

BERNARD SHAW'S INFLUENCE ON MODERN LITERATURE

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Abstract:

George Bernard Shaw, renowned for his wit, satire, and keen observation of society, stands as one of the most influential playwrights and essayists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This article delves into the influence of Bernard Shaw on modern literature. Shaw's distinctive style, characterized by sharp wit, provocative dialogue, and socio-political commentary, not only revolutionized the theatrical landscape but also left an indelible mark on the literary world. Bernard Shaw skillfully blended wit with social critique to subvert social standards and elicit thought, leaving a lasting impact on modern writing through satire and humor. Shaw guaranteed that his social and political concerns were understood by a wide audience by utilizing humor and sarcasm to make his plays interesting and approachable. Through an analysis of selected works, this paper explores the nuances of Shaw's literary craftsmanship, shedding light on the enduring relevance of his artistic legacy and by his creative works we can learn what his influence was on modern literature.

Key words: social criticism, literary text, dialogue, social commentary, modern writing

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Introduction:

Bernard Shaw's influence on modern literature is vast and multifaceted. He was not just a playwright but also a critic, essayist, and political activist whose ideas permeated various literary and cultural movements. His work challenged social norms, questioned established institutions, and introduced new ways of thinking about the role of art and literature in society.

Shaw supported the literary realist movement, which aimed to portray life as it actually was without the romantic flourishes that defined previous works. His plays frequently portrayed modern social themes, such as gender norms, class conflicts, and the hypocrisies of the upper classes. Later authors who aimed to utilize literature as a vehicle for social change found success in part because of this emphasis on social criticism. The plays of other authors, like Bertolt Brecht, who also employed drama to question society, bear Shaw's influence. Archibald Henderson emphasized about his social determinism in his book "George Bernard Shaw: His life and works". Shaw's social determinism, as M. Auguste Hamon once expressed as "absolute": his fundamental socialism throws the blame, not upon Trench, Charteris, Crofts and Mrs

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Warren, as individuals, but upon the prevailing social order, the capitalistic regime, which offers them as alternatives, not morality and immorality, but two sorts of immorality [1].

Shaw criticized a number of social structures in his plays, such as marriage, the government, and religion. He thought that these establishments frequently encouraged social injustice and were corrupt. Shaw questioned the legitimacy of these structures and revealed their weaknesses through his dialogue and characters.

Shaw examines the nature of marriage in "Candida", portraying it as a social compact frequently built on dependency and power rather than love.

The drama "Androcles and the Lion" casts doubt on the sincerity and fundamental morality of religious adherents while satirizing religious organizations. Shaw frequently created multifaceted, nuanced characters that reflected actual human behavior rather than idealized or exaggerated renditions of it. Instead of going with the theatrical Victorian theater tropes, he chose characters with realistic impulses and a gray morality. In the play "Pygmalion", Eliza Doolittle is portrayed as a strong, self-reliant woman who challenges the rigid class structures of Edwardian England by refusing to fit into society's expectations. The drama "The Doctor's Dilemma" depicts doctors as flawed people and highlights the moral conundrums they encounter when trying to strike a balance between patient care and profit.

Shaw thought that it was the duty of the dramatist to address contemporary social and political issues. He promoted socialism, women's rights, and other progressive issues through his plays and essays. The notion of the writer as a public intellectual had a profound effect on contemporary literature, inspiring authors like Arthur Miller and Jean-Paul Sartre who likewise used their writing as a vehicle for social criticism. Shaw's role as a public intellectual was not confined to his plays; his essays and prefaces are equally important in understanding his impact on modern thought [2]. The position of the playwright was profoundly changed by Bernard Shaw to become that of a public intellectual. His contributions went beyond the stage as he addressed contemporary social, political, and economic issues in his plays, articles, and public speeches. Shaw promoted the notion of the playwright as a public intellectual.

Shaw felt that it was the moral obligation of a dramatist to tackle the social issues of the day. He viewed drama as a vehicle for social critique and reform in addition to pure entertainment. Shaw addressed topics like gender norms, economic injustice, and class inequality in his plays, which he used to spark debate and promote change. As an illustration we can look through "Mrs. Warren's Profession". Shaw exposed the absurdity of society's moral judgments by using this play to attack the socioeconomic circumstances that push women into prostitution. "Major Barbara" examines the moral ambiguities surrounding riches and generosity, casting doubt on the morality of charitable endeavors supported by "tainted" funds derived from sectors such as the armaments industry. A generation of writers, intellectuals, and activists were impacted by Shaw's playwrighting and public intellectualship. His conviction that drama has the ability to confront societal difficulties motivated other writers, including Arthur Miller and Bertolt Brecht, who likewise viewed their art as a vehicle for social criticism and challenge.

Shaw's influence may be seen in Brecht's works, especially in the way he uses theater to critique politics and society. Shaw's influence can be seen in Arthur Miller's plays, including the production of "The Crucible", which explores moral and societal quandaries.

Shaw's use of satire and humor to critique society was another major influence on modern literature. He believed that laughter could be a powerful tool for exposing the absurdities of the status quo. This approach can be seen in the works of later writers such as Evelyn Waugh and Tom Stoppard, who used humor to critique contemporary society. Shaw's creations also represented a noteworthy advancement in the satirical drama. He introduced a more sophisticated, intellectual kind of satire that addressed intricate social and political concerns, moving away from the more simple, moralistic comedies of manners that were popular in the 19th century. His plays frequently have multiple levels of meaning, with somber indictments of societal institutions beneath the apparent humor.

Shaw's fusion of social criticism and humor has influenced modern writing for a long time. His impact can be observed in the writings of other playwrights and writers who came after him and tackled social concerns with humor and sarcasm. Shaw's techniques have been utilized by writers like as Tom Stoppard, Samuel Beckett, and Harold Pinter, among others, to produce works that are not only amusing but also intellectually stimulating.

Shaw's creation of the "Shavian hero" – a character who is intellectually superior, morally unconventional, and often at odds with society – was another key contribution to modern literature. This character type paved the way for the anti-heroes of modern literature, figures who reject traditional moral values and question societal norms. The influence of the Shavian hero can be seen in the works of writers such as James Joyce and Albert Camus. Shaw's creation of the Shavian hero is a significant contribution to character development in modern literature. This character archetype can be seen as a precursor to the modern anti-hero [3].

Shaw was renowned for his inventive use of language, especially when it came to his clever, epigrammatic dialogue. Later modernist writers who experimented with dialogue and narrative form were affected by his use of language. His impact can be seen in the writings of Samuel Beckett and T.S. Eliot, who both employed inventive language to investigate difficult subjects. Shaw's linguistic style, particularly his use of paradox and epigram, influenced the modernist movement. T.S. Eliot acknowledged Shaw's impact on his own work [4].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we can say that Shaw's linguistic experiments left a mark on postmodern and modernist writing. Later writers who experimented with dialogue, narrative structure, and the relationship between language and meaning were affected by his exact yet humorous use of words. Shaw's methods served as an inspiration for writers such as T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett, especially in their examination of language as a tool for alienation and communication. Shaw's writings had a significant influence on how modern drama evolved. His focus on social themes, realistic settings, and interaction established the foundation for contemporary theater. Shaw popularized the "problem play," which went on to become a mainstay of 20th-century drama and influenced writers like Tennessee Williams and Harold Pinter. Shaw's influence on modern drama is perhaps his most

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enduring legacy. Shaw is frequently recognized for having invented the "drama of ideas," a kind of theater that places an emphasis on philosophical, social, and political analysis as well as intellectual dialogue. Shaw's plays were focused on discussions of modern concerns like class, gender, religion, and morality, in contrast to the conventional melodramas or farces that dominated theater in the 19th century.

References:

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- [4]. *The Language of Modern Drama* by Morton J. Frisch (1978), pp. 84-87.