CHAPTER IX

A Note on Shaw's Prose Style with Reference to His Prefaces
Buffon utters a perennial truth when he says that "style is the man" and this holds good in Shaw's case also. Style invariably expresses a man. It reflects a man's temperament, his way of thinking, his culture and taste, the pitch of his response to his environment and the psychological tension he is in. Style reflects like mirror the working of an author's mind so much so that it could be always of great interest to a psychologist. As style is indubitably connected with the working of an author's brain, it reveals the mental state and the personality of the author. An artificial style reveals an insincere author and an author without a conviction. The style of a committed writer differs from that of an uncommitted writer who does not have a definite philosophy or a conviction of his own. Shaw insists on sincerity as the criterion of a good style. He says in the preface to Immaturity "... I have never aimed at style in my life;"

1 - Alan Warner comments, "Since style is something ingrained in writing and not stuck on top like a veneer, it follows that a man's way of writing will be an expression of his personality and his way of looking at life". A Short Guide to English Style, London, E1BS & O.U.P., 1964, p. 2.

Abbreviations used in this note:

W.H. - Widower's Houses.  
P.P. - Plays Pleasant.  
T.P.P. - Three Plays for Puritans.  
M & S - Man and Superman.  
JBOI - John Bull's Other Island.  
M.B. - Major Barbara.  
D.D. - The Doctor's Dilemma.  
G.M. - Getting Married.  
S.B.P. - The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet.  
M. - Misalliance.  
A & L - Androcles and the Lion.  
H.B. - Heartbreak House.  
B.M. - Back to Methuselah.  
St. J. - Saint Joan.  
A.C. - The Apple Cart.  
T.T.TBG - Too True to be Good.  
S.U.I. - The Simplton of Unexpected Isles.  
S.V.S. - Shakes Versus Shav.  
Pyg - Pygmalion.  
Pr. - Preface.
style is a sort of melody that comes into my sentences by itself. If a writer says what he has to say as accurately and as effectively as he can, his style will take care of itself, if he has a style" (p. 677). In the preface to Man and Superman Shaw criticises the art for art's sake theory and holds that it is difficult for a writer to achieve a good style without some kind of conviction. He maintains that 'a true original style is never achieved for its own sake' and insists on the power of assertion as fundamental to acquiring a good style. He says, "Effectiveness of assertion is the alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none; he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Disprove his assertion after it is made, yet its style remains." (p. 165). What Shaw suggests here is that a man without a faith or a conviction cannot assert anything and will be nowhere in respect of style.

Shaw's long practice of public speaking as a debater and as a Fabian socialist taught him the importance of idiom in communicating ideas to the public. He soon outgrew his initial attempts at refinement and took to an extensive use of idiom which he recognised to be "the highly vitalized form of language".¹

Every writer in his composition has to select words and combine them in an order that would meet his semantic motive. This business of selection and combination is the personal perogative of every writer. Normally the two processes of selection and combination get almost equal emphasis; however, owing to the pull of personality or culture or some psychic reasons like aphasia, a writer may get

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tilted towards either selection or combination in his language. A writer tilted towards selection may produce contiguity disorder, while a writer tilted towards combination may produce similarity disorder. Without categorising Shaw into any of the groups, Ohmann observes that use of discontinuity is a marked trait in Shavian style and says that "to a large extent Shaw's ethic is one of discontinuity..."¹

Shaw's style appears to be the style of a man who is profoundly dissatisfied with the existing order of society and is anxious to see and set up a new order of life. The genesis of Shaw's rebellious, critical and anti-establishment attitude could be traced to the unhappy experiences of his childhood.² His Rabelaisian uncle Walter John Gurly with profanity in speech and his father with his anti-climactic humour on religious matters exercised a deep anti-religious influence on young Shaw. Shaw suffered from a sense of alienation in a disintegrated family where his parents stood in an utterly damaged relation to each other. His mother "did not hate anybody, nor love anybody".³ Besides the parents, John Vandaleur Lee appeare to be equally indifferent to young Shaw. As Collin Wilson affirms, "So the two most important people in Shaw's childhood- his mother and Lee- were aloof and relatively uninterested in him".⁴

The atmosphere of indifference left boy Shaw to his own resources. The faults of the family ideal that Shaw observed in his childhood were too deeply impressed on his mind and they made him afterwards suspicious of all ideals of life. Again, the setbacks Shaw received in his early youth in respect of education owing to poverty left permanent scars on his mind. Also, the Marxian education that Shaw received in his youth fired his rebellious spirit all the more. With such a background Shaw found himself in head-on collision with the Victorian morality and Victorian smugness.

Shaw seemed to start his career with total loss of faith in the human civilization. In the preface to *Plays Unpleasant* Shaw says, "I had no taste for what is called popular art, no respect for popular morality, no belief in popular religion, no admiration for popular heroics" (p. 716). In England Shaw could not assimilate himself into any of the economic classes and maintained a kind of lonely existence. Giving vent to his sense of loneliness, Shaw observes in the preface to *Immaturity*, "I was outside society, outside politics, outside sport, outside the Church. If the term had been invented, then I should have been called the Complete Outsider" (p. 680). Like two sides of the same coin Shaw's style displays two opposite tendencies: the tendency to demolish and the tendency to propagate. This concides with Shaw's basic two roles - the role of an opposer and the role of a Messiah. The oppositional stance seems to outweigh his creative urge. He likes to be always on the alert and on the offensive. Shaw says, "It is an instinct with me

personally, to attack every idea which has been full-grown ten years". Shaw's pathological passion for negation produces in his prose a variety of negative structures.

"No more ... than" and "any more ... than" structures:

Among the negative structures "no more ... than" kind appears to be most dominant.

"As a matter of fact, the rank and file of the doctors are no more scientific than their tailors" (Pr. D.D., p. 246).

"Because a man can no more be completely original in that sense than a tree can grow out of air" (Pr. M.B., p. 116).

"We do not want good men and bad men any more than we want giants and dwarfs" (G.M., p. 11).

Structures with "never":

Structures with adverb 'never' which helps in emphasizing the negative sense are frequently found in Shaw's prose.

"The doctor never hesitates to claim divine omniscience" (Pr. D.D., p. 239).

"You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable or pardonable" (Pr. M.B., p. 128).

"Never in history, as far as we know, had there been such a determined, richly subsidized, politically organized attempt to persuade the human race that..." (Pr. B.M., p. 532).
Structures with 'No' :-

Structures with 'No' at the beginning recur frequently in Shaw's prose.

"No" knowledge is finally impossible of human attainment" (Pr. D.D., p. 256).

"No parent cares two pence whether his children can write Latin hexametres.." (Pr. Mis., p. 83).

"No statesman worth the name can possibly act on these views" (Pr. G.M., p. 12).

Structures with 'No doubt' :-

Structure with 'no doubt' at the beginning is another variety of negative weapons in the Shavian armoury.

"No doubt Galileo missed the real point at issue as completely as Socrates or Jesus" (Pr. O.R., p. 370).

"No doubt the same may be said of all professions" (Pr. D.D., p. 241).

"No doubt I must recognise, as even the Ancient Mariner did, that I must tell the story entertainingly..." (Pr. M & S., p. 165).

Structures with 'Not' at the beginning :-

Structures beginning with 'not' at the beginning also abound in the Shavian prose.

"Not one doctor in a thousand is a vivisector.." (Pr. D.D., p. 252).

"Not long ago I asked a writer of distinguished intellectual competence..." (Pr. A & L, p. 550).

"Not so in political science. Not so in religion" (Pr. Mil., p. 493).

Structures with 'nothing' at the beginning :-

Structures with 'nothing' also recur frequently which help in
emphasizing views.

"Now nothing can be more anomalous, and at bottom impossible than a Conservative Protestant party standing for the established order..." (Pr. JBOI, p. 448).

"Nothing can extinguish my interest in Shakespeare" (Pr. S. Vs S., p. 916).

"Nothing is more alarming than the ignorance of our public men..." (Pr. Sh. B.P., p. 433).

Structures with 'nobody' :-

Like 'nothing', structures with 'nobody' also recur quite frequently in Shaw's prose.

"Nobody will be able to understand the vagaries of public feeling during the war unless they bear constantly in mind...." (Pr. H.H., p. 388).

"Nobody in Ireland of any intelligence likes nationalism" (Pr. JBOI, p. 457).

"Nobody has ever seen a lady or gentleman carrying a jug of milk down bond street" (Pr. S.U.I., p. 638).

'Neither' and 'On the contrary' :-

Structures with 'neither' and 'on the contrary' have also enriched the Shavian negative armoury.

"But neither does any government exempt the pursuit of knowledge...." (Pr. D.D., p. 255).

"Neither could the minority object to the secretary..." (Pr. Sh. B.P., p. 409).

"On the contrary it would make the theatre more effectually subject to them than at present" (Pr. Sh. B.P., p. 415).

"On the contrary, every inducement to shirk that primary duty is continually before us" (Pr. Geneva, p. 882).
The method of direct talk:

As said before, Shaw's prefaces present a language of persuasion and propagation. His rhetoric is the rhetoric of an effective public speaker with full command over the audience. He never talks over the heads of the readers; he always has direct talk with them. A sense of the frontal presence of the reader is always there. This sense of frontal presence of the reader has helped Shaw in producing a very clear, forceful and telling language. The address of the reader as 'you' is a habit with Shaw. It has also given his prose a sweet conversational touch.

"And here I must remind you that our credulity is not to be measured..." (Pr. A & L, p. 587).

"But you cannot create a mentality out of the promises..." (Pr. Mil., p. 484).

"But when your son tries to skate or bicycle..." (Pr. B.M., p. 509).

The method of questioning:

Shaw has a habit of asking questions in the course of a discourse and that serves as a pretext for explaining his points and bringing them home to the readers. Questions jerk the readers and awaken their responsive sensibilities. According to Longinus, questions "increase the realism and vigour of writing".1

Ohmann finds 'use of discontinuity' a dominant feature in Shaw's style. The psychology of discontinuity works in Shaw's habit of opening an argument and trying to pass a verdict on it as early as possible for him. Ohmann comments, "To disturb the

sequence of stylistic flow is for him as appalling a business as to whip up a tempest in the flaccid flow of moral tradition."¹
Chesterton also comments in regard to the above habit of Shaw's, "His mind is both fond of abruptness and fond of finality".²
There is an innate urge in Shaw to stall the flow of argument and issue a verdict. Two phrases that Shaw uses most frequently for issuing verdicts are 'in short' and 'the truth is'.

"In short, when Major Barbara says that there are no scoundrels, she is right" (Pr. M.B., p. 129).

"In short, the officers had given outrageous provocation" (Pr. JBOI, p. 464).

"In short, those critics of mine who have taken The Apple Cart for a story of struggle between a hero and a roomful of guys have been grossly taken in" (Pr. A.C., p. 327).

"The truth is, an immoderately good man is very much more dangerous than an immoderately bad man." (Pr. G.M., p. 10).

"The truth is, this play grew out of the relations which inevitably exist in the theatre between authors and actors" (Pr. G.C., p. 811).

Shaw uses redifinitions, surprises and paradoxes to produce shocking effects and jerk the readers out of their conventional beliefs and illusions.

They also stimulate a reader's thinking. To cite instances -


"...Of treating their children as wild beasts to be tamed by a system of blows and imprisonment which they called education" (Pr. G.M., p. 7).

"There is a nasty lying habit called confession which the Army encourages" (Pr. M.B., p. 127).

"We must teach citizenship and political science at school. But must we? There is no must about it, the hard fact being that we must not teach political science or citizenship at school."

(Pr. B.M., p. 503).

"It is the sensible schemes, unfortunately that are hopeless in England" (Pr. Mis., p. 86).

Shaw's use of irony is also quite frequent in his prose. Irony with its devastatingly opposite meaning is a highly effective weapon for an attack on a subject. With reference to the British persecution in Africa, Shaw says in the preface to John Bull's Other Island, "And our clemency did not stop there. His wife was not punished at all—not even charged with stealing the shot which was found in her person. And lest Abdel Nebi should feel lonely at 25 in beginning penal servitude for the rest of his days, another young man, of 20, was sent to penal servitude for life with him." (p. 464).

"I am only defending my own age against the charge of being less imaginative than the Middle Ages. I affirm that the nineteenth century, still more the twentieth can knock the fifteenth into a cocked hat in point of susceptibility to marvels and miracles and saints and prophets and magicians and monsters and fairy tales of all kinds". (Pr. St. J., p. 629).

For a critic of conventional morals, use of satire becomes unavoidable and accordingly, in Shaw's prose there is profuse use
Shaw directs his satire against a society believing in a false custom of revenge—

"The anarchist wolf flying from the wolves of plutocracy throws himself on the honour of the man. This man, not being a wolf, does not throw him back to the pursuing wolves ... The plutocratic wolves presently smell him out. The fugitive shoots the unlucky wolf whose nose is nearest, shoots himself;" (Pr. M.B., pp. 134-35).

Shaw directs his satire against the philistine politicians of his time.

"And our Prime Ministers, though rated as mature, divide their time between the golf course and the Treasury Bench in Parliament" (Pr. B.M., p. 506).

"Our ideal was "a commonplace type with a stick and a pipe and a half bred black and tan". Even Franklyn Roosevelt won his first presidential election more by a photograph of himself in the act of petting a baby than by his political programme, which few understood; indeed he only half understood it himself". (Pr. Geneva, p. 878).

Shaw's invective is also quite frequent. In the preface to The Doctor's Dilemma the medical profession has been made the subject of his invective—

"The recklessness with which they now recommend wintering in Egypt or at Devos to people who cannot afford to go to Cornwall, and the orders given for champaigne jelly and old port in households where such luxuries must obviously be acquired at the cost of stinting necessaries, often make one wonder whether it is possible for a man to go through a medical training and retain a spark of common sense." (p. 250).

In the preface to Heartbreak House Shaw directs his invective
against the dirty game of politics in Europe before the first world war.

"Happy were the fools and the thoughtless men of action in those days. The worst of it was that the fools were very strongly represented in parliament, as fools not only elect fools, but can persuade men of action to elect them too. The election that immediately followed the armistice was perhaps the maddest that has ever taken place." (p. 391).

**Uses of paradox and contradiction:**

Shaw's sense of dialectics seem to goad him to resort to paradoxes and contradictions quite often. Shaw seems to relish the game of contradiction and it also serves the purpose of compelling the reader to think.

"The climax of legal lawlessness was reached in France" (Pr. H.H., p. 384).

"Thus it always seems strained to speak of the religious convictions of a clergymen because nine out of ten clergymen have no religious convictions." (Pr. D.D., p. 259).

"The law is equal before all of us; but we are not all equal before the law" (Pr. Mil., p. 479).

"This solves the problem for the parents. It does not solve it for the children ...." (Pr. Mis., p. 52).

**Uses of superlatives and hyperboles:**

For a propagandist writer it is quite natural to use superlatives and hyperboles because they are of help in bringing home to the reader the urgency and magnitude of a matter. In Shaw's prose the extent of the use of superlatives and hyperboles is remarkably great. Shaw himself declared, "It is always necessary to overstate a case startlingly to make people sit up
and listen to it, and to frighten them into acting on it. I do this habitually and deliberately."^1

"...Most energetically egotistic fighting style" (Pr. P.P., p. 719).

"I wish to boast that Pygmalion has been an extremely successful play ..." (Pr. Pyg., p. 809).

"Most humorously extravagant paradoxer" (Pr. P.U., p. 717).

"Most violent discussion" (Pr. C.R., p. 870).

"Thus did the neck of the giraffe reach out across the whole heavens and make men believe that ..." (Pr. B.M., p. 520).

"The educated man is a greater nuisance than the uneducated one" (Pr. B.M., p. 503).

"I have no illusions about the critics being authors who have failed" (Pr. W.H., p. 703).

Uses of simile :-

Another distinctive feature of the Shavian prose style is his peculiar use of simile. Simile is a great propagandistic weapon because it helps the propagandist in explaining matters with familiar examples. Ohmann has focussed on Shaw's passion for similarity order and observes that he "adheres with more than usual tenacity to categories of equivalence or likeness"^2. This also accounts for Shaw's extensive use of simile in his writings. In the preface to Major Barbara Shaw maintains that it is his duty "to shew the connexion between things that seem apart and unrelated in the haphazard order of events in real life." (p. 131). Simile

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helps Shaw in showing connexion between things that look different and disconnected to the ordinary eye. Generally three kinds of similes are found in Shaw's prose.

**'As' structure:**

"A craze for cruelty can be developed just as a craze for a drink can" (Pr. D.D., pp. 257-58).

"Our big capitalist enterprises now run to the Government for help as a lamb runs to its mother" (Pr. A.C., p. 332).

"...Of performing Shakespeare's plays as he wrote them, instead of using them as a cuckoo uses a sparrow's nest" (Pr. T.P.P., p. 751).

**As .... as forms:**

"A nation of prime ministers or dictators is as absurd as an army of field marshals" (Pr. A.C., p. 330).

"In the same way we find men and women practising vivisection as senselessly as human butcher..." (Pr. D.D., p. 259).

"The law of inverse squares is as incomprehensible to the common man as the Athanasian creed" (Pr. B.M., p. 534).

**Similes with 'like':**

Similes with the preposition 'like' are also not infrequent.

"...Our private capitalism would drop like stag" (Pr. A.C., p. 332).

"Poverty, when it involves continual privation and anxiety is like toothache..." (Pr. TTTBG, p. 342).

**Use of metaphor:**

In Shaw's prose there is an abundance of simile, but the use of metaphor is comparatively meagre. Use of metaphor is 'poetical' and as such, metaphor is not of 'particular relevance' to prose.
which is "essentially the art of analytical description". Metaphor implies indirect statement and indirect or roundabout mode of expression causes harm to the persuasive intent of a propagandist writer. In the propagandist writing of Shaw where the reader is directly addressed and continuous effort is made to persuade the reader, the scope of metaphoric expression is quite limited. Shaw's long habit of public speech led him to acquire the virtues of clarity, and simplicity and accuracy of language and his language tended to approximate the language used in active public life, because Shaw felt that only such a language could achieve the maximum of persuasive effect. Hence, any obscuration of meaning by a decorative metaphor could have retarded his persuasive purpose. However, the use of metaphor, though limited, is unavoidable for Shaw and in Shaw's prose the use of verbal metaphor seems to outweigh the uses of noun and personal metaphors.

"Rousseau was hunted from frontier to frontier" (Pr. B.M., p. 505).

"Our newspapers and melodrama are blustering about our imperial destiny (Pr. M & S., p. 160).

"But where were our front benches to nest if not here? (Pr. H.H., p. 379).

All the cocks in Christendom have been crowing shame on it ever since (Pr. B.M., p. 539).

"King Demos must be bred like all other kings" (Pr. M & S., p. 187).

Two figures, namely, Epanaphora and Epistrophè occur very

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frequently in Shaw's prose. Both these figures are highly useful for a propagandist writer intent on arresting the emotions of the reader. They also add to the energy and vigour of the language.

An epanaphora from the preface to Back to Methuselah:

Every faction drew a moral from him; every catholic hater of faction founded a hope on him; every blackguard felt justified by him; and every saint felt encouraged by him" (Pr. B.M., p. 532).

Another case from the preface to Getting Married:

"There are couples who dislike one another furiously for several hours at a time, there are couples who dislike one another permanently; and there are couples who never dislike one another, but these last are people who are incapable of disliking anybody". (p. 21).

In the same manner epistrophes are also found in profusion:

"They are all conspiracies against the laity; and I dont suggest that the medical conspiracy is either better or worse than the military conspiracy, the legal conspiracy, the sacerdotal conspiracy, the pedagogic conspiracy, the royal and aristocratic conspiracy, the literary and the artistic conspiracy, and the innumerable industrial, commercial and financial conspiracies..." (Pr. D.D., p. 241-43).

Sometimes epanaphora and epistrophe get combined:

"Every election is fought on nationalist grounds; every judge is a partisan in the nationalist conflict; every speech is is a dreary capitulation of nationalist twaddle; every lecture is a corruption of history to flatter nationalism or defame it; every school is a recruiting station; every church is a barrack; and every Irishman is unspeakably tired of the whole miserable business..." (Pr. JBOI, p. 457).
The quantity of adjectives is enormously great in Shaw's prose. Certain nouns, adjectives and adverbs are almost inevitable with Shaw. To cite a few,

Humbug, blackguard, maddening, hypocrite, liar, damnable, disgusting, hideous, cruel, sham, diabolical, monstrous, fool, coward, recklessly, cynically, slaughterously, grotesquely, shallow, impudent, scoundrel, sound, unscrupulous, pretence, brazen, conscience, conspiracy, libertine, ignorance, flat, perfectly, most, damnable, blasphemy, knock, shove, exterminate, incredible, heresy, ridiculous, blockhead.

The one single characteristic that unfailingly distinguishes Shavian prose is the repeated use of colon which helps Shaw in continuation of an analysis of a given proposition or idea.

Another unmistakable feature of Shavian prose is the invariable use of connectives such as, 'now', 'on the other hand', 'and', 'but', 'it will be observed', 'it will be noticed', 'thus', 'in short', by which Shaw tries to connect the paragraphs with one another and maintain the flow of argument. Many of the paragraphs are begun in the first person and also with imperative verbs such as, Take, Suppose, Consider etc.

Wit and humorous pervade Shaw's prose everywhere.

"Let me be kinder to him than he has been to me and uncover for him the pitfalls which the Joint Select Committee have dug (and concealed) in his path" (Pr. Sh. B.P., p. 437).

"The cow had an important share in my education as a political philosopher" (Pr. A.C., p. 331).

"Would it not take the popular English view that freedom and virtue generally are sweet only when they cost nothing"? (Pr. Sh. B.P., p. 436).
"I do not desire liberty to choose windbags and nincompoops to represent me in parliament" (Pr. A.C., p. 335).

"All through Europe people are adjured, by public notices and even under legal penalties, not to throw their microbes into the sunshine, but to collect them carefully in a handkerchief" (Pr. D.D., p. 248).

"I do not complain of this, though it complains very unreasonably of me" (Pr. St. J., p. 633).

Brevity is not Shaw's strong point. One could easily bring a charge of verbosity and talkativeness against Shaw. At the end of the preface to Getting Married Shaw has summarised his points of discussion which number only eight, but Shaw has taken forty four pages (P. H. ed.) to establish his points. The preface to Misalliance which is sixty one-page long (P. H. ed.) could easily have been shortened. In the preface to Androcles and the Lion which is fifty seven-page long (P. H. ed.) verbosity seems to carry Shaw away from the subject. St. John Ervine remarks about the preface, "The preface ends, as, indeed, it had to end, inconclusively...". Lucas describes verbosity as something that wastes hearer's time and becomes a "public problem". In an analysis of the Shavian penchant for verbosity Chesterton says that Shaw's verbosity is the result of his originality of thinking. He says, "An original man has to pause at every allusion or simile to re-explain historical parallels, to re-shape distorted words." However, the most surprising thing about Shaw is that his long-windedness never

There is a current of undying vitality in his prose. There is an unmistakable tone of exuberance and optimism running through his prose. His vitality, gaiety, and optimism may have resulted from his philosophy of the Life Force which is an optimistic philosophy about the future of mankind. Lucas prefers vitality to conciseness when he says, "In Literature at all events, energy without control is at least better than control without energy". The flow of vitality and liveliness is found in all the prefaches. Style reflects a writer's attitude to life and his way of thinking. Bertrand Russell's prose is indicative of his rational mind and his rational way of thinking. Many of the subjects taken up for discussion by Shaw in his prefaches, such as, marriage, sexual relation, family, morality, religion, war, socialism, communism and democracy, have also been dealt with by Russell in his prose works, but the styles of the two authors differ sharply from each other's. The reason must be attributed to the difference of the outlooks on life of the two great twentieth century thinkers.

The rationalism of Russell seems to shape every line of his. There are signs of control, measurement and calculation in his prose. But the qualities of control, measurement, precision and calculation are found to be lacking in Shaw's prose. For Shaw the most important thing about a work of art is that it should be pleasurable and interesting. In the preface to Misalliance Shaw insists that a book in order to be an work of art must be able to give pleasure to the readers. He says in the same preface, "To

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read a dull book; to listen to tedious play or prosy sermon or lecture; to stare at uninteresting pictures or ugly buildings: nothing short of disease, is more dreadful than this" (p. 94).

In the preface to *Man and Superman* Shaw refuses to call himself a "belletrist", but recognises the necessity of telling "his story entertainingly" (p. 165). In the same preface Shaw rejects academic art as something "far worse than the trade in sham antique furniture" (p. 166). In the preface to *The Sanity of Art* Shaw declares himself a journalist, because, in his view, journalism is the "highest form of literature" and "all the highest literature is journalism" (p. 800). He declares that "the writer who aims at producing the platitudes which are "not for an age, but for all time" has his reward in being unreadable in all ages".

Thus, it will be seen that Shaw rejects the method and pedantry of a conventional literary man, and opts to approach the reader with ephemeral subjects in a journalistic manner and insists on readability as the touchstone of good literary work. This also accounts for Shaw's sustained indulgence in humour.

Below are two samples of prose by Shaw and Russell:

To quote from the preface to *Getting Married*,

"Divorce reformers are so much preoccupied with the injustice of forbidding a woman to divorce her husband for unfaithfulness to marriage vow, whilst allowing him that power over her, that they are apt to overlook the pressing need for admitting other and more important grounds for divorce. If we take a document like Pepy's' Diary, we learn that we may have an incorrigibly unfaithful

husband, and yet be much better off than if she had an ill-tempered, peevish, maliciously sarcastic one, or was chained for life to a criminal, a drunkard, a lunatic, an idle vagrant, or a person whose religious faith was contrary to her own. Imagine, being married to a liar, a borrower, a mischief-maker, a teaser or tormentor or children and animals, or even simply to a bore. Conceive yourself tied for life to one of the "faithful" husbands who are sentenced to a month's imprisonment occasionally for idly leaving their wives in childbirth without food, fire or attendance? What woman would not rather marry ten Pepyses? What man a dozen Nell Gwynnes? Adultery, far from being the first and the only ground for divorce, might more reasonably be made the last or wholly excluded. The present law is perfectly logical only if you once admit (as no decent person ever does) its fundamental assumption that there can be no companionship between men and women because the woman has a "sphere" of her own, that of housekeeping, in which the man must not meddle, whilst he has all the rest of human activity for his sphere; the only point at which the two spheres touch being that of replenishing the population. On this assumption the man naturally asks for a guarantee that the children shall be his because he has to find the money to support them. The power of divorcing a woman for adultery is this guarantee, a guarantee that she does not need to protect her against a similar imposture on his part, because he cannot bear children. No doubt he can spend the money that ought to be spent on her children on another woman and her children; but this is desertion which is separate matter. The fact for us to seize is that in the eye of the law, adultery without consequences is merely a sentimental grievance, whereas the planting on one man another man's offspring
is a substantial one. And so, no doubt it is; but the day has gone by for basing laws on the assumption that a woman is less to a man than his dog, and thereby encouraging and accepting the standards of the husbands who buy meat for their bull-pups and leave their wives and children hungry" (pp. 30-31).

Now, to quote a piece from Russell -

"The grounds which may make divorce desirable are of two kinds. There are those due to the defects of one partner, such as insanity, dipsomania, and crime; and there are those based upon the relations of the husband and wife. It may happen that, without blame to either party, it is impossible for a married couple to live together amicably, or without some very grave sacrifice. It may happen that one of them, without disliking the other, becomes deeply attached to some other person, so deeply as to feel the marriage an intolerable tie. In that case, if there is no legal redress, hatred is sure to spring up. Indeed, such cases, as everyone knows, are quite capable of leading to murder. Where a marriage breaks down owing to incompatibility or to an overwhelming passion on the part of one partner for some other passion, there should not be, as there is at present, a determination to attach blame. For this reason, much the best ground of divorce in all such cases is mutual consent. Grounds other than mutual consent ought only to be required where the marriage has failed through some definite defect in one partner."

In Shaw's piece there is passionate approach to the subject; that is an anxiety to convince the reader. A constant awareness

of the presence of the reader has influenced his style. There is an attempt to enter into the heart of the reader and win him over. Questions have been inserted to shake the reader's responsiveness. Familiar examples such as leaving "wives in childbirth without food, fire, or attendance", buying meat for bull-pups and the image of petdog have been introduced for earning credibility. The conventional belief is noted down with an air of sympathy in order to attack it with full force afterwards. The whole language is that of a master propagandist or persuader at work. The frequent address of the reader, use of asyndeton such as, "a liar, borrower, a mischief maker, a teaser or tormentor of children and animals or even simply to a bore" contrast of cases with familiar examples, insertion of questions and startling clauses like "adultery . . . might more reasonably be made the last or wholly excluded", "planting on one man another man's offspring" have contributed to the vigour and vitality of the piece.

Russell's piece displays the language of a detached thinker, the language of a philosopher. There is no calculated attempt to persuade or win over anybody. The author writes with self-confidence without caring to seek anybody's opinion on his subject. There is an epanaphora with the phrase 'it may happen' repeated trice to show that the author has taken into account all the relevant facts. The reader is kept at a distance; the author appears to speak over the heads of the readers. There is a touch of graveness and coldness over the whole passage. It could be concluded that Shaw's vitality, the method of direct talk with the readers, the touch of unbounded humanism, his wit, his humour, and his clarity of thinking and straightforwardness as evidenced in his prose would make his prose enjoyable reading for so many centuries to come.