

Social Realistic and Inequality of Galsworthy's Strife & Justice

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Abstract:

Galsworthy was born at what is now known as Galsworthy House (then called Parkhurst) on Kingston Hill in Surrey, England, the son of John and Blanche Bailey (*née* Bartleet) Galsworthy. His family was prosperous and well established, with a large property in Kingston upon Thames that is now the site of three schools: Marymount International School, Rokeby Preparatory School, and Holy Cross Preparatory School. He attended Harrow and New College, Oxford. He took a Second in Law (Jurisprudentia) at Oxford in 1889, then trained as a barrister and was called to the bar in 1890. However, he was not keen to begin practising law and instead travelled abroad to look after the family's shipping business. During these travels he met Joseph Conrad, then the first mate of a sailing-ship moored in the harbour of Adelaide, Australia, and the two future novelists became close friends. In 1895 Galsworthy began an affair with Ada Nemesis Pearson Cooper (1864–1956), the wife of his cousin Major Arthur Galsworthy. After her divorce ten years later, they were married on 23 September 1905 and stayed together until his death in 1933. Before their marriage, they often stayed clandestinely in a farmhouse called Wingstone in the village of Manaton on Dartmoor, Devon. In 1908 Galsworthy took a long lease on part of the building and it was their regular second home until 1923.

INTRODUCTION:

Social Realism in the play, Strife

The directors, concerned about the damage to the company, hold a board meeting at the home of the manager of the works. Simon Harness, representing the trade union that has withdrawn support for the strike, tells them he will make the men withdraw their excessive demands, and the directors should agree to the union's demands. David Roberts, leader of the Men's Committee, tells them he wants the strike to continue until their demands are met, although the men are starving. It is a confrontation between the elderly company chairman John Anthony and Roberts, and neither gives way. After the meeting, Enid Underwood, daughter of John Anthony and wife of the manager, talks to her father: she is aware of

the suffering of the families. Roberts' wife Annie used to be her maid. She is also worried about the strain of the affair on her father. Henry Tench, company secretary, tells Anthony he may be outvoted by the Board. Enid visits the Roberts' cottage, and talks to Annie Roberts, who has a heart condition. When David Roberts comes in, Enid tells him there must be a compromise, and that he should have more pity on his wife; he does not change his position, and he is unmoved by his wife's concern for the families of the strikers. In an open space near the factory, a platform has been improvised and Harness, in a speech to the strikers, says they have been ill-advised and they should cut their demands, instead of starving; they should support the Union, who will support them. There are short

speeches from two men, who have contrasting opinions. Roberts goes to the platform and, in a long speech, says that the fight is against Capital, "a white-faced, stony-hearted monster". "Ye have got it on its knees; are ye to give up at the last minute to save your miserable bodies pain?"

When news is brought that his wife has died, Roberts leaves and the meeting peters out.

In the home of the manager, Enid talks with Edgar Anthony; he is the chairman's son and one of the directors. She is less sympathetic now towards the men, and, concerned about their father, says Edgar should support him. However Edgar's sympathies are with the men. They receive the news that Mrs Roberts has died. The directors' meeting, already bad-tempered, is affected by the news. Edgar says he would rather resign than go on starving women; the other directors react badly to an opinion put so frankly. John Anthony makes a long speech: insisting they should not give in to the men, he says "There is only one way of treating 'men' — with *the iron hand*. This half-and-half business... has brought all this upon us.... Yield one demand, and they will make it six...." He puts to the board the motion that the dispute should be placed in the hands of Harness. All the directors are in favour; Anthony alone is not in favour, and he resigns. The Men's Committee, including Roberts, and Harness come in to receive the result. Roberts repeats his resistance, but on being told the outcome, realizes that he and Anthony have both been thrown over. The agreement is what had been proposed before the strike began.

Social Realism in the play, Justice

The play opens in the office of James How & Sons, solicitors. The senior clerk, Robert Cokeson, discovers that a check he had issued for nine pounds has been forged to ninety. By elimination, suspicion falls upon William Falder, the junior office clerk. The

latter is in love with a married woman, the abused and ill-treated wife of a brutal drunkard. Pressed by his employer, a severe yet not unkindly man, Falder confesses the forgery, pleading the dire necessity of his sweetheart, Ruth Honeywill, with whom he had planned to escape to save her from the unbearable brutality of her husband. Notwithstanding the entreaties of young Walter How, who holds modern ideas, his father, a moral and law-respecting citizen, turns Falder over to the police. The second act, in the court room, shows Justice in the very process of manufacture. The scene equals in dramatic power and psychological verity the great court scene in "Resurrection." Young Falder, a youth of twenty-three, stands before the bar. Ruth, his faithful sweetheart, full of love and devotion, burns with anxiety to save the young man, whose affection for her has brought about his present predicament. Falder is defended by Lawyer Frome, whose speech to the jury is a masterpiece of social philosophy. He does not attempt to dispute the mere fact that his client had altered the check; and though he pleads temporary aberration in his defense, the argument is based on a social consciousness as fundamental and all-embracing as the roots of our social ills. He shows Falder to have faced the alternative of seeing the beloved woman murdered by her brutal husband, whom she cannot divorce, or of taking the law into his own hands. He pleads with the jury not to turn the weak young man into a criminal by condemning him to prison.

In prison the young, inexperienced convict soon finds himself the victim of the terrible "system." The authorities admit that young Falder is mentally and physically "in bad shape," but nothing can be done in the matter: many others are in a similar position, and "the quarters are nadequate."

The third scene of the third act takes place in Falder's prison. Falder leaves the prison, a broken man. Thanks to Ruth's pleading, the firm of James How & Son is willing to take Falder back in their employ, on condition that he give up Ruth. Falder resents this. It is then that Falder learns the awful news that the woman he loves had been driven by the chariot wheel of Justice to sell herself. At this moment the police appear to drag Falder back to prison for failing to report to the authorities as ticket-of-leave man. Completely overcome by the inexorability of his fate, Falder throws himself down the stairs, breaking his neck. The socio-revolutionary significance of "Justice" consists not only in the portrayal of the in-human system which grinds the Falders and Honeywills, but even more so in the utter helplessness of society as expressed in the words of the Senior Clerk, Cokeson, "No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus!"

CONCLUSION :

To conclude, we can assume that Galsworthy's play, *Strife* is based on the social conflicts of industrial life and retard production between John Antony, the Chairman of the Trenartha Tin Plate Works, and David Roberts, the Strike leader of the workers through whom Galsworthy wants to show the adamant attitudes and psychological conflicts of his contemporary people. Through this text, Galsworthy wants

to draw a new light on the revolutionary passions of the common workers against their ruling class for their rights as well as privileges of the early 20th century England. He also intends to unveil the mysterious truth of his social reality. Actually, this paper is made to highlight social realism, Galsworthy as a realistic dramatist, and the impact of social realism in the play, *Strife*, and its significance as well. The socio-revolutionary significance of "Justice" consists not only in the portrayal of the in-human system which grinds the Falders and Honeywills, but even more so in the utter helplessness of society as expressed in the words of the Senior Clerk, Cokeson, "No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus!"

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