



## Thematic Study of G.B. Shaw : Saint Joan

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Theme of Barnard Shaw's play St. Joan is the conflict between private Judgement and constituted authority, and on the other hand also the conflict between feudalism and nationalism. This theme is dramatized through the story of Joan of Arc who was a pioneer of Protestantism in religion and nationalism in Politics.

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Though she was burnt to death on May 30, 1431 at the age of 20, her spirit lived on; Protestantism and Nationalism spread through out the world.

Nicholas Greene who assumes that "Shaws message is clear: those who rule society are never ready to accept the moral genius who would change society even though that genius is a saint."

The story began when Joan Arc was a little more than a child, still living on her father's farm. She began to see visions and to hear voices which were not human and she became convinced that she was being visited by Saint 'Cathrine' and Saint 'Margret' and saint Michard she believed without a shadow of doubt that they were sent to give messages from God and that she must obey these messages. When she went to tell the army officers and the priests and they king about the visions and voices and about the mission she was ordered by them to carryout the officers laughed at her, the priest were horrified and the weak and lazy king thought her a nursance. The priest were quite sure that the Christian church was the only channel through which God's will could be known. They were so certain that Joan's voices must come from the Devil and were therefore evil.

She was very daring and was never afraid of even the Flercest looking soldiers, bishops the king or his countries. However, she could not be called a beauty. She herself accept/admit acknowledges in the epilogue : I was no beauty: I was always a rough one, a regular soldier. I might almost as well have been a man." She





had no sex appeal. Those who come near her, did not treat her as an ordinary woman. She was respected by soldiers like poulengy.

The church had all civilized Europe in its spiritual charge. If the priests of the church let Joan have her way. What was to prevent thousands like her from springing up, probably with contradictor voices?

In the end there would be utter confusion and the church's authority and orderly rule would be destroyed. If Joan was right, the church must be wrong. But since the church had been established for over fourteen hundred years as, for Christians, God's representative on earth, it was inevitable that the priest should declare Joan to be dangerously and sinfully wrong and should insist that she was Satan's messenger not God's and demand that she should be put out of harms way.

In other words, the conflict between Joan of Are and the Christian Church was a conflict Private Judgement and constituted authority and, this being so, the political leaders also became alarmed, for they saw that their authority, too, would be in danger.

While the church was thus determined to preserve the religious unity fo Christiandom other forces wee equally bent upon preserving the contemporary political structure. These are represented by Earl of Warwick, an English nobleman and Military leader, who, protests against the use of word 'French Man', rhyming

“A French man! Where did you pick up that expressions? Are these Burgundians and Bretons and Picards and Gascons beginning to call themselves French men? They actually talk of France and England as their countries.”

There is warwick's opposition and Joan's effort to make “prenchmen” fight “Englishmen” warwick's arose the desire that Frenchmen should not drive the English out. But he was also determined to uphold the feudal the feudal system, which would break down if the dependents of the feudal lords begin to think of serving their country and their king. Later in the same scene Warwick says, “If the people's





thoughts and hearts were to the king and their lords became only the king's servants in their eyes. The king could break us across his knee one by one.

Joan's religious enemies were afraid she would break up the unity of the church and destroy its spiritual power in Europe, her secular enemies feared that she would destroy their personal power by encouraging the people to unite into nations.

Quite unconsciously, through her unquestioning devotion to what she believed to be God's will she became a pioneer "Protestantism" in religion and "nationalism" in politics.

Though she was burnt to death in the market place of Rouen on 30 May 1437, when she was barely 20 years old, her spirit lived on.

### **Work Cited**

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