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INTRODUCTION

While undergoing the depth of John Galsworthy's plays I have felt the unfathomable substance and the force of life in his plays. His contemporaries had no doubt of his importance. It is his crescendo as a dramatist that has been enlightened in my present work.

Galsworthy is the critic and interpreter of contemporary English life in his dramas. In his plays we have a fine discussion of the problems of marriage, sex relationship, labour disputes, admiration of law, solitary confinement, caste feeling or class prejudice. He treated social problems in relation to the individual or the family. Galsworthy had infinite sympathy for his downtrodden and crushed character. He was pained by the conditions prevailing a society, and it was his healthy desire to reform the evils of our social life. But Galsworthy could not be an abundant propagandist like Shaw.

There is a moral note in each one of Galsworthy's plays. He believed that every work of art should have a moral or a "spire of meaning". Didacticism was the main spring of his art. Galsworthy is a naturalist, but naturalism is a fumbling, halting, clumsy language of the
imagination- it does not have the finality of Ibsen and Chekhov.

Galsworthy's themes are rooted in ordinary life. He selects commonplace situations. Through almost all the themes of his plays, Galsworthy reveals the essential hardening of the human spirit. He had a profoundly humanitarian outlook to life, and he strove to the best of his ability to adopt an objective attitude.

As a realistic artist Galsworthy clearly saw the fruits of modern civilization and was naturally sad. But he tried to employ his art in the service of society. This might seem to some critics as not a very laudable aim but he knew what he was about. He was a realist in art but an a idealist at heart.

Gaisworthy is one of the greatest modern tragic artists. His heresies or heroines are not great men or women. They are not Othellos, Hamlets, Antonios, Macbeths and Cleopatras. There is no dignified hero. There is only a weak, erring individual who struggles against the force of society and is finally crushed down by them. According to Gaisworthy tragic spirit can be infused by means of a labourer, photographer or a
shopkeeper, who can elevate us by means of his grandeur. His playa are soaked in the tragic mood. The life he depicts is sober, even bleak, a uniform shade of grey with very little of joy, optimism, or hope.

Galsworthy’s plots have themes — they are common place; as situations. They do not rely for their effectiveness on the interest of the story. They rely more on the reaction of the characters to a common place situation. Galsworthy sees his plots in the form of a problem. The method which he uses to elucidate and comment on the action is the method of realism and naturalism. It is true that the range of Galsworthy’s plots is limited. He does not regard plot as a movement in the soul of his characters; the plot is not a part of the quest of his heroes for their own true nature and destiny. Galsworthy’s plots take up a significant social problem. He poses it in the form of a significant conflict between the individual and instinctive demands and a conventional, class or institutional ethics.

Galsworthy’s character-portraits are drawn from real experience of persons or situations around him. His characters are living human beings; they are made of flesh and blood. Galsworthy’s characters are types. It was his belief that all great characters tend to be types. They are
not individuals. They represent classes only. His characters are inarticulate. He himself pointed out that Shaw’s characters do not have the feelings which they express, whereas his characters have emotions which they cannot express.

Galsworthy’s dialogue is limped, clear, flexible refrained dramatically appropriate, suggesting much more than it actually states. The strength of Galsworthy’s dialogue lies in the fact that it reveals character, contributes to the acceleration of the pace of action, defines the attitudes and the emotions raised by them, gathers within its net the facts or the incidents which happened in the past and have a bearing in the play, without losing its concentration, brevity, flexibility and naturalness.

Galsworthy’s value as a playwright lies in his construction, his ability to show thought and conflict in emotion, his reduction of plot to essentials, his dialogue and the characterization.

(a) : *Galsworthy and the Prose drama of the Modern Age*

The prose drama of the modern age is to be distinguished from the poetic drama of the 16th century in the recognition of the fact that
the modern drama has a serious purpose to serve and it is necessary to bring it in conformity with the ideas and thoughts of the age. The drama has been dragged into the social arena and people began to discuss seriously the obligation of the stage to make the drama a fitting servant of the people and the obligation of the people to use the theatre for their own upbuilding. Newspapers opened their columns to the discussion of the dramas. Plays written at this period were thinly disguised tracts. The first move towards this new direction was given by Barbom Three who in 1890 set aside one night a week for the production of these new plays “calculated to delight and charm the few”. In the following year the Independent Theatre was established and foreign plays of Ibsen, Tolstoi and Maeterlinck were staged. “With a sober middle-class audience, men of talent again began to write for the stage.” (1)

It might be almost true to say that between Sheridan’s “The school for scandal” written towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the early comedies of Oscar Wilde and George Benard Shaw, there was no English working playwright who could produce acting plays that had any literary interest. The vogue for comedies was once again introduced in the wake of the social changes and democratic freedom that came with the new
century. The now social problems rising in the new setup of values cried for solution, and drama seemed to be a fitting medium in which justice could be done in solving the social and economic problems of the times. The modern dramatist took this task seriously and gave a new outlook to drama, which it had not been in the Victorian age.

The twentieth century ushered the new drama and lent it a vitality, which was never felt in such a great measure except during the sixteenth century. One of the critics has very significantly remarked, "During recent years the drama reached a standard which has never been surpassed except perhaps by the Elizabethans. The swiftness of this transformation is astonishing. In a search for comparison, one speaks of revival or renaissance or, rising tide or, a glorious dawn; but simile of the Cinderella leaps to the mind. "With the lapse of time, new features were introduced into the drama, and every attempt was made by the dramatists to make the drama lifelike, realistic, and at the same time attractive to the common audience who came to the theatres for recreation, i.e. in order to forget the tedium of their everyday life which became indeed very hard as well as mechanical during the period of great industrial developments. The standard of the taste of the audience also gradually improved and with this improvement in taste the
playgoers ceased to be hooligans or vulgar spectators and listeners who formerly used to jeer at the actors and never permitted them to show themselves at their best. The puritanic opposition to the theatre also gradually subsided with the result that social plays or social comedies came to be popular. The modern dramatist took upon himself the cost of reforming society by means of social propaganda through these plays. So, the playwright, the play-actors and the play-goers-all contributed equally to the advancement of the drama during the twentieth century.

Recounting the emergence of drama as a powerful force in our times J.W.Marriot writes: "Is it possible to account for the miracle that happened? There is no single explanation, but we can discern a dozen or more contributory factors all of which seem significant. There has been a gradual disappearance of the ancient prejudice against theatre going, a welcome relaxation of the censorship, a steady rise in standards of judgement, due to the spread of education, an increasing margin of leisure in the life of the ordinary man and woman, a deepening conviction that a certain amount of recreation is the natural right of every human being, and the remarkable competence in theatre producer with his theories of drama as a composite art-a synthesis of all arts. The arrival of the new scenic artist
and the stage, electrician has revolutionized production. But the greatest factor of all is undoubtedly the change in the dramatist himself. The modern dramatist takes the drama seriously. His purpose is the interpretation of life and play writing has become an art as well as craft.”

Modern Drama is marked by certain characteristics which distinguish it from the earlier drama. These distinctions are partly formal and partly material. Some of them have done with the form and technique of the drama and gone deeper and are concerned with the subject, spirit and outlook of the dramatist. Two considerations are mainly responsible for these novel features of the modern drama. The dramatists have taken a serious view of their profession. Drama is no longer a pastime, Its aim is not merely to amuse. It is treated Asian art and its end is to criticise and reform. There has been a definite demand for truth in the execution of the work, a fidelity to life and to principles of form in them. Secondly, a deeper insight into the working mind has made it introspective. From these two considerations arise other features of this drama.

The most important influence on modern drama was Henrik Ibsen. His range was tremendous- it included the mythical, the symbolic,
the poetic and the realistic. He had the solemnity, the sternness and the detachment of a scientist. He also had the meditative profundity of the poet. As a craftsman, Ibsen was superb—he combined theatrical strength, penetrating vision and determined purpose. He took the well-made play from scribe and gave it the passionateness of poetic thought. What had become machinery for theatrical effect in scribe, became organic and vital in Ibsen. He brought in the vogue of the satirical treatment of social conventions.

It was "the poverty of the spirit and the halfheartedness Ibsen rebelled against. "His material consisted of contemporary themes, contemporary conflicts, contemporary beliefs, institutions, environment, and human relationships. He raised them from the level of the immediate and the trivial to the level of the universal. Though very few of his plays are cast as tragedies, but almost all of them are in the tragic mood. He deals with the logic of tremendous social and environmental forces which engulf and destroy the individual. In the realistic plays, Ibsen raised the curtain on the shams, the hypocrisies and the lies on which our social life is based. "The Pillars of Society" deals with the lie which imprisons and truth which liberates us from the shackles; "A Doll's House" depicts the lies on which our family life is based, "An Enemy of the People" is the tragedy of an idealist
struggling against a corrupt society. "Ghosts"—which has the tragic inevitability of a Greek play, in which Fate intervenes and produces undeserved suffering, is a play which utilizes the laws of heredity, the transmission of general disease from generation to generation. The individual struggling and convention, the logic of the tremendous forces which surround the individual and crush his individuality, these are typical Ibsen's themes.

Ibsen brought a new seriousness to the modern drama. In his realistic plays he used completely controlled technique which had the economy and the stability of architecture. He extended the thematic material of the theatre. If there had been no Ibsen, there would have been no modern drama. Ibsen's realistic plays which were really problem-plays in the sense that they posed problems which can only be answered by each one of us imaginatively, paved the way for the new drama. It is correct to say: "T.W. Robertson, Henry Arthur Jones and Pinero all furthered the trend of realism. But it was the genius of Ibsen, especially in such works as "Ghosts" and "The Wild Duck", that set a high standard of excellence for the literary and realistic plays of middle-class life. He expressed his profound insight into personal and social problems in finely constructed plays, written in naturalistic prose, the overtones of poetic universality being conveyed in
symbolism that was verbal.”

*Realism of Naturalism*

Realism is the most significant quality in modern drama. The main trend in the drama of the early twentieth century was a craze for realism and naturalism. These two terms have sometimes been taken to be one, but they are different in concept. Naturalism is a description of style and realism of content. Naturalism reflects accurately the surface of life, whereas realism is concerned with the truth of the experience which it conveys. Thus the two are compatible but not inseparable. The alternatives to naturalism become expressionism or poetic drama, and the alternatives to realism are fantasy or melodrama.” Realism is an artistic creed according to which the purpose of art is to depict life with objective honesty—“to show things as they really are.” The realist values concrete, verifiable details more than sweeping generalizations, impersonal photographic accuracy, more than the artist’s individual interpretation of experience. “The post-war generation of men and women started the demand for ‘reality’ above all things. They demanded that dramatists should show them ‘life’ as is living itself. The theatre was not an ‘escape’ for them.”

One thing naturalism may be said to have done. It bought the
play closer to the spectator. When Robertson substituted realistic scenery for the old time ‘flats’ the audience watched it through an imaginary ‘fourth wall’. Naturalism did something to remove the wall by giving the spectator the feeling that he was seeing things actually happen, and even creating in him the illusion that he was actually taking part in them. For instance in “Justice” Galsworthy represented a trial on the stage. Max Barbone thus describes the reaction of the audience at the first presentation.

“The curtain rises on the second act: and presently we have forgotten the footlights and are in a court of law. At a crucial moment in the cross-examination of a witness somebody at the reporters’ table drop a heavy book on the floor; an angry murmur of ‘she!’ runs round the court and we ourselves have joined in it. The jury retire to consider its verdict, and instantly throughout the court there is a buzz of conversation, aye and throughout the auditorium too. We are all of us as it were honorary “supers”

As we have seen, it was Henrik Ibsen who popularized realism in modern drama. Ibsen’s lead was followed in England by Robertson, Jones, Pinero, shaw, Granville-Barker, Galsworthy and a number of other dramatists who dealt with real life and the problems facing modern society in their
plays. "Most of the great dramatists of the last hundred years have sought to evade the limitations of naturalism without resorting to poetry. Ibsen, String Bark and Chekhov, had reoccurred to symbolism, Pirandello explored the nature of theatrical reality, using shock-tactics to pierce the barrier between actors and audience postulated by naturalism.

Naturalism is sometime claimed to be an even more accurate picture of life than is realism. But naturalism is not only, like realism, a special selection of subject matter and a special literary manner; it is a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a special philosophical thesis. This thesis, a product of post-Darwinian biology in the mid-nineteenth century, held that man belongs entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul or any other connection with a religious or spiritual world beyond nature that man is therefore merely a higher-order animal whose character and fortunes are determined by two kinds of natural forces, heredity and environment. He inherits his personal traits and his compulsive instincts, especially hunger or sex and he is subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class, and the milieu into which he is born.
Aspects of the naturalistic selection and management of materials are apparent in many modern novels and dramas. Here we are chiefly concerned with the English drama. "Only when naturalism became the dominant mode was poetry ousted from its rightful place in the theatre. Naturalism implied the reproduction of the surfaces of life; in its extrem form, it aimed at scientific impartiality, sensation which is alien to art because it excludes the author's vision, his attitude to and interpretation of, the events portrayed."

In the theatre realism meant the study of ordinary men and women. It demanded that the motives which led them to act should be convincing and derived from real life. They should talk the language of blank-verse or the rhetorical language of the past. Declamation and set postures should go, the actor must render character in terms of real life. The drama must become more intellectualistic, instead of dealing with problems of exceptional individuals, or the upper classes it must take up the raw stuff of life. The propose of realistic drama is not to delight by stage effects but to deal with problems which worry the thoughtful and sensitive play goes. The play should be nearer in situation, character, dialogue, action and motivation to real life. It must take up the actual social or domestic problems.
The setting must reproduce with fidelity the actual surroundings in which these people live and move--- no more of the forest of Arden, or the Court of Charles II, or the adventures of a European some far-off land.

Some people thought that realism was not enough naturalism came on the side of stark reality. Zola, with his dramatization of "Therese Requin" in 1873 rasied naturalism a literary creed. "Naturalism", said Zola, "is already stammering its first accents on the stage. The drama will either die or become realistic. "Naturalism demands complete objectivity; the artist is like a "camera with its shutter open recording" but never thinking, never distorting the picture in order to suit his own moods, ideas, passes, or demands. He must select the area or life he is going to photograph; once he has done that his picture must resemble, in exactness and detail, an actual photograph, J.T. Grein in his comments on "The silver Box", spoke of Galsworthy's "bioscopic view of life." Galsworthy's pictures were the exact reproductions of reality, like the moving pictures of the cinema.

Naturalism aimed at being an extract, a page torn out of life. The extract may have no final meaning, no meaning beyond itself, but the fact that it exists in real life is enough. Perhaps it may be as meaningless as
life itself. The dramatization of situations, problems, tensions, conflicts, forces which surround us in real life is enough: the solution, the deeper meaning, they way out of the dramatist. Galsworthy compared a naturalist writer, to a man going about a dark street with a lantern to show others the way and to "illustrate both fair and foul, foul and fair, no more, no less. The aim of drama, said Galsworthy, its "to communicate notion," not to solve problems. The dramatist can only create the necessary mood in which problems can be solved. Naturalism brought the play nearer to the audience-instead of being a mere watch, the playgoer became a participator in the action.

Naturalism therefore emphasizes realism. It attempts to present an excerpt out of life, it aims at a detached scientific objectivity; as a method it involves a wide inclusiveness of detail, a freedom to choose and to deal with any subject one likes. It regards the representation of the real world as an end in itself. It means the study of individual men and women it implies the subordination of plot to character, and involves the integration of situation, character, dialogue, setting, movement, gesture and acting to create a unity of effect. In dialogue, it insists on exact fidelity to the language of everyday life. It has the impersonal point of view of the camera. The artist
can select incident and character but he must repute what he has selected in detail. It demands a strict regard for probabilities. Through a clever use of the classical inutile of time, place, action, and a manipulation of the setting, through its careful selections incidents and characters from ordinary life, naturalism brought the play nearer the spectator, the plays now came to be written for reading rather than only for the stage. The same impression was communicated to the reader: Ibsen, after he had completed “Ghosts”. Wrote that the reader while he was reading the play should feel that “he was experiencing a fragment of real life.”

_Galsworthy and the Problem Play_

The modern drama dealing with problems of life has become far more intellectual than ever it was before, and it gives us plenty of food for thought. “With the treatment of actual life the drama became more a drama of ideas, sometimes veiled in the main action, sometimes didactically staffers.” The problem play became essentially the drama of disillusion, for it stripped life of false sediment and revealed the ugliness and squalor that lay beneath the false glitter of superficial life. The problem play became a precious human document presenting a living picture of human experience sometimes in an artistic and sometime in the spirit of a propagandist. The problem playwright exposed cant and hypocrisy, pulled down old idols
from their high pedestals and debunked the ruling gods. The new dramatist did not merely paint the phenomena of life and character; they desired to reveal the horrid realities that lurked behind the sacred ideals and romantic commonplace cherished and upheld middle class society.

The problem-play is an offshoot of the drama of ideas. It deals with contemporary problems in a resisted and naturalistic manner. It is intellectual. It deals with ideas, institutions, morality, class-interests and social forces. Its theme is the psychological, mental, emotional and moral clash between two opposing points of view. The purpose of a problem-play is not merely to entertain but to set us thinking.

The situation is very important from the point of view of the problem-play. The situation is the initial combination of facts, human relationship, relations within a class or group; the play starts with the situation. The plot is the way in which a situation develops or works itself out. In a problems play, the situation is the outcome of social forces, it is representative of the workings of the social process. The situation must be appropriate, capable of being developed as drama. It must be typical, rooted in ordinary life, and yet have suspense and tension. The situation must be
elaborated in terms of clash of ideas, classes, moralities or a conflict between institutions and individuals. More often that not it deals with the contradiction, between conventional, collective, social ethics, and instinctive, individual mortality. Many of Galsworthy's plays for instance are based on an "inexorable incompatibility" between the justice of society and what is actually just. The situation must not be seen in terms of a black and white psychology; it is not a clash between good men and evil men. Many of the problem-plays do not deal with a developing situation- they only probe into the motives of men and the nature of the forces which create the combination of facts called the situation. Very often in Shaw's plays, the situation conceals within itself a thesis. The facts are so selected, arranged and ordered that they illustrate an assumption of the dramatist. "Every grouping of life and character", says Glasswort, "has its inherent moral, and the business of the dramatist is to place the group and to bring that moral poignant to the light of day."

The aim of the problem-play is to reveal problems as they actually occur in society: therefore the technique of naturalism comes in handy. The XIX century had become more and more conscious of the fact that men were very much the creatures of circumstance. The characters in a
problem-play are representative, typical, rather than unique or exceptional. They are men of flesh and blood facing situations which are the outcome of forces over which they have no control. The problem-play deals with the unfolding of the struggle between circumstances and temperaments within the framework of a specific problem.

The characters in a realistic naturalistic problem-play are not exceptional or unique individual with an independent life of their own. They exist only in relation to the problem. Only those aspects of their personality which are strictly relevant to the problem must be emphasized. They must develop with in the framework of the problem and must not be allowed to run away with the play. They must not be made of superhuman stuff; they must perform typical actions; their motives must be the motives of ordinary life. They derive their force not so much from the grandeur of the dramatist’s imagination as from their representativeness. They are not individualized like Macbeth or Othello or Falstaff. What we admire in the characters of Galsworthy’s problem-plays is not their uniqueness, not their relationship to their own souls, but their movement in the clash of conflicting ideas, moralities of different kinds of conscience; things which are really more social than individual. Because the themes of his problem-plays are rooted
in tension and the conflicts in human relationships - the relation of an individual to the family, to the group, or to the class - the attitude of the individual towards himself is important only to the extent it sheds light on the cleavages in the morality of society.

The characters in Galsworthy's problem-plays, depend more for their life on their relation to the problem. They are vivid and forceful to the extent they can contain the social forces, and in their personality, represent social conflicts. That is why they tend to be typical rather than highly individual. They are not individualist within the play - their uniqueness which makes them what they actually are, rather than merely puppets in the hand of a dramatist, is not brought out. They remain symbols rather than individuals, because a high degree of individualization would destroy the balance of the play and make it appear the tragedy of an individual rather than the problem of a whole society. But there is a certain degree of individualizations - their physical characteristics are accurately noted. Certain tricks of speech are emphasized. But apart from this, Galsworthy's characters appear to be a combination, or sometimes as exaggeration of relations which we can find in ordinary life.
What is important from the point of view of characterization in a problem-play is to treat character strictly in relation to the problem raised in the play. Galsworthy could have treated the Barthwicks and the Joneses with greater accuracy: he might have thrown interesting sidelights on the psychology and the attitudes of the middle or the lower classes in general. But he takes up only those aspects of their character which are strictly relevant to the problem—the law bears more heavily on the poor than on the rich. So is the case with Roberts. The fact that Roberts loves his wife, and fancies that he is killing her by his stubborn stand against compromise, is not emphasized. For it would destroy the balance of the play. From the point of view of the problem posed in the play, only the injustice and the waste involved in a class-society are important, only the fact that they cannot have children, because Roberts is against having them, and how this fact has a certain extent warped Annie's life is hammered home; it is a fact which is relevant to the heightening of dramatic tension, it adds to the full tragic force of the struggle. Every other aspect of the husband-wife relationship, because it has no bearing on the problem in question, is brushed aside. Galsworthy subordinates character to the purpose of the play.

The Irish movement in drama gave a new turn to twentieth cen-
tury drama and started a new trend in the drama of the present age. The Iris
movement, also known as the Celtic Revival, was essentially national in
character, and concentrated on Irish themes and ideas. Irish drama was not
intended to expose the cause of realism or naturalism. Its aim was to bring
back to drama the mythology, longhands and symbols of Irish life. The
imaginative idealism which has always characterized the Celtic race, the love
of passionate and dramatic poetry which has exercised a fascination over
the Irish mind, the belief in the fairy world which Irish people had cultivated
are presented in the plays produced at the Abbey Theatre. The object of the
Irish dramatist was not to make people think, but to make them feel; to give
them an emotional and spiritual uplifting such as they might experience at
mass in a cathedral or at the performance of a symphony.

Impressionism and Expressionism

Two other trends are equally well marked in modern drama. The one is Impressionism and the other is Expressionism, and both these
trends have been pursued by a number of prominent dramatists in our times.
Impressionism was a movement in painting, music and literature whose aim
was to force the beholder, listener, or reader to participate in recreating the
experience of the artist and whose method was to suggest the "impression"
or effect on the artist than to make precise and explicit the objective characteristics of things or events.

In Impressionism the emphasis is on the subjective reception and impression. The impressionist seeks to escape from the tyrannical aspects of objective reality. The impressionist does not accept objective life as it is, but seeks an escape from the world of reality to his own cloud-cuckoo-land. There are marks of Impressionism in the plays of Irish writers particularly W.B. Yeats and J.M.Synge.

Another trend in modern drama is Expressionism. It is correlated to Impressionism. The expressionistic movement had first started in Germany. It was an extreme reaction against naturalism. It attempted to express the basic reality of its subjects rather than to reproduce the mere appearance or surface of life. "Expressionist drama was concerned not with society but with man. It aimed to offer, subjective psychological analysis, not so much of an individual as of a type and it made much of the subconscious. For such a study established dramatic form and method of expression were inadequate, and the Expressionists threw overboard conventional structure in favour of an unrestricted freedom. Their dialogue was
often cryptic and patterned, in prose, and was in every way as far removed from the naturalistic prose of the realist school as can well be imagined.” (10)

The main dramatists of England who popularized Expressionism in drama are Sean O’Casey, C.K. Munro, H.G. Rubinstein, J.B. Priestley and Elmer Rice.

_Galsworthy and The Comely of Maners_

In contrast to these highly technical and confusing trends in modern drama, we have the lighthearted vein of social comedy popularizes by Noel Coward and Somerset Maugham. During the twenties and the thirties of the twentieth century there was a revival of the comedy of manners practised by the Restoration dramatists like Etheriege, Witcherley and Congreve. Though the atmosphere of the modern age did not bear a close similarity to the Restoration atmosphere, there was a general liking for the comedy of manners in which wit and sparkling dialogues played a significant part. The comedy of manners received a set back after the second World war, because the social conditions of the period after 1945 were not conducive to the display of theatrical wit.
Noel Coward was a popular dramatist of modern age. "His popularity rested on the brilliance of a sophisticated but rather shallow wit, blast and cynical, which produced a dialogue of scintillating epigrams; the appeal to sentiment popular at the moment; the effervescent excitement which was the dominant mood of many of his later plays, and above all his superb esthetical technique. He made the most of all the possibilities of stage and actors, and the handling of some of his plays by such an expert man of the theatre as C.B. Cochran increased the popular appeal still further." (11)

The comedy of manners in the years to come did not seem to have a bright future. The Second World War gave a blighting blow to the comedy of manners. "It may return, although it is doubtful whether the social conditions of the period after 1945 are as likely to encourage the display of theatrical wit as were those of the interpellng age; and even the most cursory knowledge of theatrical history convinces us that for this kind of comedy to flourish the social atmosphere must possess certain qualities which are wanting in our time. The comedy of manners is a tender plant and will not bloom if cold winds are blowing." (12)

We have seen that the modern English drama has to do with the real problems of the age and that the present day dramatists have come
to realize the seriousness of their vocation and also the necessity of being artistic. Almost all dramatists have attempted this blending of art with truth. The measure of success they have attained in this decides their place and worth as dramatic authors. If present day popularity is any indication of intrinsic worth, we have got confess that Galsworthy is not a great dramatist. His novels are more widely read and appreciated and are deeper in significance. The plays of Bernard shaw, Bennet, Houghton, Pinero and Masefield have to wider circles of readers than Galsworthy's. Popularity apart from other considerations, is a very uncertain test. It requires a certain amount of directness of appeal and a consequent sacrifice of artistic feelings, -- devices which all authors are not willing to adopt. Consequently, these authors suffer in the popular estimation.

A critic pointed out that Galsworthy would never be a popular dramatist because by his temperament, his balanced outlook and his reverence for art, he alienates to satisfy readers. There are some who want direct teaching, direct propaganda, cut and dried remedies, final solutions and the like. This class becomes disgusted with him because he does not give them vent in the bold and direct way they like. He is too much of an artist to sacrifice his art for the popular applause. There is another class of readers
who do not want to be taught. They read drama for mere amusement. Galsworthy’s admirers are reduced to those appreciative few who have the taste and culture to judge the literary and artistic value of a play dealing with the problems of the present day life. "He does not recruit his readers, they are volunteers." Galsworthy’s plays are no doubt problem plays, but he is not a propagandist of the type of Benard Shaw or Barker. He is an artist before he is a social reformer he is not so much a thinker like. Shaw using artistic methods for his propaganda as an artist whose excellence is grounded on current ideas.

Galsworthy also differs in method of workmanship from she. The latter depends on dialogues for effectiveness but Galsworthy uses situations to serve that end. He has neither Shaw’s lively interest in himself nor Wall’s keen eagerness to remould the world to his heart’s desire. Shaw has got a greater power of characterization and is far more forcible, though Galsworthy beats him in artistic sense and dramatic craftsmanship. Pinero’s dramas appear light by the side of Galswort’s. Contrasted with Houghton, Galsworthy gains by reason of greater finish, subtlety and psychology. But Masefield is perhaps a superior man. He has got a clearness of vision, boldness and originality which we do not get much in Galsworthy. Accord-
ing to a critic, "He stands midway between the purely literary and the purely popular playwrights, and he also occupies middle ground between drama which is entirely for instruction and that which is for amusement only. Poles apart on one hand from the light comedies stage preachers like shaw and Barker. More polished and more subtle than Houghton, he is clear-eyed and heroic than Masefield." Undoubtedly his most striking quality as a modern dramatist is his sense of form and craft.

Galsworthy has infinite pity, almost reverence for suffering which characterize pre-Soviet Russian literature. But the same pity and reverence are not expressed in the large, straightforward manner of Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, but with French subtlety and irony. The writer with whom he has the greatest affinity, to whom he may be said to be a captain extend indebted, is Turgenev. In Turgenev we see the meeting ground of French and Russian art.

Galsworthy is a pessimist, not in the spirit of fire and revolt, but in the spirit of an artist, rather hopeless and compassionate. Everywhere he sees ills- the trampling down of the weak and the poor, the conflict of instinct and civilization, the outcasting of the enlightened, the tyranny of
unimaginativeness and hypocrisy. He suggests no remedy, - in fact, he insists continually on the difficulty of finding a remedy of the sore and shows at the same time his burning pity for it, kindling his own. It has been said that after reading his play one thinks that he pities making but does not love it. “But if he realises with painful vividness the evils and sorrows of life and if a certain hopelessness and dislike of interference keep him from dreaming of a bright future, his eyes are not blind to beauty, to tenderness and charm. He sees them, so to speak, through a mist of tears, but he does not miss them altogether. It is because he is so much more than a social reformer, because he is an artist and a sensitive one, that he cannot glibly set down remedies for the world’s wrong. Galsworthy only shows us the shadows, with the lights that lie beside them, not those lights which shall scatter them at last. He is an artist and the artist’s vision is not of the future, but of today.” (13)

Galsworthy is the critic and interpreter of contemporary English life in his dramas. In his plays we have a fine discussion of the problem of marriage, sex-relationship, labour disputes, administration of law, solitary confinement, caste feeling or class prejudice. In silver Box and “Justice”, he deals with the problem of justice and the cruel working of the legal
machinery. In "Strife" he concentrates on the conflict between capital and labour, and in "The Skin Game" he brings out the conflict between the landed gentry and the new capitalistic class. The main plays of Galsworthy deal with social problems. These varied problems of our social life are treated social problems in relation to the individual or the family. Shaw occasionally dealt with the problems of individual in relation with society, but Galsworthy always discussed problems in relation to social organism.

**Didacticism and Dramatic Practice**

Through Galsworthy presents his situation and characters with impartiality, yet, if we go deep down in his plays, we can detect his sympathy for the downtrodden and the underdogs in society. His sympathy extends even to animals. He has a Tolstoyan reverence for all life. Once the veil of this intellectual impartiality is lifted, the humanist in Galsworthy is clearly revealed, voicing his stroggest protest against the cruelty and injustice of our society. The warmth of feeling could hardly be chilled by the cold touch of the necessities of dramatic art. The humanistic approach to life, and its problems is evident in almost all the plays of Galsworthy and the best example of it can be given from "Justice."
Galsworthy had infinite sympathy for his down-trodden and crushed characters. He was pained by the conditions prevailing a society, and it was his hearty desire to reform the evils of our society. But Galsworthy could not be a blatant propagandist like Shaw. "Unlikely Shaw he never identifies himself with a cause. He diagnoses the disease rather than prescribes a remedy. But underneath the surface detachment bursts a vehement pity for the victim of circumstances. He is often harrowing and the impression left is one of gloom. The stubborn fight between his opposing forces generally end in the triumph of neither and the disgrace of both.... Galsworthy in his role of umpire counts his fighters out according to rules, but as he does so, we can hear him murmur. "What a pity". That seems to be the keynote of the dramas of Galsworthy. It is not pessimism. The rules are wrong, they can and must be changed. Human folly and fallibility is the cause of all the mischief." (14)

There is moral note in each one of his plays. He believed that every work of art should have a moral or a "spire of meaning." Didacticiam was the main spring of his art. His didacticiam is not trasive. His dramas have, strictly speaking, not a moral which may be obtrusive but a spire of meaning, not through a coarse melodramatic opposition of villain and hero,
not even through any intellectual argument, but through emotional sympathy with character presented in such a way to appeal to the spectator's sense of truth and justice.

Galworthy is essentially an artist and is therefore very careful about plot-workmanship. In each play he has got a problem to tackle and he never loses sight of it and its ultimate solution. This problem is taken from the graver aspects of contemporary life with all its strength, frailties and foibles. He chooses such incidents from this life as would enable him to emphasise his viewpoint and reach his goal directly, clearly and forcibly. So his invention and selection of subordinate incidents are very artistic.

The plots of Galsworthy are well constructed. They have real, critical, pleasant climaxes and surprises. They keep-up the interest of the play and save them from being in genuine and dull. "On the whole, Galworthy's calimes are good. They are not included in literary play, but where they do occur, they are reached naturally and inevitably by a kind of sure pointing forward and acceleration from the beginning."(15) The element of suspense is also maintained in his plays. Every incident and development directly leads the plot towards the climax. His plots are marked
with a certain amount of suspense from the beginning to the end. Coats says. "The reader or spectator is on fenderhooks for example, during the auction scene in the "skin Game" so much depends on who will be in the tug of war. Similarly, we hold our breath in Loyalties till the perpetrator of the 1000 robbery is discovered so we do in "Escape," till we know what shall become of Denant. In the Trial Scene in "Justice," when two advocates plead for and against Falder we are kept in suspense till the judge announces his decision." (16)

The weakest point in Galsworthy's art is his characterization. He is so much absorbed in his problems and in their artistic presentation, that his propagandist inclination and artist sensitiveness will not give him much time to care for his characters. The result is that the character of his plays generally remain more or less static. Though he has great gifts of intuition and occasional penetrating flashes into the depth of human nature, he does not generally work below the surface. Galsworthy is a Psychological analyst and he is sensitive to psychological variations, but he catches these only in their exterior manifestations, and the result is not so much a lack of profundity as a lack of grip. For this reason his characters, interesting as they really are, never succeed in being absolutely live. They appear
like dolls, ready to walk when some one breathes the breath of life into them. But they do not by themselves move. They are, as it were, creatures of an aloof, impassive and immovable destiny something like automations.

In Galsworthy, with a few exceptions, his characters refuse to develop. They are meant chiefly to express tendencies. Though they are differentiated carefully, conceived clearly and drawn consistently, they often remain types rather than individuals. Galsworthy takes no pleasure in them, because they are not often living men. No doubt, this defect is to some extent made up by the admirable naturalness and crispness of his dialogues, but they cannot make up fully. Sometimes some development is shown in the minor characters, but the major ones refuses to develop.

Another thing to be marked about his characterizations is the absence of heroic element in it. With the exception of Roberts and John Anthony in "The stife" whose tenacity commands some respect, and to some extent of Jones in "The silver Box" his characters commands no respect from us. We like them, pity them or sympathies with them but never admire or adore them. Generally, they are victims and not heroes. Correspondingly their effect is pathetic rather than tragic. To some extent the
problems which he wants to present for solution, are responsible for this. They would be best presented if his characters are weak, wavering or crushed. But to a great extent this is an inherent defect in Galsworthy's art. Falder is a weak, timid, wavering creature and the circumstances are too strong for him. We do not get in his plays the pure tragic pleasure of seeing a heroic person fighting magnificently with the adverse environment and at last falling a noble sacrifice. His partiality for incidents make his playse and his characters in a weak position, the circumstance are stronger than they, and in their fall there is no tragic awe.

We can sum up in the words of Peter Wasteland: "Galsworthy's value as a playwright lies in his construction, his ability to show thought and conflict in emotion, his reduction of plot to essentials, his dialogue, and the characterization. That is to say, in spite of his failure to take his plays beyond the point of gentlemanly protest, he succeeds because he uses every quality of sound literary craftsmanship. Finally we may note his skill in never making his plays too dramatic." (17)
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