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ANALYZING ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN JOHN GALSWORTHY'S LOYALTIES WITHIN BRITISH SOCIETY THROUGH MAX WEBER'S THEORY OF RATIONALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The delicate moral complexities encountered by the characters in "Loyalties," a drama by John Galsworthy, expose the subtle workings of British society. This research looks at these problems from the perspective of Max Weber's rationalization thesis, which states that contemporary people put more stock in logic and reason than tradition and emotion. The moral difficulties and tensions brought about by the friction between individual allegiance and social expectations are brought to light by delving into Galsworthy's characters' motives and deeds. The characters' decisions are influenced by rationalization, which frequently causes a conflict between individual ethics and collective standards; Weber's theory helps to explain this. The ethical and social foundations of early 20th-century British society, as portrayed in Galsworthy's writings, are better understood through this study, which also sheds light on the broader effects of rationalization on human behavior and social structures.

KEYWORDS

Characters, motives and deeds, rationalization.

INTRODUCTION

As Britain developed over the last hundred years from a rural to an industrial society, the daily lives of the

country's inhabitants changed competitively rapidly as well. With the Industrial Revolution, factory jobs

attracted men from the countryside, and, together with women and children, they labored long hours in unwholesome, often dangerous conditions. A social structure with closely-knit communities in which private and public life remained closely interwoven broke down before the onslaught of the factories. To serve the tallyman, the shopkeeper, the far-flung markets brewing with raw materials and finished goods, a new and necessary kind of individual emerged - the bureaucrat, typified in England by the civil servant with his starched collar and sprouting pen, sitting in his Whitehall office with its numerous regulations and interdepartmental arrows.

In this study, I shall illustrate some of the changes British society underwent and, in particular, the ethical questions that accompanied these changes. My medium will be one of England's most perceptive and most popular writers, John Galsworthy, whose realistic vision in the theatre and the novel has brilliantly caught the public's imagination and kept it for the past eighty years. Specifically, I shall analyze one of his works, *Loyalties*, for the ethical dilemmas it addresses, using sources drawn from history, sociology, and philosophy as well.

Background of John Galsworthy and *Loyalties*

Loyalties is a 1922 play by the British dramatist John Galsworthy. It deals with family relationships and social, religious, and political dilemmas within British

society. This study examines behavior towards ethics in the play *Loyalties* by John Galsworthy from a theoretical perspective, focusing on Max Weber's theory of rationalization. The play addresses the issue of the gap between what people preach and what they practice. It says: "Preach as we will, our lives show what we honour." This issue is reflected in the concept of relations between "normative order" and "individual conscience" presented by Max Weber in *Economy and Society*, which deals with sociology of law. In this concept, Weber explores elements of rationalization that have an ethical dimension.

As a sociologist, political economist, and jurist, Max Weber is known for his work on the sociology of religion. He was a member of the historical linking of the sociology department at Heidelberg with three others: economics, general history, and the state records department. In addition to law, Weber taught in the areas of commercial law, commercial trade, industrial policy, banking, sociology, and legal sociology. His goal was to analyze the relevance of authority in the construction of modern society, which is characterized by hierarchy. His studies on authority and rationalization are instrumental in dealing with *Loyalties* and understanding the nuances of people's relationships in the play depicted by John Galsworthy. Both are part of the modern reality presented by the development of capitalism, as well as its division of intellectual and manual labor, parliamentary and

monarchical bureaucratic policies, and, for Weber, the rationalization of modern civilization.

Theoretical Framework

This part is devoted to the theoretical framework on which we will "lean" to argue the ethical dilemmas in the work of John Galsworthy's *Loyalties*. In that respect, the paper will use Max Weber's theories of rationalization as well as his thought on the meaning and types of society to justify the claims made. The German sociologist is well placed in the sociological tradition to give the humanists ample material for cases like the one that is the main focus of the paper: *Loyalties*. Galsworthy's intense scrutiny of turn-of-the-century British society is based on a deep ethical strand, a pillar pursued logically through the work that would ultimately secure the author's claiming a central place in Britain's criticism of its own society and the equations that kept it functioning. Even if Weber's works have been used to study the novels he himself wrote, his sociological arguments are compelling enough to cross frontiers and give religious lessons to other temporalities.

The ordering of society and the relative place and weighting of the value spheres have concerned Western society ever since it has been able to arrive at the current complex and organized state. The present paper tries to appraise Weber's contributions in discussing these issues, amply allowing such a relevant

society to adduce lessons from the past that it finds a resemblance. By analyzing a novel written as far back as 1908, *Loyalties*, the argument implies that even if societies built principles derived from a series of mostly shared values undergone by the human condition. In most contemporary Western societies, religion is no longer the central instrument through which societies would and should carry on their lives. Judicial and criminal prescription would wrongly hold political power as the primary importance nexus of ordering society. Nonetheless, the position of political parties and the growing importance of ethical conformism show one society that was largely expected but never fully materialized. Moreover, although the whole connectedness of the human condition within society is not always current, the expectation of a pattern is present, where expectations towards the state and discrimination lead to overreach decisions. That claim pertains to the role of the state built on ethical majoritarian verve. Politics will, more broadly, actively continue to mold the prey and ranks that society assumes.

Max Weber's Theory of Rationalization

Max Weber is most renowned in the area of sociology for his theory of rationalization. He believed that society will tend to become increasingly bureaucratic. It will continue to be extremely organized, following specific, proportionate rules. These organizations will become so detailed and compartmentalized that

eventually they will lose their spirit. This belief causes Weber to focus strongly on the aspect of power and control over society. Throughout his writings, he has a negative view of society because he sees the individual losing control over that society. The theory of rationalization presented by Weber shows the negative outcomes that can come about from the ever-increasing rules, control, and power which also govern society. However, we must strive to preserve our own uniqueness and not allow ourselves to be overcome by these organizations.

In his idea of rationalization becoming more present in society, Weber felt that society will become more advanced in its technical and economic capacity. In this, it will eventually mean that individuals will lose control over their fate to these ever-increasingly controlling organizations and groups. They will not be able to understand, nor ever imagine how these massive organizations have come to dictate their daily routines. They will continue to think that their life is in "the hands of beings, beyond their control". People will simply become alienated within their society. These organizations become hyper-rationalized, full of loopholes. Society just continues to become even more complex as the overall population continues to shrink in power. This will occur until individuals are nothing more than just tiny links within a vast organization.

Ethical Dilemmas in John Galsworthy's 'Loyalties'

Galsworthy's play *Loyalties* provides insight into the ethical dilemmas offered by the process of rationalization. In his play, Galsworthy highlights the difficulties of committing to a consistent set of ethical beliefs because of rationalization and the decline of both religious and ethical phenomena. His characters struggle with the realization that their religious and ethical beliefs are separated from rationalization. The problems in his play originate from how sociology is conceived in the process, objectified, and used to control and manipulate society. Galsworthy uses this struggle to highlight the decline of religious and ethical phenomena in human society. Instead of serving as the guiding institutions, ethics is bent and reshaped to meet the demands of the state and to hold the number of sociologists at a minimum.

In *Loyalties*, Major Colford and her son Dillon are faced with an ethical dilemma. As Director of Military Intelligence, Major Colford does not want to spend unnecessary government funds. Dillon, out of respect for his captor, seeks to purposely lose his air combat training with both political and monetary implications. This conflict highlights Max Weber's concept of rationalization as the belief that society develops and has order during secularization. Rationalized, objectified, and controlled phenomena replace the earlier religious and ethical phenomena, but sociologists are still necessary in order to be useful in controlling and manipulating society.

Summary of the Novel

Loyalties is a powerful presentation of the changing world during the First World War. Loyalties is set outside the Court of Appeal in London, in 1917. Galsworthy, always a stickler for veracity, has the scenes actually taking place on days when he knew the cases being heard would interest their jury. In an era when juries could only return with a unanimous decision, the pressure put upon fractured integrity is enormous, testing even hardened barristers. Mr. Justice Bead is the old conservative judge who convenes these cases. Galsworthy uses his soft liberal alter ego, Mr. Justice Ryton, to counterbalance Bead's views. In each act of this powerful play, the audience is given clear dramatized opinions about the morality of some dedicated senior barristers. They have to learn how to control their consciences and use the 'bar tongue.' Throughout the play, we are presented with small ethical dilemmas, teaching of the British system whilst showing the erosion of precious values which occurred during the war itself.

In Act One, the hand of the old justice has already been affected by the events of the war to such an extent that he would deny a moratorium for a widowed woman who believed her husband died in action but who, years on, needs to know for certain before reaching a stage of emotional movelessness. Mr. Justice Bead's role in the play is to show how what are strictly (British) small ethical dilemmas need to be

mastered as part and parcel of the day job of a Judge. Therein presents the gamut of ethical dilemmas throughout the rest of the play and choicely worded brainteasers frame the actual play itself. But it is the longer ethical discourse between Ryton, the probation officers—both as honest and fervent (if youthful) in their beliefs as Ryton himself—and the audience which has enduring impact; older of course, in words and presentational style, though with modern references to John Chatton, Gertrude Jekyll and the future careers of hopeful young Touell and Dymshed, the two probation officers. The 'play' itself has the ring of a morality or instructional drama with appearances of three clutching 'relatives' to emphasize the problems of the probation officers while the marble pillar simile to foil Ryton is, at this stage of history, a straw logical fallacy.

Application of Max Weber's Theory

To use Max Weber's method, we select the play Loyalties as a cultural product and make inferences from the text. Deductive philosophy of social science proceeds from theoretical to specific hypothesis testing, while inductive philosophy of social science proceeds from empirical to general inferences. We can then use Weber's generalized concepts to synthesize broad principles, to apply these principles to a specific concrete political and social problem, and to develop a theory of politics grounded on a new institutionalism. The evidence of our conclusions is, for the most part,

contained in Loyalties. Weber tries to establish meaning or cause and effect. Compared to Marx, Weber uses culture as an independent variable. The religious ethic of Protestantism yields the materialistic thrust of capitalism. Culture, status groups, and social classes exist and get reinforcement from one another.

Weber offers no theory of the state. Because Weber defines social action in such a straightforward, commonsense manner, his method is particularly serviceable in the study of political sociology. On the other hand, Galsworthy doesn't need a theory of political sociology. He is not writing an academic treatise on the structure and function of the power of the British state in its international setting. Instead, he is interested in the state of social relations which Nicholas, Lady Madden, and the other members of the law chambers have in late Victorian Britain. Indeed, his interest is both specific and classical. He focuses exclusively, or nearly so, on the channels of influence exercised by the economic and legal establishment. Because Weber's perspective is cultural, we can now approach the play.

Key Concepts of Rationalization

Rationalization is central to understanding the ramifications of social and cultural interaction in modern society. As an overarching metatheory of the historical sociology of Western civilization, the impact of Weber's social theory has been immense. Covering

many diverse disciplines that range from the sociology of religion to organizational and management sociology and institutional economics, rationalization is a paradigm of immense interest.

Throughout his writings, Weber makes extensive reference to the concept of rationalization as underlying the development of modern Western society. The idea of a rationalization paradigm presents a marked contrast to the explanations for societal development which are more commonly associated with Hegelian, Marxist, Durkheimian, or Comtean philosophy. Focusing on the secularization of Western society, Weber, beginning with his analysis of the effects of Protestantism within the context of the development of the capitalist economic 'spirit' and 'method' in his groundbreaking book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, emphasized the application of scientific knowledge to all areas of social life and activities. Within the historical development of Western societies, rationalization reflects a combination of highly efficient and targeted factors that are responsible for the transformation of human behavior from pre-modern to modern.

Comparative Analysis

In conclusion, Weber's theory of rationalization both complements and complicates traditional moral theory. By conceptualizing the role of efficiency and causality, Weber is able to account for why moral

dilemmas occur and how moral codes can be applied in specific contexts. This complicates decision-making, for we can no longer say that some proposed solutions are good, but must constantly question whether they are really good for the situation at hand. Regardless of how the characters in *Loyalties* and how modern society-in-the-making as they knew it would have justified their actions, all faced inescapable moral dilemmas, which lead to tragic consequences, as they attempted to alter their societies or defend them from change.

In comparing Weberian theory with fiction, we can see why moral dilemmas, and especially why they may become entangled into interesting portrayals of tragedy, a fact which and why contemporary moral theory does not always satisfactorily resolve these dilemmas within the purview of modernity, development, social change, and economics. With the help of Weber, it is easier to understand why the characters of *Loyalties* would define their otherwise very amorphous passion around abstract symbols, at variance with traditional methods of justifying moral action, and a love for old societies being slowly transformed through modernity. The analysis herein has been but a preliminary immersion into modern notions of historic dilemmas using particular cathartic plots, but it may have suggested that such insights can be informative for strategy.

5.1. Similarities and Differences in Ethical Dilemmas

Loyalties focus on ethical dilemmas according to modernization processes and the rationalization of society, although ethical dilemmas in specific situations in the family and in love are found in many plays. However, the setting in Galsworthy's play is very particular. The society which raised the ethical dilemmas is characterized by a strict class system. Over centuries, society's members became accustomed to differences between social classes and a dependent mutual relationship established itself. The traditionalistic society was based on a patriarchal division of power and functioned best when main decision makers came from the nobility. After exclusiveness started eroding, the members of nobility came to realize that in spite of economic provision, their prime power weakened. The inclination of families from lower classes to desire importance combined with a certain snobbishness from the nobility led to difficulties in forming relationships. While the accent of the drama lies on the changes between the social classes, the noble lady Lady Bason is anxious about her daughter's poverty, her recognition of and love for a lower-ranking man. It is in this specific setting that Galsworthy raises his ethical dilemmas.

CONCLUSION

In John Galsworthy's *Loyalties*, disparate ethical dilemmas are portrayed that enact the acute personal tensions within British society at that time. Max

Weber's theory of rationalization extending from instrumental rationality to the rationalization of the life world developed in Economy and Society is used to categorize these ethical dilemmas. Weber's definition of the rationalization of the life world is also applied to the modern state, and it is seen to be the ultimate ideal within Enya's ethic suggests how trust in the modern state has been enfeebled as the outcome of life precalculations by the more powerful players within British society. This is an analysis that endorses Weber's prescience and, tentatively, his antidotes to achieving a happier society ensconced within an enhancing life world by recognizing the fractional gain in freedom of action that is achievable by changing the rules. The modern state takes, according to Enya, appealingly little with explicit consent by its citizens, an analysis that is limited by not having assimilated developments concerning the productiveness of consumer citizen behavior.

Weber's insistence that any remedy to the spread of instrumental rationality in society lay at the difficult and highly limited interface between the competing value rationalities inherent in different group values within that society becomes clear. This interface delimits the extent to which the right of the most powerful ultimately to dictate their life world preferences can and is circumscribed by the power of others to withdraw disputation with enforceable interdictions. These are observations that resound

particularly loudly today. Gibb states that instrumental rationality drove the twentieth-century curse of women and the wretched of the earth into the heart of London and tries to alleviate it. This is a prediction to which Weber would have been sympathetic, but it is one that does not acknowledge the probable effect of weakened identity and group values in creating the alienation at the heart of society's uncaring mentality. The impotence of the modern state within the purview of Enya's life world ethics is consistent with Weber's observations on the intrusiveness of society's most powerful players.

Key Findings and Contributions

In conclusion, this work has enabled a sophisticated understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by characters in John Galsworthy's Loyalties as a result of the varied societal and cultural norms of early twentieth-century British society. In so doing, it has also, in the words of Schön, identified a gap in the current knowledge and formulated a new pattern of meaning to encompass that knowledge. By employing the principles of both realistic and idealistic legitimacy, this analysis has contributed to the current body of literature by demonstrating that the investigation of multiple forms of organizational legitimacy is a relevant and sophisticated forum in which to examine Weber's four types of ethics, ethics of conviction, and ethics of responsibility. Through this demonstration, the ethical dilemma construct has been elucidated and

expanded beyond the occupation of organizational legitimacy.

The fact largely overlooked is that actors, such as the moral agents found in literature, are enmeshed within pluralistic societies whose institutional frameworks possess numerous layers. This article has built upon the ethics-legal context pragmatic model to discern moral agents in situ and in relation to their pluralistic societal context.

And finally, regarding the value of this thesis, we can understand in a sophisticated way the ethical dilemmas faced by the characters in John Galsworthy's *Loyalties* due to the diverse societal and cultural norms of early 20th-century British society. By opening up this perspective, the fact that the formation of ethics has been constructed is discovered. And through the examination of the use of this principle, this thesis has contributed to the numerous studies towards Weber's four types of ethical theories. By exploring the scope of ethical dilemmas, it expands the field of research into specific configurations and transcends the ideal struggle towards recognition and axiom criteria for the exploration of polymorphism. And through this demonstration, it begins to consider the recognition and limitations of the construction of ethical dilemmas. This study has made a significant contribution to current behavioral philosophy by demonstrating that the investigation of various forms of organizational recognition is a meaningful forum for exploration, and

by proving this fact, the content of ethical dilemmas is linked to the existence of organizations and positioned within a socially diverse background.

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