

## JOHN GALSWORTHY'S SILVER BOX' IS A TRUTHFUL DEPICTION OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE UNDERDOGS

Pratibha Deharia<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. A. Vijyanand<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor

Kalinga University, Naya Raipur, India

\*Corresponding email: deharia1984@gmail.com

### Abstract

*It is intended to focus on the fractional treatment of the Poor and rich in the play. "The Silver Box by John Galsworthy". The Silver Box covers a social mockery of unfair social partiality. The play is a plea for compassion and kindness for the poor who perpetually suffer. It accuses society of its opposing treatment of two men, Jack, and Jones, the one belonging to the prosperous section and the other to the vertically differing. The law which is equal for all is callous and unfair towards the weaker section. The purpose of this paper is to portray both the characters with all their doings. However, both the characters are found similarly mortified in the play, then the role of prosperity and social status in the court which makes Jack a respectable gentleman and the unhappily poor Jones guilty. This paper highlights the command of Galsworthy in depicting the reality of the 20th century English society and the Legal system and creating the audience to be the real judges between Jack and Jones.*

**Keywords:** Galsworthy, The Silver Box, Jack Borthwick, Jones, Social Injustice

---

Submit date: February, 21<sup>th</sup>, 2024 accept date: May, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 publish date: June, 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Correspondence author: Pratibha Deharia, Kalinga University, India Email: deharia1984@gmail.com



English Language and Arts Education Journal licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

### INTRODUCTION

John Galsworthy (1867-1933), English novelist and playwright won the 1932 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his illustrious art of tale which takes its uppermost form in The Forsyte Saga" published between 1906 and 1921 and as a collection in 1922. The second series of novels in the *Forsyte Roman fleuve* would be "The White Monkey (1924), The Silver Spoon (1926), and Swan Song (1928). Maid in Waiting (1931), Flowering Wilderness (1932), and Over the River (1933) comprised the third. The Man of Property (1906) would be the first of the Forsyte

Saga”. Reporting the Victorian upper-class Forsyte family for three generations, it was dawdled by Indian Summer of a Forsyte, In Chancery, and Awakening in 1920 and To Let in 1921. The Forsyte fascination with wealth, status, and acquisition is apparent. Galsworthy dryly though not unfeelingly criticises the hollow narrow-mindedness of everything from matters of property and matrimonial to the ideologies of the actual class he was born into. The screen rises on the Barthwick's dining room. A plate with whisky and a silver cigarette box are on the dining table. Thus, the very initial paragraph attracts our attention to the silver box, which will play a vital role advancement of the drama. The faulty functioning of the permissible machinery is the main theme of The Silver Box. The law discriminates between the rich and poor, condoning the former and condemning the latter. In the very initial scene of the play, Jack says that the saying “All are equal before the eyes of the law' is 'silly' and 'rot'. This is proved in the play. Jack steals his mistress's”

purse which is later taken along with ‘Jack's silver box by Jones, husband of the chairwoman of the Borthwick household. The stealing is exposed and reported to the police who sharply arrest Jones. In the court, all the urgings put onward by Jones are disallowed by the magistrate. Jones's first dispute is that he cannot be held responsible for the stealing that he dedicated in a bibulous state. The magistrate speaks mockingly that, if this argument is putative, a man can purposely get drunk and later obligate a crime with exemption. His second argument is that his act cannot be proprietary 'stealing'. For, he did not do it without any cautious planning. He merely 'took' the silver box in an unwary manner. This argument is also disallowed by the magistrate who facts out that taking an object that does not belong to one is equivalent to stealing. The magistrate pooh-poohs Jones's third argument that he stole Jack's box to spite him. But the magistrate does not let Jones put forward his preceding argument that Jack is left scot-free even though he is guilty of the same crimes as those committed by Jones because Jack has money power and the political support of his father who is a Member of Parliament. The magistrate is biased against Jones because of his bare threat to the police. Brainwashed by Jack's solicitor, the judge concludes that Jones is mentally

deranged and sentences him to a month's rigorous custody. Jack, a notorious womanizer, and trickster, walks out with a successful air, whereas Jones is led to prison, however still glamorously questioning the cogency of the judgment. "The law protects the rich but crushes the poor". The law is unsighted to the causes of a crime. For example, the law does not trouble to take into thought Jones's joblessness which is the root cause of all his crimes. The law is concerned only with tracing who committed a crime and how a crime was committed but never with why a crime was steadfast. This study holds the importance of Galsworthy's play ". The Silver Box covers a social mockery of unfair social partiality. The play is a plea for compassion and kindness for the poor who perpetually suffer.

Dr. Govind Appa S (2020) conducted a study "Galsworthy's the silver box as a problem play"(Govindappa). Arun Daves et al (2017) researched Galsworthy's dramatic craftsmanship as seen in the silver box, strife, and Justice – A basic study". Sapana. S, et al(2023) Social class in John Galsworthy's plays. Mishra, S.,(2017) conducted a study on "Social Issue Portrayed in Galsworthy's Play, Justice"

The dishonesty of politicians is an additional major theme of the play. Borthwick of the Liberal Party is a member of the Parliament. He is a Casanova in sheep's clothing. He pretends to be sympathetic to the poor and the worried. Eye-witnessing the sorrow of the orphaned Livens' children, he suggests taking up the cudgels for orphans in the House. But, after the play, he falls a deaf ear to Mrs. Jones's plea for help to her children. He is scared that his son's misdeeds might get into the papers and tarnish his image. Through his solicitor Roper he exercises his political influence to win over the magistrate. That he has induced or terrified the magistrate is understood in the latter branding Jones a 'nuisance to the community' - these were the actual words used formerly by the irate Borthwick regarding his son.

Now and then Barthwick originates forward to withdraw the case, saying that he does not hunger to be punitive to the poor Jones. But this is only bogus. The real meaning of Barthwick's proposal is to leak from the consequences of Jones's exposure to Jack. Borthwick represents the most immoral politicians in the

England of Galsworthy's time. Galsworthy's dramatic techniques in, 'The Silver Box'. Galsworthy never shadows the beaten track. In all his plays he researches with new dramatic techniques. Like his contemporary Shaw, Galsworthy also uses drama as an intermediate to propagate a message. But their tactics are different. Shaw's fonts hold forth at great length. The speeches ended with some of his characters in *St Joan* and *Back to Methuselah* running into several pages. Galsworthy's fonts never make such long-winded speeches.

The dialogs are short, as in actual life. In some scenes, Galsworthy generates telling possessions by using mere sounds. Thus, at the end of Act II, Scene 2 Mrs. Barthwick does not get anybody but only hears the crying of a little child and is warmed to the degree of intreating her husband to extract the case to reestablish the crying child to its mother. This part of the part economically produces pathos. The conclusion of the play in which Mrs. Jones is unrestricted by her master is also wretched. The pathetic result is created with a bare minimum of words, with Borthwick circumventing words and using a mere sign to turn down the disconsolate Mrs. Jones. Galsworthy is proficient in creating a range of moods and feelings. The first scene, in which the drunken Jack falls comatose with Jones's stealing, is humorous. The class divisions that are sank in whisky in this section assume grave proportions in later scenes. The scene in which Roper guidelines Jack has a strong element of suspense as nobody knows at this point how Jack is moving to fare in the court. The scene in which Jones derives to blows with the police to defend his wife shakes with righteous indignation, as do his numerous speeches during the trial in the last scene.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The academics put a countless deal of effort into the research paper. Both primary and secondary data were collected from books and online resources, including Sodhganga, Research Gate, Eric, JSTOR, Library Congress, Pub Met, and Google Book. Additionally, professional opinions were considered. Expert opinions were considered.

## **CONCLUSION**

Galsworthy habits are many telling animal images. The irresponsible, corpulent Jack is labeled as a 'young calf by Jones. Jack noises his mistress a 'cat (equivalent to the modern slang bitch'. Jones "snarls' like a dog. Borthwick utters that his wife doesn't have the mind's eye of even a fly. In the same vein, Jones articulates that his wife does not have the essence of even a louse. The animal metaphors serve to bring out the animal potential of the characters. Galsworthy habits certain names aptly. Roper, the supporter, is good at fastening and tying people up, as he, does Jack, and the magistrate, Borthwick uses the word 'nuisance' concerning his wicked son Jack. In the court a similar disapproving word is rummage-sale by; the magistrate regarding Jones. This repetition gives rise to the doubt that the magistrate has conventional money from Borthwick along with his distinguishing expression. Galsworthy was a social reformer. He was very much mindful of the manners, education, and code of conduct of the people in his modern society.

The dealings of human beings are reproduced in his selected plays, Justice, Strife, The Silver Box, and Loyalties. The play Justice contracts with the life of a common man, a junior clerk, William Falder. He obligates a forgery under the pressing need for money to assist the wretched woman, Ruth Honey. She is labored by her husband and Falder's requirements to drag her out of that drudgery. Falder is condemned to three years of severe custody for the act of forgery. But when he is unconfined, he is not preserved as a citizen of civilized society. He tries his best to become some employment but he could not get a job at all. When at last he goes to James, he is once more detained by Wister on another charge of forgery. But existence afraid of the horrible prison life, Falder tosses himself down and finishes his life. The play shows the unimportance of the rich and the highly positioned or highly stationed people of the society near the frail and the downtrodden, the socially tainted and the poor, the wretched and the uncared for. They are inattentive a completely empathetic of what human nature in its practical aspect is. They are uninformed of the realities, the strong points, and the weak points of human nature.

Lure plays a noteworthy role in human life this very factor of human nature was nowhere prized, valued, figured, or considered throughout the play. After his release from jail, Falder goes to see his sister thinking that she will help him, but his brother-in-law does not allow her to meet Falder because he is ashamed of Falder. The clerks, when they originated to know that Falder was an ex-convict, started to hiss at him and teased at him. Consequently, he left the job. Only reluctantly James How gives him a job again on the disorder that he should cut his relationship with Ruth Hony will, but now Ruth is the only basis of his living. Falder becomes the victim of the social forces; he is too much tortured by the people in the society after his release from jail. He tells Cokeson: "The fact I am struggling against a thing that is all around me, I can't explain it, it as if I was in a net, as fast as I cut it here, it grows up there". It reflects that in reality society does not treat the ex-convicts very well". According to sociologists, the rigid or severe law is incompetent to contract with human nature in its reformatory standpoint.

The rigorousness of the penal system makes a brute of a man. It is the law that brands a criminal's life as demonic and unworthy. As a result, sometimes the effect of the consequence is shattering in its place of being reformatory. Falder is a young, affectionate gentleman but society oppresses him. In a humanitarian point of view and for the sake of his love, he efforts to assist Ruth, but his fortune doesn't let him do so and he wages the heavy consequence of his death. No one demonstrated mercy on him however his crime was not serious. His sorrow ends with his tragic death. Ruth agonizes terribly at the hands of her callous, cruel, and callous husband who always tortures her. Her sufferings are more painful than her death. Cokeson is a kind kind-hearted gentleman whose heart thaws at the sight of unfairness and unwarranted suffering. He deserves a strong sense of humanity, pity, and sympathy. In Justice Falder becomes the victim of the mechanism of law under which he is severely crushed, Ruth suffers because of her callous husband who always nibbles heavily and beats her, neither has she run away from his clutch nor has she gotten a divorce. In Strife, the families of the laborers suffer because of the prolonged strike and Mrs. Annie Roberts develops a prey of the strike. In The Silver Box poor Jones and his acquitted wife and children are crumpled down

under the powerful force of the Enormous Dollar and in Loyalties Dancy suffers because of class bias. Galsworthy has presented human relatives and their sufferings in these selected theatres.

### **REFERENCES**

- Alary Nicolle, (1994), World Drana. - George G. Harrap 7 Co. L1d., 182, High Holborn, London, W. C. -L P.-293
- Sheldon Cheney, ref. from Alary Nicolle (1988), British Drama, -, Doaba House, NaiSarak, Delhi.P.- 136
- Galsworthy John, 1995 Some Platitudes of Drama, Penguin Books Ltd.
- William K. Wimsatt, Jr. & Cleanth Brooks, (1974) Literary Criticism- A Short History, Oxford & IBH Publishing Company, New Delhi.
- Coats R. H. ref. from J.N. Mundra & S.C. Mundra, (2002) A History of English Literature, Prakash Book Depo, Bara Bazar, Bareilly
- Allardyce Nicoll (1994) World Drame, George G. Harrap 7 Co. Ltd., High Holborn, London, W. C. -1.
- A. C. Ward 1994 Galsworhty's Theory of Drama, Oxford University Press. W. L. Phelps 1997, ref. from A. Nicoll, World Drama, New Delhi.
- George Samson 1991, ref. from A. Nicoll, World Drama, New Delhi.