

Реферат на тему: "Стилістичні прийоми Бернарда Шоу (Англ.)"

Джордж Бернард Шоу

Реферат на тему:

THE STYLISTIC METHOD
OF BERNARD SHAW.

Bernard Shaw always considered that the purpose of a writer was not to entertain or satisfy aesthetic needs of the reader, but to criticize and improve. He viewed art as a strong means of influencing the society. His plays are devoted to various social problems. Shaw believed that personal life was interconnected with social conditions.

Following Ibsen, he supported social-critical stream in drama. But Shaw, unlike Ibsen, chose not tragical, but comical situations [2: 14]. He is considered to be a founder of problematic drama where he criticized burning political and social issues of the day.

B.Shaw was called a reformer of English theatre. He viewed a stage as a place for discussion, a clash of ideas, raising vital problems. The playwright created a new structure of drama — problematic play-symposium [3: 16]. Shaw's ideas and beliefs are rendered chiefly through the dialogue. The personages usually have their own particular views of life and collisions between them usually serve as opportunities for expressing their thoughts.

Bernard Shaw's publicist attitude towards the drama demanded an effective language. His ideas are expressed in short wise, witty sayings, aphorisms, as they are called. When writing on the social contradictions of the 20th century, he often uses striking paradoxes, which bring out his attitude to England's 19th century conventions. One of Shaw's favourite stylistic devices is a paradox (we understand it as a strange point of view, far from commonly expected and contradictory to the common sense). The truth is often hidden behind such paradoxes. It is discovered that paradoxes turn trivial opinions upside down disclosing their foolishness and hypocrisy, e.g.:

The love of money is the root of all evil.

When people are very poor, you cannot help them, no matter how much you may sympathize with them. It does them more harm than good in the long run.

The dirtier a place is the more rent you get.

I'll have to learn to speak middle-class language from you, instead of speaking proper English.

The great secret... is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls.

Time enough to think of the future when you haven't any future to think of.

Independence? That's middle-class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

One of Shaw's plays is called "The Apple Cart" (1929). There is an English proverb "to

upset the apple-cart" which means that having turned the cart with apples upside down it is impossible to put them in the same order again. Shaw's plays and striking paradoxes can be compared to that person who upsets the cart — Shaw threw the apples of criticism very persistently destroying commonly accepted views — and after his stinging critics the society couldn't remain the same [4; 6: 10].

In his comedy "Arms and the Man" the playwright criticized romantic image of war; the play is antimilitary. It was staged by the Independent Theatre in 1894 and was very popular with the public. But the attitude of the government was shown when the Prince of Wales left his seat with indignation in the middle of the play [5: 10]. Later (during the First World War) B.Shaw proclaimed that English and German armies should shoot their officers, return home and gather harvest. The author couldn't bare the thought that future Shakespeares and Goethes were killing each other in the fields of war. Of course, such thoughts raised a wave of criticism and enmity, and Shaw had often been insulted and attacked in press.

In the play "Arms and the Man" romantic ideas are mocked: Sergius, "hero of Slivnitza" and "the apostle of higher love" turns out to be not so heroic and saint. The hero returns to his native place and meets his fiancée Raina. They behave like in the knight's romance, their speech is filled with stilted words of sentiment: admiration, worship, battle, deeds, inspired, love, ignoble thought, saint, passion, worshipper, loftiest exaltation. Stylistic devices are widely used: metaphors (Sergius is named "the hero", "the king" and Raina is "the queen" and "the saint"); simile (like a knight in a tournament with his lady looking down at him). Some epithets are used for describing Raina's staying at home when Sergius was fighting at war: inactive, dreaming, useless.

The syntax is suitable for rendering emotional tense, there are many addresses ("My hero! My King!", "My Lord") and exclamatory sentences. The sentences are not long and complicated: "I trust you. I love you. You will never disappoint me, Sergius". To emphasize the emotional tense aposiopesis is widely used: "Whilst I had to sit at home inactive — dreaming — useless doing nothing that could give me the right to call myself worthy of any man"; "My lord and my...".

The romantic image is destroyed and the higher love is betrayed when Sergius begins flirting with Raina's maid Louka: "I am surprised at myself, Louka. What would Sergius, the hero of Slivnitza, say if he saw me now? What would Sergius, the apostle of higher love, say if he saw me now? What would half a dozen Sergiuses who keep popping in and out of this handsome figure of mine say if they caught us here?" This metaphor is explained by Louka literally and, thus, the humouristic effect is induced: "Well, you see, sir, since you say you are half a dozen different gentlemen all at once, I should have a great deal to look after".

The image of a romantic hero is described ironically: this kind of comical modality is created by the contradiction between "the hero of Slivnitza" and his real nature, between the language of the dialogue with Raina and that one with Louka. The same contradiction is found in the use of the word "gentleman": the direct meaning is "a man who is well behaved, educated and refined" [1]; the contextual meaning is "a gentleman is a person who has its own morality and does what suits him and is convenient for him". The latter meaning is

realized in the sentence: "It's so hard to know what a gentleman considers right".

In his play "Major Barbara" the great dramatist accuses the rich entrepreneurs of England of making money on war and death, mocks British philanthropy. It is a paradox that philanthropic organization "Salvation Army" subsists on money of such people as Undershaft, the armourer and gun-maker. Such fact can exist only in a spoilt society. Despite all his cynicism and evil nature Undershaft is clever in a way and he is the only person in this play who does something practical.

His daughter, Barbara (major Barbara because this charity organization is military in structure and everybody is given a rank), is whole-heartedly enthusiastic about helping the poor, but she is able to do nothing besides giving flaming spirited speeches. Undershaft mocks such people: "You are all alike, you respectable people. You can tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You daren't handle high explosives; but you are all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man, and kill one another at the game. What a country! What a world!" In this instance irony is created by using literary and figurative meaning of words: "the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun" and "the bursting strain of a man under temptation"; "to handle high explosives" and "to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man".

It is another paradox that such enemy of humanity as Undershaft becomes an author's mouthpiece for criticizing English society. In the above-mentioned extract the entrepreneur mocks inability of people to do something practical and really useful. Undershaft's son Stephen doesn't know anything or can do anything either, but he is keen on producing solemn speeches. His father comments on it in such a way: "He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career". First of all, it is another paradox: politicians should know much about life in their country. The irony of this instance is created by incompatibility of the first and the second sentences. The second sentence is unexpected because the reader usually views politician as a knowledgeable person.

Nevertheless, Stephen is sure of his deep knowledge and competence; he merely states that he knows the difference between right and wrong. Shaw uses his two favourite stylistic means (gradation and irony) to express Undershaft's indignation at such boldness and self-assurance: "You don't say so! What! No capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, you are a genius, a master of masters, a god! At twenty four, too!" There are two cases of gradation in this small extract. The first is rising in emotional intensity: philosophers (thinkers and observers) are only puzzled by this vital problem, lawyers and businessmen (men of action) are baffled and muddled (bewildered), artists (the most emotional and easily wounded people) are ruined utterly. Another case of gradation is used for ironic praise (or so called blame-by-praise): Undershaft starts with "genius" and finishes with "god".

The entrepreneur discloses all the truth: he says who is the real government of England

— he, his companion Lazarus and other businessman: "I am the government of your country: I, and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop [Parliament], can govern Undershaft and Lazarus? No, my friend: you will do what pays us. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't. You will find out that trade requires certain measures when we have decided on those measures. When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need".

When speaking about British government Undershaft intermixes high, pathetic, stilted words with colloquial ones: "Be off with you, my boy, and play with your caucases [committee formed for the time of election] and leading articles and historic parties and great leaders and burning questions and the rest of your toys. I am going back to my counting house to pay the piper and to call the tune". Pathetic words are used ironically: in such a context leaders are not great and the questions are not burning. A little speech is concluded with a highly colloquial phraseological unit "to call the tune".

Two last Undershaft's speeches remind us of Shaw's aphorisms from the play "The Man of Destiny". Napoleon gave a speech about "morality" of English people who had never done anything without principles: if an Englishman fought with somebody he did it out of the principle of patriotism; if he robbed you — it was out of the principle of business; if he beat you — it was out of the principle of courage, etc. The playwright also remarked that if somebody wanted to find a person with high moral standards he should definitely be searching outside England.

Stephen's speech is full of high words and banalities. It is another Shaw's paradox that incompetence of English government and absence of practical skills on the part of charity workers are exposed in speeches of Undershaft — the enemy of humanity and "manufacturer of death".

The play "Pygmalion" shows author's belief in the possibilities of man. Eliza, a girl of eighteen, comes from the lowest social level and speaks with a strong Cockney accent, which is considered to be the most illiterate English. The play shows how Eliza struggles to rise to a higher cultural level. Bernard Shaw knew the common fate of those who were born in poverty. There was no rising from it to another standing without outward culture. The Cockney English spoken in the East End of London was like a stamp on a person's reputation.

It is she who insists on being taught. Eliza studies hard to be pulled out of the gutter. Her father who is merely a dustman becomes a preacher because he has an oratorical gift. Eliza doesn't only learn correct English — she becomes a cultural and harmonious person. Nevertheless, the end of the play has a tragic colouring: we don't know if Eliza will find a place in the new surroundings, but she will never return to the old one: "Oh! If I only could go back to my flower basket! I should be independent both of you and my father and all the world! Why did you take my independence from me? Why did I give it up? I'm a slave now, for all my fine clothes".

In such plays as "Arms and the Man" and "Major Barbara" Shaw uses mainly satire in

order to criticize and improve. In the play "Pygmalion" humour, not satire is used: it treats its subject kindly, laughing at some exaggerated or strange features of the person. Humour is created at different levels: lexical and syntactic.

Humour is induced by using the word "manner" in two meanings: direct — "style (rules) of behaviour" and contextual "treating people (communicating) with them in some way": "the great secret is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another". The humorous effect is emphasized by using in one sentence such lofty and colloquial words as "Heaven", "third-class carriages" and "soul".

In the following example there is a play on the literal and figurative meaning of the expression "to be passed over": direct — by a bus, fig. — to be disregarded. There are also instances of pun, based on ordinary repetition: "I'm no preacher: I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me".

The instance of humour is based upon the similarity of syntactical structures of the sentences, while their meanings are changed completely: "Eliza: He [Pickering] treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess. — Higgins: And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl".

So, Bernard Shaw created a new social drama of discussion. The writer dealt with such vital problems as incompetent government, war, climbing social ladder, education. Shaw's ideas are rendered chiefly through the dialogue, and even a negative personage can be the author's mouthpiece. Playwright's favourite devices are paradoxes, gradation, grotesque, mixture of lofty and colloquial words for creating irony. The author definitely prefers satire and irony to humour because his main task is to criticize and reveal, but not to entertain.

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