, who can distinguish everybody's origin from his/her accent. He tells her:

Woman: cease this detestable boohooing instantly; or else seek the shelter of some other place of worship.... A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere-no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulating speech: that your native language is of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible: and don't sit here crooning like a bilious pigeon. (I. 225-6, 228-232)

Mr. Higgins is a professor of phonetics with a high degree in the field of education. The quoted part of the play reveals his taste for Shakespeare and Milton which in the field of literature are regarded as highly respected masters. Therefore, Higgins is a man with *cultural capital* in contrast to Eliza and people of her class who are bereaved of cultural values of the upper-class people. Moreover, Higgins's high educational degree presupposes his high *economic* and *social capital*. When Colonel Pickering asks Higgins whether he makes good money through phonetics, he answers "Oh yes. Quite a fat one. This is an age of upstarts. Men begin in Kentish Town with £80 a year, and end in Park Lane with a hundred thousand. They want to drop Kentish Town; but they give themselves away every time they open their mouth. Now I can teach them-" (I. 220-3). In addition to *economic capital*, Higgins's friendship with the author of Spoken Sanscrit, Colonel Pickering,

indicates his relation with university men of science and his *social capital*.

In the second Act, Shaw introduces Eliza's father, Alfred Doolittle, a drunkard dustman with an expressive voice and accent. Alfred's occupation, clothing and pronunciation habits illuminate that he is a man of low-class with low *economic* and *cultural capital*. All the time he is after monetary capital. When he finds out that Eliza is at Higgins's house, he goes there to extort some money. A little amount of money could change his life greatly. He himself confesses that he is

one of the undeserving poor, that's what I am. Think of what this means to a man. It means that he's up agen middle class morality for all the time. If there's any thing going and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: you're undeserving, so you can't have it.... I'm undeserving, and I mean to go on being undeserving. I like it; and that's the truth. (II. 494-98, 507-8)

He is a dustman within the *social field* of working class people. The amount of a person's income is determined by his/her educational, cultural and social capital. Hence, with no education and a low occupation, Eliza's father cannot expect to earn a lot of money. Nevertheless, by improve his capital he can shift his *cultural field*. He seems, however, to be satisfied with his lot.

Eliza comes from a low-class broken family. She is an uneducated flower girl with a dustman father and no mother, whose way of talking is an indicator of her social class. Neither within the field of salesmanship has she any prestigious position. However, Shaw provides her with the opportunity for promotion. Higgins remarks that Eliza's 'kerbstone English' "will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. [But] in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English" (I. 241-4). Higgins's claim indicates the possibility of socioeconomic mobility. Eliza embraces the idea of change and promotion through learning how to talk in a more genteel manner. She dreams of working as a shop assistant in a florist's shop: "I want to be a lady in a flower shop instead of selling at the corner of Tottenham

Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel" (II. 79-80). Through these passages, Shaw indicates the significant role language plays in society and also its influence on the level of a person's occupation.

Bourdieu, also, points to the possibility of social mobility. In his view, *cultural fields* are dynamic and interact with each other. Within a *field*, the amount of *capital* and a person's position determines the person's power. The amount of the *capital* a person can obtain is influenced by his/her educational background, social connections, and class position. Within the *fields* there is a competition for *capital*, and agents try to improve their position and to obtain more *capital* and therefore more power (Webb and Schirato and Danaher, 2002: 22-3). In such cases, agents can transform their own value and even the field itself. For instance, a low family often tries to educate its children, and in this way to improve its position in the society and to move from one class position into another. Bourdieu, however, believes that the *habitus* of these children causes their failure. The behavioral patterns and gestures of these children demonstrate that they are not suitable for this higher position. In *Pygmalion*, too, Shaw creates a similar situation by putting Eliza in a process of acculturation, through which she accumulates *cultural capital*, and consequently, her cultural field changes. The significant question arising here is whether Eliza is satisfied with this change or not.

When Eliza goes to Higgins's laboratory to present her request, she is treated like an easy commodity incapable of feeling and understanding anything. Higgins asks Pickering whether they shall "ask this baggage to sit down, or [they shall] throw her out of the window?" (II. 74). Eliza's dress must be burnt, she must be put in the dustbin, and if she should give any trouble, she must be walloped. Eliza, actually, is subject to *symbolic violence* defined by Bourdieu as "the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate. This legitimacy obscures the power relations which permit that imposition to be successful" (Jenkins, 1992:

66). In society some agents are treated as inferior, or are subject to oppression and limitations in their social mobility and aspirations, and they think of their condition as being natural. In other words, they *misrecognize* their condition and do not protest against these forms of violence (Webb and Schirato and Danaher, 2002: 25). The upper-class people usually regard the low-class people as inferior and deny them resources; these low class people misrecognize their condition in society. They are satisfied with it and even if they challenge it, this challenge is doomed to failure. The superiority of male gender over female gender is another example of the point in case.

However, in spite of Bourdieu's insight, Shaw makes Eliza talk and defend herself against upper class violence legitimacy. To Higgins's violent behavior, Eliza responds that: "... Ah-ah-oh-ow-ow-ow-oo!... I won't be called a baggage when I've offered to pay like any lady!" (II. 76), and then, she continues that "I want to be a lady in a flower shop instead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him-not asking any favor-and he treats me as if I was dirt" (II. 79-83). In addition, she asserts that she has her own feelings like anybody else, and that she will not let anybody punish her or force her to do what she does not like. Higgins's bad behavior even arouses Mrs. Pearce's anger: "You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this" (II. 178-79). It is noticeable that Eliza does not give in to Higgins's violence and superiority, and as the play goes on, their conversations with each other reflect the change of their power relation more pronouncedly.

In Higgins's house, apart from learning graceful speech, Eliza is introduced to a world of new tastes and arts; markers of upper class distinction. Here, to explicate what it is meant by the idea of distinction, we can draw upon Bourdieu's definition of distinction as "a kind of habitus, or a set of acquired tastes, that is associated with the upper classes, but which has become more generally naturalized as good and noble" (Webb and Schirato and Danaher 2002, Xi). Shaw's description of

Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street is a good example indicating Higgins's *habitus* as a university expert of phonetics:

In this corner stands a flat writing table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames..., a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph.... Between the fireplace and the phonograph table is a stand for newspapers. (II. 4-5, 7-8, 11)

To be presentable to the society of noble people at the garden party in addition to learning a proper language, Eliza also has to learn *bodily hexis* and social codes of behavior belonging to those people. Higgins tells his mother:

[Eliza] can play the piano quite beautifully...We have taken her to classical concerts and to music... she picks them up like a shot... as if she had Beethoven and Brahms or Lehar and Lionel Monckton; been at it all her life. Though six months ago, she'd never as much as touched a piano. (III. 328, 330, 335, 38)

Concert-going and playing music are regarded as cultural practices. Along with linguistic competence, Eliza gains musical culture too. Her taste in music is oriented towards classical music of masters like Beethoven and Brahms. It is noteworthy that her preferences in music are associated with her education and her communication with upper class people, Higgins and Pickering, and has nothing to do with her pedigree. This cultural capital brings her distinction and nobility.

Act III takes place in Mrs. Higgins's home, while Eliza is taken there to be tested in society. Mrs. and Miss. Eynsford Hill and Freddy are the attendants of this at-home. Eliza, a flower girl, is dressed richly and her appearance looks like those noble ladies and gentlemen. She is supposed to talk about weather and everybody's health, but suddenly she begins to talk about her aunt's death. Her diction and grammar reveal her reality, that she does not belong to the upper class. She says "But it's my belief they done the old woman in.... They all thought she was dead; but my father, he kept ladling gin down her throat till she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.... Them she lived with would have killed

her for a hatpin, let alone a hat" (III. 187, 191-92, 198). These words and grammar are not familiar to the people present at the party. They speak formal English and lead a life different from that of Eliza's. Here, Eliza seems incongruous and grotesque, because she mixes up codes of social behavior. She has moved to another *field*, while she has taken her *habitus* with herself to the community of ladies and gentlemen, that is why she seems ludicrous. The change of *field* without the change of *habitus* creates such anomalous situations. In relation to this situation, Beardsmore points:

Eliza's problem at this stage of her development is one of cross-level interference where she has mastered the correct phonological rules of upper-class English but has not yet acquired the correct sociolinguistic rules of appropriate lexis and grammar. Nor has she yet perceived the correlation of social patterns with the distributional pattern of linguistic variables. (1970, 713)

Due to her family background Eliza is not familiar with these kinds of parties and conversations and cannot come up with a linguistic reaction appropriate to that topic and setting. This incongruity could also be analyzed with regard to the notion of *objectivism*. Bourdieu postulates that parameters such as class, ethnicity, gender, and language are crucial in determining one person's actions and attitudes. This notion is referred to as *objectivism*. The way this slum girl expresses her feelings and ideas is in accordance with her class. The language she speaks is what her family has taught her. We should not forget that her father and aunt are drunkards: "Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it" (III. 201-202), thus it is natural for her to talk about gin.

Eliza seems meaningless and marginalized, if we judge her by the standards of the dominant class. This feeling of marginality is the evil outcome of Higgins's exciting experiment. Higgins finds it interesting "to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being by creating a new speech for her. It's filling up the deepest gulf that separates class from class and soul from soul" (III. 313-14). He is only

interested in the process of forging a new identity and is ignorant of the problem his mother points out: "The manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income!" (III. 355). H.W. Massingham remarks that though Mr. Higgins accomplishes his task he forgets that "he was dealing with a human being, not with a cleverly constructed machine" (1914, 227). At the end, she asserts that she cannot live her previous life since the process of acculturation has brought her a new psychological self, and new insights towards her life and social position. Her linguistic and musical competences have pushed her to another *field* which is not in agreement with the *cultural field* of her parentage.

Eliza passes her test successfully at the ambassador's party. What the speech and a gaudy dress have done to Eliza is that they have changed her greatly; so that, at the embassy ball, everybody thought that she is a princess. But really who she is now? She is neither a princess, nor even the previous cockney flower girl. She is a 'presumptuous insect', a toy thing in the hands of a phonetician called Professor Higgins. He needed her to do his experiment and to show that he can change the class of people by teaching them genteel speech.

But now that experiment is over and Higgins has won the bet what will become of Eliza Doolittle? She wants to smash Higgins's face, and likes to kill this selfish brute; "why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of- in the gutter? You thank God it's all over.... What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's become of me?" (IV. 86-87, 128-30). As a consolation, Higgins suggests that his mother could find somebody to marry Eliza. But she remarks that: "We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.... I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me, I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you left me where you found me" (IV. 146, 148-50). Now Eliza has come to a kind of self-consciousness. Though she is changed and she looks like a princess, nevertheless, she knows well that she is "... only a common ignorant girl... [and t] here can't be any feelings between the like of [him] and the

like of [her]" (IV. 177-78). The gap is still there.

At the end, Eliza's father is shown to have changed greatly. He is to gain three thousand a year if he lectures for a moral reform community. He is not satisfied with the money he is to receive. He says that Higgins "[has] ruined me. Destroyed me happiness. Tied me up and delivered me into the hands of middle class morality" (V. 82-83). Now he is a man of three thousand pound a year and has entered into the middle-class section. A shift in his *economic capital* has caused him to move from the society of low-class people to the society of middle-class people. Yet he has his *habitus* with him. He is still a drunkard with his old habits and ideas. Alfred Doolittle does not like to be a gentleman and prefers to be free in touching others for money instead of giving money to others. He thinks that the morality of middle class is that he has to live for others and not for himself. Eliza has the same feeling. She feels her independence is taken away and protests against her slavery.

Now we can answer the question set forth at the beginning of this article. As the analysis of Shaw's *Pygmalion* displays it is true that agents can change their cultural field, but since they only progress in one or two aspects; they accumulate, say, *cultural capital* or *economic capital* and not other forms of capital simultaneously. Hence, they will seem unaccommodated in their new field. Eliza has gained cultural capital without money and economic capital. In contrast to her, Alfred has earned economic capital but no cultural value. Consequently, both are out of place; they belong neither to their previous class position, nor can they find any proper place among the upper class people. And this is the source of their dissatisfaction. However, through her quest, Eliza has obtained a brilliant piece of knowledge:

... apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to [Colonel Pickering], because [he] always treat[s] me as a lady, and always will. (V. 260-63)

Finally, Eliza feels strong enough to live without her Pygmalion. She claims she can teach phonetics. Now she has found out how foolish she had been to think of Henry Higgins as the beginning and the end. Higgins confesses that: "By George, Eliza, I said I'd make a woman of you; and I have. I like you like this.... Five minutes ago you were like a millstone around my neck. Now you're a tower of strength: a consort battleship" (V. 509-10, 512-13). These words present how the power relation between Eliza and Higgins has altered greatly. At the beginning of the play Higgins was the superior and treated Eliza violently, and now at the end, Eliza has found a speech. She began a game, a competition from the moment she decided to learn and to improve her condition. She was courageous enough to take the dangers and now after that long hard time of practice, she is able to do on her own and decides to marry Freddy. She moves upward from working class to lower middle class and by marrying Freddy she finds her social level, but Freddy moves down the social scale to a position that suits his economic circumstances.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, this discussion indicated how through linguistic retraining and mastering a set of social codes, Eliza is taken from the lower-class section to the middle-class milieu. In addition, the play indicates how this linguistic and social acculturation affects the individual personality. There is no creation of a fundamentally new personality, but the effect of language in social stratification, and reorientation of a personality is explored. Eliza passes her test successfully, yet she remains still a woman with feeling, love and character. Only her social self and her perspective towards her position in society are changed. Eliza's father also shifts to middle class through a bequest of money, while his *habitus* and character remain unchanged. Eliza has gone through a symbolic journey. The journey began on the day she left her community and entered Higgins's house. And through this journey Eliza realizes that the differences between the classes arise not because of their inherent positive qualities, but because of the way each

class is treated. The upper class fraction is so, not because it has inherent virtues. And the low class people are low, not because they lack such inherent virtues. Being upper or low depends on what people believe to be the virtues of being low or upper. And the value of the *Pygmalion* lies in how well it embodies this idea.

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