The play *The Fugitive*, in four acts, differs from the social dramas. It centres round an individual. Plays that deal with purely domestic problems of a universal and permanent significance without introducing any immediate social questions are very few. *Joy, A Family Man*, and *The Fugitive* could be included in this group. The play is the tragic story of a beautiful woman, Clare, who leaves her husband because she does not love him anymore, and is driven to desperate suicide. Social and religious issues are involved in this family breakdown. According to Leon Schalit:

This central figure is a woman; Clare, George Dedmond’s wife unhappily married, so that involuntary recollections arise of Irene in *The Forsyte Saga*, Olive Cramier in *The Dark Flower*, Andrey Noel in *The Patrician*. And Clare, like those other three, is hunted. This recurrent hunting theme in Galsworthy’s writing has already been repeatedly alluded to. It is inherent, of course, in the work of a man whose main theme is ‘The individual versus society’; the theme which gives the epic quality to his work.¹

*The Fugitive* opens in the flat of Mr. George Dedmond. The man–servant Paynter is seen arranging two tables for bridge. Burney, the maid, enters the room. Paynter looks up at her and asks where Mrs. Clare has gone. Burney replies that she is out for a walk. Paynter says that she will run off as she does not like to stay with Mr. George Dedmond. Paynter asks Burney about Clare Dedmond’s family background. Burney tells him about Clare’s family. Just then George Dedmond enters from
the hall. He is a worthy and prosaic young Englishman, six years older than Clare. He is a matter of fact person without a spark of imagination or humour. He has money, his wife has only charm and wit. He is perhaps more sympathetic than Soames Forsyte, but in the course of four years with him has become real torture to Clare.

George Dedmond is in evening dress, opera hat, and overcoat. His face is broad, glossily shaved, his eyes are clear, small and blue-grey, and have little speculation. His hair is well brushed. He gives his coat and hat to Paynter and tells him that when he sends up from the Club for his dress, Paynter should send his black waist coat always. Paynter says that he will do it and asks his permission and leaves. George calls his wife Clare but he does not get any answer. He asks him where Clare has gone. Paynter replies that his wife has gone out for a walk and she did not dress formally.

George asks Paynter when his parents would arrive to play bridge. Paynter replies that they will be coming at half-past nine. George tells Paynter to call Burney. Burney, enters the room. George asks her where Mrs. Clare has gone and what she said before she went out. Burney replies that she has gone out for a walk as it is a pleasant evening. Burney leaves the room.

Paynter, coming in from the hall, announces that General Sir Charles and Lady Dedmond have arrived. Sir Charles is an upright, well-groomed, grey moustached, red faced man of sixty-seven. Lady
Dedmond has a firm, thin face, full of capability and decision, not without kindliness. She is fifty-five years old. She kisses her son and asks about Clare. George shows his anger on Clare and tells his parents and blames Mr. Malise for his wife’s misconduct.

Paynter reappears and announces that Captain Huntigndom has arrived. He is a tall, fair soldier of thirty. He is informed of Clare’s absence. Just then Mr. Malise enters. Almost immediately Clare also comes in. She has full, smiling lips, and large grey mesmeric eyes, one of those women all vibration iced over with a trained stoicism of voice and manner. She is fond of poetry and music; she and her husband do not have one idea in common. Clare notices beautiful sunset effects as she looks out of the window but George sees time on the face of Big Ben through the window. There is some frigid conversation before Clare comes in. They talk about Mr. Malise and Clare’s affairs, their relationship. As soon as Clare comes in, everybody retires to another room to play bridge leaving Malise and Clare alone. Clare tells Malise that she does not want to stay with George and she wishes to go out of the house. Her marital life appears to her one long lie! To stay with her husband and not live with him goes against the grain; she has too high a standard of honour to allow her only to take and give nothing in return. Malise supports her decision saying that there is a whole world outside to spread her wings.
Clare tells Malise that her father is a saint, widower with a small income who is getting old and has a sister engaged and three sisters to whom she should set a good example. She says that she has no money and she wants to earn on her own. Malise approves her decision. Malise admires her and asks her to play some music. Clare goes towards the piano and plays the song “I’m glad not to be ugly” (284). Just then Mr. and Mrs. Fullarton arrive. Malise asks Clare who they are. Clare replies that Mrs. Fullarton is her old close friend. Mrs. Fullarton is a rather tall woman, with dark hair and a quick eye. Her husband was a naval person who retired from the sea, but not from susceptibility.

Mrs. Fullarton greets Clare and asks about Dedmonds. Clare tells her that they are playing bridge in the dining room. Mrs. Fullarton says that they cannot stay for the bridge, they have come there just to see Clare for a minute.

Malise says goodnight and leaves. Mrs. Fullarton asks Clare how the things are going on. Clare just moves her shoulders. Mrs. Fullarton asks Clare if she is sleeping separately in a separate bedroom. Clare replies that she is not doing so and she does not want to torture him. Mrs. Fullarton says that there are opportunities for a married woman to live independently. Mrs. Clare Dedmond asks her if she can keep her at home. But Mrs. Fullarton says that she cannot keep her at home for the fear that she would be a temptation to her husband. Mrs. Fullarton tells Clare to think wisely and not to take any step in her desperate situation.
Clare does not listen to her words. She says that she cannot anymore adjust herself and cannot live with her husband. According to R.H. Coats:

Clare, too, has no element of vice in her composition. She is naturally a loving woman, and, if sometimes she is childish and a little petulant, it must be remember that the married life to her has been like confinement in an underground damp cellar, so that her one desire is to escape into the fresh air.²

She takes a flower from her dress and suddenly tears it to bits. It is the only sign of emotion she gives. Mrs. Fullarton tells Clare to go with her brother to India for same period. Clare replies that Reggie cannot help her on his income. Clare’s friend tells her to take the help of Mr. Malise. Just then Mr. Fullarton asks Clare to sing the song “If I might be the falling bee and kiss thee all the day” (285). Mrs. Fullarton and Mr. Fullarton leave the house. But before she leaves the house Mrs. Fullarton warns Clare against any hasty move, but she lends her a woman’s moral support.

Clare’s brother Reginald comes to her and says that she should change her present behavior: “You can’t do this kind of thing with impunity. No man’ll put up with it” (285). He tells her that she cannot return to her father’s house because he is a clergyman with three other unmarried daughters to provide for, and he too cannot help her on his income. He advises her to stay there. Clare does not listen to Reggie’s
words. She begins to argue: “Get married, and find out after a year that she’s the wrong person; so wrong that you can’t exchange a single real thought; that your blood runs cold when she kisses you—then you’ll know” (285-286). Huntington tries to convince her but she does not. He tells her not to get into troubles and not make the problem complicated: “You won’t go sailing near the wind, will you?” (286). He feels vexed Paynter follows him. Paynter asks Clare if she wants anything. Clare says no and Paynter takes her leave. George angrily speaks to Clare. He scolds her for going out and not caring his own people. He asks her why she is letting him down and why she gives much importance to Malise than her own people.

Clare feels sorry, but warns him that it will happen again so long as he will not set her free. George refuses to give divorce. Clare replies that she cannot satisfy him and she pleads with him to give her a notice. In their five years of marriage life she has had nothing but suffering. George tells her that he will not give any divorce. He does not want to lose his respect and honour in society by giving divorce to her. He tells her to drop cynicism. He scolds Malise for putting all this into Clare’s mind. He does not like Malise’s looks, his infernal satiric way, his way of dressing. He asks Clare if Malise is in love with her. Clare tells him to ask that question to Malise himself. George angrily says that he does not believe in the guide, philosopher and friend business. George wants both of them together to face the facts:
The facts are that we’re married—for better or worse, and
certain things are expected of us. It’s suicide for you, and
folly for me, in my position to ignore that. You have all
you can reasonably want; and I don’t—don’t wish for any
change. If you could bring anything against me—if I drank,
or knocked about town, or expected too much of you. I’m
not unreasonable in any way, that I can see (289).

George Dedmond then behaves to her as Soames to Irene in \textit{The
\textit{Man Of Property}}. Clare tells her husband that she wants to go away
and earn her living. She is very serious in this matter and tells him to
be happy with another woman. The crisis comes when Clare, under the
influence of the young bohemian Kenneth Malise, writer and journalist,
tells her husband that she wants to leave him. Clare leaves the house.

Malise is seen in his sitting room. He is writing surrounded by
books and papers. The room is untidy, poorly furnished, almost the
exact antithesis to George’s prosperous flat. Mrs. Miller, his house–
keeper, comes in and says that she has seen a detective on the stairs.
Malise is shadowed by detectives. Malise asks her how they look like.
Mrs. Miller replies that he is just like the men seen on the front page of
daily papers. He is a nasty, smooth looking fellow with Billycock hat on
his head. Malise does not take the matter seriously and goes into the
inner room: “Malise, man of ideas and imagination, is the complete
reverse of George, ‘man of the world,’ and really no more admirable.
They are of two irreconcilable worlds, whose antagonism is deeply
rooted in temperament.”

Just then Clare comes and asks for Malise.
Mrs. Miller says that he is in the room and asks her name. She tells her to sit down and wait. Malise comes and asks her if he can do anything to her. Clare asks him for his advice. She says that she had left the house and went to her father’s house. She saw the condition in the house and says that she did not like being there. She does not want to be a burden to her father. She wants to live independently. She says that she has a thought of doing nursing. But she cannot take the pain. She feels helpless, hopeless as she has no money: “It makes my blood boil to think of women like you” (294). Malise understands the helpless condition of Clare and says that God should help all the ladies without money. As Malise and Clare are discussing Clare’s future, Mrs. Miller comes and tells them that Sir Charles, Lady Dedmond, and Mr. Robert Twisden, George’s solicitor, who was spying them, have come.

Mr. Twisden is a clean shaved, shrewd-looking man. He is George’s lawyer. He asks Malise if they can talk to Clare privately. Malise goes into the inner room and shuts the door. Twisden tells Clare that her disappearance has given her husband great anxiety. He tries to persuade Clare to return to George. George’s lawyer endeavours to make clear her situation. He tells her that she does not have any means to live independently:

What’s open to you if you don’t go back? Come, what’s your position? Neither fish, flesh, nor fowl; fair game for everybody. Believe me, Mrs. Dedmond, for a pretty woman to strike, as it appears you’re doing, simply because the
spirit of her marriage has taken flight, is madness. You must know that no one pays attention to anything but facts (296).

If she once cuts her relationship with George, she is on a road to nowhere. This is a hard world. He tells Clare to return to George as there are wolves outside: “You stand at the parting of the ways, and one leads into the wilderness” (297). Clare does not listen to his words and says that she only wants to breathe. She has come to Malise’s house just to take advice.

Twisden goes to the outer door, Clare tells him not to follow her when she leaves the house. Lady Dedmond says that George is outside. Clare refuses to see him. On Twisden’s departure, Sir Charles and Lady Dedmond make a further plea, “marriage is sacred” (298). Clare is resolute, “My marriage has become the— the reconciliation— of two animals— one of them unwilling. That’s all the sanctity there is about it” (298) and “I’m fighting for all my life to come— not to be buried alive— not to be slowly smothered. Look at me! I’m not wax— I’m flesh and blood. And you want to prison me forever— body and soul” (299). Sir Charles, recognizing this, is impressed by his daughter-in-law’s sincerity and passion in spite of himself. According to V. Dupont:

In *Fugitive*, we have an instance of a finely ironical paradox: It occurs in the second act, where Clare has an encounter with her husband’s family; their mission is to show her error of her ways and, instead, she ends by winning over at least one of them to her side.⁴
This is the moment for George himself to come up, but all he can offer by way of persuasion is a call to Clare to do her duty. But Clare feels that their marital life is a lie and disgusting. He and Mr. Malise almost come to blows and George leaves, with a threat to ruin Mr. Malise financially. If Clare is to bring misfortune on Malise, she considers that at least she should give him some equivalent in return, and she offers herself to him; but his first kiss awaken no response, and he is too proud to take her without love. Clare hopes that Malise will take her in, that they will fall in love, but both know that they do not love each other and that therefore they must not live a lie together, for it is from a lie that Clare has escaped. Clare leaves then to face the world alone.

After three months Malise is sitting in his room doing his work. Haywood, a tobacconist, comes to him with a bill. Just then a boy comes and asks Malise to give his copy for the periodical *The Watchfire* (A periodical for which Malise writes). Malise tells him to wait. Malise tells Haywood to read his book. Haywood refuses and replies that he has got his wife at home. Malise asks both of them to read. But Haywood says no. He takes his leave and goes out. The boy again advances into the doorway. Malise goes to the table and takes some sheets of manuscript from an old portfolio. Again the door is opened and Haywood reappears. Malise gives him books and money to pay the bill. There is a knock on the door. Reginald Huntington appears. He
introduces himself and informs Malise that Clare has been found selling
gloves in a department store. She escaped from him and may call
Malise. Reggie is desperate for news of his sister. He tells him that
having lost job, Clare might come to him again for advice. If she does,
it would be really generous of him if he would put her father in touch
with her. He gives him the address.

Malise replies that he will go according to Clare’s ideas. She has
got her own ideas and he will support her. Huntingdon takes his leave.
Thinking of Clare, Malise exclaims, “Poor fugitive! Where are you
running now?” (307). Again the boy reappears. Malise takes the MS
sheets, places them in an envelope, and hands them to the boy. As the
boy goes out, Clare comes in. She says that she has had a hard time:
“It’s a curse to be a lady when you have to earn your living.” (308).
She cannot work anymore. She has been selling things like the shop
girls. She is vexed, disgusted with her job. She says that she cannot
take trouble anymore. Her excitement dies away. This period of trial and
tribulation has ripened her feeling for Malise; and she now stays with
him, the man of her choice. Malise suggests her to do typewriting for
him. She accepts it. She tells him that she has to look for a new room
for her safety. She has kept her luggage in the cloakroom at Charing
Cross station and tells him that she has to go.

Malise asks her to stay in his house. Clare accepts it. Malise
takes the luggage ticket and gives it to Mrs. Miller and tells her to bring
the luggage. Mrs. Miller takes the ticket and informs Malise that two men are waiting outside, on the stairs listening and consulting secretly. With strange almost noiseless ferocity he drives them with the words, “you’ve run her to earth; you’re job’s done. Kennel up, hounds!” (310). This speech which causes some uneasiness when read, when it occurs on the stage is convincing enough, not only because it has been preceded by careful preparation, but because it is, to a point, the poetic sublimation of extreme human indignation.

Clare stays there for three months, typing manuscripts and she is paid for it. Clare and Malise discuss the income they get and also the divorce of Clare with George. Malise is in need of money. He goes out to *The Watchfire*. He is in distress. Not only is there danger of George making him bankrupt, but, through the threatened loss of his position on a periodical, he is faced with the stoppage of his chief source of income. His passion for Clare has sensibly diminished, and Clare is aware of it.

Mrs. Miller comes to Clare bringing a small bottle with a red label. Clare takes the bottle, smells it and tastes it from her finger. Mrs. Miller tells Clare that Malise is taking it to get sleep. Mrs. Miller resents her being there, and tells her that Mr. Malise will lose his commission to write for *The Watchfire* if the divorce goes ahead, because its owners have strict views on the subject: Clare gives Miller a pendant and a note in which the address is written. She tells her to give
the pendant to that address and get her thirty pounds. Mrs. Miller goes out. Later Mr. Twisden arrives with Mrs. Fullarton. Mrs. Fullarton pleads with Clare to go back home. But she bluntly refuses. Mr. Twisden informs Clare that George has resolved to withdraw the divorce suit, and to settle an annual allowance on her if she will leave Malise; if not, he will claim damages from him to his last penny: “You’ll be a stone round the neck of a drowning man” (314). The results would be miserable. She would be left dependent on an undischarged bankrupt.

Clare refuses to take money from George. When Twisden and Mrs. Fullarton leave the house, Mr. Malise enters the house. He is upset, depressed, distressed. He again goes out. Clare, recognizing what ill fortune she is bringing down on Malise’s head, arranges with Mrs. Miller to leave the house. With a heavy heart, Clare decides to save Malise from being ruined by leaving him. Once more she is alone—a fugitive! This time she leads a life of vagabondage.

Six months later, on a Derby Day at Epsom, Clare is seen in a fashionable restaurant. A supper party can be heard singing, hunting songs, “This day a stag must die” (324). A French waiter Arnaud comes and goes. Clare is very pale and is without make up. She is wearing a well-cut black dress and cloak. She sits at the table but orders nothing. The waiter supplies her with a glass of water and flowers.

A young man who looks to be a gentleman catches her sight and joins her. Fascinated by her, he speaks about the racing. He understands
the desperate position of Clare. He offers to lend her money but she does not accept it. Clare, true to her pride and principles, refuses to take without giving. She will sell herself and keep her dignity. She asks only a glass of wine. Two gentlemen in the background are observing Clare.

The young man proposes that they should leave and go for a drive. He leaves the table to pay the bill. The two gentlemen approach her. One is Dark One and the other is Blond One. The dark one challenges the other to propose a dinner date to Clare. The blond one issues the invitation and takes her silence to mean consent. Clare, as if realizing that she has nothing to hope for in a world of such men, takes a small phial of a powerful sleeping draught from her cloak. It belonged to Malise. Mrs. Miller had shown it to Clare as evidence of the depth of his problems. Clare draws back and saves herself at the last moment from a yawning pit of shame only by taking poison. Clare adds the draught to the wine and drinks it off, smiling radiant in death—a lady to the last: “The hunters have killed, but—like Falder in Justice—Clare has escaped her pursuers, given them the slip in—death!” As R.H. Coats observes:

Galsworthy softens the tragic close by casting a glamour of tenderness and pity over the final scene. When Clare Dedmond dies some gardenia blossoms are strewn upon her breast; the waiter crosses himself reverently; a woman kisses her upon the forehead; and even the music of the reveilers
in the next room ‘flies up to an octave higher, sweet and thin, like a spirit passing.’

Arnaud comes to the table and sees her dead. He sees the little bottle and smells it. Arnaud informs the manager that the lady is dead. They ask the young man if she is his friend. He says that he does not know anything about her. Thus the play ends with the tragic death of Clare. In *The Fugitive* death comes as a liberation. Leon Schalit remarks:

> He beholds in many of them the hunted, the oppressed, victims of male and social brutality, and the prejudiced of the world. He has also depicted unscrupulous women, society women, without much soul or pity; but his temperament causes him to resent doubly the wrongs done to women by the superior force of the male.

This play deals with the problem of unhappy marriages. Clare hates her husband. If she gives her love to another man, she has to lose her home and face humiliation of divorce proceedings. Driven by circumstances she concludes that a dose of poison is her only refuge. As Schalit observes:

> The action of *The Fugitive* is spread over a whole year, and ends with Clare’s suicide. We come across suicide, too, in *Justice*, in *Loyalties*, twofold in *The First and the Last*, attempted suicide in *The Pigeon* and *The Skin Game*, and camouflaged suicide in *Old English*. 
The play is a frank, analytical exposition of the problems of women who find themselves in very tragic situations, torn between the ideals of liberty, the sense of marital obligation, and the inhuman laws of society. It illustrates what George Bernard Shaw remarked about the woman question: “Woman has thus two enemies to deal with: the old-fashioned one who wants to keep the door locked, and the new-fashioned one who wants to thrust her into the street before she is ready to go.”

Clare manages to fight with the former, but fails in her attempts to overcome the latter difficulty. Cut off from the old world, not yet adjusted to the new, it results in maladjustment with the environment which consequently brings about a morbid tragedy. Clare confides in her friend: “I suppose there are lots of women who feel as I do, and go on with it; only, you see, I happen to have something in me that—comes to an end. Can’t endure beyond a certain time, ever” (285).

There is a close parallelism between Clare’s case and that of Irene in *The man of Property*, the first of *The Forsyte Saga* trilogy. In both cases, lack of mental harmony leads to strong physical repulsion. According to Schalit:

It may have been impossible to show in the action itself, how Clare gradually arrives at her last desperate resolve. Much of what she goes through has to be related instead of being actually seen on the stage, and this diminishes the sense of the inevitable. One remembers how Irene develops after she has left Soames. More energetic, more vital and less desperate than Clare she succeeds in supporting herself
with difficulty by giving music lessons and so adapting herself and living her own life without, like Clare, breaking down. While Clare is on the point of becoming an unfortunate, Irene befriends the unfortunate, and subsequently begins a new life and brings new life into the world; although in reality, life has been much harder to her than to Clare, she shows greater richness of character, and comes through. Yet both, if not the same in type, are delicate women, ill-fitted to cope with life’s brutality; both are symbols of beauty, first held fast against their will, and then hunted.10

The Fugitive is similar to Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, with Clare following the steps of Nora after she left her husband. It is certain that Nora in the same circumstances would have certainly met with disaster similar to that of Clare. The social conditions being what they are, such woman can only take negative steps; cutting themselves off from all that is familiar. So long as there is no positive refuge there is no alternative but to fall victims to the antagonistic forces contriving their downfall. According to Hermon Ould:

A problem almost identical with that of Irene is that of Clare in The Fugitive. Sexual incompatibility so extreme that she can only think of her marriage as the reconciliation of two animals, one of them unwilling. She too has that sort of beauty which acts as an irritant to what are called men’s animal passions; she, like Irene, made a bad bargain and is unable to carry it out. Her husband, like Irene’s, is pitiable rather than objectionable; his chief failing is a lack of imagination, for which he cannot be held responsible,
and a belief in the false gods of Respectability and Appearances which will not sanction the release of his lawful wife from a bondage which has become unendurable.

‘Do you suppose we’re the only couple who’ve found things aren’t what they thought, and have to put up with each other and make the best of it?’ he asks. And ‘Not by thousands,’ is Clare’s bitter reply, revealing Galsworthy’s conviction.11

Galsworthy’s ideals of sexual morality could be applied to married couples as well. Marriage vows dictated to and recited by the couple in the church retain their sanity only so long as there is mutual love. A complete break is the only possible outlet when love fails and repulsion sets in as in the cases of the Dedmonds, the Forsytes, the Noels, the Dallisons, and a number of other couples who frequent Galsworthy’s plays and novels. But he realizes the other side of the picture also, illustrated by Clare, Audrey Noel, Helen Bellew, and such other women who take the initiative to relieve their men of burden and responsibility and drift all alone to their tragic destiny. Ideals of emancipation are but half-baked; the emotional climate of society is not yet suited for such solitary adventures.

Galsworthy means the play to be the tragedy of a particular situation with a heroine who has a set character and moral code of her own. Even when she decides to initiate herself into prostitution, it is not because of her moral laxity, but because she has a firm belief that she cannot take anything from anyone without giving something in return.
From the sociological point of view, Clare’s suicide is an additional
evidence to the fact that the Feminist movement contained destructive
elements in itself. The emotional tension and maladjustment of the
women of that age are symbolized in Clare, justifying the apparently
abrupt denouement. Clare stoops to such a level out of her bitter
resentment against the whole world. Yet she is essentially virtuous and
her spirit revolts seeking the only immediate outlet, death. Meticulous
care has been obviously bestowed on this character with emphasis placed
on the spirit of defiance against conventions and subservience to self-
imposed strictures of morality.

Yet, the sudden ending of the play roused adverse criticism. Clare,
a lady by instinct, has delicate over-sensitive nerves. She is a typical
example of the woman of that transition period where women find it
revolting to surrender to their husband’s marital rights in the absence of
love, yet find themselves unable to arrive at an alternative solution.
Clare tries a desperate last leap which proves to be fatal. She decides to
leave her ladyhood behind and degrade herself. But at the critical
moment, the inherent sense of decency asserts itself and she puts an end
to her unbalanced self. This is perfectly logical and in keeping with her
character. With strong passions and prejudices, affection and loyalties,
Clare always acts on impulses. The positive as well as the negative
aspects of ladyhood seeking release from the conventional fetters blend
in Clare. The sense of ladyhood is manifest in her innate desire for
respectability, decorum, and chastity. It is always at clash with the womanly traits of revolt even at the risk of her happiness. Clare breaks the fetters but in that attempt destroys herself also. Galsworthy had a deep analysis of her character in mind when he called *The Fugitive* a tragedy of ladyhood, to defend Clare against strong adverse criticism. Leon Schalit observes:

> What the author obviously had in mind, was the tragedy of man hunting down woman, and the ultimate moral victory of the woman through remaining true to herself, though this led her to bodily self-destruction. In any case this play has cost Galsworthy the sympathy of those who still oppose the moral emancipation of women, and would have her remain a creature absolutely dependent on man. *The Fugitive*, indeed, with other works, brought the author the reputation of a ‘feminist’, who despite his much vaunted impartiality is always on the side of woman. This charge of partiality can easily be refuted if, apart from such as Mrs. Barthwick, Mrs. Baynes and Mrs. Mac Ander in *The Man Of Property*, Biancca Dallison, Lady Casterley, Mrs. Hillcrist and Mrs. March, his modern women— Fleur Forsyte, and Marjorie Ferrar in *A Modern Comedy*— are carefully observed.¹²

Gerald Du Maurier called it the tragedy of a “fey” woman and was disappointed that Galsworthy did not explore the possibilities of the situations to the full.¹³ But it is neither idleness nor selfishness that is responsible for the tragic end. It is, as the playwright emphasizes over and over again, what seems to be utter selfishness and absolute disregard for everything conventional, the strict moral scruple of adhering to the
principle of morality dictated by her own inner self. At the last minute the sense of decorum asserts itself. “In St. John Ervines vehement attack against the denouement of *The Fugitive*, he attributes the failure to the artificially contrived situations and Galsworthy’s ‘Determinism’ in his theory that men are creatures of circumstances.”[14]

In a problem play specifically meant for exposing a particular situation caused by the clash between social and individual codes of morality, it is inevitable that the circumstances have to be preconceived. With a fixed character like that of Clare, with a strong individuality of her own in an atmosphere of rigid codes of conduct, this is the most natural and effective culmination of such a story.

Clare, thus, proves to be a failure both as a wife and as a woman. She fails even to keep herself alive. Her ideals do not serve any real practical purpose in life. It is the reason for this failure in life that Galsworthy wanted to analyze. The strange traits in Clare’s character are introduced to prove his points. The play is a penetrating study of a woman’s tragic end precipitated by a violent clash between her strong sense of individuality and society at large. Acting on impulse is the tragic flaw in this great character. But she is a lady in the real spirit whose only ultimate resort is death.

In his lengthy letter to Andre Chevrillon (March, 16. 1913), Galsworthy explains the situation in *The Fugitive* and contrasts the
British and the French Idealism, proving specifically how their respective attitudes to morality differ from each other.\textsuperscript{15}

The personal interest in such women had made Galsworthy sometimes blind to similar problems man has to face. Because of his own bitter experiences the satirist in him developed and sometimes even outgrew the artist. Drew. B. Pallatle remarks that “the characterization of this mining, sniffing man of property is an attempt to epitomize what was wrong with the class that had injured Ada.”\textsuperscript{16}

Clare in \textit{The Fugitive} is one of the best examples of such characters with whom society seems to be sporting. The deterministic forces of society come into full play in her case. The experiment is set up with methodical care, all the details are given earlier so that a scientific deduction could be made in advance.

St. John Ervine criticizes Galsworthy for the exaggerated sense of inevitability introduced in \textit{The Fugitive}:

He (Galsworthy) has been called a Determinist because he shows his people as the creatures of circumstances, but in his later work, particularly in his play \textit{The Fugitive}, his Determinism has become willful…. he has deliberately tied their hands behind their backs and then exclaims, ‘These are the victims of adverse circumstances and indeed they are, but the circumstances have been artificially created by Mr. Galsworthy and not by any force that governs the Universe.’\textsuperscript{17}
However R.H. Coats rightly observes:

On the whole, Galsworthy’s *climaxes* are good. They are not included in every play; but where they do occur, they are reached naturally and inevitably by a kind of sure pointing forward and acceleration from the beginning. *The Fugitive* is a good example of this. We see the end coming from the first Act, and when it does come it is terrible, piteous, and heartrending in the extreme.\(^{18}\)

The climax in *The Fugitive* is an arranged and schemed not by Circumstance, but by; Mr. Galsworthy, and having no relation whatever to the nature of the woman. Mr. Galsworthy wanted to poison her in *The Gascony*, and so he thrust her into the restaurant in plain disregard of her character and of common facts. According to V. Dupont:

*The Fugitive* (like *Escape, The Mob*) also is a biographical drama, in a sense that it is concerned solely with following the fortunes of the central character, Clare, with little regard for all the others. The latter, not excepting Clare’s husband, George and her lover Malise, drop out of the play before the end and we hear of them no more. We might consider that *The Fugitive* is really constructed according to the principle of insertion, rather than catenary succession, since the first and the last episodes are closely connected together, while the middle portion deals wholly with the affair between Clare and Malise. Yet it would seem that the author’s intention was rather to show a series of vicissitudes and that he was betrayed by the exaggerated importance assumed by the adventure with Malise in comparison with the rest of the play.\(^{19}\)
Clare is one of those women who are not strong enough to endure the transition from an empty, but easy, life without work, to a life of action and the struggle for existence. She is not strong enough to resign herself to circumstances, too sensitive to accept help, and yet not energetic enough to do without it. With her, life is a matter of nerves. And yet she has her points, if pride, a sense of humour, and a sense of honour are points. Anyway she would rather die than give herself without feeling. Submerged yet ultimately victorious, she had made no pact with the devil, but lived consistently to her last breath.

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*A Family Man* is chiefly interesting as a study of the disaster which inevitably awaits the assertion of too much authority in domestic life. The relations which exist between husbands and wives in Galsworthy’s plays are full of interest. Sometimes the wife is of the nagging and fault finding sort. Sometimes it is the husband who takes the upper hand. Jim Jones in *The Silver Box*, George Dedmond in *The Fugitive*, and John Builder in *A Family Man* are instances of marital brutality and lack of sympathy.

The play *A Family Man* opens with Camille, a maid-servant, fetching a flower vase. She is a young woman with a good figure, a pale face, the warm brown eyes and complete poise of a French woman. Mrs. Julia Builder arranges the flowers in a vase. She is a woman of forty-one, of ivory tint, and a thin trim figure. John Builder is a tallish,
square personable man of forty-seven. His bearing has force and importance, as of a man accustomed to rising and ownerships, sure in his opinions, and not lacking in geniality when things go his way. He tells Julia that he has to go to the shooting along with his friend Chantrey the next day. Mrs. Builder asks him whether he is going to office that morning. In reply Mr. Builder says that he is not going to office for a couple of days. He asks her whether she is willing to visit Athene’s house.

Mrs. Builder is astonished by his words saying that he had done with his daughter and again he wants to meet her. According to R.H. Coats:

By the foolish exercise of misplaced masterfulness he alienates first of all his elder daughter, Athene, who goes off to live with an artist fellow, claiming to be married to him ‘to all intent and purposes,’ though not in law.\textsuperscript{20}

Builder says that it was six weeks ago that he said those words. As a father, he does not want his daughter to stay alone and live by herself. “One can’t have done with one’s own daughter. That’s the weakness of an Englishman; he can’t keep up his resentments. In a town like this it doesn’t do to have her living by herself” (578). Builder misses Athene a lot. Her absence makes a big hole in the family. He asks his wife if she has got her address. Mrs. Builder tells her husband that it does not dignify him but he sticks on to his decision: “I rather pride myself on knowing when to stand on my dignity and when to sit
on it. If she’s still crazy about Art, she can live at home, and go out to
study” (578). Athene wants liberty. But Builder controls the whole
family. He is the boss and governs his family as he likes. Athene does
not like this. According to Leon Schalit:

Athene, the elder, has a predilection for painting which
annoys her progenitor, who beholds in art something
revolutionary and dangerous, and looks down on artists as a
‘loose lot.’

She leaves the house and lives separately. She wants freedom.
Builder wants his daughter back home. He tells his wife that a few days
of discomfort might have cured her. She might have realized her mistake
and will be back. He tells his wife to be ready and accompany him to
Athene’s house. Julia tells her husband that Athene refuses to come
home. He cannot convince her but he thinks that he is nice to her and
a child could play with him even today.

Builder tells his wife that he is to be nominated for Mayor the
following month. Harris had informed him about this. As a good Mayor
he can do many things for his town. Hearing this, Julia understands why
her husband is insisting on her visiting Athene’s house and get her back
home. Builder says that it is one of the reasons: “Well, it’s partly that.
But it’s more the feeling I get that I’m not doing my duty by her.
Goodness knows whom she may be picking up with! Artists are a loose
lot. And young people in these days are the limit. I quite believe in
moving with the times, but one’s either born a Conservative, or one isn’t” (578).

Builder does not want Athene to stay out. When he becomes a Mayor it would be an odd thing and everyone would question him. He asks about Camille’s behaviour. Julia just smiles and passes out. Just then Topping comes and tells that the Mayor of Breconridge and Harris have come to see him. The Mayor of Breconridge enters. He is clean-shaven, red faced, about sixty, poll-parrotty, naturally jovial. He is followed by Harris, a man all eyes and cleverness. They greet Builder and tell him the purpose of their visit. Mayor says that they have come to a decision, that is, they want to nominate him for the post of the Mayor. They have come to ask his willingness. The other alternative is Chantrey. But they think that Chantrey is a light weight, too much county and public school person and a University man. Mr. Builder feels it as an unexpected thing and asks if he is the right person to be nominated. Mayor replies that they need a solid person and all the qualifications for the post of Mayor are seen in Builder. “… you’ve got all the qualifications— big business, family man, live in the town, church-goer, experience on the Council and the Bench” (579). Builder thinks that it is an extra work, taking all the responsibilities and thinking of the good of the town. Mayor tries to convince him saying that his name carries weight, and as a principled person he can handle the things in a proper manner: “The name John Builder carries weight.
You’re looked up to as a man who can manage his own affairs. Madam and the young ladies well?” (580)

Builder tells his weakness that he is a tempered person. In spite of his weakness, Mayor and Harris are ready to accept him as Mayor. Builder says that he needs some time to think it over and later let them have an answer. When Mayor and Harries make their exit, Camille enters the room. She has come to take the dry cleaning bill. He searches for it in his pockets but cannot find it. He moves up to the table and finds the bill. He gives it and asks her the purpose of her visit to England. Camille says that she is paid more and the English are amiable than the French. She admires Englishmen as they are so strong and kind at heart: The French man is more polite, but not in the heart. “And the Englishman have his life in the family— the Frenchman have his life outside” (581). Builder’s eyes rest on her, attracted but resentful. He asks if she is from Paris. Camille says yes, and adds that Paris is a town of pleasure. According to Builder, Paris is a loose place where people enjoy the pleasures of life more than in England. He asks if she is married. Camille replies that she is married and her husband died in Africa. She takes the letter from Builder, there is a suspicion of encounter between their eyes and she goes out. Builder feels that she is a tantalizer. Just then Maud, his younger daughter, comes in. She is a pretty girl with fine eyes.. Though her face has a determined cast, her manner at this moment is by no means decisive. She has a letter in her
hand but does not show it to her father. Builder knows the purpose of her coming and gives her five pounds. Maud advances and takes it, then seems to find what she has come for more on the chest than ever. Builder asks his daughter to type a letter for him as he is dictating. Maud sits down and prepares to take down the letter. The letter is to the Mayor saying him that Builder is ready for the nomination to the post of Mayor. To greater responsibilities, he feels it his duty to come forward in accordance with his wish. He thought of the matter carefully and has come to a decision. He feels worthy to accept it. While typing this letter, Maud tells her father to express it in a proper manner. She tells him that “he knows he is the best man for the place is the right expression to be made in the letter. Builder comments that disrespect of Maud and all the young people is something extraordinary. He asks her where she has been all the time after her evening tea. She is never in the house from six to seven every evening. Maud replies that she is out on her education. Builder says that she completed her education two years ago. Maud takes up the letter she has brought and tells her father that it is her hobby to go out. Builder tells Maud not to irritate him by maintaining secrets. He tells her that he and her mother are going to her sister Athene to bring her back. He does not like his daughter staying out. As he is becoming Mayor, he would put an end to her sister’s case. It is not dignified for the Mayor of the town to have an unmarried daughter, Athene, living by herself away from home. Maud
tells her father it is not dignified and it is a waste of time and would make him eat humble pie. Builder says, “It’s all nonsense! A family’s a family” (583). Builder tells Maud to finish off typing the letter. Maud in a desperate mood types the letter. She finishes typing the letter, and tells him that Athene always wanted to go out of the house. She hated living at home and it would be ridiculous for them to get her back home. Argument takes place between Builder and Maud. Builder says, “I tell you what, young woman—the sooner you and your sister get rid of your silly notions about not living at home, and making your own way, the sooner you’ll both get married and make it. Men don’t like the new spirit in women— they may say they do, but they don’t” (583). Maud replies that men do not like freedom for anybody but for themselves. Builder says, “Women in your class have never had to face realities” (584). Athene’s dose of reality would have cured her and she would be ready to come home. He tells Maud to call Topping and be ready with a car to go to Athene. As Builder goes out, Maud calls Topping immediately and gives him a note, “Look out! Father is coming.” She tells him to go on a bicycle quickly and handover the note to the address given and be back by twelve. Topping takes the letter and goes to the given address. He gives the note to Annie, the maid-servant of the house and says that he is Builder’s man, Miss Maud has told him to give this letter to Athene Builder. Annie takes the letter and says that she would not forget to tell Athene. Topping leaves the
house. As soon as Annie gets busy in the kitchen, she hears a knock at the door. As she opens the door, she sees Mr. and Mrs. Builder standing. They enter the house and ask if their daughter Athene is at home. Annie replies no, and says that she would be back soon. As Annie goes into the kitchen, Mr. and Mrs. Builder wait for Athene to come. Builder feels that he had done a mistake by losing his temper on Athene. Schalit remarks:

John Builder, the ‘Family Man’ who, thanks to his arch conservative disposition, his success, his environment and condition in general, has developed into the perfect family tyrant, is, on the whole, not a bad man. When, for instance, he is carried away by his sudden gusts of overbearing anger—he very soon feels he has gone too far, and blames himself.  

Mrs. Builder says that this mistake of losing temper is always in the family. Builder then comments “That’s very nice and placid; sort of thing you women who live sheltered lives can say. I often wonder if you women realize the strain on a business man” (586). Mrs. Builder ironically says that it is a shame to add to the strain of family life. Builder says that in these twenty-three years of their marital life, Mrs. Builder has always been passive and he has got all the things that he needed.

Builder takes a look at the house. He enters the bedroom of Athene where he finds a razor strop and a shaving brush. Showing these things in hand, he calls his wife and asks her explanation. She gives a
covering answer saying that Athene has got a tiny moustache. But Mr. Builder in his temperament wants to clear up everything when Athene comes: “Men who let their daughters—! This age is the limit” (587). Mrs. Builder tries to support her daughter Athene. Builder grimly says that the war has upset everything and women are utterly out of hand. Mrs. Builder feels that it is his job when his wife tells that she will stay there till Athene comes. As he is going towards the bedroom to have another look, he hears the sound of a latchkey in the outer door. He thinks that his daughter Athene has come. But it is Mr. Herringhame who comes in. He is a young man who is smoking. He is surprised to see them. Builder in his angry mood asks him if the rooms belong to him and if he is staying in the rooms. Mr. Guy Herringhame in reply says that these rooms belong to his sister who is in France and his sister’s friend Athene is living here. Builder asks him if he is living there and if he is married to her. Guy at first says yes and then no and later he replies not altogether. Guy is a flying man and when he begins to speak the truth, Builder does not want to listen to him but waits for Athene. Athene enters the room. She is flushed and graceful. She is twenty-two with glowing eyes and musical voice. She is surprised to see her parents. She looks steadfastly at Builder but does not approach. Builder controlling his anger asks Athene if she is married to Guy legally. Athene replies no. Builder asks the reasons for not marrying
Guy Herringham. Athene tells her mother and Guy to stay in another room as she wants to give explanation to her father.

Athene tells her father that he is the only reason which made her not to marry Guy: “Guy wants to marry me. In fact, we— But I had such a scunner of marriage from watching you at home, that I—” (590). As children, Athene and Maud had watched their mother suffering and how his father was used to her. “I’m used to her: What else is marrying for?” (590). Argument takes place between Builder and his daughter Athene. Builder tells her that she has gone mad and is talking all nonsense. He lifts his hands but drops them when Athene tells that she would call Guy. She tells him that Guy is anxious about their marriage but she could not bear to think of Guy as a family man. Builder becomes wild with rage on discovering that Athene has illicit relations with Guy Herringhame, the young “flying bounder,” whom she cannot bring herself to marry, because of the alarming example of family life supplied by her father with his gentle, submissive wife. She cannot bear the idea that Guy may develop into a “family man”

Builder gets distracted. In spite of all pleasures and comforts, she has brought disgrace to the family. Athene argues that he has given everything to the family but not the free will. She asks if he has given free will to her mother in all her marital life. In all her twenty-three years of marriage life, he has never looked at his wife’s face. He has not seen the suffering in her face, the trouble she faced in her life.
Athene does not want to have a face like that of her mother. Builder feels it all rubbish. According to him love leads to marriage and nothing else: “Love leads to marriage—and to nothing else, but the streets. What an example to your sister!” (591).

Athene tells her father that Maud is a free girl, she got her own will. She knows Maud better than her father: “What’s done can’t be undone; but it can remedied” (591). Builder wants Athene to marry Guy at once. He wants her to promise him that she will marry Guy. But Athene does not agree to it. She does not want to suffer like her mother who suppressed everything because of Builder. Athene tells her father that he is not satisfied in his life. She does not want to be in trouble marrying Guy as she has seen her father’s behaviour towards her mother. She loves Guy but is not willing to marry him. Builder gets angry and scolds Athene as an immodest girl and is ashamed to have such a daughter. Builder is sick at heart at this unwanted mockery and calls his wife Julia. Julia followed by Guy comes from the bedroom. Builder in high temperament says that he had is done with his daughter and goes out. Julia tells Athene, “all men are not alike” (592). Julia supports her husband saying that she has always stood up to him in his own ways. Athene passionately says, “And that’s family life! Father was alright before he married, I expect. And now it’s like this. How you survive—!” (593).
Builder is waiting for Julia outside. He makes a loud bang on the door. Julia leaves the studio saying, “He’ only in a passion, my dear” (593). After their exit, Guy takes out a wedding ring and a marriage license from his pocket and asks Athene what to do with these pretty things. Athene tells him to burn it. Guy tells her not to imagine him like her father. In reply Athene says, “Marriage does wonders” (593).

While they are talking, Annie enters with a suitcase in her hand. She says that she wants to go home. Athene says alright, but asks the reason why she wants to leave suddenly. Annie replies that seeing them she remembers her lover. She wants to go to her young man and get married, otherwise she might be in trouble. Athene asks her after the marriage if her husband treats her like a piece of furniture then what would be her reaction. She treats him the same is the reply given by Annie. Athene says that “marriage makes all the difference” (594).

After marriage, when he is sure of her, he may change completely. His attitude and behaviour will not be the same as before. Athene thinks that she is influencing her. Later she changes her mind. She gives her wages and Annie takes her leave. Guy and Athene share their opinions about Builder. Athene tells Guy that her father is hard working, upright, plucky and not stingy. He is smothered with his animal nature. He is a Town Councillor and a magistrate. He is a strict, disciplined, firm dominating person with high temperament. She does not want to see these qualities in Guy. She shares a small incident about
her father. When a woman had come to Builder for protection from her husband, he gave her back to the husband. Such is the nature of her father. Hearing all this, Guy says that all men are not same and he fits the wedding ring to her finger. Seeing her parents practically Athene is not willing to marry and feels that after her marriage she would face the same thing like her mother. Athene says, “Don’t play with fire, Guy” (596). As they are talking, they are interrupted by Annie. They ask the reason for her coming back. Annie replies that her young man is horrified by her behaviour. He says that Annie does not have strength of mind. That is the reason she has come back to work again. Athene puts her in the work again. Guy takes out the marriage license papers but Athene is not interested: “Must take chances in this life” (596). Guy tries to convince her but Athene puts a condition before Guy saying that she should never stand in his way and he should never stand in her way. Guy feels it a bargain and agrees to it. Again they are interrupted by Annie. Guy tells Annie that the next day morning he and Athene are going to be married. Annie thinks that this decision of marriage is made by them because of Mr. Builder. Guy says that it is not the exact reason: “Of course you can’t be a family without, can you?” (597) Annie gives the note which Maud has sent.

In Act Two, Maud is seen in Builder’s study. She is practising the character of the guilty typist in the movie. When Topping enters the room, she asks him whether he has given the note to Athene. Topping
replies that the maid has taken the message and will inform Athene when she is back. Topping and Maud talk about the horse race. Later Maud shows her acting and asks Topping about his opinion. He tells her that her acting is natural and her expression seems to suggest that she is guilty of something. Maud feels happy that Topping has exactly observed her character in acting. She even takes some suggestions from him. Topping never knew her taste for acting. Maud feels it a talent more than a taste. She tells Topping to put ten bobs on betting in the horse race and if she wins the race, he can post the money to the address given as she will not be in the house. Topping is disturbed and asks where she is going. Maud replies that she is going to seek her fortune. Topping tells her that already Miss Athene’s case has created a problem in the family and now if she leaves the house, he does not know how Mr. Builder would react. Maud says that it is very difficult to handle the situation but she has to go out as she has got a chance in the movies. Miss Baldini, with whom she has been studying, has given her a chance with the movie people. She is going on trial as the guilty typist in the movie *The Heartache of Miranda*. Topping asks if she is going to inform it to Mr. Builder. She nods and Topping tells her if that is the case, he has to go to the dentist before the band plays. Topping and Maud leave the room and Builder enters the room in an angry mood. Camille comes and tells him that a lady from an orphanage has come for charity. He gives her a five-pound note to give it to the
orphanage. As she turns he looks swiftly at Camille, sweeping her up and down. She too catches his glance. When Julia enters the room he becomes wild thinking of Athene’s behaviour. He gets irritated thinking of her. He apologizes to Julia for banging the door loudly. He was in a towering passion and could not control his anger. He says that Athene has gone crazy and tells her not to believe her words that Guy is going to marry. Guy is a blackguard. Atleast she should have thought about her religion and her brought up. Julia tells him that he is responsible for his daughters not having any religion. He never allowed them to go to church to keep up his position and now he is blaming his girls. Builder cannot take the post of Mayor if Athene is away from the house. Nothing can be hidden or kept dark in the town. Athene has brought disgrace to his family when compared to his brother, Ralph’s daughters. As Julia speaks ironically that Ralph is not a family man, Builder says that she is not English: “It isn’t— English. …I suppose it’s in your blood. The French -” (602). He says that it is irritating sometimes to a plain Englishman. Hearing Builder’s comments, Julia says that she will get rid of Camille as she is a French lady which irritates him a lot. Staring at Julia, he asks what is the need for her to remove Camille. Their argument stops when Camille enters the room. She informs them that Ralph Builder has come. Ralph is a man rather older than Builder and of opposite build and manner. He has a pleasant, whimsical face and grizzled hair. Ralph thinks that his brother, John Builder, has called
him to talk about the Welsh contract. But Builder discusses Athene. Athene has gone out of the house and is not married. She loves Guy, a flying bounder, and lives with him but is not interested to marry him. She has gone crazy, talking rubbish about their family life: “Family life isn’t idyllic, so she thinks she and the young man oughtn’t to have one” (603). Builder says that Ralph’s daughters are good and decent and will not bring disgrace to the family. Ralph supports Athene saying that she is an interesting girl, delightful with high principles. He says it as a domestic problem. The young generation are queer and delightful. The time has changed. Builder seriously says, “Hang it all, a family’s a family!” (603) He questions Ralph what he would do if his daughter behaved in the same manner. Ralph shrugs his shoulders and says that he would stop and not go ahead with it. According to Builder, Athene is leading a sinful life and offending the society. He cannot handle it anymore. He asks whether he is stricter than nine out of the ten men in the society. Ralph tries to convince him saying that time is not theirs and he is strict only in practice: “Well, you profess the principles of liberty, but you practice the principles of government” (604). Builder is very much upset and says life is not all roses. They talk about Welsh contract and Ralph takes his leave. Maud comes and tells her father that she has some news. She tells that she has got a job. Builder staring at her asks what kind of job she got and if at all she is going out for the sake of job, he will not allow her. She tells that she has got a chance
to act in the movies. Builder asks her if she is not joking. She says that it is not a joke. She has got a film face and an opportunity to do films. She always wanted to earn her own living and it is all settled. Maud tells her father that she is twenty-one can take a decision on her own. She cannot go on living at home. Builder feels uneasy and says that he has already had the painful scene with Athene in the morning and cannot tolerate Maud going out. He tells her to give up this silly decision and it is really childish. Maud, looking at her father curiously, says, “I’ve heard you say ever so many times that no man was any good who couldn’t make his own way, father. Well, women are the same as men, now. It’s the law of the country. I only want to make my own way” (605). Builder tries to suppress his anger. He asks her to consider his position, being a Town Councillor, a magistrate, and Mayor in the coming month with one unmarried daughter living with a man without marriage and another daughter, though belonging to a Christian family, leaving the house to do movies. Maud says, “There’s only one thing wrong with Christians—they aren’t!” (606).

Builder becomes furious, seizes her by the shoulders and shakes her vigorously. Maud gives him a vicious look and suddenly stamps her foot on his toes with all her strength. Builder with a yowl of pain becomes wild and tells her that she has to face the consequences. Maud tells her father that she dislikes him. She has known her father’s nature since her childhood, when he used to come to the school room just for
the sake of Jenny and Miss Tipton. She tells him that he only loves himself and nobody else. According to him what is good for him has to be good for others. He talks always of independence and liberty but family is a limited company to him and he has got all the share in it. Builder tells Maud not to work in the films. Films lead to gutter and nothing else in a year. She will ruin her life. If she leaves the house, no one will come for her rescue and he has done with her, as he has done with Athene. Maud replies that she would rather scrub the floors but would not stay in the house: “Athene and Maud, his two temperamental young daughters, rebel and strive to break loose from his autocratic and antiquated ideas”.

Builder calms down and subdues his anger and almost pathetically asks Maud to stay in the house. She has all the liberty until her marriage but Maud disagrees it. She wants to live a life of her own with complete freedom: “The microbe of freedom; it’s in the air” (607). Maud leaves the room and the door is bolted. Camille removes the bolt and enters the room. She asks him why he is not happy. Builder says that no one would be happy in his household. Camille, a temptress, comes close to him. She suddenly kisses him and he returns the kiss. While they are engaged in this entrancing occupation, Mrs. Builder opens the door from the hall, watches unseen for a few seconds, and quietly goes out. Builder pushes Camille’s back from him, whether at the sound of the door or of a still small voice, says that he has
forgotten himself. She has tempted him for a purpose. She should not have tempted him as he has got his reputation: “I’m a family man” (608). Camille says that she admires him and wants to have pleasure but Builder feels sorry for what he has done. He feels it a wrong thing and revolts at her calling him a little heathen. He goes to the door and opens it. He finds his wife outside in a hat and a coat. Stammering, Builder tells his wife that they should talk about Maud. Mrs. Builder replies that he has to wait. She tells him that she knows what happened in the room a minute ago. Builder, in absolute dismay, explains everything and apologizes for it. Schalit remarks:

John Builder, who is of intensely vital nature, needs a wife at least equally vital, if only one wife is to suffice him. He is at the so-called ‘dangerous age’; Julia, whom life with him has reduced to the utmost patience, and repression, cannot satisfy his passionate instincts. But, in his prudery he never owns, even to himself, that if he had his fling in this direction he would be a much happier man. Camille, the designing French maid, makes an onslaught on his wavering morality. 24

Mrs. Builder quite understands the situation: “But you must forgive my feeling impossible to remain a wet blanket any longer” (609). She feels continuously humiliated in his house and wants to leave it: “After twenty-three years of married life, to kick up like this— you ought to be ashamed of yourself” (609). Builder feels it immoral and she was never against him before. As she is his wife and he is her husband,
there is no legal excuse to leave the house. He tells her that she should not encourage him doing wrong. She should keep her husband straight. He pathetically says, "Don’t rile me, Julia! I’ve had an awful day. First Athene—then Maud—then that girl—and now you! All at once like this? Like a swarm of bees about one’s head" (609). He does not want her to be impracticable. They would become a laughing stock of the whole town. In their twenty-three years of marital life he got used to her and he cannot live without her. He has always been a faithful husband to her and cannot see her leaving the house. He pleads his wife to stay in the house. If she stays out of the house, she cannot live and he will not give her a penny. "Fancy letting a kiss which no man could have helped, upset you like this!" (610) Mrs. Builder says, "The Camille, and the last straw!" (610) and swiftly goes away and Builder looks distracted. According to V. Dupont:

Mrs. Builder has great self-control and this may be in character, but nevertheless she is leaving her husband after twenty-three years of life together. If all feeling is dead, as it must surely be to make puns at such a moment, why does she return to Builder in Act III? It is only fail to say, however, that Galsworthy succumbs to this temptation far less frequently than many an English writers like Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw.25

In Act Three, Builder is seen arrested. Harris is in the room of Mayor of Breconridge. He receives a phone call that Builder is arrested for hitting his youngest daughter. He tells Mayor that they are coming
to him to decide the case. Mayor tells Harris to keep this issue in the
dark and not to inform the press. Harris tells Mayor that Builder has
even injured the constable’s eye. Hearing this Mayor gets worried and
asks how the police has come into this family issue. Hearing the news,
Mr. Chantrey is on his way to the court. Mayor is not able to believe
that his fellow-magistrate, a family man and would-be mayor could do
these things. This issue cannot be hidden for longer time. Chantrey
enters and asks Harris and Mayor about Builder’s case. He considers it
unpleasant: “Assaulting one of his own daughters with a stick; and
resisting the police” (612). As Builder has hurt constable Moon, he is
arrested and taken to the police station. As Superintendent is away,
Martin will not take the responsibility. So Builder has been in the prison
since four o’clock the previous day. Mayor and Chantrey sit in the
seats of justice. Harris, the family of Builder, Ralph, Guy, Constable
Moon with one eye, Sergeant Martin are also present. The three ladies
and Ralph Builder are seated. John Builder remain standing between the
two policemen. His face is unshaved and menacing, but he stands erect
staring straight at the Mayor. Mayor calls for witness. At first Sergeant
says that Builder is charged with assaulting his daughter Maud by
striking her with a cane in the presence of Constable Moon and two
other persons; also with resisting Constable Moon in the execution of his
duty, and injuring his eye. Constable Moon is questioned next. He
explains the whole incident before the Mayor. He tells how he was
called by a young lady Maud, how Builder dragged his wife and when Maud went in between, he hit her twice with a stick and when the constable went to charge him, Builder said that he is a magistrate and he cannot be arrested. The defendant gave constable a push and struggle ensued, in the course of which Moon received the black eye. During the struggle a young man Guy Herringhame also appeared. All of them placed him in a cab and took him to the police station where in the absence of Superintendent and in the presence of Martin the defendant had to stay in the station all night. After Constable Moon's evidence, Miss Maud is asked to speak. She says that she wants to withdraw the charge of striking her. As she was in a temper, her father struck her and as it is a family issue she does not want to be discussed. Mayor withdraws that charge saying it is a domestic disagreement. He asks about the assault of the constable. Maud replies that her father did not hit the constable but the stick: “my father saw red, and the constable saw red, and the stick flew up between them and hit him in the eye” (615). There was a struggle for the cane and it flew up and hit the constable’s eye. The Mayor and Chantrey examine the cane and they ask constable which end of it hit the eye. Moon replies that it is the knob end. Mayor cross questions him whether the fist or the cane hit his eye. At first he says the fist but later he tells the knob end of the cane. As the case is going on, the press is seen outside. Mayor says that the press has the right to attend as it is a open court. Harris admits the
young man from the press to sit down. Miss Athene Builder is also questioned about the charge. She says whatever her sister has said is correct and does not want to discuss on the first charge. After Athene, Guy Herringhame is questioned. He is asked how he is related to the case and what made him to involve himself in this incident. Guy introduces himself that he works in the aerodrome and he visited the studio as it is his sister’s studio. As Athene is his friend, she is staying in the studio. Guy explains the whole situation to Mayor. He tells them that the constable’s arm struck the cane violently and it flew up and landed in his eye.. He used reprehensible language and offered some resistance to the constable. Later Mr. Builder is questioned. As Schalit observes:

His (Builder’s) unfortunate temperament entangles him in one unpleasant conflict after the other, till ultimately John Builder, that stern guardian of law and order, himself collides violently with the law. The incredible happens! In a fit of ungovernable rage Builder smites a constable, gives the law ‘a black eye’! In fact, Builder must be made ridiculous before he can be saved. But with such subtle cunning has the author shaped the path of his tribulation that we follow him with ever-increasing sympathy and heave a sigh of relief when at the end his fate takes an upward turn.  

In a different voice Builder asks the constable what business he had to touch him as he is a magistrate. He admits that he gave his daughter Maud two taps with a cane in a private house for interfering
in the middle when he is taking his wife home. Maud stands up and says that her father was so angry that he did not know what he was doing. Ralph also supports her saying that his brother was so much worried and upset, under great strain the previous day because of some domestic problem. He was in such an excited state of mind that he could not control himself. Athene stands up and says that Guy is not related to her father or mother and he is a friend of hers. As Schalit remarks:

The members of the family behave loyally when called on as witnesses; and seek to exonerate Builder. ‘Family feeling’ makes them take his part, in spite of his tyranny! We find this sticking together of the family constantly recurring in many of Galsworthy’s works, perhaps nowhere so strongly as in The Man of Property. 27

Mayor listens to everyone and considers Guy Herringhame’s witness impartial. Coming to the conclusion of the case, considering all the circumstances, the evidence has proved that the blow to the constable was accidental, and the evidence that he had been in an excited state of mind, and the fact that he has spent a night in a cell, the justice discharges Builder with a caution. The journalist makes a note on this case. Chantrey appreciates Mayor for his judgement: “British justice is safe in your hands” (619). Builder might lose his position in society and the news will be spread all over the town through the press.
In the next scene, a newspaper boy’s voice is heard calling the first edition of the paper, “Johnny Builder—beatin’ his wife! Dischawged” (619). Topping listens to the paper boy’s voice and tries to stop him. Topping and Camille read the news that “Tried to prevent her father from forcing her mother to return home with him, and he struck her for so doing. She did not press the charge. The arrested gentleman, who said he acted under great provocation, was discharged with a caution” (619). As they are talking about John Builder, Maud enters the house and asks if her father is back. She has come to take the belongings of her mother and tells him to make them ready. Camille says that they are ready. Maud tells her ironically that she is so clever that she has packed all the things of her mother and made them ready. Camille reacts to it and says that she is not a designing woman and she does not want to stay in the house any longer. As there are no women in the house, she wants to leave the house. Topping shifts Mrs. Builder’s things into the cab and informs Maud. He tells Maud that he did not put his ten bob the previous day and the race horse finished last. He asks her about the incident. Maud replies that whatever he has read in the newspaper is true. Builder who has the respect of everybody has lost it now. He may have to resign from his job. Again, when they hear about the news of Builder from a paperboy, Maud says that her mother is much worried about this blow. Athene has got married to Guy Herringhame and is on her way from the register office. Guy and Mrs.
Builder are at the studio. Mr. Builder is with the solicitor. Ralph and Athene come to the house. Maud tells her uncle Ralph that she has placed all the things of her mother in the cab. Ralph says that she has got the freedom of the brain. He tells her not to work in the movies in this present situation as she will be called Maud Builder who gave her father into custody. So he advises her not to work in the movies. If she wants freedom, she can stay in his house until this blow is over. Maud asks her uncle how he is able to manage with his brother. Ralph replies that he and his brother are like two sides of the coin. John is the head and he is the tail. John Builder has sterling qualities. Moreover, he is his business partner. He tells the girls to compromise with their father. Ralph convinces the girls to be nice to their father. Again they discuss the incident. During that incident Athene had warned her father not to use force as it is against the law. But Builder did not listen to her words and said, “The law be damned!” (623). While they are discussing, Builder enters the room, standing and listening to their conversation. He has a document in his hand. When the girls see their father, Builder tells Ralph that they should not be seen in the house.

Maud proudly informs her father that Athene got married to Guy and she has given up movies. Both the girls leave the house. Builder sits and writes a letter to Mayor saying that justice is a travesty. He does not want to be associated with Mayor and his fellows but he will not resign his position on the Bench or the Town Council. He shows
this letter to Ralph and also the document in his hand which disinherits his family. He has cut his relation with the two girls and if his wife will not come back, he will make her suffer: “When I suffer, I make others suffer” (623). Ralph says that Julia is upset and the girls have come to be nice with him but he has not given them a chance. When Builder tells him that he is a fighter, Ralph says that the enemy stands within the gate: “Let’s boss our own natures before we boss those of other people” (624). Topping takes a letter from him and informs him that a journalist has come to interview him. The journalist asks about the incident that had taken place. He wants to know the good reasons of Builder which can bring the matter in a different light. Builder explains everything about the incident. His point of view is that if the law is going to enter a private house and abrogate domestic authority, where the hell they should be. The maudlin sentimentality is rotting the country: “A man can’t be master in his own house, can’t require his wife to fulfill 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). A man performing his duty with too much zeal in private life and public is not treated as an angel: “A proper Englishman never is. But there are no proper Englishmen now-a-days” (625). With a painful experience he says that he had faced every kind of humiliation.
He spent the night in a stinking cell without any breakfast and it is very disgusting. Once his house was a sanctuary but now everyone is poking their noses into it. The journalist thanks him as he has shared his thoughts about the incident. He tells him that he can do justice to it and will send a proof: “They’ve chosen to drive me to extremes, now let them take the consequences. I don’t care a kick what anybody thinks” (626). As Ralph leaves the room, Camille enters. Seeing her, Mr. Builder asks if she wants to be his mistress. He has paid a pretty price for her. All his married life he commanded respect in society as a principled man, but now he has lost his authority. As Schalit says,

> At home once more, Builder sits like Job on his heap of ashes, But Job’s humility is lacking; though defeated, he is morally unconquered. Forsaken by all, he is now ready, out of revenge, to take Camille for his mistress.²⁸

He comes closer and seizes her arm. Camille feels nervous and refuses him. She does not want to be in trouble as he is a dangerous person. She turns swiftly and goes out. Builder is left alone in the room. As R.H. Coats remarks:

> The story of the play reveals the progress of Builder’s disillusionment. By the foolish exercise of misplaced masterfulness he alienates first of all his elder daughter, Athene, who goes off to live with an artist fellow, claiming to be married to him ‘to all intents and purposes,’ though not in law. His younger daughter, Maud, follows suit. She has a ‘film face’ and lends her charms to the personation of a guilty typist in *The Heartache Of Miranda.* The next
to steal out of the house is Mrs. Builder, who is infected with a ‘craze for liberty’ like the others, and can bear her husband’s ways no longer. Even the French maid Camille, to whom Builder makes love, turns in disgust from him.  

Builder is disturbed, depressed, isolated as he lost his family and his position in the society. All the family members leave his house because of his bossism, temperament and authority. Dupont observes:

Builder’s face is injected with blood; and to this that he is leaning out of a window looking off the stage, with his back therefore turned to audience, and the absurdity of the thing becomes obvious.

Through the window he hears the paperboy shouting the news about him. He gets furious and throws a flower-pot at him but it misses. Topping informs him that a messenger has come with a proof. He gives an envelope. Reading the proof, Builder feels the signs of uneasiness and discomfort growing in him. He makes a call to the editor’s office and tells him to scrap all the matter. As he has changed his mind, he wants everything to be scrapped. He tears the proof into pieces and places them in an envelope. He gives it to Topping to hand it over to the messenger outside. Topping informs him that Mayor has come. Mayor feels embarrassed for the caution in the court. He says that the Bench has got a name to keep up and is quite Parliamentary and it was very difficult for him to handle the situation. Builder tells Mayor to put himself in his place. He feels that Mayor’s visit is only eye-wash to make him resign from the post. Builder agrees to resign.
Builder, in splendid isolation says, “No wife, no daughters, no Councillorship, no Magistracy, no future—not even a French maid. And why? Because I tried to exercise a little wholesome family authority. That’s the position you’re facing, Mayor” (629).

Mayor consoles him saying that after this blow is over, he will be back in his position as he has got a good sound practical sense underneath his temper. As Schalit observes, “In spite of many specifically British traits this aggressive man is an international type; his intentions are good, but he cannot control himself; his unbridled, choleric, full-blooded nature makes him his own worst enemy”.

31

After his exit, Topping comes and asks Builder to have something as he has not eaten anything since the previous day. He informs him that Mrs. Julia Builder has come back. Builder stares at him and asks him to give the will paper lying on the table. Topping gives the Will paper to Builder. He takes the will, thrusts it into the newly-lighted fire and holds it with a poker. There is a good deal of dumb show in Galsworthy’s plays. The return of Mrs. Builder to her husband, in A Family Man, is acted entirely in dumb show.

Mrs. Builder enters the room keeping her eyes on Builder, comes down to the table, and pours out his usual glass of whisky toddy. Builder, who has become conscious of her presence, turns in his chair as she hands it to him. He sits for a moment motionless, then takes it from her, and squeezes her hand. She goes silently to her usual place
and starts knitting. Builder makes an effort to speak, does not succeed, and sits drawing at his pipe:

The family circle, which was imperiled, is closed once more; it was, after all, impossible to break it! This little scene, with which the comedy ends, is very fine and touching. In *Justice* we have already seen in what masterly fashion Galsworthy can employ the scene without words; but there the silent scene is terrible; here it is soft and restrained, and filled with something akin to music and tears… As this play, in its exemplary straightforwardness, contains no actual ‘plot’, there can be no ‘revelations.’ It is a character comedy of rare quality, with a dignified and quiet ending, far removed from all theatricality.\(^{32}\)

To conclude:

The play is absurdly improbable and even farcical, but it successfully derides the idea that a man can treat the members of his family like a piece of property, and so points a moral which is brilliantly elaborated in *The Forsyte Saga*. The irony of the situation lies in the impression which this boasted family life of ours makes upon other nations.\(^{33}\)
References:


