In 1920, William Poel, reflecting on the poor condition of the English Theatre wrote:

The condition of the English Theatre has moved steadily downward, and today it may be said to have touched its lowest level on record.... The plays of Shaw, Galsworthy, Barker, Masefield with those of all men who respect themselves and their calling, are put on one side as being impossible compositions, written by those who do not understand the needs of the public....(1)

The war of 1914-18 stimulated a preference for light entertainment. To cater to the demands of the troops on leave, farce, spectacle and musical comedy were copiously written. Of the serious dramatists of established reputation, Shaw had produced nothing since Pygmalion (1913), unless we include Heartbreak House which was withheld from the stage until 1921. Granville Barker had written no original play for ten years after The Madras House and not until The Skin Game appeared in 1920 did Galsworthy write anything of merit comparable with Justice (1910) and the plays which immediately preceded it. By the end of the war London playhouses were controlled by men whose interest in the stage was mainly financial, and theatre rents soared until it was almost impossible for writers of plays with an intellectual bias, and therefore appealing to a numerically limited audience, to get a hearing for their work. In the immediate Post-war years even Bernard Shaw found the United States and other countries abroad readier to produce his new plays than England was. In such...

1. What is Wrong with the Stage (Allen & Unwin, 1920) PP, 9-10.
conditions the drama wilted again; though a few serious plays with a contemporary bearing were successful. (e.g. Galsworthy's *The Skin Game*). We shall presently discuss some plays of Bernard Shaw and Galsworthy which exhibited the playwright's keen awareness of the contemporary social problems chiefly involving the issue of social justice.

- I -

A good number of Galsworthy's plays deal with caste-feeling in some form or other as a source of tragedy or at least of human misery. Galsworthy frequently mentioned the pagoda of caste in his novels and dealt intensively with it in his dramas. In *The Eldest Son* (1912) the caste-feeling of a county family comes into clash with morality and basic sense of human responsibility. The plot of *The Patrician* (1911) also turns on the same conflict as between morality and family honour or tradition. In *The County House* (1907) when George Pendyce gets into trouble with Mrs. Bellow (exactly in the same way as Bill, the eldest son of Sir William Cheshire was involved with the maid Freda) his father takes an uncharitable, nay, hostile attitude to the recognition of a woman's right.

In *The Skin Game* (1920) the class-feeling of the landed gentry comes into deadly conflict with the new class-consciousness of the manufacturing class. This class-conflict is dramatised in the relation between Hillchrist and Hornblower. Hillchrist is the owner of lands and he belongs to an ancient land-owning family. He is a lover of tradition and unduly conscious of honour; he is fond of games, is a chronic sufferer from gout and therefore a typical English gentleman. He is a humane lord; there are two cottages among his properties which are occupied by two old
tenants. He is ready to safeguard the interests of his tenants at all costs. He is set in opposition to Hornblower, who has made much money by manufacturing pottery. He wants to acquire lands for good clay and Mr. Hillchrist's lands are good. He purchases a bit of Mr. Hillchrist's lands containing the cottages and proposes to get rid of the cottagers by paying them compensation money. He also proposes to buy the adjoining land called the enclo­sure and to build a factory there. That factory built with its long chimneys, it will cut off the view of Hillchrist's ancestral trees from his mansion. So Hillchrist will not allow him to take possession of the enclosure. In the eyes of Hillchrist and his wife, Hornblower is an aggressive, noisy, upstart and a nasty person while Hornblower regards himself as a benefactor of the people. He says that his money and enterprise will change the face of the lands and put money in other men's pockets as well as in his own.

This difference in attitude and clash of interests makes Hillchrist and Hornblower enemies to each other. Hillchrist hits right at the root of such class antagonism when he explains to his daughter Jill,

...all life's a struggle between people at different stages of development, in different positions, with different amounts of social influence and property.

As for himself, he cannot tolerate "New people like the Hornblowers" whose 'only rule is to get all they can'. This new class of merchants and traders were gradually gaining ground and acquis­i­tion of wealth out of prospering trade lifted them in social status so much so that they became the strongest and most powerful men in the country. But money-oriented philosophy of life could hardly be welcomed by the landed aristocratic gentry who still preferred their old values of life. Hillchrist feels deeply concerned that Hornblower's influence in Deepwater is thoroughly bad and that his potteries are demoralising and changing
the whole atmosphere of the place. He has brought in the modern cut-throat spirit. Mrs. Hillehirst bears similar resentful attitude towards these people. She justifies her hatred for Hornblower who, according to her is a man without traditions, and who believes in nothing but 'money and push'. She never condescends to stare at Hornblower or to visit his newly-married daughter-in-law Chloe. Her daughter Jill who, in the play, typifies a compromising attitude and advocates the spirit of adjustment aptly says about her mother:

But mother literally looks down her nose. And she never forgives an 'h'. They'd get the 'hell' from her if they took the 'hinch'.

When Jill takes the family of Hornblower to her house, Mrs. Hillchrist ill-treats and insults Chloe which infuriates both Hornblower and Charles to take revenge by purchasing the centry and thereby ruining the scene of the countryside. Thus the two parties declare an open war which they call the 'skin game'.

All these are shown in the first Act of the play, which besides serving the purpose of exposition, strikes the keynote of the play. The bitter antagonism between two classes - the old and decaying aristocracy and the rising middle class - is aptly indicated in this very Act. The conversation between Hillchrist and his daughter Jill, the interview between Hillchrist and Hornblower and, lastly, the cold reception of the Hornblowers at Hillchrist's house - these are some of the significant episodes which occur in the first Act. At the same time it reveals characters and throws light on the motives that are at cross purposes. The dramatic conflict starts in the very opening scene.

Hornblower, the manufacturer of potteries, is strongly prejudiced about the Hillchists. He is proud of his own work. "My works supply thousands of people, and my heart's in them". With
the confidence of a self-made man he says:

I've got the guts, and I've got the money, and
I don't sit still on it. I'm going ahead because
I believe in myself.

His religion is the religion of self-help. So he says:

God helps those who help themselves - that's
at the bottom of all religion. I'm going to help
myself and God is going to help me.

He hates men like Hillchrist who are the 'idle-rich' or 'the
underserving rich'. He tells Hillchrist pointblank,

Here ye are quite content on what your fathers
made for ye. Ye've no ambitions; and ye want
other people to have none. How d'ys think your
fathers got your land? They got it by breaking
their word and turnin' out Jackmans, if that's their
name, all over the place.

This is a clear exposition of the nature of wealth. Behind all
types of accumulation and possession of wealth the same history
is repeated; eg. exploitation of the poor and injustice to the
weak. Hornblower's business-interest finds no harm in demolish­
ing the cottages of Jackman. But out of human consideration and
gentlemanly sentiment Hillchrist wants that the Jackmans should
not be disturbed. His most delicate aristocratic sentiment is
wounded by Hornblower's decision to do so and further to buy the
centre for extension of the factory that will impair the beautiful
view of his own mansion. So he accuses Hornblower of a
breach of neighbourly relationship and trusts. Hornblower thinks
it to be an injustice to try to hamper the business enterprise of
a prospering merchant.

The old conservative attitude of the aristocracy prompts
Hillchrist to refuse Hornblower any social position. So Hornblower
suffers from a sense of social inferiority. He earnestly wishes
that Mr. and Mrs. Hillchrist have allowed him the privilege of a
social status. Hence he warns Hillchrist: "unless you are friendly, sure as I stand here I'll ruin the look of your place". But Hillchrist will have nothing to do with Hornblower whom he can never treat as his equal. He ignores Hornblower's proposal:

I am a good-natured man if you'll treat me as such.
Now you take me on as a neighbour and all that, and
I'll manage without chimneys on the centry.

Hillchrist's refusal, "your ways are not mine, and I'll have nothing to do with you", makes him angry beyond measure and only hardens his desire for revenge. With equal malice he throws a bold challenge:

It'll do ye a power of good, too, to know that ye are not almighty. ....ye've had things your own way too long, and now ye're not going to have them any longer....I am the rising end you're the setting sun, as the poet says.

This is a bold challenge of a big section of the English people who had become strong and powerful enough to claim equal status with the landed gentry.

Act-I ends with a bitter quarrel between the children of the two families. Initially devoted to each other and free from the prejudices of their elders, Jill and Rolf get involved in the row and defile their innocent souls by cultivating partisan mentality. That consumes the passion of love. The following conversation between the two is worth quoting here:

Rolf. Sins of the fathers.
Jill. Unto the third and fourth generation what sin has my father committed?
Rolf. None, in a way; only, I've often told you I don't see why you should treat us as outsiders. We don't like it.
Jill. Well, you shouldn't be, then; I mean, he shouldn't be.
Rolf. Father's just as human as your father; he's wrapped up in us, and all his 'getting on' is for us. Would you like to be treated as your mother treated Chloe? You mother's set the stroke for the other
big-wigs about here; nobody calls on Chloe. And why not? Why not? I think it's contemptible to bar people just because they are new, as you call it, and have to make their position instead of having it left them.

Jill. It's not because they're new, it's because—if your father behaved like a gentleman, he'd be treated like one.

Rolf. Would he? I don't believe it. My father's a very able man; he thinks he is entitled to have influence here. Well, everybody tries to keep him down. Oh! yes, they do. That makes him mad and more determined than ever to get his way. You ought to be just, Jill.

Jill. I am just.

(Rolf, all right. I see you're hopelessly prejudiced.)

Jill. (Just as he is vanishing—softly) Enemy?

Rolf. (Turning) Yes, enemy.

The attacks and counter-attacks clearly exhibit the contagious effect of class-prejudice imperceptibly vitiating the minds of the younger generation. Jill and Rolf identify themselves completely with the cause of their fathers and with this the dramatist achieves the purpose of presenting one group force pitted against another and creates the situation of tense drama.

Act II brings complication in the action. The sale of the centry direct to Hornblower is stopped by Dawker, Hillchrist's agent, who induces the owner to sell it by auction. The auction scene is packed up with a series of suspense and exciting situations. In describing the details of the big rising higher and higher, step by step; the trick of the auctioneer and the reactions of two rival bidders—the Hillshorts and the Hornblowers—and lastly the trick of Hornblower who gives the highest bid not by himself but through an unknown agent to befoul Hillchrist, Galsworthy carries his naturalistic art to its extreme.

The rivalry between the two becomes more keen and embittered at the end of the auction when it is disclosed that the centry has gone to Hornblower.
Hillchrist. A dastardly trick!
Homblower. (with Venom) What did ye call it—a skin game? Remember we're playing a skin game, Hillchrist.

This most unfortunate and unwanted rivalry of two English families makes them defile their essential humanity in an excess of hatred for each other. Determined to get the vantage over her enemy Mrs. Hillchrist resorts to scandal-mongering of which the most innocent woman Chloe becomes a helpless victim. She retorts to her enemy: "Mr. Homblower, as you fight foul—so shall we". She has gathered from Dawker that before her marriage Chloe used to earn money by accompanying men who sought divorce in the court. She means to exploit this scandal to bring the enemy under her heels. The difference in the characters of the husband and the wife is subtly hinted at on this occasion. Hillchrist is shocked to know this and contrary to the desire of his wife he will not use this dirty weapon even if it meant their salvation. He says to his wife:

I say no, Amy. I won't have it. It's a dirty weapon.
Who touches pitch shall be defiled.

He does not like bringing a woman into this quarrel:

To use a piece of knowledge about a woman—its repugnant. I—I won't do it.

But Mrs. Hillchrist, like Lady Macbeth, goads her unwilling husband on to dabble in this nefarious game and finally he consents to it saying, 'we do it to save our skins'.

The next scene is a piece of excellent dramatic craftsmanship. It lays bare the terrible mental agony of Chloe who has already scented a foul play about her by enemy. Her desperate bid to stop the mouth of Dawker by bribes and even at the cost of her chastity (Is there anything you'll take not to spoil my life? Me?) makes her all the more helpless and pathetic in this scene. She implores her father-in-law to stop the quarrel. She even
tries to persuade her husband to refrain from the skin game. But to her utter dismay she finds both of them unyielding. This makes her position precarious.

The turning point or crisis in action is reached in the first Scene of the third Act. The play of antagonistic forces comes to a stop here. Having received a note from Mrs. Hillchrist, Hornblower comes to her house along with Chloe and becomes infuriated at the disclosure of the scandal about Chloe, calling it 'a put up job, a conspiracy, a foul shame, a lying slander'. But he is bewildered when, faced by two strangers whom she helped in the past to get their divorce, Chloe surrenders completely. There is a good deal of pathos about this innocent woman who is a pawn in the skin game. The human touch at Chloe's explanation that she was compelled to lead such a hateful way of life under pressure of circumstances and that she was going to have a child moves the heart of Hornblower. To keep the scandal a secret, he signs the deed prepared by Dawker to hand over the Gentry and Longmeadow at four thousand and five hundred only.

The balance now begins to incline decisively to a particular direction. The discomfiture of Chloe in the previous scene accounts for bringing about the catastrophe. In the evening Chloe comes stealthily into the drawing room of the Hillchrists and requests the father and the daughter to contrive some believable story about her to be told to her husband Charles. She herself suggests that they might say that before marriage Chloe had been a clerk in the office of the strangers who appeared before Hornblower to identify her and was turned out on suspicion of misappropriation of funds. But Charles whose ears have already been poisoned by the treacherous miscreant Dawker refuses to believe a word of this story from the mouth of Hillchrist and in an angry outburst of temper says that he has done with that woman and will disown a
child by her. Chloe hears from behind the curtain the angry words of her disillusioned husband. She jumps in the gravel pit and gets seriously injured. In the presence of what may be death Hornblower gives vent to the venom of his mind:

Hillchrist, ye've got me beaten and disgraced hereabouts, ye've destroyed my son's married life, and ye've killed my grandchild. I'm not staying in this cursed spot, but if ever I can do you or yours a hurt, I will.

The old man retains his fierce spirit of fighting to the last. He loses the best things of his life, receives almost a deathblow, yet he will not give up the fight.

As Strife proved the sad futility of fighting between capital and labour, so this play proves the tragic consequences of antagonism between two families having different interests and opposing values of life. Once more class is arrayed against class. Both sides lose; for the newly made rich man is beaten, and the methods employed by the aristocrats to beat him are fatal to their own honour and peace of mind. Hillchrist rightly says, "It's a dirty weapon. Who touches pitch shall be defiled". He has a painful realisation of the futility of such skin games that lead to such disastrous consequences.

Hillchrist. ....what is it that gets loose when you begin a fight, and makes you what you think you're not? Begin as you may, it ends in this—skin game, skin game.

What Galsworthy seems to drive at is cultivation of the spirit of tolerance and a capacity of adjustment conducive to a peaceful, happy and prosperous social life. Such virtues lie at the core of social justice which is occasionally defiled by snobbery and false class-prejudices. The pertinent question of Hillchrist,

When we began this fight, we had clean hands— are they clean now? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?
over which the curtain falls is the dramatist's mild mocking at the constant violation of the principles of social justice in the contemporary English society.

In the next play *Loyalties*, Galsworthy dramatises the theme of racial antagonism. It deals with anti-Jewish feeling, discrimination against a racial minority, which is still unhappily topical in many parts of the world and which has been at the root of many recent wars and disputes.

The history of the Jews in Britain is different from their history in some other countries. They were all expelled by king Edward I in 1290, and were not allowed to return until the middle of the seventeenth century, under the rule of Oliver Cromwell. It was Shakespeare, the Elizabethan with the political and racial prejudices of the average man, or of the mob who chose the story of *The Merchant of Venice*. About 1594, public sentiment in England was roused to an outbreak of traditional Jew-baiting; and for good and evil, Shakespeare the man was like his fellow-citizens. According to Charlton, Shakespeare planned *The Merchant of Venice* to let the Jew dog have it, and thereby to gratify his own patriotic pride of race. (1) The text of the play preserves sufficient evidence of Shakespeare's fixed intent to exhibit his Shylock as an inhuman scoundrel whose diabolical cunning is bent on gratifying a satanic lust for Christian flesh, the Jew in fact, who was the ogre of mediaeval story and the cur to be execrated by all honest men. This, indeed, is how Shylock is described by every character in the play. But there has been a strange redistribution of sympathies; and Shylock the ogre becomes Shylock the hero. The one is Shylock as he was meant to be, the hero.*

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the other is Shylock as he became through Shakespeare's unconscious dramatic instinct. If Shakespeare, the Elizabethan wanted to to write an anti-jew play, it was Shakespeare, the dramatic genius that shaped it at the discretion of his creative imagination. And his creative imagination had sympathies with the suffering jew. To quote Charlton again, "the emergence of the new Shylock is undeniable evidence of the incalculable value of the artist's intuition in helping humanity to reach the vital truths which in the end are revealed only through sympathy, and on which the world's future welfare is indubitably to be built". (1)

Since their return to Britain in the Seventeenth Century the Jews have not been shut up in ghettos, or massacred, or brutally ill-treated and thousands of Jewish refugees from other countries have found peaceful homes in Britain. Many have distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences, administration, business and other fields. They have not always been fairly treated, however, socially or politically. It was not until 1858, for example, that Jews were allowed to become Members of Parliament, though since then they have been appointed to some of the highest offices in the land. A small minority of Englishmen have continued to disgrace themselves by behaving harshly with the Jews. They are now very few, in a Britain which has become far more tolerant since it became anti-imperialist, but they were more numerous when Loyalties was written, about sixty years ago, and it was natural for Galsworthy, with his hatred of injustice, to deal with the question.

The plot of Loyalties was actually conceived when Galsworthy was touring America in connection with the performance of his play The Skin Game and other plays in the winter of 1929. Galsworthy and his group halted for some weeks at 'Santa Barbara',

1. Ibid, P-213.
a beautiful spot, full of natural sights and sounds. The germ of Loyalities was contracted at this very time. The play was, however, written in the summer of 1921, after Galsworthy's return to England from the tour. Galsworthy himself was highly pleased with this play. After finishing it, he told his wife Ada: "No Manager will refuse this".

On its first performance at the St. Martin's Theatre, London, March 8, 1922, it was highly appreciated and applauded by the audience. The Morning Post wrote:

The reception was almost enthusiastic, and the call for the author more persistent than any call of the kind that we can remember. It must have lasted a full minute and only ceased when it was stated that Mr. Galsworthy was not in the house.

The Daily Chronicle wrote a complimentary article on Galsworthy's dramatic craftsmanship, reviewing Loyalities "as a close-packed drama of adventure, a crook drama written by a master hand". And it extracted from his contemporary dramatist, Sir James Barrie, the warmest applause. In a letter to Galsworthy, Barrie wrote:

Every page and every character has hits that could come from you alone, and probably the most striking thing of all is that you are telling your audience all the time that there is here a matter for them to think about, without ever addressing even a covert word to them. That is certainly the most difficult part of play writing and probably its chief art. (1)

The chief cause of the astounding popularity of the play is its robust and full-flavoured dramatic elements. It is a straightforward drama of incidents rather than of ideas. In his previous plays like Justice, Strife etc. Galsworthy has touched too significantly hot social issues and the effect of his dramatic action is sometimes affected by his sociological outlook and reformatory ideas. To an average theatre-goer such sociological

contents have not always a good appeal. In Loyalties, however, there is the comparative preponderance of action and events over ideology and sociology. This is the chief cause of its triumphant career on the stage. It is an admitted fact that the greater public will always remain impervious to the drama of ideas. Plays can succeed with the general public only if the sugar of dramatic incidents sufficiently thickly encase the ideas conveyed to the public. In Loyalties, Galsworthy has his ideas to State, but the ideas are well-coated with dramatic situations and events.

The play starts with an air of excitement. In the very opening scene the key note of the whole play is touched. There is a theft of £1,000 from the room of De Levis, one of the tenants of the Meldon Court owned by Winsor. At the same time the audience is informed of the bad days of Ronald Dancy, another tenant, through the words of Winsor:

Ronny Dancy's on his bones again, I'm afraid. He had a bad day. When a chap takes to doing parlour stunts for a bet—it's a sure sign.

Again, Galsworthy, in the very first scene cleverly exposes the class prejudices of Winsor and others by showing their indignation to De Levis, the Jew—'Damn, De Levis and his money'. When De Levis confides to General Canynge his suspicion that the theft must be an act of Dancy, Canynge thinks in terms of racial prejudice and enters into a hot exchange of words:

Canynge. Without any proof. This is very ugly, De Levis. I must tell Winsor.

De Levis. (Angrily) Tell the whole blooming lot. You think I've no feelers, but I've felt the atmosphere here, I can tell you, General. If I were in Dancy's shoes and he in mine, your tone to me would be very different.

The primary concern of Canynge and other Christians is loyalty to the race. A Jew accusing a Christian is an occasion to bind together a group of gentlemen by the spirit of loyalty (esprit
de corps). Winsor. It hits us all— it hits us all. The thing's intolerable.
Canynge. I agree. Intolerable.

Winsor and Canynge feel themselves obliged to vindicate the honour of Dancy who belongs to their community while the loss of a big sum of De Levis does not move them. On the other hand they regard De Levis's suspicion on Dancy as an insult to their race and are determined to fight it out. Canynge warns the jew to cease from making such insinuation against a respectable Christian officer:

Canynge (unmoved) Must not. You're a member of three clubs, you want to be member of a fourth. No one who makes such an insinuation against a fellow guest in a country house, except on absolute proof, can do so without complete ostracism. Have we your word to say nothing?

De Levis. Social blackmail? H'm!
Canynge. Not at all— simple warning. If you consider it necessary in your interests to start this scandal— no matter how, we shall consider it necessary in ours to dissociate ourselves completely from one who so recklessly disregards the unwritten code.

Loyalty to the race leads to injustice. The Society of Christians in utter disregard of justice to a brother jew, a fellow guest in a country house, tries to blackmail him socially in the interest of a christian. This deprived attitude to ignore the justifiable right that a man merits, is a deplorable evil of a modern society. Today a plutocratic society only considers a man on the basis of his race or wealth. Such a tendency has poisoned the whole social life. But De Levis proves to be a strong adversary who has the boldness to expose the shameless sham of a vain christian world. When the curtain falls at the end of Act-I, the conflict between the jew and the christians becomes very sharp and takes a definite shape. The dramatic action and the theme are well-knit from the very beginning. The exposition is done marvellously.
The brilliant exposition is further developed in a skilful manner in the following Act. The open accusation of De Levis in a London club leads to a violent outburst of anger of a group of Christians - Lord St. Earth, General Canynge, Augustus Borring Colford and Winsor - all members of the club. Winsor informs how already Christian sentiment has acted against De Levis, 'Result of hearing he was blackballed - Pretty slippy'. In extreme excitement Colford says, "Dancy is in the club. If he hadn't been I'd have taken it on myself to wring the bounder's neck". Canynge announces his desire to take immediate action:

If he wishes to remain a member of the club he must account to the committee for such a charge against a fellow member. Four of us are here and form a quorum.

Before requesting his resignation from the club he asks De Levis for an explanation. The hot exchange of words between De Levis and St. Earth reveals the bitter hostility between the two races:

St. Earth. (Dryly) You seem a venomous youngman.
De Levis. I'll tell you what seems to me venomous, my lord— chasing a man like a pack of hounds because he isn't your breed.

The treatment, that is meted out by St. Earth's Christian Society to an offended Jew, is according to De Levis, extremely mean and bitter. The member of the club are trying to humiliate and harass him only because he does not belong to their race. The practice of these members is vivified by the Jew by a reference to the habit of hounds that follow their prey doggedly. In the same way the Christians are furiously trying to bring the Jew down. The pernicious spirit of sectarianism fills a man with spleen and rancour and extinguishes the seeds of humanity and compassion. The penetrative force of Galsworthy's observation is felt even today, as it is seen how the colour bar and other low prejudices are still entertained in America, South Africa etc. De Levis echoes the grievance of all the oppressed and neglected
people of the world.

The direct confrontation between Dancy and De Levis in the club makes the situation more tense. In the presence of the most distinguished members of the club Dancy calls De Levis a "damnable Jew" and his Christian associates give a silent approval of this blasphemy. De Levis calls Dancy a "thief", and the two are prevented from fighting by the intervention of Canynge and Winsor. The suspension of De Levis's membership to the club only hardens his desire to avenge the wrong done to him while Dancy's reluctance to bring a suit for defamation of character against the Jew creates some faint suspicion among his friends that his hands may not be clean. But still they would not forsake a fellow Christian.

Winsor. Colford! (A slight pause) The General felt his coat-sleeve that night, and it was wet.
Colford. Well! What proof's that? No; by George!
An old school-fellow, a brother officer and a pal.
Winsor. If he did do it—
Colford. He didn't. But if he did, I'd stick to him and see him through it, if I could.........yes, by God!

Out of despise and malice for the Jew, Colford will justify a crime committed by his own fellowmen. Sacrificing all considerations of reason and justice he resolves to be loyal to his own race.

The dramatic action takes a significant turn in the second scene of Act-II. The scene opens with a discussion between Mabel, Dancy's wife and Margaret Greene, their neighbour. Mabel, so long an innocent and loyal wife is made to know of the scandal about her husband and is persuaded to convince her husband of the urgency of filing a law-suit. The talk about the principle of loyalty serves as a fine exposition of the character of Mabel. She is a simple wife who loves her husband and stands for his welfare. Her thoughts and deeds rotate round about the well-being of her
husband, and are prompted by her solemn wifely consecration. This womanly spirit of Mabel has a child's simplicity and innocence, a saint's devotion and idealism. She is wholly ignorant of the complexity of modern social life. She herself is faithful, and so she feels that others should also be so. She tells Margaret "I hate half-hearted friends. Loyalty comes before everything". Unfortunately she does not know that in the modern world "loyalties cut up against each other sometimes". She lives in a world of which she has but little knowledge. Its bitter thorns are unknown to her. In the final scene of the play she appears once again as a devoted wife loving her husband from the very core of her heart and ready to stand against the scandal of her society for his sake. Her words to Dancy blaze with her undying constancy, unyielding devotion—

Mabel. (After a moment's struggle) oh ! No ! No ! No !
I'11 follow- I'11 come out to you there.
Dancy. D'you mean you'11 stick to me?
Mabel. Of course, I'11 stick to you.

Mabel identifies herself totally with her husband in the hour of his disgrace and ruin in a splendid manner and stands as a supreme example of wifely loyalty. Lady Adela characterises her fatherless love by pointing out that she has "gone awfully on him". In a world of clashing and changing loyalties her steady devotion to her husband is truly commendable.

Margaret's remarks to Lady Adela in respect of Dancy's nature amply illustrate her keen sense of observation and her insight into human nature. She has known Dancy for a long time and has fully grasped the oddity of his nature. In a few words she sums up entirely the desperate character of Dancy:

There are people who simply can't live without danger. I'm rather like that myself. They're all right when they're getting the D. S. O. or shooting man eaters; but if there's no excitement going, they'll make it-
out of Sheer craving. I've seen Bonny Dancy do the maddest things for no mortal reason except the risk.

There can hardly be any better appraisal of Dancy's queer nature and his hazardous way of life. The encounter between De Levis and Dancy in the latter's room at the close of this scene serves only to intensify the clash between them. De Levis departs with an iron determination to avenge the insults to his sacred race while Dancy, at the insistence of his wife, prepares to go to the solicitor. With this the dramatic action moves a step forward.

Once again the Christians, led by partisan spirit, request Mr. Twisden, Dancy's solicitor, to defend the reputation of a Christian. The appearance of Gilman, the grocer who hands over to Twisden a fifty-pound bank-note, the number of which tallies with one of the numbers of the notes stolen from De Levis's room at Meldon court gives a sudden and quick turn to the action. The Italian wine-merchant Ricardos whom Gilman brings with him, informs the solicitor that he received the note along with some others from Dancy in settlement of a debt of honour, relating to Dancy's love-episode with his only daughter. He also shows another note, bearing a number of the stolen notes. The total number received by him was one thousand pounds. Loyalty to his legal profession at once prompts Twisden not to pursue the case further. Dancy's confession to the solicitor marks the climax of action which now sharply falls to an end. By a sharp contrast in characterisation Galsworthy shows the blind racial prejudice of modern civilised people.

Colford. Guilty or not, you ought to have stuck to him—it's not playing the game, Mr. Twisden.

Twisden. You must allow me to judge where my duty lay, in a very hard case.

Colford. I thought a man was safe with his solicitor.

Canynge. Colford, you don't understand professional etiquette.

Colford. No, thank God!
I wisden. When you have been as long in your profession as I have been in mine, Major Colford, you will know that duty to your calling outweighs duty to friend or client.

Colford. But I serve the country.

I wisden. And I serve the Law, sir.

In Twisden one detects a conscientious lawyer whose judgement has not been blinded by narrow class-prejudices. Inspite of his sympathy for Dancy, he does not defend his crime. Beside his honesty and uprightness, the narrow sectarian attitude of Colford and Margaret seems quite mean and abominable. The appearance of De Levis in Twisden's office, though somewhat unexpected, is significant because it marks the close of the action. His declaration:

Don't mistake me. I didn't come because I feel Christian; I'm a Jew. I will take no money—not even that which was stolen. Give it to a charity.

I'm proved right. And now I'm done with the damned thing.

puts an end to clash of interests that form the staple of the play.

But still Galsworthy adds a last scene to the play. Perhaps this was necessary to explode the mystery of Dancy's crime to his wife who still remains ignorant of it. The scene is laid in Dancy's flat where, in a thoroughly frustrated and worn out condition Dancy frankly tells Mabel of his crime. Though much disappointed by this sudden revelation Mabel does not lose her faith in her husband and agrees to follow him through thick and thin. The idea of escaping to Morocco where General Canyne's letter might help the couple find a means of living seems to bring a relief. But the arrival of the Police and Dancy's shooting himself to escape the disgrace of arrest gives a melodramatic touch to the action. Galsworthy softens the tragic close by casting a glamour of tenderness and pity over the final scene. Nothing violent or ghastly occurs in the play. As in Justice, here also the death of the hero is communicated in an artistic manner through sound and movement only:
There is the noise of a lock being turned. And almost immediately the sound of a pistol shot in the bedroom. Mabel rushes to the door, tears it open, and disappears within, followed by the Inspector, just as Margaret Orme and Colford come in from the passage, pursued by the constable. They, too, all hurry to the bedroom door and disappear for a moment; then Colford and Margaret reappear, supporting Mabel, who faints as they lay her on the sofa.

and then the short but crisp expression of Colford 'Neatly—through the heart' conveys an appropriate atmosphere of death and mourning. Dancy is hallowed in death by the tears of the kneeling woman who loved him while he lived. The whole tragedy is ennobled by the last words of Colford and Margaret who extend their protecting hands over the grief-stricken woman who survives:

Margaret. (wildly) Keeps faith! We've all done that.
It's not enough.
Colford. (Looking down at Mabel) All right, old boy!

From the very first scene to the fascinating end, an atmosphere of loyalty is felt all over the play. In fact, loyalty is the motive-force behind all actions and conflicts of the play. The action of every person in the play is engineered by his or her loyalty to some cause - social or individual. Different types of loyalties are here depicted and set in conflict with one another. But overriding every other category of loyalty is the loyalty to one's race. Galsworthy's thesis in the play is that such loyalties, in most cases, make men defy and ignore justice. Blind adherence to some code makes a man dogmatic and sacrifice the human considerations of justice, fellow-feeling and sympathy. It narrows down a man's outlook and makes him mean, selfish and revengeful. The same racial pride and social conventions that made Shylock "more sinned against than sinning" acted in the friends and followers of Dancy. In the warmth and excess of their class-prejudices against the Jew, they sacrifice all other considerations. This is a sinister portent of the time and Galsworthy
has fully vivified it in the play. The social value of *Loyalties* lies in its criticism of the prevailing distemper of a refined society. Galsworthy analyses and diagnoses the cause of the present-day malady. The love of scandal and sensation, the depraved appetite for the most nauseous details of a man's misery and the failure to feel sincerely for others are the deplorable evils of a modern life.

But it is too much to say that the sole business of Galsworthy in his *Loyalties* is to preach a doctrine. The social problems of the day are indicated in the play, but they are not unduly stressed in the action. The drama is never attempted to be made a propaganda of some ideological stand. The social moral of the play is not obtrusive. It arises naturally out of the central action of the play, which has the character of a crime-drama. In his treatment of the social problems of the day, Galsworthy, however, poses to play the role of a natural artist. He takes directly no side with the clashing interests. His purpose is to show all that is in the world both fair and foul. In *Loyalties* he shews the sores that trouble man in his social life. But he does not suggest how to cure these sores. He criticizes the existing trend and provokes deep thoughts for his spectators. But he never speaks out loudly and directly in the outspoken fashion of Shaw.

The villainy of the play rises from the tyranny of social customs and conventions which often lead to injustice. There is no human villainy. Extreme class prejudices, racial pride and diverted loyalties lead people to 'cut each other's throats from the best of motives'. Dancy's tragedy does not simply follow from his reckless, daring nature. The root of his tragedy is found in the social complications with which he is confronted. He no doubt steals, like a Robin Hood. But he does so not out of pure love for danger. There is a grim social necessity that prompts him to take dangerous risks.
twice and involve himself in a penal offence. He has to meet a
debt of honour, which, if not paid, may lead him to humiliation
and disgrace in his society. Moreover, he has a bad time with his
newly married wife and no substantial income. Out of the sheer
necessity of life he steals £1,000 of De Levis. There is, of
course, no ground to justify his action. It is certainly too rash
and too roughish an act. But for a man, weak in judgement and heed­
less in deed, like Dancy, this is the only course. Again when the
theft of Dancy becomes known to his friends and lawyers, loyalty­
ties sever. He finds him disowned and alone. His pistol keeps
faith and saves him from the punishment of the world. Walder, in
Justice, adopts the same method (jumps from the stair and dies)
to save himself from the tyranny of legal justice. These people
die with no halo of glories and achievements. It is no Macbeth or
Hamlet meeting his sad destiny "after life's fretful fever and
the stir unprofitable" but an average human being, chased out of
his normal condition by the problems of his social life, prefe­
ring to have a safe shelter in the cold womb of death. The tragic
atmosphere that enwraps the play is begotten from the presence
of some omnipotent social problem, that becomes the invincible
master of man's destiny.

- III -

Escape, composed in 1926, reiterates Galsworthy's message
that lack of imaginative sympathy lies at the root of social in­
justices and the remedy lies in the cultivation of that sympathy.
The play is an earnest and ironic investigation of humanity in a
 crisis. An absconding convict puts various representative citi­
zens to the difficult task of sheltering him. In an attempt to
save a fallen woman from being arrested by a constable Malt Denant
inadvertently kills the policeman and is imprisoned. He escapes
from the prison and is chased by the police. The play divided into several Episodes instead of Acts and Scenes presents a variety of situations the escaped prisoner faces in course of his desperate bid to find a shelter.

Under the management of Leon M. Lion, afterwards an indefatigable reviver of the Galsworthy plays, Escape appeared at the Ambassadors' Theatre, London, on the 12th of August 1926, and ran for about a year. Mr. Nicholas Hannen made one of the greatest successes of his career as Matt Denant, the escaped convict. The play is full of drama and tense situations. An audience in search of first-class entertainment is sure to receive it here in full measure. They do not need to trouble their heads about the author's deeper intention. It tells a good story vividly and directly. Galsworthy denied that he had written it with any special 'purpose'. He was content to take the incident of Matt Denant's break for freedom and the events that followed it. There is fine craftsmanship here and an inevitability that grips from episode to episode.

At first Matt slips into the bed room of a lady (the wife of the constable who is on duty to find him out). The lady is all sympathy for this haggard, sodden and crumpled man. She gives him her husband's old Burberry, fishing basket, rod and fishing hat and helps him go out of the front door. She also gives him a flask with some drink and two pounds. This scene reminds us of the first Act of Shaw's Arms and the Man in which the fugitive Swiss officer captain Bluntschli who enters the room of Raina and with the knowledge and help of Catherine, the mistress of the house, escapes wearing the old coat of Major Petkoff.

As Matt makes his way along the riverside in the morning he is accosted by an old gentleman, a retired judge who detects him but, being prompted by the dictates of conscience helps Matt Denant escape. Himself a judge, this man has had a bitter experience of
the rigours and conventionalities of law and of the inhuman prison administration which unnecessarily harass a good-intentioned person and crush him for only a moment's accidental lapse of conduct. The defects of the prison system and the literal application of the provisions of law by its champions e.g. judges and juries, so vividly portrayed in Justice, is only hinted at by the old gentleman:

I have had the misfortune in my time to send a good many people to prison. And in those days I did make a point of seeing a prison now and then. I remember I used to give my juries a pass to go and see where they sent their fellow-beings. Once I tested whether they went to look round or not, and out of three juries—no, it was four—how many do you think had had the curiosity? ....it was one.

The kind and sympathetic treatment received from the old gentleman makes Matt say, "For a moment I feel quite human". It is humanitarian consideration— an instinctive perception of the principle of social justice—that prompts this retired judge to wink his other eye and thus save a man from the fatal clutches of law.

In course of this escapade the fugitive meets a couple of whom the wife is full of sympathy for him. She readily consents to Denant's proposal for a joint drive in his car to avoid suspicion of the chasing constables. But her husband is an average man of society bound by its conventions of morality and false sense of justice. His society has taught him certain codes of crime and punishment and thus made him blind to any consideration of the circumstances in which such crimes are committed. Considering himself a champion of so-called justice this man leaves the escaped convict to his own fate. The difference between the husband and the wife is finely brought out in the following words:

Wife. ........ He was a gentleman.

Man. A convict's a convict; you can't play about with the law.
She judges Matt Denant by what she knows about him. But the husband is already prejudiced. Once a man becomes a convict, no matter how and why, the word 'bad' is stamped on him and he is supposed to be past any hope of redemption. Nobody is good and conscientious enough to give him a chance of correcting himself.

A similarly unkind and prejudiced attitude is shown to the convict by farmer Browning and two labourers whom he encounters in course of his escape. Revealing his identity, the convict appeals to the farmer to save him from the predicament. But the farmer will stick to his sense of moral duties and have the convict recaptured by the police to ensure the security of life and properties of peace-loving and law-abiding members of society. Denant tries to evoke the farmer's pity by saying that he did not mean to kill the constable on duty but only tried to rescue an unfortunate cursed lady from the fetters of law. But people often get entangled in a mess of misfortune for no fault of their own. Sometimes things come to pass by an accident and involve innocent persons who might otherwise live peaceful life. Matt warns the farmer, "Take care you don't have bad luck, that's all". Himself a sufferer from the mishap of an accidental lapse of behaviour, he earnestly wishes that others should not have such bad luck. Once a man is stained, he is treated as an outcast and nobody cares to help him rectify his error. Farmer Browning thinks that he is doing his duty in trying to detect the convict. But his daughter, a little girl of thirteen represents the better side of human conscience. She is full of sympathy for Matt Denant in distress and when the latter leaps from the barrow, runs away and is chased by the labourers she wishes him good luck, "I do hope he gets off!" Once again two different attitudes are typified by the father and the daughter and by a device of contrast the dramatist brings forth the main theme e.g. lack of imaginative sympathy for the victims of social injustice. The little girl's mind...
is free from prejudice, not defiled by the rigours of social customs and conventions. That is why she can regard the convict with human considerations of sympathy and kindness. Only through such treatment can hearts of men be changed.

In the next episode the absconding convict is shown to seek shelter in the parlour of a cottage owned by two maiden sisters Miss Grace and Miss Dora. He rushes through the French window panting and distressed, makes a sudden revealing gesture of appeal and blots himself out behind a window curtain. The two ladies stare in wild surprise when the farmer appears and enquires about the convict. The younger sister promptly denies any knowledge of the convict and the searching squad is gone. The elder sister Miss Grace takes great offence at this. It is shocking for her "to tell such a lie! and for a convict!" Her rigid sense of morality makes her take a serious view of such crimes as breaking through the prison. She thinks that such people do not deserve any sympathy: "Sympathy is wasted on them". Society wants all its members to follow its conventions and customs blindly without application of individual judgement. Miss Grace is one of those members of society whose consciences have been hardened by some conditioned attitudes and beliefs. She thinks "it's wrong and it's absurd" to give shelter and protection to a criminal and she warns her sister: "You can't help him without breaking the law".

But conscience gets the better hand of custom in the younger sister Miss Dora. She is, as her elder sister says, 'impulsive and humanitarian'. She serves the convict a cup of tea and in spite of strong oppositions of her sister hides him even by telling a lie; for, she does not find any harm in telling not one but a hundred lies for an honest purpose e.g. to save the soul of a man from being ruined for nothing. She does not like that a man should be chased by a band of men as a poor helpless animal is chased by hunters and hounds: "I can't bear to see a soldier and
a gentleman chased by a lot of chawbacons". The characters of the two sisters offer a study in contrast. While blind adherence to conventions has made Miss Grace mechanical and devoid of any compassionate feeling, freedom from prejudice enables Miss Dora to take a humane view of crime and offence and be soft and kind to Captain Denant who, she knows, "is n't a common convict". Touched by her innate goodness and sincerity Denant gratefully admits, "It's shown me how decent people can be".

The ninth and the last Episode marks the climax of the situation. With no time gap after the previous scene Denant enters into the room of a Parson of the village church, who at once recognises him as an escaped convict and says, "you ought not to have come in here". The convict's appealing enquiry, "Then where Sir?" is full of significance. Galsworthy raises the pertinent question of social justice. If religion does not help and offer consolation to a fallen man where should he go? The church professes to offer shelter and protection for a lost soul. One would naturally expect the Parson who belongs to the sacred institution of the church to extend his fullest co-operation to this convict. But, as the Parson states, "In old days the church was a thing apart; now it belongs to the state". The church no longer retains its independent entity to act in its own ways. It has become a handmaid to politics, its activities being controlled by the laws of the State. Himself noble and conscientious, the Parson is torn between his sense of duty and his sense of fellow-feeling. The following conversation reveals the torment of his mind:

Matt. Well, you needn't worry, Padre. I shall be caught all right.
Parson. (With a smile) I'm not worrying about that. Caesar can look after himself, he has the habit. What bothers me is my own peace of mind. I don't like the thoughts that keep rising in it. You led a company in the war. And I lead—
Matt. Your parishioners— um?
Parson. Yes. (Nodding) When you're gone— Shall I be
entitled to have been silent about you without telling them that I have been silent? Am I entitled to refrain from helping the law without letting them know it? If I let them know it, can I keep what little influence I now possess? And is it right for a parson to go on where he has no influence? That's my trouble, Captain Denant.

While the villagers are up to the detection of the crime, should a parson whose example they would follow, support the criminal? At last he makes a compromise between duty and humanity!

Matt. (Suddenly). Well, Padre, how does it look to you? Giving me up?
Parson. (Moved) Padre! (He takes a turn and comes to a sudden halt in front of Matt's chair) As man to man — who am I to give you up? One poor fellow to another? (Shaking his head) I can't help you to escape, but if you want rest, take it.
Matt. (Suddenly) Wonder what Christ would have done!
Parson. (Gravely) That, captain Denant, is the hardest question in the world. Nobody ever knows. You may answer this or that, but nobody ever knows. The more you read those writings, the more you realize that He was incalculable. You see — He was a genius! It makes it hard for us who try to follow Him.

Christ who did not seek vengeance on his enemies but, on the contrary, prayed to God for their salvation, would not perhaps approve of such conduct of His followers. Since the days of Christ there have been differences of opinion over the issue of right and wrong. But no opinion or judgement seems to be infallibly correct. The controversies about what should be the right attitude only confuses matters. So the Parson says, "I don't know that I've the right to turn you out of here. I don't know — anyway I can't".

Matt Denant, however, realises the clergyman's dilemma. If the Parson hands him over to the police, he would be helping law but defying humanity. Again, if the Parson gives him shelter, he would be acting Christ-like but violating law and justice. Putting himself in the clergyman's position he leaves the shelter
of the church and surrenders himself to the police.

The story provides an opportunity to review the utility of law and justice. It does often more harm than good to observe strictly the letters of law and follow the time-honoured conventions of justice in utter disregard of humanitarian feelings. Only a little sympathy and kindness would make the gentlemanly soldier Captain Denant live a decent life. But deprived of this imaginative sympathy from his society Denant becomes a lost man and is completely ruined. Galsworthy believes that the existing society is full of ills everywhere. In this society, the weak and the poor are suffering terribly and being crushed daily under the tyranny of unimaginative cruelty and hypocrisy. The causes of social misery are too deep-seated. No tinkering reforms can remove these causes. In order to create a better society, life and its problems must be viewed with love, pity and sympathy. If life is viewed with imagination, man can easily remove the existing ills and miseries of social life and can realise the meaning and purpose of life. A change of heart, according to Galsworthy, is the only means to achieve this noble end.

Within the ring-fence of his theme Galsworthy rounds up his characters. All the characters have some definite role to play and none seems superfluous. Leaving aside the important characters, even the minor ones, e.g. the Parson's bellringer, the farmer's labourers, the shopkeeper's sister etc. are integral to the design of action. They do or say something that lead to a better understanding of either a situation or a character. For example, the Parson's bell-ringer by repeatedly mentioning that he saw a man enter the vestry, evokes the suspicion of the farmer and puts the Parson in the predicament of a confused state out of which he is saved by the self-surrender of the convict. Again, it must be noted that the structural novelty of the play (its division into Episodes instead of Acts and Scenes) does not provide scope for
gradation of characterisation. Captain Denant is at the centre of action. All other characters who act and move around him are almost equally prominent. The constable's wife, the old gentleman, the shopkeeper and his wife, the farmer, the two sisters and the Parson—each of these characters contribute definitely to the development of the main theme of the play.

As a social playwright Galsworthy is concerned not with individual villany or heroism but with the problems that beset an individual in social intercourses. Individual characterisation naturally has not much scope here, and the dramatist's interest seems to have concentrated on man in his social situation. These characters, therefore, have not much of individual existence, apart from the function they are intended to serve in the play. In *Escape*, the characters are divided into two groups, each representing a social attitude or ideal. The first group includes the constable, the shopkeeper, the husband, farmer Browning and Miss Grace who represent the conventional attitude of scorn and hatred for a convict. Each of them act with the best of intentions to ensure safety of life and property by the enforcement of Law. In the other group may be placed the wife of the constable, the retired judge, the wife of the shopkeeper, the farmer's little daughter and Miss Dora who are advocates of social justice wishing no violation of law but only a broader, more humane and generous view of the erring and fallen men.

This is not to say that the characters here have become wooden or lifeless. They are neither mechanical nor devoid of life-force. They lack the greatness of celebrated characters of Shakespeare, but through them flows the blood of the living people of the age. In this respect Galsworthy is more realistic and comes closer to his spectators, who can recognise in his characters their own shadows and lives, their own problems and conflicts.
At the time of the production of *Escape*, Galsworthy announced that it was the last play he intended to write. He did not keep to this decision although he may have wished that he had done so. Neither *Exiled* (1929) nor *The Roof*, his last play, produced by Mr. Basil Dean at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, on Nov. 5, 1929, attracted the public. Though a relentless fighter against social wrongs and injustices up to the end of his life (he died on January 31, 1933), Galsworthy did not write these two plays with the palpable motive of spotting out the evils of society as he had been assiduously endeavouring to do so long, in play after play.

- IV -

When Galsworthy died Shaw was an octogenarian; yet as active, mentally and physically, as many half his age. The British public ceased to look upon him as the 'enfant-terrible' of the English stage and adopted him as its Grand Old Man. His new status was due chiefly to the vigorous popular success of *St. Joan*, produced after he had been written off as exhausted by the critics who were themselves exhausted by the five nights of his 'metabiological pentateuch' *Back to Methuselah*. Shaw, however, continued to give faithful warnings that civilisation would founder if men and women stubbornly ignored the universal law of the Life Force (a neologism for the will of God). He stood by the principle that the total quality of human society is dependent upon the personal quality of its individual members and that the way of salvation does not lie primarily through the field of political and social reform. Yet the social and other abuses and shortcomings against which he crusaded could not be ignored when he had shown them up, nor could the national conscience remain asleep.

What little faith Shaw had left in the labour and socialist movement after its behaviour in the world war evaporated when he
saw the Labour Party Government of Great Britain in 1924 fumble disgracefully under Ramsay Macdonald, the inheritor of Shaw's own temporizing Fabian Society—a fact that the dramatist elided. Here was its great opportunity, and it failed miserably. Shaw reacted to this situation in 1930 with the Apple Cart, a fantasia about the sagacious king Magnus who seized power (not as king, however, but as a talented and disinterested politician) and tried to make sense of the shoddy business of governing. A disjointed but charming play full of bubbling humour, The Apple Cart was also a devastating satire, its butt being a government that is led by the Labour Prime Minister Proteus but is actually controlled by Breakages Limited.

The play is set in the palace of king Magnus of England in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Politics has become a matter to which none but a few people give attention; only seven percent of the electorate had bothered to vote at the last general election. Poverty has been abolished and everyone is comfortably off; for England is supplying the chocolate creams and other luxury articles of world commerce, and the country is securely in the hands of big business, which has discovered the secret of making everyone comfortable; a prophecy of the welfare state. Yet all is not well, for the cabinet is in revolt, because the king has been making speeches that show marked personal independence. He has been criticizing the Government and expressing his own opinions. That his Labour Government will not have, so he is presented with an ultimatum to the effect that he must make no more speeches, have no more contact with the Press, and surrender the royal veto. Magnus asks for a few hours in which to consider the matter. He is, as Proteus realises, no fool and sympathetically inclined towards the problems of the Powermistress General, Lysistrata, whose efforts to run her department efficiently are continually undermined by Breakages Limited, a powerful firm whose financial well-being depends on contracts to repair
machinery and who buy up and suppress any inventions which might stem the flow of breakages and renewals.

In an Interlude we see King Magnus relaxing with his mistress Orinthia. They have a strangely innocent relationship; but she insists that he shall divorce his Queen — for whom he retains an obstinate affection — and marry her. A decorative, extravagant but intelligent woman, she is certain she will fit the role, whereas he feels she is better placed as at present, a fascinating diversion from cares of state and a happy but humdrum marriage. He insists on returning to his wife for tea and in Orinthia's struggle to retain him they fall to the ground, fighting. He is tactfully rescued by his secretary Sempronius.

Late that afternoon on the terrace, the king and queen are visited by Vanhattan, the American Ambassador, who excitedly brings the news that his country has scrapped the Declaration of Independence and decided to rejoin the British Commonwealth. He is hurt that the king, realising that this virtually means a takeover bid for the British Isles, greets the news with modified rapture and asks time for consideration. The Cabinet arrives for the king's answer to their ultimatum. To their dismay he offers to abdicate in favour of his son, become a commoner, form a new political party and stand as Parliamentary candidate for the Royal Borough of Windsor. Knowing that this party would defeat him at the polls, Proteus tears up the ultimatum and admits defeat.

In the Preface to The Apple Cart Shaw wrote a significant sentence, "It is never safe to take my plays at their surface value; it ends in your finding in them only what you bring to them and so getting nothing for your money". This is more a warning than an encouragement to critical interpretation. The particular view of the play Shaw is there anxious to reject sees it as a struggle between "a hero and a roomful of guys". The chief dramatic matter of the play, a trial of strength between king...
Magnus and his Ministers over the royal prerogatives, involves a discussion of democracy and a demonstration of its workings. Shaw avails himself of the opportunity of upsetting the apple cart of democracy. Not that he had not upset that particular apple cart before; but here he upsets the apple-cart of royalty too, exposing "the unreality of both democracy and royalty as our idealists conceive them". He says little more about democracy than he had already said, which is that men and women must be educated for it. But he does say more about royalty, attacking "the figment called a constitutional monarch", arguing in favour of men trained to rule. In the play his monarch gets the better of his democratically elected ministers; but Shaw points out that he is left in a worse plight than they, for he wins by making a desperate bid for dictatorship; and dictatorship much as Shaw admires the efficiency of its action, is, as he says, no more than a personal victory, which must end in the dictator's death or collapse. The alternative is to construct a political system for rapid positive work instead of slow nugatory work, made to fit into the twentieth century instead of the sixteenth.

What the new system should be depends on people trained both for government and citizenship, people controlled by their consciences. It requires the enlargement of the units of local government and the establishment of regional federal legislatures, also the abolition of national frontiers. Had we not better teach other children to be better citizens than ourselves? — is his generalised conclusion. Through such lessons, Shaw would say, we can rid the society of its present wrongs and injustices. The cleansing of social conscience can be achieved by reforms in social as well as political institutions.

One germ of the Apple Cart may be found embedded in chapter XV of An Unsocial Socialist where Trefusis argues:

A king nowadays is only a dummy put up to draw your fire off the real oppressors of society... Finally,
having taken everything else that men prize from him, we fall upon his character, and that of every person to whom he ventures to show favour....

A picture of his dead wife, the romantically beautiful Henrietta, gazes upon him from an elaborately jewelled frame; a remote anticipation of Orinthia, the Beloved.

Further contributions to the development of Shaw's idea seems to have been made by Laurence Housman's political satire, *King John of Jingalo*. At the climax of this novel, King John arrests his constitutional power when he counters his Prime Minister's tactical threat of resignation by himself abdicating King John's disputes with his ministers in council offered Shaw source material for the kind of debate he was able to make amusing on the stage; and Housman had varied these with more domestic episodes, as *The Apple Cart* was to do.

*King John of Jingalo* was published in 1912 and seventeen years were to pass before Shaw set to work on the material it offered. It is probable that it was the publication in 1928 of Granville-Barker's last play *His Majesty*, that brought the novel back into his mind. The closeness of the group of dramatists involved together in the Court Theatre experiment, and particularly the artistic and personal intimacy between Shaw and Barker that had already linked Barker's *The Voysey Inheritance* and the contemporary *Major Barbara*, *The Madras House* and *Misalliance*, was still bearing fruit in 1929, when something like a process of thought shared with his old friend could still provide the background to the particular originality of Shaw's first Malvern Festival Play. When Barker's play was broadcast in 1950, a brief note by Stephen Williams in the *Radio Times* (17 Nov. 1950, p.10) commented on the similarity between Barker's King Henry, a master of the political game, and King Magnus. Other resemblances are quickly discoverable: the King's first interview, in either play, is with a spokesman for democratic equality; and the new opponent
introduced in the last act is the ambassador of a foreign power; abdication is the weapon with which Barker's hero, too, wins the struggle. The topsy-turvydom which characterises the encounter between Boanerges and the secretaries recalls the subtler exposition of double-think given by Count Zapolya in Act.I of His Majesty.

The identities are obscured by great difference of method and style. His Majesty is a tragi-comedy on a grand scale, employing a fine psychological realism as the basic mode of character-drawing. The Apple Cart looks shallow and facile satire beside it, with a theatrical adroitment obvious enough to deserve Shaw's own comment: "The whole affair is a frightful bag of stage-tricks as old as Sophocles. I blushed when I saw it". (1) Shaw was able to work as quickly as he did because of the extent to which he could bypass the profounder processes normally involved in the dramatic working out of a complex theme. Granville-Barker had done this kind of imaginative thinking for him and now supplied him with the tokens of it ready-minted for his own use.

In Barker's play Bruckner is a convert from socialism to fascist realpolitik:

The King. What did you go to prison for?

Bruckner. Optimism. Belief in millenium...in the brotherhood of man and the rest of it. I am quite cured.

The basis of Shaw's critique of large-scale democracy is the dictation (reflection) of Bruckner:

There's one way to govern a country...just one. Find where its real power is...and give that play.

This is echoed in Magnus's comment that a capital "will stay at a real centre of gravity only" and demonstrated in his triumph

1. Shaw's letter to Alfred Sutro, quoted in Hesketh Pearson, Bernard Shaw, His Life and Personality. (Methuen, 1961).
over the united opposition of the cabinet. Lysistrata extends the relevance of the point:

It is not the most ignorant national crowd that will come out on top, but the best power station; for you cannot do without power stations, and you cannot run them on patriotic songs and hatred of the foreigner and guff and bugaboo....

But this is precisely the kind of performance, the Cabinet led by Protens, puts on stage.

The Apple Cart exposes an actual divorce between power and the functions of government and supports the exposure with an attack on the Marxist belief that political effectiveness can inhere in the masses. While the elected representatives of the people make speeches in parliament and squabble over constitutional issues, the country is dominated by Breakages Limited, the big business in which "public losses are...private gains". A similar passage occurs in His Majesty:

.....the men that fool their fellowmen and call it government and the fellows behind that they let fool them....that stir the mud and fish their dirty profit from it.

Boarnerges's explanation of his position had not lost its topicality:

No king on earth is as safe in his job as a Trade Union official.... I talk democracy to these men and women. I tell them that they have the vote and that theirs is the kingdom and the power and the glory. I say to them, "You are supreme, exercise your power". They say, "That's right: tell us what to do", and I tell them. I say "exercise your vote intelligently by voting for me". And they do. That's democracy.....

Before dismissing as fascist the argument that a democratic politician can only be a demagogue, the lesson of On the Rocks is worth recalling. Shaw's attack on blind faith in the Parliamentary system was proceeding logically, developing criticisms
that had never been adequately answered, since they were launched by Carlyle and by Dickens. Carlyle's *Shooting尼亚*—*And After?* was written in reaction against the 1867 Reform Act. It is less easy to choose a single text to exemplify Dickens's criticisms of democracy. The account of the election of veneering in *Our Mutual Friend* is, perhaps, the culminating point. His distrust of the machinery of Trade Unionism and the opportunity it gave to unscrupulous demagogues is expressed in *Hard Times* and anticipates the satire Shaw centres on Boerserger.

When *The Apple Cart* was first produced there arose on the one hand a paean of praise and on the other vilification. Both reactions have been proved wrong. The first was simply an excess of sentimental admiration for The Grand Old Man of English Drama, the second was the delusion that the play blasphemed against democracy. It is certainly a good play, full of vitality, wit and wisdom; the discussion emerges with the usual vigour and lucid complexity; King Magnus is one of Shaw's finest creations. Yet the dialogue lacks the density of earlier work; it sparkles vividly and the lines move with unabated rhythmic grace; but underneath this, those recurring ironies of the stuff of life, seem to be melting away.

In *The Millionaire* (1935–36), Shaw returns to the theme of the inequality created by poverty on the one hand and riches on the other, and asks what it is that enables an individual to rise from poverty to riches and from obscurity to fame.

The Preface is occupied with the discussion of the question: What are we to do with bossess, with those people of commanding ability in money-making, in politics, in the church and in
something else, the talented individuals? They cannot be 'li-
quidated' because without them civilisation would go to pieces,
but we must be delivered from their tyranny. Even the abolition
of private property will not do it, for even then we shall be at
the mercy of "the decider, the dominator, the organiser, the tac-
tician and the mesmeriser...." whose activities result in differ-
ent kinds of social injustices. The remedy to this, says Shaw,
lies in the multiplication of talented persons, 'to what may be
called their natural majority limit', which will destroy their
present scarcity value. But we must also eliminate the mass of
ignorance, weakness and muddle which force them to treat fools
according to their folly. In other words, men and women in gene-
ral must be educated sufficiently to distinguish merit when it
exists and become sufficiently intelligent and powerful to pre-
vent their rulers from ruling when those rulers cease to be
'efficient and successful'. He adds, "only a creed of Creative
Evolution can set the souls of the people free".

Shaw is intimately concerned with Epifania, who seems to
unite what fascinated him in capitalism, the perpetual object of
his attack. Epifania is not merely a millionairess; she has in-
erited a gospel of money from her father, along with her for-
tune. 'Stick to your money', he said, 'and all other things shall
be added unto you'. She is as certain as Undershaft that the po-
ssession of money is necessary to a free, secure and powerful
life:

It's the difference between living on the slope of
a volcano and being safe in the garden of the Hes-
perides.

The pleasure of making it is a fulfilment to her. Others regard
her love of money as meanness; but the avarice which determines
her unfeeling and perfectly calculated economy is combined with
the drive of the born boss that organises the productive capaci-
ties of others to multiply her wealth. For her business enterprises
she commandeers the finances that others have deposited in banks, the profit of their labour. Her Solicitor, Julius Sagamore, identifies her as 'An Acquisitive Woman', and her family history is the history of capitalism, the acquisitive society:

My ancestors were money-lenders to all Europe five hundred years ago; we are now bankers to all the world.

They have not been infallible. Epifania has arrived at Sagamore's office in despair and is administered the usual Shavian cure: die of it or get over it. The cause of her distress is two-fold: that she has married the wrong man and that her income is much less than it should be. Her attachment to the hereditary principle—father-fixation in terms of individual psychology—is insufficient to conceal that the great loss was her father's:

the greatest man in the world. And he died a pauper.

...0 have barely seven hundred thousand a year.

Adrian gets thrown downstairs for revealing in casually critical complaint that the revered parent backed the wrongside:

I have not the slightest notion of how he contrived to get a legal claim on so much of what other people made; but I do know that he lost four-fifths of it by being far enough behind the times to buy up the properties of the Russian nobility in the belief that England would squash the Soviet revolution in three weeks or so.

So far, it seems that the patronymic di Parerga is a sign that Epifania can be set alongside Mr. Superflew, the middleman she cuts out in her re-organisation of the old people's business. These people are all superfluous in the sense of being dispensable in a properly ordered society; they are parasitic. Both names suggest Marx's doctrine of surplus value which Shaw had come to accept as practically identical with the theory of rent he had derived from Henry George, the surplus being "the product of social labour which is appropriated by a propertied class by virtue,
yet there is clearly more to Epifania than that other restless energy and decisive force are the dynamism that transforms the 'natural wags' of the peasant into the processes of an efficient, highly industrialised society, Alastair and Adrian, Shaw's latest varieties of the young man-about-town (as Cockane in Widowers' Houses and Frank Gardner in Mrs. Warren's Profession) are very different creatures. Adrian is the mere consumer of luxuries and Spiv knows the truth about him:

He is on fifteen boards of directors on the strength of his father's reputation, and has never, as far as I know, contributed an idea to any of them.

As for Alastair, he made the money which won him Epifania as a wife in much the same way as Wells's Kipps managed to cash in on the system — essentially the same mode of gambling as Frank Gardner was content to live by. His three ventures into capitalist business were all within the peripheral area of entertainment and indeed proved to be the swings and roundabouts of his fortunes. After the failure of an attempt to get the cash value of his untrained natural endowments ('a startlingly loud singing voice of almost supernatural range), he reaped enormous profits from backing a show, in collaboration with a quick-witted American, by a systematic process of kiting cheques. The anecdote, as Alastair tells it to the assembled company, provides a satire in miniature on normal big business methods and the tenuousness of the distinction between capitalism and criminality. Before he lost all his money in three weeks, after investing it in a circus, he had married Epifania and so exposed the weakness of her father's test, which the latter should himself have recognised — that it

1. "Bernard Shaw and Economics" by Maurice Dobb in S. Winsten (ed.) G.B.S. 90 (pp.131-39)
could be passed by a lucky fluke without any sustaining ability:

.....ninety percent of your self-made millionaires
are criminals who have taken a five hundred to one
chance and got away with it by pure luck.

The generic similarity to the test administered by Portia, in
The Merchant of Venice, after her father's death, is greater than
is involved in the choice of a successor to the Undershaft empire,
which merely excludes incompetents who might otherwise inherit
through birth alone.

Shaw has insinuated a distinction between irresponsible and
inefficient capitalism on the one hand, and well-managed and effi-
cient big-business—like the firm of Undershaft and Lazarus. He
demonstrates the better alternative, in the present play, through
Epifania's response to the test proposed by her Egyptian doctor's
mother, which is a variant on the Judgement Day test of the
Simpleton: one that will, in fact, prove that she is not redun-
dant, that she can justify her existence by earning her own li-
ving:

The profits due to her efforts can be classified as
differential 'rent of ability', as the Fabians, fo-
llowing in the wake of F.A. Walker, understood it;
a differential return going to the better entrepre-
near because of his superior ability. It was rooted
in human nature; it sprang from natural differences
in ability and so would arise even in a perfect sys-
tem. (1)

This fable shows no hankering after a return to a pre-industrial
economy. It does make, in new terms, The Major Barbara distinc-
tion between the brute power, meaningless and irresponsible, that
lies in money and the moral power that an individual, who is high-
ly developed in mind and spirit, can wield through it. Alastair's
chief virtue in Eppy's eyes is his solar plexus punch that had

1. Fabian Socialism and English Politics (1884-1918), A.M.
McBriar, p-40.
held her in control; the Doctor who is to replace him, is a wiser and a nobler being. Epifania's claim, "I think Allah loves those who make money", is not the last word of the play, but it carries some considerable weight. It is capped by the Doctor:

I do not see it so. I see that riches are a curse; only in the service of Allah is there justice, righteousness, and happiness.

When Epifania declares her unshakeable intention of divorcing Alastair and marrying the doctor, we are permitted to anticipate that conscience will be welded to her genius to enable her to serve Allah. If the union between Egypt and England does not make the doctor a businessman, and does not make Epifania a humanitarian, eugenics may combine the two qualities in their offspring. Shaw does not say this in the play, but it is an obvious inference.

'As long as I live I must write'. (1) Shaw died when he was working on his fifty-third play. We could follow him beyond The Millionaires, the forty-seventh in his dramatic corpus. But there does not seem much point in doing so, for they bear little relevance to the theme of social justice, although they represent a good deal of what was enduring and vital in him.

1. Preface to Buoyant Millions, p-891.