

**Tribhuvan University**

May 2019

**Critique of Capitalist Ethos in Galsworthy's *The Silver Box***

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

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**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur Kathmandu**

**May 2019**

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr.Khem Raj Sapkota has completed his thesis entitled “ Critique of Capitalist Ethos in Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*" submitted under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2075/09/15 B.S. to 2076/01/15 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Pradip Raj Giri

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “ Critique of Capitalist Ethos in Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*” submitted to the Central Department of English, by Khem Raj Sapkota has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to a number of people for their help with this project .First , express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Pradip Raj Giri Lecturer at the Department of English for his guidance, advice, criticism, encouragements, and insights through out the research. His constant support and guidance help me to lead the research for its completion.

Thanks are also due to Prof, Dr. Anirudra Thapa Head of the Central Department of English, for his friendly presence and approval of this research work in its present shape. Similarly, words cannot express my gratitude toward respected teachers at the department for their feedbacks, insights, and valuable suggestions.

Finally yet importantly, I want to express my love and gratitude to my parents for their constant and life long support and encouragement. Most importantly, thanks to my friend Naresh Acharya who has been there for me through all the vicissitudes and help me to complete directly and indirectly.

Khem Raj Sapkota

May 2019

## Critique of Capitalist Ethos in Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*

### Abstract

*This research entitled the Critique of Capitalist Ethos in John Galsworthy's The Silver Box focuses on conflict between upper class and lower class. Society is not beautiful and charming all the time. In the capitalist society upper class dominates and excludes lower class people. Galsworthy believes that personality, culture and class are not defined by birth. Instead, such categories are constructed based on power, position, and money. Upper class valorizes own culture and class with the help of super structure. Galsworthy without taking the side of any class, he artistically reflects the social reality. In the play representative of lower class, Jones is accused of theft though he is not guilty. He is demoralized and humiliated by upper class Barthwick. The play reflects the 19<sup>th</sup> century England without hiding cruelties of capitalism.*

Keywords: society, class, realism, culture, structures, equality

## Introduction

The present thesis analyses John Galsworthy's play *The Silver Box* in the light of marxist concept of reflection of social reality. The play contains cruelities of capitalism in England. It shows serious and lamentable violation of justice and humiliation of human values. Mrs Jones and Mr Jones are from lower class, who work as servants in the house of a parliament member Mr. Barthwick. One day Barthwick loses his silver cigarette box. The Jones are accused of theft and they are brought in the police station for trial. The Jones try their best to deny the accused with evidences, but their voice is not listened by the police authorities. They are dominated and tortured by the police officers as they remain influenced from Mr. Barthwick. The Jones are honest but they are tangible with power politics of Barthwick. The Jones can not work normally because of the influence of capitalist power practices. Galsworthy reflects the another side of capitalist society realistically but he does not take any active side of the class of the society.

Galsworthy highlights specific socio-economic practices present in early industrial England. He specifically highlights the class differences between the bourgeoisie, the working-class, and the peasants. The lower class people labour hard but it is very difficult for them to solve their basic needs. They get frequent domination and exploitation from various power centers, which are under the control of capitalist. The playwright presents the cruelties of capitalism to mirror the ugly aspects of the society.

For George Lukacs, literature should have objective perspective that simply and clearly represents the subject matter of the society without hiding realities in which lower class people are the victim of capitalist ideology. However, the relationship between literature and society is not a correspondence because all literary

writers do not reveal the ugly aspects of capitalism. Galsworthy attempts to situate the play in socio-historical context in which lower class people are victimized by capitalist ideology.

John Galsworthy reflects the reality of the contemporary society. Throughout the play, people are continuously recognized from which class they are through different factors such as how they are dressed, their manners, and how they speak. In the Play, Mr. Barthwick although well dressed, well spoken and with money, is not genteel and kind towards lower class. He frequently mistreats and dominates the Jones.

The Play centers on the Jones. They are not reckoned as human by the capitalist society. Economically they are vulnerable, socially they are forgotten and morally they are degraded in the eyes of Mr. Barthwick. What prevents them to enjoy their freedom? Why they are culprit in the eyes of Barthwick? What is their social status? Do they get respect by Barthwick? Does Galsworthy present cruelties of Barthwicks upon the Jones throughly? These are some of the issues this research aims to answer.

The play is the mirror of the modern capitalist society. Each and everything is decided in terms of money. People earn money to secure the life and people are being immoral and corrupted in the society, which aspects are captured the text. Galsworthy shows the modernist society which is morally corrupted running behind material assets. It dominates and exploits lower class people only to bonafy upperclass.

John Galsworthy's reputable pessimism clearly comes through: the play deals with pessimistic events and emotions and his characters are victims of ironic necessity in the capitalist society. For the purpose of this project, pessimism is

defined as including attributes of hopelessness, helplessness, general negativity, and situations where the literary characters “glass is half empty” outlook (Cappo 67). The question arises as to why Galsworthy chooses to depict such gloomy story. Does Galsworthy aim to use dark stories to entertain his audience, or is there a deep, philosophical message to the readers behind his storylines? Is there a social justice agenda Galsworthy is trying to push? Perhaps Galsworthy’s pessimism is related to the realism present in late 19th century literature, which favored science and rationality and viewed Capitalism as an obstruction to human progress. Galsworthy could have simply been a proponent of social problem, a literary movement seeking to depict believable everyday reality. Regardless, a thorough understanding of Galsworthy’s life, work, influences, and writing style is important to understand why he chooses to write pessimist stories and how his brand of pessimism depicts social awareness and inspires social change.

Realism is written from an objective perspective that simply and clearly represents the subject matter of the story, even at the expense of a well-made plot with social criticism. Nineteenth-century writers addressed social, economic, and political concerns through their depictions of various aspects of life during that time, and they strove to accurately represent contemporary culture and people from every echelon of society. Realism had a documentary quality in that these authors accurately reported the details of a specific historical era. In their portrayals of love, marriage, and family, realists explored social and psychological factors contributing to conflicts in nineteenth-century domestic life. In fact, Galsworthy is noted for his attention to the complexities of human psychology and the numerous factors contributing to individual motivation. He captures regional dialects as well as differences in the speech patterns of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds to show the

dialectics of society.

However, Galsworthy's ability to write about many sorts of people and conditions is often attributed to his sensitive personality. For example, he explores the connection of class with his audience, and fundamentally asks, "Who is rich and who is poor?" Galsworthy personally struggles with poverty, but finds a way to relate with his audience through the relatable poverty of his characters. Wallace explains, "Galsworthy was able to conceive of that little bit of poverty in us all because he was a little more than "normally" poor, and his characters have that human degree of poverty which gives them reality and causes us to identify with them" (103). In this way, Galsworthy combines his abilities of understanding people with his own autobiographical moments to create authentic yet relevant stories. In his narratives he relates he dictates critiques through his characters, "there is a notable tendency to make the narrator and one or two personages the transparent mouth-pieces of certain clear-cut opinions on women's rights, sexuality, patriotism, and conjugal morality" (Wallace 294).

Different critics have examined how the play excels in the depiction of the contemporary society and its discursive practices. Lee Yan has discussed this play from the perspective of power balance. He further asserts:

Mr.Barthwick evidently establishes himself as a domineering male character and the power relation between Mrs Jhonand Mr.Barthwick is not balanced. There are imbalance power relations between groups of people or between institutions/state, there will be a production of knowledge. As the play proceeds, the interdependent relation between education discourse and other discourses like class and marriage is revealed. (68)

It is shown that acculturation and language retraining give Mrs Jones better chance

for marriage. Mr. Barthwick says “By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I’ve done with you”

(Galsworthy-6). He also predicts that Mrs Jhon could marry an officer or the son of a marquis, a significant advance on the social ladder for her. Higher education secures a better financial condition, and provides better chances for marriage. Mr. Barthwick predicts a plentiful life of luxury, chocolates, taxis, gold, and diamonds for Eliza. .

Elsie Adams analyses this play from the feminist perspective. According to her there are several sorts of female stereotypes in Galsworthy’s works. She further asserts:

The play, presents us with various combinations of the traditional figure of temptress, goddess, or mother (usually with a capital M); and, even when he creates a woman who has broken out of a traditional "female" role, he tends to draw on another literary type - the “emancipated” woman... career girl. (17-22)

In fact, Galsworthy was quite a reformist and actually favoured the idea of the emancipated woman which will be made clear through the further analysis of *The Silver Box*. Feminist issue in the play provides extra light to the issues of the females.

During the time, that Galsworthy wrote this play the feminist movement was at full blast. Critics were marching and protesting in London for women’s suffrage.

Galsworthy himself can also be seen as some sort of an emancipator. A well-known feminist comment by Galsworthy: “a man is a woman without petticoats” (Adams 20), indicates that Galsworthy saw men and women as equals. Apart from the feminist criticism, there are some of the critics to counter misogyny in the play. Loluis

Crompton claims that Mr Barthwick is not just an unfriendly man without manners, but that he actually suffers from a mental disorder called the Asperger syndrome. For Crompton:

. . . Aspergen has difficulties in social interaction, lacks empathy, or has difficulties with it, has trouble with social role-taking and has unusual responses to the environment similar to those in autism. . . . Aspergens often lack common sense. They may be socially aware but display inappropriate reciprocal interaction, and are often clumsy, awkward and fidgety.... They can almost always achieve professional success, usually in highly specialised academic professions. (397)

Although Galsworthy desires to stray from realism, it bleeds through his writings largely due to the influence of contemporary socio historical contexts of England. Although all these critics have raised different issues in the writing of Galsworthy, the issue realism is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries. The present research adopts the theory of reflection model of literature as conceptualized by George Lukacs and Richard Hoggard to explore pros and cons of the drama by Galsworthy.

Marxism has had its main influence among workers and intellectuals in capitalist countries. In the Western countries, even non-Marxist intellectuals, particularly sociologists and historians, have drawn considerable insights from Marx's writings. Marxism considerably modifies to deal with their special mixture of primitive and advanced capitalist conditions which has clarified the nature of the enemy for many liberation movements. Terry Eagleton says that "Marx's dialectical approach to it insures that his fuller subject is always capitalist society. The actual changes that occur in history are seen here as the outcome of opposing tendencies, or contradictions"(54). Marx's dialectic is materialist. Marx was primarily concerned with capitalism as lived rather than as thought about, but people's lives also involve consciousness.

Lukacs's theory of realism is based upon objective reflection of the society. Lukacs's book *Reification* clearly demonstrates the nature of the capitalist society. He states that "The basis for any correct cognition of reality whether of society is the recognition of the objectivity of the external world, that is, its existence independent of human consciousness" (87). Any understanding of the external world is nothing more than a reflection in consciousness of the world that exists independently. This basic fact of the relationship of consciousness to being also serves for the artistic reflection of reality. The theory of reflection provides the basis for all forms of theoretical and practical mastery of reality through consciousness. Thus it is also the basis of the theory of artistic reflection of reality.

The worker is alienated from the distinctive potential for creativity and community. Through labor that alienates them from their activity, workers gradually lose their ability to develop the finer qualities. The worker's products "pass from one hand to another, changing form and names along the way—value, commodity, capital, interest, rent wage—depending chiefly on who has them and how they are used" (Lukacs 141). The worker has constructed the necessary conditions for reproducing his own alienation. The world that the worker has made and lost in alienated labor reappears as someone else's private property. Marx's main examples of alienation are drawn from the life of workers. Other classes are also alienated to the degree that they share or are directly affected by these relations.

Richard Hoggard argues that true realism then can be defined as the method which presents Man as a whole and society as a whole, that is, while it emphasises the completeness of the human personalities it also attempts to clarify the essential, human, socio-historical factors determining men and times. "It examines in depth the reality behind appearance and presents the dialectical process in which reality is

transformed into appearance and is manifested as a phenomenon and reveals the other side of the process in which the phenomenon in motion discloses its own particular reality" (89). Furthermore, these individual aspects not only contain a dialectical movement but also stand in continuous interaction as elements of a continuous process. True realism thus represents life in its totality, in motion, development and evolution.

The play begins with a night scene in which we see young Barthwick returning home completely drunk. He enters the room with a purse in his hand which he has stolen for a joke from the girl with whom he has been spending the evening. He is accompanied by a rather less drunk working man, who met him outside the house and helped him find the keyhole for his key. Barthwick falls asleep and Jones, the working man, seizes the opportunity to steal the street girl's purse and silver cigarette box from the table. The play then goes on to show how different is the consequences for an upper class and a lower-class criminal. Barthwick is visited by the girl, who demands her purse back, but she is satisfied when Barthwick's father offers her some money. Jones is sentenced to a month's hard labor, no one thinks about him at all. In this play a case in portrayed of Jack and Jones. Jack is a pleasure seeking man and the son of a rich member of parliament. Law favours the rich and crushes the poor. In a lot of different especially capitalist cultures there is an upper class rich, powerful and in control. Then there was a middle class, less comfortably off than the upper class, and certainly less powerful, but respected nonetheless. At the bottom there is the lower working class making up the majority of people, rarely having the necessities of life and never considered by other classes no matter how long or hard they work. Within the framework of Marxist reflection model the research examines the negative effects of capitalism upon working class people. Even it highlights how capitalism manipulates

and twists cultural practices, language and social conducts to dominate and exploit working class people.

Jones meets Jack at night and helps him to open the door of his house, where upon Jack offer him wine as he has no money to pay . Barthwick cross questions Mrs. Jones and finds out the previous history of him. It reveals that Mr. Jones had a child before marriage. He decides to discontinue the poor Mrs. Jones, who is honest. Though Galsworthy obviously states the theme of this play in the preface to be confined to tragic tone, the true concern of the play centers on the class system and the resulting changes of a capitalist society.

For Raymond Williams Society, economy, and culture are three concepts whose meaning has changed recently, each change in one affecting the meaning of the other two as well. In short, each concept has conformed to a bourgeois model: society, for instance, previously referred to active fellowship or company but in a bourgeois context refers to “civil society,” or commercial society (56). The meaning of economy has changed from management of household and community to the system of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of modern capitalism. “Culture has also taken its particular place within the bourgeois model”: previously referring to the process growth and tending of crops, animals, and eventually human faculties, it responded to changes in the other two concepts to become equated with the concept of Mrs. Jonestion in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (56). The concept of culture is for Williams symbol of the condition of literary theory. It is a concept with a long development through complicated and even contradictory uses, and is undergoing a crisis in its stability as a concept:

When the most basic concepts – the concepts, as it is said, from what we begin – are suddenly seen to be not concepts but problems, not analytic problems

either but historical movements that are still unresolved, there is no sense in listening to their sonorous summons or their resounding clashes. We have only, if we can, to recover the substance from which their forms are cast. (11)

Mrs. Jones herself underwent a crisis at this time, severing its links with the concept of "civil society" which had an exclusively commercial and economic meaning and instead "expressed two senses which were historically linked: an achieved state, which could be contrasted with 'barbarism', but now also an achieved state of development, which implied historical process and progress (45).

Galsworthy, signifies that it is speech alone that makes the difference between Mrs. Jones and a duchess, therefore endowing "this action line with a fine satiric thrust at the basic artificiality of social ranking" (Cappo, 57). He preferred social poise and considerateness to mere crudity, harboring even some "limited admiration for the dignified code of manners of the Victorian period," though he found some its artificialities cramping (Cappo, 143). Galsworthy also uses Mr. Barthwick' character to evoke his own personal thoughts within the play, making other satiric comments on the place of speech in British society and on "the deplorable lack of suitable training in the phonetics of the English language" (57). In the Preface, Galsworthy enthusiastically applauds the new scientific approach to language by phoneticians, "if only because it raised pronunciation above the intense self-consciousness and class snobbery which had always bedeviled the subject in England" (Cappo, 142).

Mr. Barthwick portrays the white-collar class through his treatment of Mrs. Jones. The Jones is "antithetical to Mr. Barthwick in all but his interest in linguistics" claims one critic (Nethercot 216). Shown as gentle and courteous, he is immediately touched by "Mrs. Jones's vulgarity and innocence" by offering to pay for her lessons himself (216). Even Mrs. Jones appreciates, accrediting his treatment as a catalyst.

"Your calling me that day when I first came to Wimpole Street," claims Mrs. Jones, "That was the beginning of self-respect for me" (79). Contrasting from Jack, Mr. Barthwick claims he has "created this thing out of squashed cabbage leaves of Covent Garden" in reference to Mrs. Jhon (78). *The Silver Box* that Jones took away from Jack was out of spite. Jones is an honest man who wants to work he says. A man wants to sweat his soul and to keep breath in him and ain't allowed that's Justice that's freedom and all the rest of it 6 Jones feels very odd when he is not working when he is out of employment. He drinks heavily. He drinks but of another kind of work that sets him to drink. According to Galsworthy: "The key note of Barthwick is want of courage. He thinks himself full of Principles and invariably compromises in the face of facts. The key note of Mrs. Barthwick is want of imagination" (78).

Williams opposes his understanding of language to a vestige of linguistic idealism, structuralism. Structuralism is a key starting point for Williams because a variant of Marxism has attempted to synthesize itself with French structuralism, and he wishes to differentiate himself from this particular strain of Marxism. Williams' criticism of structuralism is, in brief, that it gives temporal priority to a system of values (in the Saussurian sense) over empirical "utterances," which are considered derivative from the structure of a language which is seen as given. For Williams, this relationship between structure and utterance embodies a political relationship between observer and observed, "where the 'language-habits' studied, over a range of speech of conquered and dominated peoples to the 'dialects' of outlying or socially inferior groups, theoretically matched against the observer's 'standard', were regarded as at most 'behavior', rather than independent, creative, self-directing life." (27) By privileging structure over utterance structuralism participates in an imperialist project, taking over from 19<sup>th</sup> Century linguistics the objectification of languages, particularly

“foreign” languages or “provincial” dialects. Treating language as a stable object that is constitutive of individual thinking and communication denies individual agency and creativity. For Williams, any understanding of language as constitutive of humanness must take into account its indissolubility from acts of self-creation and expression.

Mrs Jones metamorphoses not only into the "duchess" Mr. Barthwick promises, or the shop girl Mrs Jones wants, but also rather into a self-reliant professional woman. Mrs Jones originates as the "incarnate insult to the English language," according to Mr. Barthwick, yet her personal evolution of character is dramatically shown by Galsworthy as a theme of favoritism (11). As Mrs Jones begins as Mr. Barthwick' pupil, he teaches Mrs Jones all that he knows about phonetics and speech, yet it was up to her to find her own strength. Soon the true romance of the play is revealed: The growth itself and the improbable transformation of Mrs Jones was actually the intended happy ending. Galsworthy calls the play a romance "because it is the story of a poor girl who meets a gentleman at a church door and is transformed by him, like Cinderella, into a beautiful lady" ( Galsworthy 63). In fact, Mrs Jhon grows to realize that she does not need Mr. Barthwick. "She learns that she is a human being with all the potential that implies," says one critic of Mrs Jones (Carr 66). Her original state of being as a prude who is happy in a sexual relationship with Mr. Barthwick changes as she enters into a normal, sexual relationship with Mr. Jones.

According to Lukacs, a writer must possess a firmly established, vital ideology in order to see the world in its contradictory dynamics, and to present the contradictions of life in a fruitful ordered context; the world-view plays an important role in artistic creation in that it enables the artist to understand the essence of social realities and to choose between the Important and the superficial, the crucial and the

episodic. Perspective or world-view is crucial to a writer's art since it acts as a principle of selection, as the criterion by which a writer selects the details which are necessary for the depiction of 'totality' and orders them in accordance with their significance in the work of art. However, the interaction between world-view/ideology and composition is not a direct or simple one in Lukacs's view. (Lukacs 307). The world-view of a writer is influenced, among other things, by his personal and social history, that is, by his class - position and the Ideological climate and the socio-political forces of his age; its manifestation in literature depends largely on his imagination and his ability for abstraction and concrete presentation. Therefore, the relation between world-view and literature is mediated, complex and dialectical. The production of language needs expanded form, and the production of social relationships and the reproduction of the species, such that all human activity is inherently social activity. The result is that there is no such thing as "pure consciousness," or isolated theoretical consciousness, but consciousness that always and only exists in terms of the material elements of language and that is engaged in practical and social activity.

In the Play, Mr. Barthwick's ill mannered remarks do not stop Mrs Jone from liberating herself from his oppressive words, for she resolves to become a phonetics teacher, much to Mr. Barthwick dismay. When Mr. Barthwick questions the credibility of such an occupation for Mrs. Jones, she responds, "What a fool I was not to think of it before! You can't take away the knowledge you gave me. You said I had a finer ear than you. And I can be civil and kind to people, which is more than you can" ( 88). He even ignores the question of how she is to earn her living afterwards.

Mrs. Jones: you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you. Once for all, understand that I go my way and do

my work without caring two pence what happens to either of us. I am not intimidated, like your father and stepmother. So you can come back or go to the devil: which you please. (85)

Ms. Jones masters even more than the pronunciation of the educated classes, but also a new dignity and even calculation in her emotional outburst. Obviously, her old commonness has abandoned her at the very moment that the experiment has ended and she must find her way independently in life. Regardless, Mrs. Jones's development is limited, for she never proceeds past the stage of judging the world in correlation to herself. She remains a "typical petite bourgeois, who, as Mr. Barthwick puts it, sees life and personal relations in commercial terms" (Crompton 147). Mrs. Jones's unique ascent, though, to the middle class is juxtaposed to the established bourgeois family, the Unknown ladys.

Williams express that relationship between base and superstructure is vague. More centrally, base and superstructure are taken as objective categories that exist in some sort of a hierarchical relationship of importance favoring the base. As Williams and Lukacs both try to demonstrate, institutions, forms of consciousness, and institutional and political and cultural practices are inseparable from economic relations and practices, such that the two cannot be treated as separate entities. Williams concludes that the neither the base nor the superstructure can be considered as separate objects, as:

It is one of the central propositions of Marx's sense of history, for example, that in actual development there are deep contradictions in the relationships of production and in the consequent social relationships. There is therefore the continual possibility of the dynamic variation of these forces. The variations of the superstructure might be deduced from this fact alone, were it not that the

‘objective’ implications of ‘the base’ reduce all such variations to secondary consequences.(77)

Material production is for Marx only a subset of all productive forces, but it has been taken as representative of all productive forces in a society, such that production has been equated only with economic activity, in turn identified with the base that determines the superstructure (not in the sense of providing limits and pressures but in the reductive sense of reflection) thus giving rise to economism. Marx himself gives emphasis to material production because he is studying production under the system of capitalism, which sharply divides between material production and society, culture, and aesthetics, all of which could be considered types of production

Galsworthy compares the middle class and lower class mannerisms using Unknown ladies and Mrs Jhon Alfred's interaction throughout the play. Galsworthy's view of the middle class begins at the start of the play, when the Unknown ladies' have difficulty getting a cab, thus symbolizing the economic predicament and their problems in functioning on a level of society accustomed to using cabs. Bernard Galsworthy's view of the lower class, again, is portrayed through the brute necessity prompting Mrs Jhonto " wheedle a few last coins from the opera-goers" at Covent Garden (Crompton, 142). Crompton comments on *The Silver Box*, "All the time Galsworthy is treating us to Mrs. Jones's plangent diphthongs he is also dissecting the manners of the girl in the middle-class family, Unknown lady" (143). Compared to Mrs. Jones, Clara comes off worse, for she is pushing and deals poorly with strangers, especially with that of Mr. Barthwick at the introduction of the play. Extremely suspicious, she is just as quick to take offense as Mrs. Jones, yet her retort is not quite as comical. Mrs. Jones's pushiness, on the other hand, is easier to understand considering her desire to escape from the slums and attain self-respect and

independence required of a bourgeois world.

Typification has in fact become very popular in Marxist cultural theory which has searched for figures who represent dynamic social processes, “the elements and tendencies of reality that recur according to regular laws, although changing with the changing circumstances.” (Lukacs 102). The idea of being a representative example of something, such as an ideal type, though, presumes a reality, a something of which the ideal type can be an example and against which it can be verified, reintroducing the dualism and objectification of social reality, on the other hand, is distinguished from the concept of correspondence, which can refer to either resemblances between seemingly different practices based on their growth form a shared social process, analogies between the activities, or displaced connections in Adorno, where “while the immediate evidence is direct, the plausibility of the relation depends not only on a formal analysis of the historical social process but on the consequent deduction of a displacement or even an absence.” (104) All these senses of correspondence refer to similarities between appearances, whereas homology refers to similarities between forms and structures of things, or in origin and development. So the homology between different events or objects demonstrates the form of social and historical development by which they are organized, On the other hand, ‘correspondence’ and ‘homology’ can be in effect restatements of the base-superstructure model and of the ‘determinist’ sense of determination. Analysis begins from a known structure of society, or a known movement of history. Specific analysis then discovers examples of this movement in cultural works. The most evidence practical effect is an extreme selectivity. Only the cultural evidence which fits the homology is directly introduced. (106)

The only concept that can avoid treating history and social structure as known

objects that can be made into the basis of social analysis is One scene of importance in this matter is at Mrs. Mr. Barthwick' at-home, "where Mrs. Jones, now master of enunciation as a parrot might be master of it, delivers pompous recitations and spicy Lisson Grove gossip with the same impeccable air"(143). Mrs Jone reveals of her aunt's death with a mixture of her new façade and a hint of her old humorous vulgarity. She does manage to think and feel naturally behind the veneer, though. Contrarily, Clara is full of pretentiousness, lessening her role as a vital character. She even outdoes Mrs. Jones's parroting by repeating the word "bloody" as the latest thing. Galsworthy's distaste for profanity provoked him to overuse the word in order to ridicule Clara's naivete. As Clara and Mrs Jhonand Alfred Alfred similarly diverge in light of social contentions.

Mrs. Jones's reaction to her transformation differs from that of her father's, Alfred , due to their contrasting circumstances of rising into higher classes. Introduced by Galsworthy with the full complement of phonetically spelled cockney sound the play remains "the most complete and most effective treatment of low speech generally and cockney dialect in particular" (Lukacs 50). Their similarities cease to exist at this point. Alfred Alfred, a common dustman, is a "thinking man" (52). He possesses better than average, if not superior, intellectual qualifications, though with questionable moral proficiency. The latter characteristic translates to his unique brand of rhetoric, an unembarrassed avocation of drink and pleasure at other people's expense. Alfred's character incorporates Galsworthy's aim to expose the "vanities of philanthropy" for he shows how a man's behavior is a consequence not of his character, but of his situation (Crompton 144). Alfred differs from Mrs Jones in this aspect, for he is thrust into a higher social class, not by updated speech or manner, but

by money.

Lukacs could be described as "literature of the people", as it "attempts to relate literature to the social and economic history within it has been produced" (67). He tries to break off traditional ties, and emphasise social and economic limitations that surrounds literature. He argues:

It is true that Culture has always been embedded in our society, however it only became more widespread with the emergence of industrialisation and the bourgeoisie, as "bourgeois society was created by a capitalist mode of production . Culture is a process of surplus value, which will always be controlled by social and economic factors, however without it, our society would never develop. (67)

Obviously, the relationship between literature and society must have been conceived of as intimate for the methods of one discipline to seem applicable to the objects of another: literature was embedded in social practices, was itself a social practice, yielding representations of other social phenomena, and could be analyzed as the worldview of a class, an ethnic group, a nation, or a gender at a particular historical moment. Most of these "approaches" assumed that in the related dyad literature/society, "literature" was the representational, symbolic, or signify ingentity, while "society" was the set of human relationships and conditions informing the lived experience of the readers and writers. No matter how intertwined literature and society were imagined to be, however, the relationship between literary and social studies in those days in America was essentially nonreciprocal.

Galsworthy is critical of society and its conforming classes, both lower and upper statuses. Those unfortunate enough to have grown up in the slums of England give away their lowly origins due to their distinct mannerisms and accents. For

comical use, Galsworthy implements these characteristics in Mrs. Jones's character, only to emphasize her refinement. Galsworthy also takes care to use this judgement solely on language to ridicule the superficiality of upper class. Mr. Barthwick's role in the play compares to benevolent character of Jack. While Mr. Barthwick demeans Mrs. Jones from the start, Jack treats Mrs. Jones as an equal member of society. Mr. Barthwick's mean behavior, though, did not discriminate between Mrs. Jones and her own mother. Another view of these characters is both of Mrs. Jones's teachers' failure to realize the sacrifices their student has made, only to view their final product, a fine young lady. This very transformation, though, does have its perks. Mrs. Jones gains the strength she needs to venture out into the professional world by herself after being forced to change her ways by Mr. Barthwick and Jack. This very strength results in her independence and departure from Mr. Barthwick, only to marry Freddy Unknown lady. Unknown lady, though, is used by Galsworthy to compare to Mrs. Jones in the area of middle-class manners. The last of Galsworthy's illustrious comparisons is that of Mrs. Jones and her father, Alfred. Both of these characters' views differ in the perspective of how each attains their middleclass status. Alfred is forcefully burdened by the responsibility of actually having money, whereas Mrs. Jones tries to change everything about her to gain a respectful position in the upper class. Mr. Alfred's character exemplifies Galsworthy's contempt for the poor class and the morals that have risen from such standards. Status quo of Galsworthy's era reveals the criticism of social rank to be the unified theme of the play.

Richard Hoggard, a cultural anthropologist, is responsible for the most systematic statement of cultural materialist principles. Cultural materialism is a system theory of society that attempts to account about the social reality : origin, maintenance and change. Cultural Materialism is based on two key assumptions about

societies. First, the various parts of society are interrelated. When one part of society changes, other parts must also change. This means that an institution, such as the family cannot be looked at in isolation from the economic, political, or religious institutions of a society. When one part changes it has an effect on other parts of the system. This component of sociocultural systems consists of the organized patterns of social life carried out among the members of a society. Each society must maintain secure and orderly relationships among its people, its constituent groups, and with neighboring societies. Hoggard further asserts:

Infrastructure, Structure, and Superstructure. The major principle of cultural concerns the relationships between these components ...the conscious and unconscious cognitive goals, categories, rules, plans, values, philosophies, and beliefs about behavior elicited from the participants or inferred by the observers. The mode of production and reproduction (infrastructure) "probabilistically determines" (strongly influences) political and domestic structure, which in turn probabilistically determines the behavioral and mental superstructure. (67)

The link between socio cultural systems and individual behavior is through individual cost/benefit decisions regarding sexual behavior, children, work, and living standards. Modern England was populated by the middle class society.

The play excels in the depiction of the middle class morality in the play ,which makes his an advocate of the contemporary culture. John Galsworthy uses the term "middle class morality" a lot in his play but what point is he trying to make in so doing? Especially in the case of Mrs. Jones, one of the "undeserving poor" even the lowest in society has their place, but just because they are "economically-challenged" does not necessarily mean that they are the lowest of the low in society (54).

It could be said that the condescension of the high class onto the other two puts their moral standing lower than them, but at the same time both the middle and lower classes use everybody else with persuasive antics and unenviable standards to swindle their way to getting what they want. Mrs. Jones in this sense extorts money from Mr. Barthwick merely by outwardly playing the card of a beggar. Mr. Barthwick certainly does not believe him, but since he is delighted by how well he plays his game, he pays Mrs. Jones anyway. The following lines from the play highlight this issue:

Alfred is most certainly not one of the "lowest" of the low. Being a retired pickpocket and con artist, he knows how to play people-- especially the higher classes. In a sense, there is a sort of superiority to him in those capabilities, but would it be fair to say that it makes him better than those he steals from? or it was only the fool act. (31)

Galsworthy uses satirical tone in the play to depict what he wants his audience to see a fallacy in the social structure. We are taught to see the high class as "better-thans" and privileged, but are they really (47)? They look down on the working class for merely needing to work to earn their keep, and their politics and ruthless social gambits are fueled by greed and the unnecessary to be on top. The low class consists of the beggars, laborers, and the unemployed, and they resent the upper classes for walking over them to the extent that they do.

In his preface to *Cultural Materialism* Marvin Harris wrote that culture "is based on the simple premise that human life is a response to the practical problems of earthly existence." His theory of cultural materialism prioritizes material conditions as more likely than ideas to be causal in human societies. He asserts:

Under infrastructure modes of production (technology of subsistence, techno-

environmental relationships, ecosystems, and work patterns) and modes of reproduction (demography, mating patterns, fertility, etc.). Under structure domestic economy (family structure, domestic division of labor and education, sex roles, etc.) and political economy (political organization, taxation, division of labor, class, hierarchy, control, war, etc.). Under behavioral superstructure art, music, dance, literature, rituals, sports, games, and science. (87)

Harris asserts the principle of infrastructure determinism, namely, that “the etic behavioral modes of production and reproduction probabilistically determine the etic behavioral domestic and political economy, which in turn probabilistically determine the behavioral and mental emic superstructures” (55-56). He acknowledges that the emic superstructure has influence, but he wants to explore fully the influence of the etic infrastructure and structure before considering the influence of the emic superstructure (56). He finds that the interactive exchanges that occur among the superstructure, the structure, and the infrastructure are important in sustaining, accelerating, or deflecting the direction and pace of transformational processes initiated within the infrastructure (160).

The character Alfre in the play outlines his views of the middle-class and the undeserving poor. We first see this character, played by Wilfred Lawson, when he comes to pinch Mr.Barthwick, portrayed by Howard, for money in the name of his daughter, Mrs. Jones, depicted by Hiller.Mr.Barthwick is quickly charmed by Alfred and offers to give him twice as much as he asks for. Alfred passes it up under the explanation that ten pounds would force him to feel prudent-something he detests and avoids by staying at the station of "undeserving poor."

Later in the play, Alfred finds himself shoved into position of middle class; and, suddenly, he has to change the way he lives his life. He has to marry his wife. He has

to give to charity. He remarks that, as dissatisfied as he is at this change in lifestyle, he has to maintain it. The tragedy of being middle-class is that one's freedom is replaced by fear and struggle. "Intimidated, that's what I am," he asserts to Mrs. Mr. Barthwick. If he does not continue to keep the money he receives, then he will be a waste-something there was no danger of becoming when his life was deliberate .

Another important criterion for producing 'types' (and realism) is the , writer's involvement with life and society. Hoggard writes with reference "real types can be created only by writers who have richly wasteful. Practical experience of life, who have themselves led a rich life"(87). The implication is that a writer should be passionately involved with the people he has chosen to depict, and should possess a sense of community. Only then would he be in a position to create social-historical types. The question of community is crucial to a writer's vision; whether by community the writer identifies a small unproductive minority or sees the community of humanity as a whole; it is important because, it determines whether ,his attitude to life is contemplative or active and practical. The writer's sense of community, his capacity to create types, the connection between the evolution of the community and the typical problems and characters that spring into being in the process are elements of considerable importance in the Marxist approach. For the Marxist perspective, knowledge itself assumes a practical character and truth is something that can be grasped only through practical activity. The "writer's grasp of reality will thus depend on his involvement with the community" (Hoggard 87).

Before Alfred received the gift, he complained about the middle-class's attitude towards him. He describes them as not giving him anything because he was unworthy. He complains that middleclass morality was "just an excuse for never

giving me anything"(87). Alfred professed his deservingness, which was based on his need. Basically, the main change in his state of being lies the loss of his right to self-interest. Galsworthy uses Alfred to demonstrate that middle-class morality is centered on obligation and responsibility. Galsworthy aims to modernize the contemporary culture. Love is a term meaning different things from generations to cultures.

Marriage and prostitution are closely linked. These institutions are very much related in Galsworthy's plays, especially in Mrs. Warren's profession. From his unusual standpoint of being committed to a celibate marriage, Galsworthy apparently feels free to denounce marriage as an exchange of sexuality for money similar to prostitution. Ironically, while her father expresses no regrets when he is led to believe that Mrs. Jones will take up this profession, it is she who denounces it. She declares that she was less degraded as a flower-seller than as a "genteel" lady trying to make an appropriate marriage because as a flower-seller, at least, she wasn't selling her body.

Lukacs considers tradition to be the most powerful means of incorporation, as long as we see tradition not in the traditional Marxist fashion but as an active process of selection, "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification. From a whole possible area of past and present, in a particular culture, certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded. Yet within a particular hegemony, and as one of its decisive processes, this selection is presented and usually successfully passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant past'." (115-116) Tradition gives a selection of the past in order to provide continuity with the present. The active sense of tradition is especially important as it gives us a clue as to where to

find counter-hegemonies, in the discarded past material separated from “the tradition,” which can be taken up and used to create an alternative tradition, such that tradition as a mode of incorporation is both powerful and vulnerable.

This process of the creation of a tradition is usually thought to take place in identifiable institutions, particularly ones involved in social activities. Educational institutions, for instance, are sites where selected knowledge and skills are taught to children as ways of making them recognize what social reality is and how to live in it, along with other institutions, such as religious institutions, the media, and certain state institutions. These are often thought of as locations where tradition is primarily contested. While this understanding of the role of institutions is partially true, for Lukacs an often neglected and equally if not more important are non-institutional formations as sites where hegemonic processes are transformed and traditions are contested. Formations are “conscious movements and tendencies (literary, artistic, philosophical or scientific) which can usually be readily discerned after their formative productions. Often, when we look further, we find that these are articulations of much wider effective formations, which can by no means be wholly identified with formal institutions, or their formal meanings and values, and which can sometimes even be positively contrasted with them.” (119) Formations are specialized practices, occurring outside of institutions but which can enter into institutions, stemming from meanings and values in the wider and more diffuse social sphere.

Galsworthy makes Mrs Jones defy men with her daunting "I am a good woman, I am" echoed repeatedly throughout the play (55). Here Mrs Jhon is defying societal expectations of young women in her position. Galsworthy's feminism is not only shown in the character of the defiant and feisty flower girl but also in the

character of Mr. Barthwick's mother, who does not approve of her son's behavior.

Barthwick rejects the way men view women. She tells Mr. Barthwick and Jack that they are babies playing with a "live doll." (10). To Mr. Barthwick and Jack, Mrs. Jones is nothing but a doll for them to play with. Mrs. Barthwick's outburst "Oh, men! men! men!!!" at the end of Act Three also emphasizes Galsworthy's dissatisfaction with the doll-like image of women (68). It is Mr. Barthwick who sounds the ultimate feminist call in the play when he tells Mrs. Jones in Act Three, "I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight: did I ever fetch your slippers? I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave?" (100). While Barthwick vocalizes these thoughts in the play, it is hard to imagine him actually putting them into practice in a marriage with Mrs. Jones, for example. She would forever be fetching his slippers.

Galsworthy is obviously presenting the theme of female emancipation because Mrs. Jones not only becomes a "lady," but also an independent woman. The play is delightful. Galsworthy calls it a "romantic comedy," but the ending has a problem. A true comedy moves towards reunion. But Galsworthy's play does not. In the play version, Mrs. Barthwick returns at the end dressed to attend the wedding of Jones's father. She and Mrs. Jones prepare to leave. Barthwick isn't going because he can't behave himself in church. The play ends as "when a Forsyte was engaged, married, or born, the Forsytes were present; when a Forsyte died — but no Forsyte had as yet died; they did not die; death being contrary to their principles, they took precautions against it, the instinctive precautions of highly vitalized persons who resent encroachments on their property" (87). As Galsworthy explains in an Afterword published with the printed text of the play. With the help of Colonel Jack, Jones and Freddy set up a flower shop. Galsworthy insists the play is still a comedy because it pokes fun at the

foibles of Victorian society and exposes its hypocrisy. Galsworthy simply felt that a marriage to Barthwick at the end would make the play overly-sentimental and that such a marriage the traditional happy ending would detract from the play's serious social themes.

In the conclusion, *The Silver Box* is the representation of the society of 19th century England. Galsworthy presents these themes with the help of different characters from working class to upper class. The modernist practices of money, marriage and morality get highly institutionalized during the period that play was written. In the play we observe a society divided, separated by language, education, and wealth. Galsworthy gives us a chance to see how that gap can be bridged, both successfully and unsuccessfully. As he portrays it, English society cannot simply be defined by two terms, "rich" and "poor." Within each group there are smaller less obvious distinctions, and it is in the middle, in that gray area between wealth and poverty that many of the most difficult questions arise and from which the most surprising truths emerge. Galsworthy also represents the issue of proletariats. Blacks when Galsworthy wrote the play could not vote in the United Kingdom; in 1918 women over the age of 30 were given the right, and it took another ten years for all women to be given a voice. Galsworthy's depiction of Proletariat and attitudes toward them is impressively and sometimes confusingly varied. They are shown in conventional roles as mothers and housekeepers and as strong-willed and independent. The play pays special attention to the problem of proletariat's space in society. Galsworthy depicts the given world of capitalism as it directly appears to him. His intellectual honesty, passion for truth, love of life which the great realists has been torn to shreds and destroyed. With such a love for humanity he reflects something that necessarily involves the cruelties of capitalism for a society, classes and

their representatives who humiliate and deform human beings in the capitalist world.

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