PREFACE
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Bernard Shaw's prefaces attached to his plays have been drawing attention of the readers and critics as propagandist essays on economics, politics, sociology, religion, morality, philosophy, morality, art and theatre since their publication. Shaw has forty prefaces attached to his plays (Paul Hamlyn ed.) and the relation between the plays and the prefaces to the plays has remained a matter of curiosity for all readers of Shaw. The biographers of Shaw, such as, St. John Ervine and Henry Archibald Henderson have made certain passing remarks on some of the prefaces in the course of their reviews of Shaw's literary career. Again different critics in their reviews of Shaw as a dramatic artist have occasionally referred to the Shavian views as expressed in the prefaces in order to defend their lines of argument in their works. But all these, in no way, can be called a systematic study of the relation between Shaw's plays and prefaces. Again, there are certain books written in the form of 'Study-aid' or 'Note' published by Methuen & Co., London and Monarch Press, Newyork which have discussed and summarised some of Shaw's prefaces and plays. As these books are primarily written for the benefit of the students as help-books, they do not rise to the status of critical study. Hence, these books also cannot be called any systematic study of the relation between Shaw's prefaces and plays. In his book A Guide to the Plays of Bernard Shaw, C. B. Purdom has written a two and half-page note on the prefaces, but has expressed his unwillingness in it to go into a detailed discussion of the prefaces because such a discussion would have
led him away from the subject of this book. Eric Bentley, in his book Bernard Shaw has devoted two and a half pages to a serious discussion of the relation between Shaw's prefaces and plays. As this book is primarily devoted to a critical analysis of Shaw's economic, political and religious views and to a discussion of Shaw's chief plays in the perspective of the Shavian life-work and philosophy, a detailed and complete discussion of the relation between Shaw prefaces and plays cannot be expected from such a work. H. G. Earnshaw has written a short note on Shaw's prefaces and his style in the Introduction to A Selection From Shaw's Prefaces (Longman Group Ltd., 1977), but a discussion about the link between Shaw's prefaces and plays has not been possible for him within the limits of an introduction except for a passing reference to the same.

Thus, it is seen and felt that though Shaw's prefaces have drawn the attention of the critics, a detailed and thorough study of the relation between Shaw's prefaces and plays has not been undertaken by any writer till to-day. Thus, this aspect of Shaw's writings awaits proper treatment. The present work is a modest attempt at supplying this long-felt need.

In the present work written as a thesis, an attempt has been made to examine the link between Bernard Shaw's plays and the prefaces to his plays and find out the nature of the link between them; in other words, the present work attempts to find out what purposes the prefaces serve and in what relation the prefaces stand to the plays, or whether the prefaces affect the independence

of the plays as works of art. It also examines whether the prefices can be categorised as traditional prefaces or whether they form a new genre of prose writing.

Something needs to be said as a kind of clarification as regards the chapter divisions and the scope of the subject in the present work. In the *Complete Prefaces of Bernard Shaw* edited and published by Paul Hamlyn, the preface to *Major Barbara* has been included under the heading Sociological, the preface to *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* has been included under the heading Political, and *Geneva* has been included under the heading Miscellaneous. *Major Barbara* by Shaw's own confession and by overwhelming opinion of the critics is a religious play. At the end of the preface to *Major Barbara* Shaw says that *Major Barbara* was 'inspired' by his religious passion. Desmond MacCarthy calls it a religious play. At the beginning of the preface to *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* Shaw declares the play to be a "really religious tract in dramatic form". Accordingly, the prefices to *Major Barbara* and *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* have been included under the heading Prefaces to Religious Plays in the present work. *Geneva* is obviously a political play and it is, accordingly, included under the heading Prefaces to Political Plays. Again in Paul Hamlyn's edition, *Plays Unpleasant*, *Plays Pleasant* and *Three Plays for Puritans* have been included under the heading Autobiographical and Professional. *Plays Unpleasant*, *Plays Pleasant* and *Three Plays for Puritans* were the titles given by Shaw himself to his first ten plays. Hence, I

have decided to retain Shaw's own titles in the present work instead of giving them a new title in accordance with their common characteristics which could be anti-idealism and natural history. As they chronologically come first, they have been considered first in the present work, beginning from the chapter II. The prefaces to minor one act plays have been considered in a separate chapter for the sake of convenience. The major one act plays, namely, *The Man of Destiny*, *Getting Married*, *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* and *Misalliance* have been included in various other chapters in accordance with their themes.

The present work is entirely concerned with the relation between Shaw's plays and the prefaces to his plays. Hence, it has not considered Shaw as a philosopher or thinker, or Shaw's position as a dramatic artist. Some references to the commentaries by the critics on Shaw's works and some comments on Shaw's philosophy have been made in the footnotes as and when found necessary. The plays, *Press Cuttings*, *The Glimpse of Reality*, *Passion*, *Poison*, and *Petrifaction*, or *The Fatal Gazogene*, *The Fascinating Foundling*, *The Music Cure* and *Village Wooing* do not have any prefaces; hence, they are considered as lying outside the purview of the present work. Again, as *Jitta's Atonement* is a translation and not an original work by Shaw, it is also not considered as any part of the scope of the present work.

I express my profound gratefulness to my revered teacher Dr. Amaresh Dutta, the former Professor and Head of the English Department, Gauhati University and at present Professor and Head of the English Department, Dibrugarh University who acted as Guide in this work amidst his numerous preoccupations and helped me in
completing it with his invaluable suggestions and supervision. It was his teaching which originally got me interested in the writings of George Bernard Shaw. The years of my association with him in connection with my humble intellectual venture shall always remain proud and inspiring memories for the rest of my life.

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The texts used for Shaw's prefaces and plays in the present work have been the Paul Hamlyn editions of the Complete Prefaces and Complete Plays of Bernard Shaw, London, 1965. The details of the abbreviations of the references to other editions of Shaw's works, such as Constable and Orient Longmans, have been given in the footnotes of the pages where they are used.

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