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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

SIGNIFICANT MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF JOAN OF ARC

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of Master of Arts

Department of English

by

Virginia Quarrier Wynn

Year

1948

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**SIGNIFICANT MODERN INTERPRETATIONS
OF JOAN OF ARC**

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Five hundred years have passed, and Joan remains a living breathing presence, when those others of her day have become little more than names, a museum of labelled shadows.¹

What is the explanation of this continued interest in a young girl who lived for only nineteen short years in the first part of the fifteenth century?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us briefly summarize the facts of her life: she was born, it is believed, on January 6, 1412 in Domremy, a small town in north-eastern France. There, at the age of thirteen, she first heard voices and saw visions of saints and angels who, in the years that followed, instructed her to go to the aid of the city of Orleans which was besieged by the English, and afterwards crown the Dauphin at Rheims. Within three short months she fulfilled her mission, though she continued in the service of the king for the next year, until taken prisoner by the Burgundians while fighting before Compiègne. Sold to the English, she was tried for sorcery and heresy, and burned at the stake in Rouen on May 30, 1431 — just a year after her capture.

These main facts of Joan of Arc's life have never been seriously questioned, yet their interpretation has continually changed throughout the years. In the age of Shakespeare, the Maid's character was distorted by nationalistic prejudice; in the eighteenth century, by the new rationalism; and, in the nineteenth, by the romantic reaction. With the coming of modern times, however, there was no longer one generally accepted interpretation, but instead four distinct attitudes were widely expressed: the romantic, the scholarly, the sceptical, and the pragmatic, to each

1. Paine, Albert, Bigelow, Joan of Arc, Maid of France, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1925, v. 2, p. 327.

of which one chapter of this thesis will be devoted.

That a vital interest in Joan of Arc has continued into the twentieth century is due, in large measure, to a desire, on the part of several great writers of our present age, to explain her voices and visions, as well as her entire personality, on the basis of recent findings in science and psychology. Furthermore, in France, her name became important in both a political and a religious way as was never the case in England or America. In all countries, though, men were inspired to reinterpret the Maid's story, since her canonization caused them once again to wonder about her remarkable achievements.

The fundamental reason, though, for a continued interest in the deeds of Joan of Arc lies in the fact that any interpretation of her accomplishments invariably rests upon the author's beliefs about theology, pathology, and metaphysics. And this explains "the fascination of France's national saint -- not just the subject of a biography, not merely a picturesque figure in armour and a scarlet cloak, but a figure who challenges some of the profoundest tenets of what we do or do not believe. More, perhaps, than any other military figure in history, she forces us to think."²

2. Sackville-West, V., Saint Joan, Doubleday, Doran, & Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 343

CHAPTER I

THE ROMANTIC GLORIFICATION OF
JOAN OF ARC

THE ROMANTIC GLORIFICATION OF JOAN

Toward the turn of the twentieth century -- in 1896 to be exact -- Mark Twain published his Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, a work which is of importance in itself, as well as having had considerable influence over the past fifty years.

Writing in the romantic tradition, the author glorified and worshiped the Maid:

...the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times without misgiving or apprehension as to the result. Judged by any of them, judged by all of them, it is still flawless, it is still ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment, a loftier one than has been reached by any other mere mortal. ¹

Mark Twain's interest in Joan dated back to the day, years before, when he chanced to pick up, off the street, a torn leaf from a book which described the plight of the Maid in prison. And, although he had never heard of the subject before, he became intensely interested, and felt the deepest compassion for Joan. Moreover, immediately, he read everything that he could find relating to the French wars, and to the Maid, in particular. ²

Years passed, and then when he was nearing sixty, he determined to write the story of Joan of Arc as a biography. In a letter to a friend, he wrote: "Possibly the book may not sell, but that is nothing -- it was written for love" ³ -- for love of the Maid of Orleans, because, now in the cynicism of his later life, a character such as hers seemed to him the only justification for the existence of our poor human race. Moreover,

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1. Clemens, Samuel L. ("Mark Twain"), Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, P. F. Collier & Son Company, New York, 1899, v. 1, p. xi.
 2. Paine, Albert Bigelow, Mark Twain: a Biography, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1912, v. 1, pp. 81-82.
 3. Clemens, Samuel L., Mark Twain's Letters, Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1917, v. 2, p. 624.

in Joan, he saw the personification of the ideal woman, at her purest and best, and, also, perhaps a reflection of his beloved daughter, Susy.

In Mark Twain's character, there had been quite a strong vein of idealism — an idealism, though, which tended to become more and more submerged as time passed, for disappointments and sorrows crowded upon the author in later years. Thoroughly embittered, he seemed, in the Personal Recollections, to sum up a lifetime's rage against "the forces in society that array themselves against the aspiring spirit";⁴ and, in his attack on Joan's judges, to make a "savage and despairing defense of the misprized poet, the betrayed hero, in himself."⁵

Mark Twain's interest in Joan was, then, entirely personal; he saw her, first, as the personification of the best in our human race; second, as a reflection of those he loved, and, thirdly, he identified himself with her in her struggle against an unjust world.

This, of course, is apparent only when we read between the lines, for, on the surface, the book is such a simple and sweet story that it might well have been written for children. And, Van Wyck Brooks, one of the most noted critics of Mark Twain's work, thinks that this is exactly what the author was unconsciously doing.⁶ Certainly, Mark Twain said in a letter to a friend: "I am writing a companion to the Prince and Pauper ..."⁷ Moreover, it is evident that he constantly read the manuscript aloud to his own children, and consulted with them about it. Susy, indeed, wrote:

4. Brooks, Van Wyck, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, 1920, p. 256.

5. Ibid., p. 257.

6. Ibid., p. 176.

7. Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters (op.cit.), p. 579.

Hearing the M.S. [sic] read aloud is an uplifting and revealing hour to us all. Many of Joan's words and sayings are historically correct and Papa cries when he reads them. In fact he almost always fills up when reading any speech of hers.⁸

Susy died a year and a half after the Personal Recollections were finished, at about the time that they first came out in book form and were generally known to be by Mark Twain. The work had been published anonymously for the reason given by the author himself:

I shall never be accepted seriously over my own signature. People always want to laugh over what I write and are disappointed if they don't find a joke in it. This is to be a serious book. It means more to me than anything I have ever undertaken. I shall write it anonymously.⁹

Now, Susy had always liked the story of Joan more than anything else her father had written, and this, I believe, had much to do with Mark Twain's continued love of the book throughout the rest of his life. For, otherwise, he would undoubtedly have realized that Huckleberry Finn, for instance, was more of a literary masterpiece than the Personal Recollections, and, consequently, would not have written as he did on his seventy-third birthday:

Nov. 30, 1908

I like the Joan of Arc best of all my books; & it is the best; I know it perfectly well. And besides, it furnished me seven times the pleasure afforded me by any of the others: 12 years of preparation & 2 years of writing. The others needed no preparation, & got none.¹⁰

In reality, though, Mark Twain did not spend as much time on his life of Joan as he later thought. For, in a letter to Henry Rogers at the time it was completed, he told how he actually worked:

The first two-thirds of the book were easy; for I only needed to keep my historical road straight; therefore I used for reference only one French history and one English one -- and

8. Wagenknecht, Edward, Mark Twain, the Man and his Work, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1935, p. 145.

9. Paine, op.cit., v. 2, p. 959.

10. Ibid., p. 1034.

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shoveled in as much fancy work and invention on both sides of the historical road as I pleased. But on the last third I have constantly used five French sources and five English ones and I think no telling historical nugget in any of them has escaped me. ¹¹

Paine mentions by name the principal sources upon which Mark Twain relied: Quicherat's record of the trials, the Life of the Maid by Lord Ronald Gower, and the Jeanne d'Arc of Michelet ¹² (from the latter of which he undoubtedly derived something of his romantic outlook). In addition, Paine shows that the book was written remarkably quickly: a hundred thousand words — or about half of it — in a period of six weeks. ¹³ It was, then, truly as the author described it: "a tale which tells itself; I merely have to hold the pen." ¹⁴

From these facts, we would assume that Mark Twain was mainly interested in getting from his sources the outline of Joan's life, a factual basis upon which he might freely enlarge and interpret as he saw fit. For, he was writing what we today term "fictionalized biography" and, it is interesting to note, in passing, that he is the only author (I think I am correct) who has attempted thus to write of the Maid.

One would naturally presume that Mark Twain made use of this form in order that the book might be more readable and the characters more human. The story, of course, is interesting -- its popularity over the years has proved that -- but it fails to appeal to the thoughtful twentieth century reader, because so little psychological knowledge and insight is employed by the author in his presentation of Joan herself. The main characters are skillfully drawn, but the Maid never becomes a credible human being. In fact, from beginning to end, she remains "ideally

11. Clemens, Mark Twain's Letters (op.cit.), p. 624.

12. Paine, op.cit., v. 2, p. 958.

13. Ibid., p. 960.

14. Ibid., p. 989.

perfect,"¹⁵ "that wonderful child, that sublime personality."¹⁶ She is, indeed, very much as Shaw humorously referred to her: "skirted to the ground, and with as many petticoats as Noah's wife in a toy ark."¹⁷

Actually, though, such a biased point of view is to be expected from a book entitled Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc by the Sieur Louis de Conte, Joan's page and secretary. The story is told in the first person, and, at times, too, in a way no contemporary of Joan's would have done. For instance, the reader is amused to come across the details of many things which a person living in the age would have taken for granted, as in the description of the village, the houses, etc.

The following passage will, I think, give a fair idea of the author's style, outlook, and general method of approach, as well as being typical of the battle descriptions scattered throughout:

I was her playmate, and I fought at her side in the wars; to this day I carry in my mind, fine and clear, the picture of that dear little figure, with breast bent to the flying horse's neck, charging at the head of the armies of France, her hair streaming back, her silver mail plowing steadily deeper and deeper into the thick of the battle, sometimes nearly drowned from sight by tossing heads of horses, uplifted sword-arms, windblown plumes, and intercepting shields. I was with her to the end; and when that black day came whose accusing shadow will lie always upon the memory of the mitred French slaves of England who were her assassins, and upon France who stood idle and essayed no rescue, my hand was the last she touched in life.

As the years and the decades drifted by, and the spectacle of the marvellous child's meteor flight across the war firmament of France and its extinction in the smoke-clouds of the stake receded deeper and deeper into the past and grew even more strange, and wonderful, and divine, and pathetic, I came to comprehend and recognize her at last for what she was -- the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One.¹⁸

15. Twain, op.cit., v. 1, p. xi.

16. Ibid., v. 2, p. 287.

17. Shaw, Bernard, Saint Joan, Penguin Books, Inc., New York, 1946, p. 22.

18. Clemens, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (op.cit.), v. 1, pp. xvii-xviii.

If, after reading such a passage in the preface, the reader continues with the story, he should not judge it harshly, for he has been forewarned. The entire remainder of the book is written in this same vein.

Throughout, the story is simply and sweetly told; no realistic details are ever included, not even in the battle scenes, or in the description of Joan's death. And, nowhere is there a passage which we today would classify as naturalistic. All is told as though by a storyteller, and hence is quite conversational in tone.

There is a complete acceptance of Joan's voices, visions, and miracles at face value. The latter are explained either as knowledge which she gained through listening to her voices (as in her prophecies) or, as an ability to transform the character of others, through keen insight into their minds and hearts. We see this, especially, in some of the products of the author's imagination, such as the Paladin; and, to a lesser degree, in the case of an historical figure, like La Hire.

Mark Twain believed, then, that Joan was directly inspired by God, and, furthermore, that "she was not made of common clay" like the rest of us, but instead "was built on a grander plan than the mass of mankind, and moved on a loftier plane."¹⁹ He described her as "the Beautiful; and this was not merely because of the extraordinary beauty of her face and form, but because of the loveliness of her character."²⁰ Moreover, "whoever listened to the voice and looked into the eyes of Joan of Arc fell under a spell, and was not his own man any more."²¹

The Personal Recollections are divided into three "books": the first deals with Joan's life in Domremy; the second, with the fulfillment

19. Ibid., p. 135.

20. Ibid., p. 36.

21. Ibid., p. 189.

of her mission; and, the third, with her captivity and martyrdom. The first part of the story is more fictional than any other, for the author had fewer facts upon which to draw. He wanted, though, to clearly portray the Maid's character, and so he told imaginative episodes which would illustrate her various characteristics. For instance, in order to show her fearlessness, modesty, and influence over others, he described her bravely calming an escaped madman after her companions had run away, and, then, with the danger past, hiding, for the "glory was so trying to her diffidence." 22

The story becomes more factual, though, as it continues; and, in Book III, the author makes a definite attempt to follow Quicherat's record of the trial. It is interesting to note that, in contrast to Shaw's later interpretation, Mark Twain treated Joan's trial as one of the most unjust ever held, and consistently regarded Cauchon with horror and disgust. For, viewing it from the vantage point of the twentieth century, he was never able to understand that, in Joan's day and time, the prosecution really had a case.

Writing with the eloquence of DeQuincey, he described the Maid at Rouen:

Yes, Joan of Arc was great always, great everywhere, but she was greatest in the Rouen trials. There she rose above the limitations and infirmities of our human nature, and accomplished under blighting and unnerving and hopeless conditions all that her splendid equipment of moral and intellectual forces could have accomplished if they had been supplemented by the mighty helps of hope and cheer and light, the presence of friendly faces, and a fair and equal fight, with the great world looking on and wondering. 23

Throughout the Personal Recollections, the author skillfully employed humor to break the tension of tragedy, and it would, indeed, have

22. Ibid., p. 44.

23. Ibid., v. 2, p. 230.

been an unobservant reader who could not have recognized its author when the book was first published. All is typical of Mark Twain: from the endless boastings of the Paladin, to old Laxart's tale of riding a bull to a funeral.

In general, the minor characters are realistically portrayed, and, in them, the story truly comes to life. These were all men whom the author knew -- on the farm, in the mines, and on the river -- transplanted into fifteenth century France. Even La Hire rather reminds us of a character from Life on the Mississippi.

In conclusion, it is clear that Mark Twain carried on the tradition of the romantic glorification of Joan -- a tradition which had begun a hundred years before, with the works of Southey and Coleridge, writers who, in their conception of the Maid, were reacting against the scepticism of Hume and Voltaire. The romantic tradition reached its peak in the nineteenth century with Schiller in Germany, De Quincey and Landor in England, and Michelet in France. Thus, Mark Twain in America was merely its latest development: the writer of the first popular biography of Joan, a fictionalized work.

The Personal Recollections had considerable influence: Andrew Lang, some years later, thought of dedicating his own book, The Maid of France, to Mark Twain. The latter received the letter proposing the dedication in 1909, but, apparently laid it aside and forgot about it, for his memory had not improved with failing health. ²⁴

Other biographers, also, acknowledged indebtedness to Mark Twain; but, unfortunately, with many of them, as in the case of Mrs. Henry Fawcett, the influence was bad, rather than good. For, unless genius is

24. Paine, op.cit., v. 2, p. 1032.

combined with adoration, sentimentality is the inevitable result, as is shown, for instance, in a sentence such as the following one:

That our poor human nature can rise now and then to such sublime heights makes a halo of glory for the whole race, and can give us thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. ²⁵

In the same year that the Personal Recollections were published in America, a work was written in Scotland by Margaret Oliphant, entitled Jeanne d'Arc. The author, a popular writer, wrote this book at the age of sixty-eight, -- just a year before her death -- for the "Heroes of History" series. It seems very probable that she was interested in the Maid not simply because the latter would afford a subject for another biography, and, hence, be the means of making some much needed money, but also because Joan of Arc had been a heroine of hers for many years. Moreover, just as Mark Twain saw in the Maid something of his daughter, Susy, so Margaret Oliphant glorified Joan, undoubtedly also seeing therein the image of her daughter who had died. This, at least, helps to explain her extravagant praise of Joan of Arc, as shown, for instance, in the following passage:

The Maid of Orleans, the Virgin of France, is the sole being of her kind who has ever attained full expression in this world. She can neither be classified, as her countrymen love to classify, nor traced to any system of evolution as we all attempt to do nowadays. She is the impossible verified and attained. She is the thing in every race, in every form of humanity, which the dreaming girl, the visionary maid, held in at every turn by innumerable restrictions, her feet bound, her actions restrained, not only by outward force, but by the law of her nature, more effectual still, - has desired to be. ²⁶

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25. Fawcett, Mrs. Henry, "Joan of Arc," Five Famous French Women, Cassell and Company, Limited, London, 1905, p. 50.
26. Oliphant, Margaret, Jeanne d'Arc: Her Life and Death, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1896, p. 7.

This is merely one of dozens of similar rhetorical and flowery descriptions scattered throughout the book, all of which seem to the modern reader like the epitome of Victorianism at its worst.

Like Mark Twain, Margaret Oliphant wrote in the romantic tradition, only her Jeanne d'Arc is not of equal significance with the Personal Recollections, since she lacked his gift for story-telling. Moreover, she adored her heroine to such an extent that the book has little life, since human interest is not even to be found in the minor characters (which were so realistic in the Personal Recollections).

Margaret Oliphant's work was quickly written; and, for sources, the author relied mainly upon Andrew Lang and Michelet. The biography contains no bibliography and not more than a dozen footnotes; however, from her references in the text itself, the author seems to have read fairly widely in the field.

Although not writing a fictionalized biography as did Mark Twain, Margaret Oliphant, nevertheless, did not hesitate to enlarge upon the known facts of Joan's life. Frequently, she allowed her imagination free play, as, for instance, when she wrote of Joan's father:

The sudden appearance of this dark remorseless figure, looking on from his village, who probably in all Domremy -- when Domremy got to hear the news -- would be the only person who would in his desperation almost applaud that stake and devouring flame, is too startling for words. ²⁷

In addition to enlarging on the facts, the author frequently made extravagant and inaccurate statements, as, for example, when she wrote: "There is no record in all her career of any woman who was not her friend." ²⁸ Now, Catherine of La Rochelle could certainly not be called Joan's friend, and there were undoubtedly others, too, -- certainly among the nobility -- who felt far from kindly toward the Maid.

27. Ibid., p. 310.

28. Ibid., p. 214.

In the first two hundred pages of the book, Margaret Oliphant told of Joan's life prior to her captivity, while, the last half of the biography she devoted entirely to the Maid's trial and martyrdom. However, throughout the story, like Mark Twain, the author's implicit belief in Joan's divine inspiration did not falter; not once did she attempt to make a rational explanation of any event in her life. For example, when writing of the miracle of the Maid's knowledge of the sword buried behind the altar at the church of St. Catherine at Fierbois, she observed:

However, as we are compelled to receive the far greater miracle of Jeanne herself and her work, without explanation, it is foolish to take the trouble to attempt any explanation of so small a matter as this. ²⁹

Margaret Oliphant preferred to think that Joan's mission was concerned solely with the raising of the siege of Orleans and the coronation of the Dauphin and that "in continuing the war, she acted only as a well inspired and honourable young soldier might, though no longer as the direct messenger of God." ³⁰

It is not unusual for the romantic biographer to have difficulty in accepting Joan's later military defeats; usually he is forced to explain them in one of four ways; he will either portray the Maid rather as Mark Twain did, as the tragic heroine, sent hither and yon by the king and his councilors -- in other words, as the victim of circumstance; or, he may, like Margaret Oliphant, believe that her voices guided her only during her successes; or, perhaps, in the fashion of Southey, the biographer will completely ignore the latter part of her life; or, lastly, do as Schiller did, imagine a more suitable ending, such as death in battle.

The latter half of Margaret Oliphant's Jeanne d'Arc is more factual than the first part; and, this was because she followed the Procès quite

29. Ibid., p. 61.

30. Ibid., p. 130.

closely. In fact, she attempted to give a literal translation of the public examination; since, with the exception of the records of Quicherat which were out of print and very difficult to procure, no such detailed translation was then in existence. The private examinations, though, she passed over more quickly, since a detailed study of them would have required a great deal of space, as well as have fatigued the reader through constant and prolonged repetition.

In describing Joan's trial and imprisonment, Margaret Oliphant wrote: "if ever martyr were worthy of being called a partaker of the sufferings of Christ it was surely this girl ..." ³¹ Yet, despite this fact, she did not harshly condemn Cauchon, as one would have expected her to do. Instead, her estimate is a far fairer one than Mark Twain's, and, in fact, more within reason than Shaw's, which erred in the other direction, to the extent of inaccuracy.

Margaret Oliphant wrote of Joan's judge:

...he did not believe in her [Jeanne] any more than the loftier ecclesiastics of France believed in Bernadette of Lourdes, who was of the spiritual lineage of Jeanne, nor than we should believe today in a similar pretender. It seems unnecessary then to think of dark plots hatched between these two dark priests (Cauchon and Winchester) against the white, angelic apparition of the Maid ³².. They made a great and terrible mistake, as the wisest of men have made before now. They did much worse, they behaved to an unfortunate girl who was in their power with indescribable ferocity and cruelty; but we must hope that this was owing to the period at which they lived rather than to themselves. ³³

In conclusion, we might summarize by saying that although Margaret Oliphant made a sincere effort to accurately portray Joan's life, yet, with the exception of the trial itself, she succeeded no better than had Mark Twain. Both perceived the Maid only through a rosy film of

31. Ibid., p. 335.

32. Ibid., pp. 220-221.

33. Ibid., p. 225.

romanticism; and, consequently, for neither of them did she become a credible human being who might actually have walked this earth.

We have studied, then, two examples of the romantic glorification of Joan: both popular biographies, one fictionalized, and, the other, not. But, because Mark Twain was a more gifted writer, endowed with the gift of story telling, and having cultivated a simple and more direct style, his interpretation is of far more interest to the twentieth century reader.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHOLARLY BIOGRAPHY AND ITS SUBSEQUENT POPULARIZATION

CHAPTER II

THE SCHOLARLY BIOGRAPHY AND ITS SUBSEQUENT POPULARIZATION

In the same year that Mark Twain and Margaret Oliphant published their romantic interpretations of the Maid, Francis C. Lowell wrote a work of a very different character. Realistic, objective, and critical in approach, his Joan of Arc is, as far as I know, the first important scholarly biography to be written about the Maid in English.

Lowell was a Boston lawyer by vocation and an historian only by avocation. This, however, was an asset, since it enabled him to bring a discriminating and critical legal mind to a study of the problem in which he was most interested: the differentiation between fact and fiction in a biography of the Maid.

Lowell realized that, for most people, "the life of Joan of Arc is unreal, resembling a picturesque legend rather than truthful history."¹ And, he felt that this was unfortunate when the facts of her real life are known in such detail and to such a remarkable degree of certainty. Of course, pure legends concerning her are common enough, but their absurdity can be easily detected due to their extravagant improbability and also because of their inconsistency with well-known facts.² The author points out:

The life of Joan of Arc affords a striking illustration of two important historical principles: first, that legends require the shortest possible time for their luxuriant growth, — a contemporaneous account being often little less legendary than an account separated from the event by a considerable lapse of time; and second, that the wildest and most improbable legends may exist beside the most definite and well-ascertained historical facts. The

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1. Lowell, Francis C., Joan of Arc, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1896, p. iii.
 2. Ibid., p. iii.

popular impression concerning Joan and the existence of these numerous legends have caused me in this book to cite authorities more frequently and more fully than I should otherwise have done. ³

Lowell has indeed written a work which is carefully and accurately documented, and his conscientious citation of his authorities at the foot of each page reminds us of Anatole France who employed a similar method twelve years later. France, however, was not nearly so accurate as Lowell, with the result that there are many inexact and erroneous references in his Vie de Jeanne d'Arc.

Lowell's biography is based mainly on Quicherat's work which contains the most complete collection of all data about the Maid that has ever been published. And, the author has shown real skill in making use of this vast quantity of material with critical discrimination and never-failing good judgment.

Chapter I of his Joan of Arc opens with a discussion of the condition of France, since to study the Maid "apart from the life of her people and her generation is no less absurd than to regard her as their type." ⁴ Now, Andrew Lang, a decade later, wrote a similar opening chapter, but since his biography does not continue beyond the first pages on this objective factual level, such a beginning seems rather out of place. However, in Lowell's case, it is an appropriate opening for a work which retains its unbiased critical and scholarly character from the first to the last page.

With the second chapter, Lowell narrows his focal point to the little town of Domremy where Joan was born, spent her childhood, and first heard her voices at the age of thirteen. In the latter connection, after telling the story as the Maid herself told it at her trial, the author

3. Ibid., p. iii.

4. Ibid., p. 1.

writes:

These were the subjective impressions on the mind of Joan. Their objective cause and explanation have been widely sought, but if we try to connect the past life and the surroundings of the little girl with the saints whom she saw, we shall find the evidence of such connection very scanty....the cause of her veneration [of the saints], if it existed before her vision, is more probably buried with the lost history of her early childhood and of the local traditions and worship of the village.⁵..That she both saw and heard the saints we know, but precisely what she saw, or how she heard them speak, she never told any one. Two things only are certain: first, that she was sincere, both then and afterwards, and, second, that no trick was played upon her by others. It appears, moreover, by very strong evidence, that in all other respects she was quite healthy, both in body and in mind. Further than this, history cannot go, and the choice between insanity and inspiration must be made by another science.⁶

This discussion is typical of the objective and critical method of approach that Lowell employs throughout the biography. Generally speaking, though, he altogether refrains from comment -- unless such commentary is necessary for clarifying the material -- and confines himself to an unprejudiced statement of fact.

However, in an appendix at the end of the book, he does probe more deeply into the problem raised in the text of Joan's inspiration or insanity; but, even there, he does not actually give us his own opinion. This is very unusual, for I know of no other of the Maid's biographers whose personal interpretation and outlook we do not know. Lowell, though, treats the subject completely objectively:

The question most commonly asked about Joan of Arc, "Was she insane or inspired?" may seem to have received an insufficient answer in the text, and yet it is doubtful if any length of discussion will lead to an answer much more definite. The facts are few and, for the most part, undisputed; it is the inferences to be drawn from these facts which are in doubt.⁷..The man who believes in God may...believe Joan to have been inspired, and, most probably, will believe it.

5. Ibid., p. 29.

6. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

7. Ibid., p. 364.

The man who does not believe in God, by the terms of the supposition cannot believe her to have been inspired, in the ordinary meaning of the word....

It seems to follow, then, that our opinion concerning Joan's insanity or inspiration is likely to depend not much upon our beliefs concerning Joan, but principally upon our beliefs concerning insanity and inspiration in general. As this book does not pretend to treat of pathology, metaphysics, or theology, the matter must be left here.⁸

Returning to the text, we find there a description of Joan in the days after her "heavenly visitors" first came to her:

She was reserved, and having a great secret which she told to no one, she lived by herself more than most girls of her age; but she had her friends, whom she loved and who loved her. She was strong and brave, very earnest, but having much of the shrewd humor of the peasants of Lorraine. After she had become famous, the villagers strained their memories, and roused their imaginations, to tell marvelous stories of her girlhood, but, as she grew up among them, they thought of her only as a good girl, like other good girls whom they knew.⁹

And, elsewhere, the author portrays her as "a well-grown girl, strong and healthy, dark-haired, with a pleasant face and a sweet voice,"¹⁰ "rather pretty."¹¹

Such a characterization of Joan is noteworthy for its freedom from the distortions both of the romanticist and of the sceptic. As a scholar, Lowell approached the mass of material collected by Quicherat with a completely open mind. The result is that after piecing together the available evidence, he was able to draw a remarkably life-like portrait of the Maid which avoided the excesses either of sentimentality or of scepticism — pitfalls into which many of her other biographers have fallen.

As we have observed, Lowell's account is generally straight-forward and objective with his critical material confined almost entirely

8. Ibid., p. 367.

9. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

10. Ibid., p. 34.

11. Ibid., p. 39.

to the footnotes and the appendix. It is always interesting, though, to read this commentary, since, like the text itself, it reveals the author's commonsense and shrewd reasoning. Two lines selected rather at random from the footnotes will, I believe, suffice for illustration: "I am inclined to think that Joan's public career made these hints [of hers that help would come to France] seem more definite when remembered than when they were uttered." ¹² And in another connection: "The evidence that Joan really announced the defeat [of the French at the battle of the Herrings] to Baudricourt is quite insufficient, but there can be little doubt that he afterwards believed she had done so." ¹³

Lowell does discuss in the text the problem of what share of the French successes were due to Joan, since this is one of the most important questions that must be answered in any biography of the Maid.

That she was responsible for the tactics of the French army is not likely, for it was commanded by experienced officers, who directed the details of all movements. She was hardly responsible for the strategy of the campaign, for of strategy there seems to have been little....To treat the successes of Joan like those of Alexander or Napoleon is gravely to mistake her power.

After all this has been said, however, it remains true that the success of the campaign was chiefly due to her. The two causes which gave victory to the French were the different morale of the two armies and the quickness of the French movements. That the excellent morale of the French and the doubtful morale of the English troops were both due to Joan is plain to any one reading the history of the siege of Orleans....Again, the remarkable quickness and vigor of the French movements were largely the result of Joan's incessant exhortations. ¹⁴

Elsewhere Lowell writes: "Her theory of war, as far as she had a theory, consisted only in seeking out the enemy, wherever he might be, fighting him as soon as found, and never admitting the possibility of defeat." ¹⁵ Needless to say, a discussion of "her theoretical rank in

12. Ibid., p. 36.

13. Ibid., p. 48.

14. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

15. Ibid., p. 221.

the army would lead to no important conclusion; her actual position and influence must be gathered from what she actually accomplished." 16

She was not a general; to the art of war she brought nothing but shrewd common sense, a keen eye for the situation, and a quick sympathy with the moods of her soldiers. Given the full command of an army, very likely she would have failed. What she did and could bring to any honest general of respectable skill was the power to make his soldiers fight as they had never fought, and to fill his enemies with a mysterious dread which paralyzed the bravest of them. This moral power, worth thousands of the best fighting men, the king's council — for the wretched king had no will of his own — deliberately threw away. 17

It is interesting to note that Anatole France, one of the Maid's most sceptical biographers, explained the secret of her military success in a similar way. Like Lowell, he placed primary emphasis on Joan's moral power — on this combined with her own personal heroism. 18 The two writers, however, differ strikingly in their explanation of the source of her inspiration: for France, the source is human; for Lowell, divine, since thus she testified at her trial, and any other explanation is a mere hypothesis.

Both biographers cover approximately the same ground, continuing the narrative beyond the Maid's martyrdom through the Trial of Rehabilitation. France, however, presents all material from a biased point of view which is in marked contrast to Lowell's completely disinterested approach.

In any work about Joan of Arc, the author's presentation of her trial is invariably a crucial point, and this presentation, of course, depends largely upon the light in which the jurors, and particularly Cauchon, are viewed. Lowell characteristically takes a middle course

16. Ibid., p. 155.

17. Ibid., pp. 191-192.

18. France, Anatole, The Opinions of Anatole France, Paul Gsell, recorder, Ernest A. Boyd, tr., Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1922, p. 75.

in his portrayal of the Bishop of Beauvais, avoiding the extremes of Mark Twain on the one hand and Shaw on the other. The latter, reacting against the romantic conception that invariably pictured Joan as a heroine in conflict with a "devil,"¹⁹ one worse than a brute,²⁰ described Cauchon as primarily interested in saving Joan's soul: "We have striven for your salvation to the verge of sinning ourselves; we have opened the door to you again and again; and you have shut it in our faces and in the face of God."²¹

Lowell, on the contrary, characterizes the Bishop in a less dramatic, but undoubtedly more truthful, way: "At the outset of the trial Cauchon's temper was neither judicial nor hypocritical, but that of a sincerely bigoted partisan."²² And, later on, he writes: "Cauchon's original position, that of a prejudiced judge who wishes justly to punish a person undoubtedly guilty,...gradually changed to that of an advocate, wishing by all means to convict an accused person, concerning whose guilt or innocence he cares little."²³

In general, Lowell gives a fair representation of both trials, merely attempting to objectively interpret the factual evidence. The book ends on a simple and restrained note, describing what took place after the Trial of Rehabilitation:

A fortnight later, upon further order of the court, there was a procession at Orleans also, attended by two of the judges. As has been said already, the people of Orleans had waited for no judicial decree to celebrate every year the deliverance of their city by Joan the Maid.²⁴

Thus concludes a work which evinces the highest historical and scholarly

19. Twain, op.cit., v. 2, p. 199.

20. Ibid., p. 207.

21. Shaw, op.cit., p. 126.

22. Lowell, op.cit., p. 256.

23. Ibid., p. 310.

24. Ibid., p. 356.

admiration. Throughout, the author succeeded in his primary purpose of distinguishing between fact and fiction in a biography of the Maid. The legendary element he carefully and consistently excluded by a straightforward factual account of what is actually known of the life and achievements of Joan of Arc.

Unfortunately, though, the very nature of the biography limited its reading public, for it was too learned and serious a work to appeal to the average person. There was, then, a real need for the popularization of the scholarly biography -- for works which would be accurate factually and, at the same time, entertaining and rather light reading.

But, it was not until 1927 that an important biography of this type was published: Albert Bigelow Paine's Joan of Arc, Maid of France. The author tells in the foreword how he first became interested in his subject:

Thirty years ago I read Mark Twain's Personal Recollections of Joan, and for me the Maid of France emerged from a land of myth and fable to become a reality. Reading and re-reading that vivid story, I was prompted, first, to follow in person the footsteps of the Maid, then, to seek out and set down the veritable historic sequence upon which that luminous and tender romance had been constructed. ²⁵

Fifteen years earlier, Paine wrote a biography of his friend Mark Twain in which he expressed the opinion that the Personal Recollections was "the loveliest story ever told of the martyred girl" ²⁶ and its author's "supreme literary expression, the loftiest, the most delicate, the most luminous example of his work." ²⁷ After reading such an expression of unqualified admiration for one of the most romantic stories ever told of the Maid, the reader is amazed to see Paine's own unpre-

25. Paine, Joan of Arc, Maid of France (op.cit.), v. 1, p. v.

26. Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (op.cit.), v. 1, p. 81.

27. Ibid., v. 2, p. 1029.

judiced and scholarly approach to his material. For, although he writes in the foreword that the "story of Joan is the wonder tale of the ages and needs little embellishment," yet he continues: "The facts alone are marvellous enough. My effort has been to present them, without bias and without neglect." 28

Paine spent over four years in writing his Joan of Arc, and during that time he not only travelled to every place where the Maid "is known certainly to have set her foot," 29 but he also traced her story "through a maze of official documents, letters, and contemporary chronicles." 30

My chief endeavor...has been to step as nearly as possible in the Maid's precise historic tracks, coördinating the testimony, without slighting or garbling it in the interest of any pre-conceived notions of my own. Also, I have thought it worth while to supplement the episodes with some description of such localities and landmarks as may be still identified; places that Joan of Arc saw, objects that she may have touched. 31

The inclusions of this topographical information is one of the most unusual and outstanding features of Paine's biography, and while it does cause the book to possess a certain disunity, yet, at the same time, it lends to its popular appeal.

In other ways, too, the author attempted to make his Joan of Arc as entertaining as possible: dozens of illustrations, several very interesting maps, and an itinerary of the Maid's journeys are included. Moreover, the footnotes -- far fewer in number than in Lowell's work -- are collected in a brief appendix at the end of each volume rather than listed at the bottom of the page. Thus, the book is kept from having too scholarly an appearance.

Paine tells in the foreword of his general method of presentation:

28. Paine, Joan of Arc, Maid of France (op.cit.), p. vii.

29. Ibid., p. v.

30. Ibid., p. vi.

31. Ibid., p. vi.

As to the method of the story, I have, for the most part, let the witnesses speak, allowing Joan herself and those who knew her best to tell it in their own word and phrase, a plan which so far as I know has not been much employed; why, I cannot say. To me it seems that words contemporary with the thought and event carry a flavour and convey a reality lacking in paraphrase, however deftly constructed. With this idea in mind I have translated as literally as the languages of races separated by five centuries, and even to some extent by different mental processes, would permit. Here and there, when I have thought it might interest the reader, or where the rendering has seemed likely to mislead, I have quoted the original. Where this was in Latin, as in the case with much of the testimony taken at the trials, I have supplemented the Latin with some authoritative French version. 32

Now, Andrew Lang in his biography, The Maid of France, also followed this same general method of presentation: quoting what Joan and her friends said whenever possible. However, probably because Lang did not take the time to polish and smooth his narrative, his work is far less integrated than Paine's.

The latter, in the first volume of his Joan of Arc, follows the well known sequence of events in the Maid's life. In general, his account is factual and objective, though it does have a certain romantic flavor, probably resulting, in large measure, from an extravagant use of superlatives. In the spirit of Mark Twain, Paine writes: "Her story has been told many times, and will be told oftener in the years to come, for she was, she is, the most interesting human being the world has ever known." 33 And, elsewhere, he describes the Maid's mission as one "such as has never been assigned to another in all the world's history." 34

Nevertheless, for Paine:

Joan was no ethereal visionary, of delicate physique, but a healthy peasant girl, capable, and with plenty of temper and determination....³⁵ As to her appearance, we have little

32. Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

33. Ibid., p. v.

34. Ibid., p. 25.

35. Ibid., p. 23.

on which to base a description. We know that she was strong, of good height, that she had dark hair, and we have the words of a comrade, who rode with her and was nearest her during her days of battle, that she was "beautiful and well formed." 36

Such a description rather reminds us of ones found in Lowell's Joan of Arc, and the same may be said of the following discussion of the Maid's voices and visions:

It is enough for our purpose that she believed in their genuineness. That with her physical, or mental, eye she saw; that with her physical, or mental, ear she heard, has never been really doubted....We may believe, if we choose, that she saw and heard subjectively. Her saints assumed the conventional pictured forms, familiar to her in the churches, and they sometimes came when others were present, for whom they had neither voice nor aspect. Whatever may be the truth, to Joan they were realities who brought her comfort and revealed to her the future. It is as such that we shall consider them; a day has come when the wise no longer deny intolerantly the thing they do not see and hear. 37

Volume II is concerned almost entirely with the Maid's captivity and martyrdom, though a short section is included to tell what took place after her death. Several hundred pages, then, are devoted exclusively to the trial, very much as they were in Mark Twain's Personal Recollections; however, in contrast to the latter's story, nothing is summarized or omitted; instead, "Joan's examination is presented in its entirety." 38

In conclusion, we might summarize by saying that Paine's Joan of Arc is the first biography of significance in which scholarly and popular characteristics have been skillfully blended together. Moreover, there have been few works of this type, since published, in which the results of sound and careful research have been presented in such a simple and entertaining way.

Two years later -- in 1929 -- Hilaire Belloc published a small book (only 128 pages in length) entitled very simply Joan of Arc. Belloc

36. Ibid., p. 27.

37. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

38. Ibid., v. 2, p. 103.

was undoubtedly interested in the subject of the Maid since he is an ardent Roman Catholic, ³⁹ an upholder of nationalism, ⁴⁰ and a great lover of the medieval period. ⁴¹ Like Andrew Lang, he has "a deep 'sense of the past,' and on the whole tends to look backward rather than forward." ⁴²

Usually, Belloc is a vigorous, almost a truculent, controversialist. ⁴³ Yet, in telling the story of Joan of Arc, he completely refrains from comment, criticism, or the slightest show of belligerency. Of course, admittedly, he expresses frankly partisan opinions, and any questionable points in her career are accepted arbitrarily one way or the other. Moreover, no explanation or discussion is given in the notes, for there are no references of any kind in the form of footnotes, bibliography, preface, or introductory comments.

But, despite all negative criticism of Belloc's unscholarly methods and approach, his Joan of Arc is, nevertheless, a real literary gem. Setting out merely to retell the story of the Maid's life, the author has produced a work of distinction because of his beautiful prose style -- one which has been strongly influenced by the King James Version of the Bible.

The book opens with these lines:

Five hundred years ago, and more, there was in France an old mad King whose wife was a German harlot, mocking him. All in his realm was distracted; for when kingship is weak the powerful oppress and destroy. And among the miseries of the time was this: that the kingdom was riven by rivals. ⁴⁴

39. Kunitz, Stanley J., and Haycraft, Howard, eds., Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature, The H. W. Wilson Company, New York, 1942, p. 110.

40. "Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Fourteenth Edition, v. 3, p. 385.

41. Kunitz and Haycraft, op.cit., p. 109.

42. Ibid., p. 110.

43. Ibid., p. 110.

44. Belloc, Hilaire, Joan of Arc, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1930, p. 11.

After reading a few pages of background, we come to the following passage which is strikingly reminiscent of the story of the birth of Jesus and his growth into manhood as told in the Bible:

While these evils were happening, James d'Arc and his wife Isabel of Domrémy in the Marches of Lorraine, had born to them on the Epiphany, in the year of Our Lord fourteen hundred and twelve, a girl child whom they called Joan on the day when she was baptised into the Church of God.

She grew up tall and sturdy, strong of body and clear of mind, and vigorous at her tasks of spinning and all housework; she would tend sheep and she would plough upon their half-hundred acres, for her father was a yeoman. ⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that Belloc never once romanticizes the Maid; instead he merely lets her deeds speak for themselves. Of course, as a Roman Catholic, he believes unquestioningly that the source of her inspiration was divine. And, perhaps it is for this reason that he is able to give one of the loveliest descriptions ever written -- though not the most accurate -- of the day when she first heard her voices.

One summer morning when she was thirteen years of age and some months more, she went into the meadows to gather flowers with her companions and they ran races together, till she heard a lad saying, "Your mother needs you." Joan therefore went back quickly to the house, for she was kept subject. But her mother wondered and said she had not summoned her; so Joan went out again from the door into the garden-close and stood there a moment looking westward toward the near hills. It was noon.

As she so stood a dazzling light shone by her at her right hand, supplanting the day, and she was overcome with terror; till, from the midst of the glory, came a Voice which spoke of the Faith and its observance, and at last gave order that she should seek the uncrowned King of France, dispossessed by his foes, and rescue him and crown him at Rheims. At the third summons she saw St. Michael in his splendour and about him the Soldiery of Heaven. ⁴⁶

Unfortunately, the source of this picturesque story is a letter that is full of pure legend and cannot be trusted. ⁴⁷ A more reliable account would relate only what Joan herself told at her trial: that it was a

⁴⁵. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁴⁶. Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁴⁷. Lowell, op.cit., p. 30.

summer day, at the hour of noon, in her father's garden. There she saw a wonderful light and had a vision of the archangel Michael surrounded by other angels. She was very frightened, but soon the vision faded away. ⁴⁸

However, we should not expect great factual accuracy in a biography that gives no references or discussion of controversial points and which aspires to be no more than the simple retelling of an old story. Moreover, in such a book, it is not surprising to find many of the legends of the Maid, which Lowell and others have been so careful to disprove, related at face value.

Belloc tells unquestioningly all stories that rest upon the knowledge Joan gained from her voices, such as her recognition of the Dauphin, her knowledge of the sword buried behind the altar at St. Catherine of Fierbois, and, particularly, the seemingly miraculous fulfillment of all her prophecies. Thus the author's emphasis is placed upon the events of the Maid's active life, and only about fifteen pages are devoted to her captivity, her unfair trial (presided over by "that evil Bishop" ⁴⁹), and her martyrdom.

In the latter connection, Belloc's description reminds us of the crucifixion of Jesus as told in the King James Version of the Bible, undoubtedly because of its similar prose style as well as because of certain actual parallels in the story itself.

And when they had come into the market-square there was a great concourse of many thousands awaiting them, and in the midst (but somewhat to the western side) was a heap of mortar very high, hardened to stone, and a tall stake standing in it, and the faggots piled around it. These, after one deputed had preached at her, she mounted without faltering, and was chained to the stake. But being there, above the people, and seen by all, she forgave her enemies and

⁴⁸. Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁹. Belloc, op.cit., p. 125.

begged each priest in that multitude to say one mass for her soul. 50

And, after it was all over:

Order was given for the embers to be pulled apart so that all might see she was dead. But lest her relics should be worshipped, men were bidden bear her ashes to the river Seine which ran near by. So they threw into the river the ashes of that Maiden, and her heart, which the fire had not consumed. 51

Thus concludes an unpretentious, and yet noteworthy, account of the life of Joan of Arc which is significant for its literary, rather than its historical, attributes.

We have studied, then, three books that illustrate the various stages in the popularization of the scholarly biography — three books whose significance it is impossible to compare as their aims were so entirely different. One is outstanding as history; the other as literature; and the third, as a skillful blend of the two. Little would have been gained, moreover, had we included innumerable less important works in our discussion, for, in their own fields, Lowell, Paine, and Belloc are each unsurpassed.

50. Ibid., p. 127.

51. Ibid., p. 128.

CHAPTER III

A SCEPTICAL BELITTILING OF JOAN OF ARC AND A ROMANTIC REACTION

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When the memory of Joan of Arc was able, to such an extent, to stir the imaginations of men of other nationalities, how much greater was its influence in France, her native land. There, toward the end of the nineteenth century, her name was found increasingly on men's lips. For, after the war of 1870, the twofold influence of the patriotic spirit, exalted by defeat, and the revival of Catholicism among the middle classes gave a new impetus to admiration of the Maid.¹

Her memory haunted the restless minds of the Royalists from the days of the Third Republic. In 1873, the plot for a Bourbon restoration broke down as the result of an obstinate refusal of the Comte de Chambord to accept the tricolor in place of "the flag of Jeanne d'Arc." After that, Joan's name became more and more of a rallying cry for the monarchist revolutionaries; and, in the first decade of the twentieth century, they sought to establish her memory forever by means of a shrewd spectacular stroke — canonization.²

In 1904, Pope Pius X granted that Joan might be called "Venerable," and, by Decree, four years later, she was beatified. Now, if she were further canonized, this would emphasize tremendously the link between French patriotism and the Catholic Faith. Before such a tribute of the Holy Father to the warrior Maid, Church and Army might again cement their alliance.³

1. France, Anatole, The Life of Joan of Arc, Winifred Stephens, tr., John Lane, The Bodley Head, London, 1909, v. 1, p. lxi.

2. Stewart, Herbert Leslie, Anatole France, The Parisian, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1927, pp. 155-156.

3. Ibid., p. 156.

Anatole France, who had been watching this movement at first hand, saw the danger which threatened the liberal and radical thought of France in the idealization of a simple peasant girl as a saint of the church. The flagging faith of the people in the supernatural would be stirred, with the result that the intelligent, orderly change to a Socialist commonwealth would be rendered more difficult, if not impossible. ⁴

With this in mind, France determined to finish his history of the Maid as soon as possible. For him, it became a race with the Church in which the prize was the free intelligence of millions of Frenchmen. Hoping to forge a weapon which would defeat Rome -- hitherto impregnable ⁵ he worked diligently, but the Church won in the long run, for Joan was canonized in 1920, twelve years after he completed his Life.

Of course, anti-clerical propaganda was not France's sole motive for writing. Certainly, he desired that this book should establish for him a new sort of fame; for, now, in addition to being thought of as an imaginative writer, Socialist reformer, satirist, and critic, he would also be regarded as an historian. ⁶

Furthermore, France probably undertook his biography of Joan of Arc, since Renan, with his Vie de Jesus, had shown him the way. ⁷ Clearly, his is the spirit and method of Renan, ⁸ and the result is that his portrayal of Joan is human and understandable -- just as was Renan's interpretation of Jesus.

France, then, was mainly interested in the Maid for religious and

4. Axelrad, Jacob, Anatole France: A Life Without Illusions, 1844-1924, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1944, p. 315.

5. Ibid., p. 315.

6. Stewart, op.cit., p. 157.

7. Dargan, Edwin Preston, Anatole France, 1844-1896, Oxford University Press, New York, 1937, p. 179.

8. Shanks, Lewis Piaget, Anatole France, The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, 1919, p. 191.

political reasons — both of which were personal in origin. As a boy, he had been brought up in a Royalist and Catholic atmosphere and had attended the Collège Stanislas, a Jesuit school. However, his characteristic attitude toward Catholicism and its priests, with his keen distrust of priestly ethics and metaphysics, was formed in adolescence.⁹

By the time he reached manhood, he had turned against all his early teachings, becoming a sceptic in religion and a liberal in politics. Nevertheless, throughout life, the color of his mind was heavily suffused with the Catholicism of his early years — a fact which made it particularly easy for him to reconstruct Joan's background of the Middle Ages. France's mind was, indeed, so soaked in Catholic lore that he rather reminds us of that other lapsed Catholic, James Joyce.¹⁰ No matter how much he tried, it was impossible for him to completely rid himself of the teachings of his childhood.

But, in his attitude toward the Maid, France was reacting against the period of "romantic and Neo-Catholic enthusiasm"¹¹ when the arts and letters together completed the transfiguration of the simple peasant girl.

Unfortunately the Church's idea of saintliness has grown insipid since the Council of Trent, and orthodox historians are disinclined to study the variations of the Catholic Church down the ages. In their hands therefore she becomes sanctimonious and bigoted.¹² Catholics, like the learned Canon Dunand, vie in zeal and enthusiasm with free-thinking idealists like M. Joseph Fabre. By reproducing the two trials in a very artistic manner, in modern French and in a direct form of speech, M. Fabre has popularised the most ancient and the most touching impression of the Maid.¹³

France, though, was unable to write of Joan of Arc in this orthodox manner, for his keen sceptical mind rebelled against any undue senti-

9. Kunitz and Haycraft, op.cit., p. 483.

10. Ibid., p. 484.

11. France, op.cit., p. lxi.

12. Ibid., p. xxxvii.

13. Ibid., p. lxi.

mentality. And so, quite naturally, he followed the realistic tradition which had started way back, in the days of Shakespeare for nationalistic reasons, and had continued into the eighteenth century with Hume and Voltaire. Hume seems, particularly, to be a forerunner of France; for, his account of the Maid's life, although full of inaccuracies and half-truths, is very definitely scientific in approach. Joan's voices are described as the impulses of passion, rather than as heavenly inspiration.¹⁴ And, it is suggested that Dunois and the wiser commanders prompted her in all her measures¹⁵ -- an explanation which is rather similar to France's theory that the idea of her mission was imposed upon her by fraudulent priests.¹⁶ Both writers, then, were forced to search for a motivating force which could explain her remarkable achievements, since they did not believe in her divine inspiration.

In all probability, France was also influenced by Voltaire; certainly, he too condemned "the influence behind the scenes, whose purposes were to foster and magnify mythical elements in any story above the legitimate features and the known facts."¹⁷ Neither writer ridiculed Joan, but both attacked the legend of the Maid because of bitter anti-clericalism.

Following the scepticism of Hume and Voltaire, there was a romantic reaction which lasted until 1841 when Quicherat published the Procès (containing the two trials and a vast amount of supplementary material). As a direct result of Quicherat's publication, Sainte-Beuve wrote a very interesting essay on "Jeanne d'Arc" in 1850. This sketch, written at a time when science was just beginning to make itself felt, very clearly

14. Hume, David, The History of England, Porter and Coates, Philadelphia, n.d., v. 2, p. 255.

15. Ibid., p. 261.

16. France, op.cit., p. 180.

17. Voltaire, Francois Marie Arouet de, "The Maid of Orleans," The Works of Voltaire, E. R. DuMont, Paris, 1901, v. 1, p. 4.

prepared the way for France's biography. For, Sainte-Beuve's is an interpretive study of high order, based on psychological and natural grounds. The author stressed the Maid's characteristic vigor and frankness,¹⁸ and gave a very human picture of the young girl. Like France, Sainte-Beuve believed that Joan's voices were an hallucination inspired by the pity which she felt for her country and the Dauphin;¹⁹ although, unlike the latter, he did not feel that the idea of her mission was imposed upon her from the outside.

Lowell's Joan of Arc was the next important work to be written in the realistic tradition. Like France, the author wrote a critical, scholarly biography which attempted to differentiate between the historical Joan and the legendary Maid. Lowell, though, in contrast to France, did not attempt to put across any pre-conceived ideas of his own.

Having looked at the tradition in which Anatole France was writing, let us now turn to the actual work itself. France's biographers generally say that he was engaged for some twenty years on the Vie de Jeanne d'Arc; however, during the same twenty years, he was busy with at least twenty-five other books, as well as countless pamphlets, on quite different subjects. Hence, it would probably be more accurate to say that he began his Jeanne d'Arc in 1889, but did not finish it until 1908.²⁰

Now, when France determined to bring together his innumerable jottings about Joan, he found it necessary to engage a secretary for the purpose of documenting them.²¹ Jean Jacques Brousson, who was employed to speed the book to its conclusion, has left us a record of the first day France presented him with a sackful of memoranda for The Life of Joan of Arc. He described the scene thus:

18. Sainte-Beuve, "Jeanne d'Arc," The Essays of Sainte-Beuve, William Sharp, ed., Gibbings & Company, Limited, London, 1901, v. 3, p. 144.

19. Ibid., p. 141.

20. Stewart, op.cit., p. 157.

21. Ibid., p. 157.

Anatole France takes his place at the massive oak table in the great adjustable armchair. He tinkles a little church bell. Enter Josephine, in a flurry.

"Bring the sack."

The servant returns dragging a sort of mattress after her.

"Leave it on the carpet. Do you know what that is, my young friend? That is the manuscript of Joan of Arc. You see that for some time to come you have your bread provided for. There must be well over a hundred-weight of it. All that rubbish is yours. Burn it, tear it to pieces, blue-pencil it. I don't want to look at it. This Maid is too much for me. You don't know where to get hold of her. She may have been a saint, but she was certainly a joker. However you start in to tell the story of her, you'll make everyone furious. Religious folk will cry out 'Sacrilege!' and atheists will say I am a bigot. I had shoved up all those papers into the garret along with the mice. Madame can't bear the mention of it. She is all for tales of today. She doesn't understand that the Life of Joan of Arc might be another Life of Jesus. Aren't they talking of canonizing the holy girl? We must be ahead of them, and race them to the church door. The point is to finish our liberal and republican monument before the priests hoist her up on to their altars. There's no time to be lost. Just have a look over the manuscript."

I extract a mass of note-books from the sheet in which they are done up with safety-pins as tight as in a bathing costume. On to the carpet rain letters, envelopes, visiting cards, announcements of marriages and of deaths, newspaper cuttings, tradesmen's bills -- ice-cream-men, pastry-cooks, picture framers. On the back of these scraps -- for they are no more -- are hasty notes, dates and references.

"You didn't expect such a mess, my young country gentleman? You see I work everywhere. Especially at railway stations....You will find there numbers of essential passages copied from goodness knows what books....The first thing to do, I think, must be to divide up the work. Once the chapters are fixed, the book is ready written in my head. Our Joan of Arc, I foresee, will make two volumes. But we must arrange them so that one will lead up to the other. It is essential to string the reader on. Readers, I have noticed, often lack appetite when volume two is dished up. To prevent its selling less than number one, it must carry a full cargo. Twenty in one, fifteen in the other. Let us mark Joan of Arc's wrappers. Really we can't leave the Maid in that state on the carpet. There must be wrappers in that blotter." 22

Thus, with humour, Brousson described the state of the Joan of Arc "jottings" when he took them in charge. His task was a tremendous one -- too large, in fact, for any one man. The consequence was that the

22. Brousson, Jean Jacques, Anatole France Himself: A Boswellian Record, John Pollock, tr., J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1925, pp. 31-33.

finished product contained many errors and careless mistakes which were almost the inevitable result of such a beginning.

In the introduction to the Vie de Jeanne d'Arc, France tells us of his principal sources: the trial which resulted in Joan's condemnation; the chronicles; the trial for her rehabilitation; and, lastly, letters, deeds, and other papers.²³ He discusses each authority from a critical point of view, and, in general, his judgments seem to be characterized by insight and a remarkable objectivity. Nevertheless, often he fails to make the cautious and judicious use of these documents that he himself advocated in the introduction. Andrew Lang remarked on this fact when he wrote: "M. Anatole France is specially severe on the Trial of Rehabilitation, though he freely quotes the depositions."²⁴

Turning to Chapter I of the biography, we find here an example of France's writing at its best. In a clear and simple style, the author describes the Meuse valley where Joan was born and then proceeds immediately with the narrative. The reader is not forced to wade through a long discussion of the political conditions of France before the story begins, as is the case in Andrew Lang's biography. Of course, this background material is supplied whenever necessary, but the reader is not discouraged by it in the opening pages.

France describes Joan's childhood, expressing not the slightest disbelief over the stories of the fairies or any of the other folk-lore connected with her early years. In fact, he refrains from comment until he tells of the day when Joan first heard her Voices. But, then, he writes:

23. France, op.cit., p. vii.

24. Lang, Andrew, The Maid of France, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1909, p. x.

Had this idea of a holy militant mission, conceived by Jeanne through the intermediary of her Voices, come into her mind spontaneously without the intervention of any outside will, or had it been suggested to her by some one who was influencing her? It would be impossible to solve this problem were there not a slight indication to direct us. Jeanne at Domremy was acquainted with a prophecy foretelling that France would be ruined by a woman and saved by a maiden ²⁵.. Who taught her this? Some peasant? We have reason to believe that the peasants did not know it, and that it was current among ecclesiastics. Besides, it is important to notice in this connection that Jeanne was acquainted with a particular form of this prophecy, obviously arranged for her benefit, since it specified that the Maiden Redemptress should come from the borders of Lorraine. This local addition is not the work of a cowherd; it suggests rather a mind apt to direct souls and to inspire deeds. It is no longer possible to doubt that the prophecy thus revised is the work of an ecclesiastic whose intentions may be easily divined. Henceforth one is conscious of an idea agitating and possessing the young seer of visions.

On the banks of the Meuse, among the humble folk of the country-side, some churchman, preoccupied with the lot of the poor people of France, directed Jeanne's visions to the welfare of the kingdom and to the conclusion of peace. He carried the ardour of his pious zeal so far as to collect prophecies concerning the salvation of the French crown, and to add to them with an eye to the accomplishment of his design. For such an ecclesiastic we must seek among the priests of Lorraine or Champagne upon whom the national misfortunes imposed cruel sufferings.²⁶

Meanwhile Jeanne was living a life of illusion. Knowing nothing of the influences she was under; incapable of recognizing in her Voices the echo of a human voice or the promptings of her own heart, she responded timidly to the saints when they bade her fare forth into France ²⁷.

Thus France differs from Shaw, since he does not think that the wisdom of Joan's voices was all her own. ²⁸ Instead, he believes that she was subject to certain influences, ²⁹ at the same time that she listened to the cries of her own heart. ³⁰

As the narrative progresses, France enlarges on his theory of the Maid's "indoctrination." He believes that the clerks deliberately falsi-

25. France, op.cit., pp. 44-45.

26. Ibid., pp. 45-46.

27. Ibid., p. 47.

28. Shaw, op.cit., p. 14.

29. France, op.cit., p. xxviii.

30. Ibid., p. 83.

fied a prophecy of Merlin so that Joan would more readily be accepted by the common people. The prophecy had originally foretold the great and wonderful deeds of a virgin coming from the English town of Winchester. ³¹ Now, though, it was changed to read: "From the town of the Bois-Chenu there shall come forth a maid for the healing of the nation." ³²

But, the ecclesiastics did not merely falsify a prophecy of Merlin, they forged one for Bede which also foretold the coming of the Maid. ³³ France, however, thinks that we should not blame the ecclesiastics too much:

These clerks had but one object, -- the peace of the realm and of the church. The miraculous deliverance of the people had to be prepared. We must not be too hasty to condemn these pious frauds without which the Maid could not have worked her miracles. Much art and some guile are necessary to contrive for innocence a hearing. ³⁴

And, in discussing Joan's examination at Poitiers, France writes:

What has not been sufficiently remarked upon is that the French party made a very adroit use of her. The clerks at Poitiers, while inquiring at great length into her religion and morals, brought her into evidence. These Poitiers clerks were no monks ignorant of the world; they constituted the Parliament of the lawful King; they were the banished members of the University, men deeply involved in political affairs, compromised by revolutions, despoiled and ruined, and very impatient to regain possession of their property. They were directed by the cleverest man in the King's Council, the Duke Archbishop of Reims, the Chancellor of the kingdom. By the ceremoniousness and the deliberation of their inquiries, they drew upon Jeanne the curiosity, the interest, and the hopes of minds lost in amazement. ³⁵

Of course, in general, France has told the story of Joan's life simply and straightforwardly, without comment.

Even at the risk of missing the revelation of some of the beauties of her nature, I deem it better to keep one's

31. Ibid., p. 177.

32. Ibid., p. 176.

33. Ibid., p. 179.

34. Ibid., p. 180.

35. Ibid., p. xl -- xli.

own personality out of the action. I have written this history with a zeal ardent and tranquil; I have sought truth strenuously, I have met her fearlessly. Even when she assumed an unexpected aspect, I have not turned from her. I shall be reproached for audacity, until I am reproached for timidity. 36

It is interesting in this respect to compare Lowell's biography with France's: the former also sought to give a truthful account of Joan's life, and, throughout, to distinguish between legend and fact. Unlike France, though, he always kept his own personality entirely "out of the action" — not merely writing that he intended to do so, but actually carrying out his intentions in the text itself. Moreover, he refrained from inserting imaginative passages into the narrative as France did, for example, in the following instance:

One cannot help supposing that those pious persons who believed in Jeanne's goodness, and desired her to be taken into France for the saving of the kingdom, must have undertaken to reassure her father and mother concerning their daughter's manner of life; perhaps they even gave the simple folk to understand that if Jeanne did go to the King her family would derive therefrom honour and advantage. 37

How bitterly France would have condemned a similar imaginative passage in any of the romantic biographers.

If the reader notices carefully, however, he will see that the author only seems to depart from the factual evidence when he is trying to support or add to his theory of "indoctrination". At other times, the account is completely objective and very accurate. For instance, I know of no one who has given a better description of the city of Orleans, the siege, and the French victories there after the Maid's arrival.

But, after having told without comment of all that took place, France thus explains the secret of the Maid's success:

36. Ibid., p. lxxiii.

37. Ibid., p. 95.

To those she came to help she appeared a daughter of God, to those she came to destroy she appeared a horrid monster in woman's form. In this double aspect lay all her strength: angelic for the French, devilish for the English, to one and the other she appeared invincible and supernatural. 38

Throughout the book, France disparages Joan's military inspiration:

As to the opinion that this damsel was clever in arraying and leading an army and especially skilled in the management of artillery, that is more difficult to credit and would require to be vouched for by some one more trustworthy than the poor Duke of Alençon, who was never considered a very rational person.³⁹ For ever praying and for ever wrapped in ecstasy, Jeanne never observed the enemy; she did not know the roads; she paid no heed to the number of troops engaged; she did not take into account either the height of walls or the breadth of trenches. Even today officers are to be heard discussing the Maid's military tactics. Those tactics were simple; they consisted in preventing men from blaspheming against God and consorting with light women. She believed that for their sins they would be destroyed, but that if they fought in a state of grace they would win the victory. Therein lay all her military science, save that she never feared danger. 40

France, however, does not mean to imply that the Maid had no part whatever in the work of deliverance.

By no means. Hers was the nobler, the better part; the part of sacrifice; she set the example of the highest courage and displayed heroism in a form unexpected and charming ⁴¹... Under influences which it is impossible for us exactly to discover, the idea came to her of re-establishing the Dauphin in his inheritance; and this idea appeared to her so grand and so beautiful that in the fulness of her very ingenuous pride, she believed it to have been suggested to her by angels and saints from Paradise. For this idea she gave her life. That is why she has survived the cause for which she suffered. The very highest enterprises perish in their defeat and even more surely in their victory. The devotion, which inspired them, remains as an immortal example. And if the illusion, under which her senses laboured, helped her to this act of self-consecration, was not that illusion the unconscious outcome of her own heart? Her foolishness was wiser than wisdom, for it was that foolishness of martyrdom, without which men have never yet founded anything great or

38. Ibid., p. 275.

39. Ibid., p. xliii.

40. Ibid., pp. xliv - xlv.

41. Ibid., p. xlvi.

useful. Cities, empires, republics rest on sacrifice. It is not without reason therefore, not without justice that, transformed by enthusiastic imagination, she became the symbol of "la patrie" in arms. ⁴²

We must not be deceived by the beauty of France's writing and think that he changes from an attitude of belittling scepticism to one of adoration of the Maid. Quite the contrary. For, although he consistently portrays Joan as a mystic who had visions which were neither feigned nor counterfeited, ⁴³ yet, to him, this can mean but one thing: namely, that she was subject to hallucinations of hearing, sight, touch, and smell -- her hearing being the most strongly affected of all her senses. ⁴⁴ Moreover, he feels that her constant hallucinations generally rendered her incapable of distinguishing between the true and the false. ⁴⁵

France, though, is not doubting Joan's sincerity for one moment. "It is impossible to suspect her of lying; she firmly believed that she received her mission from her voices." ⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the author explains her actions entirely from a rationalist's point of view: she acted as she did because of the powerful influence of suggestion combined with the hallucinations of a disturbed mind. Thus, man -- not God -- was the source of her inspiration; and, only when we look at it in this light do we see how far removed is France's interpretation from the orthodox Catholic view.

Of course, the author's description of Joan's physical appearance is written entirely in the realistic tradition:

Robust, with a firm, short neck, her figure appeared full, although confined by her man's jerkin. She wore breeches like a man, but still more surprising than her hose was her head-gear and the cut of her hair. Beneath a woolen hood, her dark hair hung cut round in a soup-plate fashion like a page's. ⁴⁷

42. Ibid., p. lx.

43. Ibid., p. xxxiii.

44. Ibid., p. xxxiii.

45. Ibid., pp. viii-ix.

46. Ibid., p. xxxviii.

47. Ibid., p. 169.

Throughout the book, France portrays the Maid as a pure, simple, courageous, and sincere girl, nowhere ascribing to her any motive of self-seeking or fraud. He thinks of her as a mystic: "sensitive to things invisible, her eyes were closed to things material." 48

For him, then, Joan's story is the story of a saint, just like that of Colette of Corbie, or of Catherine of Sienna. 49 Her mission, moreover, was not unprecedented: "it was no more than saints, both men and women, had already endeavoured to accomplish in human affairs." 50 Thus, France is combatting the romantic idea of the uniqueness of Joan's life by showing that she was, in truth, very much like other visionaries and saints.

In the preface, France writes: "I have restored the Maid to life and to humanity. That is my crime." 51 And, it was, actually, a crime in the eyes of the Catholic church which was about to canonize the "holy" girl. For, the Church was interested in her divine -- not her human -- qualities. Never would it approve of describing her as the product of her environment: a time when sainthood, usually accompanied by all manner of oddities, manias, and illusions, still wielded sovereign power over the minds of men. 52

France, though, made a real effort to portray Joan with the fifteenth century as a background. But, to "enter into the spirit of a period that has passed away, to make oneself the contemporary of men of former days, deliberate study and loving care are necessary." 53 For this reason, then, France visited the cities and countries about which he was writing. "I drew near to these folk, who were our fellows, and who yet differed from us by a thousand shades of sentiment and of thought;

48. Ibid., p. 266.

49. Ibid., p. lxxi.

50. Ibid., p. xxxix.

51. Ibid., pp. v - vi.

52. Ibid., p. xxxix.

53. Ibid., p. lxviii.

I lived their lives; I read their hearts." 54 And so it was that, in the course of the narrative, the author was able to relate many things which, without having a direct relation to the Maid, revealed the spirit, the morals, and the beliefs of her time.

In passing, we should note that France devotes only about a quarter of the work to a treatment of Joan's trial; this is a better proportion than is often found in the romantic biographies. In general, he describes the Maid's captivity rather objectively, portraying her neither as the heroine of a melodrama (as Mark Twain did), nor as one persecuted essentially as she would be persecuted today (as Shaw described her).

Writing of Cauchon, France says: "...this case at once temporal and spiritual, as ambiguous as his own position, excited his worse passions. He flung himself into it with all the thoughtlessness of the violent." 55 However, in general, the author feels that the judges were high-minded:

...the judges of the trial were not all infamous prevaricators; the chapter of Rouen lacked neither courage nor independence 56....There were doubtless many who imagined that by passing sentence against her they were maintaining Catholic orthodoxy and unity of obedience against the abettors of schism and heresy; they wished to judge wisely. 57

France, though, was most interested in Joan's betrayal by the clergy:

The hapless Maid was deserted by the very clergy whose croziers had so recently been carried before her; of all the Poitiers masters not one was found to testify in the château of Rouen to that innocence which they had officially recognised eighteen months before. 58

Two chapters are included to tell what happened after the death of

54. Ibid., pp. lxx-lxxi.

55. Ibid., v. 2, p. 171.

56. Ibid., v. 1, p. li.

57. Ibid., p. lii.

58. Ibid., p. liii.

the Maid, and the narrative is thus carried through the Rehabilitation Trial where Joan was made to "appear as weak and imbecile as possible. Such a representation exalted the power of God, who through her had restored the King of France to his inheritance." 59

The book ends on an ironic note: Thomas de Courcelles delivered the oration at Charles VII's funeral.

Thus it befell that the assessor of Rouen, who had been the most bitterly bent on procuring Jeanne's cruel condemnation, celebrated the memory of the victorious King whom the Maid had conducted to his solemn coronation. 60

Gsell's The Opinions of Anatole France gives us the actual words of France when he was questioned about his biography and about Joan herself. Perhaps it will surprise us to hear that he did not really expect his Vie de Jeanne d'Arc to be popular:

People will not like my book. No, I assure you, they will not like it. They will not find in it what they are looking for. Oh, I can easily guess what is expected of me: a narrative packed with unctuous indecencies. People will be disappointed. 61

In answer to the direct question: "But what, in the last analysis, what do you think of Jeanne, dear Master?" 62 France replied thus:

"That she was a valiant girl, very devoted to her king. I am filled with enthusiasm for her bravery, and with horror of the awful barbarity of the theologians who sent her to the stake."

"Then you entirely share the feelings of Michelet?"

"Why not? 63...However....If I defend and admire the visions of the poor little herdsmaid, it does not follow that, in writing her history, I have myself given credence to the miracles. Quite the contrary. I constantly remembered that it is the duty of the scientist to find a rational explanation for all facts. And I tried to bring out what made Jeanne's mission logically possible.

"First and foremost, it was the general credulity of the period. Her position with the Armagnacs was strengthened by the prophecies of Merlin and the Venerable Bede concerning a Maid who would deliver the kingdom. To the troops of the Dauphin and the soldiery of the militia Jeanne was a

59. Ibid., v. 2, p. 390.

60. Ibid., p. 397.

61. France, The Opinions of Anatole France (op.cit.), p. 70.

62. Ibid., p. 71.

63. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

mascot, whose mere presence aroused their fanaticism, made them oblivious of danger, and gave them victory. On the other hand, her reputation as a sorceress inspired terrible fear in the English, who had hitherto been so greatly dreaded by the people of France, and who were commonly called 'Les Coués,' that is, the tailed devils....

"All Jeanne's power, which was undoubtedly considerable, came from the ascendant which she unwittingly established over the feeble mentality of her contemporaries. To this must be added the heroism which the excellent girl displayed on every occasion. When her marvellous adventure is minutely analysed, it arouses the same surprise as a very brilliant star seen through the most powerful astronomical glasses. However greatly it be magnified, the heavenly body always remains a point without diameter.

"Jeanne was but little in herself, but the legend which formed about her immediately was splendid, and it has not lost any of its splendour. It must be added that her mission was perhaps easier than one would think, for the English were exhausted and few in numbers. Nor must we forget the skill of Charles VII and his counsellors, for I am quite persuaded that, if he was far from warlike, Charles VII was at least a very shrewd negotiator, who got more by gentle methods from the burghers of the towns than by force, and relied more upon diplomacy than upon arms, one of those good kings, in brief, whose prudence, skill, and tenacity in council, made ancient France great." 64

Anatole France was right in his foreboding: The Life of Joan of Arc made him more unpopular than all his works put together. Especially were his preface and the addendum hated by the clericals because of his critical analysis of such sources as the chronicles. The book was also violently attacked by the reactionaries, since the author did not grant Joan divine inspiration. They felt that this was unpardonable, forgetting, of course, that it took the popes over four hundred and fifty years to canonize her. These men, though, wanted to use Joan in the cause of the Church and the King, and it would never do to have the people's faith in her divine inspiration shaken. 65

Nor did the historians and psychologists show great haste in acclaiming this "triumph of science." They pointed out the freedom with

64. Ibid., pp. 74-76.

65. George, W. L., Anatole France, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1915, pp. 78-80.

which France had filled out the evidence with the most daring guess work, and how the witnesses who were against his conclusions were dismissed as liars, while those whose evidence could be construed as favoring it were believed implicitly. Moreover, they found that in several places he reversed what we have good ground for supposing to have been the real order of events. Apparently, M. Brousson's task of devising safeguards against disproof of detail was too heavy for him. 66

I was interested in Herbert Stewart's criticism that Anatole France was writing in the spirit of the eighteenth, rather than of the twentieth, century. Stewart makes this observation on the basis of France's wholesale attribution of fraud to some conjectured but unnamed ecclesiastic, the constant recourse to an assumed falsifying of oracles and legends, the dismissing of contrary evidence as probably perjured, and the acceptance of favorable evidence no matter how inconsistent with itself or how expressly contradicted by witnesses of average credibility. 67

Stewart, moreover, points out that it is quite possible that the priests at the time of Joan of Arc were as simple-minded as the Maid herself, that they too were equally the victims of enthusiasm and of terror about "ghostly visitants," and that the legend they propagated may have been their own genuine belief. 68 Certainly, these are possibilities; and, as an historian, France should carefully have discussed all sides of the question, instead of arbitrarily setting forth his own opinions as the unquestionable truth.

Thus, by many, his history was branded as a fairy tale. He who had always written with the utmost care and a fine punctilious rectitude was accused of a shabby handling of ascertainable fact, even of a dis-

66. Stewart, op.cit., p. 163.

67. Ibid., pp. 166-168.

68. Ibid., p. 167.

honest perversion of manifest truth. He had relied on others for the truth; on himself, for the interpretation. Now, he was criticized for both; and, he smarted under the lash all the more, since there was some justification for it. ⁶⁹

In the introduction to the Vie de Jeanne d'Arc, France had written: "I have always indicated the sources of my facts, so that every one may judge for himself of the trustworthiness of my authorities." ⁷⁰ Often, though, the sources were not accurately given, and many times footnotes had no relevancy to the point for which they were offered as proof.

A book may be great, however, despite the fact that the writer, in a hurry, confused his authorities, and even though — flinging scruple to the winds — he deliberately cited authorities which do not exist. ⁷¹ France's biography certainly gives us "the soul of the truth even if the body was in many ways distorted." ⁷²

In conclusion, although it is impossible to keep from condemning Anatole France for his sins of both commission and omission, yet I think, inevitably, the reader will realize that The Life of Joan of Arc is a real scholarly achievement and a work which has been of inestimable value in combating the false romantic conceptions of the Maid that, in large measure, were an outgrowth of the many biographies written in the orthodox Catholic tradition. France's attitude of sceptical belittling, thus, has served a real purpose.

The author, though, was not satisfied with merely negative criticism, and so he introduced into his otherwise clear and objective narrative a positive interpretation of the Maid which emphasized her humanity, rather

69. Axelrad, op.cit., p. 338.

70. France, op.cit., v. 1, p. lxxii.

71. Stewart, op.cit., p. 165.

72. Axelrad, op.cit., p. 336.

than stressing the qualities in her nature that were almost divine. As a rationalist and a scientist, France found it possible to account for all the events of her life entirely on natural grounds.

The author made the mistake, though, of attempting to present his theory of Joan's "indoctrination", not as a tentative hypothesis, but as the only possible interpretation. However, if the reader is tolerant of this one fault — which is the direct result of the religious and political exigencies of the moment -- he will, unquestionably, be impressed with the stature of the work as a whole, at the same time that he notes, with a certain amusement, how well the author has illustrated the truth of his own observation: "Humanity cannot be interested in a personage of old time unless it clothe it in its own sentiments and in its own passions." 73

* * * *

Only six months elapsed before Andrew Lang, a Scotsman, published his biography, The Maid of France, as a counterblast to Anatole France's Life of Joan of Arc. Lang, a versatile man-of-letters, wrote The Maid of France at the age of sixty-five, just three years before his death. This was not the first controversy in which Lang had taken part during the course of his life, 74 although it seems to have aroused him as none of the others had -- probably because France's interpretation clashed, to such a degree, with his own romantic personality.

Lang was one who had always worshipped the past and disdained the present -- a man who shunned the realities of the day, only with the utmost difficulty having any traffic in them. 75 Invariably, he felt

73. France, op.cit., v. 1, p. lix.

74. Kunitz, Stanley J., and Haycraft, Howard, eds., British Authors of the Nineteenth Century, The H. W. Wilson Company, New York, 1936, p. 366.

75. Ibid., p. 367.

the keenest sympathy for lost causes "just because they were lost causes." ⁷⁶ This does not imply, though, that he was a liberal in politics; quite the contrary. His "whole instincts were fundamentally and strongly conservative"; "...the vociferous cant of progress, he knew for an illusion and a snare." ⁷⁷

And so it was primarily for reasons temperamental, rather than political or religious, that Andrew Lang set out to counteract Anatole France's "false" interpretation of Joan of Arc. In the preface to The Maid of France, Lang explains his purpose thus:

I have...written this book in the hope that grave errors, as I deem them, may be corrected; and also because, as far as I am aware, no British author has yet attempted to write a critical biography of the Maid ⁷⁸....while America has a critical and valuable Life of Joan of Arc, -- that by Mr. Francis Lowell, -- England has none that is critical and complete, and informed by documents brought to light since the time when Jules Quicherat published the five volumes entitled Procès de Jeanne d'Arc (1840-1850)....

I have therefore tried to fill this empty place in our bookshelves, and to depict, however feebly, this glory of her sex, "a Star of ancient France." ⁷⁹

If the reader will note, Andrew Lang gives as his first reason for writing a biography of Joan of Arc: "in the hope that grave errors, as I deem them, may be corrected." ⁸⁰ And, from the following quotation, taken from the first page of the preface, it is obvious that he is referring to those errors found in Anatole France's interpretation:

Her courage and her goodness of heart are denied by no man, but, as a set-off against the praises of the "clericals," and even of historians far from orthodox, her genius is denied, or is minimized; she is represented as a martyr, a heroine, a puzzle-pated hallucinated lass, a perplexed wanderer in a realm of dreams; the unconscious tool of fraudulent priests, herself once doubtfully honest, apt to tell great palpable myths to her own glorification, never a leader in war, but only a kind of "mascotte," a

76. Lang, Andrew, The Poetical Works of Andrew Lang, Mrs. Lang, ed., Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1923, v. 1, p. ix.

77. "In Memoriam: Andrew Lang," Blackwood's Magazine, v. 192, Sept. 1912, p. 429.

78. Lang, The Maid of France, (op.cit.) pp. v-vi.

79. Ibid., p. vii.

80. Ibid., p. vi.

"little sainte," and a "béguine" -- in breeches!

It has appeared to me that all these inconsistent views of the Maid, and several charges against her best friends, are mainly based on erroneous readings of the copious evidence concerning her; on mistakes in the translating of the very bad Latin of the documents, and, generally, are distorted by a false historical perspective, if not by an unconscious hostility, into the grounds of which we need not inquire....⁸¹

To reject abundance of sworn evidence because it conflicts with a critic's personal idea of what is probable or possible is not the method of History, and will not be adopted in this book. Much less will I reject, for instance, the evidence of Jeanne herself on any point, and give a fanciful theory of my own as to what really occurred. If there are instances in her career which Science, so far, cannot explain, I shall not therefore regard them as false. Science may be able to explain them on some future day; at present she is not omniscient.

The mournful truth is that the historian has a much better chance of being read if he gives free play to his fancy than if he is strictly accurate. ⁸²

And now comes his direct attack against France:

But to add the figments of fancy to the facts on record, to cite documents as if they were warrants for the statements which they do not support, is to wander from history into the enchanted forest of romance.

In the Notes will be found many specimens of the method, arising, of course, from unconscious misreadings and misquotations. ⁸³

Lang thus informed the reader that France has many a footnote reference which, upon investigation, was found to have no relevance to the statement in the text for which it was cited as evidence. He gives instances of this and then remarks: "I know not how to understand the method of making very strange statements, and supporting them by references to books and pages in which I can find no such matter." ⁸⁴ Lang, moreover, even goes so far as to say (though this is in the Fortnightly Review, rather than in the biography itself): "These examples of Mr. France's inconsistencies may suffice to prove that he has really pro-

81. Ibid., p. v.

82. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

83. Ibid., p. 15.

84. Ibid., p. 316.

duced no living and recognisable portrait of the Maid." 85

Now, Lang would have exhibited better judgment had he -- in a simple and straightforward manner -- given us his own interpretation of the Maid, omitting from the text all indirect critical references to France's biography. However, the Vie de Jeanne d'Arc was still so very fresh in his mind that he could not resist refuting statements with which he did not agree. One quotation, selected from innumerable possible ones, will, I believe, suffice for illustration.

We are told [Lang means to say that Anatole France has told us; but, as is his custom, he avoids calling France by name in the text itself, and refers to him only indirectly] that Jeanne was in spiritual relations with several priests, of whom two are named. One of them was eight years old when Jeanne left Domremy, yet we are told that he heard her in confession! The other had heard her thrice in one Lent, once on another occasion. 86

The reader, of course, is glad to have any errors corrected, but he would prefer that such corrections be confined entirely to the notes; since, otherwise, the continuity of thought is very definitely broken.

The author, though, has prevented a smooth flow of narrative in yet another way; as he himself explains it:

When I quote any speech or other matter, between inverted commas, I cite my text literally; translating as closely as I am able to do. Attempts to "give the general sense" [as France did] are apt to end in giving the wrong sense. 87

Direct quotations -- and sometimes even the inclusion of whole excerpts from one of the two trials -- may make a biography more correct factually, but certainly they do not lend to its literary charm. Moreover, a reader who recalls how hastily Lang wrote The Maid of France is likely to attribute such a method as much to a time-saving device as to an aid to accuracy.

85. Lang, Andrew, "The Chef D'Oeuvre of M. Anatole France," The Fortnightly Review, v. 83, new series, June 1908, p. 986.

86. Lang, The Maid of France (op.cit.), p. 61.

87. Ibid., p. xiv.

Of course, needless to say, Andrew Lang's is the most scholarly biography that has been written about Joan of Arc in the romantic tradition; and, unquestionably, this was the author's intention. In the preface, 88 though, Lang implies the hope that his work will be of the same critical value as Lowell's. The Maid of France, however, falls far short of its goal, since, instead of being realistic in outlook, in general, it is sentimentally romantic. Moreover, it is subjective in its antagonism, rather than completely objective. And, finally, it is not nearly so carefully documented as Lowell's Life of Joan of Arc.

The latter fact will undoubtedly surprise the reader, since one who was so bitter in his condemnation of another's references should have taken particular pains with his own. Of course (as far as I was able to tell), Lang did not misquote his authorities or make mistakes in his footnotes; he simply did not give as many of them as France had. The latter cited a reference at the foot of each page for practically every statement which he made; while Lang often lets several pages elapse without giving a single reference for the sources of his material.

Lang's footnotes, moreover, are all listed according to page and line at the end of the book -- not at the foot of each page as were France's. And, since the lines of the text are not numbered, the reader is constantly forced to look back and count line by line in order to find out to which statement the footnote is referring; certainly, this is an inconvenient arrangement.

In the preface, Lang discusses the historical evidence on which he has relied for his biography. In general, he seems to have studied the same material as France and to have evaluated it in much the same way. This is true with the exception of the Trial of Rehabilitation, about

88. Ibid., p. vii. (passage quoted on p. 50 of thesis).

which Lang writes:

We shall use it with the warning that, in twenty-five years, human memories are apt to be fallacious; that the bias of the witnesses was favourable to the Maid; and that some witnesses had to excuse their own share in the trial of 1431, and to exhibit the judges, mainly Cauchon and the accuser, in the most unfavourable light. But we shall not accuse the captains of deliberate perjury, out of our own will and fantasy ⁸⁹ [a thrust at Anatole France].

The preface is followed by an interesting introduction which opens thus:

The name and fame of Jeanne d'Arc are "in the catalogue of common things," like the rainbow; of things so familiar that an effort of imagination is needed before we can appreciate the unique position of the Maid in history. The story of her career, as one of her learned French historians has said, "is the most marvellous episode in our history, and in all histories." ⁹⁰

More extravagant praise follows, and then Joan's "career of wonders" ⁹¹ is briefly retold in order to disprove all France's accusations.

Lang's answer to France's theory of the Maid's "indoctrination" is of special interest to the student. First, Lang points out that France's idea is merely a revival, in a modified form, of an old theory which was set forth by two historians in 1548 and 1570. ⁹² He continues:

This theory [of France's] is unthinkable. First, it cannot be thought that even if one mad "curé" bade the girl to make peace by restoring France with the sword in her hand, Jeanne's other clerical tutors would all follow him. ⁹³ [It is, of course, possible that they might, though, admittedly, not very probable]....The scientific hypothesis, then, cannot be accepted by the historian. Moreover, the hypothesis is self-contradictory, if that be any objection in modern logic. It is distinctly and frequently, and correctly maintained, by the advocate of the theory of clerical "indoctrination," that no priest knew anything from Jeanne of her psychical experiences, that Jeanne never told about her "revelations" to her curé or any churchman....⁹⁴

89. Ibid., p. xi.

90. Ibid., p. 1.

91. Ibid., p. 6.

92. Ibid., p. 9.

93. Ibid., p. 11.

94. Ibid., p. 12.

That she confided the facts of her visions and Voices to no churchman is thus maintained by the friends of the theory that, apparently because she did confide them [but could it not have been that they had merely heard of her piety?], the churchmen knew about them, and "indoctrinated" her; taught her the nature of her warlike mission; and used her as their mouth-piece and puppet. The theory of "indoctrination" rests on a contradiction in terms. ⁹⁵

Now, Lang could very easily have rejected France's theory by saying that the latter, in an effort to explain Joan's deeds on natural grounds as well as through personal anti-clericalism, had fabricated a theory which was based on insufficient historical evidence. However, it is untrue to say that: "the theory of 'indoctrination' rests on a contradiction in terms." This, however, is but one example (which might be selected from many) of the way in which Lang frequently presses a point dangerously far in order to worst his adversary, with the result that his own conclusions are also incorrect.

Chapter I of the biography, as I mentioned before, is concerned entirely with a discussion of the political conditions of France. This is valuable material, but it would be more interesting were it inserted when necessary, instead of rather formidably concentrated in the opening pages.

In the second chapter, Lang describes the local surroundings of the Maid and tells the story of her childhood in Domremy. In this connection, he writes:

There is no reason to suppose [as France did] that "forged prophecies" of Merlin were "the means by which the young inspired girl was put in motion" -- by some unknown churchmen, or that "without these pious frauds the miracles of the Maid would never have been wrought." The inspiration of the Maid arose in her visions and Voices, in 1424 or 1425. We have no evidence that she had heard of the Merlin prophecy of the Victorious Virgin till after she announced her mission, -- till 1428-1429, -- and no fraudulent priest was needed to convey to her ears the "ancient popular rumour." ⁹⁶

95. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

96. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

The subject of Joan's voices and visions is discussed more in detail in the next chapter:

...nothing indicates that Jeanne, when she heard the Voices, was noticeably "dissociated," or in any manifestly abnormal condition. Nor is it true that she was "perpetually hallucinated," and, "as a rule" (le plus souvent), "in no condition to discern between truth and falsehood," as has been alleged [by France, of course].

There is no evidence for these statements. We always find Jeanne keenly alive to her surroundings, very vigilant and observant. ⁹⁷

And, in the appendix, Lang treats the subject further:

Her visions and Voices were (in modern phrase) "automatisms," expressions by which were made manifest to her the monitions of her unconscious thought ⁹⁸....My own bias is obvious enough. I incline to think that in a sense not easily defined, Jeanne was "inspired," and I am convinced that she was a person of the highest genius, of the noblest character. Without her genius and her character, her glimpses of hidden things (supposing them to have occurred) would have been of no avail in the great task of redeeming France. Another might have heard Voices offering the monitions; but no other [a rather extravagant statement] could have displayed her dauntless courage and gift of encouragement; her sweetness of soul; and her marvellous and victorious tenacity of will. ⁹⁹

As one would expect, Lang conceives of Joan as a beautiful girl:

Her hair was black, cut short like a soldier's; as to her eyes and features, having no information, we may conceive of them as we please. Probably she had grey eyes [why grey?], and a clear, pale colour under the tan of sun and wind. She was so tall that she could wear a man's clothes, those, for example, of Durand Lassois. Thus, with her natural aspect of gladness and her ready April tears, Jeanne was a maid whom men loved to look upon, and followed gladly...¹⁰⁰

The author continues: "Nowhere among visionaries is there another like the Maid; 'her brothers of Paradise' never had such another sister among the Saints on earth." ¹⁰¹ "In considering the surroundings of Jeanne in youth, we must not [as did Anatole France] persuade ourselves that her environment accounts for her." ¹⁰²

97. Ibid., p. 47.

98. Ibid., p. 329.

99. Ibid., p. 330.

100. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

101. Ibid., p. 106.

102. Ibid., p. 55.

Although continuing in this romantic vein throughout, Andrew Lang does seem to exercise greater restraint toward the latter part of the book than he did in the beginning -- probably because he quotes more directly from the witnesses themselves. The work closes, moreover, on a very simple note: "That the world might have no relic of her of whom the world was not worthy, the English threw her ashes into the Seine." ¹⁰³ Thus Lang concludes with Joan's martyrdom, telling nothing (as France had) of what took place after her death.

In summary, Andrew Lang is writing in the romantic tradition just as was Mark Twain, though the latter's is a fictionalized work; the former's scholarly. Lang's biography, however, lacks the wide appeal of Mark Twain's, since the controversial tone detracts from its appeal as general reading. Nevertheless, it does possess "a vivacity inspired by the two master passions of literature, love of the subject as a vital issue, and a strong objection, both temperamental and reasoned to the author who has most lately treated it." ¹⁰⁴

But, interestingly enough, although Lang reacts so bitterly against France's Life of Joan of Arc, his own biography resembles the latter's in several important respects. The reason for this lies primarily in the fact that both writers were influenced by the critical spirit of the twentieth century. Furthermore, both were writing scholarly biographies; yet neither presented his material completely in an objective manner because of a strong personal desire to influence the reader to his own way of thinking.

And, since Lang's and France's temperaments were such poles apart, it is inevitable that their interpretations of the Maid should differ

103. Ibid., p. 307.

104. _____ "Two Women of History," The Nation, v. 88, Feb. 18, 1909, p. 169.

widely: the writer who is a scientist, rationalist, and liberal can never view a mystic in the same light as one who is an idealist, romantic, and conservative. But, the real difference between the two works lies in the author's quality of achievement; it cannot be explained by mere difference of outlook. In The Maid of France, Lang achieves perfection in detail, yet through an overemphasis upon the trivial, his biography fails to attain the greatness of France's Life of Joan of Arc. The issue, I believe, becomes clear if we view it as did Longinus when he asked the rhetorical question: "Which is preferable in poetry and prose, greatness with some flaws, or only moderate success but with everything sound and impeccable?" ¹⁰⁵ The answer, of course, is self-evident.

105. Longinus, "On Literary Excellence," Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden, Allan H. Gilbert, ed., American Book Company, New York, 1940, p. 185.

CHAPTER IV

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATIONS:

PARTICULARLY DISCUSSING SHAW'S ATTITUDE
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After reading several of the relatively unimportant dramas which have been published in the twentieth century on the subject of Joan of Arc, I have selected two that seemed considerably more interesting than the average and which I thought would be of value in our study, if for no other reason than that they make Shaw's and Anderson's plays stand out all the more by contrast.

Percy Mackaye, in his Jeanne d'Arc (1906), seems mainly interested in doing what Southey did: giving to Joan "not the passion of love, but the remembrance of subdued affection, a lingering of human feelings not inconsistent with the enthusiasm and holiness of her character."¹ This he accomplishes by portraying the fondness of the simple child-like Maid for the sceptic, D'Alençon; moreover, he pictures Joan as so influenced by D'Alençon that she fails to hear her voices, as a result of his judgment that they are mere delusions, "vanities and whisperings of the air."² In the last scene, however, she regains her faith, through these words of his:

Child, let not my sceptic love
Lead your weak spirit to the world's dark sill
Thus stricken — blinded, groping for its saints
Believe! you who have made me to believe.³

The playwright thus employs poetic license to gain dramatic effect.

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1. Southey, Robert, "Joan of Arc," Poetical Works, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1864, p. 17.
 2. Mackaye, Percy, Jeanne d'Arc, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1906, p. 108.
 3. Ibid., p. 161.

The Joan which Mackaye presents, with the exception of this one lapse of faith, is the conventional Joan -- the divinely inspired child who actually heard voices and saw visions. The playwright, then, attempts no new interpretation of her character in the light of the twentieth century, but, instead he simply retells her story according to the romantic tradition.

Four years later, Will Hutchins published an interesting play in Poet Lore, "Jeanne d'Arc at Vaucouleurs." The author writes, in the introduction, that he is venturing "a new treatment of an old theme" for, while "there is nothing new in the world, there are endless possible new combinations of old things which may perhaps lay claim to a modest degree of novelty. The present play aspires to no higher claim." ⁴

Hutchins continues, describing his interest in Joan at this specific point in her career:

At Vaucouleurs Jeanne was still the peasant girl. The home ties were still real. Her career was still before her. And yet, in her conquest of Robert de Baudricourt and Jean de Metz, she not only gave promise of the conquest of Charles VII and the French Army -- she achieved an equal victory. The difference is hardly one of degree, even. Vaucouleurs, for the dramatist, is not only the epitome of France: it is France. But, considering Vaucouleurs as the epitome of France, we are acting in harmony with a sound principle of art. For the drama is the epitome of life and history, not -- emphatically not -- its mirror. ⁵

Hutchins conceives of Joan as "quite human, even if she typifies, as she does, the race of supermen." ⁶ Moreover, she "was no ascetic; she was healthy and sane, physically and mentally. Her abnormalities

4. Hutchins, Will, "Jeanne d'Arc at Vaucouleurs," Poet Lore, v. 21, No. 2, March-April 1910, p. 97.

5. Ibid., p. 98.

6. Ibid., p. 98.

were her most prominent feature; yes, but they were an excess of sanity, not a lack of it." ⁷ The latter thought seems to anticipate Shaw, except for the fact that Hutchins accepts her voices and visions at face value; whereas Shaw considers their wisdom entirely Joan's own.

Now, if Hutchins had been able to carry out his original ideas with imagination and skill, the drama would have been very outstanding. Unfortunately, though, there is a sad lapse between the original plan and its final execution, with the result that the play deteriorates into the mere dramatic presentation of one episode of Joan's life.

Let us turn now to Saint Joan (1923) which is not only one of Shaw's greatest plays, but also one of the most significant works written about the Maid in the twentieth century. Shaw is vitally interested in the life of Joan of Arc for several reasons, but, primarily, because she was the tragic heroine of evolution, the bearer, in her time, of two new ideas: Protestantism and Nationalism. Shaw thus conceives of Joan as a revolutionary hero — a hero in the sense that Christ, Socrates, and Napoleon were heroes. Moreover, he is interested in the Maid's struggles as a Protestant against Catholicism, and as a Nationalist against Feudalism, since hers was always the conflict of the individual with constituted authority. And, although the playwright realizes that Joan did not understand the implications of her beliefs, nevertheless, he sees that both Protestantism and Nationalism survived her death. Consequently, a study of her life from this point of view would not fail to interest the twentieth-century reader and theatre-goer.

The main thought underlying the play might be explained in this way: Shaw believes that the law of God is a law of evolution, but, since

7. Ibid., p. 98.

all evolution in thought and conduct is a breaking of old laws, evolution must therefore, of necessity, first appear as heresy and misconduct. If it is true, though, that the law of God is a law of change, it follows that "when the Churches set themselves against change as such, they are setting themselves against the law of God." ⁸ And, this is exactly what happened in the case of Joan: in casting her out and turning her over to the secular power, "the Church was unwittingly denying the latest revelation of Divine Purpose" and "destroying a tentacle of Creative Evolution." ⁹

"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"; ¹⁰ in other words, Catholicism must become more catholic. Furthermore, it is necessary that the Church learn humility as well as teach it; for, being merely an "official organization of mortal men whose vocation does not carry with it extraordinary mental powers," ¹¹ it can not hope to keep pace with the private judgment of persons of genius. The Church Militant, thus, must not act as if it were already the Church Triumphant, if it would avoid making appalling blunders of the type which led to the martyrdom of Joan.

Shaw, then, is pleading that we profit by the mistakes of the past and that, in both Church and State, we follow the guidance of persons of genius and help them along their way, rather than making every effort to destroy them. If only we could learn this lesson, we would avert a tragedy such as he has depicted in Saint Joan: the wanton sacrifice of our best -- the best which the evolutionary process has slowly created.

8. Shaw, op.cit., pp. 33-34

9. Colbourne, Maurice, The Real Bernard Shaw, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1940, p. 205.

10. Shaw, op.cit., p. 31.

11. Ibid., p. 31.

Thus, in Saint Joan, Shaw has expressed many of his religious ideas either directly or indirectly. For instance, one cannot help but feel that his defense of the Freethinker is anything but impersonal.

He writes:

...a Church which has no place for Freethinkers: nay, which does not inculcate and encourage freethinking with a complete belief that thought, when really free, must by its own law take the path that leads to The Church's bosom, 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. ¹²

Shaw believes that Joan's is "the protest of the individual soul against the interference of priest or peer between the private man and his God." ¹³ Thus, then, for him, she becomes the exponent, or, perhaps even the symbol, of the Protestant spirit -- a spirit with which he keenly and whole-heartedly sympathizes.

Shaw considers Joan a saint and a genius; the reader, though, is amused to see the reserve and certain skepticism with which he defines the former term: "A saint is one who having practised heroic virtues, and enjoyed revelations or powers of the order which The Church classes technically as supernatural, is eligible for canonization." ¹⁴ His definition of the latter term, though, is quite thought-provoking. "A genius is a person who, seeing farther and probing deeper than other people, has a different set of ethical valuations from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuations in whatever manner best suits his or her specific talents." ¹⁵

Neither Joan's voices nor her miracles offend Shaw as they did both Voltaire and Anatole France, for Shaw's attitude toward them is that

12. Ibid., p. 32.

13. Ibid., p. 97.

14. Ibid., p. 5.

15. Ibid., p. 5.

of a pragmatist. What does it matter how her ideas come to her, so long as they fulfill a need and are practical and useful? Of course, as a rationalist, Shaw does not believe that Joan was divinely inspired; on the contrary, he thinks that her voices and visions were illusory and their wisdom entirely her own.¹⁶ As Gupta points out:

There is nothing mystical in the plans she thinks out, nothing supernatural in the operations she undertakes. What is magical is the iron will, the dauntless faith which seems to have lent to her calculations the force of divine inspiration....Her powers were human, but her confidence was divine.¹⁷

Consciously or unconsciously, Shaw has put a great deal of himself into the character of Joan. With her, he is fighting for the freedom of the individual, and, particularly, for freedom from the bindings of tradition.¹⁸ Thus, as an ardent Socialist, he is able to attack conservatism through the character of the Maid. In reality, then, the play is much more than it would seem on the surface: the dramatic presentation of the life of a great personage of the past. Instead, it has profound religious, philosophical and political implications.

Shaw's interest in Joan was based, then, on many factors, but all of them could really be reduced to a personal desire to express, through her, his ideas on various subjects. Furthermore, because of a certain likeness of temperament, Shaw keenly sympathized with the Maid; for, he, also, was unconventional, far ahead of the age in which he was living, and, at the same time, a mental giant and a freethinker.

When asked what first made him think of writing a play about Joan of Arc, he replied:

I wanted to get to work on something, but I hadn't a subject. "Why not write a play on Joan of Arc?" said my wife. So I

16. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17. Gupta, S. C. Sen, *The Art of Bernard Shaw*, Oxford University Press, London, 1936, pp. 144-146.

18. Grenzmann, Wilhelm, *Die Jungfrau Von Orleans in der Dichtung*, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, 1929, p. 65.

did. I had already read the reports of the trial and the rehabilitation, and found that they contained a drama that needed only arrangement for the stage -- child's play to me -- and that all the old Joan plays and histories are romantic poppycock. I stuck to the contemporary reports and did not read a word of the critics and biographers until I had finished the play. I was interested in Joan as the first Protestant, quite insufferable as all great beginners are. My Epilogue was a device to include what happened after Joan's death; the rest is a pure chronicle of events. Of course the play was much too long at first, and I had to cut it down to the bone. Even then some people seemed to think that three and a half hours of it made a fairly substantial bone....I have dramatised the original documents. Everyone else has romanced about Joan. I have told the story exactly as it happened. It is the easiest play I have ever had to write. All I've done is to put down the facts, to arrange Joan for the stage. The trial scene is merely a report of the actual trial. I have used Joan's very words: thus she spoke, thus she behaved. ¹⁹

Before her first appearance in scene I, Shaw wrote of the Maid thus:

She is an able-bodied country girl of 17 or 18, respectably dressed in red, with an uncommon face; eyes very wide apart and bulging as they often do in very imaginative people, a long well-shaped nose with wide nostrils, a short upper lip, resolute but full-lipped mouth, and handsome fighting chin. ²⁰

In the preface, Shaw had observed: "To put the point roughly, any book about Joan which begins by describing her as a beauty may be at once classed as a romance." ²¹ The playwright, then, was interested in the Maid not as a pretty feminine young girl, but instead as the most notable Warrior Saint in the Christian calendar, a Protestant martyr, and apostle of Nationalism, and a realist in warfare. ²²

In the first scene, though, we see her at the beginning of her career when she is merely a very impudent and self-assured peasant girl who acts just as Shaw himself would have acted under the circumstances.

19. Pearson, Hesketh, G.B.S., A Full Length Portrait, Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1946, pp. 340-342.

20. Shaw, op.cit., p. 54.

21. Ibid., p. 6.

22. Ibid., p. 1.

Brought into the presence of Robert de Baudricourt:

Joan. You must not be afraid, Robert --

Robert. Damn you, I am not afraid. And who gave you leave to call me Robert?

Joan. You were called so in church in the name of the Lord. All the other names are your father's or your brother's or anybody's. ²³

In addition to being endowed with the personality of Shaw, Joan also expresses Shaw's ideas, even though these ideas may be in direct opposition to all that the real Joan believed and testified at her trial.

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. ²⁴

Now, Shaw considers that Joan had two abnormalities: one was her tendency to hear voices and see visions, and the other was her craze for soldiering and the masculine life. However, as a pragmatist, Shaw does not regard her as mad, a liar, or an impostor merely because she heard voices and saw visions, but instead he thinks of her as a sane woman, for the simple reason that her voices never gave her any advice that might not have come to her from her "mother wit." "The test of sanity is not the normality of the method but the reasonableness of the discovery." ²⁵ Consequently, he feels that she was nonetheless an able leader of men for imagining her ideas in this way. ²⁶

Now, in regard to Joan's second abnormality, it is natural that Shaw should consider her the sort of woman that wants to lead a man's life, ²⁷ since this is the only reasonable explanation of her conduct, when the possibility of divine inspiration is eliminated. It is unavoidable that he should believe that: "Everything she did was thoroughly

23. Ibid., p. 61.

24. Ibid., p. 60.

25. Ibid., p. 9.

26. Ibid., p. 10.

27. Ibid., p. 16.

calculated; and though the process was so rapid that she was hardly conscious of it, and ascribed it all to her voices, she was a woman of policy and not of blind impulse." ²⁸

In passing, it is interesting to note the difference in Shaw's and Anatole France's interpretation of Joan's voices: Shaw believes, as we have seen, that their wisdom was all Joan's own, while France feels that they were not merely the promptings of her own heart, but this together with the echo of a priestly voice. ²⁹ Actually, then, Shaw's is a more truly scientific interpretation, since he merely attempts to rationally explain the facts as he understands them, while France is so intent upon putting across his own theory that he does not hesitate, at times, to distort or enlarge upon the truth.

France and Shaw are alike, though, in their effort to humanize Joan, and to show her against the background of the Middle Ages. Neither think of her as a miracle worker, while both regard her as a very human young girl. Shaw summarizes his impression of her thus:

This combination of inept youth and academic ignorance with great natural capacity, push, courage, devotion, originality and oddity, fully accounts for all the facts in Joan's career, and makes her a credible historical and human phenomenon, but it clashes most discordantly both with the idolatrous romance that has grown up around her, and the belittling skepticism that reacts against that romance. ³⁰ [Into the latter category, Shaw later places Anatole France's interpretation.]

Returning to scene I, we also see, herein, an example of the way in which Shaw generally treats Joan's miracles as mere coincidences. When the scene opens, Robert de Baudricourt is very upset over the fact that his hens are no longer laying. The steward explains: "Sir: I tell

28. Ibid., p. 18.

29. France, op.cit., v. 1, p. 47.

30. Shaw, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

you there are no eggs. There will be none -- not if you were to kill me for it -- as long as The Maid is at the door." ³¹ However, after Baudricourt has interviewed Joan, and, with many misgivings, sent her on her way:

The steward runs in with a basket.

Steward. Sir, sir --

Robert. What now?

Steward. The hens are laying like mad, sir. Five dozen eggs!

Robert. [stiffens convulsively: crosses himself: and forms with his pale lips the words] Christ in heaven! [Aloud but breathless] She DID come from God. ³²

In scene II, Shaw, the pragmatist, speaks through the mouth of the Archbishop and defines a miracle as "an event which creates faith. That is the purpose and nature of miracles." ³³ And, he points out that it would be a miracle only in this sense of the word if Joan were to pick out the Dauphin from among his courtiers.

She will know what everybody in Chinon knows: that the Dauphin is the meanest-looking and worst-dressed figure in the Court, and that the man with the blue beard is Gilles de Rais ³⁴....When this girl picks out the Dauphin among his courtiers, it will not be a miracle for me, because I shall know how it has been done, and my faith will not be increased. But as for the others, if they feel the thrill of the supernatural, and forget their sinful clay in a sudden sense of the glory of God, it will be a miracle and a blessed one. And you will find that the girl herself will be more affected than anyone else. She will forget how she really picked him out. So, perhaps, will you. ³⁵

As it turns out, Joan considers the deception quite a joke (though, in real life, it is almost certain that she did not).

Fun dawns in her face.

Joan. Coom, Bluebeard! Thou canst not fool me. Where be Dauphin?

31. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

32. Ibid., p. 63.

33. Ibid., p. 71.

34. Ibid., p. 70.

35. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

A roar of laughter breaks out as Gilles, with a gesture of surrender, joins in the laugh, and jumps down from the dais beside La Trémouille. Joan also on the broad grin, turns back, searching along the row of courtiers, and presently makes a dive, and drags out Charles by the arm. ³⁶

Within a few minutes, she is addressing him as "Charlie," ³⁷ and La Trémouille as "old Gruff-and-Grum." ³⁸

Scene III takes place before Orleans, and is concerned with the changing of the wind from east to west upon Joan's arrival. In contrast to the incident of Baudricourt's hens laying again, this "miracle" was an historical fact. It was like the other, though, in that it, also, was an event which created faith; Dunois' confidence in the Maid was immediately inspired:

Dunois. [looking at the pennon] The wind has changed. [He crosses himself] God has spoken. [Kneeling and handing his baton to Joan] You command the king's army. I am your soldier. ³⁹

The first three scenes have shown Joan's successes: with Baudricourt, with the court, and with Dunois. In each case, either through sheer good luck (which was outside her control), or by common sense (her own natural ability), she has won. But now, in scene IV which is set in the English camp, we have the first intimation of tragedy. Here Warwick and Cauchon -- the former representing Feudalism, and the latter, the Church -- discuss the heresy of the Maid. To Warwick, it is the heresy of Nationalism: "she has never once mentioned the peerage, and thinks only of the king and herself ⁴⁰...if this cult of The Maid goes on, our cause is lost." ⁴¹

Cauchon, on the other hand, considers Joan's heresy that of Protestantism; and, although he asserts that if she were brought before

36. Ibid., p. 73.

37. Ibid., p. 76.

38. Ibid., p. 79.

39. Ibid., p. 84.

40. Ibid., p. 97.

41. Ibid., p. 92.

him, his first duty would be to save her soul, yet:

The Pope himself at his proudest dare not presume as this woman presumes. She acts as if she herself were The Church ⁴²
....what will it be when every girl thinks herself a Joan and every man a Mahomet? ...Let all this woman's sins be forgiven her except only this sin; for it is the sin against the Holy Ghost; and if she does not recant in the dust before the world, and submit herself to the last inch of her soul to her Church, to the fire she shall go if she once falls into my hand. ⁴³

Scene V shifts to the Cathedral of Rheims after the coronation ceremony, and an amusing bit of realism is inserted in the description of the weary Charles who "would not go through it again to be emperor of the sun and moon." ⁴⁴ His robes were so very heavy and the famous holy oil was rancid!

By this time, although at the height of her career, Joan is completely alone; the English would destroy her if she were in their hands, and the French would not save her. Even Dunois, her only friend, admits that if she were captured, he would not risk the lives of his soldiers to rescue her. The Maid, though, makes a truly eloquent reply to the selfish king, his nobles, and his generals:

Do you think you can frighten me by telling me that I am alone. France is alone; and God is alone; and what is my loneliness before the loneliness of my country and my God? I see now that the loneliness of God is His strength: what would He be if He listened to your jealous little counsels? Well, my loneliness shall be my strength too; it is better to be alone with God: His fellowship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare, and dare, and dare, until I die. I will go out now to the common people, and let the love in their eyes comfort me for the hate in yours. 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! ⁴⁵

When we turn to scene VI, the trial, we see more clearly than ever

42. Ibid., p. 93.

43. Ibid., p. 94.

44. Ibid., p. 101.

45. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

what Shaw has been trying to do throughout the play: not merely to write history, but to interpret it.

...it is the business of the stage to make its figures more intelligible to themselves than they would be in real life; for by no other means can they be made intelligible to the audience....the things I represent these three exponents of the drama [Cauchon, Lemaître, and Warwick] as saying are the things they actually would have said if they had known what they were really doing. ⁴⁶

Moreover, in scene VI, we see the playwright making a sincere effort to destroy the popular misconception that Joan was the heroine of a melodrama, and Cauchon the villain. In the preface, Shaw pointed out the fallacy of this belief:

Joan got a far fairer trial from the Church and the Inquisition than any prisoner of her type and in her situation gets nowadays in any official secular court; and the decision was strictly according to law. ⁴⁷

Furthermore, Shaw makes it clear that unless we in the twentieth century feel that we might have voted for burning Joan ourselves, we know nothing about her. ⁴⁸ "Joan was persecuted essentially as she would be persecuted today." ⁴⁹

The playwright continues:

...if Joan had not been burnt by normally innocent people in the energy of their righteousness her death at their hands would have no more significance than the Tokyo earthquake, which burnt a great many maidens. ⁵⁰...Therefore the question raised by Joan's burning is a burning question still, though the penalties involved are not so sensational. That is why I am probing it. If it were only an historical curiosity I would not waste my readers' time and my own on it for five minutes. ⁵¹

In scene VI, it is also interesting to note the development which has taken place in the Maid's character. In many respects, she is still

46. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

47. Ibid., p. 5.

48. Ibid., p. 23.

49. Ibid., p. 25.

50. Ibid., p. 45.

51. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

the child who saucily reassured Baudricourt -- as is seen in her frequent pert replies to her judges -- yet, in other respects, she has definitely matured. Now, when things go contrary to her wishes, she no longer pouts as she did in the opening scenes, but, instead, she rises above the afflicting circumstances. For example, when, after signing her recantation, she realizes that she will not be set free, she tears the paper into fragments and utters these magnificent words:

Bread has no sorrow for me, and water no affliction. But to shut me from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers; to chain my feet so that I can never again ride with the soldiers nor climb the hills; to make me breathe foul damp darkness, and keep from me everything that brings me back to the love of God when your wickedness and foolishness tempt me to hate Him: all this is worse than the furnace in the Bible that was heated seven times. I could do without my warhorse; I could drag about in a skirt; I could let the banners and the trumpets and the knights and soldiers pass me and leave me behind as they leave the other women, if only I could still hear the wind in the trees, the larks in the sunshine, the young lambs crying through the healthy frost, and the blessed church bells that send my angel voices floating to me on the wind. But without these things I cannot live; and by your wanting to take them away from me, or from any human creature, I know that your counsel is of the devil, and that mine is of God. 52

The scene closes thus:

The Executioner. Her heart would not burn, my lord; but everything that was left is at the bottom of the river. You have heard the last of her.

Warwick ... The last of her? Hm! I wonder! 53

The Epilogue, as Shaw himself explained, was merely a device to include what happened after Joan's death. 54 The scene is set in King Charles VII's bedroom on a windy night in June, 1456. Charles, who is dreaming, sees one by one the men who took part in the Rouen trial as well as those who were most prominent in Joan's life. Ladvenu, who has just given his testimony at the Trial of Rehabilitation, is the first to

52. Ibid., p. 133.

53. Ibid., p. 138.

54. Pearson, op.cit., p. 340.

enter. He speaks these words, which are of interest since they give the playwright's own opinion:

At this inquiry from which I have just come, there was shameless perjury, courtly corruption, calumny of the dead who did their duty according to their lights, cowardly evasion of the issue; testimony made of idle tales that could not impose on a ploughboy. Yet out of this insult to justice, this defamation of the Church, this orgy of lying and foolishness, the truth is set in the noonday sun on the hilltop; ...a great lie is sentenced for ever; and a great wrong is set right before all men. 55

Gradually, they are all brought together: Charles, Ladvenu, Joan, Cauchon, the Archbishop, Warwick, the Inquisitor, De Stogumber, the soldier who tied together two sticks to make a cross for Joan, and Dunois who is, at last, able to say: "I have kept my word: the English are gone." 56

A gentleman then appears, dressed in the fashion of the year 1920, who brings the news that the Church has admitted Joan to the ranks of Venerable and Blessed, and has declared her a saint. Hearing this news, all who are present praise the Maid, until she utters these words:

Woe unto me when all men praise me! I bid you remember that I am a saint, and that saints can work miracles. And now tell me: shall I rise from the dead, and come back to you a living woman?...What! Must I burn again? Are none of you ready to receive me? 57

For, hearing these words, with apologies and excuses, all hurriedly take their leave. The Maid, then, in her nobility, had made the mistake of thinking that the human race wants to be led by persons of genius. Ironically enough, though, this is the one thing which humanity as a whole most dreads; it seems invariably to shrink from any participation in the process of creative evolution. And so, once again, the Maid is left alone — alone and praying: "O God that madest this beautiful earth,

55. Shaw, op.cit., p. 140.

56. Ibid., p. 144.

57. Ibid., p. 152.

when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?" 58

To summarize, Shaw was far more interested in the ideas -- religious, philosophical, and political -- which it was possible for him to express in Saint Joan than he was in the mere accurate portrayal of an historical personage of the past. But, nevertheless, his re-creation of the Maid is intensely interesting, since it is the expression of a new attitude toward her: the attitude of pragmatic hero-worship. We enjoy the play, then, for the vital and human characterization of Joan of Arc, as well as because, herein, are expressed the ideas of a truly great thinker who was able to give contemporary significance to an event which occurred five hundred years ago. This being the case, is it any wonder that Saint Joan was such a brilliant success, or that it has been considered by one critic, at least, to be the greatest drama in English since Shakespeare? 59

Almost twenty-five years passed, and then, in 1946, another significant drama was written about the Maid; it was Maxwell Anderson's Joan of Lorraine. I think that Anderson was primarily interested in Joan of Arc because her life seemed to afford at least a partial answer to problems which had worried him for years -- problems dealing with the great questions of life, such as faith, death, compromise, etc.

Anderson's doubts apparently stemmed from his relations with his father, a Baptist minister, who was anxious for his son also to follow a religious career. Anderson, though, according to Robert Rice, had early intellectual doubts about his father's religion and sincerity; indeed, he is quoted as saying; "He [my father] got along with everyone in public and in the pulpit was the most persuasive man I ever heard. But I knew

58. Ibid., p. 153.

59. Henderson, Archibald, Bernard Shaw: Playboy and Prophet, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1932, p. 540.

it was all put on. I've never been able to stand anything affected since." 60

And so Anderson turned away from thoughts of the ministry to playwriting, and, at the same time, strove to replace his agnosticism with a more positive philosophy of life. All the while, he was writing; and in one play after another, his characters were portrayed as the victims of tragic circumstance. 61 Constantly, though, he was searching for a meaning to life, as, for example, when he wrote in Winterset (1935):

On this star,
in this hard star-adventure, knowing not
what the fires mean to right and left, nor whether
a meaning was intended or presumed,
man can stand up, and look out blind, and say:
in all these turning lights I find no clue,
only a masterless night, and in my blood
no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,
yet is my heart a cry toward something dim
in distance, which is higher than I am
and makes me emperor of the endless dark
even in seeking! What odds and ends of life
men may live otherwise, let them live, and then
go out, as I shall go, and you. 62

And, later, in Joan of Lorraine:

...every faith looks ridiculous to those who don't have it....We moderns have a way of feeling very smug about poor Joan of Lorraine back there in the dark ages, believing in her Voices and doing what they told her. But not one of us believes in anything more solid.... We live by illusions and assumptions and concepts, every one of them as questionable as the Voices Joan heard in the garden. We take on our religions the way we fall in love, and we can't defend one any more than the other....More and more men are going to realize that it's our destiny to be in the dark and yet go forward — to doubt our religions and yet live by them. To know that our faith can't be proved and yet stick by it. Unless it's a bad one....But you have to know, because you're held responsible if you follow a bad one. Those who followed Hitler are held responsible, you may have noticed. 63

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60. Block, Maxine, ed., Current Biography, 1942, The W. H. Wilson Company, New York, 1942, p. 18.
61. Childs, Herbert Ellsworth, "Playgoer's Playwright: Maxwell Anderson," The English Journal, v. 27, June 1938, pp. 481-484.
62. Anderson, Maxwell, Winterset, Anderson House, Washington, D. C., 1935, pp. 133-134.
63. Anderson, Maxwell, Joan of Lorraine, Anderson House, Washington, D.C., 1946, p. 93.

Anderson, then, is more interested in discussing the great questions which arise when one studies the life of Joan of Arc, than he is in trying to put across any positive ideas of his own, as Shaw did. In other words, Anderson is still searching for answers to the problems which trouble him, and he invites the reader and the theatre-goer to join him in his search.

When the curtain first rises in Joan of Lorraine, a group of actors, at rehearsal, are discussing a play which they are producing on the subject of Joan of Arc. Their director, Masters, tells them that, on this day, they will go over the play from beginning to end, omitting no part of it.

After each episode of the play-within-the play, there is an interlude in which the actors discuss the past scene. At these times, some very interesting discussions take place between Masters, a realistic man-of-the-world, and Mary Grey, his leading lady. The latter, a complete idealist, objects to their present interpretation of Joan of Arc, because the implications seem to be that:

...we all have to compromise and work with evil men -- and that if you have a faith it will come to nothing unless you get some of the forces of evil on your side.

Masters. That's right. I don't think I'd call them the forces of evil -- but you have to get some of the people who are running things on your side -- and they're pretty doubtful characters mostly.

Mary. But is that what we want to say, in a play about Joan of Arc?

Masters. It's what I'd like to hear said. 64

This discussion takes place as a result of the episode in the play in which Joan permits the Dauphin to be crowned, although she knows that he has sold out to their enemies, the Burgundians. Dunois, however, begged her to do so, since, as he pointed out:

64. Ibid., p. 35.

Every government is made up of bargainers, Joan. That's to be expected. Even God must be aware of that. And it's a lucky country where the bargainers don't have it all their own way -- where there's somebody like you about, making the bargainers behave. ⁶⁵

But, finally, toward the end of the play, Mary comes to the realization that, although Joan might compromise in little things, she would never compromise her belief -- her own soul. After an unjust trial (which was in contrast to Shaw's interpretation), Joan had said:

Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, nevertheless they give up their lives to that little or nothing. One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it's gone. But to surrender what you are, and live without belief -- that's more terrible than dying -- more terrible than dying young ⁶⁶....I would follow my faith, even to the fire. ⁶⁷

Anderson feels, then, that Joan's faith was such that it gave meaning to her entire life; and he seems to imply that although her answer may not be the right one for us today, at least it is worth thinking about. Moreover, just as Joan knew why she believed what she believed, so should we. Her answer, though, to this, "the toughest question ever put to the human race," ⁶⁸ was very simple:

Because I feel that they [the Voices] meant good to me, and good to the world -- because when they speak to me my heart is alive -- like the heart of a girl in love...⁶⁹

Anderson, speaking through the mouth of Masters, gives us his conception of Joan: a completely feminine young girl who was divinely inspired. This, of course, is contrary to the way she's often been shown on the stage in the past:

...as a sort of Tom Paine in petticoats, a rough, mannish hoyden, with visual delusions, strong common-sense, and a rather homo predilection for soldiers'

65. Ibid., p. 106.

66. Ibid., p. 136.

67. Ibid., p. 138.

68. Ibid., p. 8.

69. Ibid., p. 123.

clothes and manners. Even Shaw follows that line, but it doesn't seem to be historically accurate. As far as the evidence goes she was a modest and unassuming village girl who never would have raised her voice anywhere if she hadn't been convinced she was carrying out God's orders. 70

For a girl such as this, the great difficulty lay in finding a means of making herself heard, a way in which to get her message across to those in authority. And the only way she knew in which to do this was as she herself described it:

I stood as my brother stood and spoke heartily as he spoke, and put my challenges in the words he would have spoken. 71

This was necessary, since:

When I spoke with my own voice nobody listened, nobody heard me, yet, was it honest to assume ways that were not my own? 72

The entire premise that Joan imitated her brother and was later worried about the honesty of so doing is, of course, entirely fictional, yet it is certainly within the realm of probability. This, however, is one of the few times when the playwright departs, to any great extent, from the known facts about Joan's life.

In conclusion, when we compare Shaw's and Anderson's plays, we find that they are alike in only one important respect: both give contemporary significance to an age-old story. Shaw's main interest, though, was to express his own ideas through the character of Joan; while Anderson was primarily concerned with raising questions suggested by a study of Joan's life. Shaw, then, attempted to put across well formulated ideas; Anderson, on the other hand, merely wanted to arouse his audience to formulate their own ideas.

70. Ibid., p. 32.

71. Ibid., p. 127.

72. Ibid., p. 127.

The playwrights' conceptions of Joan herself were also quite different: in describing her appearance, Shaw follows the realistic tradition; Anderson, the romantic. And, this was likewise the case in their treatment of her trial. However, in the interpretation of her voices and visions, Shaw's attitude might better be defined as pragmatic; Anderson's, as idealistic. The latter, though, did not portray Joan merely as a romantic heroine; instead, he pictured her as a very human young girl, always trying to do the right thing, but constantly beset by doubts and inner conflicts, who differed from others only because she was trying to carry out the direct commands of God. Thus, Anderson's interpretation of the Maid is a blend of romance and realism; while Shaw's, on the contrary, is written entirely in the realistic tradition.

We should not make the mistake, though, of considering the two plays of equal significance, for Shaw's Saint Joan is a greater achievement in almost every respect. From the standpoint of content, it is of far more interest than Anderson's, since it is the expression of the ideas of an exceptionally great thinker; and, from the technical point of view, it is not nearly so disunified. Thus, it seems likely that the theatre-goer could see Saint Joan several times, with both profit and enjoyment, but once would very likely suffice for Joan of Lorraine.

CONCLUSION

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In summary, we observe four outstanding modern attitudes toward Joan of Arc: the romantic, the scholarly, the sceptical, and the pragmatic. Of these, the first is more typical of the thought of the nineteenth century; the other three, of that of our present age. Certainly, the romantic approach is in contrast with the interpretations that have been influenced by such dominant characteristics of the twentieth century as the application of the methods of science to all fields of research and investigation, the general exaltation of reason above faith, and the emphasis upon utility and workability.

But, as well as having been influenced by the times in which they were expressed, these four attitudes were also affected by the interests of the individual authors -- interests that with the romantic biographers were exclusively personal and temperamental, but which with two of the great thinkers of our day, Anatole France and George Bernard Shaw, were also religious, political, and philosophical.

The differences among these four attitudes are most noticeable when we review the various ways in which the Maid's voices and visions have been interpreted, for all writers have revealed their outlook and general approach in a discussion of the source of her inspiration. The romanticists who generally thought of Joan as a symbol and an ideal, rather than as a credible human being, without exception portrayed her as directly guided by God. And, it is interesting to note that Lowell also presented her in like manner, not because of an idealistic outlook, but rather because he recounted the factual evidence in a completely objective way and thus she had testified at her trial. In all other respects, though, he

characterized her as a very human young girl just as did France and Shaw.

Anatole France, whose general attitude was a sceptical one, set forth the theory that the Maid's voices and visions were the echo of a priestly voice combined with the promptings of her own heart. For France, then, the source of Joan's inspiration was a real issue as it was not for Shaw, since the latter was a pragmatist who thought that it mattered little in what form her ideas came to her as long as they fulfilled a need and were practical and useful.

Thus, in our study of the significant modern writings about Joan of Arc, we have observed the ways in which the known facts of her life have been interpreted by four different types of minds whose general outlook revealed the influence of the age in which they were living as well as reflecting the authors' own individual temperaments and interests. It is, then, very true of the Maid, as France said, that "every man beholds her according to his own fashion, creates her according to his own image." ¹

1. France, The Life of Joan of Arc (op.cit.), v. 1, p. 476.

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