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THE UNITIES IN PRESENT DAY LITERATURE

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THE UNITIES IN PRESENT DAY LITERATURE.

The title may amuse the strictly classical student, who, well versed in the connotation of the term "unities" and little interested in present day literary movements, may overlook the whole question as an absurdity or look over it to find the humor of a Chestertonian paradox.

We propose to show that the Unities are still found, that no author has successfully dispensed with them, and that the Unity of Action or design is a fundamental in the art of literature.

The word "unities" conjures up in the scholar's mind the far-famed Three - Action, Time, and Place - a long line of critical warriors and lawgivers and great armories of interpretation. The validity of the Unity of Action is universally conceded; the difficulty lies in the agreement as to its true meaning. Great literary critics have failed to come to an understanding on the subject. Time and Place are considered by some as quite subordinate, while others lay the greatest stress upon them. Nevertheless we must have some definite idea of these terms.

Aristotle with dogmatic authority laid down as the Unity of Action, that the events chosen should have relation to one action and each event so connected, essential and complete that if one of them were transposed or eliminated, the whole would be changed or destroyed;- furthermore that the extensiveness of the whole must not becloud its comprehensibility.

So much for Action. With respect to the Unity of Time, we find in Aristotle no more than the following: "The Epos is distinguished from the Tragedy by its length; for the latter seeks as far as possible to circumscribe itself within one revolution of the sun or to exceed it but little."

The Unity of Place means no change of scene - at least no distant change. This Unity is not mentioned by Aristotle.

The author or critic of to-day has something to attend to besides the old trio of Unities; the critic of to-day looks for all but these. So the spirit or trend of modern drama must be hastily reviewed to show the position of the author in this modern situation and several works closely analysed to show the disposition of our best playwrights and novelists towards the Unities.

With the passing of Shakespeare's genius it was inevitable that the standard of the drama should decline, but the deterioration of a form of literature which so completely dominated the beginning of the seventeenth century was swifter than the fading of a single genius justified. The

Eighteenth century had scarcely dawned when the essay at the skilful hands of Addison and Steele blossomed into full vigor, and up to the first quarter of the nineteenth century the essay continued to be the greatest medium of expression. In this period but two dramatists are worthy of notice - Goldsmith and Sheridan. With Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, the novel wrested the supremacy from the essay, so that in the nineteenth century prose fiction attained a popularity as complete as that of the drama in the days of Elizabeth. As the old century drew to a close, however, the short story in the capable hands of Poe, Hawthorne, and Kipling, was gradually winning over many former adherents of the novel. With the advent of the present century the revolution is completed, for the drama is once again in the ascendancy.

This rejuvenation of the drama is first to be noticed in the period from 1892 to 1895. Robinson, the principal dramatist of the previous generation, portrayed a limited London society in a dialogue that was hopelessly dull. So when in 1892 following such a dearth of ideas, a drama noted chiefly for its clever dialogue - "Wilde's Lady Windermere's Fan" was produced, it resulted in a truly great sensation.

Oscar Wilde and Henry Arthur Jones are the predecessors of the modern drama. Now, when we look back at "Lady Windermere's Fan" we can see readily enough its defects. Except for the brilliance of dialogue, the play, especially in the soliloquies, looks thin. His own generation vastly overestimated his abilities, not realizing that since Wilde never subdued his art to his hand, the play is untrue to life, theatrical, and of mediocre characterization. In "Michael and His Lost Angel", Henry Arthur Jones made an honest attempt at characterization, successful for two acts, after which the play goes to pieces. As a result of this weakness and of the offensive nature of the play, it was an immediate and absolute failure. Yet these two efforts were not wholly in vain. Inadequate as were their labors, Wilde and Jones paved the way for the modern drama.

More successful than either Wilde or Jones was their contemporary Pinero. In "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" he depicted a modern English tragedy convincing and right, in a style that was deeply moving and gripping. Only in the ending is the play unsatisfactory, but at the time an illogical ending did not interfere with its popularity. Even though the play can only be considered as a transitional one, Pinero accomplished more than anyone

litera
century w. his time to give the English drama freedom.

What is this freedom of the drama and why is it desirable? To the first question I should answer that it is the privilege of a playwright, limited only by the confines of good taste and decency to treat any subject in any method he may choose. It is desirable because it extends the scope of the drama and thereby opens new fields to cultivation and consequent enjoyment. Few of us would care to subsist on a single article of diet, yet how many of us demand that our dramatic tastes be satisfied with a solitary type of drama? Have your favorites if you must, ~~prefer~~ ^{prefer} the drama with the "heart interest" if you insist, but do not shut out from the confines of your enjoyment all the plays which fail to meet the test of your preferment; do not withhold your patronage from plays that touch problems other than those of romance. This has been and is the desire of contemporary drama; this has been the goal toward which the struggle has been directed. Unconsciously at first and then deliberately, the modern drama has sought freedom of form and subject.

By no means were the English playwrights the leaders in extending the narrow confines of the drama. On the contrary, the continental authors have been much more vigorous in promoting its freedom. While Ibsen first showed that the love story could be subordinated, later authors such as Björnson, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck, and Brieux, excluded it entirely. "Beyond Human Power" which Björnson introduced into Norway in 1883, really begins the entire movement for freedom of form. In the face of the five-act play of tradition, this has but two. It fulfills the strictest laws ever set down for the Unities of Time, Action and Place.

In a time when characters changed off the stage, and when plays were witnessed for sheer entertainment, the characters of "Beyond Human Power" developed before our eyes, while it contained no love affair whatsoever.

"Beyond Human Power" is the story of the members of a religious sect who despondingly felt their faith weakening because it seemed that they were denied some signs or miracles which their ancestors had. Then one of their ministers in a small town, Pastor Sang, acquired a reputation for his apparent power of healing. With the ardent hope that the profound longing of their hearts might be realized, his associates flock to see him attempt the cure of his own wife, a bed-ridden invalid for many years. Never before had he felt equal to this great task. At the appointed hour the ministers assemble in the parlor, thousands gather outside the modest home, and Pastor Sang goes into the church to pray. The period of waiting is tense. Then the wife rises from her bed and walks into the room where

the ministers are seated. The ministers jump to their feet with words of thanksgiving, the immense crowd outside bursts forth into a jubilant Hosanna, the church bell rings out in sustained tolling, and Pastor Sang, his heart overflowing with emotions, enters the room, advances towards his wife and embraces her. At the height of the zealous jubilation, while the chorus swells higher and higher, the bell peals louder and louder, she suddenly becomes limp in his arms and dies. Overcome by such a tragedy at the zenith of his triumph, the husband too falls dead. The joy of the pastors is turned to consternation. Outside the singing ceases but the bell rings on, no longer with its note of exultation, but with a depressing, overpowering, and cynical irony. The climax is tremendous. The tragedy is not in the death of Pastor Sang and his wife, but in the despair of the living. If only in the handling of the bell at the end, Björnson shows himself a consummate artist. This is a play which breaks down tradition, which neglects the "heart interest", which, though it may be repellent and distasteful, is yet powerful and emotional, and finally a play which settles nothing, but which at the end leaves the audience completely bewildered. "Beyond Human Power" is the beginning, and the worthy beginning, of the movement for the freedom of form and for realistic characterization.

Maeterlinck developed dramatic freedom in a totally different direction than did Björnson. At a time when beauty was supposed to be dead, he put into "Pelleas and Melisande", and "The Blue Bird" a prose as responsive as any verse. His plays, which have been popular with a limited audience in England and America, help prove that the drama could treat any subject in any individual way.

Since "Pelleas and Melisande" was written the same year as "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray", - that is in 1893 - and ten years after "Beyond Human Power", we can see how much the continental drama was advanced beyond our own. Indeed it was not until ten years later that the English tongue could boast of a play rivaling Maeterlinck's in beauty of speech. Then it was not in cultivated England nor in progressive America that the awakening took place, but in untutored Ireland. The story of the Abbey Theatre where these Irish plays were first produced, is the story of a direct effort of Irishmen to create an Irish stage. An old building was turned into a theatre where the authors joined amateur actors in producing the plays they themselves had written. The three leading figures are Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats, the founders, and John Millington

Synge, their greatest dramatist. At a time when the world was absorbed in industry, commerce and aggrandizement, Ireland had not lost her keen imagination nor her feeling for beauty in speech. The aim of these playwrights was not to depict Irish life as it appeared to others, or as they thought it should be, but as it actually existed. To accomplish this they frequently segregated themselves from the outside world and lived among the simple Irish peasants, training their ears to the delicate rhythm of the Irish tongue. The success was remarkable. From an obscure group of experimentalists, they became one of the most widely known companies speaking English. Their fame spread to England and America, and they toured both of these countries. Of more importance, however, than this wide popular success, was the highly commendable dramatic and literary merit of their work. The dialect is nicely and surely written, the characterization excellent, the fashion compelling. Many of the works of this group are short, one-act plays, such as Yeats' "The Hour Glass", Lady Gregory's "The Rising of the Moon" and Synge's "Riders to the Sea". All the rules of drama are lived up to in these. The latter especially is a masterpiece in style, swiftness of events, and dramatic intensity. The power and beauty of the modern drama in the English tongue first arose to its full significance in Ireland, and it is doubtful if the Irish drama has been excelled in either England or America.

It was not until 1909, with the works of Galsworthy, Baker, and Massfield, that England began to attain a rank equal to that of Ireland or the continent. Employing the repertory the "atretto" bring out their plays, these dramatists experimented in various types. The advantages of these small repertory theatres is that experimental plays which the general public will not patronize, may be tried out and supported to some extent by the limited audience which is interested in the progress of the drama. The repertory theatre has been a constant stimulus to the development of the modern drama.

John Galsworthy got his start in the Court Theatre, an experimental playhouse under Granville Barker. As a roadbreaker, Galsworthy's "Strife" is an honest, direct and simple attempt to depict the problem of the labor union and the capitalist. The unity of design is seen in every line. Much more satisfactory than the essay or lecture in bringing to our attention the realization of some unsatisfactory condition, is the drama. While the stage cannot preach, it may illustrate faults; while it cannot give a remedy, it may arouse our concern to the need of a remedy. This stirring up of thought in the minds of the audience is in some respects

the greatest contribution of the modern play.

During this period the tendency of the American drama has been toward popular rather than literary success. Fifteen years ago "The Witching Hour" by Augustus Thomas, and "The Great Divide" by William Vaughn Moody were playing to crowded houses in both United States and Canada. The former is an excellently entertaining story of thought transfer, a play for acting and one of fair characterization. In "The Great Divide" Moody attempted a huge task in character development, and it must be admitted that the result is not convincing. It was a decided success in America, but when produced in Paris was a flat failure. Why did it fail? Simply because it ignored all the rules of the drama and overestimated character portrayal. One American play was more successful abroad than in America, and that is Sheldon's "Romance". "Romance" is popular in its appeal, yet of more literary, artistic and dramatic merit than most plays of its kind.

While "Romance" was still drawing full houses in America, the English drama reached the highest point it had yet attained in both freedom of form and beauty of language. In "My Lady's Dress", Edward Knoblauch throws to the winds all ordinary conceptions of plot and sequence. The first and last scenes alone have any connection. In the first scene a woman decides to get a dress; in the last scene she gets it. Intervening are several distinct episodes in the lives of the different people who make the material or furnish the workmanship going into the dress. These episodes have no connection with each other or with the first or last scene. The Unity of Place is utterly disregarded, whilst the Unity of Time is highly respected. A wide interpretation of the Unity of Action would show its being obeyed in this clever piece of technical ingenuity which clearly shows the result of the motion picture with the "flash back". Quite different is "The Faithful" written in 1915 by John Masefield. With an old Japanese legend as a plot, in a curious kind of rhythmic, poetic prose, Masefield combines the literary man and the dramatist. The Unities are carefully observed. "The Faithful" is a play of disappointment, of high ideals, of enthusiasm, written in a mood of discouragement and disillusion yet showing the strong faith in loyalty and ideals even to the greatest sacrifice. Although "The Faithful" may never be widely popular, in its own peculiar field it may never be excelled.

What does "The Faithful" lack that it may never attain popularity? The answer is not that "The Faithful" lacks the qualities which should make it popular, but that the present day audiences are so narrowly

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prejudiced that they refuse to patronize anything except a favorite type of drama. The reason that the English and American drama is less thoughtful than that on the continent is that the public does not support the thoughtful drama. The public insists on certain types of plays, gets them and nothing else. The American drama must have the feminine or "heart interest" as the central theme of every play. Now there are many interesting sides of life that do not concern the feminine interest at all. To drag it into all plays distorts life, robs it of its honesty, and makes the dramatic art impossible under such conditions. In Ancient Greece and in the days of Elizabeth, the people went to the drama to learn about life enjoyable. At the present time the more thoughtful type of plays are slowly and with difficulty forcing their way upward. What distinguishes these more thoughtful types of recent plays are their freedom and high literary workmanship. "Beyond Human Power", "Pelleas and Melisande", and "My Lady's Dress" best illustrate the advance in freedom both of subject and of treatment. A remarkable fact is that the drama of to-day is international, while the drama of the past was national. How free or how literary this international drama is, depends not so much on the dramatist as on the audience.

After being whisked over the field of modern drama, the reader may wonder what should be considered as literature. One thing is clear, viz: we know whom to blame for the paucity of true literary productions on the stage. An analysis of several of our best plays and novels will show what authors, blind to the craze for new fashions in literature and deaf to the clamor of a crowd hungry for a favorite stew, have done of late in following the laws of Unity.

One of the most popular plays at present is "The Skin Game". In this play Galsworthy depicts two types of society leaders by outlining the ideals, aspirations and fortunes of two families, the Hillcrists and the Hornblowers, who are quite the antithesis of each other. We would class the Hillcrists among the aristocratic. They are lovers of family tradition and hold every inch of paternal estate sacred. The Hornblowers stand for the business class. These are not governed by precedent but firmly believe they are salvaging society. Both families prove failures, the one, the Hillcrists, is humiliated, the other - the Hornblowers - is defeated and so the author makes clear that society needs new ideals and an internal readjustment to suit new conditions and environment.

The "Skin Game" is a three act Tragi-Comedy. It is worthy to be

upheld as a classic example for strict adherence to the Unities.

Time might correspond closely to Aristotle's view, in as much as it occupies or represents a little over a day. Place too, is better observed than it was in the majority of Greek plays. Acts one and three have the same scene; act two has two scenes laid in the near vicinity of this.

Unity of Design is evidenced from the start. Hillcrist remarks to his daughter Jill at the opening of the play, that life is a struggle between people at different stages of development, in different positions, with different amounts of social influence and property. The only thing is to have rules of the game and keep them. New people like the Hornblowers haven't learned those rules; their only rule is to get all they can. - Thus ideals are contrasted.

Hornblower is a man of industry and has established great pottery manufacturies near the Hillcrist estate - in fact owns land purchased from this autocrat. His factories are being enlarged and some old tenants are forced to move, to make room for the spread of industry. Their eviction arouses Hillcrist; it is contrary to his principles. He visits this unconventional fellow Hornblower and a quarrel is the outcome. The captain of industry tells him that he will soon have to move away all the idle and that no one or no thing can stand in the way of business enterprise. It happens that an old, nearby estate is to be auctioned soon. Hillcrist determines not to let his opponent secure this. The crafty Hornblower outwits him and buys this land at a high price.

Events thicken, Mrs. Hillcrist hears that the wife of Hornblower's eldest son is a woman of ill repute and straightway resolves, despite the entreaties of her husband and daughter, to employ this information as a weapon against the enemy. The plan works well. Hornblower sells the land to Hillcrist for half the cost, on condition that the news about his daughter-in-law, Chloe, be hushed up.

Meanwhile, this harlot's husband is ignorant of impending disgrace. He must remain so. To forestall any suspicions that he might have, Chloe arranges with Hillcrist for an explanation of her actions. No sooner is this scheme devised than the victim of it appears and asks what his wife, who had just slipped out, was doing in this place. Hillcrist plays the hypocrite. His daughter confesses the whole affair. Chloe, of course, has disappeared and while she is being searched for, old Hornblower comes and demands the deed of the land on the grounds of breach of contract.

Whilst he and Hillcrest wrangle, Chloe's remains are carried in.

Who is the hero? - Hillcrest's daughter, ^{it} is generally conceded. Yet this young lady has been pictured as one caring little for money, less for the rules of society and certainly not at all for matrimony - unless it were arranged to be compatible with a care-free life. The author never strays from his point and presents a problem of modern society in a pleasing and deeply interesting manner.

Masefield's "Nan" is a three act tragi-comedy which follows thr Three Unities to the letter. There is no change of scene. The events would naturally take place in two hours. The story is perfectly developed and admits of different interpretations. The author's purpose is to paint the different sides of a woman's character.

The plot is developed from a record in an old law book, which stated that a certain man had been hanged for sheep stealing and how, afterwards, his innocence was discovered and his family given the recompense of fifty pounds. The localization of scene and the use of a dialect helped to popularize the play in England, but these must be regarded as samples of the influence of an audience in the production of a play.

The scene is laid in the kitchen of a small tenant farmer. The play opens with a mother and her daughter discussing the preparations for a party, whilst Nan, (the central figure of the play), an adopted girl whose father has been hanged, is doing the work. Soon the two girls, Jennie and Nan get into a confidential chat on love affairs and Nan discloses the fact that she is infatuated with one Dick Gurvil, who happens to be Jennie's intended husband.

The first act contrasts the industrious, patient, candid Nan, with the lackadaisical, huffy, intriguing Jennie.

Act two presents Nan alone in the kitchen singing and working. Dick Gurvil rushes in with the news that a criminal is at large and blurts out: "All criminals should be hanged". Here again there is a study in character - a contrast between Dick's and Nan's. Both reveal themselves in their views of married life. Dick sees endless toil and trouble in matrimony; Nan the joys and blessings of family life. Dick proposes to Nan, who says she cannot marry him and gives him her family history. They plan to get married, however, and go to America. Later, Jenny's father and mother give the disgraceful history of Nan's father and mother to Dick. They picture a life of sorrow and want ahead of him if he marries Nan. Dick now resolves to marry Jenny. The engagement is announced and Nan is thrown into

despair. She wishes she were dead.

Act three gives us a clear indication of Nan's threat. She will drown herself. The announcement of her father's innocence, the payment of the compensation money and the promise of a good home fail to change Nan's mind. On top of all this, comes Dick's apology and a renewal of his promise. Still she is steadfast. Taking Dick aside, she compares her father's condemnation with an opportune lover's rejection. It is her firm conviction that men like him should not be given chances to spoil people's lives. She kills him and goes out saying: "There shall be a strange fish in the nets tomorrow".

The author vividly portrays situations that bring out the many sides of a woman's character. There is such a natural development in the story that interest is constantly maintained. No event is strained nor far-fetched. Sly remarks, such as, "The sects should come after one another like sheep going through a hedge", and "Nan, like her father can only dance on air", show the resourcefulness of a master-dramatist in weaving the whole play around a central incident.

"The Skin Game" and "Nan" are representative plays of Galsworthy and Masefield respectively. These writers stand first among the English dramatists of today; the former first with the public, the latter first with the scholar.

Since they follow the old time methods, why do they differ? In answer to this question I would say that Galsworthy stands midway between the purely literary and the purely popular playwright and he also occupies middle ground between drama which is entirely for instruction and that which is for amusement only. His central situation is the moral or social situation at the bottom of the play. He carries on his propaganda almost entirely by situation; he is realistic and never relies on dialogue for introducing his theories except in so far as dialogue develops or explains the situation. He depends on the characters or their actions to enforce the moral. The characters in his plays are types and I will outline his technique in "Strife".

The purpose of "Strife": it was not written to expose the evils of our present industrial system so much as from the impulse to create, grounding itself in an economic problem which the artist displays and analyses just as others, and he also, at other times, would display and analyse any problem of love, manners, life, or human nature, in the name of "plot".

In "Strife" we have the central situation the contrasting groups, the combination of types - the whole so perfectly balanced, that it does not creak once. The central idea is the dispute between the directors of the Works and their employees, but it is impossible to consider this in itself, apart from the attitude of the two parties towards it. Indeed we are given a very vague idea of the nature of the difference; all we know is that it has reduced many of the workers to starvation, while the directors have to face angry shareholders and failing dividends - Harness, the trades-union delegate, acts as a go-between, and gradually both groups begin to see the allurements of a compromise. Various circumstances drive them towards it, with the exception of their respective leaders, Roberts and old Anthony. The end is pitiful for the two sides surrender to each other simultaneously, breaking their leaders' hearts. These men are of extraordinary character and ability, and of the most splendid courage, but they are betrayed by cowardly followers, who have not grit or faith enough to see their only chance lies in "no compromise".

The action is compact; the climax is inevitable. Art and the idea are blended. The author himself says: "A drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day". This is why we find unity of action in the presentation of situations in Galsworthy's plays.

His ideal is completely fulfilled in "Strife", "The Silver Box", "Fraternity", "The Man of Property", "The Skin Game" and some of the sketches - hence it is in these that we must look for his best work. Now and then the idea carries away the artist, warping his vision, but maintaining unity according to one of our greatest English critics - Sir P. Sidney. Examples of this are: "Justice", "The Fugitive" and "The Island Pharisees".

So much for Galsworthy. Masefield is a literary artist and aims at character portrayal and personal issue rather than social or economic questions. His methods of technique are the same as Galsworthy's.

His chief assets are a sense of situation, a sense of atmosphere and the power of presenting both beautifully. His sense of character is wide and profound. His characters, charming as they sometimes are, interesting as they always are, are true to life - not types. Galsworthy's characters are acquaintances; Masefield's are friends. Masefield's best works are "Nan", "Philip the King" and "Good Friday".

The new freedom has crept into the French drama - yet the Unities are highly respected still in France, both by artists and audiences. Edmond Rostand is one of their most successful playwrights. His ingenuity in construction and art in expression is unrivalled in our day. In his "Cyrano de Bergerac" he disregards the Unities of Time and Place.

"Cyrano de Bergerac" is a tragi-comedy in five acts. Its setting is in the sixteenth century but it is so true to life that it strikes us today. Rostand seems to have attempted to combine the novel and the play.

The Unity of Time is well observed in the first four acts. Act five takes place fifteen years later, and the place shifts from a theatre in a small town to a battlefield and later to a convent.

The author's purpose is one of a real artist - to delight and instruct. "Les Précieuses" are delightfully amusing; the portrayal of the hero's character highly instructive. There is such a subtle artistic grouping of events and incidents, remarks and moves, to bring the hero into relief that we must say the unity of action came not by endeavor but by inspiration.

THE NOVEL: Some idea of what a novel should be is necessary before a criticism of any is attempted. Someone says the novel can produce life literally for us; hunt for trouble to add to what we already have enough of in all conscience, as if to distract us from deep pain by raising a cutaneous suffusion. Or a novel may reproduce life for us, but show us a character that has borne it with fortitude, and so indirectly edify us into nobility; or it may present another character who yielded basely and thus repel us into contrary manliness; it may lovingly lay bare the incongruities of this life, and so laugh us into good humor; add the more distant friendliness of comedy and make us practically ashamed of our weakness; satirize it, and fill us with the comfort of justifiable indignation. The novel may present this actual life to us almost dramatically, or dilute it with the comment of Thackeray or Meredith; be fertile with charity, or arid with cynicism; it may see the world through a mist of tears, or lit with June; superficially with the shallow eye of youth, or profoundly with the deep eye of age; - whatever - it is a reflection of everyday life in our own town - "quidquid agunt homines, nostri est farrago libelli." This is the novel. Bayne said: "The novel is scientifically definable as a domestic history, in which the whole interest and all the facts are made to combine in the evolution of a tale of love. But Balzac in five successful novels confutes this

scientific definition. "César Birotteau", "Le Curé de Tours", "Une Ténébreuse Affaire", "Le Cousin Pons" and "Les Paysans", ignore love. So do most of Bazin's. The best novel in English, Robinson Crusoe, falls into this class.

The novel can produce a far wider view of life than is possible in the three hours traffic of the stage, supposing equal genius in the dramatist and novelist. Commonly, the play selects material as simple as that of the short story, but the novel uses complex events. Time and Place are at the novelist's service without restriction.

With this preamble, I conclude that the novel is life set forth in story with a plot that has proportion. There must be human interest, the development of real situations - not merely presentation of them, a detailed working out of events, - not mere outlining of them.

Galsworthy has written many novels. They failed. Why? Simply because abstract ideas do not help the human interest of a novel. It is remarkable how small a part the abstract plays in even the lives of the most thoughtful of us, and anything in the nature of a problem or an idea of anything belonging to the brain rather than to the heart, has a tendency to destroy the illusion of real life which it is the object of a novelist to create.

Galsworthy is too fond of problems. Again, he likes to take a situation, examine it from characteristic and conflicting points of view, and show the effects it has on different lives, but he never attempts to develop it, to start a chain of events from it, mould characters by it. Practically every character in a Galsworthy novel, with the possible exception of "The Dark Flower", is the same at the end as the beginning. He develops neither situation nor character; he never goes forward; he goes around. His characters are flesh and blood, their stories real and moving, but somehow they have nothing creative about them. They lack the individual touch; they would suit the play but are out of place in the novel. - Of course there are exceptions: Lord Miltown in "The Patrician", Mr. Stone in "Fraternity", but these on examination, prove to be only a fining down of type till it is almost an individual; there is no definite creation.

There is a certain inequality about the seven novels: "The Island Pharisees", "The Man of Property", "The County House", "Fraternity", "The Patrician", "The Dark Flower", and "The Freelanders". In every way the first is the weakest, but, on the other hand, the last is not the most

successful. The finest are: "The Man of Property" and "Fraternity". Undoubtedly Galsworthy is at his best when his technique is at its highest pitch of excellence, and weakest when his sense of form most fails him.

"The Island Pharisees" show perhaps more than any of the novels the raw edges of his art. He is burning with indignation at the self-righteousness of the British middle classes, and his power as a novelist is as yet too undeveloped to cope with his zeal as a reformer. He lacks the ability to expose a cause out of the mouths of its own champions. He attacks crudely - through a series of events which are not always above the suspicion of pre-arrangement, through dialogue which is often manoeuvred and artificial. None of his characters, except Ferrand, the vagabond, have much the breath of life, and over the whole hangs a fog of bitterness which is scarcely ever dispelled by those illuminating phrases and flashes of insight into opponents' cause, which elsewhere make him so appealing.

In "The Man of Property" we have the same idea - the satire of class. The Forsyte family are representatives of that section of the middle class whose chief aim is Possession. The Forsytes possess many things - they possess money, they possess artistic treasures, houses, wives, children; they even possess talents; but with them the verb "I have" is of more importance than its object. "This interests me not in itself, but because it is mine" - is their motto. They are natural, however, and their consciousness of possession compels admiration. These six old brothers whose god is property, have a certain greatness; though they and their lust of possession are satirized in many telling episodes, we feel the nation would do badly without them.

The chief representative of Forsytism belongs, however, to one of the younger branches of the family. Soames Forsyte is essentially the Man of Property, because we see the lust of possession working in him, not only through the splendid house he is building, but through his wife, Irene. It is in his attitude towards Irene that he declares himself the Man of Property. He is unkind to her, he is not untrue to her, but she is his in the sense the Robin Hill house is his, and it is this realization which fills her with bitterness and loathing. Irene belongs to the contrasting group which Galsworthy uses in his novels as in his plays. She and her lover Bostanney stand for all that is antagonistic to the Forsytes. In many ways Irene is one of Galsworthy's most vivid creations. She is a type we meet elsewhere in the novels, yet she has about her

certain elements of originality. She is in revolt but not strenuously or effectively. Galsworthy has little sympathy for the strong successful woman.

June Forsyte is the antithesis of Irene. This contrast switches Bosinney's love. This lover is the opposite of the Man of Property - fortune and talents mean nothing to him. Yet the sudden knowledge that someone else owns the woman of whom he thought he was the sole possessor drives him to madness and suicide.

There is a depth of gloom about the book as if the shadows of great possessions lay over it. If Galsworthy had shown some sympathy with the springs of the nature of the characters as well as their mental attitude he would be playing the novelists' rôle.

There is something haunting about the book. The author achieves his end. Property triumphs. Bosinney is beaten and killed by the Man of Property and Irene is brought back to the slavery from which she has revolted. One can say without much fear of contradiction that after the "Man of Property" the finest of Galsworthy's novels is "Fraternity". Indeed it comes as near being a perfect work of art as any novel ever written. There have been many novels with a stronger appeal, a wider comprehension, a greater depth and force, but few of which it can be said that they fulfill more completely the canons of novel-writing.

In its perfection of balance, Fraternity reminds one of his plays. There is a central situation, flanked by two contrasting groups. It is not of mere industrial or moral significance, nor is it a satirization of any particular class; it is a problem which has always occupied human minds, and will do so to the end of time - the problem of the rich and the poor. It is embodied in old Mr. Stone, with his great unfinished - and we suspect, ever to be unfinished - work on Brotherhood. The Classes are represented by the two Dallison families, the Masses by the Hughes, Creed and the little model. It is remarkable how highly the whole fabric is drawn together - Hilary and Stephen Dallison have married two sisters, Bianca and Cecelia, and their Shadows live together under the same roof.

The little model is sympathetically pictured and details about her give deep pathos to the story. The Hughes group consists of: the bullying husband, gross and selfish; a nagging and complaining wife; a poor old man, fallen on evil days yet philosophic and respectful.

The classes are shown unable to help the masses, or even themselves. Hughes is an undeserving brute; Mrs. Hughes brings on most of his

troubles. The little model is forlorn but designful. The whole result is an atmosphere of deep depression. The author's purpose seems to be to make us realize the impossibility of bringing rich and poor together in brotherhood.

Now let us turn to Bazin and Hardy, our foremost novelists today.

Why is Bazin so successful? It is not due to any single trait. His attitude towards life, the qualities of his art, his interest in the children of the soil, his emotional restraint, his robustness, his human sympathy - all these conspire to stamp his work as unique in the French language today.

Hardy is Bazin's counterpart in the English speaking world. No English novelist can be classed with Hardy for the perfection of plot construction. He carried into fiction that sense of proportion and interdependence of parts which he had learned from his early study of architecture.

The novels of both Bazin and Hardy are crowded with incidents each of which however slight provides a test of his characters. These characters we should recognize anywhere, on the street, in the harvest fields, on the moor, in the vicarage, among the boat-men or villagers or artisans; and for good or ill should know their passing. One thinks of Hardy's best women as charming wives; of Bazin's as perfect mothers.

Let us review each author's masterpiece and contrast them. In both Bazin's "L'Isolée" and Hardy's "Tess of the D'Ubervilles" the heroine is a young and beautiful woman, possessed of the wish rather than the will, to avoid moral danger. Hardy, true to his philosophy, insists that Tess is a "pure woman" despite her transgressions. She is merely a pawn upon life's chessboard. Malignant destiny throws her into the path of her destroyer; malignant destiny robs her of her husband when she has scoured her timidity into confessing the past; malignant destiny brings her seducer once more across her path to play upon her love of her wretched family and lure her again to his arms. Over against all this let us consider Bazin's "L'Isolée".

Pascale seeks refuge in the convent from those worldly temptations which she fears may overmaster her, and is happy there until she is thrust back again into the world from which she sought escape. She then seeks refuge at Nemes with her aunt, a figure weak and vile enough to mate with Tess's mother. Against her better inclinations she, too, becomes the prey of a villain, not because malignant fate has thrown her across his path, but because the hates of religion have forced her from convent shelter and

her own weakness of will has left her vulnerable.

The results of each woman's misstep are tragic. Tess murders her seducer and pays the penalty with her own life. Pascale is murdered by the brute who has wronged her. With neither novelist is there any flinching, and the realism of Bazin is no less harrowing than that of Hardy. Each sympathizes with his heroine and with all his art lends her a pathos the culminating effect of which reaches an overwhelming climax at the end. As you stand upon the hill, near Wintonchester, ^{WITH ANGEL CLARE AND LIZA LU AND} see the black flag move slowly up the staff upon the jail tower, you know that within its gloomy walls the hapless Tess has paid the price which inexorable law demands.

Hardy pictured Tess's life at Talbothay's Dairy in chapters of supreme and idyllic beauty. Bazin in the first half of his book shows us Pascale dwelling in conventual peace amid joys unguessed by the daughters of the world. But just as the sunlight withered from out Tess's days, so Pascale's life beyond convent walls fell in dark places and we behold her caught in the maelstrom of temptation and suffering from a fall more hideous than that of Tess, because she had dwelt upon spiritual heights of which Tess had never dreamed. We see Pascale, the beautiful, the tender, the good, and alas, the weak, as a woman of the streets, struggling in the grasp of a half-drunken drover. Again we behold her with dull eyes and hollow cheeks crouching on her heels at the public washing tank, and still again, when Prayon, taking her in attempted flight, carries her back in his arms to his house and in a rage hurls her against the wall with all his strength, where she lies, pitiable and inert, a crimson thread of blood staining her lips. Hardy mercifully draws the veil over the final scene in which Tess pays the penalty. Not so Bazin. He shows us Prayon pursuing his victim with upraised knife and striking her down just as she has sobbed out the broken prayer, "Miserere mei, Deus!" He goes further and pictures her miserable lonely burial without a mourner.

No one can lay aside Tess or L'isolée with emotions unstirred to the depths. The pathos of human suffering has rarely been told with a more tender sympathy or a more perfect realism. To sum up: Does the modern drama tend to follow the unities? A dogmatic yes or no is out of order, because what the "Unities" are is a vexed question, yet there can be no play without some unity. We have shown that the best plays of today measure up to the strictest rules ever laid down by critics. Furthermore that there is a movement to throw over-board all methods of the past, nevertheless, those who have attempted to realize this have

made unique productions and proved that in endeavoring to neglect, they have best fulfilled the standard set by even the oldest master.

Considering the novel: there is always a central plot in the novel. The best English novelist of today, Hardy, is a master constructionist. The second best, Galsworthy, is most effective when his technique is best. Bazin's purpose is to show the far-reaching effects of the anti-religious movement in France. His art conceals his purpose. Hardy assures us that his work was intended to be neither didactic nor aggressive, but in the scenic parts, to be representative simply, and in the contemplative, to be often charged with impressions rather than convictions. His novels observe unity of place and in Tess ^{OF THE} D'Urbervilles the seven phases of the story are so closely interwoven that it might be used as an illustration of Aristotle's idea of Unity.

Appreciation of

"The writer in present day literature"

The subject is difficult but treated in a masterly manner by Mr. Cutley.

There are errors which a rhetorician or grammarian would instructively single out but interest carries one forward so steadily that slight errors are condoned.

In places metaphorical construction is rather far-fetched and in others a touch of bathos makes one halt in one's stride. In places, also, words of doubtful legitimacy are made use of. The authors mentioned as the leaders of literary work are presumably personal selection.

The thesis however is of undoubted cleverness with close reasoning and delicate tracery, its acceptance is recommended.

27. May 1923.