

Fernando Pessoa

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Shaw, minor artist though he be, has nevertheless the virtue of being a stimulant. He stimulates to critical thought, though critical thought, once stimulated, will begin by breaking down all his illusions about mankind, who cares nothing for mankind, and justice, in which no one believes. Mr. Shaw, like most propagandists, is conducive to something else — a self-defeater by nature. A stimulant is something that excites us to be ourselves; thus whisky has led many men to deeds wholly unconnected with barley. Mr. Shaw follows the way of all stimulants: he expects we will agree with him, but that is not the way of stimulants — it is they that must agree with us.

Shaw's capital fault — the capital fault of any man who may want to be considered an artist — is that he has no poetry in him. This means that he has no humanity in him.

Shaw is more like the founder of a religion than like a creator of literature, which, at any rate, he is not. He is not a Synge, nor even a Wilde. He has not the unopinions for that. He has not that lack of opinions which [...].

s. d.

"Erostratus". in Páginas de Estética e de Teoria Literárias. Fernando Pessoa. (Textos estabelecidos e prefaciados por Georg Rudolf Lind e Jacinto do Prado Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1966: 211.