GSR

GLOBAL SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. X ISSUE II, SPRING (JUNE-2025)

Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal
www.gsrjournal.com
© Global Sociological Review

Humanity Publications
sharing research

Article title

Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation

Abstract

The present paper seeks to investigate the selected drama Pygmalion from the perspective of transformation. Shaw's Pygmalion (1913) reflects an in-depth transformation through the characters, events, and incidents. Shaw in Pygmalion explores the concerns of class, language, gender, and identity by introducing the character Eliza Doolittle, a downtrodden flower girl who grows into an autonomous and self-confident woman through the assistance of Professor Henry Higgins and Colonel Pickering. This paper analyzes the play Pygmalion (2003) from the perspective of Transformative Learning theory given by Jack Mezirow (1991). The paper uses qualitative research with content analysis and comes up with the conclusion that the challenges faced by the character lead to her empowerment. Pygmalion reminds us that overcoming obstacles, even tough ones, can lead to meaningful growth in a world with many social barriers.

Keywords: Drama, Pygmalion, Transformative Learning Theory, Qualitative Research, Content Analysis, Overcoming Obstacles

Authors:

Saman Salah: (Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan. (Email: samanmkn@gmail.com)

Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem: MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Womens' University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Maryam Shah: Lecturer, Department of English, Balochistan University of Engineering Technology, Khuzdar, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Visit Us

Citing this Article

11	Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation		
Authors	Saman Salah Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem Maryam Shah	DOI	10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).11
		Pages	128-133
		Year	2025
		Volume	X
		Issue	II

Referencing & Citing Styles

APA	Salah, S., Azeem, K.-U.-N., & Shah, M. (2025). Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation. *Global Sociological Review*, *X*(II), 128-133. https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).11
CHICAGO	Salah, Saman, Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem, and Maryam Shah. 2025. "Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation." *Global Sociological Review* X (II):128-133. doi: 10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).11.
HARVARD	SALAH, S., AZEEM, K.-U.-N. & SHAH, M. 2025. Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation. *Global Sociological Review,* X, 128-133.
MHRA	Salah, Saman, Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem, and Maryam Shah. 2025. 'Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation', *Global Sociological Review*, X: 128-33.
MLA	Salah, Saman, Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem, and Maryam Shah. "Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation." *Global Sociological Review* X.II (2025): 128-33. Print.
OXFORD	Salah, Saman, Azeem, Khair-Un-Nisa, and Shah, Maryam (2025), 'Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation', *Global Sociological Review,* X (II), 128-33.
TURABIAN	Salah, Saman, Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem, and Maryam Shah. "Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation." *Global Sociological Review* X, no. II (2025): 128-33. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2025(X-II).11.

Title

Reclaiming Identity through Transformation: An Analysis of Shaw's Selected Plays from the Perspective of Transformation

Authors:

Saman Salah
(Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.
(Email: samanmkn@gmail.com)

Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem
MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Womens' University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Maryam Shah
Lecturer, Department of English, Balochistan University of Engineering Technology, Khuzdar, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Contents

Abstract

The present paper seeks to investigate the selected drama Pygmalion from the perspective of transformation. Shaw's Pygmalion (1913) reflects an in-depth transformation through the characters, events, and incidents. Shaw in Pygmalion explores the concerns of class, language, gender, and identity by introducing the character Eliza Doolittle, a downtrodden flower girl who grows into an autonomous and self-confident woman through the assistance of Professor Henry Higgins and Colonel Pickering. This paper analyzes the play Pygmalion (2003) from the perspective of Transformative Learning theory given by Jack Mezirow (1991). The paper uses qualitative research with content analysis and comes up with the conclusion that the challenges faced by the character lead to her empowerment. Pygmalion reminds us that overcoming obstacles, even tough ones, can lead to meaningful growth in a world with many social barriers.

Introduction

Academic commentaries on Pygmalion tend to dwell upon its linguistic aspects, including phonetics and social mobility, or its satire of Edwardian class systems (Kim, 2025; Ahmad & Malik, 2025). The play emphasizes the process of education as a means of emancipation, which is able to bring people out of the class to identify the personal price of this transition (Rehman & Iqbal, 2025). According to the Shroop Editorial Team (2008), the play employs education to

redefine the idea of identity and to go beyond the skin-deep nurture to the real issue of self-knowledge. Hashem Pour, Güvencksoy, and Arap (2019) give an intertextual analysis, in which Pygmalion is coupled with Ovid, Metamorphoses, and its mythological study of transformation, identity, and self-identity in literary tradition, such as Rumi, Divevan-e Shahamat Tabrizian, Nader Naderpoor, Bot-Taraash, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Birth-Mark. Reynolds (2017) also explores Pygmalion as a female empowerment story, where Eliza is unable to shake the shackles of patriarchy and class as she evolves, which resonates with the focus of transformative learning on agency (Naz, Khalid & Rehmat, 2025; Mocbil, 2025).

Mezirow asserts that when one's perspectives change, transformation occurs (Mezirow, 1994, 1995, 1996; Cranton, 1994, 1996). Primary careers' unique influences and cultural assimilation are the main Causes of frames of reference. Unlike opinions, habits of thought are more Resilient. As we consider the methodology or content of problem-solving, and recognize the need to adjust presumptions. A problem can be solved through various means. (Jensen, 2025; inucu-Jianu, et al, 2025).

George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion reflects the principles of transformative learning theory, as Eliza Doolittle's journey illustrates how individuals can undergo a profound change in identity through critical reflection and new experiences. Mezirow says that transformative learning usually starts with a disorienting dilemma, and in Eliza's case, the dilemma is her unhappiness with her life as a poor flower girl and her meeting with Higgins, who forces her to envision an alternative future. As Eliza goes through speech training, she not only learn external skills, but she also starts to critically consider the social boundaries, the social classes, and herself. This process brings out the fact that language is not only a means of communication but an indicator of status and respect in society.

Discussion

The play, Pygmalion, by George Bernard Shaw, offers an emotional insight into social norms and the manner in which it is enforced upon individuals based on gender. This study examines how these assumptions are reflected and contradicted in the play in the themes and Characters. The way Eliza Doolittle, a flower girl belonging to the working Class, transforms herself into a refined woman is one of the principal Themes of the story "Pygmalion. The person in charge of the orchestration of this change is Professor Henry Higgins. The forces of society on Women to follow a specific, often superficial understanding of femininity are seen in the way Eliza followed. In order to be regarded as a socially acceptable person, she has to adopt refined speech, etiquette, and appearance. This transformation shows that Society often imposes traditional gender norms by requiring Women to occupy specific roles and appear in a specific manner. Eliza becomes a different person under the guidance of Higgins and learns a new sense of independence and Self-confidence. This progression is an indication that individuals can become personally empowered when they go against the social norms. In her journeys, Eliza also defies gender expectations of the Submissive female type and demonstrates her desire to take up for herself. Among the significant problems that have been offered by the play, Pygmalion, is the idea that Gender is an in line with formative act. The development of her character as a flower lady into a girl is, in a number of ways, a Performance. This highlights the significance of this conflict between the Roles of genders, which Shaw criticizes, saying that they are no longer natural, whether as an Imposition and a performance, something that is also relevant to the current gender theory. The man or woman of Eliza Doolittle is an appalling personification of the social demands made on ladies in Edwardian England. She is a flower lady, and she stands in A decrease rung in society, without opportunity or employer. The moment when she is transformed is the moment to emphasize the harsh evaluation of confined positions that the Society imposes on ladies and the potential of non-public growth and Independence as the latter is provoked.

Interconnection Between Identity, Power, and Critical Reflection

In George Bernard Shaw's [2003](#) Pygmalion, the interconnection among Identification, electricity, and crucial reflection is the vital use of Pressure of the narrative. The play demonstrates how identification isn't always inherent; however, an assemble formed via way of means of outside Factors, especially language and social class. Power dynamics decide who has the authority to outline identification, whilst crucial reflection is the manner in which individuals, like Eliza, reclaim their selfhood and Project the power structures.

Identity: How characters see themselves; how society sees them; speech, Manners, and elegance as markers of identification.

Power: Social elegance, monetary status, linguistic authority (who controls Language), teaching/education electricity (Higgins over Eliza), cultural Capital.

Critical Reflection: The second of self-attention or perception, while a Person questions their identification or the systems that form it; mirrored Image on electricity relations; ethical questioning.

Identity

In the play, Professor Henry Higgins wields strength via his knowledge in Phonetics, a form of expertise that he believes offers him the proper to reshape Eliza Doolittle's identity. He sees her now no longer as someone, but as an "experiment," a "individual with the thoughts of a cockroach" to be moulded right into a duchess. This dating immediately hyperlinks Strength to the advent of identity.

Power

Social Power Higgins represents the arbitrary strength of the higher class. He and Colonel Pickering guess on Eliza's transformation, viewing her as an Item or a mission in place of a topic together along with her personal agency. Their authority is derived from their social status and highbrow superiority, which offers them the potential to dictate who Eliza "should" be.

Critical Reflection: Self-Awareness & Resistance

The vital image of Eliza changes as the play goes on. In the beginning, she is quite Passive: she is just submissive to Higgins and also in keeping with the role of Student/pupil. But in later years, she retrospectively asks: What is this change Price me? What am I below those exterior indications? She asks for dignity.

She then ends by stating to herself: You are no longer my trainer now. There is a Vitality change-- she must be appreciated and independent. The description of her identification is no longer only aided by using Higgins or by using magnification. She uses the paraphernalia of language that Higgins Taught her (his energy) to bet her own identity. According to Shaw, it is not only outside changes (clothes, speech) that lead to full social Recognition or belonging. Even Alevin, though Eliza can fool a few humans to wonder that she is upper-magnificence, there are times when the Origin, accent, and manners give way, and the fact that energy structures (magnificence Prejudices) remain.

Equally, Higgins is not an absolute energy; he possesses tradition and knowledge; however, in a few aspects lacks sensitivity, does not look beyond the results of his experiment on Eliza to identify her feelings. His energy is technical, but social and emotional energy remains in dispute. Eliza is surrounded by his very last Statement that puts him in a fix.

Collectively, identity, Electricity, and vital reflection intertwine together in Pygmalion, showing how each shape and form is made through means of the other. The play begins with Eliza Doolittle deeply entrenched in her working-magnificence self: her words, her manners, her social Interactions all are ways of identifying her as a flower girl, and she is treated like one by society, as someone with limited rights and little social graciousness. Higgins, an already socially advantaged phonetics Professional, now exercises electricity no longer just over her language, although how she will be perceived by others, thinking that by taking away her Cockney accent and imparting her the manners of a lady, she will remodel her identity. But this transformation does

not always come without any bumps, or purely External: as Eliza acquires the rules of speech and looks, she becomes able to negotiate better the society, but inside herself she suffers over what has been imposed on her. She reflects upon what she has lost: that freedom, that distinct identity, that emotional base, and begins to confront the fact that she is now just a project or object in the experiment of Higgins. As an example, her arguments are like, Why are you taking my independence from me? Why did I deliver it up? I have become a slave; all my first-class Clothes! (Act 5) are protesting. The Strength, alevin but mighty, of Higgins is discovered to be limited: he can also shape her outside language, but cannot totally control her internal Passions or her consciousness of herself. The necessary reflection of Eliza terminates in A shift within the power balance -the woman insists on her own agency, demanding situations, Higgins refuses to be used, and she needs dignity. By so doing, Shaw suggests that identification is not socially constructed in any most appropriate way but that the true strength is in self-expertise and self-proclamation, rather than physical appearance, or an improved class membership. In a George Bernard Shaw play titled Pygmalion, it is a magnificent play that closely examines the Elaborate hyperlink between identification, strength, and vital mirrored Image. The power of Professor Henry Higgins lies in his social and Highbrow superiority, and he takes advantage of the situation to control the Identification of Eliza Doolittle. He considers her a trivial object to be used in an experiment, a cockney Flower girl that he can transform into a duchess, which proves that the power dynamics can determine what kind of person one can be. Nonetheless, such an externally imposed identification is critiqued through the manner of development of Eliza through her subjective method of critical mirrored image. As she manages to navigate through the vast society with great efficiency, she begins to raise the question of whether or not it is apparent that she is becoming more like a lady, or if it is actually more like Higgins winning the highbrow battle. This egoism leads to her successful dilemma with Higgins, in which she assures her independence and must be treated like an unbiased character with a

right to her own future. Finally, Eliza's escapades suggest that correct identification is not a gift given through the channels of the powerful, yet is something regained through significant mirror image and what one values that one has.

The play claims that identification is not always an inherent and fixed quality; nevertheless, as an option, a social assembly is brought nearer through the influence of Professor Henry Higgins, who, being a phonetician, has the lofty authority to dominate and remake identification. He perceives Eliza no longer as a person but as a project, as a creature with her in a collaboration with her kerbstone English to be resurrected into a duchess. It is a pure illustration of how the individuals occupying the authority can coerce an identification by the much less fortunate ones, in this instance, the educated elite. The speculation by Higgins with Colonel Pickering explains Eliza as being a systematic experiment where her dehumanization is set up and where his power to force out her words defines her social status and experience of self as being completely reliant on his power. Nevertheless, the true genius of the play is in the adventure of Eliza, of a significant mirrored image, which, however, overturns this strength relationship in the end. Her external success as a lady is achieved, but it is not enough to define her. The second calamity is when Higgins and Pickering celebrate themselves about their success with no thought of her future. This experience of getting used to makes Eliza reflect on her circumstances, to the point of her understanding that she has been stripped of her vintage identification as a flower lady without being granted a new one of her own.

This important mirrored image is the catalyst for her empowerment. Eliza's well-known line, "The distinction between a female and a flower lady isn't how she behaves, but how she's treated," is the end result of her self-realization. She knows that her authentic schooling got here now no longer from Higgins's instructions in phonetics but from the kindness and admiration proven to her with the aid of using Colonel Pickering, who, not like Higgins, dealt with her as a man or woman from the Start. By

confronting Higgins, she reclaims her agency, demonstrating that her identification is her very own to define, now no longer his to create. Her Refusal to be a trifling ownership or a completed task is an effective act of Defiance. By the play's end, Eliza has moved past being a passive recipient of strength and has grown to be an independent, self-conscious girl who can forge her very own path, proving that essential mirrored image is the vital Device for releasing one's identity from the restrictions of Sophistication and strength.

The Development of Critical Consciousness

She is still regarded as a creation of Higgins, a master piece of his work with language. Her turning point is when she states that she is no longer a thing he can discard because she is autonomous. The only rebellion that she exhibits is the fact that she refuses to revert to his control and goes back to his home, which makes it clear that she knows that real liberation does not lie in altering how you speak, but rather in challenging the power structures that look down on you and lock you down using your speech. She realizes that she has exchanged a kind of slavery (poverty) with another (the fact that she is an object of the intellectual vanity of Higgins).

Another good area in Pygmalion, but worthy of discussion, is Language and Identity, which impacted identity. Higgins is of the opinion that he can literally switch the identification and social status of Eliza by modifying her speech and mannerisms. This speech

change was so well known because society commonly immoderately friendlier speech forms with gender, class, and social status. The difficult circumstances that ladies faced in trying to fit into society are exhibited by Eliza as she struggles to understand right speech and behavior. Points out how language can be a tool of control or control, because it can reinforce and/or impose gender norms. The presentation of gender relations in the surrounding Edwardian context is delicately presented in Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw. Shaw provides a critique of stereotypical gender roles and calls the target audience to examine the tension of these roles through character growth, social commentary, and linguistic analysis. The under discussion play is a reflection of the society as well as gender norms and their construction.

Conclusion

Pygmalion is one of the finest creations by George Bernard Shaw. Though the play contains themes of consciousness, growth, and focus however it particularly describes and interprets transformation through the major character of Eliza. Thus, in the play, Eliza is not only a character who suffers but forms, learn, and transforms into an independent girl with her own choices and decisions. This marks the play as one of the most enthusiastic portrayals of women who are suppressed somehow in their lives. The play depicts a clear vision of a woman through understanding herself and the world around her.

References

Ahmad, F., Riaz, T., & Malik, N. (2025). Exploring language, class, and identity in Shaw's *Pygmalion*: An analysis through Communication Accommodation Theory. *WAH Academia Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 4*(1), 67–78. https://wahacademia.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/183
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Dinucu-Jianu, D., Macina, J., Daheim, N., Hakimi, I., Gurevych, I., & Sachan, M. (2025). From problem-solving to teaching problem-solving: Aligning LLMs with pedagogy using reinforcement learning. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2505.15607.* https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.15607
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Jensen, S. K. (2025). *Situating educational psychology practice: Exploring the practice-turn of EP practice.* Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-025-09915-6
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Kim, H. W. (2025). The power of "felt absence" in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion. English Studies, 106*(4), 512–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/00144940.2025.2487800
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Mezirow, J. (1994). Understanding transformation theory. *Adult Education Quarterly, 44*(4), 222–232.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Mocbil, A. S. A. (2025). The use of satire in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* to critique Victorian society. *Middle East Journal of Language and Literature Studies, 3*(1), 55–66. https://meijournals.com/ara/index.php/mejlls/article/view/875
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Naz, S., Chaudhry, M. N., Khalid, A., & Rehmat, F. (2025). Language as power: Exploring linguistic control and class mobility in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion. Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literary Studies (JALT), 6*(2), 101–117. https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/373
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Rehman, S., & Iqbal, N. (2025). A Foucauldian reading of *Pygmalion. International Journal of Research in English, 7*(1), 190–197.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Reynolds, J. (2017). *Pygmalion* and female empowerment: Rewriting the narrative of transformation. *Modern Drama, 60*(3), 321–340.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Shmoop Editorial Team. (2008). *Pygmalion: Themes of education and transformation.* Shmoop University Press.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Shaw, G. B. (2003). *Pygmalion* (D. Greene, Ed.). Penguin Classics.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext