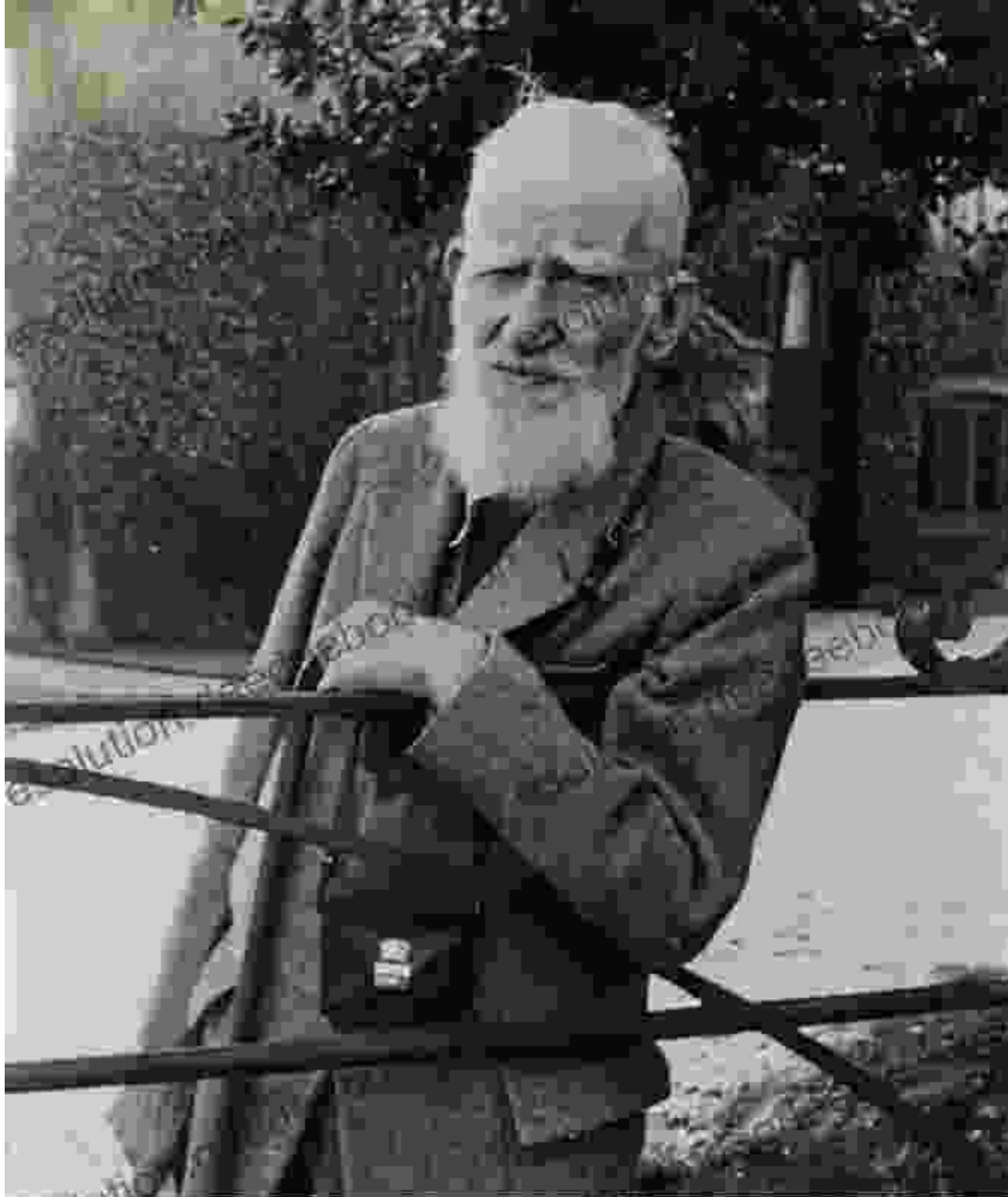
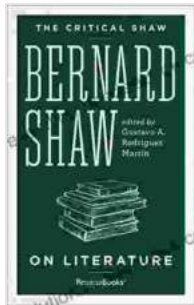


# Bernard Shaw On Literature: The Critical Shaw



Bernard Shaw, the renowned Irish playwright, critic, and Nobel laureate, was a towering figure in the literary world of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His incisive wit, sharp intellect, and unconventional views on art

and society made him a formidable force in the shaping of literary criticism. In this article, we delve into Shaw's critical writings on literature, exploring his unique perspective on the nature of art, the role of the artist, and the relationship between literature and society.



## Bernard Shaw on Literature (The Critical Shaw)

by Rajat K Baisya

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3508 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 254 pages  
Lending : Enabled



### Shaw's Concept of Art

Central to Shaw's critical approach was his belief that art should serve a social purpose. He saw art not as an ethereal pursuit but as a tool for social transformation. In his essay "The Sanity of Art," he argues that art should reflect the realities of life, expose social injustices, and inspire positive change. Shaw believed that great literature had the power to educate, enlighten, and provoke audiences into critical thinking and action.

### The Artist as a Social Critic

Shaw viewed the artist as a social critic with a responsibility to challenge the status quo. He believed that artists should use their talent to expose hypocrisy, question authority, and advocate for a more just and equitable

society. In his play "Major Barbara," Shaw presents a compelling portrait of an artist who uses her art to challenge the social and economic inequalities of her time.

### **The Importance of Truth and Authenticity**

Shaw's critical writings emphasized the importance of truth and authenticity in literature. He rejected conventional forms and artificial characters, believing that art should reflect the complexities and contradictions of human experience. In his essay "The Problem Play," he argues that the purpose of drama is to present life as it is, not as we would like it to be. Shaw's plays are renowned for their realistic dialogue, their exploration of difficult themes, and their refusal to shy away from controversy.

### **The Relationship Between Literature and Society**

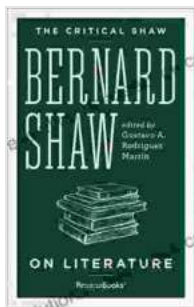
Shaw believed that literature had a profound impact on society. He argued that literature could shape public opinion, influence political discourse, and even contribute to social change. In his essay "On Going to Church," Shaw suggests that literature can be a substitute for religion, providing moral guidance and spiritual solace. However, he also recognized the potential for literature to be manipulated for political or ideological purposes, a danger he warned against in his play "Heartbreak House."

### **Shaw's Influence on Literary Criticism**

Bernard Shaw's critical writings have had a lasting impact on literary criticism. His emphasis on social purpose, authenticity, and the artist's role as a social critic has influenced generations of critics and writers. His unique perspective on literature continues to challenge and inspire readers

and scholars alike, ensuring his legacy as a seminal figure in the field of literary criticism.

Bernard Shaw's critical writings on literature offer a wealth of insights into the nature of art, the role of the artist, and the relationship between literature and society. His incisive wit, sharp intellect, and unconventional views have left an indelible mark on literary criticism, shaping the way we think about and engage with literature even today. As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, Shaw's critical legacy continues to provide valuable guidance, reminding us of the power of literature to educate, inspire, and challenge the status quo.



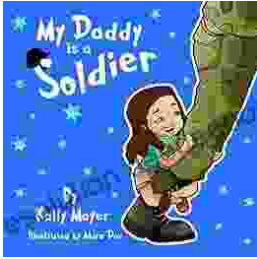
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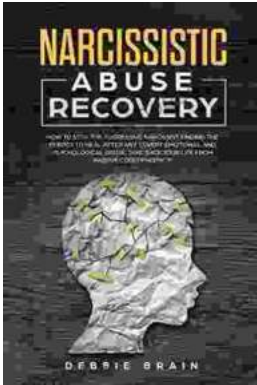
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