

# The New Criterion

## Features

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### The cure for Bernard Shaw

by [Anthony Daniels](#)

On the crank medical theories of George Bernard Shaw.

The first writer whose prose style I ever admired was Bernard Shaw. I was between eleven and twelve years old at the time, and did not arrive at my judgment independently. I was under the influence of my English teacher, the first intellectual I had ever met (other than a second cousin who had published a few verses in the small and evanescent English-language literary journals of Paris in the 1950s), and I and my friends admired him to the point of hero-worship. If he had told us that the greatest novelists who ever lived were Marie Corelli and E. Phillips Oppenheim, we should have defended his opinion to the death, citing his arguments, and the fact that he advanced them, as proof incontrovertible of its truth.

In fact, his attitude to Shaw was little short of ours to him, namely idolatry. He told us that Shaw was the greatest playwright in the English language since Shakespeare, which I thought a far greater accolade than I t ...

**Anthony Daniels's** most recent book is *In Praise of Prejudice* (Encounter Books). Hewas born in 1949. After qualifying as a doctor, he worked in what was then Rhodesia, followed by South Africa, before returning for three years training as a psychiatrist in London's East End. Three and a half years in the Gilbert Islands were interspersed with some South American wandering, and then between 1984 and 1986 he worked in Tanzania. His first book, *Coups and Cocaine*, was followed by *Fool or Physician*, subtitled 'the memoirs of a sceptical doctor.' *Zanzibar to Timbuktu*, his trek across Africa by public transport was published to great acclaim in 1988, and was a runner-up in the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award.

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