SOAMES FORSYTE: A STUDY IN CHARACTERIZATION

By

Lynn Lubin Gold, B. A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Department of English
McGill University
Montreal

April, 1964

CONTENTS

Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine Galsworthy's portrait of Soames Forsyte through the course of six novels, to interpret the changes in that portrait, and to determine whether Soames really developed, as leading critics suggest, from a villainous to a heroic character.

Galsworthy wrote his best novel, The Man of Property, in an uncharacteristically rebellous mood because of the circumstances of his courtship of Ada. As he grew older and more tolerant, as he and his wife were accepted into the society against which they had rebelled, and as his position in literature became firmly established, he looked at Soames with increasing insight and compassion.

Because of Galsworthy's balanced technique and method of understatement, it is easy to miss noticing and appreciating his objectivity and detachment. Although in A Modern Comedy he chose to emphasize those characteristics which he respected in Soames, he did not lose sight of his original conception of the character; nor did he try to erase the flaws and limitations of Soames's personality in order to draw an idealized self-portrait. His attitude at first was bitterly satirical, but with an undertone of

sympathy;[1] toward the end, the sympathy and understanding predominated, but Galsworthy preserved an undertone of criticism.

I suggest, then, that Soames, despite a softening and diffusion of his less attractive character traits, remains basically constant from beginning to end, and that the changes took place, not in the character, but in the viewpoint of the author.

A Note on the Text

Galsworthy wrote The Man of Property between 1902 and 1905; he published it in 1906. Some years later he made the following entry in his diary:

> Wingstone. We stayed on at Wingstone till the end of August /1918/, during which I began the Second Part of The Forsyte Saga, to be called The Second Flowering. The idea of making The Man of Property the first volume of a trilogy cemented by Indian Summer of a Forsyte and another short episode came to me on Sunday, July 28th /1918/, and I started the same day. This idea, if I can ever bring it to fruition, will make The Forsyte Saga a volume of half a million words nearly; and the most sustained and considerable piece of fiction of our generation at least. . . . But shall I ever

[1] Many critics mistakenly believe that Galsworthy was so bitterly indignant when he wrote The Man of Property that he detested Soames and treated the character without tolerance or understanding. I hope to demonstrate that The Man of Property does not support this belief.

bring it off?[2]

Two years later (1920), In Chancery appeared; the other novels and interludes comprising the two trilogies came regularly thereafter at similar intervals. The Man of Property, "Indian Summer of a Forsyte" (in Five Tales, 1918), In Chancery, "Awakening" (1920), and To Let (1921) were brought together and published (1922) as The Forsyte Saga. The White Monkey (1924), The Silver Spoon (1926), "Two Forsyte Interludes" (1927), and Swan Song (1928) appeared as A Modern Comedy (1929). Another trilogy, End of the Chapter (1934), was published posthumously.

Other Forsyte material includes "The Salvation of Swithin Forsyte" (in A Man of Devon, 1901), "Cry of Peacock" and"Soames and the Flag" (both in On Forsyte 'Change, 1930).

Not all the works listed above are relevant to this study. Soames Forsyte appears throughout the three novels (but not the interludes) of The Forsyte Saga, the three novels of A Modern Comedy and its interlude, "Passers By," and in the stories "Cry of Peacock" and "Soames and the Flag." The third trilogy, End of the Chapter, begins after

[2] H. Vincent Marrot, The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy (London, 1935), p. 443.

the death of Soames and deals with the family of his son-in-law rather than with the Forsytes themselves.

Galsworthy's letters, notebooks, and essays provide invaluable insight into the author's attitudes, aims, and difficulties concerning the characterization of Soames. This material answers many of the questions raised about these attitudes and proves much of the adverse criticism directed against Galsworthy to be unfounded; I have quoted his non-fictional writings wherever pertinent.

I: Biographical Material and its Relevance to the Criticism

If Ada Cooper had not married Arthur Galsworthy, John Galsworthy would not have written The Forsyte Saga in its present form, for the period between his first meeting with Ada, his cousin's wife, and his marriage to her constituted the turning point of his life and the most crucial influence on him as a novelist. His greatest novel and its sequels had their origin in his turbulent, intense emotions during that time. In any consideration of Galsworthy's work, one cannot ignore the experience nor over-emphasize its importance. Furthermore, Ada's unwavering faith in his ability during his apprenticeship in novel-writing, when he was producing some remarkably bad stories, may very well have been decisive in making writing his career.

The scandalous aspects of the story, however, give rise to questions which the critic, like the biographer, must ask himself. How much should he reveal? What interpretation should he put upon this material? Most important, what is his justification for including it; that is, how does it serve his purpose?

Two years after the death of John Galsworthy, H. Vincent Marrot published the "official" biography of the writer. His acknowledgements include an expression of

gratitude to Mrs. Galsworthy for her "untiring assistance and encouragement of many kinds."[1] This statement is a very small acknowledgement of the extremely close supervision under which he wrote the book, for Ada Galsworthy approved every line of the final version.

Marrot gives the facts of the courtship as follows :

> Ada Galsworthy's first marriage was a tragic mistake. Blameless and helpless, she was living in extreme unhappiness. Her two loyal friends /Galsworthy's sisters, Mabel and Lilian/ were doing all they could--which was little enough; and from them their brother began to learn--with what distress may be imagined--the torment that married misery can be. It was a very education in pity, and it was to last for many years. . . ./They met at intervals, gradually drew closer, and at last fell in love./ Then, in September of 1895, they became lovers, and there began the long turmoil of their hearts--that life 'spun between ecstasy and torture'--which was to last through nine mortal years. For themselves their course was simple. Concealment was repugnant to both of them, and there was every argument in favour of openness. Every argument, that is, save one, and that fatal. What of the old man, his father? . . . could he be expected to accept with composure that which training and the habit of years must force him to regard as a scandal? . . . At any rate, 'Neither,' wrote one of them, 'would contemplate for one moment doing anything that could grieve the very declining years of his father, to whom they were both utterly devoted.' (pp. 101 - 102)

Nine years of clandestine meetings followed, during which time Arthur Galsworthy went to South Africa

[1] Marrot, p. xiv.

when the Boer War came, and Ada made the gesture of moving into her own flat. She remained there for three years until the death of old John Galsworthy in December, 1904.

> Overwhelmed with deepest grief and joy, they knew that life was changed, and the period of their bondage over.
>
> They spent a few weeks together at the farm-house . . . were served, much to their satisfaction, with divorce petition papers . . . left for Italy . . . were married on September 23rd--the very day after the expiry of the six months' nisi period, and settled happily down in a little old house in Addison Road. The long ordeal was over.[2]

Not another word does Marrot say about Arthur Galsworthy and his marriage with Ada. He gives--is permitted to give--only the bare bones of the tale. To adduce from his account the emotional source of the Soames-Irene-Bosinney story is to exercise all the ingenuity which fertile imagination and sympathy can supply.

The reasons for the biographer's delicacy and restraint are self-evident. In the late 1770s Samuel Johnson wrote:

> The necessity of complying with times, and of sparing persons, is the great impediment of biography. History may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but Lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever. What is known can seldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known. . . . It is

[2] Marrot, p. 103.

surely better that caprice, obstinacy, frolic, and folly, however they might delight in the description, should be silently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unseasonable detection, a pang should be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend.[3]

Biography is an art, and like all arts has its changing rules. The modern biographer's attitude toward the introduction of embarrassing personal details is vastly different from what it was in Johnson's time. In a very recent article, the purpose of which is to defend the living artist from encroachments upon his privacy and the consequent impairment of his creativity, Stephen Spender traced this change in attitude over the past two hundred years.[4] The pre-Strachey biographer (John Morley on Gladstone; Forster on Dickens, Boswell on Johnson, and Johnson on the English Poets are cited as good examples) regarded himself as a kind of filter. Entrusted by members of the family with private papers and other information, his function was to separate the public from the private and to present "an edited and censored version of the whole sum of public and private events that goes to make a life."[5] When the public was

[3] Samuel Johnson, "Joseph Addison," Lives of the Poets, Everyman Edition (London, 1925), I, 345-346.

[4] Stephen Spender, "How Much Should a Biographer Tell?" Saturday Review, XLVII, iv (January 25, 1964), 16-19.

[5] Spender, p. 16.

already in possession of certain awkward facts, the duty of the biographer was to try to explain them away. There were exceptions to this practice: when the subject was not a hero but a villain, when intimate details were directly related to a work of art, or when, as in Johnson's Life of Savage, the biographer gave details in an attempt to excuse the shortcomings of a man whose public image needed rehabilitation. For the most part, however, biographers believed that a public figure was entitled to the same privacy regarding his personal life as any ordinary citizen. Dowden's Life of Shelley elicited expressions of shock and dismay from Matthew Arnold, who deplored the scandalous information made available even though most of it was already vaguely and partially known, at least to a certain class of the public.

The modern view is different for several reasons. One, the result of social revolution, is a lack of respect for members of the upper classes, a respect which at one time protected them from unfavourable publicity. Another is the feeling that the modern reader is capable of receiving private information without distaste, and of liking the artist despite--or even because of--his personal weaknesses. A third reason is simply the availability of biographical material as the result of modern research methods, material

which a hundred years ago might well have remained buried in "decent obscurity." The most compelling (and defensible) reason of all is the conviction that the circumstances of the artist's life are related to his work and that a knowledge of those circumstances illuminates the public's understanding and appreciation of the work.

> We are inclined to think that everything, however private, is relevant to the work, the man, and the vocation. We are moving toward a state of affairs in which the work of a writer and his biography will merge, as it were, into a single consciousness. When we know all about the work and all about the life, both work and life will contribute meanings to a sum. . . . We cannot draw that boundary between the relevant public material and the irrelevant private that seemed so obvious to people before the era of psychoanalysis. To us, everything about an artist is relevant to his vocation.[6]

Dudley Barker, who has written the most recent full-length study of Galsworthy, represents the modern point of view.[7] Unlike Marrot, he was free of the widow's supervision and of the fear of hurting anyone, since all the persons involved were dead. Furthermore, he had at his disposal materials not available to Marrot, information

[6] Spender, p. 17.

[7] Dudley Barker, The Man of Principle: A View of John Galsworthy (London, 1963).

which came from personal talks with Viola and Rudolf Sauter (Galsworthy's nephew and his wife, who knew John and Ada intimately), Hubert Galsworthy (another nephew), and Mrs. Wilhelmine Galsworthy, Arthur's second wife. From this information Barker was able to give--partly through fact and partly by speculation--a fairly detailed account of the personality of Arthur, the circumstances surrounding the failure of his marriage, and an estimate of the character and temperament of Ada. This last is somewhat acidulous, even though Barker is careful to give her credit for her virtues and for her aid to the novelist throughout his career. He allows also that, if her stories about the cruelty and abuses of her first husband were exaggerated for the purpose of gaining sympathy, their importance is not so much a matter of their truth but of their effect on Galsworthy.

To the extent that the private story is relevant to an understanding of the novels, the biographer-critic is fully justified in investigating the details of that story. How relevant, however, are Barker's inferences concerning the lovers' motives for waiting until the death of old John? On the "evidence" that Arthur Galsworthy was convinced they waited only through fear of losing the patrimony, and as a logical deduction from his knowledge of human nature, Barker

concludes that their motives were entirely monetary (p. 67).

Apart from the weakness of his reasoning and of the authority on which he bases his inference, Barker does not justify its inclusion. Had he chosen to demonstrate its relation to the novels, he could well have done so; what is most surprising is his failure to discover material in The Forsyte Saga that he might have used to support his theory--that is, the young Jolyon-old Jolyon story.

Old Jolyon is most certainly modelled after old John Galsworthy; young Jolyon is almost as certainly, in large measure, a self-portrait of the novelist. When young Jolyon ran off from his wife and child with a French governess (the details are never fully revealed), he was not only disinherited by but estranged from his father--to their mutual pain and sorrow--for a number of years.

In failing to refer to this story, Barker loses the opportunity to justify his inference; for, unless it can be demonstrably related to the novels, the whole subject is an invasion of privacy. If the biographer's aim is to satisfy the curiosity of the public with scandal and speculation, he must forego his pretentions to a fair and serious critique.

II. The Man of Property: A Possessive Husband

It is not only in the date of composition that The Man of Property is separated from the rest of the Forsyte chronicles. It is commonly considered the best of Galsworthy's works and the cornerstone of his literary reputation. It is the most skilfully plotted of all his novels and the richest in feeling and characterization. Finally, critics have given most of their attention to this book.

The figure of Soames Forsyte was, and still is, taken by many readers to be a villainous character.

> Galsworthy's personal involvement . . . warped his treatment of Soames. Not only is the poor man mocked cold-bloodedly in his troubles throughout the first volume of the Saga (except for the last few chapters) but Galsworthy pilloried him years after, when he returned to write of the Forsytes and the Victorian world. He depicted with relish Soames's agonized desire for an heir and the subsequent irony of his obtaining only one child and that a girl.[1]

This interpretation was contrary to Galsworthy's intention and one which the author refuted several times. He said, in a letter to his sister, "I was very pleased that you felt sympathy with Soames. I have been very much afraid of not doing him justice."[2] Years later, when he came to

[1] Drew B. Pallette, "Young Galsworthy: The Forging of a Satirist," Modern Philology, LVI (1958-9), 184.

[2] Marrot, p. 182.

write the Preface to The Forsyte Saga, he felt still that Soames needed defending:

> One has noticed that readers, as they wade on through the salt waters of the Saga, are inclined more and more to pity Soames, and to think that in doing so they are in revolt against the mood of his creator. Far from it! He, too, pities Soames, the tragedy of whose life is the very simple, uncontrollable tragedy of being unlovable, without quite a thick enough skin to be thoroughly unconscious of the fact.[3]

Soames is anything but a simple character. He is, for one thing, a symbol of the possessive principle motivating the upper-middle-class of England. He is the most Forsyteian of the Forsytes, an honour he shares, perhaps, with his father, James; he is the embodiment of the need to possess which regards all things--land, houses, paintings, even women--in terms of ownership.

> This need to possess is at once a psychological and a social quality. Galsworthy's psychology at this point probably strikes a modern reader as curious; but at least it is clear. He has no recourse to depth psychology; indeed, such analysis was hardly available to him in 1903-6, when he was writing the book. He finds his explanation in heredity. . . . But at the same time this possessiveness is socially relevant because, as Young Jolyon explains, the Forsytes are typical. They represent half of England, the upper half, the propertied half. Their virtues and their faults are reflected through the governing class of the island. This

[3] The Forsyte Saga (New York, 1936), p. xii. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

is Galsworthy's charge against his society.[4]

This criticism of the ruling class brought against Galsworthy charges that he was a revolutionary, a Socialist, a traitor to his class. But far from attempting a sweeping analysis of social structure, with recommendations for its improvement, he wrote with a much more limited aim and scope and from a highly personal point of view. An interviewer once asked him whether preaching a bit through characters and plots had any part in his writing. He denied that he wrote with consciously didactic intent.

> But I do not write without emotion or passion; quite the contrary. The temperament of a writer must have freedom, but with restraint, and always without falsifying one's characters. I do not suppress my temperament, because my temperament dictates the incidents and characters in which I have sufficient interest. They reflect indirectly my emotions and thoughts. Everything is indirect, and the whole process very subtle. I hate didacticism.[5]

Possessiveness in Soames is more to be pitied than censured, for he is blind to his fault, punished tragically throughout his life for the fault, and, except for that one fatal blemish, depicted as a man of many virtues. When he

[4] Woodburn O. Ross, "John Galsworthy: Aspects of an Attitude," Studies in Honor of John Wilcox, ed. A. Dayle Wallace and Woodburn O. Ross (Detroit, 1958), p. 203.

[5] Bernice Cosulich, "Life's Ironies Inspire John Galsworthy," Literary Digest International Book Review, IV (April, 1926), 298.

tries to woo Irene back after their estrangement, he asks her, "What's the matter with me? I ask you a plain question: What is it?" And he goes on, "I'm not lame, I'm not loathsome, I'm not a boor, I'm not a fool. What is it? What's the mystery about me?" (p. 481). It is true: he is none of those things; he is only physically distasteful to her. "He could not understand what she found wrong with him. It was not as if he drank! Did he run into debt, or gamble, or swear; was he violent; were his friends rackety; did he stay out at night? On the contrary" (p. 50). As for his character, he is fastidious in his person, scrupulously honest in his business dealings (as well as intelligent and shrewd), prudent, sane, dependable.

How much of Soames, even as he is in The Man of Property, is part of the author? The following testimony is from Galsworthy's pen:

> A novelist, however observant of type and sensitive to the shades of character, does little but describe and dissect himself. . . . in dissecting Hilary /a character in Fraternity/ for instance . . . . his creator feels the knife going sharply into his own flesh, just as he could feel it when dissecting Soames Forsyte. . . .[6]

That the author did not despise his character cannot be over-stressed, in view of the numbers of critics

[6] Quoted in Terence William Leighton MacDermot, "John Galsworthy," Dalhousie Review, IX (1929-30), 356.

who believe that he did. He may have hated what Soames stood for, but he was incapable of hating his own creation. Although Soames sins so greatly against Irene, he sins in blindness, unconscious of sin. With his lack of imagination, he is incapable of seeing himself objectively and helpless to correct faults he is unaware of. Galsworthy's method of showing this characteristic is not to insert a dissertation on Soames's limited imagination; instead, he gives Soames's own thoughts, which reveal to the reader his narrowness of outlook better than any amount of direction from the narrator could. Presently, an examination of Soames's meditations will demonstrate the method.

With tongue in cheek, Robert Nőel Bradley wrote:

> Soames could not help it; he behaved just as most Englishmen would have behaved, and our judges would have commended him. He exercised his marital rights. . . . We are rather sorry for Soames, for he really loved his wife. . . . He was not at fault; it was his sense of property that made him do it.[7]

This is sarcasm, but it contains a truth. By Soames's standards--the values appropriate to his nature and class and environment--asserting his marital rights was not wrong. His blindness is the blindness of his class; it is

[7] Robert Nőel Bradley, Duality: A Study in the Psycho-Analysis of Race (London, 1923), pp. 78-79.

his personal and grotesque tragedy to be unable to see beyond class mores.

The "rape" episode (a term, by the way, inaccurate although employed by critics; according to English common law, the cohabitation of a man with his own wife, however unwilling she may be, does not constitute rape) has given rise to a curious trend in criticism. Galsworthy made an earnest effort to present Irene sympathetically; she was, of course, modelled after Ada. ("Who . . . knows enough even to connect A with I, especially as I have changed her hair to gold?"[8]) Yet, during the early 1920s critics began to look at Irene unsympathetically and to soften their hostility toward Soames. (Chapter IV discusses this change of attitude in more detail.) Hugh Walpole questioned whether she was really so monstrously ill-treated, since, "playing the part from first to last of a female cad," she failed to keep her part of the bargain; he concluded that "her own callous selfishness is to one reader at least infinitely more appalling than Soames's possessiveness."[9] An earlier critic pleaded even more eloquently for Soames:

[8] Marrot, p. 182.

[9] "John Galsworthy," The Post Victorians (London, 1933), p. 179.

> Soames, the man of property, takes this woman, as just as much his possession as any other rare thing of beauty and value he has paid its price for, to enjoy, whenever he may choose. For that initial act of grossness, he pays and pays again, throughout a lifetime; pays much more heavily than, with his nature, he may ever apprehend. Not with impunity can we ever besmirch the dignity of a human soul. But, surely, Soames--Forsyte as he is through and through--could never, even as a lover before marriage, have been much less Forsytian? That is where the reader, just a little less Irene's man than Mr. Galsworthy is, feels the first indication of the 'something wanting' in the delicacy of discriminations which later are the means of making so many lives rock.[10]

Galsworthy intended the reader to share his utter condemnation of the act and to see it as a brutal violation of the fragile, shrinking woman, inexcusable from every moral, ethical and humanitarian viewpoint. One of the tidbits which Dudley Barker elicited from Viola Sauter hints that some such act occurred, according to Ada, between the Arthur Galsworthys (p. 51). (According to his second wife, however, Arthur was sexually unaggressive to a degree that makes the story unbelievable.) If this account were true, or if the novelist believed it to be true (rather than the exaggeration of a neurotic, bored, unhappily-married woman), his shock and horror are understandable.

One would expect that this affair could only be

[10] May Bateman, "John Galsworthy," Catholic World, CXIV (1921-22), 741.

described from the woman's point of view, but, in keeping with his intention of presenting Irene always indirectly,[11] Galsworthy relates the story through Soames.

Soames is walking in the park one night, thinking of his coming lawsuit against Bosinney. Suddenly he has the "blood driven from his heart by a low laugh and the sound of kisses."

> Starved as he was, the whispered sounds in the stillness, the half-seen forms in the dark, acted on him like some morbid stimulant. He left the path along the water and stole under the trees . . . a stealthy inspection of chairs side by side against tree-trunks, of enlaced lovers, who stirred at his approach. (p. 242)

He steals along, catching sight of a pair of lovers entwined in the lamp-light, oblivious; he hurries on, looking and looking.

[11] In the Preface to The Forsyte Saga, Galsworthy says that Irene is never present except through the senses of other characters. This is literally true, for, although she does speak, she always has a companion to hear her words. Galsworthy describes her appearance only through the observation of another character. He never gives her thoughts, as he gives those of Soames or Jolyon. There is one instance when the reader sees Irene's behaviour without the medium of an observer; that is, when she and Bosinney stroll through a copse (in the chapter called "Drive with Swithin" in The Man of Property). Bosinney, a character also presented indirectly, does not count as an observer. Galsworthy evades the problem of inconsistency by having Uncle Swithin fall asleep and by sending his "Forsyte spirit" down into the copse to watch the lovers.

> In this search, who knows what he thought and what he sought? Bread for hunger--light in darkness? Who knows what he expected to find--impersonal knowledge of the human heart--the end of his private subterranean tragedy--for, again, who knew, but that each dark couple, unnamed, unnameable, might not be he and she? . . . But shaking himself with sudden disgust, Soames returned to the path, and left that seeking for he knew not what. (pp. 242-243)

An unpleasant incident occurred a few days before, when a gossip hinted to Soames, at a dinner-party, that Irene was "a great friend" of Bosinney's. The remark set Soames to brooding; the words "had roused in him a fierce jealousy, which, with the peculiar perversion of this instinct, had turned to fiercer desire" (p. 258). The jealousy, the evening in the park, the "fiercer desire"--all provide the incentive for his act, and Irene's having forgotten for once to lock her bedroom door provides the opportunity.

The morning after "a certain night on which Soames at last asserted his rights and acted like a man" (p. 258), Soames breakfasts alone. Uncomfortable and remorseful, he tries to reassure himself with the knowledge that she would not tell anyone--"it was not the sort of thing that she would speak about." He continues to think about the "incident," attempting to rationalize away the discomfort of the memory:

> Those nightmare-like doubts began to assume less extravagant importance at the back of his mind. The incident was really not of great moment; women made a fuss about it in books; but in the cool judgment of right-thinking men, of men of the world, of such as he recollected often received praise

in the Divorce Court, he had but done his best to sustain the sanctity of marriage, to prevent her from abandoning her duty, possibly, if she were still seeing Bosinney, from--No, he did not regret it. (p. 259)

If this were all, if Galsworthy had left him in that state of self-assurance, one would be justified in saying that Soames was an icy-hearted villain and that his creator detested him. The attitude expressed so far represents everything that was wrong, in Galsworthy's eyes, with society's view of a wife as a chattel of her husband. Galsworthy gave his opinion on the subject in a letter to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.

You use the word sentiment. Now, the longer I live the more constantly I notice that hatred of suffering, abhorrence of cruelty, is called sentiment only by those who have never fathomed, or truly envisaged the nature of that particular suffering or cruelty, and I am going to say quite frankly that though you are an older man than myself, of possibly wider general experience, you can never have looked first hand into the eyes of an unhappy marriage, of a marriage whose soul has gone or never was there, of a marriage that but lives on the meanest of all diet, the sense of property, and the sense of convention. You have never at first-hand--as I have--seen souls shrivelling in bodies under that possibly worst form of suffering and worst kind of cruelty in the world. . . . A more fiendish spiritual destruction I would not wish any man than that he should continue to possess a woman who revolted at his touch. . . . I speak strongly, because I feel strongly, and know what I am talking about.[12]

He went on to elaborate upon the matter, about which he felt

[12] Marrot, pp. 382-383.

so intensely and so personally, but it is not necessary to quote more to demonstrate the strength of his convictions.

Throughout the time Soames is telling himself how unimportant the incident was, and justifying his action, Irene's sobbing echoes in his ears. He goes to business, rides the underground, reads his paper, transacts his affairs, always with that sobbing and the sight of her tear-stained face haunting him. The reader must interpret his guilt and discomfort, which are obviously unconnected with any realization of the right and wrong of it; Soames does not feel horror and aversion toward himself because of his act. It is not merely the distress which an art-collector feels at the sight of a damaged painting in his collection. Surely it is meant to indicate that Soames, obtuse as he is, is not insensitive and uncaring entirely for Irene's feelings; it is a hint that she is more than a piece of property to him. He cannot understand why she cried; yet her weeping gives him pain.

That his desire for her is something more than possessiveness is confirmed later by his reflections on the possibility of divorce. At first it seems to him like jettisoning his property; "She would no longer belong to him, not even in name!" (p. 280). It occurs to him that divorce

will injure him professionally and that he will have to sell the house he had built for her, and at a loss. When he realizes, however, that she will pass out of his life, that he will never see her again, the knowledge stupefies him. "He traversed in the cab the length of a street without getting beyond the thought that he should never see her again!" (p. 280).

He returns home, discovers that his wife has left him, and finds in her jewelry case a note addressed to him.

> 'I think I have taken nothing that you or your people have given me.' And that was all.
>
> He looked at the clasps and bracelets of diamonds and pearls, at the little flat gold watch with a great diamond set in sapphires, at the chains and rings, each in its nest, and the tears rushed up in his eyes and dropped upon them.
>
> Nothing that she could have done, nothing that she <u>had</u> done, brought home to him like this the inner significance of her act. For the moment, perhaps, he understood nearly all there was to understand--understood that she loathed him, that she had loathed him for years, that for all intents and purposes they were like people living in different worlds, that there was no hope for him, never had been; even, that she had suffered--that she was to be pitied.
>
> In that moment of emotion he betrayed the Forsyte in him--forgot himself, his interests, his property--was capable of almost anything; was lifted into the pure ether of the selfless and unpractical. (pp. 286-287)

Whatever Soames may be, whatever he may become, at this moment the most superficial reader must feel with him and must understand that the novelist is looking into the heart of a man of feeling as well as of property.

The passages describing Soames's courtship of Irene explain her magnetism for him. Galsworthy told part of the story in The Man of Property and part of it in a short story written many years later.

On Forsyte 'Change (London, 1930) contained the story, "Cry of Peacock." In an introductory note to the reader, Galsworthy apologizes for wearying the public with still more Forsyte tales and offers two excuses:"that it is hard to part suddenly and finally from those with whom one has lived so long; and, that these footnotes do really, I think, help to fill in and round out the chronicles of the Forsyte family." He says also that he wrote those stories after finishing Swan Song, the last Forsyte novel.

More than twenty years had passed since the publication of The Man of Property. Galsworthy's writings reflect a gradual change in many of his ideas and attitudes and a growing confidence in stability and convention. Dudley Barker associates the changes in Soames Forsyte with the changes in Galsworthy and his world; as the author and his wife "came back into the fold" of social convention, Galsworthy came to regard Soames with deepening sympathy, to minimize his faults and dwell upon his virtues, and to identify himself with the character almost completely. "Cry of Peacock" provides a touchstone by which the allegation can

be examined, for it covers material alluded to in The Man of Property. If the author's tone and attitude toward that material are different in the two works, the difference will support Barker's thesis.

The story is brief, some seventeen or eighteen hundred words, and without a word of dialogue; the episode takes place entirely in Soames's mind. The time is an evening two weeks before his marriage to Irene, just after he has left a ball. He has danced six times with Irene. "Irene loved dancing! It would not be good form to dance with one's wife. Would that prevent him? No, by Jove!" When the lover's ardour cools to husbandly caution, however, Soames stands aside and watches Irene dance with others (in The Man of Property). "He danced with no one. Some fellows danced with their wives; his sense of 'form' had never permitted him to dance with Irene since their marriage, and the God of the Forsytes alone can tell whether this was a relief to him or not" (p. 176).

Galsworthy deliberately inserted the reference to dancing in "Cry of Peacock" in order to emphasize the contrast between Soames's recklessness before marriage and his prudence after it. In the short story, Soames is a man possessed. He hastens through the streets in the night

toward Irene's house, intending to station himself outside it in hopes of catching a glimpse of her at the window. He must be surreptitious; he must not be seen. Would she be offended if she saw him stealing by?

> If only she had for him the feeling he had for her, then, indeed, she could not mind--she would be glad, and their gaze would cling together across this empty London street, eerie in its silence with not a cat to mark the meeting of their eyes. Blotted against the lamp-post he stayed unmoving, aching for a sight of her.

She comes to the window for a moment and he has a fleeting glimpse of her before she closes the curtains.

> A sensation as of madness stirred in his limbs, he sprang away . . . he turned not towards his rooms, but away from them: Paradise deferred! He could not sleep. . . . This early world of silent streets was to him unaccustomed, as he himself, under this obsession, would be to all who knew and saw him daily, self-contained, diligent, a flat citizen. . . . He felt that he would always remember a town so different from that he saw every day; and himself he would remember--walking thus, unseen and solitary with his desire.

He knows that she does not care for him as he cares for her. He knows that he owes the engagement to her stepmother's eagerness to get rid of this beautiful obstacle to her own marriage plans. Yet his desire for Irene is so strong that he wants her on any terms and however unwilling she may be.

He lies on a park bench and daydreams of her. He has wandered past the house they will live in and tried to visualize something of their future intimacy; he has never

yet seen her with her hair unbound.

Ah! but soon--but soon! And as if answering the call of his imagination, a cry--long, not shrill, not harsh exactly, but so poignant--jerked the blood to his heart. From back over there it came trailing, again and again, passionate--the lost soul's cry of peacock in early morning; and with it there uprose from the spaces of his inner being the vision that was for ever haunting there, of her with hair unbound, of her all white and lost, yielding to his arms. It seared him with delight, swooned in him, and was gone. He opened his eyes; an early water-cart was nearing down the Row. Soames rose and walking fast beneath the trees sought sanity.

It is the familiar portrait of a yearning lover, his senses overwhelmed with desire for his loved one. There is no suggestion that his desire is more possessive than any other lover.

In the novel, however, the yearning is interpreted, or labelled, differently. Soames has just been shown the site of Robin Hill.

In spite of himself, something swelled in his breast. To live here in sight of all this, to be able to point it out to his friends, to talk of it, to possess it! His cheeks flushed. The warmth, the radiance, the glow, were sinking into his senses as, four years before, Irene's beauty had sunk into his senses and made him long for her. (p. 58)

The Man of Property has several other scattered allusions to Soames's courtship. James comments that he could not convince his son that a penniless girl was not the best match for him: "Soames was in such a hurry; he got quite thin dancing attendance on her" (p. 10). Nicholas

reports that "he was half-cracked about her. She refused him five times" (p. 19). Soames himself recalls the first time he saw Irene at a dance. "As Soames stood looking at her, the sensation that most men have felt at one time or another went stealing through him--a peculiar satisfaction of the senses, a peculiar certainty, which novelists and old ladies call love at first sight" (p. 105). He recalls how he came back to propose again and again, dogged, tenacious, heart-sore at each refusal but "steadfast and silent as the grave" until at last, for a reason he was never able to discover, she accepted him.

The lover and the husband have different reasons, evidently, for wanting her. There is no evidence that Soames as lover is different in the novel and the story. In neither does he consider Irene as a desirable piece of property. After several years of marriage, however, the possessive aspect of his feeling toward her predominates. It does not occur to him that her capacity for inspiring affection is bound up with her whole temperament and with the fact that she was "born to be loved and to love." "Her power of attraction he regarded as part of her value as his property; but it made him, indeed, suspect that she could give as well as receive; and she gave him nothing! 'Then why did she marry me?' was his continual thought" (p. 50).

He has forgotten the courtship, her reluctance, the pressures at home that finally made her yield to him. He remembers only her capriciousness; now he cannot understand why his devoted wooing has not been crowned with a story-book ending, why they are not living happily ever after. The madness which possessed him during courtship has passed. He is again his own man and has regained his sanity and lost his selflessness. He has even forgotten that he promised to set her free whenever she wished. When Bosinney goes home after having spent an evening at home with the Soameses, Soames suspects that the young man may be prowling about outside the house, looking at Irene through the windows. Soames steals to a window and peers out, but sees no one.

> Suddenly, very faint, far off in the deathly stillness, he heard a cry writhing, like the voice of some wandering soul barred out of heaven, and crying for its happiness. There it was again--again! Soames shut the window, shuddering.
>
> Then he thought: 'Ah! it's only the peacocks, across the water.' (p. 205)

He does not recall his own wanderings and lurkings outside Irene's house, nor the cry of the peacock he heard that night long ago; he could not remember because "Cry of Peacock" had not been written. The presence of the theme in the novel constitutes a curious reversal of chronology, almost as if it had been put there in anticipation of its echoes

twenty years later. Galsworthy, most probably, really had the experience. He put it into the novel and then, years later, used it again when he found it there, happily at hand, in The Man of Property.

This comparison does not prove the thesis that Galsworthy changed. All it reveals is that the author treated Soames the suitor similarly both early and late, and that Soames the suitor is different from Soames four years married. The fact that Galsworthy was sympathetic toward the lover even in The Man of Property, however, weakens the argument that Soames is quite villainous at the beginning of the Forsyte chronicles and quite heroic at the end.

III. *In Chancery*: A Tragicomic Lover

Between the beginning and the end of the Forsyte chronicles, Galsworthy's attitudes changed radically. Although the changes were gradual, there is a point in the novels that clearly marks his transition from rebel to elder critic. For some critics, the apparent point comes at the end of the first trilogy, since they frequently point out the differences between the tone of *The Forsyte Saga* and *A Modern Comedy*. Soames "was something like the villain of the *Saga*: he is undoubtedly the hero of *A Comedy*."[1]

> One can hardly say that the author has developed a completely new style in "A Modern Comedy"; but there is certainly a much greater brilliancy in its texture. "A Modern Comedy" is very colourful. Life has lost the depressing aspect it wore in the "Forsyte Saga," we are served with a mellower wine, and now and then with champagne.[2]

The true change in Galsworthy took place, however, during the fourteen-year interval between the publication of *The Man of Property* and *To Let*. *In Chancery* is the transitional novel, the work reflecting the author's

---

[1] Henry Charles Duffin, "The Rehabilitation of Soames Forsyte," *Cornhill Magazine*, N.S. LXVIII (1930), 405.

[2] Leon Schalit, *John Galsworthy: A Survey* (New York, 1929), pp. 86-87.

first conception and his development during the intervening years. The powerfully and passionately felt figures which had grown out of his own tormented experiences still fascinated him, but the rebel of thirty-nine was not the fifty-one-year-old gentleman of letters, mellowed by professional and social acceptance. His portrayal of Soames reflects Galsworthy's matured intellect and judgment.

The ending of The Man of Property left an impression of dramatic finality, but Galsworthy softened the harshness of that impression in the interlude, "Indian Summer of a Forsyte." This story carries the tale forward twelve years. Irene did not remain behind the door which Soames slammed in Young Jolyon's face; she left Soames that very night, "slipped out in the night and vanished," and Soames "had never been able to lay hands on her again" (p. 316). She took a little flat in Chelsea, earned a small living teaching music, and occupied herself with helping "fallen women." Soames lived alone in Brighton, accumulating a tidy estate, collecting paintings, and visiting his family. Each has spent twelve lonely years by the time In Chancery opens.

The subject of marriage increasingly occupies Soames's thoughts. He is "getting on" and has acquired a fortune, but has no one to leave it to, "no real object for

going on with what was his religion" (p. 368). Above all else he wants an heir, and with this aim has begun courting a young French girl, Annette. He chooses her, not only because she is healthy and would be a suitable mother for his son, but also because she is attractive, for Soames is a man of strong physical passion. "He had tasted of the sordid side of sex during those long years of forced celibacy, secretively, and always with disgust, for he was fastidious, and his sense of law and order innate" (p. 368).

In this Soames certainly resembles his author. No one has ever attempted to investigate Galsworthy's private sex life aside from the pre-marital relationship with Ada, and there is no reason for doing so; yet it is inconceivable, in the light of everything that is known about his character, upbringing and personality, that he should regard "the sordid side of sex"--by which he presumably meant prostitution--with anything but disgust. One has only to read the fourth act of his play, The Fugitive (1913), to know his opinion of the man who, through necessity or choice, consorts with prostitutes. Soames is to be pitied for having been driven to it against his instinct for fastidiousness and his sense of order.

Galsworthy devoted many scenes of In Chancery to

the marital problems of Soames's sister, Winifred Dartie. The sub-plot parallels Soames's own situation, especially since Soames acts as legal advisor to Winifred. He has the opportunity to meditate and comment on the position of the innocent partner in an estrangement, on the distasteful aspects of divorce, and on the irresponsibility of the press in publicizing the personal tragedies of private citizens.

> Odd that one whose life was spent in bringing to the public eye all the private coils of property, the domestic disagreements of others, should dread so utterly the public eye turned on his own; and yet not odd, for who should know so well as he the whole unfeeling process of legal regulation. (p. 492)

Galsworthy, like Soames, was trained in the law, and Soames is expressing views that Galsworthy held. In a letter to William Archer, Galsworthy characterized the divorce law as being "based on cynicism, and the lowest views of human natures. It is, in fine, a barbarous law, which puts a premium on materialism and brutality."[3] He stated this opinion over and over, in fiction, letters, and public addresses.

Similarly, Soames speaks for Galsworthy on the press. "The papers are a pushing lot; it's very difficult to keep things out. They pretend to be guarding the public's morals, and they corrupt them with their beastly reports"

[3] Marrot, p. 703.

(p. 493). During the crucial period prior to Ada's divorce from Arthur, Galsworthy wrote to Ralph Mottram that he and Ada were going abroad for a few months, until they could be married.

> The hydra-headed monster of waiting will be slain, I trust this month, by what are called 'proceedings' against us in the so-called Courts of Justice.
>
> When we return, if you still look upon us as sufficiently respectable, I trust you will come and visit. . . . Upon the whole I wouldn't if I were you speak of it till after the case is over, which according to our pleasant system will doubtless be reported, though I should think shortly.[4]

Further examples abound, but there is no need to labour the point. Insofar as Soames speaks for law, order, reticence, and respectability, he speaks for the author.

Wherever the viewpoint of the lover and co-respondent must be recorded it is Young Jolyon, of course, who expresses the attitudes and emotions which Galsworthy had under similar circumstances. In deciding not to defend the divorce suit, Jolyon muses as Galsworthy must have done.

> Thank Heaven she had not that maddening British conscientiousness which refused happiness for the sake of refusing! She must rejoice at this chance of being free--after seventeen years of death in life! As to publicity, the fat was in the fire! To defend the suit would not take away the slur. Jolyon had all the proper feeling of a Forsyte whose privacy is threatened: If he was to be hung by the Law, by

[4] Marrot, p. 163.

all means let it be for a sheep! . . . No, no! To defend a suit only made a London holiday, and sold the newspapers. A thousand times better accept what Soames and the gods had sent! (p. 585)

Jolyon is frequently the observer and commentator of In Chancery, and the author expresses much of his own attitude toward Soames through Jolyon's point of view. It is an attitude of mixed pity and distaste, as one would expect of a man who is half-artist and half-Forsyte. Jolyon is, in fact, as close to a self-portrait as Galsworthy painted. The author analyzed himself in a letter to Edward Garnett.

> The critical essence of the book /The Patricians, which he was revising/--and it is on that feature that your strictures were really bent--consists in an opposition of authority and dry high-caste life with the lyrical point of view, with the emotionalism and dislike of barriers inherent in one half of my temperament. In other words this book, like The M. of P., The C.H. /The Country House/ and Fraternity, is simply the criticism of one half of myself by the other, the halves being differently divided according to the subject. It is not a piece of social criticism--they none of them are. If it's anything it's a bit of spiritual examination. . . . The more I consider things the more I find that I'm only a social critic by accident. I've neither the method nor the qualities of the social critic. I've no patience, no industry--only detachment in so far as I can dispassionately examine myself in contact with life. My value from first to last as a critic of social conditions is that there are two men in me, both fairly strong; and the creative man in me up against the other produces a critical effect.[5]

[5] Edward Garnett, Letters from John Galsworthy? 1900-1932 (London, 1934), pp. 199-200.

Jolyon's Forsyte half, "authority and dry high-caste life," is in continual opposition to the artistic half, "the lyrical point of view," "emotionalism," and "dislike of barriers." In The Man of Property, Jolyon describes himself to Bosinney, the pure artist, as "a kind of thoroughbred mongrel."

> Now, there's no mistaking you. You're as different from me as I am from my Uncle James, who is the perfect specimen of a Forsyte. His sense of property is extreme, while you have practically none. Without me in between, you would seem like a different species. I'm the missing link. (p. 196)

Jolyon can pity, and even envy, the haggard lover. He, like Galsworthy, has lived through the agony and poignancy of waiting and wishing for stolen minutes with his beloved one, and of making the terrible decision to break up a marriage. Yet he can see Soames's point of view.

> Whence should a man like his cousin, saturated with all the prejudices and beliefs of his class, draw the insight or inspiration necessary to break up this life? It was a question of imagination, of projecting himself into the future beyond the unpleasant gossip, sneers, and tattle that followed on such separations, beyond the passing pangs that the lack of the sight of her would cause, beyond the grave disapproval of the worthy. But few men, and especially few men of Soames's class, had imagination enough for that. (p. 199)

Jolyon is here describing Soames's basic flaw, lack of imagination, the flaw that is responsible for the whole tragedy of Soames's life from the beginning of The Forsyte Saga to his death at the end of A Modern Comedy.

Even in the first novel, therefore, Galsworthy sets up Jolyon as his own dispassionate spokesman. Galsworthy's original plan, in fact, was to write a series of three novels on the theme of the "utter disharmony of the Christian religion with the English character," with Jolyon carried through all three novels as commentator. The author even made some changes in The Man of Property, altering the chronology of Jolyon's life, to accommodate the plan.[6]

Jolyon finds Soames's personality so distasteful that it checks compassion. "What was there in the fellow that made it so difficult to be sorry for him?" (p. 411). After a visit from Soames concerning the possibility of divorce (for Jolyon is trustee of Irene's affairs), he recalls the night when Soames slammed the door in his face.

> The repugnance he had then felt for Soames--for his flat-cheeked, shaven face full of spiritual bull-doggedness; for his spare, square, sleek figure lightly crouched as it were over the bone he could not digest--came now again, fresh as ever, nay, with an odd increase. 'I dislike him,' he thought, 'I dislike him to the very roots of me. And that's lucky; it'll make it easier for me to back his wife.' (p. 419)

Yet, despite his dislike, Jolyon can appreciate Soames's feelings. " 'He really suffers,' thought Jolyon;

[6] Garnett, pp. 84-85.

'I've no business to forget that, just because I don't like him' " (p. 423). After the interview, Jolyon spends the whole train trip home thinking, not only of Irene in her lonely flat, but "of Soames in his lonely office, and of the strange paralysis of life that lay on them both" (p. 424). Even though he is aware that his feeling for Irene is deepening into love, he "had something of his father's balance, and could see things impartially" (p. 488). His principles and feelings have been outraged by Soames's warning that anyone coming between husband and wife incurs heavy responsibility; yet he can be detached enough to feel sorry for the tragic spectacle of a man enslaved by his own possessive instinct, "who couldn't see the sky for it, or even enter fully into what another person felt!" (p. 546).

At times one part of Jolyon dominates and at times the other. It is an over-simplification to decide, as one critic does, that he is more artist than Forsyte.

> Of all the Forsytes, he is least characteristic of the breed. Segregated from the healthy, pure-blooded specimens of that species by his mésalliance, he has diluted--or polluted--the Forsyteism in his veins to such a degree that by the time 'In Chancery' begins he is hardly recognizable as a Forsyte, except for a certain chinnyness. In him the sense of property has become more or less rudimentary. Instead, the sense of beauty, incipient in Old Jolyon, is the determining characteristic. And when Irene enters his life, he has become qualified in every respect, through the evolutionary process that has purged his temperament of every Forsyte taint, to consummate the passionate love of

Beauty that permeates his very being.[7]

On the contrary, there is ample evidence that Jolyon's sense of property is more than rudimentary. It is true, for example, that his feeling for Robin Hill is partly a response to its beauty and dignity; yet, as he surveys the house and land, wondering about its appearance and owners in years to come, an element of possessiveness enters his appreciation.

> The aesthetic spirit, moving hand in hand with his Forsyte sense of possessive continuity, dwelt with pride and pleasure on his ownership thereof. There was the smack of reverence and ancestor-worship (if only for one ancestor) in his desire to hand this house down to his son and his son's son. His father had loved the house. . . . These last eleven years at Robin Hill had formed in Jolyon's life as a painter, the important period of success. He was now in the very van of water-colour art, hanging on the line everywhere. His drawings fetched high prices. (pp. 402-403)

The sense of possession is linked to Jolyon's love for his father. Soames, too, has a deep affection for his own father which is associated with a "sense of possessive continuity." In both Soames and Jolyon, these feelings extend to a desire to bequeath property to their children. Jolyon's meditation on Robin Hill, furthermore, reveals his pleasure in the commercial success of his paintings, a crite-

[7] Natalie Croman, John Galsworthy: A Study in Continuity and Contrast (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), p. 33.

rion of the value of art which, in Soames, is scornfully attributed to Forsyteian crassness and insensitivity.

An obvious difference exists between a man who collects paintings with an eye to profit and an artist who enjoys being well-paid for his paintings. There is nothing reprehensible about regarding the artist as worthy of his hire; even Bosinney had the right to be paid for his labour, for even Bosinneys have to eat. Until Jolyon began to make some money at painting, he could not afford to take the country jaunts so necessary to a landscape painter. An art critic once advised him to choose a definite subject for a series of paintings because, since he lacked an original style, the public would be more likely to buy "a capital Forsyte" if it were easily identifiable by subject. The artist in Jolyon rebelled at the advice, but not the Forsyte.

> The words bore good fruit with young Jolyon; they were contrary to all that he believed in, to all that he theoretically held good in his Art, but some strange, deep instinct moved him against his will to turn them to profit.
>
> He discovered therefore one morning that an idea had come to him for making a series of watercolour drawings of London. How the idea had arisen he could not tell; and it was not till the following year, when he had completed and sold them at a very fair price, that in one of his impersonal moods, he found himself able to recollect the Art critic, and to discover in his own achievement another proof that he was a Forsyte. (p. 245)

At a similar point in his career (1894-1895), Galsworthy gave up his legal chambers and all pretensions to

the practice of law in order to devote himself entirely to authorship. He met with some opposition from his family, particularly from his mother, to whom Law was more respectable than Literature. Although his family was far too fond of him to expect him to make his living entirely by writing, their disapprobation must surely have provided some incentive to prove that he could succeed as a writer. Even though he did not need money, therefore, financial success would justify his choice of career.

Galsworthy never knew want at any time in his life; in fact, from the time his independent income was assured, he made a practice of unobtrusively giving half his earnings to charity. His affluence undoubtedly accounts for the infrequent mention of money in his notebooks and letters; yet, wherever such references occur, they reflect a practical and business-like attitude toward money matters.

His first book, From The Four Winds (1897), was published at the author's expense. He offered the manuscript of his second book, the novel Jocelyn, to Fisher Unwin, who had published the first, on terms suggested by Joseph Conrad. When Unwin could not meet the terms, Galsworthy withdrew the manuscript and found another publisher, Gerald Duckworth, who was willing to issue the book at his own risk.

When Galsworthy had almost finished The Man of

Property, he asked Edward Garnett to send the manuscript, on completion, to Sydney Pawling, who had previously accepted The Island Pharisees for Heinemann's.

I am bound by my last agreement to give him the refusal; and I thought of asking for a fifty pound advance and 15 per cent royalty rising to 20 per cent after 2000 copies. I don't see why I should ask Heinemann's less. If they refuse this and Duckworth cares for it I would give it to him on a 12 per cent or 10 per cent royalty with no advance, because I consider that I owe him money /because Jocelyn had not sold well/ . I should want the royalty to increase to 20 per cent after 2000 copies sold.[8]

Although Galsworthy never pandered to popular taste in order to assure the sales of his books, there was a relationship, in his view, between sales and merit. He complained to Pawling of the disappointing sales of The Country House and of the small number of advance sales of Fraternity, and rapped the publisher sharply for what he considered negligent publicity.

I don't understand it. I wonder whether your travellers take trouble about my books. I never see them on railway bookstalls anywhere, and hardly ever in a shop window. I feel that I am the sort of author about whom a publisher soon says : "Oh! yes--Galsworthy--superior sort of stuff--will only reach a certain circulation," and then gives it up. But I don't accept that view of my own writing; it has this distinction (among many others) from the work, say, of James, Meredith, or Conrad--that it is absolutely clear in style, and not straining the intellect. I feel that from The Man of Property 5000, to The Patrician 8000, is a

[8] Garnett, p. 56.

very discouraging rise. Of course I know you will say you can't make the public buy my books, but that is just the point. I think you could make them more than you have. I seem to feel that both you and Heinemann have become perhaps discouraged, perhaps a little indifferent. If that is the case, I had better know. [9]

In his notebook, however, he recorded with satisfaction that The Patrician (1911) "brought in" over two thousand pounds between English and American publication and serial rights in The Atlantic Monthly.[10]

Galsworthy wrote to Garnett about the closing of the play Foundations (1917) after a short run and unfavourable reviews. "People seemed to like it all the same, and they gave it fifteen curtains on the last performance, and about ten every night. A few less curtains and a few more seats taken would however have been better for all concerned."[11]

Galsworthy's concern about the financial success of his books and plays runs parallel with Jolyon's interest in the sales of his paintings. If it was Forsyteism in Jolyon, Galsworthy was as much a Forsyte. Jolyon represents Galsworthy's idea of the artist far more accurately than does

[9] Marrot, p. 317.
[10] Marrot, p. 317.
[11] Garnett, p. 228.

Bosinney, who is an unrealistic abstraction. The author once wrote that the world was divided for him into "the Artist and the Non-Artist" and classified himself with the former.[12] The artistic temperament was not inconsistent, in his opinion, with an interest in money, as the notebooks and correspondence demonstrate.

Once Jolyon dreamed of a small restless figure roaming on a great curtained stage. He was not only observing but inhabiting the figure, which turned out to be a dual Soames-Jolyon trying to reach a vision of light and beauty seen through the curtains. The dream disturbed him badly, "especially that identification of himself with Soames" (p. 576); the identification is made explicit in his later interpretation of the dream.

> She /Irene/ was the chink of beauty in his dream. Was he to pass through the curtains now and reach her? Was the rich stuff of many possessions, the close encircling fabric of the possessive instinct walling in that little black figure of himself, and Soames--was it to be rent so that he could pass through into his vision, find there something not of the senses only? 'Let me,' he thought, 'ah! let me only know how not to grasp and destroy!' (p. 592)

One might use these passages to "prove" that Galsworthy was more Forsyte than artist, more conformist than rebel, more closely identified with Soames from the

[12] Marrot, p. 297.

very beginning than he thought. The gift of hindsight, armed with the formidable ammunition of modern psychiatry, makes it easy to read into literature a variety of meanings "unconsciously" divulged by the writer. Whatever his shortcomings, however, Galsworthy earned and deserved the epithet, "conscious craftsman," which has so frequently been applied to him. There is very little, if anything, in his writings which is not there by design. If Jolyon is confused about his own nature, he may well reflect Galsworthy's confusion or uncertainty about his own; but certainly the novelist was aware of it and tried to analyze it. Jolyon's self-analysis, as well as his comments on Soames, conveys the impression Galsworthy intended to leave with the reader.

Complementing and supplementary Jolyon's observations on Soames are Soames's own meditations, through which Galsworthy presents much of the action of <u>In Chancery</u>. Soames plots to attract Annette and her mother with a display of his wealth. He is pathetically disturbed by the renewal of his passion for Irene. He calculates the effect on his family of concealing Annette's origins and presenting her to them as a French lady from abroad. He yearns for all the complex satisfactions his second marriage will bring.

> What a perfect young thing to hold in one's arms! What a mother for his heir ! And he thought, with a smile, of his

family and their surprise at a French wife, and their curiosity, and of the way he would play with it and buffet it--confound them! . . . 'I will and must be free,' he thought. 'I won't hang about any longer. I'll go and see Irene. If you want things done, do them yourself. I must live again--live and move and have my being.' And in echo to that queer biblicality church-bells chimed the call to evening prayer. (p. 437)

The knowledge that Jolyon has been seeing Irene awakens unexpected jealousy in Soames, who is now uncertain what he wants, "a child between a promised toy and an old one which had been taken away from him." He decides to visit Annette to reaffirm his decision to marry her. To his surprise, he finds himself regarding her coquetry with cool detachment; so much has the mere idea of Irene unsettled him. His thoughts are a masterpiece of rationalization and character revelation. "If only Irene had given him a son, he wouldn't now be squirming after women!" "One woman's much the same as another, after all." He cannot, however, convince himself that this is true, for Annette does not have Irene's attractiveness. Realizing this, he reconsiders reconciliation with his first wife, justifying the idea with a total inability to understand feelings alien to his own.

'And Irene's my wife, my legal wife. I have done nothing to put her away from me. Why shouldn't she come back to me? It's the right thing, the lawful thing. It makes no scandal, no disturbance. If it's disagreeable to her--but why <u>should</u> it be? I'm not a leper, and she--she's no longer in love!' Why should he be put to the shifts and the sordid

> disgraces and the lurking defeats of the Divorce Court, when there she was like an empty house only waiting to be retaken into use and possession by him who legally owned her? (p. 463)

The author here inserts a comment: "To one so secretive as Soames the thought of re-entry into quiet possession of his own property with nothing given away to the world was intensely alluring." Soames's thoughts then continue. He is glad he went to see "that girl." He knows now what he wants. " 'If only Irene will come back I'll be as considerate as she wishes; she could live her own life; but perhaps--perhaps she would come round to me.' There was a lump in his throat" (p. 464).

Soames is conscious of his reasons and attitudes. At other times the author inserts comments to clarify for the reader motives that Soames is unaware of. When, for instance, Soames decides to buy a jewel for Irene so that he will have an excuse to visit her and ask for a reconciliation, his motives are mixed.

> Alongside the dry and reasoned sense that it was now or never with his self-preservation, now or never if he were to range himself /sic/ and found a family, went the secret urge of his senses roused by the sight of her who had once been a passionately desired wife, and the conviction that it was a sin against common sense and the decent secrecy of Forsytes to waste the wife he had. (p. 474)

This passage is irony too overt, comment too didactic. Galsworthy here violates his more usual, and

better, practice of letting the characters speak for themselves. Such comments form the basis of the charge that he "mocked" and "pilloried" Soames in The Forsyte Saga.[13] He has not yet attained the state of mind expressed in his remark, "As one gets older, one no longer takes such a serious and tragic view of things; rather one is struck by the irony, the humour in them."[14]

His comments are, however, sometimes quite sympathetic. When Irene has refused Soames's overture with "the brutal truth: I would rather die," Soames stands mute and stares at her. "And there intervened in him a sort of paralysis of speech and movement, the kind of quivering which comes when a man has received a deadly insult, and does not yet know how he is going to take it, or rather what it is going to do with him" (p. 480). He pockets the jewel and prepares to leave, and again the author comments. "But he could not go out. Something within him--that most deep and secret Forsyte quality, the impossibility of letting go, the impossibility of seeing the fantastic and forlorn nature of his own tenacity--prevented him" (p. 481).

[13] Pallette, p. 184.

[14] Schalit, p. 87.

This is not to suggest, of course, that Galsworthy "sympathizes" with Soames's attitude, but only that his comments reveal an understanding of the man's helplessness and his blindness as regards his own limitations. The author's understanding is implicit even in passages showing Soames through his own eyes.

> He often scrutinized his image in these days. He had never been a peacock like that fellow Dartie, or fancied himself a woman's man, but he had a certain belief in his own appearance--not unjustly, for it was well-coupled and preserved, neat, healthy, pale, unblemished by drink or excess of any kind. The Forsyte jaw and the concentration of his face were, in his eyes, virtues. So far as he could tell there was no feature of him which need inspire dislike. (p. 475)

As he cannot believe that the Forsyte chin is not a virtue, so he cannot believe that Irene would refuse him unless she had a new lover. "Her words, 'I would sooner die!' were ridiculous if she had not" (p. 489). He will never understand the kind of woman she is, nor what love means to her. "Even if she had never loved him," he thinks, "she had made no fuss until Bosinney came on the scene" (p. 489). His obtuseness inspires pity even while his views evoke distaste, and the reader's mixed response derives entirely from the revelation of Soames's thoughts, since the author deliberately withholds comment.

Sadie H. Davies, who examined the original manuscripts of the Forsyte chronicles, throws an interesting

light on Galsworthy's restraint.[15] She points out a description of Soames at the end of the second part of In Chancery. "Walking into the centre of the great empty drawing-room, he stood still. A wife! Somebody to talk things over with. One had a right! Damn it! One had a right!" (p. 560). In the original manuscript there is this additional passage: " 'If only, ' he thought, 'if only I had a wife waiting for me, that I could talk things over with. If only Irene stood there and smiled at me." The passage does not appear in the published version. Davies attributes the omission to the fact that the reflections ending with "One had a right!" are consistent with Galsworthy's and the reader's idea of Soames.

> He wants Irene because she is his property; a useful piece of property; 'somebody to talk things over with.' His sense of loneliness is not stressed as the real motive of the desire. If this is a rationalization then it is not Galsworthy's business to say so. He presents his characters to us as might a behaviorist. There his work finishes. We do the rest. (LXXXVI, 12-13).

This interpretation of the writer's motives in omitting the second passage may be an over-simplification,

[15] "Galsworthy the Craftsman: Studies in the Original Manuscripts of the Forsyte Chronicles," The Bookman (London), LXXXV (October, 1933), 18-20; LXXXVI (April, 1934), 12-16a; LXXXVII (October, 1934), 27-31.

for the fact is that Soames's loneliness has already been stressed many times in the novel and is no secret to the reader. More than likely, the real reason for the omission is that Galsworthy believed the reader so well-prepared already to understand the hidden motive that the explicit statement would be artistically false, a too-obvious bid for sympathy.

Soames's greatest motivation is the desire for an heir. He is not sure whether his desire to marry Annette is the cause or the effect of that aim; he is increasingly conscious, however, that "property without anyone to leave it to is the negation of true Forsyteism" (p. 390). His longing for a son is intimately related to his affection for his father and is, in fact, a manifestation of the Forsyte clannishness. When Jolyon heard that his son, Jolly, had died in the war, his greatest pain came from knowing the boy had died far from home and family. "And all the deeply rooted clanship in him, the family feeling and essential clinging to his own flesh and blood which had been so strong in old Jolyon--was so strong in all the Forsytes--felt outraged, cut, and torn by his son's lonely passing" (p. 593).

A critic described Soames's affectionate treatment of his father and sister as a fault in characterization, an inconsistency, a failure "to bring the particular into

complete harmony with the general."[16] He failed to realize that family feeling is completely consistent with the Forsyte temperament. Winifred may regard her husband as a property of dubious value and Soames may want Irene as a possession, but both Winifred and Soames have a deep and tender feeling for their own children and their parents, a feeling untainted with possessiveness. One does not need to own one's relatives, for they are on one's side, against the world; witness the bond between Soames and Winifred and between Jolly and Holly, James's affection for his children, Old and Young Jolyon's mutual love, the devotion of old Juley and Hester to Timothy. No one in the world loves unloveable Soames except his aunts, parents, and daughter. The others detest or mistrust him.[17]

Soames's relationship with his father is marked by a complete lack of outward sentiment. Neither is capable of revealing deep feelings; neither ever offers to discuss the more intimate problems of life with the other. When

[16] Bruce W. McCullough, "John Galsworthy," Representative English Novelists (New York, 1946), p. 330.

[17] Jolyon, a mongrel Forsyte, dislikes especially those traits in Soames that he recognizes and deplores in himself.

James is disturbed by bad news, he looks to Soames for reassurance, suggesting that Soames visit him more often. "Soames nodded; the mask of his countenance betrayed no understanding, but he went closer, and as if by accident touched his father's shoulder" (p. 401). After an exchange of matter-of-fact "good-nights" Soames goes to his own room. There, remembering James's age and the pathetic thinness of his arm, he sits on the edge of his bed and thinks, "I want a son, I want a son" (p. 401). Soames and James are bound together with something beyond the power of words, something "hidden deep in the fibre of nations and families--for blood, they say, is thicker than water--and neither of them was a cold-blooded man."[18] The bond extends to the coming generations of Forsytes as well. The thought of his father almost always leads Soames to the thought of a son.

> That evening in Park Lane, watching his father dine, he was overwhelmed by his old longing for a son--a son, to watch him eat as he went down the years, to be taken on his knee as James on a time had been wont to take him; a son of his own begetting, who could understand him because he was the same flesh and blood--understand, and comfort him, and become more rich and cultured than himself because he would start even better off. To get old--like that thin, grey wiry-frail figure sitting there--and be quite alone with possessions heaping up around him; to take no interest in anything because it had no future and must pass away from

[18] Hermon Ould, John Galsworthy (London, 1934), p. 23.

him to hands and mouths and eyes for whom he cared no jot! (p. 583)

The author's sympathy is so clear that it is difficult to understand how anyone could accuse him of mockery or of depicting "with relish" Soames's agonized desire for a son. The Soames-James relationship, furthermore, reveals the inconsequence of another charge.

> It is, in a sense, a heavy handicap to him, that he sets himself to picture the minds and spirits of a class of people whose traditional code is the suppression of any signs of emotion, but the effect is sometimes almost that of a deliberate shirking, a fastidious shrinking from direct emotional clashes. [19]

This "effect" can only be the result of careless or of selective reading. If Soames's behaviour only is taken into account and his thoughts and the author's comments ignored, one would certainly get the impression that the writer is shrinking from emotion. How far this observation is from the truth becomes clear in the chapter entitled "James is Told."

James was convinced, with his habitual pessimism, that he would not live to see the birth of Annette's child. All the aunties on Forsyte 'Change prayed, as he approached

---

[19] Elizabeth A. Drew, The Modern Novel (New York, 1926), p. 166.

his ninetieth birthday, that he would live until his grandchild was born, "that James might not have to die without some certainty about things. James did so dislike uncertainty" (p. 621). One's name did count, and Winifred's children, after all, were called "Dartie."

When Annette was brought to bed, Soames had to decide whether to save her at the certain cost of the baby's life or to risk her life so that the child might be born. He chose to take the risk, for it was his only chance for a son; Annette could survive no second childbirth. Both mother and child lived through the delivery, but, to Soames's bitter disappointment, the baby was a girl.

Immediately after learning the news, Soames was called to his father's death-bed.

> James' breathing was as if strangled; his eyes were closed. And in Soames, looking on his father so worn and white and wasted, listening to his strangled breathing, there rose a passionate vehemence of anger against Nature, cruel, inexorable Nature, kneeling on the chest of that wisp of a body, slowly pressing out the breath, pressing out the life of the being who was dearest to him in the world. (pp. 632-633)

James opened his eyes and asked for news. "A flood of emotion made Soames' face work so that he could not speak. Tell him?--yes. But what? He made a great effort, got his lips together, and said: 'Good news, dear, good--Annette,

a son' " (p. 633). James sank away again, and Soames sat beside him, warming with his hands a foot which had escaped the covers. With a strong sudden cry, the old man died. No one wept in that room but the hired nurse, a stranger. Soames went out, ran to his bedroom, "flung himself face down on the bed, and broke into sobs which he stifled with the pillow" (p. 635).

It is apparent from this account that the character, not the author, is shrinking from emotional display. Soames does not cry out, or weep, or lament, in the presence of others; yet through the author's interpretive comments the reader is made to feel that it is one of the most emotional moments in Soames's life. If Galsworthy had chosen to shirk the emotionalism, he would have refrained from commenting and from following Soames into the bedroom.

The scene has additional significance. The chapter is transitional since the lie Soames tells his father has certain suggestive powers. Irene had meanwhile borne a son at last, but, ironically, to her second husband, Jolyon, so that the lie involves the future tangling of Jon and Fleur, the two Forsyte offspring. Moreover, the ease with which James is deceived and his gratification at the news stand in

contrast to Soames's present disappointment; in a sense, however, James's pleasure anticipates the later reversal of Soames's attitude, when the object of his disappointment turns out to be his dearest treasure and the focus of his life.

IV. To Let: The Unselfish Father

To Let begins with a quotation from Romeo and Juliet. "From out the fatal loins of those two foes/ A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life." The subject of the novel is the love affair between Soames's only child, Fleur, and Irene's only child, Jon. Jolyon no longer serves as Galsworthy's spokesman; he plays a minor supporting rôle and fades into the background. Annette's interest in her daughter's life is perfunctory, for she is occupied with an affair of her own; her function in the novel is primarily to show the contrast between Soames's feelings for her and Irene. Soames and Irene, in conflict with Fleur and Jon, direct the action and determine the conclusion.

Irene's behaviour in To Let is so unpleasant that the reader finds his sympathy turning to Soames. After reading the book, many critics re-examined the preceding parts of the Saga and revised their originally favourable opinion of Irene. Their reaction genuinely puzzled Galsworthy.

> I never know whether to be gratified or not that the relative virtues and vices of my characters seem to form the staple of the articles written on them. No one, I think, ever enjoys both Soames and Irene. If they like Soames they abuse Irene, and vice versa. This to me seems queer. But

I suppose an author is incapable of liking or disliking his characters, and so can't understand how they affect other people. To me they are only badly or well made.[1]

Galsworthy wrote this in 1930, long after Irene's critics had had their say. By then, he had either forgotten or chosen to deny his partiality for Irene. Soames is never free of her influence throughout the trilogy, and much of his behaviour results from his relationship with her. A retrospective look at Irene, therefore, helps to understand Soames and Galsworthy's treatment of Soames.

Galsworthy does not allow her, in the first place, to be blamed for having married Soames. After her son has read Jolyon's letter telling the story of her first marriage, Irene says to Jon, "I know that in marrying Fleur's father without love I did a dreadful thing. An unhappy marriage, Jon, can play such havoc with other lives besides one's own" (p. 883). She blames herself, at the age of fifty-seven, for a decision made at twenty. Jolyon's explanation in the letter is plausible enough, however, to convince the reader of her innocence.

You see, Jon, in those days and even to this day. . . most girls are married ignorant of the sexual side of life. Even if they know what it means they have not <u>experienced</u> it. That's the crux. It is this actual lack of experience,

[1] Marrot, p. 800.

whatever verbal knowledge they have, which makes all the difference and all the trouble. In a vast number of marriages--and your mother's was one--girls are not and cannot be certain whether they love the man they marry or not; they do not know until after that act of union which makes the reality of marriage. (p. 850)

The reader must accept the possibility of such ignorance, even though Irene found Soames physically repugnant a full year before she accepted his proposal.

She had looked at him over her slowly waving fan; and he had lost his head. Seizing that moving wrist, he pressed his lips to the flesh of her arm. And she had shuddered--to this day he had not forgotten that shudder--nor the look so passionately averse she had given him. (p. 106)

Given her unhappy situation, without means and living with a hostile step-mother, given the tenacity of Soames's pursuit and her virginal ignorance, it is possible to agree with the author that she is blameless.

Within a week, she knew that she had made a mistake. In the face of her husband's refusal to free her, she might simply have left him, but she had no money, nowhere to go, and no means of supporting herself. Perhaps she felt obliged to try to live up to her part of the bargain even though Soames, in refusing to free her on request, had failed to keep his promise. With involuntary shrinking that turned to loathing, she shared her bed with her husband for three years.

Then, one night she locked her bedroom door against

him. She chose that particular night, rather than any one of a thousand nights before, because Soames had threatened to sue Bosinney for the extra cost of the house. The next day she visited Bosinney and became his mistress "in deed as well as thought." From that time on, she slept by day with Bosinney and by night alone, behind a locked door. Bosinney's fiancée, June, might break her heart; Soames might live in celibacy forever, or manage as best he might with other women; Irene had no choice, it seems, but to obey the call of passion.

If her reasons for remaining with Soames for three years are acceptable, her return to him after the adulterous act is not. Concern for Soames's position and reputation did not motivate her. The only possible explanation, in realistic terms, is that she wanted to retain a position of respectability and to keep a lover too. David H. Lawrence said, "Irene seems to me a sneaking, creeping, spiteful sort of bitch, an anti-Forsyte, absolutely living off the Forsytes--yes, to the very end; absolutely living off their money and trying to do them dirt."[2]

[2] "John Galsworthy," Phoenix (London, 1936), p. 545.

Galsworthy, had he lived long enough to read Lawrence's attack, would have been horrified at the suggestion; Irene was supposed to represent the antithesis of conventional prudence and respect for reputation, position, and property. Yet Galsworthy offers no explanation of her return to Soames, nor of her choosing to remain with him until Bosinney's death.

The author's purpose in making her return is no mystery. He manipulated the character to suit the plot and, as he admitted to Garnett, to point a moral.

> You, and I think your wife, want me to end the book with a palpable and obvious defeat of Forsyteism by making the lovers run away happily.
>
> To my mind (and I desire to defeat Forsyteism) the only way to do so is to leave the Forsytes masters of the field. The only way to enlist the sympathies of readers on the other side, the only way to cap the whole purpose of the book, which was to leave property as <u>an empty Shell</u>--is to leave the victory to Soames.[3]

Perhaps Galsworthy was unaware that he had failed to provide Irene with an acceptable motive.[4] More probably,

[3] Garnett, p. 74.

[4] No one has tried to explain why Ada Galsworthy stayed with her first husband after she and John became lovers; nor does anyone know why her lover accepted that situation.

he hoped that the sweep of action and force of feeling would cause the reader to overlook the omission.

Part of the failure comes from his hesitancy to define Irene as a real person and from his anxiety not to commit her to an imperfection.

> Irene, or Galsworthy through Irene, makes it seem discourteous and unfair to discuss her at all on the human plane, for if one were to say that she is selfish, vain and hypocritical--all without knowing it--her author might put the accusation out of court by saying: 'You misrepresent my purpose. You have failed to understand to how great an extent, in my mind, Irene is a spirit, an emanation of the absolute, an idea, and so exempt from terrestrial argument.'[5]

The embodiment of Beauty stayed on until her husband, wild with jealousy and desire, invaded her room. She reported the event to her lover the next day, but returned to spend another night at home. Only on the following day did she pack a trunk and a bag and leave. The twenty-four hour delay is inexplicable; no real woman, feeling the shock and horror Irene is supposed to have felt, would have returned to that house for any reason.

Her final return is, of course, fully explained. Even Soames understands it as an automatic act, the result of having heard of Bosinney's death. "She had come back like

---

[5] Menander /pseudonym/, "Irene Forsyte," Times Literary Supplement, Nov. 4, 1944, p. 531.

an animal wounded to death, not knowing where to turn, not knowing what she was doing" (p. 307). As soon as the shock wore off, she left again, this time for ever.

After twelve years, during which time she managed to support herself, she refused, quite properly, to return to Soames. She also refused to give him new evidence for a divorce so that he might be free to remarry and father a son. She had had no lover since Bosinney and would not, despite a professed desire to help, take a lover to order for Soames's convenience. He must look to his own life, she suggested; if he wanted a divorce so badly, she would be happy to oblige by charging him with adultery. It did not occur to her that she had no reputation to lose, whereas his entire career was at stake. If she had had a lover, she would have leaped at the chance to be free; since freedom was worthless to her, Soames's anguish did not concern her. To put the matter crudely, she was willing, because Soames was repugnant to her, to punish him for life so long as her own tranquility was undisturbed. Only when his continuing desire for her began to be frightening, and after her affection for Jolyon led to a willingness to remarry, did she find the idea of divorce appealing. At that point, her objections to scandal miraculously dissolved; she even

cooperated to the extent of giving Soames evidence of adultery before the fact (p. 589).

This account of Irene's behaviour is factual but at complete variance with the tone of In Chancery. Although Galsworthy treats Soames with understanding, he does not criticize Irene for her obduracy; he was incapable of criticizing her at all. His attitude is irritating because he saw his other characters so very clearly but was apparently unable to look directly at Irene and to realize what he had made of her. In all three novels he makes her behave badly and then tells the reader, through tone and comment and sometimes a spokesman, that she is acting in accordance with her beautiful nature and ruining lives all around her because she cannot help being so beautiful and desirable. As an abstraction and a symbol, she is not to be judged by real laws and real standards of morality; Irene cannot be brought to account because she is an intangible. Her portrait is the chivalrous gesture of Ada's devoted husband, but it is not convincing characterization.

Galsworthy's vision of Irene is even more distorted in the third novel than in the second. She destroyed June's happiness and was responsible for Bosinney's death (The Man of Property); she continued to make Soames wretched and

almost succeeded in blighting any hope he might have for future happiness (In Chancery). In To Let she causes a number of serious changes in others' lives with just a few soft words. She shatters Jon's security and plans; Fleur rebounds into a loveless marriage; Soames is wounded through Fleur; and the shock of giving the letter to Jon hastens Jolyon's death. "Don't think of me--think of yourself," she tells Jon.

> How did Galsworthy, a perceptive artist, a man full of sensitive charity, fail to understand that it is this very saying of Irene's which condemns her. Always, with Soames, with her son, she wants her own way, but rejects the responsibility of taking it. In so far as she is woman, she is self-deluded, hypocritical, self-pitying. If Galsworthy, loving her nevertheless, had compassionately criticized her, she might have been unique, one of the undying women of fiction . . . but he would recognize no fault in her and, isolating her from humanity within the ring of his idealism, deified and killed her.[6]

Jon does as Irene wants him to, despite her admonition to think only of himself. In allowing him to be controlled by her will, she demonstrates a possessiveness exceeding that of any Forsyte. She is intended to symbolize a large spirit, but fails to deal with Jon in that spirit.

One must be careful to distinguish Jolyon's motive in writing the letter from Irene's approval of his action.

6 Menander, p. 531.

Jolyon is not possessive toward Jon; he acts only through consideration of Irene's feelings. It is unfair to condemn them together, as one critic does.

> For what imaginable reason could Jolyon and Irene--the unpossessive ones, if you please: the devotees of beauty!--have conspired to break their boy's heart just because he loved Soames's daughter? . . . Jolyon and Irene behave like maniacal monsters of possessive selfishness to their son.[7]

Galsworthy knew that they might be suspect, for he wrote their defense in his Introduction:

> A criticism one might pass on the last phase of the Saga is the complaint that Irene and Jolyon--those rebels against property--claim spiritual property in their son Jon. But it would be hyper-criticism as the tale is told. No father and mother could have let the boy marry Fleur without knowledge of the facts; and the facts determine Jon, not the persuasion of his parents. Moreover, Jolyon's persuasion is not on his own account, but on Irene's, and Irene's persuasion becomes a reiterated: "Don't think of me, think of yourself!" That Jon, knowing the facts, can realise his mother's feelings, can hardly with justice be held proof that she is, after all, a Forsyte. (p. xiii)

The defense collapses at its weakest point, "facts determine Jon, not the persuasion of his parents." The text reveals the statement, intended as the mainstay of the argument, to be a falsification. After Jon is in possession of "the facts" (and Jolyon's presentation of the facts is a masterpiece of special pleading, deliberately designed to elicit sympathy

[7] Gerald Gould, "John Galsworthy As A Novelist," The Bookman (London), LXV (1923), 135.

for Irene), he has a conversation with his mother.

/Irene:/ "Do you think you can possibly be happy with this girl?"

Staring at her dark eyes, darker now from pain, Jon answered:

"Yes, oh! yes--if you could be."

Irene smiled.

"Admiration of beauty and longing for possession are not love. If yours were another case like mine, Jon--where the deepest things are stifled; the flesh joined, and the spirit at war!"

"Why should it, Mother? You think she must be like her father, but she's not. I've seen him."

Again the smile came on Irene's lips, and in Jon something wavered; there was such irony and experience in that smile.

"You are a giver, Jon; she is a taker."

That unworthy doubt, that haunting uncertainty again! He said with vehemence:

"She isn't--she isn't. It's only because I can't bear to make you unhappy, Mother, now that Father—" He thrust his fists against his forehead.

Irene got up.

"I told you that night, dear, not to mind me. I meant it. Think of yourself and your own happiness! I can stand what's left--I've brought it on myself." (p. 883)

The facts have not been enough to convince him, and so Irene has to bring in a new "fact"--her opinion, based on one strained meeting, that Fleur is a "taker." That her estimate of Fleur's character happens to be accurate does not justify her bringing it into the discussion, since her objections are supposed to be based on past history rather than on conjectures about the future.

Jon rejects the argument, anyway; the only obstacle is Irene--"I can't bear to make you unhappy,

Mother." Irene has only one arrow in her quiver, and she lets it fly with such subtle misdirection that he does not know he has been hit. She tells him again, "Don't think of me," and adds, with martyred humility, "I can stand what's left--I've brought it on myself." Knowing the tenderness of his heart and the depth of his love for her, she has made sure that he cannot fail to think of her. With a soft caress, she leaves him to his night-thoughts.

"Admiration of beauty and longing for possession are not love," she tells him. Soames's great sin against Irene was that he did not love her selflessly enough; if he had, he could not have caused her such pain by refusing to set her free. A manifestation of selfless love is the pain which Jolyon felt when he imagined Jon reading the letter. "There were things in it which hurt him so much, when he thought of Jon reading them, that he nearly tore the letter up" (p. 853). Jon's first reaction to the letter is the thought of his father's pain in writing it; <u>this</u> is selfless love. Irene's comment on the letter, however, is startlingly casual: "It's wonderfully put. I don't see how it could be put better. Thank you, dear." She might be thanking him for writing an invitation to lunch, instead of a letter that will undermine the foundation of her son's

security and tear him away from the girl he loves. The only feelings which matter are her own.

> Irene, that prig, with the cold, uncharitable heart and long, venomous memory, overcharged with hate, who brings misfortune on every person with whom she comes in contact . . . a morbid miser, hoarding her body as if it were a museum piece, and displaying a sense of possession as acute as that of the most acquisitive Forsyte. . . .[8]

Perhaps Ervine's opinion is too strong; a more charitable view would be that her love for Jon and her loathing of Soames combine to make her irrational on the subject of marriage between Jon and Fleur. No other explanation can excuse her. Her action is so plainly culpable that Soames's behaviour shines brightly by comparison.

He is faced with the identical problem: he hates the idea of the marriage, adores his only child, and is torn between his instinct to obstruct the union and his desire to avoid hurting Fleur. Unlike Irene, he loves his child so unselfishly that he prepares to give her up for the sake of her happiness. His line of action is so right and decent in itself, and in such contrast to Irene's, that he "gets a double accretion of admiration."[9]

[8] St. John Ervine, "John Galsworthy," Great Democrats (London, 1934), p. 283.

[9] Duffin, p. 399.

Almost nineteen years have passed since the birth of Fleur, and Soames is now sixty-five. He dotes on his daughter, while recognizing that the power she holds over him has made her wilful. "Sixty-five! He was getting on; but he didn't feel it, for fortunately perhaps, considering Annette's youth and good looks, his second marriage had turned out a cool affair. He had known but one real passion in his life--for that first wife of his--Irene" (p. 666).

For many years he has ceased regretting not having a son; Fleur "filled the bill in his heart" (p. 667). "Aware that his expression was softening as he looked at her, Soames frowned to preserve the unemotionalism proper to a Forsyte. He knew she was only too inclined to take advantage of his weakness" (p. 677). His world revolves about this girl, who has absorbed the feeling he once had for Irene.

> 'Too fond of her!' he thought, 'too fond!' He was like a man uninsured, with his ships at sea. Uninsured again--as in that other time, so long ago, when he would wander dumb and jealous in the wilderness of London, longing for that woman--his first wife--the mother of this infernal boy. (p.738)

Galsworthy stresses the resemblance between his absorption in Fleur and his old passion for Irene more than once. "It was odd how, with all this ingrained care for moderation and secure investment, Soames ever put his emotional eggs into one basket. First Irene--now Fleur" (p. 807).

Fleur's place in his heart leaves little room for anyone else, least of all for his second wife. He has never had any sympathy with Annette's language, has never understood her patriotism, and has never loved her; she "had never been much more than a mistress, and he was getting indifferent to that side of things!" (p. 807).

> A fine possession, an excellent housekeeper, a sensible and affectionate enough mother. If only she weren't always so frankly cynical about the relations begween them! Soames, who had no more real affection for her than she had for him, suffered from a kind of English grievance in that she had never dropped even the thinnest veil of sentiment over their partnership . . . when from a marriage love had disappeared, or been found never to have really existed--so that it was manifestly not based on love--you must not admit it. . . . Thus you had it both ways, and were not tarred with cynicism, realism, and immorality like the French. . . . He could never understand what she meant when she talked of the hypocrisy of the English. (pp. 684-685)

Galsworthy is having a bit of fun at Soames's expense. Poor Soames, whose first wife could not, and whose second wife would not, pretend to love him!

When Soames suspects Annette of having a love affair with Prosper Profond, he reacts almost with indifference. Such a suspicion of Irene had driven him into a frenzy of jealousy; now he chooses to ignore Annette's flirting until forced by the danger of scandal to take action. Even during his courtship of Annette, twenty years

earlier, he had anticipated such a situation without dismay. "Years hence I shouldn't be surprised if I have trouble with her; but I shall be getting old, I shall have children by then. I shall shut my eyes" (p. 608).

One of Galsworthy's letters throws light on an important aspect of the Soames-Annette relationship. Addressed to a French friend, André Chevrillon, the letter discusses the difference in women's status in France and England.

> I am not at all sure that the progress of sentimental laxity in marriage that you speak of in France is any sign of the emancipation of women from male desire and male design. It seems to me more likely to be a mere change of channel due to the paramount power of male convenience, and not to the principles of a wider humanity, or of a stricter self-respect. No doubt the French woman is freer <u>within</u> the ring of sex; the give and take is greater--perhaps more natural, perhaps less natural--who knows? For instance, English women (with very rare exceptions) who have lovers don't remain on marital terms with their husbands; I am told that this is not at all infrequent here.[10]

This belief of Galsworthy's makes it easier for the reader to understand one scene of <u>To Let</u>. Soames has received an anonymous letter accusing Annette of "carrying on with a foreigner" and of meeting Profond several times a week. Soames confronts her with the letter and threatens to cut off her money unless she breaks with Profond. Not

10 Marrot, pp. 364-365.

only does she refuse to affirm her innocence, but she warns Soames not to threaten her or to make any demands; she promises only to avoid scandalous behaviour. Soames decides that she is right to assert her independence and that he can do nothing.

> The instinct of self-preservation warned him to batten down his hatches, to smother the fire with want of air. Unless one believed there was something in a thing, there wasn't.
>
> That night he went into her room. She received him in the most matter-of-fact way, as if there had been no scene between them. (p. 811)

The dramatic climax of The Man of Property was Soames's forcing himself on Irene and asserting his marital rights. Echoes of the incident resound, in fact, through all the Forsyte novels. Its direct effects are Bosinney's death, Irene's departure and refusal to return, and her opposition to a union between Fleur and Jon. The indirect effects of the incident include most of the main plot of The Forsyte Saga and the Fleur-Jon relationship in A Modern Comedy. The contrast between such an important, far-reaching event and the casual few lines describing Soames's visit to Annette is obviously deliberate.

Superficially, the contrast seems self-explanatory, especially if the reader is familiar with the views expressed in the letter. Annette is French; therefore she regards the

question matter-of-factly. Irene is English; it follows that she is fastidious about sharing herself with two men. Annette is realistic and earthy, like her mother; she probably has had no illusions about the sexual side of marriage from the time Mme Lamotte could first instruct her about the realities of life. Irene, on the other hand, is all spirit and idealism; born to be loved, she has no idea how one goes about it. Perhaps because this explanation seems so obvious, no critic has even bothered to comment on this particular contrast.

There is, however, a point which does not seem to fit, a small recurrent comment that casts doubt on the simplicity of the explanation. Irene is not English in appearance or temperament. She looks like a heathen goddess (p. 9), like Titian's "Heavenly Love" (p. 247), like Venus (pp. 421, 577, 654). There is not an Englishwoman among them. "Soames will have trouble with her . . . she's got a foreign look" (p. 19). When James looked at her, "an odd feeling crept over him, as though he had come across something strange and foreign" (p. 73). While travelling in Spain with his mother, Jon observes: "A Southern people stimulated his admiration for her type of beauty, which he had been accustomed to hear called Spanish, but which he

now perceived to be no such thing. Her beauty was neither English, French, Spanish, nor Italian--it was special!" (p. 762). As to temperament, "she was one of those women--not too common in the Anglo-Saxon race--born to be loved and to love" (p. 50. Italics added). Her reaction to Soames's intrusion was not attributable to her English-ness at all.

It is always tempting to exaggerate an "original" interpretation and even to distort facts in order to support a thesis. Certainly Annette is Galsworthy's somewhat stereotyped idea of a Frenchwoman and behaves just as he believed a Frenchwoman would behave. It is possible, however, that Galsworthy at fifty-two or fifty-three regarded the whole subject with less indignation and more tolerance; he might even have treated the "rape" scene differently if he had been writing it in his later years. If he felt then as strongly as he had felt in 1905, surely he would have made more of the Annette-Soames incident than he did, if only to comment on the difference between the two women. Not wishing to make more of the matter than it warrants, I leave it with the suggestion that the contrasting episodes provide a possible clue to the changes in Galsworthy's attitudes as

time passed.

Galsworthy did comment on the scene, but his remarks concerned Soames's, not Annette's, behaviour.

> I am not more absolutely certain than Soames was whether Annette was actually Profond's mistress. I incline--like him--to think she was. I think the doubt sooner or later was inherent in Soames' second married life; and I am sure the thread woven-in lends an extra closeness to the story, and complements the character of Soames, by showing the very different effect such a contingency has on him in the very different cases of his two marriages. I think, too, that his indelicacies in that scene with Annette and after it, are due to "Superior Dosset" outcropping in him under pressure, and to the whipping up of his sense of property.[11]

Soames is still a man of property and he remains one to the end. His gradual rehabilitation does not consist in the author's changing Soames's character but in Galsworthy's altered interpretation of it and in a shift of emphasis to Soames's more admirable characteristics. Soames's sense of property gradually "takes on the more respectable guise of an innate sense of law and order--a counterbalance to 'lawlessness' rather than a cage for it."[12] Instead of wanting to own a wife, he longs pathetically for a son.

[11] Marrot, p. 511.

[12] Duffin, p. 399.

Soames even shows signs of being sensitive to beauty. Examining a recently-purchased painting which he knows to be valuable, he believes it to be a bargain because he can "admire the quality of the table, the floor, the chair, the girl's figure, the absorbed expression on her face" (p. 628). His collection of paintings represents an investment to him, desirable primarily for its resale value. The collecting of pictures, however, fills an emotional need for him during his twelve lonely years. Increasingly, aesthetic appreciation enhances his proprietary satisfaction in his paintings. There is a great contrast between Galsworthy's early and late attitude toward Soames's rôle as art collector. In The Man of Property, Soames talked of the Barbizon school of painters, which he had just discovered.

> These were the coming men, he said; he should not wonder if a lot of money were made over them; he had his eye on two pictures by a man called Corot, charming things; if he could get them at a reasonable price he was going to buy them--they would, he thought, fetch a big price some day. (p. 278)

That they are "charming things," Galsworthy implies, counts for nothing with Soames except insofar as their charm assures their future value. Soames's habit is to examine prospective purchases, making notes on the subjects

of the pictures and the names of the painters and deriving satisfaction from calculating their value rather than through a response to their beauty (pp. 51-52).

At the time In Chancery begins, Soames's collection has grown to considerable size and attracts many dealers and acquaintances. "For though he was but a taciturn showman, his quiet collected determinism seldom failed to influence his guests, who knew that his reputation was grounded not on mere aesthetic fancy, but on his power of gauging the future of market values." (p. 367). His "mere aesthetic fancy" still plays a secondary rôle in determining his selections, although the acknowledgement of its existence marks a progression in the author's attitude.

Finally, To Let contains a passage which not only closes the gap between art and commerce but justifies the existence of collectors like Soames.

> Soames had not spent thirty-eight years over his one hobby without knowing something more about pictures than their market values. He was, at it were, the missing link between the artist and the commercial public. Art for art's sake and all that, of course, was cant. But aesthetics and good taste was what gave a work of art its permanent market value, or in other words made it 'a work of art.' There was no real cleavage. (pp. 734-735)

I do not detect any note of irony in this passage;

on the contrary, it seems to be a genuine expression of Galsworthy's mature attitude toward the relationship of art and the public. Soames is no less "possessive" than before, but Galsworthy can now see uses for, and virtues in, possessiveness that he was unable--or perhaps able but unwilling--to recognize formerly.

More dear to Soames than paintings is Fleur, "this treasured possession of his life" (p. 677). His love for her is possessive in the sense that she is his treasure, a source of comfort to him, and the object of all his frustrated affection. "Fleur's future! 'I want fair sailing for her,' he thought. 'Nothing else matters at my time of life.' A lonely business--life! What you had you never could keep to yourself! As you warned one off, you let another in. One could make sure of nothing!" (p. 808).

His possessiveness, however, is subordinate to his concern for her happiness; "I must put up with things, I know," he tells Fleur, "to keep your affection" (p. 830). At Fleur's request that he intervene with Irene, selfless devotion vanquishes his Forsyteism almost immediately.

> Why should he help her to get this boy, who was killing her affection for himself? Why should he? By the laws of the Forsytes it was foolish! There was nothing to be had out of it--nothing! To give her to that boy! To pass her into

> the enemy's camp, under the influence of the woman who had injured him so deeply! Slowly--inevitably--he would lose this flower of his life! And suddenly he was conscious that his hand was wet. His heart gave a little painful jump. He couldn't bear her to cry. . . . If she must have it for her happiness-she must; he couldn't refuse to help her. (pp. 887-888)

He does not decide without a struggle; giving up Fleur to any man would be hard for him, and his ambiguous feelings toward Irene further intensify his inner conflict. " 'I don't know what I've done,' he thought, 'to have such things thrust on me!' " (p. 888).

At this point Galsworthy's treatment of Soames becomes weakened by vaccillation. The author has partly rehabilitated Soames in the eyes of the reader by contrasting Soames's behaviour to Irene and his treatment of Fleur's love affair with Jon. Galsworthy cannot, however, improve Soames's attitude toward Irene without damaging her image. Soames must misunderstand and abuse Irene to the end if she is to remain sympathetic.

Immediately after making his unselfish decision, Soames goes to see Irene, and Galsworthy describes him as "he who represented the Day of Judgment for her on earth as it was in heaven; he, legal ownership, personified, meeting lawless beauty, incarnate" (p. 889). When Galsworthy deals with Irene all the careful repair work that has gone into

Soames's portrayal counts for nothing; the author, the characters, and the reader are transported to the mood of The Man of Property. Irene is still beautiful and desirable; Soames remains, not only possessive toward her, but as obtuse as ever. "Ah! she had been a bad lot--had loved two men, and not himself! He must remember that when he came face to face with her once more" (p. 890). He even considers "repossessing" some part of Irene through the union of their children and through the grandchildren they would have in common as a result of that union (p. 868). Soames's love for his daughter has led the reader to believe that he has acquired some understanding into the nature of love, but Galsworthy once more sacrifices Soames for Irene's sake.

> Even now he could not understand why she had been so impracticable. She could love other men; she had it in her! . . . It seemed to him, fantastically, as he looked back, that . . . all this modern looseness had come out of her revolt; it seemed to him, fantastically, that she had started it, till all decent ownership of anything had gone, or was on the point of going. All came from her! And now--a pretty state of things! Homes! How could you have them without mutual ownership? Not that he had ever had a real home! But had that been his fault? He had done his best. And his rewards were--those two /Irene and Jolyon/ sitting in that Stand, and this affair of Fleur's! (p. 841)

Only near the very end of To Let does the author

permit Soames the ray of understanding that changes his attitude toward Irene.

> Softened by the events of the past week, affected by the melancholy beauty of the autumn day, Soames came nearer than he had ever been to realisation of that truth--passing the understanding of a Forsyte pure--that the body of Beauty has a spiritual essence, uncapturable save by a devotion which thinks not of self. After all, he was near that truth in his devotion to his daughter; perhaps that made him understand a little how he had missed the prize. (p. 916)

It is significant that this knowledge comes to Soames towards the end of the novel. A review of Galsworthy's comments about Soames shows a progressive self-awareness on Soames's part. At the beginning, only the author and the reader share certain knowledge. "Enjoy! The word brought no puritan terror to Soames; but it brought the terror suited to his temperament. He had always been afraid to enjoy to-day for fear he might not enjoy to-morrow so much" (p. 687). Soames overlooks Annette's flirtation, Galsworthy remarks, because "his possessive instinct, subtle, less formal, more elastic since the War, kept all misgivings underground" (p. 777). Soames certainly does not seem to be aware of this change in his possessive instinct; at least, he attributes his deliberate "blindness" to his comparative indifference to his second wife.

As To Let progresses, however, the character begins imperfectly to be aware of some of his own traits. "As modern life became faster, looser, younger, Soames was becoming older, slower, tighter, more and more in thought and language like his father James before him. He was almost aware of it himself" (p. 885). After Jon has rejected Fleur, Soames has a near-glimpse of himself as he looked to Irene.

> That boy had given her up, declared part and lot with the woman who so long ago had given her father up! Soames clenched his hands. Given him up, and why? What had been wrong with him? And once more he felt the malaise of one who contemplates himself as seen by another--like a dog who chances on his reflection in a mirror and is intrigued and anxious at the unseizable thing. (p. 893)

Finally, in his long meditation at the cemetery at the very end of the Saga, he has a last clear insight into his own shortcomings. He has first reviewed the history of the Forsyte family and the events of his own life. He sees himself as an island of stability in a sea of change, resisting and surviving the dissolution of "property, manners, and morals, . . . melody and the old forms of art" (p. 920). Yet with all this he is troubled by a melancholy craving and by the awareness that, with all his virtues and solidity, all his strength and goodness, something is lacking in him and always will be. "He might wish and wish and never get it--the beauty and the loving in the world" (p. 921).

V: A Modern Comedy: The Final Portrait

Less than six weeks after To Let appeared, Galsworthy began planning a continuation of the Forsyte chronicles. At that time (Nov. 8, 1921) he wrote to a friend of his intentions. "I am quite lost at present. Though the Saga is finished--the old Forsytes all gone--and the long duel over, I feel that I haven't done with Fleur; and am trying to gather force to pursue her in the world of to-day and to-morrow."[1]

Fleur is the central character of A Modern Comedy, but Soames plays almost as prominent a rôle. Galsworthy stated in the Preface that he intended to portray the post-war generation against the background of Victorianism that Soames represents. "It is against the background of this more or less fixed quantity that we can best see the shape and colour of the present intensely self-conscious and all-questioning generation."[2]

Galsworthy did not try to delineate the "multiple

[1] Marrot, p. 510.

[2] A Modern Comedy (London, 1929), p. ix. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

types and activities of today," for such an attempt would require much more space than three novels afforded; he tried, instead, to reflect generally the spirit of the age in Fleur's discontent and restlessness. His primary interest, however, was to continue the story begun with the meeting of Soames and Irene in a drawing-room so long ago, "a tale which could but end when its spine snapped, and Soames 'took the ferry' forty-five years later" (p. xi).

At the end of the Preface, Galsworthy comments on Soames.

> The chronicler, catechised (as he often is) concerning Soames, knows not precisely what he stands for. Taking him for all in all he was honest, anyway. He lived and moved and had his peculiar being, and, now he sleeps. His creator may be pardoned for thinking there was something fitting about his end; for, however far we have travelled from Greek culture and philosophy, there is still truth in the old Greek proverb: "That which a man most loves shall in the end destroy him." (p. xi)

Soames is thus identified to the very end as both man and symbol, although the symbolism never subdues his personality. He "lived and moved and had his peculiar being" as vividly as any character in fiction; yet he is at the same time the Victorian man of property, the symbol of possessiveness, and finally, when nemesis overtakes him, the tragic hero.

"The measure of Galsworthy's success is the degree to which he maintains the state of unstable equilibrium between convincing characterization and description on the realistic level and poetical-symbolic undertones and overtones."[3] Soames is most convincing on both the realistic and symbolic level because Galsworthy knew him best. The generation the novelist knew least, that of Fleur and Michael, is less convincing because Galsworthy "constructed its representatives on more purely theoretical considerations instead of from observation and real insight."[4] The modernism that he hoped to seize escaped him, for he failed to show an understanding of the post-war world.

A few dissenting readers find Galsworthy's portrait of Fleur's generation the most successful achievement of A Modern Comedy,[5] presented with "a cool, ironic, rather sad clarity, which time may well declare to be

[3] David Daiches, "John Galsworthy," The Novel and the Modern World (Chicago, 1939), p. 45.

[4] Daiches, p. 46.

[5] Mary S. Gretton, "John Galsworthy," Contemporary Review, CXLIII (1933), 323.

the nearest to truth of any contemporary writing."[6]

There is general agreement, however, that A Modern Comedy is inferior to The Forsyte Sage for one reason or another. Dudley Barker, for example, finds the opening chapters of The White Monkey comparatively dull and the novel coming to life only with Soames's appearance in the sixth chapter. "What makes the book," he says, "is Soames, mousing forward into the modern world with his Victorian standards, now thoroughly approved by his creator" (p. 206). Soames's appearances in the new series, however, only contribute to the general boredom of another critic.

> One feels that Mr. Galsworthy is carried forward more by the momentum already acquired than by any powerful creative impulse; each book follows immediately on the year in which the action is placed, as if the author were somewhat hastily and perfunctorily keeping his chronicle up to date. One grows rather tired of the monotonous reappearances of Soames in his double rôle of anxious financier and doting father. . . . One's final impression of the series is a sense of indeterminateness greatly in contrast with the sharpness of outline which characterizes the earlier novels.[7]

[6] Arthur Simons Collins, "John Galsworthy," English Literature of the Twentieth Century (London, 1951), p. 177.

[7] Joseph Warren Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel (New York, 1932), p. 250.

Beach's comments on A Modern Comedy as a whole are valid. The plots of the three novels are complex and rambling, and the reader often loses interest. The fault is partly because Fleur, the central character, is unsympathetic. Weary of her petulance, immaturity, and cold-hearted plotting, the reader finally stops caring whether she gets what she wants or not.

There is some disagreement among the critics concerning Fleur. Galsworthy undoubtedly wanted the reader to excuse her faults, while recognizing them, because they are inherited; her possessiveness toward Jon and Michael is parallel to Soames's attitude toward Irene. The flaw, transmitted from father to daughter, is the retributive instrument, in fact, of Soames's final tragedy. Galsworthy persuaded some critics, at least, to like Fleur.

> The reader's kindliness toward Fleur, despite all her faults, is, of course, largely a tribute to the skill with which Galsworthy has portrayed her. . . . By the time we have got through the Saga and the Comedy we have suffered with her in her young heartbreak over Jon; we have stood by her side through the agonies of motherhood; we have trembled for her soul when she flings her cap over the windmill; and we have tasted the salt tears of her bitter remorse when Soames is killed. . . . The quality that serves her best to win our tenderness is the endearing childlikeness she carries under all her surface sophistication.[8]

[8] Edward Wagenknecht, "The Selfish Heroine: Thackeray and Galsworthy," College English, IV (1942-1943), 296-297.

Another reader finds the Fleur-Jon love story "one of the tenderest things in modern fiction,"[9] related with poignancy deepening into a profound sense of pathos. "And something of the pathetic clings about the youthful figure of Fleur, whose very positiveness lends an odd attraction to her character, and makes her deplorable defeat the more pitiful."[10]

These favourable opinions of Fleur are reminiscent of the apologies for Irene; Galsworthy has again created a character whom most readers find unsympathetic and has then tried to elicit compassion for her. Again he has largely failed, for Fleur leaves a final impression of shallowness and frosty calculation.

If Fleur, as the symbol of her generation, were really sympathetic, Soames would not appear in such a good light. While Galsworthy made no basic changes in Soames's characteristics, he interpreted them more favourably, and the younger characters suffer by comparison. The motif of

[9] St. John Ervine, "John Galsworthy," Some Impressions of My Elders (New York, 1922), p. 151.

[10] Croman, p. 41.

possession links the series, and by studying the changes in Galsworthy's treatment of this motif one may trace the evolution of his manner and his own development from satirist to social critic and philosopher.[11]

When Swan Song was published in 1928, readers became aware, if they were not already, that Soames was different. Some critics suggest that the mellowing effect of time and the substitution of Fleur for Irene as an emotional stimulant account for the change. Soames's increased stature, however, may have been only relative. "A lone Victorian, he dwarfed the scurrying Lilliputians of the post-war epoch, though he had cut no special figure among his contemporaries. This view assumed a different, and dangerous, aspect in the minds of some who asked, 'After all, was he ever very bad?' "[12]

Duffin goes on to answer that Soames was indeed very bad; "Oh, there can be no question about the depth from which Soames has to rise. Galsworthy rubs him in" (p. 398). Against this opinion is that of Angus Wilson, at the other

[11] Croman, pp. 12-14.

[12] Duffin, p. 397.

extreme.

> There is no moment, I think, at which Galsworthy does not pull his punches against the Forsytes from the very start. . . . He is clearly at one with his readers--on the side of soundness and dividends and Soames with a nice sense of beauty and whimsy and lovely Lutyens houses.[13]

The truth lies somewhere in the middle. One must qualify both statements by referring to Chapter II of this study, where it is made clear that Galsworthy, even in The Man of Property, understood and emphasized Soames's inability to control or to understand his flaws and limitations.

Nevertheless, Soames's flaws become near-virtues toward the end. Soames becomes the point of rest in a chaotic, confused, and amoral world. "In an iconoclastic society which has destroyed the ancient code and pilloried the ancient beliefs, he appears the solitary specimen of a strong and solid race whose sturdy limbs were braced on the firm ground of tradition and whose eyes were steady with a sense of continuity."[14]

The miraculous transformation takes place by an

[13] "Galsworthy's 'Forsyte Saga'," New Statesman and Nation, LI (1956), 187.

[14] Croman, p. 47.

infinitely slow process, detail added to detail, leaving no residue of doubt to mar complete acceptance.

"The man of property, who in early manhood had hoped to take beauty by force and love by purchase, at the end gives his life fighting with all his strength to save beauty from the ravages of fire, and receives his death-blow in protecting from harm the one creature whom he had unselfishly loved."[15]

A succession of small touches, apparently insignificant in themselves, bring about Soames's transformation. A good example is the trivial fact that he takes up golf at an advanced age. Galsworthy himself became an enthusiastic tennis-player in his fifties, although he had previously considered horse-back-riding a satisfactory and gentlemanly substitute for the sports he had enjoyed at university. His account of Soames's introduction to golf not only provides a humorous touch but also illuminates a side of Soames the reader has not before seen.

A nephew gives Soames a set of golf clubs for his sixty-ninth birthday. Soames is completely puzzled by the gift; what is he to do with them at his age? "Annette, with that French quickness which so often annoyed him,

[15] Ould, p. 228.

suggested that he should use them. She was uncomfortable!" (p. 369). The set of clubs collects dust until some time later, when Cardigan, the nephew, demonstrates his "swing" and challenges Soames to better it.

> "Absurd!" said Soames.
> But in his room that night he had stood in his pyjamas swinging his arms in imitation of Jack Cardigan. The next day he sent the women out in the car with their lunch; he was not going to have them grinning at him. He had seldom spent more annoying hours than those which followed. They culminated in a moment when at last he hit the ball, and it fell into the river three yards from the near bank. (370)

The next day he is stiff and sore, but infected with what is now called "golf fever." He joins a golf club and practices every lunch hour. "He kept at it with characteristic tenacity, till by July he had attained a certain proficiency; and he began to say to Annette that it would do her all the good in the world to take it up, and keep her weight down." He rationalizes his interest in the game on the grounds that it is good for his health, since it would be out of character for Soames to enjoy anything unless it were profitable.

One vice, however, leads to another, for the same Cardigan sends Soames a box of cigars which, to his surprise, please him.

A suspicion, however, that the family had set Jack Cardigan

on, prevented him from indulging his new sensation anywhere but in his picture gallery; so that cigars gathered the halo of a secret vice. He renewed his store stealthily. Only when he found that Annette, Fleur, and others had known for weeks, did he relax his rule, and say openly that the vice of the present day was cigarettes.

"My dear boy," said Winifred, when she next saw him, "everybody's saying you're a different man!"

Soames raised his eyebrows. He was not conscious of any change. (p. 371)

Certainly he is a different man; he has discovered that life holds pleasures in non-productive ways, even though he will always need an excuse to enjoy those pleasures.

An even more significant incident occurs when a brash young man, trading on a casual acquaintanceship with Val Dartie, steals a snuff-box from Winifred's house and then has the audacity to try to sell it back to Soames.

Soames began to stammer. The fellow was exercising on him a sort of fascination. And suddenly the whole thing tickled him. It was rich!

"Well!" he said, taking out two five-pound notes. "For brass--!"

A thin hand removed a slight protuberance from a side pocket.

"Thanks very much. Here it is! Good-morning!"

The fellow was moving away. He moved with the same incomparable languor; he didn't look back. Soames stood with the snuffbox in his hand, staring after him.

"Well," he said, aloud, "that's a specimen they can't produce now," and he rang Winifred's bell. (p. 758)

In the old days Soames would not have paid for his own property, but would have had the man arrested without hesitation. His humour and tolerance are late and graceful additions to his character.

An incident in The White Monkey illustrates Galsworthy's method of suggesting changes in Soames without the character's being aware of them. For no reason that he knows, Soames, who has no small children or grandchildren at the time, buys two coloured balloons from a shabby vendor. " 'You can keep the change,' said Soames hurriedly, and passed on, astonished. Why on earth he had bought the things, and for more than double their price, he could not conceive. Extremely peculiar!" (p. 94). He cannot admit that the vendor's misery and poverty have touched his feelings, and so he translates the impulse into more manageable terms. "And suddenly he realised why. The fellow had been humble, mild--to be encouraged, in these days of Communistic bravura. After all, the little chap was--was on the side of Capital, had invested in those balloons! Trade!" (p. 94).

To the author and the reader it is apparent that Soames's motives were less objective, more emotional, than Soames realizes, and he is more likeable for that. In a similar incident in the same novel, Soames finds employment for an unfortunate man who has suffered financial reverses, but hesitates at explaining his reasons for helping; "to

claim a good motive was repulsive to him" (p. 197).

A critic once remarked that Galsworthy does not show his pity for Soames by making him weak, timid, or unattractive, but "by faithfully recording such characteristics as should, if there were justice in life, permit of his being loved, and yet fail to do so."[16] This is true of The Man of Property and of most of In Chancery and To Let, but not of A Modern Comedy, wherein Soames becomes increasingly likeable, if not loveable, to the reader.

Many readers have commented on Galsworthy's growing affection for Soames.

> Mr. Galsworthy's intellect and judgment have undergone a natural change during the intervening fourteen years. The wheel has come full circle, which, in a work of art, is a desirable thing to happen; and now Mr. Galsworthy's love of Soames, always inevitable (for it is a law that the creator must sooner or later love his creations), is to the fullest extent apparent instead of being concealed.[17]

The possessiveness which once made Soames a frozen egotist is now the basis of his generosity and warmth toward his daughter. The other characters seem to take second place to him; Galsworthy is most at home with Soames. "They have

[16] Ould, p. 202.

[17] Edward Shanks, "Mr. John Galsworthy," London Mercury, VIII (1923), 401.

grown old together and will doubtless continue to make the best of each other as life partners."[18]

Soames is almost too good, suggests Duffin; he has run away with Galsworthy's heart and grown "a grander thing" than his creator intended him to be.[19] This is a frequently-expressed comment but is not always disparaging. Hugh Walpole speaks of Galsworthy's creative zest in characterization which sometimes caused his characters to take hold of him, carry him away, and exist independently of their author. He adds, "It is notorious that Soames took charge of him in this way--he has himself acknowledged it--and in Soames he does what every true novelist longs to do--adds a universal figure to the small company of immortals" (p. 183).

I have not been able to find any acknowledgement by Galsworthy that Soames "took charge of him," although the novelist made a relevant comment in an early letter.

[18] Robert Morss Lovett, "More Forsyte Scandal," New Republic, XLVIII (1926), 25.

[19] P. 405. How Duffin knows Galsworthy's intentions is a mystery. A developing character is, generally speaking, better than a static portrait in fiction. It is common for an author's plans to become more ambitious as his characters engross him, but it is still the author, not the character, who wields the pen.

As to character there is always this to be remembered. You start with a suggestion, you go on working from a figure (a living figure) for perhaps two or three chapters, then suddenly you work no longer from that figure, but from what you have said about him--from your own creation in fact, which at every sentence diverges more and more from the original.[20]

Galsworthy discussed the problem of a "run-away" character in his lecture, "The Creation of Character in Literature."

An expression frequently used concerning books: 'The character of so and so took charge,' is true enough without being the whole truth. For a character can obviously never outrun the limits of his 'creator's' nature, nor take him beyond his secret sense of shape. Even if that sense of shape be only a glorification of the shapeless, it is still there, and beyond it character will not set foot.[21]

Descriptions of Galsworthy's method of composition would appear to contradict this assertion. On more than one occasion, he stated that when he sat down to write he had no idea what he was about to put on paper. An interviewer reports.

It is as if he had a motion-picture projection machine within his brain. The film unreels, and the pictures are as unexpected to him as to the theater-goer. And he has no more control over the progress or cessation of his mental picture than the person who has purchased a seat in a

20 Marrot, p. 184.

21 Candelabra (New York, 1933), pp. 304-306.

theater has over the operator high over his head.[22]

Statements like this have led detractors to assume that the novelist was at the mercy of his characters, forced to adopt whatever plan his subconscious mind dictated, and as helpless to direct the course of his plots as a mind-reader at a séance taking dictation from spirits of another world. This is absurd, of course; Galsworthy wrote rapidly and fluently but, particularly in later years, exercised a great deal of care in drastic revision and wholesale deletion.[23] If his subconscious mind, in whose productions he was entitled to take some proprietary interest, dictated his first drafts, then his conscious mind collaborated as editor. It is as presumptuous to try to evaluate the role of each as it is unprofitable; in any case, each reader's opinion would differ.

Rudolf Sauter told an interviewer that toward the end of Galsworthy's career, "the author would sometimes make a remark to him on the state of the world, and the same comment would appear in Soames's mouth in copy written during

[22] Cosulich, p. 298.

[23] Davies, p. 30.

the next few days."[24] Unfortunately, Sauter left no complete record of his conversations with Galsworthy, although Marrot, who had access to Sauter's diary, reprints some of their talks about art. Many of Soames's views on politics, economics, and society, however, have parallels in Galsworthy's letters and essays. The novelist specified one notable exception: "Most of the reflections about the French in the Forsyte books are the reflections of Soames, who would naturally have the old-fashioned English views; they are not those of the author."[25]

In 1914 Galsworthy commented on David H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, which he had just finished reading.

I've nothing but praise for all the part that deals with the Mother, the Father and the sons; but I've a lot besides praise for the love part. . . . That kind of revelling in the shades of sex emotions seems to me anaemic. Contrasted with Maupassant's--a frank sensualist's--dealing with such emotions, it has a queer indecency; it doesn't see the essentials, it revels in the unessentials. It's not good enough to spend time and ink in describing the penultimate sensations and physical movements of people getting into a

[24] Pallette, p. 186.

[25] Marrot, p. 610. Galsworthy's letter to Chevrillon which I quoted earlier, concerning the differences between French and English women, expresses views that sound very "old-fashioned" and "English". Perhaps Galsworthy was less sophisticated than he liked to believe.

state of rut; we all know them too well. There's genius in the book, but not in that part of the book. . . . /Great writers/ only use the body, and that sparingly, to reveal the soul.[26]

Lawrence later wrote the bitterest attack on Galsworthy that has ever appeared in print.[27] One cannot imagine two more radically different artistic temperaments; it was inevitable that they should clash on the subject so important in both their novels--the portrayal of sexuality in literature.

In The Silver Spoon, Soames takes up a modern novel and begins to read it, but after the first few pages, which bore him, he turns to the end and begins to read backward. "In this way he could skip better, and each erotic passage, to which he very soon came, led him insensibly on to the one before it." (p. 503) The book seems rambling and disconnected to him; he cannot understand why it was written at all, except to make money, of course.

But was there another purpose? Was the author one of these 'artist' fellows who thought that to give you 'life'--wasn't that the phrase? they must put down every visit to a bedroom, and some besides? 'Art for Art's sake,' 'realism'--what did

[26] Marrot, p. 724.

[27] "John Galsworthy", Phoenix.

they call it? In Soames' comparatively bleak experience 'life' did not consist wholly of visiting bedrooms, so that he was unable to admit that this book was life, the whole of life, and nothing but life. (p. 503)

Galsworthy recognized Lawrence's genius but could not endure his approach to sex; Soames's opinion of the "advanced" novel reflects Galsworthy's reaction to the Lawrentian school of fiction.

The first World War had come and gone, Galsworthy had become an eminent man of letters, and some of his attitudes had changed with time. To many readers of his later novels it seemed that, despite his efforts to maintain an objective viewpoint, he had become a moralist and disciplinarian. No longer the pioneer and humanist of old, he was himself a little set, almost an institution, a Forsyte. As he changed, says Rolfe Arnold Scott-James, he changed Soames until the character "became transformed, ennobled almost, into a reflective elder critic of our time, a guardian of the Samurai honour and dignity of the past."[28] Dudley Barker carries this opinion so far that he makes a complete identification between Soames and Galsworthy. In his view, Soames became "ever more certainly the mouth-

[28] Fifty Years of English Literature: 1900-1950 (London, 1951), p. 46.

piece of his author," and was "not only forgiven by his author; he was gradually merged with him."

> By the time of the general strike of 1926, Soames Forsyte was no longer pitied or condemned or despised by John Galsworthy. By then Soames Forsyte was John Galsworthy and there could be little ahead for the novelist but honorary doctorates, honours, and the highest public esteem for his services to Literature. (p. 13)

Certainly Galsworthy drew upon some of his own ideas and experiences in creating Soames. The Forsytes are, after all, the Galsworthys, from Old Jolyon, patterned after old John Galsworthy, down to generations yet unborn. Two almost identical passages which the novelist wrote, one about the Galsworthys and the other about the Forsytes, prove the truth of this statement. At the end of To Let, Soames meditates on the history of the Forsyte family.

> Good solid middlemen, they had gone to work with dignity to manage and possess . "Superior Dosset," indeed, had built in a dreadful, and Jolyon painted in a doubtful, period, but so far as he remembered not another of them all had soiled his hands by creating anything. . . . Collectors, solicitors, barristers, merchants, publishers, accountants, directors, land agents, even soldiers--there they had been! . . . And yet he sometimes felt as if the family bolt was shot, their possessive instinct dying out. They seemed unable to make money--this fourth generation; they were going into art, literature, farming, or the army; or just living on what was left them--they had no push and no tenacity. They would die out if they didn't take care. (The Forsyte Saga, pp. 918-919)

Galsworthy either had a phenomenal memory or kept copies of all his letters, for the following passage is taken from a letter written in 1907.

> The Galsworthys rising into the middle class for two generations with all its tenacity, and ability (of a sort), now seem in the third generation all abroad, as if melting away again into a more creative Sphere or nothing at all, muddling out as architects, writers, painters, engineers, do nothing at all, a non-practicing barrister, a musicianly solicitor, one doctor, and a curious dandified land agent, alone represent the truly middle-class element and very poorly at that. What will become of them in the fourth generation? Very few have any children.[29]

The "Galsworthy" passage became the "Forsyte" passage almost without revision, indicating that the author himself identified the two families. Galsworthy devoted a whole chapter of Swan Song to Soames's investigation of his ancestry (pp. 1027-1038); Soames finds a field called "Great Forsyte", and visits the family home and graveyard in Dorset. He is moved by feelings of kinship with the place with its air, its atmosphere, its loneliness. "For a moment he seemed to understand even himself." Almost he wishes he could retire to that isolated, even desolate spot, and live the primitive and uncomplicated life of his ancestors.

Galsworthy wrote the whole chapter out of his own experience. He himself made a similar trip to Devonshire, found a field called "Great Galsworthy," and meditated on his own ancient ancestors and their home. He gave time and

[29] Garnett, p. 134.

money for thirty years to investigate his pedigree, for he had, Marrot reports, "an unusually penetrating sense of contact with his ancestors" (p. 22).

As for Soames himself, Galsworthy was enough like him to understand him as he could never understand a totally different type like Bosinney. The author freely admitted that his lack of insight into Bosinney's personality was responsible for his failure to make that character come alive; he was forced to portray Bosinney indirectly, through Forsyte eyes, in order to retain the character for purpose of plot. Galsworthy was so comfortably "inside" Soames, however, that he was able, not only to depict Soames through internal monologue, but to use him as a camera on the world outside him.

Insight into a fictional character and identification of oneself with that character, however, are two different things. Galsworthy preserved a certain measure of detachment toward Soames even while expressing some of his own opinions through the character. Soames remains limited in understanding, pitiable, and sometimes funny to the end of his life. When the author invites the reader to share his amusement at Soames's obtuseness, Galsworthy is not laughing at himself; nor, when he pities Soames, is he

pitying him for Galsworthian traits but for those characteristics which made Soames different from himself. Doubtless, Galsworthy was in full accord with Madame De Staël's sentiment, "To understand makes one very indulgent." Understanding, however, does not make one blind. Those critics who see Soames entirely as a self-portrait of Galsworthy ignore the numerous instances where the author steps back and regards the character with dispassionate detachment.

Soames's introduction to golf and cigars is one such example. Another illustration is the memory which comes to him in his old age of an incident from his schoolboy days.

> Nearly sixty years ago! He remembered his first day--a brand-new little boy in a brand-new little top-hat, with a playbox stored by his mother with things to eat, and blessed with the words: "There, Summy dear, that'll make you popular." He had reckoned on having command of that corruption for some weeks; but no sooner had he produced a bit of it, than they had taken the box, and suggested to him that it would be a good thing to eat the lot. In twenty-two minutes twenty-two boys had materially increased their weight, and he himself, in handing out the contents, had been obliged to eat less than a twenty-third. . . . His popularity had lasted twenty-two minutes, and, so far as he knew, had never come back. He had been against Communism ever since. (pp. 594-595)

The incident is introduced not only for the sake of humour, but with the express purpose of illuminating the character. It throws light on Soames's present and past,

helping to explain and to evoke sympathy for his tragic incapacity to excite love.

Elsewhere, Soames hears some rooks in a state of excitement.

> He knew little about the habits of birds, not detached enough from self for the study of creatures quite unconnected with him; but he supposed they would be holding a palaver about food--worm-currency would be depressed, or there had been some inflation or other--fussy as the French over their wretched franc. (p. 810)

Soames's incapacity to understand "creatures quite unconnected with him," his association of everything with the proprietary instinct, and even his basic lack of sympathy with his French wife, all emerge from this apparent digression. Nothing could be less Galsworthian than Soames's thoughts about the rooks. The author, who habitually understates, does not comment, but leaves the reader to deduce what he will from the passage.[30]

What misleads the critics is the change of tone which characterizes A Modern Comedy. Galsworthy wrote The Forsyte Saga, and especially The Man of Property, in a mood

[30] I am indebted to Hermon Ould for pointing out these two passages--the incidents of the candy-box and the birds--as examples of Galsworthy's technique of introducing humorous digressions for the purpose of "forwarding the story or illuminating a character or a relationship." pp. 141-142.

of indignant and savage satire, barbed irony, and passionate intensity; his tone in A Modern Comedy is one of tolerant humour, mellow tranquillity, and a subdued melancholy. The harshly-drawn Soames of the first novel became a comically pathetic figure in the second; one laughs at his ridiculous position when, after a visit to Irene in Paris, he hears himself described by the detective as "the other man" in the pending divorce case. With extraordinary perception, Galsworthy reveals Soames's dumb animal bewilderment after the divorce, "spiritually imperceptive and puzzled by his inability to understand, . . . still utterly confounded by her complete revulsion from him."[31] By the time Galsworthy wrote A Modern Comedy, his bitterness had evaporated and he portrayed Soames, the same Soames grown old, with greater insight but still with an undertone of subdued, delicate irony. Only at the end did he return to the deep emotional tone of the early books, with the death of Soames. Even then, Galsworthy underlined the flaw in character which had made Soames's life one of almost unrelieved tragedy. "Something in him had repelled feeling, dried up its manifestation. There had been no

[31] Ervine, Some Impressions of My Elders, pp. 157-158.

magnet in his 'make-up' " (p. 1077). Sir Lawrence Mont, Michael's father, sums up Soames's character succinctly, with all its virtues and faults.

"I respected old Forsyte," he said to his son, while they returned on foot from the graveyard, where, in the corner selected by himself, Soames now lay, under a crab-apple tree: "He dated, and he couldn't express himself; but there was no humbug about him--an honest man" (p. 1081).

A Selected Bibliography

Barker, Dudley, The Man of Principle: A View of John Galsworthy. London, 1963.

Bateman, May, "John Galsworthy," Catholic World, CXIV (1921-1922), 732-747.

Beach, Joseph Warren, The Twentieth Century Novel. New York, 1932.

Bradley, Robert Nöel, Duality: A Study in the Psycho-Analysis of Race. London, 1923.

Brash, W. Bardsley, "John Galsworthy," London Quarterly Review, CLX (1935), 460-471.

Bullett, Gerald, "John Galsworthy: A Diagnosis," New Statesman, XIX (1922), 265-266.

Chevrillon, André, Three Studies in English Literature, trans. Florence Simmonds. London, 1923.

Church, Richard, "Afterthoughts on Galsworthy," London Mercury, XXXII (1935), pp. 497-498.

Collins, Arthur Simons, "John Galsworthy," English Literature of the Twentieth Century. London 1951. Pp. 176-184.

Conrad, Joseph, John Galsworthy: An Appreciation. Canterbury, 1922.

Cosulich, Bernice, "Life's Ironies Inspire John Galsworthy," Literary Digest International Book Review, IV (1926), 297-298.

Croman, Natalie, John Galsworthy: A Study in Continuity and Contrast. Cambridge, Mass., 1933.

Curle, Richard, "John Galsworthy," The Bookman (London), XLV (November, 1913), 91-97.

Daiches, David, "John Galsworthy," The Novel and the Modern World. Chicago, 1939. Pp. 33-47.

The Present Age in British Literature. Bloomington, Indiana, 1958.

Davies, Sadie H., "Galsworthy the Craftsman: Studies in the Original Manuscripts of the Forsyte Chronicles," The Bookman (London), LXXXV (October, 1933), 18-20; LXXXVI (April, 1934), 12-16a; LXXXVII (October, 1934), 27-31.

Drew, Elizabeth A., The Modern Novel. New York, 1926.

Duffin, Henry Charles,"The Rehabilitation of Soames Forsyte," Cornhill Magazine, N. S. LXVIII (1930), 397-406.

Eaker, J. Gordon, "Galsworthy and the Modern Mind," Philological Quarterly, XXIX (1950), 31-48.

Eaton, Harold T., Reading Galsworthy's "The Forsyte Saga." New York, 1936.

Edgar, Pelham, The Art of the Novel. New York, 1933.

Elwin, Malcolm, "Galsworthy and the Forsytes," Old Gods Falling. London, 1939. Pp. 363-390.

Ervine, St. John, "John Galsworthy," Some Impressions of My Elders. New York, 1922. Pp. 113-160.

"John Galsworthy," Great Democrats. London, 1934. Pp. 277-298.

"Portrait of John Galsworthy," The Listener, LIV (1955), 418-419.

Follett, Helen T. and Wilson, Some Modern Novelists. New York, 1918.

Ford, Ford Madox, "Galsworthy, " The American Mercury, XXXVII (1936), 448-459.

Frierson, William C., The English Novel in Transition. Norman, Oklahoma, 1942.

Galsworthy, Ada, Over the Hills and Far Away. London, 1937.

Galsworthy, John, The Forsyte Saga. New York, 1936. (originally published London, 1922.)

A Modern Comedy. London, 1929.

On Forsyte 'Change. London , 1930.

"The Creation of Character in Literature" (Romanes Lecture: 1931), Candelabra. New York, 1933. Pp. 291-311.

Garnett, David, "Some Writers I have Known: Galsworthy, Forster, Moore, and Wells," Texas Quarterly, IV, iii (1961), 190-202.

Garnett, Edward, Letters from John Galsworthy: 1900-1932. London, 1934.

Gould, Gerald, "John Galsworthy as a Novelist," The Bookman (London), LXV (1923), 133-135.

Gretton, Mary S., "John Galsworthy," Contemporary Review, CXLIII (1933), 319-325.

Grove, Frederick Philip, "Morality in the Forsyte Saga," University of Toronto Quarterly, XV (1945-1946), 54-64.

Hamilton, Robert, "John Galsworthy: A Humanitarian Prophet," Quarterly Review, CCICI (1953), 72-80.

Hutchinson, Percy, "John Galsworthy in His Most Acidly Ironical Vein," The New York Times Book Review, Nov. 13, 1932, p. 5.

Kain, Richard M., "Galsworthy, the Last Victorian Liberal," Madison Quarterly, IV (March, 1944), 84-94.

Lawrence, David H., "John Galsworthy," Phoenix. London, 1936. Pp. 539-550.

Lovett, Robert Morss, "More Forsyte Scandal," New Republic, XLVIII (1926), 25.

MacDermot, Terence William Leighton, "John Galsworthy," Dalhousie Review, IX (1929-1930), 354-368.

Mansfield, Katherine, Novels and Novelists. London, 1930.

Marrot, H. Vincent, The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy. London, 1935.

Martin, Dorothy, "Mr. Galsworthy as Artist and Reformer," Yale Review, XIV (1924), 126-139.

Masur, Gerhard, Prophets of Yesterday: Studies in European Culture 1890-1914. New York, 1961.

McCullough, Bruce, "John Galsworthy," Representative English Novelists: Defoe to Conrad. New York, 1946. Pp. 320-335.

Menander /pseudonym/, "Irene Forsyte," Times Literary Supplement, November 4, 1944, p. 531.

Mottram, Ralph H., John Galsworthy /"Writers and Their Work": no. 38; Bibliographical Series of Supplements to "British Book News"/. London, 1953.

Ould, Hermon, John Galsworthy. London, 1934.

Pallette, Drew B., "Young Galsworthy: The Forging of a Satirist," Modern Philology, LVI (1958-1959), 178-186.

Pritchett, Victor Sawdon, "Sensitive Toff," New Statesman, LXV (1963), 273-274.

Ross, Woodburn O., "John Galsworthy: Aspects of an Attitude," Studies in Honor of John Wilcox, ed. A. Dayle Wallace and Woodburn O. Ross. Detroit, 1958. Pp. 195-208.

Schalit, Leon, John Galsworthy: A Survey. New York and London, 1929.

Scott-James, Rolfe Arnold, Fifty Years of English Literature: 1900-1950. London, 1951.

Shanks, Edward, "Mr. John Galsworthy," London Mercury, VIII (1923), 393-404.

Sparrow, John, "John Galsworthy," London Mercury, XXVIII (1933), 50-55.

Spender, Stephen, "How Much Should a Biographer Tell?" Saturday Review, XLVII, iv (Jan. 25, 1964), 16-19.

Stevens, Earl Eugene, "A Study of the Structure of John Galsworthy's The Forsyte Saga" /unpublished dissertation, University of North Carolina/. Chapel Hill, 1963.

Swinnerton, Frank, "John Galsworthy," The Bookman (London), LXXV (December, 1928), 147-151.

Tilby, A. Wyatt, "The Epic of Property," Edinburgh Review, CCXLI (1925), 271-285.

Wagenknecht, Edward, "The Selfish Heroine: Thackeray and Galsworthy," College English, IV (1942-43), 293-298.

Walpole, Hugh, "John Galsworthy," The Post Victorians. London, 1933. Pp. 173-186.

Williamson, Hugh Ross, "Notes at Random," The Bookman (London), LXXXIII (1933), 473-484.

Wilson, Angus, "Galsworthy's 'Forsyte Saga'," New Statesman and Nation, LI (1956), 187.

Young, Iona D., "The Social Conscience of John Galsworthy" /unpublished dissertation, University of Texas/. Austen, 1955.