PREFACE

The thesis, 'Quest for Social Order in the Select Plays of Clifford Odets', is the outcome of my research in the Department of English, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. In the present thesis, an attempt has been made to evaluate the ten published plays of Clifford Odets from the perspective of the quest for social order in the protagonists. The aim of the study is to bring out the influences in moulding the artistic career of Clifford Odets as a stage playwright. The topics include the Great Depression, the propagandist writers, the Agit-prop technique, the Marxist-tenor in Odets' plays, the protest of the protagonists, the drama of revolt in the committed decade, the social commitment and the existential predicament or the quest for identity of the heroes.

In this context, I have to indicate that I could get only the xerox copies of the plays Night Music and The Flowering Peach, which are available in IACIS (formerly ASRC), Hyderabad. In fact, the original copies of these plays are not at all available anywhere. Moreover, the xerox copy of the play The Flowering Peach does not have the publication details also, and so it became impossible to mention them. I could not select the play Clash by Night due to some practical problems, even though it has its own importance.

The present thesis has conveniently been divided into seven chapters. The First Chapter subtitled Clifford Odets: the Golden Boy of American Drama gives an introduction to Clifford Odets' overall life and traces his career as a dramatist. This also gives details about Odets' childhood, his growth as a dramatist; about his works, especially highlighting the impact of depression on him, and the techniques used in different plays. The impact of the Great Depression on the playwright and overall survey of the American drama is also mentioned. The Second Chapter subtitled Awakening the Conscience deals with the first two plays of Clifford Odets — Waiting for Lefty (1935), the first successful play, and Awake and Sing!, the first major play. Till the Day I Die and Paradise Lost have been studied in the Third Chapter subtitled From Communism to Humanism. An attempt is made in the Fourth Chapter
subtitled A Golden-way to Domestic Bliss to study the plays of Odets' Golden Boy and Rocket to the Moon. The plays, Night Music and The Big Knife, form the Fifth Chapter, A Struggle for Spiritual Values of this study. The plays The Country Girl and The Flowering Peach are studied in the Sixth Chapter, A Journey to Religious Faith (Noah Arc Revisited: Hope and Redemption). The Last and Seventh Chapter, Odets as a Master Playwright presents a summing up of the study.

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