

What does eliza consider to be her real education

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The play is an adaptation of the Greek myth of Pygmalion who fell in love with a statue as it was more real in the understanding of its own composition than the actual women he had observed and grown despondent to. It is a work that closely follows the relationship between society and linguistics, wherein the woman is real, but has yet to have her manners sculptured. In particular, it highlights the role of convention and articulation in relation to identities, depicting this through the subject of Eliza.

In this paper the author will be addressing the subject of the play and its central character, whilst examining the effects that learning the speech of, what was considered, correct English had on her. Main Body When first completing the text, it is clear that there is an irony in the play that brings forth the now famed social and political points to the surface. However, one may be forgiven for considering these points relevant in today's society, though in a more fractured sense. This is because they relate to speech and language use in relation to social standing.

// Although social standing in today's liberal society is becoming an ever more redundant concept, using someone's speech as an indication of someone's identity is still in evidence. This notion is apparent in the main plot line in which Eliza becomes entrapped to the perspective of a new language system. When adopting the role of the speaker, Eliza adopts a slowly differing identity that emerges with child like astonishment before she changes into what is essentially a different person. It does not continue to be a liberating and learning experience.

Rather, the liberation of a woman hiding behind the veil of civility in a bid to expose it, perhaps showing the power of the human spirit over class in the

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process, is lost. That is to say, that on speaking the language through the conventions of class Eliza loses sight of the world through her former eyes and comes to view it through her new language that cannot be escaped. Essentially, it is through this change in persona that the play delivers its moral warning and cutting implication in that the core of the human being cannot escape from the language that it uses to identify itself with.

The language and convention used by those of high society is responsible for each of their perspectives and it is not the person or people's speaking the language. Essentially, if you are to change the person's language, language use and perspective then they themselves will come to define themselves and their being according to the structural meaning inherent to the language that is used by that society. This is indicated throughout Eliza's discussions and becomes the main rationale for all that she does.

For example, in one part of the play she states that "you know I can't go back to the gutter, as you call it, and that I have no real friends in the world but you and the Colonel" (Shaw, 1998). This short extract shows the great division based upon the language being used and the fact that it is represented by a social reality, in this case being social standing. What is interesting about the use of language in relation to others is the way in which Eliza is accepted and rejected at different times during the play.

For example, it first appears that Eliza is rejected from society as her language does not denote the correct social grouping, stock and/ or class. This is first justified as being because of her use of language, accent and the incorrect convention. However, it appears on later reading that the convention is of little consequence as she uses the same convention, but put <https://assignbuster.com/what-does-eliza-consider-to-be-her-real-education/>

to a different context. Rather, it is the response from others alone that make it something of note.

At one point during the play she makes the assertion that speaking properly (meaning without a cockney accent) is simply learning to dance in a fashionable way, which accentuates this point even further. Essentially, the assertion that she puts forward here relates to the realisation of the superficiality of language in its conventional format as both languages mean exactly the same thing from a pragmatic perspective.

At this stage she is learning the meaning of language and the convention of getting from one thing to another via language use. She realises that the only difference is a superficial one as the functional meaning (cause and effect) is the same whichever language is spoken. Essentially, the only different in the language is the significance of the source of referents, which dictate a different context to convention.

Therefore, her conclusion is that it is merely a state of fashion in which the dancer dances the same, but where one dancer adopts the fashionable style, the other is overlooked as being able to dance (Baudrillard, 1968). This conclusion relates to the elements of high society that come with the speakers of proper English and that are not afforded to those of a poorer language, such as cockney. Those that do not speak the language are simply those that do not speak of anything meaningful, when in reality there is simply a clash over the source of referential meaning.