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INTRODUCTION:

John Galsworthy is well known as both a novelist and a dramatist. In his works the characters are governed by the social forces that dominate men's life. According to Galsworthy's characters are "As powerless to escape society as the tragic hero is to escape his fate."⁽¹⁾ Moreover he states that, society is a corrupting force operating with a dual standard of morality and justice, one for the rich and the other for the poor.

John Galsworthy has written his play *Strife* in 1909 in London. The thing that makes this play interested is that the play foretells the great strike in 1911 and 1926. This play does not retell the Industrial history. John Galsworthy's *Strife* is called is called a prophetic foresight drama.

It was his third most successful play of the three. Galsworthy was a modern dramatist. He wrote well made plays dealing with social problems. He follows the trend set by realist and naturalist theatre. As a pragmatic, social thinker and oritic. 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 He wanted to shed new light on the dark aspect or his contemporary society to bring about a significant change in the outdated social structure or the day. In order to fulfill the craving or 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 or awareness concerning the evils of the people through the burning social problems of his contemporary England. He had a profound

humanitarian outlook of lie 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.

Galsworthy considered *Strife* his best play. It was written in 1907 and produced by Charles Forhmann at the Duke of York's Theater in 1909, when it was received with universal acclaim; even those few dissenting voices who spoke of excessive impartiality amounting to indifference and cynicism were loud in their praise of the play's construction and technical perfection. During the years that have elapsed since then the play's technical merits have been absorbed into the general pattern of the development of drama, and nowadays one hears carping critics speaking of super flours characters, lack of dramatic tension, sentimentality and so on.

"Ultimately *Strife* is a real time-wrap, but one that's actually quite enjoyable if you go in with the right mindset and a fair bit or patience. For the low price it's certainly worth a punt, but those expecting a polished modern day experience might go away scratching their heads."⁽²⁾

PLOT CONSTRUCTION OF *STRIFE*:

That plot structure of John Galsworthy's *Strife* begins with the meeting between John Galsworthy's Anthony as the chairman and the directors of the Trenartha Tin Plate works such as Edgar Anthony, Fredric H. Wilder, William Scantlebury, and Oliver Wanklin. They talk about the position and the attitude of the company during the strike. By this strike. The company loses the customers and the shares go down, and these bring the company into a bad situation. The snows that fall down during the strike also make the condition of the workmen worse.

We can understand how John Galsworthy showed the theories of tragedy in order to know whether the downfall of the two opposite leaders in his *Strife* can be classified as tragic downfall. According to perinne, the down fall can be categorized as tragic downfall when the downfall of the hero is caused by his own mistakes or the result of his own free choice not the accident, villainy of fate.

In John Galsworthy's *Strife*, Anthony's and Robert's downfalls are not caused by accident, villainy or even fate. Their downfalls are the result of their greatness and responsibility as the leader of two different groups of people. Anthony, the chairman, of the Trenartha Tin Plate works defend his decision to refuse all the workmen's demands. Meanwhile, Robert, the leader of the committee also has to defend his decision to force the

directors to fulfill the workmen's demands. Finally, the directors leave Anthony and the men leave Roberts. They have sacrificed many things to win, but all their sacrifices are nothing.

Strife was Galsworthy's third play. 'After The Silver Box' (1906), which was successful and joy (1907), which failed. He wrote it in a few months in 1907, and sent the manuscript to friends for comment, including Edward Garnett and Joseph Conrad. After being refused by several theatre managers a successful production in Manchester led to its production in London by Charles Frohman at the Duke of York's Theatre, opening on 9th March 1909 for the first of six matinee performances. It was well received and the play was transferred to the Haymarket Theatre, then to the Adelphi Theatre for evening performances. It attracted much attention. A reviewer in The Times wrote :

“When an artist of Mr. Galsworthy's high Endeavour, mental equipment and technical skill writes a play like *strife*, he has done much more than write a play, he has rendered a public service.”⁽³⁾

In New York it opened at the New Theatre on 17 November, 1909. It was one of the first plays produced at this theatre, which had opened on 6th November. The action takes place on 7th February at the Trenartha Tin Plate works, on the borders of England and Wales. For several months there has been a strike at the factory. *Strife* is a play concerning the clash between capital and labour, the waste of force involved in the caste, feeling of capital pitted against the caste-feeling of labour. The memesis of extremism the conflict between opposing wills the lack of cohesion between leaders and the followers, the conflict of intransigent personalities, the inability of peace and prosperity, and fanaticism and inflexibility in a industrial society. It also focuses on the social conflicts of industrial life and retard production between John Antony, the Chairman of the Trenortha Tin Plate works, and David Robert, the strike leader of the workers. Through this play, Galsworthy wanted to highlight the revolutionary passions of the common workers, against their ruling class for their rights of early 20th Century English.

The first act of the *strife* starts with 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 unions demands. David Roberts leaders or 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 Antony and Roberts.

After the meeting, Enid Underwood daughter of John Antony and wife of the manager, talks to her father : she is aware of the suffering of the families, Robert's wife Annie used to be hermaid 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. In Act II, Scene I Enid Visits the Boert's 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 concerns for the families of the strikers.

In Act II, Scene II, in an open space near the factory, a platform has been improvised. Harness was giving a speech to the strikes, says they have been ill advised and they should cut their demands, instead or 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."⁽⁴⁾

"Ye have got it on its knees; are ye to give up at the last minute to save your miserable bodies pain?"⁽⁵⁾ When news is brought that his wife has died Roberts leaves and the meeting peters out.

In Act III opened 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 new that Mrs. Roberts has died. The director's meeting who was 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 and an opinion put so frankly.

He puts to the board the motion that the dispute should be place in the hands or 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 into receive the result. Roberts repeated his resistance but on being told the both been thrown over. The agreement is what had been proposed before strike began.

THEMES/PROBLEMS IN *STRIFE*:

Poverty:

Between 1900 and 1914, though the plight of the poorer classes was serious some afforts were being made to improve it, and if those efforts were perhaps not as effective and

as through as they might have been they represented a positive, almost revolutionary advance from conditions in the earlier part of the Victorian period.

John Galsworthy, however, was so little satisfied with the progress that was being made in ameliorating the lot of the poor that nearly all of his first period works were concerned in some degree with that matter. *The Island Pharisees* (1904) concerned itself chiefly with the problems of the 'outcast' class, which was concreted in the persons like Ferrand, Carolan, *The Irishman* and *Joahue Creed*.

The Silver Box (1906) indicates the destructive effect of unemployment on a man of the working class largely because of resentment at his failure to get work. Jones commits his theft of the silver box. In addition he is cruel to his wife, and takes to drink, because as his wife explains, "He's been out of work two months and it preys upon his mind."⁽⁶⁾

The play *Strife* (1907), puts the blame for this extreme poverty of the workers for a large industrial firm squarely on the shoulders of the chairman and the board of directors of the company. These gentry, "thought that not to pay more wages than Necessary was the A B C of commerce."⁽⁷⁾ Refuse the worker's request for better wages. After six months of refusal to settle the strike, during which the workers and their families suffer greatly from cold and hunger, the board of directors become fearful of the trouble the stockholders will cause them if the strike interferes with further dividends, and grant slight wage increases. The implication Galsworthy made here were that a little generosity on the part of the company and its stockholders, but that any such feeling was deliberately put aside in the interests of high profits.

Social Realism:

John Galsworthy's play *Strife* (1907), here his dramatic art was absorbed into the general development of English realist theatre. Some harsh critics of today who become oblivious of Galsworthy's age speak of superfluous characters, lack of dramatic tension and sentimentalization of the situation arising out of the death of Mrs. Roberts, the wife of the Strike-Leader Mr. Roberts. Despite its negligible flaws, *Strife* was a great success in London and in New York and later on in Vienna in 1913. Its popularity is of lasting nature because it portrays the eternal battle between capital and labour, the employees and the employees. The rise to real power of the English labour movement early in the 20th Century provided a subject suited to Galsworthy's realistic method : *Strife* comes closest, among his plays to a work of lasting value. Through the careful dramatic opposition of ideas, characters, metaphors, and structural elements.

It realizes that how the people got in the grim and despair due to 'Strike'. There should be reconciliation between the two parties since unnecessary strikes and lock-outs hamper the progress of industrial life and retard production. Galsworthy constructed the play so that its spire of meaning would arise from the dialectic of the opposing concepts represented by Anthony and Roberts. They refuse to compromise their principles by giving into the other side; their rigidity of purpose shows a kind of heroic intellectual vainglory, producing bitterness, suffering waste and death. The play has no heroes in the traditional sense of the word. Neither Roberts nor Anthony is a heroic figures. They are the two best men. Both of them are broken. Galsworthy makes neither Anthony nor Roberts a man who governs events. Both have from will and are determined to fight to the bitter end, but they are not drawn in individualistic heroic terms. The one takes his strength from what may be called the capitalist faith, the other from the faith of the rebels.

From the previous description, it is clearly seen that Anthony has a principle that there is a barrier between two different classes. One class is higher than the other and in this case, Anthony's class is higher than the workmen.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF WOMEN IN *STRIFE*:

John Galsworthy never forgets to regard socio-economic life struggles or working class women. As the title "Strife" suggests, their life is full of troubles and tribulations. How they overcome these challenges thrown at them by life and society is what makes them strong. Although strife centers on the conflict between labour and capital, it encompasses the socio-economic life of working class women. The predicament of the women in the wake up or the strike has been brought into full focus and calls for their redemption not only from the fetter of starvation but also from the domination of men.

On the side of the workers, the women and children are enduring the greatest privations through cold and hunger for the winter has been exceptionally severe.

The company had the very worst time continued for five months. Bitter cold, winter and the resentment among the workers is also bitter.

For social dramas are meant to depict topical problems and as such a zealous reformative spirit thus informs them. In this play Galsworthy has tried to achieve the impossible and he has succeeded as much as in the nature of the impossible task allowed him. As Mrs. Roberts, aged about thirty-five is a very patient and forbearing woman. She knows her husband well and tells her friends madge that the striking workers.⁽⁸⁾

"Won't beat Roberts" when her employer Mr. Enid asks Mrs. Roberts.

“Can’t you stop his going Annie? Have you tried? Does he know how will you are.”⁽⁹⁾

Galsworthy maintains that women must have their way and say. They are not merely “breeders”. They are men’s best companion. They have a certain place in society and should get due recognition. Women are not heard simply because they depend on men for all their needs, even for their bread.... It is only the stubbornness of Roberts but also the economic and emotional dependence of Mrs. Roberts which leads to her death for want of care. Playwright’s impassioned plea, though tacit, is that women must not remain deaf and dumb. They must come forward, become articulate and vindicate their position as compared men.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLAY:

The play largely centers about the two dominant figures: John Anthony the president of the company, rigid autocratic and uncompromising; he is unwilling to make the slightest concession although the men have been out for six months and are in a condition of semi-starvation. On the other hand there is David Roberts, an uncompromising Revolutionist. Who devotion to the workers and the cause of Freedom is at red-white heat. Between them are the strikers, worn and weary with the terrible struggle driven and tortured by the awful sight of poverty at home.

At a director’s meeting, attended by the company’s representatives from London, Edgar, Anthony, the President’s son and a man of kindly feeling, pleads in behalf of the strikers.

Edgar – I don’t see how we can get over it that to go on like this means starvation to the men’s wives and families It won’t kill the shareholders to miss a dividend or two; I don’t see that that’s reason enough for knuckling under.

Wilder – H’m! shouldn’t be a bit surprised if that brute Roberts hadn’t got us down here with the very same idea. I hate a man with a grievance.

Edgar – We didn’t pay him enough for his discovery. I always said that at the time.

Tench – Company made a hundred thousand out of his brains and paid him seven hundred..... that’s the way he goes on, Sir.⁽¹⁰⁾

The appalling state of the strikers is demonstrated by the women : Anna Roberts. Sick with heart trouble and slowly dying for want of warmth and nourishment : Mrs. Rous, so accustomed into privation that her present poverty seems easy compared with the misery of her whole life. Into this dismal environment comes Enid, the president’s daughter with delicacies and jams for Anni like many women or her station she imagines that a little

sympathy will bridge the chasm between the classes, or as her father says, “you think with your gloved hands you can cure the troubles of the century.”⁽¹¹⁾

Enid does not know the life of Annie Robert’s class : that it is all a gamble from the “time ‘e ‘s born to the time clies”.

David Roberts has all the mental and moral attributes of his adversary coupled with the spirit of revolt and the inspiration of modern ideas. He, too, is consistent : he wants nothing for his class short of complete victory. They will have to learn that men like David Roberts are the very forces that have revolutionized the world and thus paved the way for emancipation out of the clutches of the “White-Faced monster with bloody lips.” Towards a brighter horizon, a freer life, and a truer recognition of human values.

The play *Strife* appeals on many levels of meaning.... It is a play about the clash between capital and labour, the waste of force involved in the caste-feeling of capital pitted against the caste feeling of labour, the nemesis of extremism, the conflict between opposing wills, the generation gap represented by Anthony and his children Enid and Edgar, the lack of cohesion between opposing the leaders and the followers, the conflict of intransigent personalities, the inability to change with the times and lead a life of peace and prosperity, and the logic that fanaticism and inflexibility alike overreach themselves in a society which ought to thrive on mutual understanding, especially in trade disputes.

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