The history of the English stage after Sheridan up to the end of the nineteenth century, is, to a great extent, a history of influences. From the Continent, from France mainly, came the impetus that several times urged English playwrights to effort and resulted in a thorough renovation of the national drama. In France, for a century after the violent post-revolution dramas, the theatre went through a very quick succession of changes. The romantic plays, dealing with exceptional characters and often divorced from the social preoccupations of the time, frequently presented, for all their lyricism, external situations childishly complicated and unreal; and being often inspired by a rebellious desire to reject artistic discipline, they were sometimes allowed to become a disconnected succession of scenes linked together by no imperious necessity.

The romantic movement did not blossom in French drama until the 1820s, and then primarily in the works of Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, while in England the great Romantic poets did not produce important drama, although both Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley were practitioners of the closet drama. Burlesque and mediocre melodrama reigned supreme on the English stage.

Although melodrama was aimed solely at producing superficial excitement, its development, coupled with the emergence of realism in the nineteenth century, resulted in more serious drama. Initially, the melodrama dealt in such superficially exciting materials as the gothic
castle with its mysterious lord for a villain, but gradually the characters and settings moved closer to the realities of contemporary life.

The concern for generating excitement led to a more careful consideration of plot construction, reflected in the smoothly contrived climaxes of the well-made plays of Eugène Scribe and Victorian Sardou of France and Arthur Wing Pinero of England. The works of Émile Augier and Alexandre Dumas combined the drama of ideas with the “well-made” play. Realism had perhaps its most profound expression in the works of the great nineteenth-century Russian dramatists: Nikolai Gogol, A. N. Ostrovsky, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Maxim Gorky. Many of the Russian dramatists emphasized character and satire rather than plot in their works.

Related to realism is naturalism, which can be defined as a selective realism emphasizing the more sordid and pessimistic aspects of life. An early forerunner of this style in the drama is Georg Büchner’s powerful tragedy *Danton’s Death* (1835), and an even earlier suggestion may be seen in the pessimistic romantic tragedies of Heinrich von Kleist. Friedrich Hebbel wrote grimly naturalistic drama in the middle of the nineteenth century, but the naturalistic movement is most commonly identified with the slice-of-life theory of Émile Zola, which had a profound effect on twentieth-century playwrights.

While these anti-realistic developments took place on the Continent, two playwrights were making unique contributions to English
theatre. Oscar Wilde produced comedies of manners that compare favourably with the works of Congreve, and George Bernard Shaw brought the play of ideas to fruition with penetrating intelligence and singular wit.

English theatre before Galsworthy was chiefly traditional. It sacrificed the truth of characterization and probability of incident to situation and the need for providing everybody with a good part. Eugene Scribe, the most competent French playwright who created the well-made play, said in his address to the French Academy in 1836:

> You go to the theatre, not for instruction or correction but for relaxation and amusement. Now what amuses you most is not truth, but fiction. To represent what is before your eyes everyday is not the way to please you; but what does not come to you in your usual life, the extraordinary, the romantic, that is what charms you, that is what one is eager to offer you.¹

This conception of the function of the theatre prevailed both in France and England. In England the Victorian stage was governed by commercial motives. It was satisfied with the money that its labour brought in. Invention was dreaded. The actor-managers judged a play by the opportunities it gave them for emotionalism. They had no mind to place before the audience heroes fashioned out of actual, dull, everyday men, and heroines that looked like simple maids in gingham gowns. This fear of realism on the part of the professional actor was justified, he believed that if the resemblance between the hero and the audience
appeared too great, the scope for the development of passion, and the big dramatic opportunities like murder and suicide would seem false and ineffective. Nevertheless, realism was in the offing. In France Eugene Scribe wrote half a thousand well-made plays with the assistance of several hacks. When he died in 1861, his tradition was carried on by Victorian Sardou. He wrote topical plays and made naturalness in drama a convention. He developed a stage logic. In fact he carried the play a little towards journalistic realism.

In England, the pioneer of the well-made play was Thomas William Robertson. He began as an adapter of the Scribe-Sardou sort of trifle, but either through an independent urge to observation or through the influence of Augier Emile and Dumas the younger French dramatists, he took a step forward in the direction of the social drama. His plays Society in 1865, Caste in 1867, Home in 1869, School in 1869, War in 1871, and others are considered landmarks on the way to Realism. They established a new kind of domestic drama which some contemporaries dubbed as the “teacup-saucer” theatre. It has been observed by some critics that Robertson’s aim was to urge the public to bring their fireside concerns to the playhouse. This he sought to do by making his plots and characters and setting as realistic as he possibly could.

Besides Robertson and the adapters of the French plays, the story of the well-made play in England is told by two great men: Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Pinero. Both found their inspiration in Sardou
rather than in Scribe. Each added his individual variations and touches. Each raised the English drama from the triviality and falsity of the French adaptations to realism. Pinero was an expert craftsman. He introduced several advances in technique.

H. A. Jones, says in his preface to Saints and Sinners (1884), insists that play writing should be not merely “the art of sensational and spectacular illusion, but mainly and chiefly the art of representing English life.”

Drama must be more than mere popular amusement, and there must be close connection between any living drama and the larger drama and society in which the theatre exists.

When Pinero and Jones were vivifying the stage of the nineties by their problem plays, there was a lack of psychological climate. Sex, politics, and religion were still taboo as subjects of conversation at decent dinner-tables. The dramatist’s right to choose any subject he pleased was not granted by populace. Freedom of the stage was not a practical reality. These things came with Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw. Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright, was the greatest figure of the Realistic theatre of the nineteenth century. He made the drama social, revolutionary, topical. He diagnosed the ills of mankind, destroyed illusions, satirized conceit, provincialism and hypocrisy. Economic pinch and social injustice which he had personally suffered shaped his keen-
edged social drama. His plays are un-Romantic thesis plays. They are observed dramas.

Henrik Ibsen of Norway brought to a climax the realistic movement of the nineteenth century and also served as a bridge to twentieth-century symbolism. His realistic dramas of ideas surpass other such works because they blend a complex plot, a detailed setting, and middle-class yet extraordinary characters in an organic whole. Ibsen’s later plays, such as *The Master Builder* (1892), are symbolic, marking a trend away from realism that was continued by August Strindberg’s dream plays, with their emphasis on the spiritual, and by the plays of the Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck, who incorporated into drama the theories of the symbolist poets.

Ibsen was the first modern dramatist to handle serious problems with material drawn from everyday life. His characters are ordinary people. His plays depicted domestic tragedies. He portrays the struggles of individuals in conflict with the forces of convention. All his plays are pregnant with progressive social ideas about the rights of man as well as woman. *The Pillars of Society* in 1877, *A Doll’s House* in 1879, *Ghosts* in 1881, and *An Enemy of the People* in 1882 present natural characters in conflict with social customs and environment. They in fact bring a fresh breath into the theatre. The setting of Ibsen’s stage is uncompromisingly realistic. The object of his drama is to show in the narrowest and most
familiar surroundings the working out of a problem which is world-wide in its application.

George Bernard Shaw was the disciple of Ibsen. His prominent characteristic is a fearless intellectual criticism. He possesses to the highest degree wit, humour and inventiveness. He has the knack of making ideas live. He carries the Realistic drama to its highest potentiality. He makes it primarily and enjoyably intellectual drama. Sheldon Cheney says that Shaw is more natural than the average Realist. True to his theory of drama, Shaw raises the curtain on characters that act naturally and with a scientific–intellectual honesty. They come into conflict with romantically conventional characters, and the contrast between them becomes vividly dramatic and vastly entertaining. Shaw wrote many plays. Most important of these area are *Arms and the Man* in 1894, *Candida* in 1895, *The Man of Destiny* in 1897, *The Devil’s Disciple* in 1894, *Man and Super-Man* in 1903, *The Doctor’s Dilemma* in 1905, *Pygmalion* in 1913, *Androcles and the Lion* in 1913, *Back to Methuselah* in 1919-1920, and *St. Joan* in 1923.

After Shaw, it was Galsworthy who enjoyed the greatest vogue. Like other practitioners of the Realist theatre, he believed in using the stage to set out human follies, inconsistencies, injustice. Both John Galsworthy’s strengths and weaknesses as a dramatist derive from his commitment to the ideas and methods of realistic drama. He was neither a religious man nor a political activist, and his plays spoke for no
specific ideology or orthodoxy, but he believed that “every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day. This meant, as he said in Some Platitudes Concerning Drama, that a drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning.”

Such a theory of drama attempts two mutually contradictory tasks: first, the objective, balanced, impartial depiction of reality, and second, the embodiment of the playwright’s subjective, ethical, emotional response in the posing or shaping of a moral spire of meaning. Galsworthy’s plays are secular morality plays. His gentlemanly didacticism issues in dramatic sermons that attempt to evoke sympathy and understanding for the human condition and that teach the humanistic creeds of civility, compromise, and fair play. In Galsworthy’s plays, the sentimental or melodramatic pointing of a moral frequently undercuts the attempt to depict faithfully the problems of individual characters or social groups.

The realistic problem play was not a new form when Galsworthy took it up; its development in England can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when Tom Taylor and Thomas William Robertson attempted to leaven their melodramas with realistic settings and restrained social comment. In the late nineteenth century, this English tradition drew strength from the influence of Henrik Ibsen’s
realistic social dramas, which were championed in England by William Archer and also by Shaw, who published *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* during this period (1891-1913). Following Ibsen’s example but lacking his genius, Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero combined upper-middle-class marriage problems with the form of the well-made play; the result was a rejuvenation of English drama. Though he wrote comedy in the paradoxical mode pioneered by W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde, Shaw’s challenging and idiosyncratic variety of dramatic realism was also inspired by Ibsen. Shaw’s plays and polemics helped to create an atmosphere of critical acceptance in England for the realistic theatre of ideas and social problems. Shaw’s *Candida: A Mystery* appeared in 1904 at the Royal Court Theatre as part of the Barker-Vedrenne management’s effort to raise the level of English drama. When Galsworthy sent the manuscript of *The Silver Box* to Harley Granville-Barker, it arrived on a Saturday, was read by Barker and Shaw on Sunday, and was accepted for production at Shaw’s urging on Monday.

Throughout Galsworthy’s dramatic works, there is a tension between oppressive moralism and melodramatic theatricality. As critic Allardyce Nicoll has observed, “Galsworthian realism and Socialist Realism tend to suffer from the same pathetic complaint—deplorable and even tawdry sentimentalism.” In plays such as *Strife, Loyalties*, and *Escape*, however, Galsworthy successfully combined realistic representation with dramatic presentation of theme. His plays remain
historically interesting because they embody his perceptions of English social and ethical attitudes in the early twentieth century. As examples of realistic drama, his plays have merit as the works of a sincere and careful craftsman who wrote in a tradition made great by the true artists who made it their own: Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Anton Chekhov, and George Bernard Shaw.

In a letter, Galsworthy remarked that the main idea of *The Silver Box* was “that ‘one law for the rich, another for the poor’ is true, but not because society wills it so, rather, in spite of society’s good intentions, through the mere mechanical wide-branching power of money.”

Galsworthy’s play contrasts the unprincipled, propertied, and pragmatic upper-middle-class characters with their lower-class victims in the manipulation of the judicial system. The audience knows from the beginning who the culprits are in two related cases of petty thievery, but Galsworthy creates suspense through gradual revelation of their guilt to their families. The first thief is young Jack Barthwick, down from Oxford on vacation, who, while out drinking with a female companion, steals her purse containing seven pounds. The play opens as Jack returns to the Barthwick home with Jones, a drunken, unemployed groom. When Jack passes out, Jones steals the purse and a silver cigarette box. Jack’s theft is revealed to his family but is concealed in court at Jones’s trial until after Jones’s sentencing, when he can only cry out in helpless
frustration, thus giving the audience the main idea of the play: “it’s is money got ’im off -- Justice!”(47).

The Barthwicks’ cowardly hypocrisy is illustrated throughout the play, especially in one scene at the end of act 2. Jack’s father, John Barthwick, a Liberal Member of Parliament, is so concerned that the scandal of a trial will damage his political and social reputation that he betrays his Liberal sympathy for the poor. One of the Jones children is heard sobbing outside the Barthwicks’ window because the child cannot find Mrs. Jones, his mother and the Barthwicks’ housekeeper.

Galsworthy’s short fiction exhibits similar themes to those of his novels, challenging upper-class Victorian standards. Though he himself was born to a wealthy family, Galsworthy espoused a liberal philosophy, opposing rigid doctrines of morality and religion. He believed that justice depended on the individual and on faith in humanity. He wrote about social justice, poverty, and old age, as well as love, beauty, and nature. Some of his stories are passionate tales of romance, such as A Man of Devon and The Apple Tree, both of which take place in the Devonshire countryside. The former features the relationship between a young girl, Paisance, and the man she falls in love with, Zachary Pearse. Tragically, Paisance, as she watches her love sail away on a voyage that she was forbidden by her grandfather to join, trips and falls from the edge of a cliff to her death. In The Apple Tree, a man returns after twenty-six years to Devon, where he had deserted a relationship with a farm girl in
order to pursue a wife of greater social status. The story focuses on the remorse that he feels about his past choice as well as the guilt that he experiences upon discovering that the farm girl had committed suicide soon after he had left many years ago. Sanford Sternlicht considers *The Apple Tree* Galsworthy’s “most finely crafted, most symbolic, and most poetic tale.”

Other stories are character portraits or mood pieces such as *Spindle berries*. He created his visions in minute detail, imbuing a strong sense of atmosphere and character. In general, Galsworthy’s stories tend to centre more on characters and their environment rather than on plot. In many of his stories, Galsworthy empathizes with characters who are unappreciated by society for their kindness and humanity. Those who are depicted as most admirable are individuals who recognize goodness and beauty in others. For instance, in *The Forsyte Saga*, Irene leaves her husband, Soames, for Young Jolyon because Soames considers her his property and merely lusts for her, whereas Young Jolyon loves Irene and worships her beauty. In the idyllic *Indian Summer of Forsyte*, first published in *Five Tales*, Old Jolyon, an epicurean, dies as he sips an exquisite wine, as if from excess of delight. *A Modern Comedy*, on the other hand, denounces the post-World War I generation for their aimlessness and restlessness. Commentators have noted that while Galsworthy satirized the wealthy in his early works, he presented a more sympathetic view of the Forsytes in his later works, especially those collected in *A Modern Comedy*. Collectively, *On Forsyte Change, The*
Forsyte Saga, and A Modern Comedy have been referred to as The Forsyte Chronicles.

A prolific author who worked in many genres, Galsworthy is most widely recognized as a chronicler of English bourgeois society during the early twentieth century. His most acclaimed work, The Forsyte Saga, is a trilogy of novels and two short stories, featuring Soames Forsyte, a prosperous and materialistic solicitor. A passionate humanist, Galsworthy criticized social injustice in Victorian society and exalted nature, beauty, and love. His style was noted for its charm, delicacy, and descriptive detail.

In 1867 John Galsworthy was born on a family estate in Kingston Hill, Surrey, near London. His mother was a descendant of provincial squires, while his father was of Devonshire yeoman stock. His father was a successful solicitor who had financial interests in mining companies in Canada and Russia, and who later served as the model for Old Jolyon Forsyte in The Forsyte Saga. At the age of nine, Galsworthy was sent to a boarding school and later to the prestigious Harrow School in London, where he excelled in athletics. In 1886 he enrolled at Oxford to study law, graduating with second degree honours in 1889. The following year he was admitted to the bar. For a short while he worked at his father's legal firm but showed little interest in the law. He left for Canada in 1891 to inspect his family's mining interests and travelled extensively thereafter. In 1893, while aboard the Torrens, he
befriended the first mate, Joseph Conrad, who was working on his first novel. Conrad would later become an important source of encouragement in Galsworthy's writing career. When Galsworthy returned to London in 1894, he had his own legal chambers but heard only one case. Within a short time, he gave up his chambers and spent the next few years reading and writing assiduously. Galsworthy was interested in writing about the plight of the working class, and he spent many hours roaming the impoverished neighbourhoods of London. Ada Galsworthy, a married cousin with whom he became romantically involved, encouraged him to pursue a writing career, and her unhappiness with her failed marriage inspired many of his stories. In 1905 John and Ada Galsworthy were married. She acted as his secretary and critic throughout his literary career. They had no children but they led very happy lives in mutual love and admiration.

John Galsworthy was one of the leading figures of England in the first quarter of the twentieth century. He was a prolific writer and he wrote many poems, plays, novels, and short stories, but his fame chiefly rests on his Forsyte Saga and his social tragedies. Though he was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth, he never had the typical rich man’s attitude towards life. He had genuine sympathy with the underdog and he mainly had his focus regarding the sufferings of the individuals due to the vicious social, economic and legal practices and conventions. He had a warm heart and he was deeply touched by the
sufferings of the poor, the infirm, and the outcasts. He had experience of these when he went to collect rent on his father’s property. These experiences were included in his works in his later life.

In 1897 the first volume of his stories entitled *From the Four Winds* appeared under the pseudonym John Sinjohn (John son John). His first novel, *Jocelyn* published in 1899. They were merely literary exercises and were not noticed by the critics at all.

Shortly thereafter he wrote two novels and another book of short stories called *A Man of Devon*. Galsworthy made a mark on the literary scene with the appearance of *The Silver Box* in 1906. By the end of the thirties of twentieth century he had to his credit thirty volumes of poems, plays, novels and short stories.

Galsworthy’s earliest work showed the influence of Conrad, though Galsworthy insisted he was influenced most by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev and Guy de Maupassant. His writings have also been compared to those of Rudyard Kipling, Charles Dickens, and Katherine Mansfield. Galsworthy’s talents were first widely recognized in 1906 upon the publication of his novel *The Man of Property* and his first play, *The Silver Box*. The novel introduced his famous Forsyte family, through whom he satirized Victorian society. Galsworthy finally achieved international acclaim when *The Man of Property* was republished in 1922 as part of *The Forsyte Saga*, along with two of his most famous stories, *Indian Summer of a Forsyte* and *Awakening*. Galsworthy was widely
regarded as a compassionate humanist whose work evinced sensitivity, sincerity, and charm. Many believe that he successfully captured the spirit of his age. Yet, while some consider him a critic of the upper class, others assert that he admired it, especially later in his life. Some of his contemporaries, especially experimental modernists, disdained his work. Virginia Woolf, for instance, considered him a “stuffed shirt” and found him guilty of the same behaviour and attitudes to which he objected in his writing. His style was variously faulted as overly sentimental and melodramatic or too analytical and pessimistic. His plays in particular were often criticized as social propaganda lacking dramatic intensity. However, many critics agree that as his style evolved it became less rigid and more subtle. Galsworthy’s earlier style showed similarities to French naturalism, shifting later to a more deliberate use of symbolism and mythology.

Galsworthy also wrote about a hundred poems, many of them appeared in periodicals and a collection was published in 1912 under title Moods, Songs and Doggerels. Another volume entitled, Verses New and Old appeared in 1926. None of the poems brought success because poetry is the expression of deep emotion and it cannot be written by Galsworthy who was cold, impartial, judicial and self control. His qualities suited prose better.

In recognition of his contribution to literature and his public service he was offered a Knighthood in 1918, but he declined it because
he felt that “the work of Literature is its own reward.” He felt that a title of this type was not appropriate to the profession of literature. But he accepted Literary Honours. In 1921, he was made the first president of the London centre of the P.E.N; a worldwide organization of poets, playwrights, essayists and novelists. In 1929, he was awarded the Order of Merit. In 1932, he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. He received honorary degrees from his own Oxford university and many other universities.

Galsworthy passed his last days quietly in his country home in Sussex. He died at Grove Lodge on the 31 January 1933, and his ashes were scattered to the winds according to his directions.

Galsworthy was generous by temperament. He helped his needy relations and gave small pensions to a lot of poor old people. He was reserved and modest. The desire to help and serve others was an obsession with him. He was against the fights between the Christians and the Jews on the basis of religion. He was against dogma in religion. His religion consisted of sincerity, truthfulness and kindness to all. All his writings show sympathy for the poor and the under-dog. In many of his plays he brought out the sufferings of the victims of social wrongs. The themes of his plays were the problems that were faced by the English people in those days. He had sympathy with those individuals who were crushed down by the brute majority. He raised his voice against men who treated women as their property. He opposed all
class conflicts and wanted equity and justice to be practiced in relations between men and men and men and women.

In his plays he is absolutely impartial in stating the case for capital as well as labour, for the rich as well as the poor, for the aristocrats and the industrialists. Galsworthy’s faith is best summed up by the following lines of Adam Lindsay Gordon, an Australian poet:

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Life is mostly froth and bubble;
Two things stand like stone;
Kindness in another’s trouble
Courage in your own.9
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Galsworthy has to his credit nineteen full-length plays and six short plays. His plays differ in several aspects from the old type of plays. Most of the plays of Galsworthy are problem plays. On the basis of their themes or the problems, they can be classified as plays dealing with 1. family relationships, 2. social injustice, 3. social deterioration and its causes, 4. results of social deterioration, 5. tragedy of idealism, and 6. caste feeling and its consequences.

*Joy* and *A Family Man* deal with the relationships of family life. *Joy* is a study of the egoism of human nature which is most evident in family life. In this play we are introduced to Colonel Hope, a retired army officer, his wife Mrs. Hope; their daughter, Letty, married to Earnest Blunt, a youth of twenty eight; Joy aged seventeen, who is loved by Dick Merton, her senior by three years; a maid servant called Rose, and Miss Beech, or Peachey, an old governess friend of the
family. When the play opens, they are expecting the arrival of Colonel Hope’s niece, Mrs. Gwyn, aged thirty-six. Mrs. Gwyn is the mother of Joy by a husband who had disappeared out of her life many years before, and she is seeking another husband who is expected to arrive with her, in the person of the Hon. Maurice Lever. There is a discussion on the rearrangement of bedrooms to accommodate the expected guests, an acrimonious dispute regarding a game of tennis, various preparations for a dance that is to take place the same evening and some mild lovemaking. The conversation that goes on brings to light the egoism of Colonel Hope who thinks that no man in the army has been treated so badly as he himself, and to assert his own self-importance invests a huge amount in a mining company. Mrs. Hope’s egoism is that of a housewife who wants to order people about and who is injured because her husband has invested such a large amount without consulting her. Other characters, too have their own particular brands of egoism, and this results in tensions and conflicts, As R.H. Coats observer:

joy first strikes a note which we find sounded again and again in the plays of Galsworthy. Most of life’s troubles arise from some failure of sympathy or imaginative understanding, and this failure of understanding is due to egoistic self-absorption and the lack of love.10

In A Family Man the conflicts result from the over-assertion of authority in family life. John Builder is an unimaginative hot-tempered man, who thinks he can boss his wife, control his young people, and
govern his household in any way he likes. But the women-folk get utterly out of hand. Even wives object now-a-days, he complains. The times clearly are out of joint.

The maudlin sentimentality in these days is absolutely rotting this country. A man can’t be master in his own house, can’t require his wife to fulfil her duties, can’t attempt to control the conduct of his daughters, without coming up against it and incurring odium. A man can’t control his employees; he can’t put his foot down on rebellion anywhere, without a lot of humanitarians and licence-lovers howling at him.(625)

The result of this over-assertion is increasing frustration and alienation. The women folk leave him one after another and in the end he finds himself living in splendid isolation. Lack of imaginative sympathy and understanding is again the cause of undoing, as in Joy. Disaster is caused when excessive authority takes the place of love and affection in a family. The young people revolt against the parental authority.

The second category seen in Galsworthy’s plays is the social injustice. The Silver Box shows how the law favours the rich at the expense of the poor. It illustrates the old adage that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. A long purse can sway justice in its favour. Jack Barthwick and Jim Jones are both found to be guilty of theft on the same evening. The former steals a woman’s sky blue velvet silk purse: the later steals a silver cigarette box. Mrs. Jones is the
charwoman working in Jack’s house. She is suspected of stealing the silver box. Mr. Snow a police-inspector inspects the case and finds the silver box in Mrs. Jones house. Rather than let the blame fall on her husband, Mrs. Jones is on the point of being taken into custody for stealing the box, when Jones himself owns to the theft and violently assaults Snow for presuming to lay hands wrongfully upon his wife. A court case follows. In many particulars, the cases are exactly parallel. But there is one important difference. Jack is the son of a wealthy Liberal Member of Parliament, Jones is a loafer out of work. In the end, after a rapid enquiry, the theft of Jack is passed over with the help or Barthwick Senior and his solicitor and Jones is condemned to one month’s hard labour. The poor are helpless before the law.

*The Show* is not so popular but a fine play. In this play Galsworthy criticizes journalists who delight in spreading scandals about the private lives of important people. Its theme is the suffering which is caused to the individuals through public curiosity satisfied by the press and other media of mass communication. What Galsworthy complains of, however, is not healthy curiosity, but morbid, excessive, and impertinent curiosity, the cruel tendency in all of us to gloat over the misfortunes of other people and to regard their discomfiture as a show or a theme for unkindly gossip. Galsworthy does well to call our attention to the suffering, its inflicts, and to remind us once again that this social cruelty arises simply from insensitiveness and lack of imagination, the failure to
enter sympathetically into the feelings of others or to put ourselves into the place of those whom we make our victims. As R.H. Coats observes:

The restrained yet passionate indignation of Galsworthy on this subject is nowhere more evident than in the closing scene of the powerful and mordant play we have just been considering. The novels of Galsworthy also contain references to the pain caused by over-publicity in the miserable business of reporting cases of public scandal. There is the affair of Marjorie Ferrar in *The Silver Spoon.* ‘Dead Sea fruit—a feast for all the gossips about town.’ Mrs. Pendyce, in *The Country House,* when her son gets into trouble in connection with Mrs. Bellew, suffers agonies very similar to those endured by Lady Morecombe in *The Show.* ‘Two men and a woman wrangling, fighting, tearing each other before the eyes of all the world. A woman and two men stripped of charity and gentleness, of moderation and sympathy—stripped of all that made life decent and lovable, squabbling like savages before the eyes of all the world. Two men, and one of them her son, and between them a woman whom both of them had loved!’

In the play *The Forest,* Galsworthy exposes the financiers who ruin ordinary people by their unscrupulous speculation. In it social injustice and misery is caused by gross swindling of the public on the part of big capitalist. People who have invested money in good faith are robbed and ruined by these speculators. It is the law of the jungle which prevails and capitalists like Bartaple and Strood ruthlessly cheat and exploit the people, and grow rich at their expense. The dramatist
shows that England's industrial system is like a forest in which the capitalists prowl like lions without any restraint around the unwary and innocent people of English society.

*Justice, Windows,* and *The Fugitive* are the three plays which deal with the social forces that go to the making of the criminal, the disreputable, and the outcasts of society.

*Justice* is the most powerful and popular play. It shows how criminal law and harshness of society at large turns a weak, but chivalrous and generous young man, like Falder, into a social outcaste, and he is ultimately compelled to commit suicide. This very harshness and apathy of the world around compels his beloved Ruth to lead an immortal life during the two years that he is in prison on a charge of forgery. A weak person who commits a crime under a terrible stress is completely ruined. In this play Galsworthy also shows the cruelty of solitary confinement.

In the play *Windows* a young woman gets an illegitimate child. She kills him to escape social tyranny. She is sent to prison, and when she comes out, no one has any sympathy with her. Faith Bly, in *Windows*, has an equally unfortunate career. Brought up by her father to follow her instincts, she finds herself the mother of an illegitimate child at the age of eighteen. In a moment of self-abandonment she stifles the two-day old infant in bed, although she loves it, and thereafter is imprisoned for infanticide for a period of two years. After her release,
she works as a domestic servant in Mrs. March’s house where her father is a window-cleaner. She wants to see a bit of life and freedom after her punishment or imprisonment. She flirts with Johny, son of Mrs. March. Knowing this, Mrs. March insists Faith to go, though Johny endeavours to shield her. Finally there appears a lover from round the corner whom even Johny sees to be a thorough scoundrel. Faith does not believe this, as two years in prison have arrested her development and kept her comparatively ignorant of the world’s evil. But a police inspector makes it clear that the young man in question makes a living out of the earning of the fallen woman. Fresh offers are now made to induce Faith to remain, but she refuses either help or charity and insists on recovering her freedom. “There’s nothing to be done with a girl like me” (735), she says, as she goes out into the world. According to R.H. Coats:

It should not be overlooked that the many allusions to windows in this play are symbolic, or at least significant. Mr. March, who is careful never to notice anything he has no wish to see, looks out of the window when Faith is laying the table very badly. Faith herself twice complains that there were no windows to her prison life. Johnny speaks of the men who stare from club windows on the look-out for pretty girls. Mrs. March, when insight comes to her at the close of the play, calls for open windows and fresh air. Bly, who is a window cleaner by profession, has the whole philosophy of windows at his finger ends. ‘Windows never stay clean,’ he says. ‘You clean ’em, and
they’re dirty again in no time.’ ‘You can clean yer windows, and clean ’em, but that don’t change the colour of the glass.’ ‘There’s windows all round, but you can’t see.’

The play *Fugitive* deals with the problem of unhappy marriage. Clare hates her husband. Clare and her husband George does not have one idea in common. After five years of wedded misery, Clare deserts her husband and goes for advice to an artistically minded friend Malise, whom she likes. If Clare gives her love to another man, she has to lose her home and face the humiliation of divorce proceedings. Driven by circumstances, she concludes that a dose of poison is her only refuge.

The fourth category is the problem of outcasts. The play *The Pigeon* published in 1911 deals with the problem of reclaiming the social outcasts. It is one of Galsworthy’s best plays. An amiable artist Wellwyn lives with his daughter Ann. He is the pigeon of the title, for he is generous and kind and gives money to the needy. But three people regard him as the pigeon and prey upon this good man. First there is Mrs. Megan, a beautiful flower-seller, second is Ferrand, a French interpreter, and the third is Timson, an old cab-driver. All the three like the artist for his money, but refuse to improve or mend their ways. As a result, the well-meaning artist is ruined and his belongings sold.

Three social reformers do try to mend the three incorrigibles but to no avail. A clergyman, Canon Bartley, is one of the opinion that
Mrs. Megan ought to be restored to her husband, and in the mean time he undertakes to admit her to domestic service in his own house. Professor Calway has a pet theory that in all cases we ought to support the State in helping the undeserving. Sir Thomas Hoxton, on the other hand, who is a Justice of the Peace and a self-styled practical man, is firmly convinced that support should be given only to private organizations for the assistance of the deserving. In literal truth they “lose sight of the individual.”

There are, of course, very sincere social reformers and thinkers. But these idealists are not able to produce the right results. They only produce abstract theories and paper schemes. They are visionaries and not practical men. There is no sympathy for those who are forced to modern charitable institutions. The inmates of the reformatories and charitable institutions are often subjected to very humiliating treatment which makes them worse. What is required is sympathetic understanding and generous relief.

Tragedy of idealism is the theme seen in Galsworthy’s plays *The Mob* and *A Bit of Love*.

*The Mob* is a conflict between an idealist and the mob. The idealist wants peace but the mob wants war. Stephen More, a man of strong convictions is the central figure in *The Mob*. He is an idealist and does not want war. But at the moment England is about to declare war. He denounces the decision in the House of Commons and faces
difficulties. There is opposition from his own family and relatives and he is subjected to fierce public attacks. He has to give up his job as under-secretary, and his political career is ruined. Ultimately he is killed while addressing an infuriated mob. After his death a statue is erected in his honour with the words ‘Faithful to his ideal’ inscribed on it. This is how the idealists and visionaries are sacrificed at the altar of mob mentality and then monuments are raised in their honour. The play is interesting because it was composed in 1913 and staged just before the First World War engulfed the world in a terrible catastrophe. The Mob, thus, depicts the fight of an idealist against adverse social forces. Galsworthy’s dislike of mob mentality is expressed thus in the play:

You—Mob—are the most contemptible thing under the sun. When you walk the street—God goes in... You are the thing that pelts the weak; kicks women; howls down free speech. This to-day, and that to-morrow. Brain—you have none. Spirit—not the ghost of it! (414).

A Bit of Love is a play in which an idealist has to face oppression and persecution. Michael Strangway, the idealist, saintly clergy, is the protagonist of the play, in the course of which he frees from its cage an imprisoned lark which one of the girls has brought with her. At the sound of a distant cuckoo, Strangway is reminded of his wife Beatrice who has been unfaithful to him. She lives with her former lover, Dr. Desart. She herself presently appears and earnestly begs him, for her sake and her lover’s, to grant her release and not insist on
the publicity and disgrace of divorce proceedings. Strangway, after his
experience with the caged lark, cannot but let her go, though it tears his
heart in twain to do so. Immediately after thus losing his wife by
desertion, he is called upon to console and encourage Jack Cremer, a
village rustic, who has lost his wife by death.

The news of what has happened spreads in the village and all
think that he is a coward. He should have stood up to Dr. Desart for
meddling with his wife. Strangway is completely misjudged by his own
people. None understands his feelings. In his spiritual struggle he suffers
a lot and wants to leave the village. Afterwards, he decides that it will
be better for everyone if he takes his own life. He does not want to
continue as a clergy man as his mind is disturbed and doubts whether
there is God. He makes an attempt to commit suicide but two people,
Tibby Jarland and Jack Cremer stop him to do so. They restore him to
the love of nature and love of humanity. Strangway is thus seen to be
an idealist who believes in the power of love and forgiveness. He
ultimately wins that glory in life which most of The Mob get only after
death.

As the play concludes, Strangway lifts his hand in a gesture of
prayer and says, “God, of the moon and the sun; of joy and beauty, of
loneliness and sorrow—Give me strength to go on, till I love every
living thing!” (460).
Caste feeling is yet another problem in Galsworthy’s plays. People generally have the feeling that they belong to a higher class than others. Clashes between communities, classes, and interests are inevitable. A number of Galsworthy’s plays deal with caste feeling in one form or the other. In these plays the interest is focused, not on a individual, but on a class, or ideals of a class, loyalty to which implies antagonism to some other class.

*The Eldest Son* published in 1909 deals with class consciousness. The eldest son of an English baronet falls in love with a maid servant and he wants to marry her. But all the family members are against this as they do not want him to marry a girl who is much below him in status, position and wealth. This results in the social tragedy. Human feelings have to be sacrificed before family prestige. In *The Eldest Son* the caste feeling of a country family comes into collision with morality.

*The Skin Game* is a play which shows the conflict between two classes that is aristocrats and the rich class of the owners of industry. The play is about the clash between two strong individuals: Hillchrist who represents the landed aristocracy of England and Hornblower who represents the manufacturing class. Hillchrist is a kind old man, whereas Hornblower is an aggressive man who wants to become richer and richer. He comes from the north to the country side and wants to develop the locality. The quarrel starts when both of them want to purchase the same piece of land. Thus the caste feeling in the land-
owning class enters into a deadly feud with the caste feeling in the manufacturing class.

The play *Strife* is about the conflicts between the employers and the workers. The problem of industrial strife was taken by Galsworthy from the life around him. It is a daily occurrence in the modern industrial world. When the employers and the employees do not understand and appreciate each other’s problems and difficulties there is a struggle which causes loss of production and misery for the workers and their families.

In this play the conflict is between two strong personalities. They are both men of principles and are ready to fight and suffer for their ideals. It is a prolonged struggle. The workers of Trenartha Tin Plate Works remained on strike for better wages. Anthony belonging to Capital does not look at the strike as an attempt by the poor labourers to get a few more pounds as wages. He looks at it as an attempt by the working class to destroy the comfort and luxuries of the capitalist class and to create chaos in the country. Roberts, representing the labouring class, does not look at the strike as a means to get more wages but a fight of labour against the blood sucking monster of capitalism. Anthony and Roberts are not prepared to accept any compromise and are determined to fight to a finish. So the strike continues bringing big losses to the company and the workers. At the
end the leaders of both sides are disowned by their followers and are broken in spirit.

*Strife* is a social tragedy which emphasizes the waste and suffering caused by the lack of harmony in the society. It shows us the caste feeling of capital pitted against the caste feeling of labour. As Leon Schalit observes:

> All the suffering comes from the implacability of the two extremists, Anthony and Roberts. So it is ever in party struggle—extremism with its demagogy and its pride and its greed of power waste human life, cause infinite trouble. Only through mutual toleration, mutual concession and agreement can human society progress.¹⁴

And, in the struggle between John Anthony, chairman of the Trenartha Tin Plate Works, and David Roberts, leader of the strikers, our sympathy and antipathy constantly waver between the two; and at the end, we feel profound pity for both of them.

The theme of *Loyalties* is the conflict of various forms of caste feeling with one another. It deals with the caste feeling of the Christians against the Jews, who are a part of English society but are treated as second rate citizens. This is illustrated by the story of Dancy, a Christian, who steals the money of De Levis, a Jew. Dancy is supported by his Christian friends and De Levis is looked down upon as a vulgar trader as he first insists on calling the police to investigate the case, and then goes to court. Soon it becomes clear that Dancy is the thief and
De Levis, having established his point, is ready to let bygones be bygones. When the police comes to arrest him, Dancy shoots himself. Had Dancy’s Christian friends been impartial, had they not shut their eyes to obvious truths, had they realised the force of De Levis’s case, matters would not have gone so far and tragedy would have been averted. But their caste feeling makes them blind to truth; it is not loyalty to a friend but prejudice against a Jew. They cause tragedy with the best of motives. Imagination and sympathetic understanding are needed to ameliorate human lot.

On the other hand, we have a religion of kindness commended as a corrective to caste feeling in *The Foundations*. *The Foundations* is a farcical presentation of a serious theme, that of class-war. Though some of the scenes are realistic and extremely moving, the general tone has not done justice to the gravity of the basic theme. It is the most amusing of Galsworthy’s plays and at the same time one of the most instructive and an extravagant play.

Lord and Lady William Dromondy, who are luxuriously served by four footmen, a butler, and other servants, live in a palatial residence in Park Lane. In the subterranean wine-cellar of the mansion is discovered what looks suspiciously like a bomb. The times are revolutionary, and it is supposed to have been left there by a plumber, Bob Lemmy, who lives with his mother, an aged person of seventy-seven, in Bethnal Green. The very rich and the very poor are thus brought together, and
the interest of the play is derived, not from the story, which is ridiculous and incredible, but from the views which the various characters hold regarding life in general and the revolutionary situation in particular.

Lord William is quite unable to throw off the prejudices of his class, although he tries to do so. He is a warm-hearted, middle-headed person, who orders thirty-four bottles of wine to be served at a society dinner held in his house in aid of the Anti-Sweating Society. He has been through the Great War; he has learned from the free-masonry of the trenches that the common people are “good chaps,” and “real sports,” so that his feeling is that all should pull together in the same boat in the spirit of comradeship. Interviewed by a reporter, he gives his views on religion, which he takes to mean, not “been baptised and that sort of thing” (473), but the practice of friendly feeling, as taught in the Sermon on the Mount: “Well, I think it would be a deuced good thing if everybody were a bit more kind” (473).

Mrs. Lemmy, Bob’s mother, represents sweated labour in its worst form; and, because there is no lower stratum of poverty than hers, her son very properly remarks that it is on people like her, in a literal sense, that the whole structure of society reposes as on its foundations—“an’ rocky yn’t the word for ’em” (510). In spite of her hardships, Mrs. Lemmy is the principal exponent of the spirit of loving-kindness which gives the keynote to the play. She has brought up a family of five
children on twelve shillings a week, besides laying by a sum sufficient to pay for her own funeral expenses. “Better a little goin’ short here below,” she says, “an’ enter the kingdom of ’eaven independent” (487). Her troubles do not succeed in robbing her of her shrewd wisdom, happy memories, and charitable sentiments. The general moral of the play is caste feeling in all classes of society must be overcome through the spirit of comradeship and mutual understanding. A country’s one foundation is the happiness and prosperity that are diffused through love. The Foundations ends on a very common note: “Next time yer build an ’ouse, daon’t forget—it’s the foundytons as bears the wyte” (512).

Galsworthy’s short play The First and the Last deals with another aspect of the same problem. The laxity of morale and its subsequent total failure are the themes. Law is presented as an ineffectual, indifferent, and blind power. This imbecility creates havoc in individual lives. It is a serious tragedy. Keith Darrant, within the ace of a judgeship is faced with a moral dilemma when his brother Larry kills the ruffian husband of the girl he loves. Keith could easily have shielded Larry, but Larry refuses to give up Wanda even at the risk of his own life. Keith’s genuine doubt is, “Can a woman like that love?” (909). The police claim to have succeeded in arresting the “culprit,” evidently the wrong man, a “little yellow, ragged, lame unshaven scarecrow of a chap” (916). Keith feels relieved and manoeuvres to get the suspect sentenced to death. But Larry decides to save the poor convict
at any cost. He tells Wanda, “I hate this world - I loathe it ! I hate its Godforsaken savagery, its pride and smugness. Keith’s world -- all righteous will power and success ....We were cast out at birth -- soft, will-less better dead” (920-921). After writing a confession letter Larry and Wanda take poison and die. Climax is yet to come. It comes when Keith sees the dead bodies lying, is anxious to keep his name un tarnished; burns the letter and lets the secret die with the dead. The play reaches the pinnacle of tragic grandeur, not when Larry and Wanda take poison, but when truth for which they lay down their lives is burned down by Keith. An unscrupulousness and hypocrisy of an individual and the inefficacy of law are clearly observed in this play.

*Escape* is a play in which various forms of caste feeling are negatived and overcome by the spirit of sympathy and humanity.

According to R.H. Coats:

Matt Denant, once a soldier and a gentleman, but now a convict serving five years for manslaughter, who escapes from Dartmoor Gaol on a foggy October afternoon. In his extremity he meets with various kinds of people, a young married woman, a judge, a picnic party, a man and wife taking a walking tour, some labourers and a farmer, two maiden ladies in a cottage of gentility, and finally a parson. In the case of nearly all of them, humanity prevails over prejudice or caste feeling. The average man proves to be ‘a good sport.’ All sorts of people put themselves in the place of Denant, whose manslaughter was very venial, and therefore instinctively assist him to get away.15
The play *Exiled* presents a young member of an aristocratic family forced to leave England for good, because in the contemporary social set-up he finds it impossible to cope with the enterprising business magnates. It is the story of Sir Charles Denbury, a Twelfth Baronet, who, reduced to a state of bankruptcy, is forced to take shelter in Africa to live without staking his self-respect. Sir John Mazer is ‘A king of Industry’ who has supplanted Denbury’s family and is occupying their family house. The mine workers revolt against Mazer because he has decided to close down a few pits, and does not care whether they have necessary facilities. Though jovial and good-humoured, Sir John Mazer has the same stubborn tendency of pushing forward at any cost. He shares this quality with Hornblower in *The Skin Game*. Denbury has the fine distilled essence of a gentleman in him when he rejects the proposal Joan makes and decides to leave for Africa for good. Galsworthy does not emphasize any of these points. It is a mild portrayal of a broken gentleman and a good-natured yet shallow business magnate.

*Hall-Marked* is a short-play. It is an exposition of a humorous and delicate dramatic situation. The British are shallow in spirit but fond of display. They are snobs, and are quick at passing judgements on others. They are very pretentious about the external aspects of morality. This tendency leads them on frequently to ridiculous situations as in *Hall-Marked*. 
The play *Old English* differs from all the plays of John Galsworthy. The central character, Old Heythorp, though lovable even in his hypocrisy, is the symbol of all that is bad among the national traits. Mr. Heythorp with his antiquated Old English ideas is a magnificent caricature of the more spacious English virtues which are not generally observed. He is more of a French in his approach to the problems. A man who does not fight shy of his emotions, Mr. Heythorp tries to swindle his colleagues in business and save as much money as possible for the maintenance of his grandchildren. He is not bothered about professional scruples. In fact, he laughs at everything that is binding in the moral or commercial codes of behaviour. The British nation in fact prefers hypocrisy to plain dealing, and *Old English* gives a rude shock to his legal daughter Adela in disclosing the secret about his illegitimate son. Heythorp keeps on drinking in spite of the doctor’s advice. When his foul-play in business is discovered at last, he eats and drinks himself to death: “You can’t play God Almighty any longer” (843). “The great old sinner he was!” (849).

*Defeat* is a tiny play in which we see mainly two characters: the officer and the girl. The girl’s nationality is German. She is a prostitute and is tempered with suffering having “no work, and no money, and no friends” (957). She has developed an attitude of resignation: “… all that I ever knew is gone; fader, moder, sisters, broders, all; never anymore I shall see them, I suppose, now. The war it breaks and breaks, it breaks
The girl likes the young officer for his kindness. She feels that he is a nice and good person. She shares her feelings with this young soldier. She converses with him about her past life, her country, and the people in society. She leads a very miserable life and is disgusted with the world:

I don’t hate even the English—I despise them. I despise my people too; even more, because they began this war. Oh! I know that. I despise all the peoples. Why haf they made the world so miserable—Why haf they killed all our lives hundreds and thousands and millions of lives—all for noting? They haf made a bad world—everybody hating, and looking for the worst everywhere. They haf made me bad, I know. I believe no more in anything. (958)

She loses her faith in God. She does not let her “mind become a turnip just because she is no longer moral” (961).

At first she thinks bad of her country. She does not care if her country is lost in the war: “I don’t care which win. I don’t care if my country is beaten. I despise them all--animals--animals” (959). She strikes bargains with an English soldier and accepts some currency notes. She gives a wrong picture about her country, her people and the war but inwardly she has got a patriotic feeling and love for the people of her country. The Galsworthian dignity asserts itself towards the close of the play when the British victory--that is the German defeat--is announced:
“Great victory—great victory! official! British! 'Eavy Defeat of the 'Uns! Many thousand prisoners! 'Eavy Defeat!” (961).

The girl cannot digest the defeat of the Germans. She refuses to have English money and tears the notes. Galsworthy gives an effective touch by presenting her in an appealing posture: “Mechanically, she sweeps together the scattered fragments of notes, assembling them with the dust into a little pile, as of fallen leaves, and dabbling in it with her fingers, while the tears run down her cheeks” (962).

The theme of The Little Man is very significant. The playwright tries to give an answer to the question “Who is a Man?” He is striking at the very roots of the claims of individual nations of their great traditions and heritage. An Australian railway platform brings a number of men together—English, American, German, and others. There is a little man with no particular appeal sitting in an obscure corner. He says, “I’m afraid I’m nothing particular. My father was half-English and half-American, and my mother half-German and half-Dutch” (929). The others discuss lofty ideals of humanism, the American’s voice ringing loudest. Galsworthy laughs good-humouredly and not without irony when he makes all others shrink away from a sick child and makes the quiet little man go to its rescue. The American takes a snap-shot of the man and the child—at arm’s length because he is afraid of the child’s typhus.
The Little Man reflects the painful reaction of a sincere soul behaving in and clamouring for the realization of the ideals which nations are boasting of. The little man without a specific nationality of his own, symbolizes the author’s desire to see all men sharing the same points of view -- that patriotism should not be too narrow in application. Pride of one’s own nation should not prevent a man from recognizing the dignity of other nations and their rights to be encouraged. A spirit of universal brotherhood is evinced where individual souls are free from narrow concepts of nationalism.

The Little Dream, published in 1911, is an attempt at the lyrical expression of the complex feelings in a girl’s mind. The play is the poetic expression of the conflict in the mind of a girl Seelchen (Little Soul) belonging to a mountain tribe. The idyllic as well as realistic aspects of life exert strong influence on her mind, and she is tossed between the two. The peace of the mountain side is contrasted with the humdrum of the cities. Leon Schalit explains:

Seelchen, swaying hither and thither in her “little dream”, between these incompatible modes of life, flung hither and thither between the two most contradictory feelings and recognitions, and passing— after experience of country and town, of rustic peace, and the fevers of the city— into the reconciling and everlasting country beyond death.16

The Sun is a short play which introduces a soldier who, on his return from the battle field, finds that his betrothed has deserted him
and has become intimate with another man. Yet, the bright summer sun infuses a spirit of joy in him which asserts mastery over his mean thirst for revenge. He decides to live. He says, “I’ve got a laugh in me you can’t put out, black as you look!... All the world seems bright!” The girl observes, “The sun has touched him Jim!” (968-969).

_Punch and Go_, intended to be a satire against the commercialization of art, is symbolic in concept. The play within the play, “Orpheus with his Lute” (976), is meant to suggest the dominant mood of modern civilisation, monotony: “The Orpheus legend is the -- er - apotheosis of animism. Can we accept” (981). The modern civilization is represented by the serious professor, and his young wife symbolizes the longing for romance.

_The Roof_ is Galsworthy’s last play. It has a kaleidoscopic technique of presentation. Various rooms in a French hotel one night present different facets of life. A fire breaks out unexpectedly and each inmate’s metal is tested. And, the roof where all the people run for shelter assumes a symbolic significance. The fire that is consciously lit is an accident, and accidents alone are the sure tests of character. Thus the fire becomes symbolic of all worldly ordeals which put a man to test. Individual reactions to the accident are enlightening. The eloped couple are afraid of getting themselves exposed. The elderly lady is worried about her make-up. The children get excited. That is the time for self-sacrifice. The drunken young man who happens to have started
the fire, though not with the intention of setting fire to the hotel, dies in the attempt to save the old waiter Gustave. Martin Ellenhauge remarks, “The just punishment of the drunken villain of ‘The Roof’ is sure to please an ordinary theatrical audience.”

Galsworthy deals with the social problems in his plays. His themes are the ‘problems of the age, its conflicts and inequality, and the inequities of man-maid loss and systems.’ He has nothing to teach. His plays are marked by his qualities of modesty, sincerity, sympathy and impartiality.

Many persons object that the discussion of problems is outside the jurisdiction of drama. The discussion of problems should be the concern of a debating society. Drama should only provide entertainment. But Galsworthy would reply that modern life is beset with problems and it is the function of drama to hold a mirror to life. A dramatist should present different aspects of these problems as objectively and impartially as possible.
References


17. Martin Ellenhauge, Striking Figures Among Modern English Dramatists 46.