PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

51

O. Wilde and B. Shaw

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." With these words, in the preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde declared that art answers to itself and not to the censor. George Bernard Shaw, who thought that the stage should change society and not merely entertain it, would have disagreed with the doctrine and admired the wit. Welcome to Topic 51: O. Wilde and B. Shaw. Two Dubliners, born only two years apart, conquered the London stage from opposite sides: Wilde in the 1890s with the polished paradox of the drawing-room comedy, Shaw in the following decades with the drama of ideas.

In order to address this topic, I will divide it into five sections. Firstly, I will set out the context: the Irish background, the Victorian stage and the New Drama. Secondly, I will examine Oscar Wilde, his life, his prose, his plays and his fall. Thirdly, I will turn to George Bernard Shaw, his ideas and his main plays. Fourthly, I will compare both writers and say a word about their reception. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications of the topic within our current educational framework.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include Richard Ellmann's Oscar Wilde, Peter Raby's edited The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde, Christopher Innes's edited The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw, and Carter and McRae's The Penguin Guide to Literature in English, as well as the online sources of the Nobel Foundation and the Project Gutenberg editions of the plays. I have also drawn on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Real Decreto 217/2022 and 243/2022, and Decreto 110/2022 and 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, modified in 2023.