CHAPTER SIX

SAINT JOAN

(I)

The production of *Saint Joan* (1924) at the New Theatre practically synchronised with the deaths of William Archer, Shaw's political preceptor, and that of Mrs. Eleanor Duse, an important Italian actress and a critic, two most important persons whom Shaw highly admired. The writer, who was sporting so long with his unbridled imaginations in the play, *Back to Methuselah*, has come down once again to the real world. This time he has chosen the historical character of Joan of Arc. *Saint Joan* is a religious play, written in relation to the feudalistic social setup of the 15th century France. Thus, the play has a dual importance - religious and political. His fidelity to history has been questioned from several quarters. According to Eric Bentley, "Shaw wrote his history plays before reading the history books, trusting his knowledge of human nature to generate historically accurate plots." J.M. Robertson in his book, *Mr. Shaw and the Maid*, wanted to save history from Shaw and vehemently criticised his "instinct to put things both ways". In support of J.M. Robertson, T.S. Eliot also stated that "to Shaw, truth and falsehood ....do not

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1. Bentley, Eric; *Bernard Shaw*; New York, 1957, p-159.
2. Robertson, J.M; *Mr. Shaw and the Maid*; London, Hodden-Sanderson; 1926; p-85.

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seem to have the same meaning as to ordinary people". So far as the religious aspect of the play is concerned, Shaw has made an attempt to limelight his personal religious convictions through the character of Joan. We should assess the play in this light in order to understand the religious stand of its author. For this specific purpose in many senses he has taken history in his own hands, without taking liberty with the cardinal events in Joan's life, and thereby he has made an attempt to save the Maid from the romantic writers like Mr. Drinkwater - "Save the Maid from Mr. Drinkwater". Shaw was, perhaps, a good reader of human behaviour. Once writing to Has keth Pearson, he stated that "human nature remains largely the same."

Briefly put, Joan speaks mostly for Shaw himself. The revolutionary and the reformative religious spirit of Joan has attracted him. Joan questioned the supreme authority of the church-fathers in handling man's spiritual life. As a result, she had to fight against the church singlehanded. She was singularly assisted by her liberal religious convictions and also by her iron-will. Purely indicative of the mind of Shaw, Joan could not accept the intermediary position of the church-fathers between God and man. The political aspect of the play is very tactfully interlinked with the religious. Shaw has clearly


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shown how the feudal lords employ the church as instrumental in carrying out their class interests. Joan's spiritually inspired political convictions posed a veritable threat to the century-old class privileges of the feudal lords.

Regarding the preface to the play Prof. R. M. Ohmann writes, "The preface to "Saint Joan" is particularly rich in transtemporal juxtapositions. In the first five pages alone Shaw likens the Maid to Queen Christina of Sweden and Chevalier D'Eon in her taste for men's dress, to Caesar in pretensions, to Queen Elizabeth in length of life, to Socrates in being misunderstood, to Napoleon, Christ, Herod, Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas in possessing that superiority which inspires fear, to Mahomet in being both saint and conqueror, and to other dignitaries not specifically named."38

Thus, in the preface to the play Shaw has clearly shown the quintessence of the Joanesque spirit, which echoes his own. The opposition between her and the church is virtually a combat between the creative religious convictions and the traditional prejudice-bound religious ideas of the priestly class.

Although, Martin Luther is honoured with the credit of being the first Protestant, Shaw offers this honour to Joan, since she was the real inaugurator of the spirit of Protestantism. Others only followed her suit. It was she, who asserted private judgement against established authority. Shaw writes - "Though

a professed and most pious Catholic, and the projector of a crusade against the Husites, she was in fact one of the first Protestant martyrs. She had an unbounded and quite unconcealed contempt for official opinion, judgement, and authority.

Such qualities are suggestive of the Protestant spirit in her personality. Like Joan, Shaw was against the institutionalized and authoritarian and hierarchical form of Christianity. Shaw assuredly believed - "The kingdom of heaven is within you." In this sense, like Joan, Shaw also believed that the priest-class's claim of being the direct representative of God is nothing but a gross distortion of fact. If religion leads to inner growth and spiritual uplift, the so-called intermediary position of the priest-class is obviously unimportant, or, that there is really no necessity of spiritual spoonfeeding by the priest-class. Shaw was an inveterate hater of this class.

For Shaw, Joan is not a person, but an embodiment of some impersonal force. She firmly believed, Joan was guided not by herself, but by a mighty force which was beyond her comprehension and intellectual grasp. She herself admitted - "I do not know A from B".

6. Joan; ac. Vip-132. contd...
That mighty force, according to Shaw, is the progressive urge of the Life-Eternal. Or, call it Absolute Perfection. That is why, Shaw says what Socrates was at the age of seventy Joan was at the age of seventeen. Maybe, it was her exceptional precocity. Any advanced religious idea is treated as heresy by the prejudice-bound people, and the initiators of those advanced ideas are either put to death or excommunicated - "Socrates has to drink the hemlock, Christ to hang on the cross, and Joan to burn at the stake". Shaw goes to the point of saying - "it is far more dangerous to be a saint than to be a conquerer".

Talking about Joan's voices and visions Shaw says that there is practically no unreasonableness in assuming that some people with ardent as well as impassioned thirst for some superpersonal understanding might hear some voices in the void or see some visions in the vacuum. Such voices and visions are the outcome of the impassioned urge seething in man. Something happened to Joan, and on this ground she cannot be treated as insane. Shaw writes - "Socrates, Luther, Swedenborg, Blake saw visions and voices just as Saint Francis and Saint Joan did". In this light, Joan's direct conversation with Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret and Saint Michael can be vindicated instead of

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7. Preface, Ch. Contrast with Napoleon, P-4.
8. Ibid
9. Preface, Ch. Joan's Voices and Visions, P-10-11. contd...
branding it as lunacy as has been done by the ministers of the church. Shaw repudiates the 19th century interpretation of Joan's voices and visions, which misinterprets her indomitable evolutionary spirit as delusions.

Shaw rather accepts the 20th century interpretation which finds mysticism in all her voices and visions - "The twentieth century finds this explanation (19th century explanation) too vapidly commonplace, and demands something more mystic. I think the twentieth century is right". Because, Joan was not 'mentally defective' as the 19th century thinks, but 'mentally excessive' as the 20th century holds. Joan was guided and inspired by what Shaw calls "an appetite for evolution" and "a superpersonal need" than by anything personal and physical.

Religion in its traditional form does not evoke any spiritual appetite in man, nor does it pave the road to his evolution, Shaw affirms. Hence, his antagonism to it. As Joan had the push from such "an appetite for evolution", naturally she transcended the ordinary level of human understanding and perception. So, what was fact to her was fiction to the ordinary people with ordinary understanding. Once again vindicating the voices and the visions of Joan, Shaw remarks - "It is one thing to say that the

10. Preface, Ch. The Evolutionary Appetite, P-12.

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figure Joan recognised as St.Catherine was not really St.Catherine, but the dramatization by Joan's imagination of that pressure upon her driving force that is behind evolution, which I have just called the evolutionary appetite.11 Shaw even goes to the extent of declaring - "If Joan was mad, all Christendom was mad too".12 On the contrary, the priestly class branded her divine inspiration as witchcraft and gross blasphemy.

Joan wanted to make Catholicism more catholic. Not that, she hated the church-father, but what she stood against was their self-assumed intermediary position. Shaw aptly remarks: "her notion of a catholic church was one in which the Pope was Pope Joan".13 The same can be said also of Shaw. He found the catholic church corrupt and depraved. It was virtually guided by what he calls "primitive calibanism". He wanted to rescue the pristine spirit of religion from the strangulatory grip of the ageold doctrinal and episcopal autocracy. He also very tactfully links the political aspect of the play with the religious, as we have already stated. He also pinpoints the subservient position of the church to the temporal authority. Joan's liberal political ideas posed a veritable threat to the solidarity of the feudal aristocracy, leading to the breakdown of the ageold institution itself. The feudal lords employed the church as

12. ibid.
13. Preface; ch. Joan not tried as a Political Offender; p-32.

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instrumental in working out their dirty designs. Shaw maintains complete antipathy to such subservient tendency of the church.

Shaw firmly believed that even by being anti-clerical one can be a devout and sincere Christian. In support of his statement, Shaw writes: "All the reforming Popes have been vehement anti-clericals, veritable scourges of the clergy. All the great orders arose from dissatisfaction with the priests: that of the Franciscans with priestly snobbery, that of the Dominicans with priestly laziness and Laouiceanism, that of the Jesuits with priestly apathy and ignorance and indiscipline. In the middle age poets like Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) in his prologue to the Canterbury Tales laughed at the selfishness and the lasciviousness of the priestly class. Shaw also holds the similar attitude towards them.

In the chapter entitled Catholicism not Catholic enough Shaw holds the view that Catholicism in order to be sufficiently Catholic must encourage free-thought and dynamic spirit. And so, if we admit, as we must, that the burning of Joan was a mistake, we must broaden Catholicism sufficiently to include her in its charter."

15. Reface; ch. Catholicism not yet Catholic enough; p=38.
Theology must supplement science, and science should similarly supplement theology, Shaw believes. Without this mutual reciprocity, theology will remain unactual and at the same time detached from truth and reality. Science and religion should go hand in hand, without being confined into two isolated watertight compartments.

Catholicism was already blinded by its detachment from the spirit of science. Shaw writes: "When the church militant behaves as if it were already the church triumphant, it makes these appalling blunders about Joan and Bruno and Galileo and the rest which make it so difficult for a Freethinker to join it; and a church which has no place for Freethinkers is not, which does not incultate and encourage freethinking with a complete belief that thought, when really free, must by its law take the path that leads to the church's doom, not only has no future in modern culture, but obviously has no faith in the valid science of its own tenets, and is guilty of the heresy that theology and science are two different and opposite impulses, rivals for human allegiance." 16

Shaw knows that such a remark will anger and badger the church militant, but he wants to remind the priesthood - "that the church is in the hands of God,  

and not, as simple priests imagine; God in the hands of the church".

In the chapter *The Law of Change is the Law of God* Shaw once again emphasises the dynamism in religion. Religion without dynamic and progressive spirit is anti-evolutionary, and so practically anti-religious. Religion, he thinks, should be subject to the universal "law of change", and anything contrary to it is unprogressive, and therefore anti-God.

Traditional form of Catholicism is solidly founded on 'intolerance'. Religion must make room for new and fresh ideas although they seem to be heretical at first sight. As a matter of fact, all evolutionary movements come in the guise of heresy and misconduct. So, the church must keep its door open to fresh ideas. Shaw emphatically points out: "When the churches set themselves against change as such, they are setting themselves against the law of God." So, the derecognition of the "law of change" in the church means the derecognition of the very spirit of religion itself.

(II)

The first scene of the play amply demonstrates


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Joan’s iron-will inspired by her profound faith in God. Shaw believes that if one is possessed of the extraordinary consciousness, he or she can practically do and undo everything. He or she simply becomes a part of divinity itself. No opposition of any kind stand before his or her spell. Joan was possessed of such an extraordinary power, directly come from the creative force, characterizing the universal law.

Shaw firmly believed that the universe is constantly moving towards perfection; and it is the duty of religion to make men understand and feel that universal purpose behind the whole creation, and thereby help the onward march of creation towards perfection. According to Shaw, Joan represents such a spirit; and being the possessor of such a spirit she could cast her spell on everybody. In this scene even the hens are victims of her spell, not to speak of Robert de la Jaudricourt, the Steward, Poulengy and others. The Steward of the Squire explains the situation - "But there is a spell on us; we are bewitched".¹

Her extraordinary power defeats all sorts of oppositions blocking her progress. It is not black magic or voodooism. It is the divine cosmic power itself.

¹Steward, Sc. Ip-65 (v. L). contd....
This happens in case of people, attaining a higher level of consciousness, almost transcending the frontier of subject-object distinctions. This transcendental consciousness is called 'Turiya' in the Mandukya Upanisad. Joan was in the frontier of that consciousness, practically by virtue of her genuine chastity, simplicity, and faith in God, and her firm determination to carry out the wishes of God. Every moment she was conscious of her part towards the furtherance of the will of God.

A girl of 18, Joan dares to raise the siege of Orleans and thereby formally coronate Dauphin. Robert de Baudricourt, despite his misgivings about her, helps furnishing her with what she wanted to raise the siege. Her decision and actions are dictated by God, she firmly believed in. In a sense, her whole being is merged and assimilated in the thought of God. As a result, she cannot think of anything except in relation to God, the Almighty. Poulengy rightly says: "I think the girl herself is a bit of a miracle". This miracle aspect seemed to be madness to many, even to Robert:

Robert: Whoa! You are as mad as she is.

Poulengy: We want a few mad people now. See where the sane ones have landed us!

(P-72)


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This is certainly the voice of Bernard Shaw himself, who doubted the sanity of the so-called sane and wise people. To these so-called wise class of people any new idea is sheer madness. Hereby Shaw wants to mean that for the uplift of man there is the absolute necessity of such so-called 'mad' people. Earlier, Shaw pointed out that any new idea at first appears to be madness through the conventional eyes. Through the conventional eyes Jesus Christ was mad, Luther was mad, and Galileo too was mad.

Robert is confused. He holds a dubious attitude towards the divine voices of Joan. In order to test the veracity of the same he crossexamines her:

Robert: What do you mean when you said that St. Catherine and St. Margaret talked to you every day?
Joan: They do.
Robert: What are they like?
Joan: I will tell you nothing about that: they have not given me leave.
Robert: But you actually see them, and they talk to you just as I am talking to you?
Joan: No; it is quite different; I cannot tell you; you must not talk to me.

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about my voices.

Robert: How do you mean? Voices?

Joan: I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God.

Robert: They come from your imagination.

Joan: Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us.

(P-74)

Here Shaw emphasises the point of creative imagination through which divinity manifests itself to the pure and elevated souls. He has already cleared the mist encrusting the idea about the truth of Joan's voices in his preface. Maybe, the voices she hears are more real than the flesh-and-blood ordinary voices. Shaw has already said that she was 'mentally excessive', and not 'mentally defective'. In her there was the turbulence of the 'appetite for evolution', seething within her. This is a purely mental condition, an example traceable in the hagiology of many saints and seers. By 'imagination' Shaw does not mean anything sentimental, but a trance-like state of mind arising out of man's transcendent consciousness and supersensitivity, which offer him a kind of divine insight to see and understand the deepest depth of the mysteries of the Absolute Reality and the creative purpose of Life-Force. Religion in its traditional cast cannot bring contd....
about such a state of mind.

Joan did not have any kind of personal hostility towards the English. Because, any narrow parochial interest could not be associated with her simplicity and supersensitivity. She did not have any imperialistic bellicosity towards the English. On the contrary, she was innocently against the political exploitations carried on by the English over the French. She believed in the idea — "we are the sons of God", so, one brother should in no case exploit the other.

In short, Joan linked up religion with every aspect of her life. Even in her war preparations against the English she was guided by her faith — "one thousand like me can stop them. Ten like me can stop them with God on our side." 3

The second scene of the play is devoted more towards Shawian tirade against the luxury and conventionality of the priestly community. The Archbishop represents the rottenness of the community. The picture of the Archbishop shown in the stage directions is adequately suggestive. "The Archbishop of Seville, close on 50, a full-fed political prelate with nothing of the ecclesiastic about him except his imposing bearing." 1 That can be more venomous than the expression 'full-fed political prelate'.

The Archbishop is interested more in political
affairs than in anything intellectual. He has taken priesthood as a lucrative as well as a respectable profession with the high sole motive/self-idolization. He has a very opinion about himself, talking to La Tremouille he exposes himself - "You see, I am an Archbishop; and an Archbishop is a sort of idol. At any rate he has to learn to keep still and suffer fools patiently." Shaw was indignant of the hollow pride of the priestly class. An iconoclast, Shaw believed that the priestly class is primarily responsible for the moral degradation of our society.

Through the lucrative profession of priesthood the Archbishop has become economically well-to-do. Even king Dauphin had to financially depend on him. The Archbishop was very much proud of his wealth - "He (the king) never has a suit of clothes that I would throw to a curate". Thus, priesthood had become a coveted profession with the bright possibilities of great material comforts and benefits. Shaw hates such preoccupation of the priestly class with worldly life.

The Archbishop has been dissatisfied with the miraculous exploits of Joan, fearing that her presence might loosen his hitherto sustained hold on the people.

3. -Ibid- contd...
at large. Her prominence might dethrone his class from
the high pedestal. So, he does not at first allow the
king to see and talk to Joan - "I am not interested
in the newest toys". The King was bent upon meeting
the girl, thinking that she might be able to bring about
some radical change in his wretched life. The king mocks
at him - "You are always ready with a lecture, aren't you?"
Shaw hated such lecture-mongering habit of the priestly-
class. Their lecture-mongerings were nothing but
boobytraps cast to tantalize and mesmerize the innocent
people. The king, further, mocks at the Archbishop - "Thank
you. What a pity it is that though you are an Archbishop
saints and angels don't come to see you!"

According to the Archbishop, saints and seers must
be made from the church militant. The saint must have
the episcopal recognition. Joan does not have that. So,
she cannot be a saint. And so, she must be a heretic.
Shaw takes serious note of the Archbishop's comment about
the Maid - "This creature is not a saint. She is not even
a respectable woman. She does not wear woman's clothes.
She is dressed like a soldier and rides round the country
with soldiers. Do you (the king) suppose such a person
can be admitted to your highness's court?" For the
Archbishop respectability is the precondition to saint-
hood. What can be sillier than this? What astonishes


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Shaw is the fact that being an Archbishop he has not yet been able to shed away the question of respectability and the idea of traditional dress-decorum.

Shaw ascribes such silly ideas to the intellectual inferiority of the Archbishop. Long steeped in luxury and a cosy life that feudal aristocracy offers, the Archbishop has been completely detached from the spiritual pursuits of any kind.

Joan's presence cows down everybody. Her spell binds everyone. Contrary to all expectations, Joan seeks the blessings of the Archbishop that fattens him with pride and snobbishness. Flabbergasted and self-complacent, he blesses her - "child! you are in love with religion". And at the same time, he admits - "The Maid comes with God's blessings, and must be obeyed". Such eulogizing remarks of doubtful sincerity must have emanated from the Archbishop without his knowledge.

Joan always felt that she had come to the world with a mission from God for its fulfilment. She wants to inspire the king, "I tell thee it is God's business we are here to do; not our own. I have a message from God; and then must listen to it, though thy heart break with the terror of it." In this sense, Shaw is Joanesque both in

8. Archbishop, Sc.II, P-91
9. Ibid., P-92
10. Joan, Sc.II, P-95

contd...
letter and spirit. According to him, behind the creation of man, God has a definite purpose. That purpose being the Absolute Perfection. And, everyman should dedicate his whole being towards the furtherance of that cosmic will. Religion, Shaw thinks, should dynamise human spirit towards that end.

In the third scene, Shaw highlights the divine power of the Maid. Her spell binds not only the world of men, but also the nature itself. Wind and weather change their directions according to her wishes and prayers. This, Shaw is confident, is the direct result of her transcendental power. But, this suprapersonal power of Joan has been misunderstood as witchcraft.

Joan's prayer and presence change the course of the wind, befitting her strategic need. Maybe, this being the result of her complete surrender and dedication to the will of God. She thought herself to be the faithful servant of God - "I am not a daredevil : I am a servant of God. My sword is sacred : I found it behind the altar in the church of St. Catherine, where God hid it for me."¹

Such a spirit of complete surrender to the will of God should be the somum bonum of every religious belief,

¹Joan, Sc. III, P-102 contd...
Jhaw asserts, in short, true religion is invariably above its institutionalized form, as has been proved by history.

In the fourth scene Jhaw once again exposes the rottenness and hypocrisies of the priestly class in further detail. Through his character portrayals he has clearly shown the spiritual and intellectual dearthness of the priestly community. He also shows their narrow selfishness, and thereby he wants to stress the need of saving the true spirit of religion from this depraved community. So long Christianity is in the hands of these professionals there is no future for it; Jhaw stresses with confidence.

He has also shown how the feudal aristocracy in collusion with the priestly community help sustain their dirty class interests at the cost of people's spiritual uplift and intellectual growth. Both the institutions are criminal accomplices for one another.

Shavian hatred for the priestly community is once again limelighted even in his stage directions. He depicts the Chaplain as a 'bull-necked English Chaplain'. That none of these priests had anything intellectual in him is adequately proved in their foolish interpretations of the exploits of the Maid. The Chaplain ascribes the exploits of the Maid entirely to her 'witchcraft and sorcery'. Cauchon, the bishop of Beauvais, ascribes contd...
her exploits to the diabolic power of the Prince of Darkness. The Chaplain wants to get rid of her by burning her by his own hands - "I will fling my cassock to the devil, and am myself, and strangle the accused witch with my own hands". Almost all of them are steeped in the medieval beliefs concerning witchcraft and black art. They failed to understand her suprapersonal power.

Comparatively Warwick is a better man than all these ministers of the church. His relationship with the Maid is purely political. He is fearful of the new national consciousness which the Maid is going to imbibe in the hearts of the people. This national consciousness might ultimately lead to the collapse of his feudal aristocracy. He does not have any complaint against the Maid on religious ground, but he feels a sense of relief when the church itself has taken the whole responsibility of putting an end to her life purely on religious grounds. He is least interested in religion. What is worse, religion was an instrument in his hands. He used it for political ends. He was unwilling to transfer even a fraction of his power to the king: "Men cannot serve two masters. If this cant of serving their country once takes hold of them, goodbye to the authority of their feudal lords, and goodbye to

1. The Chaplain, sc. IV, p. 106. contd....
the authority of the church". What Shaw complains against is the fact that the church became instrumental in killing the Maid.

Warwick himself did not have any high opinion about the Christians. He makes a derogatory remark - "in my experience the men who want something for nothing are invariably christians".

Cauchon is the venomous of all the characters of the play. In a sense, Shaw makes him the symbol of the whole priestly class. He is corrupt, selfish, prejudiced, and aggressively repulsive to any modern thought, however correct and scientific that might be. He believes, "the devil is making use of this girl - and I believe he is". He ascribes every work of the Maid to the "prince of darkness - "Against that dreadful design (of the prince of darkness) the church stands ever on guard. And it is as one of the instruments of that design that I see this girl. She is inspired, but diabolically inspired".

The Chaplain calls her a 'witch'. Cauchon thinks her to be a 'heretic'. Shaw depicts Cauchon as a man of hypocrisy, always trying to whitewash the dark side of his personality and that of his own class. Cauchon hypocritically points out that the church cannot kill people in view of the great sin involved in it. Warwick under-

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2. Warwick; Sc. IV, p. 107. 4. Cauchon; Sc. IV, p. 111.
3. Ibid. 5. Ibid. contd...
stands this - "No doubt, but you do burn people occasionally".6 Defending himself, Cauchon points out - "No, when the church cuts off an obstinate heretic as a dead branch from the tree of life, the heretic is handed over to the secular era. The church has no part in what the secular era may see fit to do".7 According to Shaw, this is a factual distortion. Because, the church may not kill people, but it serves as an instrument to it. In other words, the church wants to wash its hands off the girl by putting an end to her life through others. Cauchon's hypocrisy is expressly exposed to us when he says - "I am not thinking of the girl's body, which will suffer for a few moments only, which must in any event die in some more or less painful manner, but of her soul, which may suffer to all eternity".8

Cauchon's indignation was mainly caused by Joan's neglect of the intermediary part of the church. He complains - "Has she ever in all her utterances said one word of the church? Never. It is always God and herself".9 This side of Joan's life is highly acclaimed by Shaw. Incidentally, Cauchon's hypocrisy was so deeprooted that he would have possibly reacted in the same manner had Jesus Christ himself was in place of Joan.

7. Cauchon, Sc. IV, P-112. 9. ibid. contd....
Joan is not the only tragic victim to religious intolerance, and religious obscurantism. The church militant had burned John Huss (1373-1415) to death only thirteen years back. His only mistake was his reformative zeal. Mahomet was also persecuted, though not physically burnt to death. John Wycliffe (1320-84) also had to face the same music. Of course, he died a natural death. Cauchon refers to all these cases, and blames the English for not burning John Wycliffe to death - "A man named Wycliffe, himself an anointed priest, spread the pestilence in England, and to your shame you let him die in his bed". Thus, Cauchon wants to discard any progressive religious thought as 'pestilence'. He interprets this progressive spirit in man as 'cancerous' - "I know the bread, it is cancerous; if it be not cut out, stamped out, burnt out, it will not stop until it has brought the whole body of human society into sin and corruption, into waste and ruin". The church militant has been aggressively withstanding all the progressive and liberal thoughts of man from its very inception.

Shawdreamt of a world where every man will be a Mahomet, and every girl a Joan. Cauchon shuddered at the thought of such a world: "but what will it be when every

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11. Ibid. contd....
girl thinks herself a Joan and everyman Mahomet? I shudder to the very marrow of my bones when I think of it. I have fought it all my life; and I will fight it to the end.  

The scene ends with a devilish promise of the Chaplain — "I would burn her with my own hands". Birds of the same feather flock together. Cauchon blesses the Chaplain, saying 'sancta simplicitas'. He encourages his diabolic pursuit; he has rebels against such brainless butchery, perpetrated in the name of religion.

The fifth scene of the play shows the loneliness of the maid. The king, whom she has coronated, leaves her aside. And, what is worse, he ascribes the French victory entirely to luck. The church community is against her. The same hostility is maintained by the feudal lords. She has become the sore of everyone's eyes. Only Dunois being an exception. Dunois calls her a "poor innocent child of God". This childlike innocence is yet to find its right place in the world. The world, which crucified Jesus Christ cannot be expected to be fair to Joan. Dunois understood the position of Joan. Consoling her he says: "sim-ples-ton? do you expect stupid people to love you for showing them up? Do blundering old military dug-outs love the successful young captains who


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supersedes them? Do ambitious politicians love the climbers who take the front seats from them? Do archbishops enjoy being played off their own altars, even by saints? 1

Joan also has the same realization - "The world is too wicked for me." 2 Shaw stresses the point that there can hardly be any happy compromise between the wickedness of the world and the wisdom of Joan. But, in the long run, the latter will supersede the former, Shaw believes. The physical end of Joan does not mean her spiritual end. She is the harbinger of a new world. She is the living symbol of the evolutionary force, which is working round-the-clock. It will go on marching ahead in the teeth of all the oppositions. Shaw harps on this point again and again.

The church people misconstrue the spiritual awareness of Joan as pride and blasphemy. What is 'pride' and 'blasphemy' and 'disobedience' to them is simply common-sense to her. The Archbishop goes to the point of saying - "You have stained yourself with the sin of pride. The old Greek tragedy is rising among us. It is the chastisement of hubris." 3

We must note one thing - Joan did not work according to any established religious doctrine. She rather

1. Joan; Sc. Vp-123.
2. Joan; Sc. Vp-123.
worked according to the dictates of some mystic power, which Shaw calls 'evolutionary appetite'. She heard the voice of that mystic force, which makes her appear mad in the eyes of the ordinary people. Her explanation being: "They (the voices) do come to you, but you do not hear them". This is simply her cosmic awareness, which gave her so powerful. Joan is right when he said: "She thinks she has God in her pocket".

The society boycotted Joan. The church declared her as a dead branch of the tree of life, yet she does not feel herself lonely. She was alone, but never lonely, because she knows God is on her side — "It is better to be alone with God: His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare, and dare, and dare, until I die.... You will all be glad to see me burnt, but if I go through the fire I shall go through it to their hearts for ever and ever. And so, God be with me!" Shaw puts special stress on the immortality of human spirit, which never dies. Joan's physical death does not mean the death of the Joanesque spirit. Shaw refers to the case of Martin Luther, who virtually kept the ball moving until the dream of Joan is realized only some decades after the execution of Joan Martin.

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Luther (1483-1546) came to the vanguard of that reformatory movement, adding another significant chapter in the history of human progress. We must also add that, according to Shaw, this evolutionary appetite of the men cannot be necessarily be said to have ended with the establishment of Protestantism, because Protestantism is not the last word of human evolution.

Protestantism is not the final answer to man's spiritual progress. It is only a significant step ahead. It will continue its onward journey until the kingdom of heaven is established in the heart of every man. Shaw aims at the radical transformation of man into God, in short, religion, he thinks, should make man conscious of that inexorable reality behind the so-called reality, without binding him to fixed doctrines.

The sixth scene throws ample light on the flimsiness of the trial Joan was subjected to. Thereby, Shaw exhibits his exacerbation against the Inquisition, the judicial section of the church. The entire trial against Joan was ill-founded and malicious. Shaw laughs at such ecclesiastical courts. He does not find any basic difference between an ecclesiastical court and a police court. Like the police court, the ecclesiastical court also maintains a large number of officials in its judicial branch. Such officials include the Inquisitor, the Pre-
motsr, the assessors, each having definite powers and functions and functional jurisdictions. Such questions as to why should there be any functional ecclesiastical courts at all? Do they really serve any religious purpose at all? The ecclesiastical courts expose the abominable animalism of the church Militant.

The charge-sheet prepared against Joan is ridiculous. It almost verges on intellectual and spiritual suicide. The charge-sheet initially contained sixty-four charges, later reduced to mere 'poor twelve'. This reduction business received strong opposition from some officials of the church like the chaplain and counselors. This disagreement among the church officials leads to a feud among themselves. The charge-sheet included many flimsy charges. The archangel is said to have spoken to her in French, which, according to them, ought to have been spoken either in English or in Latin; the Maid had stolen the horse of the Bishop of Senlis; the Maid had worn man's dress instead of woman's; she made her hair like man's etc., etc. At the first stage of the trial there was a great deal of controversy regarding the charge-sheet. The controversy turns the place into a pandemonium. This difference of opinion centred round some flimsy charges levelled against her. Ridiculously enough, Joan was examined fifteen times: six public and nine private.

contd....
The church community proves to be more hypocritical than the secular Heads. Erwick expressly declares: "her (Joan’s) death is a political necessity," but, the ministers of church always hid their ugly motives of preserving their age-old privileges. The inquisitor blames the secular authority: "All secular power makes men scoundrels. They are not trained for the work; and they have not the Apostolic succession." Joan was against the very idea of "Apostolic succession", under which it is the disease of the forefathers which is being inherited by the successors. And, thus, the disease continues generation after generation.

Joan was finally tried on the charge of heresy. Heresy, according to the church officials, should in no case be tolerated. In the words of the inquisitor: "I say, if you hate cruelty, remember that nothing is so cruel in its consequences as the toleration of heresy." This is certainly a gross distortion of truth engineered by the church people to suit their purpose. Interestingly enough, while carrying on the examinations the doctor was forbidden by the church to bleed Joan, supposing bleeding might remove the witchery from her; or this Joan calls them 'silly people'. D'estivelt finds heresy in her attempt to escape from the prison.

1. Erwick, p. V1p=139.
2. The Inquisitor, Sc. V1P=140.
3. ibid, p=146. contd....
D'estivet: You tried to escape?
Joan: Of course I did, and not for the first time either. If you leave the door of the cage open, the bird will fly out.

D'estivet: (rising) This is a confession of heresy. I call the attention of the court to it.
Joan: Heresy, he calls it! Am I a heretic because I try to escape from the prison?

Shaw pinpoints this foolishness of the church people in every page of the play. He also points to the fact that it is dangerous for the righteous people to live in this world. Joan clearly said: "It is an old saying that he who tells too much truth is sure to be hanged." Typically Shawian in spirit, Joan subordinates the church to God: "God must be served first." But, the church people misunderstand the meaning of Joan's words.

D'estivet: When your voices command you not to submit yourself to the church militant?
Joan: My voices do not tell me to disobey the church; but God must be served first.

For a proper appraisal of the Shawian attitude to religion we must point to his special emphasis on the supremacy of God over both the people and the church.

5. Joan; Sc. V1p.-150.

contd....
But the mistake the church people committed was that they subordinated God and His will to the will of the church, and worse still, they struggled to the last drop of their blood for the preservation of church supremacy at the cost of even God's will itself. In this sense, Joan was more sinned against than sinning. Making her final statement she said: "His (God's) ways are not your ways, nor wills that I go through the fire to His bosom; for I am His child, and you are not fit that I should live among you. That is my last word to you." 8

Shaw once again reiterates his view that mere physical death cannot lead to spiritual death. Physical death emancipates the soul from the prison of the body. After the physical death the soul crosses the boundary of the finite and becomes timeless, age-less, and space-less. There is much logic in the saying of Ladvenu: "This is not the end for her, but the beginning." 9 The executioner is also right when he said: "Her heart would not burn, my lord." 10

From the beginning to the end Shaw has been emphasizing this point of her spiritual victory earned through her physical death. Her spiritual victory is felt by one and all immediately after her death. The

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10. The Executioner: Sc., VI, p. 168. contd....
Chaplain, who wanted to burn her by his own hand, is also mortally stung with self-pity and self-reproach. Joan, even from the burning stake, was calling the name of Jesus Christ, and some people chuckled at her. The Chaplain could hardly tolerate this: "Some of the people laughed at her. They would have laughed at Christ." 11 The same is the case with Ladvenu. He wanted to show the dying girl the holy cross, but she from within the fire warned him to save his life by going off. This incident makes him feel: "By lord: a girl who could think of another's danger in such a moment was not inspired by the Devil, when I had to snatch the cross from her sight, she looked up to heaven. And I do not believe that the heavens were empty. I firmly believe that her Savior appeared to her then in His tenderest glory." 12 Ladvenu was correct.

(III)

In the Epilogue Shaw reinforces the same idea in a more potent way. It is not our purpose to judge whether the Epilogue serves any artistic or dramatic purpose or not. By and large, Shaw has introduced the Epilogue only to show the spiritual triumph of Joan. Only after a

11 The Chaplain; Sc. VI: p. 167.
12 Ladvenu; Sc. VI: p. 167. contd....
period of twenty-five years Joan's case was retried. Consequently, she is declared to have been misjudged by her judges. And, it is also declared that her judges were full of corruption, cozenage, fraud and malice—four falsehoods, and the sentence on her is broken, annulled, annihilated, set aside as nonexistent, without value or effect. 1

Except King Charles all the characters, including Joan, are physically dead. They appear in the scene only as spirits. Shaw reiterates his idea of spiritual freedom that the soul achieves after the physical death. This spiritual freedom from the prison of 'matter' offered Joan complete identification with the spirit divine. She became one with what Shaw calls 'Life-force.'

Charles: Are you really dead?

Joan: As dead as anybody ever is, laddie.

I am out of the body...

I was not in my right mind until

I was free of the body. 2

Joan's spiritual victory has penetrated into the deepest core of all her opponents...Everyone fools, it is just foolishness to judge the dead with the ordinary down-to-the-earth values of man. Cauchon realizes: "I arraign the justice of man. It is not the justice of God." 3

1. [Advenutri epilogue:] p. 171.
2. Ibid. p. 173.
3. Cauchon: epilogue: p. 174. contd...
Cauchon is also correct when he said: "the world is saved neither by its priests nor its soldiers, but by God and His Saints". This is definitely the projection of the mind of Shaw. The executioner also feels the invincibility and the all-pervasiveness of the Joaneseque spirit: "She is more alive than you, old man. Her heart would not burn; and it would not drown. I was a master of my craft: better than the master of Paris, better than the master of Toulouse; but I could not kill the maid. She is up and alive everywhere."

Shaw also harps on the spiritual undergrowth of man. Man is still not spiritually mature enough to understand the ways of the saints. Paradoxically enough, man is prepared to worship the saints only in the altar. Man cannot tolerate the down-to-the-earth and flesh-and-blood presence of the saints. King Charles rightly says: "If you could bring her back to life, they would burn her again within six months, for all their present adoration of her." This idea is further reinforced when Joan shows her willingness to appear as a living woman: "Who unto me when all men praise me! I bid you remember that I am a saint, and that saints can work miracles.

...and tell me: shall I rise from the dead, and come back

5. Executioner: Epilogue, p-180. contd...
to you a living woman". She is shocked at the suggestion and forbids her to come that way - "The heretic is always better dead. And mortal eyes cannot distinguish the saint from the heretic".

Joan also deplores the over-all spiritual undergrowth of man; yet like Lilith (back to Methuselah), she is also hopeful of a better future for man:

"There is a beyond". Joan's future lies in her super-consciousness and super-sensitivity; but that glorious moment has not yet blossomed. At the top of her emotion, Joan says: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy Saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"

It is only after reading the play between the lines one can perhaps identify Shaw as the spiritual child of Joan. Like Joan he was also optimistic of a better future for man. He knows that the evolutionary appetite of the cosmic force is not dead, it will never die. Like her Shaw is also above the church, above the cross, and above the traditional religious values. From the core of his heart he believed that religion in the traditional set-up chloroforms man's creative mind; and thereby impedes his spiritual growth. Religion,

9. Lilith: Back to Methuselah, Part-V, p-962. (From the complete plays, The Home Library Club.)

contd...
Shaw asserts, should be liberal, scientific, progressive, and at the same time creative. He aggressively looked down upon all sorts of doctrinal and ecclesiastical autocracy. Shaw is invariably Joan herself when she said:

"I shall out-last that cross." 11

11. Joan; Epilogue; p-174.