



## **Indoctrination of Victorian Class Identity: Arnold and Shaw, Beyond Victorian Class Struggles**

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### **APA Citation:**

Poorghorban, Y. (2021). Indoctrination of Victorian Class Identity: Arnold and Shaw, Beyond Victorian Class Struggles. *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, 9(16), 21-33

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### **Abstract**

The representations of Victorian identity take place through active discourses which aim to indoctrinate Victorian people with certain characteristics to form class identity. Victorian social classes are marked differently by various scholars. This study investigates Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* in light of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* to elucidate how Arnoldian paradigms impose social and cultural behaviours to each Victorian social class by limiting and defining class identity. Arnold's concept of culture is further investigated in terms of Marxist criticism. In Shaw's work, Eliza Doolittle represents the Victorian working-class while Higgins represents the Victorian upper-class. While Arnold does not envisage the same sort of education for the working-class Victorians for their inability to learn and become culturally equal to the upper-class Victorians, Shaw represents an opposing view where he endows Eliza Doolittle with energy to excel the upper-class ideals. Moreover, this study examines Shaw and Arnold as social critics to question whether they are Organic Intellectuals who serve the upper-class ideology or represent objective ideas alienated from upper-class ideology. Lastly, this study seeks to elucidate how the indoctrination of class identity takes place via language in the context of Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

**Keywords:** Matthew Arnold, George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*, Hegemony, Organic Intellectual, Language

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### **Introduction**

The cultural categorisations of Victorian social classes are pretty difficult since the Victorian era underwent many changes that the western world still deals with. Mass culture or popular culture is primarily rooted in this period, and many cultural critics attempted to investigate the singularity of the period. It is a period "from the day queen Victoria came into power from 1837 until her death in 1901" (Poorghorban & Veysi, 2020, p. 220). However, it must be noted that there are disputes among critics for the date of this period under the emergence of social, political, industrial, and cultural aspects, yet, in this paper, I assume the reigning period of queen Victoria. Social class becomes a contributing factor in constructing Victorian identity through countless stereotypes that keep circulating in Victorian society. These hegemonic discourses were strongly reproduced that eventually led to the indoctrination of class identity through proposing certain codes and behaviours which were applied to a particular social class. These discourses promoted the idea that these class codes and characteristics were inherent individual codes suggesting that a lower-class subject would inevitably practice certain codes and behaviours that were presumed for that social class. In this

sense, it appears that individual identity is essentially in debt to the class identity for its representations. Each social class aimed to impose certain codes to the opposing social classes through indoctrination to subvert and dominate other social classes. “Establishing the role discursive representations played in the organisation of class identities has been a principle concern for British cultural studies” (Edge, 2008, p. 304). The nature of class struggles in the Victorian era determined social identity indoctrination.

One of the most celebrated Victorian cultural critics is Matthew Arnold. He was an “elitist; classist; English nationalist; and conservative” (Striphas, 2017, p. 145). He is widely recognised not only for his theories of culture but also for his success “in obscuring the connection between intellectual authority and other sites of social, economic and political power” (Sandhu, 2014, p. 13). But Arnold contributes mainly to the framework of the Victorian class identity. “He was also one of the most eloquent spokesmen for the humanities in the nineteenth century” (Pratt, 2007, p. 19). What we seek here is to examine Arnold’s classifications of the Victorian class identities to question his analysis. In doing so, I will be able to posit him either as an objective critic and social observer or as a manipulated critic who is deceived mainly by the dominance of the Victorian social discourses in the terrain of power. Arnold analyses Victorian identity in three distinct social categories; the upper-class (the Barbarians), the middle-class (the Philistine), and the lower-class (the Populace) proposing that each social class inherently follows certain codes and behaviours.

The investigation of Matthew Arnold’s theories from his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) is only applicable where a primary source of Victorian social context is available. For this reason, I have chosen George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* (1913) as an authentic Victorian literary work where the characterisations of both the aristocracy and the working-class are primarily represented. Analysing Shaw’s *Pygmalion* allows us to explore Arnoldian class-identity distinction to question its validity and reliability. Is Arnoldian class categorisation authentic or is it social indoctrination in the terrain of power relations utilising hegemonic discourses? Furthermore, I aim to question Shaw’s objective voice in representing these social classes to realise if he, as a man of literature and a social critic of the Victorian era, was manipulated by the hegemony of the dominant power or if he remained an objective social critic. While he remained “a Fabian and a feminist” (Peters, 2006, p. 23), his mind-set cannot be easily recognised concerning his social preferences of the Victorian English classes. It is only through his works that any sort of assumption can be firmly established.

In this article, I intend to probe Arnold’s notion of culture by exploring his class categorisation. Arnoldian class categories assign certain codes and behaviours to each social class to promote an assumption of class identity suggesting that each social class, as I will illustrate later, carries certain behavioural codes that are thought innate in that particular class. Analysing Shaw’s *Pygmalion* allows us to examine Arnold’s theory. Significant Marxist and Cultural critical terms are also included to analyse Arnold’s and Shaw’s standpoint both as writers and social intellectuals. Lastly, this paper seeks to elucidate how the indoctrination of class identity takes place in the context of Shaw’s *Pygmalion*.

Language functions as the most unique system of signification. It is through language that our perception of reality and truth comes into existence. Moreover, language becomes a tool in the battleground of power relations. Language through discourse can impose a hegemonic notion of selfhood by constantly reproducing certain discourses. In this sense, language can meticulously design and reformulate class identity mainly to serve the dominant power. Shaw’s *Pygmalion* illustrates language not only as a system of communication but also as a system of power. It elucidates how language serves certain social classes in the process of indoctrination. As Qadha (2019) fairly states, “there is an inevitable relationship between language and social class” (p. 422), and this relationship is dramatically portrayed in Shaw’s *Pygmalion*.

Understanding the system of power, Marxist and cultural critics propose that it is the dominant power that establishes and differentiates normal, standard, and abnormal. In this sense, “truths compete with each other for power within a social system” (Fiske, 2011, p. 177). Qadha fails to see this issue, and he considers Eliza as an incompetent English speaker. “One can easily notice that she speaks non-standard English that can hardly be understood and thus replied to” (Qadha, 2019, p. 425). Eliza Doolittle is a native English speaker who has spent her entire life in England, yet she is being accused of speaking proper English. This ‘proper English’ is a matter of analysis both by scholars and by Higgins, the aristocrat professor of phonetics.

England of the Victorian period is the burgeoning era of class discourses. The class distinction becomes such a significant issue in the period that a considerable proportion of literary works of this period have some references to this issue. “In that hierarchical society, to a certain extent, a person’s pronunciation distinctively reflects his social status” (Xiaowei, 2018, p. 8). In this sense, language and all its specific characteristics contribute chiefly to the dominant hierarchal discourse of the period. Eliza’s transformation from a ‘flower girl’ to a ‘lady’ signifies the importance of the determining discourses which define and frame the Victorian lady. Xiaowei argues that “The transformation from a flower girl to a lady is only the transformation in accent, dressing and manners” (p. 8). This is not Eliza’s entire transformation, although, in British Victorian society, the mentioned characteristics are deemed considerably necessary. The argument becomes significant when the dominant power defines the Victorian lady.

Suppose the transformation from a working-class girl to an upper-class lady is in debt only to accent, manner, and dressing. In that case, every working-class woman could find her way into the upper-class and upper echelon discourse with a bit of effort. However, the structure of the dominant power does not allow such easy shifting between two classes. “Working-class women, without the financial or cultural capital to successfully perform femininity, are regularly cast down into the realms of the grotesque” (Hatherley, 2018, p. 355). Consequently, it takes much more than those three characteristics for a working-class woman to enter the realm of upper-class society since the realm of upper-class society equals the terrain of power. This paper will illustrate how this shifting of classes is quite complicated and how the characters are limited by the power to act literately from their class backgrounds.

*Pygmalion* illustrates a figuratively master/slave relationship between these two social classes. Higgins as the representative of the upper-class society acts so ruthlessly against Eliza as the representative of the Victorian working-class woman that Sasani (2015) defines it as a “complex relationship between the coloniser and the colonised” (p. 238). What was quite stunning in the process of reviewing scholarly works was the view of scholars towards Eliza’s accent and speech. Sasani (2015) fails to take into account the normalisation of the dominant power. She states: “Because of Eliza's weird accent, he belittles her” (p. 239). First of all, Eliza’s accent is not weird, and it is presumably a cockney accent. Secondly, the reason why Higgins undermines Eliza is not solely due to her different working-class accent. However, her working-class accent reveals her class identity and posits her as a socially inferior character.

At the core of Eliza and Higgins’s relationship exist class and social discourses. As an upper-class character in the play, Higgins represents Victorian upper-class norms. On the other hand, Eliza and her father are the representatives of the working-class identity. The beginning of Higgins and Eliza’s relationship as teacher/student is entirely discouraged by people around Higgins, like her mother. “For them, Higgins is a selfish misogynist feeling no respect for others” (Pirnajmuddin & Arani, 2011, p. 148). What I would like to suggest in this study, however, is that the reason for this discouragement of other upper-class characters is not for the sake of Eliza but for the sake of a threat they feel upon aristocracy’s exclusiveness. It is intended

to establish an argument in which Shaw's stance as the author of this work and Arnold's viewpoint as the critic of the Victorian culture becomes accessible.

The scholarly works I have reviewed here signify the influence of the existing dominant power on the mind-set of these scholars in a way that Eliza's accent is still being considered unnatural, weird, and non-standard. This is only concerned with the accent of Eliza as the working-class character and the other classes are not criticised for having a particular accent for they are the creators of the Victorian norms. On the other hand, Shaw's representations of these two classes are of grave importance. It is sought to demonstrate Arnold's and Shaw's position in encountering these two different classes.

### **Arnoldian Culture: The Indoctrination of Victorian Social Classes as Fixed Entities**

Many scholars have attempted to put the concept of culture into a definable framework. Yet, as Williams (2017), explains: "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p. 49). This is in large due to its inconsistencies which prevent establishing a unified meaning. Culture, in Arnoldian terms, is quite different from our modern understandings. "He saw culture as the answer to many of the social problems of the time" (Johnson, 1972, p. 165). For Arnold, culture "is a study of perfection. It moves by force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good" (Arnold, 2006, p. 34). Arnoldian perception of culture is unified and well-framed. In this study of perfection, Arnold stresses the role of religion. He states: "religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself" (Arnold, p. 35). All literature, arts, and everything that exists must "enhance the moral, intellectual, and spiritual fibre of those who patiently studied them" (Striphos, 2017, p. 145). Arnold claims that to achieve this state of perfection, one must seek "beauty and intelligence, or in other words, sweetness and light" (Arnold, p. 53). It is only through seeking sweetness and light that the pursuit of perfection is feasible.

This study of perfection is not equally available for every individual from different social classes. Arnold divides Victorian England into three classes. He calls the aristocrats 'the Barbarians'. "The Barbarians, to whom we all owe so much, and who reinvigorated and renewed our worn-out Europe, had, as it is well-known, eminent merits" (Arnold, p. 76). Arnold further mentions these aristocrats' unique characteristic, which is "well-known politeness" (p. 75). In Arnoldian terms, these barbarians only seek sweetness and are rather careless about light; that is, beauty is their singular passion, and little do they care about intelligence. Having this all explained, Arnold still sees the aristocrats much worthier than the other two classes.

Later, Arnold illuminates the characteristics of the middle-class whom he calls 'the Philistine'. "for Philistine gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light" (p. 75). In short, Arnold claims that the middle-class is concerned with neither sweetness nor light but seeks all businesses and machinery, leading to money-making industries. "The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich" (Arnold, p. 39). Machinery, in Arnoldian terms, has negative connotations, for he despises machinery as an opponent of culture and perfection. Yet, Arnold is hopeful that through education, the ignorance of the middle-class can be cured, for he believes that "culture had a purging effect; it cleansed its subjects of the toxins of the material world" (Gikandi, 2007, p. 190). The possible result from educating the aristocrats and the middle-class is quite tangible for Arnold, yet, the same issue does not apply to the working-class or 'the Populace'.

Arnold entitles the working-class as 'the Populace'. His definition of the working-class is significantly more radical than the previous social classes and social identities. The resistance of the middle-class towards light can at least be altered with the aid of education. This issue

shifts its way and results when it comes to the Populace. Arnold vehemently describes the Populace when he claims:

when he remembers how often, \_every time that we snatch up a vehement opinion in ignorance and passion, every time that we long to crush an adversary by sheer violence, every time that we are envious, every time that we are brutal, every time that we adore mere power and success, every time that we add our voice to swell a blind clamour against some unpopular personage, every time that we trample savagely on the fallen, \_ he has found in his own bosom the eternal spirit of the Populace. (p. 75).

Arnold's definition of the Populace suggests that the working-class people have almost all the horrible characteristics that a human being could have. In short, they are ignorant, envious, passionate, violent, brutal, and incapable of pursuing light and sweetness. To Arnold, the working-class people and their living and practices are a threat to the culture. For in his belief, they have lost "the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference" (p. 57). It appears that what Arnold seeks to establish in the working-class people based on his notion of culture is only a sense of subordination and submission for the other social classes. "Although education would never bring 'culture' to the working-class, it might bring discipline" (Storey, 2012, p. 20). For the Barbarians and the Philistine, there is always a chance to improve and become more cultured. Yet, for the Populace, everything is ordered not to improve, since improve appears to be a lost cause, but to control and subvert. I have examined this issue in this paper to investigate the validity of Arnoldian class categorisations in light of Shaw's *Pygmalion*.

### **Hegemony and the Intellectuals: Unification of Culture through Organic Intellectuals**

Although Gramsci was not the originator of the term 'hegemony', he refashioned the term that revolutionised our perception of how the dominant power works. Gramsci argues that all the elements of power are homogenous in this structure and are actively at work to win the masses' consent. "The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses' of the dominant fundamental groups" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 145). Consent is as opposed to 'coercive power'. Gramsci argues that through producing and reproducing hegemony in a society, the need for coercive power is drastically reduced if not wholly extinguished. Consequently, by winning the majority of the masses' consent, coercive power "enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 145). In this sense, the dominant power rarely engages directly since hegemony power works "as an indirect dominance" (Bidgoli, 2019, p. 129). There are countless tenets of power that are actively at work to preserve the authority of sovereignty. Although Althusser later introduces many of these principles, our concern remains with Gramsci's introduction of the intellectuals.

Gramsci's notion of the intellectual is significantly different from our assumptions, for he argues: "the notion of 'the intellectual' as a distinct social category independent of class is a myth" (p. 131). He further divides the intellectuals into two groups since they "are distinguished from other social categories not by their innate capacity to understand the world, but through their 'organisational function' within economic, political, or cultural spheres" (Hoşgör, 2015, pp. 277-278). The division known as the organic intellectuals and the traditional intellectuals is historically concerned. Since "a high proportion of traditional intellectuals are of peasant origin" (Gramsci, 1971, p.136), peasantry lost its former dominance in society when industrialisation took over the economic power. With the rise of industrialisation, the organic intellectuals came along who "held a monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and the science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good work, etc." (Gramsci, 1971, p.137). These organic intellectuals were constantly rationalising the bourgeoisie's ideology to preserve and protect hegemony

which softens their ways to consent. Now that a brief introduction of Gramsci's notion of hegemony and the organic intellectuals has been made, I intend to investigate Arnold's and Shaw's position in light of *Pygmalion*.

### **Language: An Unbroken Tenet of Hegemony in Victorian Aristocracy**

Shaw's *Pygmalion* is a well-recognised dramatic work since it juxtaposes all social class discourses. "He based *Pygmalion* on a standard romantic plot that was already old before he was born" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 241). Through reading literary works of a particular period, attaining common discourses of the period is feasible. Shaw's *Pygmalion* revolves around Eliza, a flower girl who eventually transforms from a working-class to an aristocrat; this transformation, however, does not include financial issues. Reading Shaw's *Pygmalion* permits us to grasp a better understanding of class distinctions. On the other hand, Higgins, an aristocrat phonetician, carries most characteristics of Victorian aristocrats.

One of the significant discourses of *Pygmalion* is language and its function. Language does not act merely as a means for communication; it carries social position. "linguistic competence is presented as one of the markers of social status and a source of social power" (Pirajmuddi & Arani, 2013, pp. 35-36). The hegemonic upper-class discourses represent the upper-class dialect and accent in a highly elaborated way which becomes the Standard English of the period. At the beginning of the play, Higgins observes Eliza's speech and articulation as the note taker. Eliza is bothered by him, for she thinks that Higgins is a policeman. Higgins keeps irritating and disrespecting her when he finally states:

THE NOTE TAKER (*explosively*). Woman: cease this detestable boohooing instantly, or else seek the shelter of some other place to worship.

THE FLOWER GIRL (*with feeble defiance*). I've a right to be here if I like, same as you.

THE NOTE TAKER. A woman who utters such a 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 articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon. (p. 196).

Eliza is disrespected and accused of a sort of inability to speak 'proper' English. The significant issue is that the concept of 'proper' is created by the hegemonic power. Power seeks homogeneity so that it can easily control its subjects. It opposes heterogeneity since it fails to subvert too many different subjects. Another issue that is of grave importance is how Higgins, as the representation of the aristocrats, aligns himself with the language of Milton, Shakespeare, and the Bible. By putting his language as the representative of the Victorian upper-class, he seeks to create a sort of authenticity and validity for his dialect so that whatever opposes his dialect is not only opposes the upper-class dialect but the dialect of Shakespeare, Milton, and the Bible. "A language is a historical product and has inscribed within it the knowledges that serve the interests of the social formations which have dominated history" (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). This characteristic of language is beneficial to the dominant power comparing the resisting force.

By winning the history of a particular society through a specific language, the dominant power wins the social function of that specific language. Consequently, the availability of language is under question. "though it is a resource available to all members of a society, it is neither neutral nor equally available" (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). Language functions as a vehicle of power for Higgins and his social class. This is how hegemony is at work in this context. Eliza is hapless and fails to utter a single word in opposition to Higgins's subversive discourse.

Through this conversation, Eliza, the working-class subject, is manipulated and subverted. She replies:

THE FLOWER GIRL (*quite overwhelmed, looking up at him in mingled wonder and deprecation without daring to raise her head*). Ah-ahah-ow-ow-ow-oo!

THE NOTE TAKER (Whipping out his book). Heavens! What a sound (He writes; then holds out the book and reads, reproducing her vowels exactly) Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ow-oo! (p. 197).

Chagrined and belittled, Eliza remains hopeless in this conversation. She is subverted and does not resist the discourse any longer. Consequently, the concept of ‘proper’ English is firmly established, and the working-class subject accepts this standard. Ideology succeeded in defining proper and standard English. Now that a depiction of how ideology manipulates the subjects for the benefits of the upper-class has been made, I intend to analyse this part under Arnoldian social paradigms. The first subject of our analysis is the aristocrats or the Barbarians. Arnold claimed that the Barbarians were only in search of sweetness and were careless about light. He also claimed that they are famous for “their well-known politeness” (p. 75). The example I prepared evidently suggests not only a lack of politeness but a vehement presence of rudeness. Higgins constantly disrespects everyone around him, yet, the working-class characters are the most disdained people in his conversations. He states:

THE NOTE TAKER. You see this creature with her kerbstone English: The English that will keep her in gutter to the end of her days (p. 197).

Higgins calls Eliza a creature as if she is not considered a human being only for her accent and dialect. This is all taking place while Eliza is looking and listening to him. This is only one example of Higgins’s apparent politeness. To establish an argument as opposed to Arnold’s categories, many more examples must be given to examining his authenticity as an objective observer of Victorian social classes.

The first act ends where Pickering and Higgins come to know each other and are off. At the same time, Eliza remains disrespected and hurt yet, the idea of upper-class accent and dialect’s superiority has been already established in her mind. Consequently, she locates where Higgins lives and goes to see her so that he could teach her how to speak proper English. Eliza is aware of power relations and the social functions which proper English conveys. A poor working-class flower girl is willing to pay money to Higgins to be involved in this power relations through acquiring proper English. At the same time that she is included in the practice of power by acquiring proper English, she gives consent to the dominant power since she becomes an active agent for the dominant power. Language is a power bloc, and “hegemony depends on the ability of the power-bloc to win the consent of the various formations” (Fiske, 2016, p. 41). The second act is entirely significant for many reasons. Once more, we encounter Higgins’s obnoxious behaviour towards Eliza.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Well, if you was a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down, I think. Don’t I tell you I’m bringing you business?

HIGGINS. Pickering: shall we ask this baggage to sit down, or shall we throw her out of the window? (p. 204).

Higgins is more disrespectful than a working-class character in this play. This creates doubts about Arnold’s admirable description of the aristocrats. Still, it must be noted that only Higgins, so far, is an impolite upper-class character in the course of the play, and such horrible behaviours are not depicted in other upper-class characters. On the other hand, the fact that Pickering does not prevent Higgins from speaking so disrespectfully signifies this matter as

relatively normal in this context. But if we ignore the apparent politeness of the aristocrats for a while, there is a more significant issue which presented itself at the beginning of the second act, and that is Shaw's introduction of a new character, Mrs. Pearce. Mrs. Pearce is Higgin's servant who is crucial to our argument here. Gramsci's notion of hegemony proposed an ideology that was won not by coercive force but by consent. When consent is won the subjects wilfully act according to the dominant ideology and the favour of the ruling class. Mrs. Pearce is a representation of a subjugated working-class who gives consent to the dominant ideology. Many examples are shown in the context of this play and I intend to address some of them.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Don't you be so saucy. You aint heard what I come for yet. (to MRS PEARCE, who is waiting at the door for further instructions) Did you tell him I come in a taxi?

MRS PEARCE. Nonsense, girl! What do you think a gentleman like Mr Higgins cares what you came in? (p. 204)

The hostility exists in the discourse of Mrs. Pearce towards Eliza as the representative of the working-class society. Mrs. Pearce is a working-class character yet expresses very little concern for her people from her own class and sympathises more with upper-class characters. Mrs. Pearce, in this case, becomes a successful hegemonised subject who is subjugated by the upper-class society. What draws attention towards Mrs. Pearce is that, unlike Eliza, a working-class character, she speaks proper English. It can be argued that there is a relation between acquiring proper English and the ultimate subordination. Besides the availability of appropriate English for the aristocrats, it appears that it can also be available for those working-class characters as a form of an object of desire. Only those working-class people who consent to the dominant power will be allowed to learn proper English.

THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they wont make me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him- not asking any favour- and he treats me as if I was dirt.

MRS PEARCE. How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins? (pp. 204-205)

Mrs. Pearce acts as a means of the dominant power. Her actions and words are well-organised to serve the dominant influence. "power exists in its practice" (Fiske, 2011, p. 79). Mrs. Pearce is a hegemonised subject who actively takes part in the dominant discourse and power. Her whole presence in the conversation of Higgins and Pickering as characters of upper-class society ascertains her status among the bourgeoisie. Mrs. Pearce acts so efficiently in the power system that she sometimes obliges Higgins to do as she says. Domination does not only win people's consent by employing manipulation. It allows them to practice power and within the practice of management lies pleasure. Accordingly, every attempt that Mrs. Pearce takes in practising power gives her joy and strengthens the pillars of power.

HIGGINS (*peremptorily*). Sit down.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it \_

HIGGINS (*thundering at her*). Sit down.

MRS PEARCE (*severely*). Sit down, girl. Do as you're told.

(*She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between HIGGINS and PICKERING, and sand behind it waiting for the girl to sit down*). (p. 205).



This is still the second act when Eliza asks for Higgins's help to teach her how to speak proper English and encounters obnoxious treatment on Higgins's and Pearce's sides. Not only Mrs. Pearce act as an active agent of the dominant power, and she has become a hegemonised character who acts according to the dominant ideology, she simultaneously participates in the practice of power. One more example is when she says: "you mustn't speak to the gentleman like that" (p. 206). She is acting in favour of the dominant bourgeoisie ideology, and at the same time, she practices power which gives her pleasure. In the second act, Higgins continues disrespecting Eliza and her father, but in the end, he agrees to teach her how to speak proper English.

The third act commences with announcing how well-aware Eliza has become of proper English, and her accent and dialect have shifted dramatically. Consequently, Higgins and Pickering attempt to examine her ability by taking her to an upper-class tea party. Language functions as the critical factor in the course of the play, in fact, "scarcely a minute of the play is without some reference to words" (Reynolds, 1992, p. 209). The issue that Higgins and Pickering's encounter is not related to how Eliza pronounces words rather, what she says becomes a matter of concern.

MRS HIGGINS. That's satisfactory, at all events.

HIGGINS. Well, it is and it isn't

MRS HIGGINS. What does that mean?

HIGGINS. You see, I've got her pronunciation all right; but you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces... (p. 237).

If we are to divide the process of domination into two phases. The first and primary phase is to change the accent of the working-class character so that it appeals to the upper-class, and the second phase is to change and control the content of her speech. Moreover, an important issue is that "a successful hegemonic group has to thoroughly recreate itself" (Jones, 2006, p. 45). Higgins is afraid that the second part has not been looked at; still, he attempts to persuade his mother to let Eliza be part of her tea party so that he and Pickering could analyse her accent. In this attempt, Eliza fails since she is not aware of upper-class discourses. She acts rudely and fails to satisfy her companions as a pleasant speaker. Yet, her accent proves flawless, which signifies her ability to learn what the upper-class usually acquire. Although Eliza's speech is still quite different from the upper-class society, her ability to learn is directed in opposition to what Matthew Arnold claimed. Still, it is too soon to question Arnold's presumption of the working-class Victorians since acquiring an upper-class accent does not strongly prove Eliza's learning ability.

Earlier I proposed that Higgins failed to draw Victorian upper-class politeness in his manners. At the party, before Eliza showed up, there is a conversation between Higgins and Miss and Mrs. Eynsford Hill concerning the characteristic of the Victorian upper-class.

HIGGINS. You see, we're all savages, more or less. We're supposed to be civilised and cultured\_ to know all about poetry and philosophy and art and science, and so on; but how many of us know even the meaning of these name? (To MISS HILL) what do you know of poetry? (TO MRS. Hill) what do you know of science? (*Indicating* FREDDY) what does he know of art or science or anything else? What the devil do you imagine I know of philosophy?

MRS HIGGINS (*warningly*). Or of manners, Henry? (p. 241).

This is a turning point in the course of the play. Higgins is a well-educated upper-class who speaks rather rudely in front of his peers. The significant issue lies within his speech accusing

the upper-class people of not knowing anything and only pretending it. The other characters show no objection to the content of his speech, and only his mother relents the way Henry speaks. By accepting his speech and not resisting it, it can be argued that the Arnoldian categorisations of the Victorian upper-class society are gravely under question. Shaw's upper-class character, Henry Higgins, categorises the upper-class characters as uncivilised and uneducated people, which directly opposes Arnoldian descriptions. "Contemporary Marxist analysis of Arnold's work argues that his theory is founded on racist, imperialist, and bourgeois hegemonic structures" (Mohamed, 2020, p. 153). His writings concerning the upper-class people signify his biased subjectivity. The aristocrats are not as brilliant in manners and thoughts as Arnold describes them.

This posits Arnold, not as a liberated social critic who observes social phenomena of his era objectively instead as a manipulated and manipulative intellectual who attempts to justify the ways of the bourgeois. Arnold's view of the social classes' educations is quite problematic. "Arnold does not envisage working-class, middle-class and aristocrat students all walking down the same road to culture" (Storey, 2021, p. 20). It appears that Arnold considers innate flaws in the working-class people concerning education and culture. By the end of the play, Eliza has completely transformed from a cockney accent flower girl to the perfect ideal of the Victorian upper-class lady. Eliza excels Higgins both at speech and manners. This contradiction signifies the biased position of Arnold, for he considered the Populace to have 'the eternal spirit', which makes it impossible for them to be cultured according to the Victorian norms. It can be argued that Arnold is thus an Organic Intellectual who actively takes part in bourgeois discourse and seeks to empower it. The concept of culture for the aristocrats and the middle-class is quite different from that of the working class. For the common Populace, "the social function of culture is to police this disruptive presence" (Storey, 2021, p. 19). Arnold believes that the purpose of educating working-class people is only to restrain them from creating anarchy. In this sense, "Culture is not the main concern of Arnold's work; rather the main concern is social order, social authority, won through cultural subordination and deference" (Storey, 2021, p. 21). The working-class subjects are threats to the dominant ideology of the bourgeois. As a social critic, the role of Arnold is to hegemonise the ideology through culture, restrain and subordinate the working-class subjects, and confine the threats.

### **Shaw's Social Viewpoint about the Victorian Working-Class**

Now that Arnold's stance as a social critic was investigated, it is suitable to consider Shaw's approaches to different social classes. "He looks forward to socialism and communism" (Wenjing, 2015, p. 30), and his socialist tendencies allow him to observe all social circumstances from a different view. The feasible way to achieve a rational thought of Shaw's standpoint, either as an organic intellectual who serves the dominant ideology or resists and opposes it, is through his depictions of his characters. Shaw's illumination of Eliza is quite significant since she possesses a rather dynamic character whose thoughts and behaviours entirely change in the play.

HIGGINS (*continuing*). She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifth of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about £60. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! It's the biggest offer I ever had.

LIZA (*rising, terrified*). Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get\_ (p. 207).

This is the second act when Eliza has come to ask for help with her accent. Pickering, Higgins, Mrs. Pearce, and the readers share a sort of knowledge that Eliza is unaware of. The example above illustrates the way Shaw is looking at working-class people. Higgins is only comparing a millionaire and Eliza concerning the amount of their income they are both willing

to give, yet, Eliza fails to understand this comparison and reacts dramatically and perversely. This is an illustration made by the playwright, and it can be argued that Shaw's assumption of the working-class people is biased to some extent. Another example is when Eliza and the Eynsford Hill family are at the tea party, and she behaves so inconsiderately.

MRS EYSNFORD HILL. I'm sure I hope it won't turn cold. There's so much influenza about. It runs right thorough our whole family regularly every spring.

LIZA (*darkly*). My aunt died of influenza: so they said. (p. 244).

This scene appears to be bitterly humorous in the course of the play. Eliza is significantly imprudent towards the Eynsford Hills. Once more, the other characters and the readers share the same sort of inappropriateness that Eliza ignores. Eliza is not just a former flower girl, but she represents the working-class people in this play. Her actions, thoughts, and behaviours represent that of the working-class. Shaw's characterisation of Eliza as a working-class character differs essentially from when she has grown into an ideal upper-class lady. At the end of the play, we encounter a wholly altered Eliza with no similarity with her former self.

LIZA. I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't do it. You see, really and truly, 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 you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will. (p. 280).

This is the fifth act, and Eliza is speaking to Pickering about Higgins. Her accent, grammar, and the content of her speech are highly elaborated. She has transformed into an intellectual who's aware of social relations. She is no longer an imprudent, perverse, dramatic character who tends to make everyone uncomfortable with whatever she does, instead, she acts better than Higgins as the representative of Victorian upper-class society. It can be reasonably argued that Shaw, unlike Arnold, sees the path of education and culture equally for everyone. The issue is that his representations of the Victorian working-class society are so dramatically low that it is almost impossible to witness a working-class character as well-cultured as the other people from other social classes. The excellent point is that he allows the transformation of the working-class people using culture and education, which are vital to these working-class characters. When they are provided with enough care and attention, they excel even the upper-class characters (Higgins, for instance). Although Shaw is more aware of the social circumstances of the Victorian social classes and is by far less biased than Arnold, he is still unable to categorise the Victorian working-class as normal, civilised, and intellectual. This is due to the robust and active ideology that overshadows a social critic's mentality like Shaw.

## **Conclusion**

The Victorian period is a milestone both in literature and the social progress of the British Isles. Understanding the social relations of this period is quite challenging due to its complexity and existing contradictions. There are numerous discourses presented in this era and following the authenticity of each one seems impossible. This study investigated the social viewpoint of both Matthew Arnold and George Bernard Shaw. In light of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, I explored Shaw's *Pygmalion* mainly for three primary purposes. The first purpose of this study was to investigate the characters in light of hegemony, power relations, and ideology. I illuminated the role of language in the course of the play as an active agent of power within Victorian social classes. The second purpose of this study was to examine Arnold's authenticity as a social critic. In my analysis, I suggested that Arnold's illustration of social classes and

culture is quite biased, and he cannot analyse these issues objectively. I proposed that Arnold is an Organic Intellectual who serves the purposes of the dominant power. His illustrations of the working-class people as innately uncivilised and uncultured and as people who are unable to enter the realm of upper-class society through education contradicted the depictions of Shaw's characters. Eliza as a working-class flower girl achieved a higher level of intelligence and knowledge, and she ultimately transformed into an upper-class ideal through Higgins's education. The third purpose of my analysis was Shaw's stance as a social critic. Shaw's representation of Victorian working-class people suggested his manipulated mind-set; however, in comparison to Arnold, Shaw possesses a better sense of judgment. Although he opposes Arnold when it comes to education for the working-class people, he cannot think entirely outside the dominant ideology, for he, too, depicts a shallow character of the Victorian working-class people. Moreover, this paper represents a better understanding of social classes and power relations in the Victorian period.

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