

## Realism Portrayed in Galsworthy's *Strife*

Dr. Sushil Kumar Mishra

Associate Professor and Former- Head, Department of English, SRM University, Sonapat, Haryana, India

### Abstract

*Strife* by John Galsworthy, an English writer is a three act play. It was his third and most successful play of the three. Galsworthy is a modern dramatist. He writes well made plays dealing with social problems. He follows the trends set by realist and naturalist theatre. This paper deals with contemporary social problems depicted by Galsworthy in his play *Strife*. This article intends to look at social realism through psychological viewpoints of Galsworthy. *Strife* was received with universal acclaim. Even those critics, who did not like the dramatist's excessive impartiality in the conflicts of the play, loudly praised it for its superb construction and technical perfection. In fact, Galsworthy's dramatic art in *strife* was immediately absorbed into the general development of the English realist theatre. In this way the whole play deals with analytical projection of social reality, Galsworthy as a realistic dramatist, the impact of social realism in the play *Strife* and its significance as well.

**Key Words:** Extremism, Fanaticism, Social realism, Social Issue and Social disparity

### 1. Introduction:

As a pragmatic, social thinker and critic, Galsworthy established himself as one of the prominent and influential playwrights in the history of English literature. He wanted to shed new light on the dark aspect of his contemporary society to bring about a significant change in the outdated social structure of the day. In order to fulfill the craving of his spirit, he wanted to focus on social, economic, domestic or personal problems: the disparity between the rich and the poor, the clash between the labour and the capital, social and legal injustice, domestic tyranny, the class conflict and unhappy marriage. He wanted to focus on the sensibility of awareness concerning the evils of the people through the burning social problems of his contemporary England.

He had a profound humanitarian outlook of life and he tried to the best of his ability to adopt a realistic attitude. His realistic plays are shaped and inspired by high intention and imagination.

He dealt with social reality like a social reformer. He dealt with social reality like a social reformer. His role as a reformer did not let him stay in the magic world of fancy or idealism. Galsworthy chose his characters and plot around the central social themes.

Galsworthy's *strife* is a play concerning the clash between capital and labour, the nemesis of extremism, the conflict between opposing wills, lack of cohesion between leaders and the followers, fanaticism and inflexibility in an industrial society. It also focuses on social conflicts of industrial life and retard production between John Antony, the Chairman of the Trenartha Tin Plate

Works and David Roberts, the strike leaders of the workers through whom Galsworthy wants to show the adamant attitudes and the psychological conflicts of his contemporary people. Through this play Galsworthy wanted to highlight the revolutionary passions of the common workers against their ruling class for their rights of early 20<sup>th</sup> century England. Thus this article aims to look at social realism, Galsworthy as a realistic dramatist and the influence of social realism in the play *Strife* and its significance as well.

According to Galsworthy the word realist characterizes that artist whose temperamental preoccupation is with revelation of the actual spirit of life, character and thought with a view to enlighten him and others. Drama is a meaningful art form, capable of stirring the mind and bringing awareness of noble principles in human life. It is a medium through which a dramatist can portray a life as he realizes it. Galsworthy realized that the realistic depiction of contemporary life through the play would serve a useful purpose. It would make people realize their shortcomings, awaken in them a sense of guilt and prepare them to change the defective structure of society. With such noble purpose in mind, Galsworthy started playwriting.

He wanted to bring to light the evils in society in order to bring about a reasonable change in the outdated social structure of the play. As a social thinker, Galsworthy employs his play to serve the purpose and humanitarian in him appeals for benevolence, tolerance and understanding.

His plays are concerned to significant scenes from everyday life through which his inherent moral emerges. The themes and characters of Galsworthy's plays are based on disparity between the rich and the poor, the clash between the labour and the capital, social and legal injustice, domestic tyranny, the class conflict and unhappy marriage. These ideas shape the very backbone of his psychology.

Galsworthy's method of presenting an idea is quite different from that of Bernard Shaw. Both Galsworthy and Shaw regarded drama as a meaningful form and emphasized its serious purpose of life. Galsworthy thrills the heart and mind whereas Shaw agitated the mind. Galsworthy was disgusted with the current unreal romantic type of drama. The organic human being was the centre of attraction for Galsworthy. The uneven social condition of his time and the tyrannies inflicted on the individuals under them were very disturbing. The poor had to suffer due to economic disparity. The aristocrats exploited their inferiors and the members of the weaker sections of society had to bow before the law that was meant for the benefit of money class.

Women had to live their lives according to the wills of their husbands and could not get protection from society or law.

Galsworthy portrayed the presentation of real life on the stage because he wished to revolt against the artificial and bastard form of drama. He wanted to bring a sense of awareness among people of the evils of their systems by presenting the burning social problems of his contemporary age.

Galsworthy's aim is to communicate emotions not to solve problems.

**Conclusion:**

Galsworthy's *Strife* is a beautiful indictment of the present structure of industrial society. It presents the strife between the capital and the labour, and advocates better understanding between these two great forces of our industrial life. The leader of the capitalists is Anthony and the leader of the labourers is Roberts. Galsworthy advocates for industrial harmony. Both capitalists and the labourers should work in union and should not unnecessarily fight for

their rights. There should be reconciliation between the two parties since unnecessary strikes and lock-outs hamper the progress of industrial life and retard production. *Strife* strongly stresses this type of injustice. It also depicts that the life of workers is utterly hopeless. They cannot raise their hands and walk like free and equal species of mankind. 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. Galsworthy also intends to unveil the mysterious truth of his social reality.

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