

Educating rita essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Many critics agree that there is a dramatic transformation in the Russell's Protagonist, Educating Rita. Rita has many parallels with the author Willy Russell. Both Russell and Rita had the same job as a women's hairdresser and then realize that there is more to life than just new clothes and decide that an education would give them 'choice'. So they both studied literature to get a better education. Russell reveals the changes Rita undergoes through his stage directions, Rita's language throughout the play and her body language.

In the beginning of the play, we see Frank in 'control'. This is shown by Rita's respect and admiration for him, she refers to his room as "a perfect mess," (Act 1 Scene 2). This shows that Rita sees Frank's room as being a symbol of middle class unpretentiousness. To Rita it seems that Frank is too busy to clean up. However her statement is biased as Frank is from the middle class and Rita sees the middle class as being superior to her as she is of the working class. Rita also shows her admiration for Frank by saying "an' I like you" (Act 1 scene 1).

She has just met him but Rita grows to admire Frank very quickly, and refuses to change tutors. This shows that Rita looks up to Frank in the early scenes, and appreciates him for who he is. Rita also says, "if I'd got some other tutor I wouldn't have stayed," (Act 1 scene1) Rita's admiration for Frank is highlighted here. Frank's higher status position soon changes and Rita takes 'control' towards the middle of the play. This is shown in Act 2 scene 3, when Rita is already in the study as Frank enters.

This shows Rita's authority and her control of the relationship. It shows a transformation in Rita. In the beginning of the play Rita is also suffering from low self-esteem and most of her humour is self-effacing "It'll probably have trouble finding my brain" (Act 1 scene 1). This shows Rita's lack of confidence. Her language is very colloquial. Most of her words are abbreviations, for example, instead of you she says y'. "Dead good" is a phrase Rita uses often, when describing things (Act 1 scene 1).

She also describes the erotic painting as the "pornography of its day" (Act 1 scene 1). This shows that Rita is trying to analyse the painting but is finding it difficult with her limited vocabulary, therefore falling back on this comment. It shows that Rita is observant she also shows an innate intelligence, while describing how erotic it is. The main theme shown in the first scene is determination, as Rita is determined to learn 'everything'. In Act 1 scene 7 Rita's growing dissatisfaction with her working class roots is shown.

This scene is a pivotal scene in her development. She explains to Frank how she found it difficult to attend the dinner party as she was anxious that she wouldn't fit in. This shows her low confidence. She didn't want to be "charming and delightful," (act 1 scene 7). Rita wanted to be able to "talk seriously," she felt that she didn't have the 'tools' (language / skills) to cope. She missed the party because she would feel out of place in those surroundings and she wouldn't fit in. She was too preoccupied with what wine to take, what to say and how to dress.

This shows that she was, Rita was also worried about social and intellectual inadequacies. Rita explains to Frank how in order to go to the dinner party she had to break away from the rest of the group. She also had no support from her husband “ I told Denny we were goin’ to yours he went mad” (Act 1 scene 7), he’s not happy about Rita breaking away and becoming ‘ free’. We see Rita trapped in her working class life. Although, she manages to stand up to Denny “ I’d go on me own” (Act 1 scene 7), which shows Rita is no longer following the crowd.

It symbolizes her metamorphosis into a more independent person and shows her first attempt to ‘ break away’ from the crowd and change. She’s sick of being ‘ the court jester’ (Act 1 scene 7) instead Rita wants to be an equal of middle class intellectualism to Frank, she sees herself as a ‘ freak’ (Act 1 scene 7), because she can’t understand literature and have an intellectual conversation with Frank’s friends. She doesn’t realize she has her own uniqueness, which Frank sees as a “ breath of fresh air” (Act 1 scene 1), however she sees herself as a half cast caught in a cultural limbo.

Rita doesn’t really belong to either of the classes at this point in the play, more like she’s caught between classes. Her decision not to go to the party and returning to the pub was an identity crisis. She probably felt that she let her culture / class down by trying to go to Frank’s dinner party. She explains to Frank about how she started to reconsider the course and whether she should just “ pack it in an’ stay with them an’ join the singin” (Act 1 scene 1). This shows confusion and guilt on Rita’s behalf for even considering to change.

We could sing better songs than those” (Act 1 scene 1). This is a metaphor that shows that Rita’s mom is also ashamed of the working class values and culture. They could do better, but they’re not trying, they get by, by sitting in a pub, singing. The laughing and singing covers the pain just below the surface. During this visit to the pub, Rita realizes that she doesn’t want to be unfulfilled like her mother. Her mom wants to sing her own song but she can’t. Rita is given a renewed determination to succeed in learning her own, better song.

This scene shows the new determination in Rita’s transformation. There is an irony in this scene, as everything that Frank admires in Rita; she wishes to get rid of. Key themes in this scene are incompleteness, Rita’s mother’s incompleteness and how she longs to sing a better song. It also shows Rita’s search for liberation. Act 2 scene 1 is halfway through Rita’s transformation. Rita’s confidence had grown tremendously since she attended summer school ‘ stage directions: she swirls on the spot to show off her new clothes. ‘ This shows that Rita is bubbling with confidence.

The old Rita wasn’t happy with the way she dressed, this shows a metamorphosis in Rita, but is it for the best? Although she still uses some colloquial vocabulary “ I was dead scared” this shows Rita is halfway through her transformation. She also tells Frank that when she was asked if she was fond of Ferlinghetti she nearly said, “ only if it’s served with parmesan cheese” (Act 2 scene 1) but she didn’t. That would be something the old Rita would have said, but the new Rita doesn’t use humour as a shield anymore. She also stands up to ask questions, this shows her new confidence.

We also find out about Rita's new flat mate, Trish in act 2 scene 1. Rita says she's having "the time of me life" (Act 2 scene 1), living with Trish is like a dream for Rita; she describes Trish as "dead classy" (Act2 scene 1). Rita now wants to sit on the grass with the "real students," Rita used to look up to them as if they were her superiors, now she feels like she's their equal, and has the courage to join them.

Whereas Frank is very reluctant to sit on the grass. This shows that Frank's confidence isn't as high. In Act 2 scene 1, Rita decides, "the room needs airing. This shows a change in Rita that happened during summer school. Rita used to admire Frank's study. Now she thinks it needs a "breath of fresh air" (Act 2 scene 1), this is ironic, as Frank used to see Rita as that "breath of fresh air." When Frank tries to surprise Rita by introducing her to Blake, but he finds out Rita has already 'done' him, she also recites one of his poems by heart to prove her point. This shows that other tutor besides Frank have started to influence her. In this scene there Rita's metamorphosis into a more educated woman is shown.

Also Rita and Frank's relationship is starting to go downhill at this point of the play. Frank can't deal with Rita's changing personality. He liked the old Rita. In Act 2 scene 2 we see Rita's attempts to try and change herself, under the influence of Trish. She changes her accent and her vocabulary "unavoidable," "merely." Trish has now assumed the role model status from Frank. Rita ignores Frank's plea to "be yourself" (Act 2 scene 2). Frank preferred the old Rita. She was unique and unpretentious. She was different to all the rest of Frank's friends.

Rita feels like a ‘real student’ as she plucks up the courage to sit with the ‘proper students’ on the grass. This makes her late for her tutorial, for the first time. It shows she has other interests now and her need for Frank is diminishing. Rita sitting with the student is the first sign of her transformation, and this is shown by the way she outgrows the male characters around her, Denny and Frank. Rita’s illusion of the students can be fallable and their superiority shatters. In this scene we see: Rita’s now has improved education and how she can comfortably argue her points across.

Also an even bigger change takes place in Rita in this scene and her progress is now more visible. In Act 2 scene 4 Rita starts becoming more independent. She is once more late for her tutorial, which shows she no longer needs Frank as much. We see feelings of rejection from Frank. He also no longer knows where Rita works. This shows that Frank and Rita are drifting apart, as she no longer talks to him about her life. She thinks that the details that Frank wants to know about her life, like where she works is “boring irrelevant detail” (Act 2 scene 4), and she no longer opens up to Frank.

She tells Frank they talk about “everything” (Act 1 scene 1) in the Bistro. “Everything” was Rita’s goal. She has managed to achieve it. Rita also says, “I’ve got to come here” (Act 2 scene 4), it doesn’t mean she wants to go for a tutorial. Rita used to ‘want to’ go to her tutorials, and enjoy it. She now has her priorities right. She only goes to the tutorials in order to pass her exam. She is now caught up in middle class pretentiousness. Frank decides to test her and see if she’s become cold and detached like the other students.

He wants to see if she lost her ability to react honestly and give her true opinion. He does this by giving her his poems to read and criticize. In this scene we see a change in the way Frank reacts towards Rita, and Rita towards Frank. There is also a sudden fall in Rita and Frank's relationship as it begins to break up. In Act 2 scene 5 we see Rita's uniqueness disappearing. She says Frank's poems are "brilliant," "witty" and full of style. "Rita's critique is no longer unique and of any value to Frank. He realizes that he's ruined the 'breath of fresh air."

He likens himself to Mary Shelly. Ironically he sees Rita as the 'monster' he created; just as Mary Shelly created Frankenstein. Rita fails to understand this simple reference. Frank is saying that Rita's achievement is shallow, but Rita doesn't see that. He also feels that Rita has swapped one culture for another, and the new song she found to sing isn't better, but "different" and on her lips it sounds "shrill and hollow and tuneless." This shows, that Rita has achieved her goal in becoming a different person but in the process she has lost more than she has gained.

We also find out that Rita has changed her name to Susan, her original name. Rita and Frank's relationship has crumbled. And we see Rita change her culture, or swap it for a different one. In the final scene of the play, Act 2 scene 7, Rita seems to have come to terms with herself and she has gained perspective. The 'large winter coat' Rita is wearing shows that time has moved on. Rita is now trying to build bridges in their relationship, whereas before we saw their relationship dissolve there is now gentle teasing and a renewed humour between the two.

Now that she is educated, she has a ' choice. ' This has changed her overall attitude as she has more than just a choice of what to wear. We also find out that Rita's role model Trish tried to kill herself. Rita's language is less rough around the edges although she is starting to use abbreviations again. She has accepted the old Rita and embraces the new one. She is now humorous of Frank's drinking, and no longer critical. Overall she has settled into a hybrid Rita, halfway through the old and the new Rita. She now has academics, social confidence and choice but lost her sense of innocence.

She has found herself. She now has uncertainty in her life, but choice and opportunity. In conclusion, we see a tremendous change in Rita through the course of the play. She goes from being an uneducated working class woman into an academic woman that has been accepted into middle class circles. She manages to ' find herself'. She now has ' choice' and uncertainty in her life. This shows us that Rita has managed to achieve her goals, as she is now able to wear the dress that Frank gives her. It is symbolic, because it is now the dress of an educated woman.