

CHAPTER 7

WHAT PRICE FAITH? — MAXWELL ANDERSON'S
JOAN OF LORRAINE (1946)

Twice distanced from the history of Joan, Maxwell Anderson's play,¹ *Joan of Lorraine*, weaves the ideals and the problems of the medieval heroine with those of the twentieth-century actress who plays Joan. The technique of the play within a play adds to the significance of the Joan of Arc story, because of the manner in which her history is discussed and pondered upon by various members of the cast and the stage manager of the peripheral play. The closeness in thought which Mary, who plays the part of Joan, establishes between herself and Joan, indicates the changeless moral quality in humanity. By emphasis on the unchanging answers to the moral dilemmas of the past and those of the present, a sound philosophy of hope for the future is forged.

Anderson's inner play is close to documented history; nothing substantial is added, but several key phrases and situations are highlighted and given extra importance. These phrases are either parallel to or are in conflict with, words of the outer play, or the actors' thoughts or perceptions regarding their play and its meaning. The situation of Joan in her family is given prominence; in particular the influence of her brothers is emphasised, and this gives a new dimension to her later life, her trial and the reason for which she is to die.

The two acts of the play are interspersed with a Prologue, Interludes and a Rehearsal Preface. Lighting devices, scenery and stage props used in the peripheral play form part of the discussion in the Prologue and the

¹ Maxwell Anderson, *Three Plays, Joan of Lorraine, Valley Forge, Journey to Jerusalem*, N.Y., 1962. Page nos. in parenthesis refer to this edition of the work.

Interludes. As in *The Lark*,² the audience is kept well aware of the centrality of 'the play' but unlike Anouilh's audience, who watched a part of history re-enacted by historical characters, Maxwell Anderson gives his audience two plays: one within the other. The playwright's own ideas of history, of truth and of faith are enhanced. There may be some conflict between his 'theater of ideas': his belief that a central conviction must be adhered to, and his commitment to Aristotelian tragedy.³ The central, recurring theme in his historical and religious plays is the spiritual victory of man.⁴ This exaltation of humanity follows upon the free choice of the individual. When man reaches a belief that is so strong that he is willing to abandon all else, then he will give his life for that belief. The centrality of individual choice in his theme may oppose his Aristotelian form which he chose to follow, and which more effectively displays the forces which negate free will.

Through Joan, by way of Masters, the stage manager, Anderson makes his own proclamation of faith. This he repeats during the Rehearsal Preface when the actors have come to a deadlock concerning whether commonsense or science or faith should be featured, especially in the rendering of the lines:

Masters: ... A man has to have a faith, and a culture has to have one- and an army. An army may move on its belly, but it wouldn't move at all if it didn't believe in something. (p.57).

Masters speaks with conviction about both medieval and twentieth-century conditions. Masters, as the director, is in control throughout the play; organising the set, examining the costumes and the equipment, apprehensive about the correct pronunciation of French names, negotiating and 'compromising' with the owner of the theatre who is in legal trouble. He is the authorial voice, he is the voice of the writer of the inner play, and

² J. Anouilh, *The Lark*, translated by C. Fry, London, 1955.

³ Mabel Driscoll Bailey, *Maxwell Anderson. The Playwright as Prophet*, 1957, p.169.

⁴ Barbara M. Perkins, in *20th Century Drama* (1983), p.22.

he is the confidante and friend of Mary Grey, the character actress who will play the lead, whose dilemma concerning Joan of Arc and her alleged compromise with 'evil men' in the new play is finally resolved.

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The Prologue is the scene of general preparation, of the experimentation with lights, and a stimulating talk by Masters which is meant to arouse more enthusiasm. His words at times are incongruous when related to his production's subject. He talks of financial backing, lack of money for correct lighting, and gives general reminders about cues. Then he explains his own theory of waiting for the holy fire to play on one or another of them, of hoping for a miracle, and about the descent of the spirit, and of creating a new world like a star, on a bare stage.(p.5). The idea that Joan is Divinely inspired is implanted and there is a juxtaposition of the spiritual needs of war-torn medieval France and the spiritual needs of America in the post-war nineteen forties.

The audience discovers early in the play that Anderson's Maid is quite different from other twentieth-century treatments. It neither idealises Joan nor does it portray her as a mentally deranged female, typical of the Middle Ages. Instead, the author emphasises Joan's firm faith in her religious beliefs, and at the same time, through Masters, he asserts his own faith. He therefore poses the question of the fate of Joan of Arc as one which happens to anyone at any time.

Critics and readers agree that Anderson has borrowed nothing from others who have written the Joan of Arc story. He wants to take away the false picture of hoydenism and other images which, although without foundation, have been passed on from one writer to another. He conveys this feeling in the Prologue; the scattered bits of scenery — unwanted and

improvised material; remnants of others' ideas of the Maid. This obsession of playing her as she really was is extended into the Interlude I, when the playwright is re-writing and there is a possibility of them not having a theatre to perform in. These occurrences create an intrusion of the modern economic world and the false world of necessary compromise into an artistic situation, where there is a striving for truth and perfection. Here, drama is taking the place of religion, to some extent, in the showing forth of the eternal truths about human nature.

Mary is antagonised about the changed lines because Joan is her model and she cannot conceive of her being involved in corruption amongst 'evil men' (p.21). The new lines in the play have given it a new meaning which is not in keeping with Mary's idealistic image of Joan. Anderson's concern for presenting a true Joan has been transferred to Mary Grey, the actress who plays the part of Joan. Joan's adversities and false friends have become Mary's problems. The portrayal of Joan's false friends is also a reiteration of Anderson's own belief that persons of goodwill are often destroyed by those who are evil.⁵

The importance of Joan's place within the family is one which Anderson explores. Surprisingly, in view of psychology's claim that early memories are of vital importance to the unravelling of outstanding, later-life behaviour, few writers or playwrights have followed historical records carefully. Some have ignored her home life, with the exception of the fairy tree and the Neufchateau incidents, or they have fabricated a cruel father and an unlikely mother. Her Voices were first heard when she was about thirteen years old, so that it is not irrational to consider Joan, first in the context of a member of a family.

⁵ John W. Crawford, *Critical Survey of Drama: English Language Series, I*, ed. by Frank N. Magill, 1985, Maxwell Anderson, p.28.

Maxwell Anderson claimed an aversion to the picture of Joan as a mannish, strident character.⁶ 'He wants no Tom Paine in petticoats' (p.19). Because the author's belief is in the spirituality of democracy, he wants to make her as natural as possible, yet still keeping her as a typical girl of her times. If he had endowed her with mannish qualities before her military achievements, several problems may have arisen. If Joan had appeared as a deviant from the family norm of daughter and sister, Anderson could not have indulged his characters in the extra play-acting, when the boys play-act and Joan mimics. A mannish or hoydenish Joan could not have played so realistically her part in the tender revival of the abandoned lamb.

In his interpretation, Joan is entirely feminine, and her later, soldierly exploits are a result of advice from her Voices and a little imitation of her brothers' role play. This performance she had witnessed whilst they were all discussing the plight of France. There is emphasis on the influence of the brothers d'Arc. Although historically they joined the standard of Joan of Arc before Orleans, their later behaviour is not always clear. One was captured with her at Compiègne, but records of later years suggest that their loyalty depended partially on material gains.⁷ Historical documents reveal that during the Trial questioning, Joan mentioned that the children of Domremy often had bloody fights with children from an adjoining village. The people of Domremy lived in the Armagnac sector, whilst those in a village nearby were Burgundians.

Anderson introduces Joan (Jeanette) as a member of a loving family. Her father's concern for her is that her excessive piety may have made her a little mad. He knows that she has already made an unsuccessful journey to Vaucouleurs and blames Laxart, his kinsman, for helping her to accomplish

⁶ Mabel D. Bailey, *Maxwell Anderson: The Playwright as Prophet*, 1957, p.158.

⁷ R. Pernoud, *Joan of Arc*, 1962, p.126; p.244.

it. Laxart wishes for family forgiveness as he needs to enlist the help of Jeannette for his wife's forthcoming confinement. He promises Jacques that there will be no repetition of the Vaucouleurs incident and reassures him by mentioning Robert de Baudricourt's amusement at Joan's presumption:

I don't remember that he answered. He laughed at her. She said very little and very low, and I'm sure he understood what she meant. So he laughed and told me to take her home. (pp. 9-10).

The warm family atmosphere is reinforced by the presence of the cold unfed lamb, which Joan and her brothers bring inside in an effort to revive it. When Jacques asks Joan if the lamb will live, her reply of: 'Yes. I think his mother has refused him'...(p.10) is a foreshadowing of some of the 'kitchen history' which she is to receive from Alain Chartier when she is close to Chinon:

Charles' mother Isabeau says he's a bastard and therefore has no claim on the throne of France. She states this formally in a treaty, and the history of her amours goes far to confirm what she says.(p.28)

Joan, in answer to her father's pleas, assures him that she always wants to be good, to do what is right and never to offend him. She does not, however, promise anything specifically about Vaucouleurs. She says only that she thinks she will never again go there.(p.11.) The feminine image which Anderson wishes to recreate is apparent in this scene when Joan is surprised by her brothers just as her Voices have left her. She is teased about her prayerful attitude, but both boys console her when she begins to cry. They have obviously been playing battle games and their conversation veers round to Joan's 'notion that she might be the maid from Lorraine, sent to save the King.'(p.13) Joan then receives her first lesson — she finds a way to speak. She listens to her brothers' play-acting, whilst Jean gives a version of the words which historically Joan uses to warn the Duke of Bedford. This is another link with a later scene when Joan will use the example of her brother

strengthened by the advice of St. Margaret: 'And as for your speech with Baudricourt-think carefully what you will say, for you will see him soon'(p.12). Her comment to her brother reflects the two lessons and indicates, according to Anderson, Joan's first reason for adopting manly dress.

You almost make me believe — a boy could do it. Or a man.... Oh if only I could speak large and round like a boy, and could stand that way and make my words sound out like a trumpet — if I could do that I could do all the things God wants me to do. But I'm a girl and my voice is a girl's voice, and my ways are a girl's ways. If only I were a man! If only I could shout like a man! But that wouldn't help either, for it wouldn't fit with the prophecy.(p.16)

Chinon is the second scene where Joan is in the ascendant and where she begins to use the knowledge she practised on Baudricourt. Alain Chartier has already warned her of the corruption when he meets her on the outskirts of the city. He tells her of the bad bargains the Dauphin makes and of his lack of self-respect.He goes on to say:

I told him he had made the House of Valois a house of prostitution — and that it was the only house of that character that ever lost money on its transactions. He laughed at that. If he can make three sous profit on any virtue you can bring him he'll sell you out, and throw you in a corner like an empty sausage-skin. There's no honor or decency left around him. None of any kind — in government, or religion — or the arts. Nothing but carrion flesh and big birds pulling at it.(p.28.)

Chartier's meeting with Joan may be fictional but the sentiments expressed in his conversation may well be closely akin to those which he actually expressed in the fifteenth-century.⁸ The account of the early meeting between Joan and her followers, and someone from the French court is fraught with imagery which suggests the vast difference between them and their worlds. Chartier is struck by their honesty, simplicity and great faith;

⁸ Pernoud, *op.cit.*, p.97; c.f. M. G. A. Vale, *Charles, VII*, 1974, p.80. This work refers to Chartier's *Le Curial*, where Chartier has made many accusations about the extravagances, the lavish style of life and the corruption of the court.

they are baffled by his story of the Dauphin's affairs, and by Chartier's worldliness which they do not understand. Nevertheless they are eager to press on to Chinon, in spite of the other's warnings. Chartier finally sees that Joan is 'neither fool nor charlatan', that, in fact, 'she is a child, with a child's heart'. Anderson's viewpoint implies that she also embodies the extreme and devastating simplicity of the common people. Joan makes her declaration of faith, which is reiterated by Mary and by Masters in an Interlude:

It may be that the Dauphin has lost faith in himself and in the kingdom of France. I shall bring his faith back to him, and with the help of God, I shall bring all France back to him.... You see these two men with me. They were only soldiers. They had no faith — but now they have. And all France will have faith.... (p.29).

Chartier's reply is both a foreshadowing of the fate that awaits her and a reflection of the light which will shine brightly in Mary's eyes, in Masters' play. (Interlude 2, p.29).

Maybe I'm the fool — for there's a brightness on your face or something dazzles my eyes. I begin to believe — yes, if there were help possible for France—you might bring it....And if you don't succeed where you're going — then girl, you're not likely to live very long afterwards.(pp.29- 30).

The next scene is at Orleans, where Joan of Arc reaches the culmination of her success. The battle action is viewed from an upper window of the palace, and the Dauphin and Dunois are criticised by the Archbishop of Rheims for allowing Joan to usurp their power. But the besieged city is about to fall to Joan and La Hire, and all except La Tremoille and Rheims are overjoyed. Whilst Charles appoints Joan, Dunois and La Hire to his council and dismisses La Tremoille and Rheims, Joan reverts to her childish, girlish state and cries because of the blood of the English dead, and because she herself is wounded. Dunois' cry of 'Why, you're a little girl Joan! Just a little

girl', (p.44) is an echo of Chartier's surprise when he realises that she is just a child. Joan's reply reinforces the idea of her own play-acting and imitation, and is a reminder of the danger which she will very soon face.

The other was all put on. So they'd respect me and listen to me.
But I can't do it any more. I went through so many things because
I looked forward to victory. I thought victory would be beautiful.
But it's ugly and bloody and hateful. (p.44).

This is the cry of a sensitive being at the first bloody experience of war. In spite of the obvious contrivance of a play, the cry perhaps reflects the inner revulsion of Maxwell Anderson towards war. If the story is true that he was discharged from the staff of a Quaker College because of his pacifist beliefs,⁹ the irony of such a happening does not detract from the strength of the conviction which brought about such a real-life situation. The scene ends with another declaration of faith — and a rather faltering one — one drawn from the Dauphin after Joan has exhorted him to be honest, so that his people will really believe in him and have faith in him as a king. She reassures him because he is worried about his lack of money and tells him that if he has enough faith in his heart he will have whatever he needs. His reply to Joan shows lack of moral strength, and his fear of La Tremoille and Rheims, and it strongly suggests their perfidy.

I don't know whether I want to do this. I have made some very
powerful enemies. (*He looks out after Tremoille and Rheims*).
And if it's all going to depend on my having faith — That's a
catch — that's a real catch, you know. (p.48)

The look on Joan's face (p.49) banishes doubt, even from the Dauphin.

Interlude 3 begins with the assembly of the whole of Masters' cast listening to Mary, expounding on what, to her, is the true meaning of Joan of Arc.

⁹ George Freedley, p. ix of his 'Introduction', to *Three Plays (op.cit)*, (1962).

She has a meaning for me. She means that the great things of this world are brought about by faith — that all the leaders who count are dreamers and people who see visions. (p.50)

Once again the core opinions expressed in the Joan of Arc play are repeated in the peripheral play. Mary now instructs the company on the importance of dreams and visions but especially of faith, in the same way that Joan has urged the Dauphin to be honest and to have faith. She complains about the rewriting of the play and of how it contains a thread of dishonesty which even Joan tolerated. Her air of indignation is countered by Masters' assuring statement that Joan, as everyone else, must permit some dishonesty in order to accomplish the tasks which she has set for herself. The dishonesty and the subterfuge of the medieval French court become superimposed on the thoughts and actions of the twentieth-century stage cast. Mary's certainty that Joan would not have crowned the Dauphin, if she had known of his dishonesty, brings the question of compromise to the fore. She is sure that she herself would not have done so, nor would Masters, she insists. And then Masters gives her a frightening, if an enlightening, answer.

My dear Mary, let me tell you something about the business end of the theater. It's frightening. You find yourself dealing with all sorts of shady operators. You heard me say that the theater we're supposed to open in turns out to be rented from a man who put through a minor swindle to get the lease on it — and he's in jail, and if we don't cover a bad check of his he'll stay there and lose his lease and we can't open.(51)

Masters thus puts the financial and the professional hazards of their particular company's impending performances to the cast for consideration. This allows them deliberate on Mary's suggestion that it is like going into partnership with thieves, and of the even worse situation, cited by Masters where the private graft of the box-office men may be rife when they are handling a hit production.

Anderson's total play is cleverly structured so that it allows the crises

and traumas of Masters and of the cast to happen in parallel with the crises of Joan, Dunois, the Dauphin and the ones who influence and affect their behaviour. 'This is where the play goes wrong', asserts Mary (p.68). She cannot believe that Joan would deliberately agree to a corrupt deal. But the author has decided it must be that way. Yet another contingency has arisen which might hinder the smooth running of the play. The man from whom they had their lease, now freed by the goodwill and financial help of Jimmy Masters, is to visit the theatre in order to give his opinion on the play. (p.68) The opening night might stand or fall pending this person's judgement. There is a fleeting reminder of the envoy from the Duke of Burgundy, who visited the court of Charles, to bargain for a two-week truce.

He sent a messenger last week....He wished to see you. I told him you would not negotiate. He sent another this morning. He offered you a hundred thousand gold crowns if you would make a two-week truce.(p.60)

Charles does offer to negotiate, and craftily makes Tremoille aware that his share in the bargaining is noted and understood. 'How much do you get?' Charles asks, but Tremoille replies: 'Nothing. It seems that Burgundy wishes to deal with you directly.'(p.61)

Mary, after walking out on the rehearsal, is back on a truce-like stay just for the rest of the day. She is very aware that the play might after all not take place; even as Joan considers that as the Dauphin is unworthy, he might not be crowned. A few lines of the outer play are interposed into the coronation scene and several words are significantly repeated by both groups.

Joan (Tessie, Mary's understudy): (kissing his hand) Gentle Dauphin, I hope this day will prove all you could wish.
 Dauphin: Indeed, I think it will. The crowds are enormous.
 Joan: It's the day we fought for and waited for.
 Al: (Mary takes Tessie's place). 'Indeed I think it will'.
 Dauphin: Indeed I think it will. The crowds are enormous.
 Joan: It's the day we fought for, and waited for.(p.62.)

Although Mary is repeating Joan's words, according to the play, there is a sign that the past is hidden only just below the surface of the present and that there is a certain universality in problems and doubtful situations. Perhaps the words reveal to Mary that Joan does not finally compromise her integrity and her honesty. Joan dislikes the short truce proposed by Burgundy, to which Charles has agreed, and she finds the celebrations and the feasting in the cities to be empty, unnecessary, and meaningless. 'But O King O Heaven, the food is bitter'(p.70). The Dauphin has sold their advantage for a 'mess of pottage'. Joan has fulfilled her mission as God's messenger; for God 'could not be wrong!' (p.67). After she has seen Charles crowned and anointed, she places her white shining armour on the altar and vows she will fight again as a humble soldier, wearing armour which is dark and insignificant. At this point we are again aware of the author's firm faith in the common people.

Joan wishes to be armed when she is taken prisoner; that too was told to her when she was instructed about her mission. Joan's pride, as seen in her pride in her armour, is not personal pride, but is embedded in the mission of which her armour is a part. Dunois reminds Joan that every government has its bargainers. 'Even God knows that.'

When Joan decides to fight again 'whether I win or lose', she becomes reconciled to whatever the future holds for her. Mary experiences a similar feeling when she discovers added meaning in the new lines. 'I have an answer now'.

Some of the new lines in this scene are Joan's own words. I could feel them turning and living. and then suddenly I knew what she would say.(p.87).

She repeats that she had an answer, when Masters asks her if she, too, is having revelations. She is convinced that although Joan is willing to

compromise in little things, she would not compromise her belief. Rather than do that, Mary avers, Joan will step into the fire. (p.87)

The details of the trial proceedings of the Anderson play are close to the historical records. For artistic purposes the playwright has emphasised certain portions of the questioning which dovetail into the Masters play, thereby making a cohesive whole. One of Joan's disturbances is her torment of mind. She confesses to the Inquisitor that she is tortured by the quandary of knowing she is doing right when the greater authorities of the Church assert that she is doing wrong. She cannot be convinced that her Voices are evil; they have come to her since she was a child. After Joan declares that she will not betray the truth to avoid the fire, the Inquisitor informs Joan that she has come to the great question: (which is the play's central imposing one). 'Why do I believe what I believe?'. That is a question which has been considered by the Masters cast. The play's Inquisitor, who is much kinder than he perhaps actually was, tells Joan that he came to the answer to this question at a much later age than she now is. He tells her that it is impossible to believe anything which cannot be proved.

But then what is there that can be proved? ...But if I give them up I shall be empty. All my world and my life will have no meaning.(p.79)

Masters made the assertion — which he claims is in democracy:

I can't even prove that it's a good influence. I just have faith that it is. — And every faith's like that — every faith looks ridiculous to those who don't have it. (p.58)

The Inquisitor exhorts Joan to give up the belief in her Voices, which cannot be proved, as can the doctrines and teachings of the church. 'All hopes, all dreams, all aspirations, all imaginings must be ruthlessly emptied out'. (p.79) St. Michael explains that this is not so. He assured her that her church judges could prove no more than she could. 'In all the articles of belief and

creed not one is capable of truth.'(p.83).

Joan's final answer 'I have an answer now' (p.88) is echoed by the cast of Masters' play. She firmly believes in the church, but cannot renounce her Voices and call them evil. She must be true and honest to herself, and must choose for herself. She makes the momentous decision; that to live a life without faith is more terrible than the fire. (p.89)

Both the personality of the playwright and the popular mood (of faith in the national cause) in vogue at the time when the play was written are strong influences which help to shape the meaning of *Joan of Lorraine*. Belief in the nobility of humanity is captured in the spirit of George Washington in *Valley Forge*, and in *Journey to Jerusalem*, where the humanity in Jesus is sincerely dramatised through the eyes of the young Joshua. Joan is another outstanding noble person. The story of Joan of Arc, a heroine in wartime, admirably fits the sentiments of the people who may have become aware of friends or colleagues whose belief has led to their death. The question of faith, which is deeply entrenched in the play, has more meaning at certain periods in history than in others. Audiences in nineteen forty-six, doubtless, were more sharply aware of the parallels of life during the Hundred Years' War and the second European war. Parallels of situations and word associations in the dual play enhance this awareness. Anderson seeks to prove, in the play, that ordinary people, including electricians, actors, stage managers, must all believe in something, irrespective of whether this is an organised religion or an (social) ideal that might be help to create a better world.

There is also an awareness of the fact that it may be necessary for anyone to have to answer such a vital personal question, as did Joan, at any time. Circumstances may change the extent to which a person may be committed to

a particular belief. Some would need to compromise; yet everyone has a choice. Joan's Voices told her that if resumption of her faith was too difficult, it would not be required of her. (p.84) She had saved Orleans and crowned the Dauphin at Rheims. Joan's persistence in her belief, first in God, and then in her Voices, which she claimed came from God, proves her integrity and why she willingly went to the fire. Because of the way the play is structured, Anderson has made it relevant and striking to his contemporaries without the need to make distortions in a search for novelty. Nevertheless, in the screen version of the play the simple story of Joan unfolds without the outer framework of rehearsals.¹⁰ This may have been valid as cinema entertainment, yet it loses a key aspect of Anderson's stage play — his keen awareness of the close relationship of a people and their theatre — particularly in time of war. As the inner play comes to be accepted by the cast, so this dialogue in progress is intended to argue out and illustrate: the playwright's vision of the dignity and significance of human life; the affirmation of a life of positive decision; and that the dignity and significance of human life consists in the power to suffer.

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¹⁰ M. D. Bailey, *op.cit.*, p.14.

CHAPTER 8

THE MAID - A BLITHE SPIRIT

Because so much has been recorded about Joan of Arc, and yet so little is known about her actual person, a large tapestry of images of St. Joan has emerged throughout the years. More recently, the trend towards producing a work that is sensational, that will appeal to the many or sell quickly and widely, is responsible for this continually varied presentation. No doubt the amazing details which are known of her history and the baffling inexplicability of that part of her life which is shrouded in doubt, will continue to present opportunities for imagination and conjecture. The work under consideration is perhaps an exception¹. With little distortion of the known qualities of Joan, the author is able to present a play which also reveals his own absorption in a particular theme; thus there are discernible links with an earlier play and a hint of his preoccupation with later ones.²

The Lark, a translation and abbreviation by Christopher Fry of Jean Anouilh's *L'Alouette*, is a cleverly devised play, accented by all aspects of its stagecraft. The contrived casualness of the settings, the acceptance of missed clues, the aside remarks of the cast, all create an atmosphere intended for audience entertainment and participation; everyone must realise that they are witnessing a play about a play.

Charles, Joan's parents, Cauchon and the others who have taken part in the chief episodes of Joan's drama, must each accept his role and at the right time act his own part (p.15). There is much in the play which savours of present-day psychology - returning to memories to solve a problem, or re-creating the scene of a crime as a method of detection. These deliberate anachronisms enliven a situation where past and present, fantasy and

¹ Jean Anouilh, *The Lark*, (1955) London. Trans. C. Fry. Page Nos. in parenthesis refer to this edition. I will work from this English translation but will refer to the unabbreviated French text when this is relevant.

² L.C. Pronko, *The World of Jean Anouilh*, (1968) p.37.

reality are all possible and valid. *The Lark* is self-conscious play-acting, which treats a tragic subject in a lighthearted manner. Anouilh's acknowledged admiration of Moliere is reflected in this type of presentation. Of Moliere, Anouilh said that he wrote of man's darkest or most evil moments, in terms of tragedy.³

It is claimed that Anouilh wrote *L'Alouette* at the threshold of a new life - with a new marriage and a new home⁴ - so it is possible that his personal mood provided extra blitheness for a tragic theme. The unhistorical ending is nevertheless a glimpse beyond history. In addition to improvising the forgotten coronation, the sensational but 'happy' ending supplies a flashback from the present to 1431; from the ashes the lark, phoenix-like, is revived and has continued to sing throughout the centuries.

The playwright's resistance to the Christian message of Joan is very evident and the play is reported to have had adverse criticism from the media, probably because of Anouilh's lack of religiosity in the original play. This is an idea which is easily contrasted with G.B.Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Although Shaw showed animosity towards the established Church, he did show Joan as a pure, holy creature, if at times she was boisterous and outspoken. Instead, Anouilh's Joan has a special kind of purity; hers is the purity of a child, innocent and guileless, a quality which sets her apart from the other characters.

Critical commentary and audience reception of this text vary from country to country because of differing religious and patriotic leanings. The original play in French appears to have been fairly well received by critics and it played to enthusiastic, packed audiences. The first appearance of Fry's *The Lark* was at the Lyric Theatre, London, in 1955. It coincided with a

³ Philip Thody, *Anouilh*, Edinburgh, (1968), p.70.

⁴ H.G.McIntyre, *The Theatre of Jean Anouilh*, London, (1981) p.87

revival of Shaw's *Saint Joan* and it is probable that the timing was unfortunate. Inevitably, comparison between the two Joan plays took place to the detriment of *The Lark*, which did not last the season.⁵ An adaptation of Anouilh's *L'Alouette* made by the American, Lillian Hellman, fared much better in New York, late in the same year. Her adaptation included modifications and omissions featured because of the difference and expectations of an American audience.⁶

Anouilh's chief concern in portraying heroic characters, particularly women, is their presentation as noble humans who fight against the corrupting influence of the world, and who, refusing to demean themselves with compromise, never achieve earthly happiness. The many ordinary people, content with second best, are satisfied with the baser, materialistic aspects of life. These latter are often seen as ugly and devious; they are aware of their abysmal state, yet they are unable to do anything about it. The noble, self-sacrificing Joan of history fits so easily into the framework of Anouilh's race of noble heroes. Her child's faith, and particularly her single mindedness, have close parallels in other plays by Anouilh where youth and inner purity are incompatible with mature age and the often resultant necessary connivance. The heroine of the *Antigone* of Anouilh is changed from that of Sophocles' *Antigone* by the introduction of various sentiments and incidents but chiefly by the emphasis on the ideal state of childhood. Whereas the Greek heroine gives her life for overwhelming religious reasons, Anouilh's *Antigone* is filled with nostalgia for the lost perfection of childhood. Her purity is not of the same calibre as Jeanne's, nor her convictions as selfless as those of her Greek counterpart. Both Jeanne and Anouilh's *Antigone* refuse to say yes to life, yet for *Antigone* her steadfastness is for her essential self alone; while Jeanne must remain true

⁵ Henry Knepler, 'The Lark' *Modern Drama*, May, 1958, p.16.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.15

to herself which includes her love for the common man.⁷ And so she reminds Warwick when he implores her to stay in her abjured state:

You're a good dear fellow in spite of your gentlemanly poker-face; but there isn't anything you can do: we belong, as you say, to different ways of life. (p.98)

The major theme which dominates the plays of Anouilh is the conflict between the two races; the heroic and the mediocre. Like *Antigone*, the heroines of the *Medee* and *Romeo et Jeanette* also refuse life with its ugly compromise,⁸ but their acceptance of death does not include the generosity and human kindness of Jeanne as she forgives her enemies; their refusal of life, although it resembles the one given by Anouilh for Jeanne, is centred on self. In death, Jeanne becomes her essential unconquered self, but the contrived ending reveals her to the world in her ideal state.⁹

In the first part of *The Lark* where the scene is set for the trial, the atmosphere created is one of play-acting, as all re-enact the episodes from Joan's past.

Cauchon: But, my Lord, before we do that, there's the whole story to play: Domremy, the Voices, Vaucouleurs, Chinon, the Coronation. (p.1)

and later:

Cauchon: Not immediately. Before we come to that, there's the whole of her life to go through. It won't take very long, my lord. (p.1).

These early words of Cauchon to Warwick stress the motion of acting, with added irony which emphasises in a particular way the short life of Joan, the child. When Joan, after questioning Cauchon as to where in her life she should begin, is reassured that she may choose, she becomes visibly

⁷ Pronko, *op.cit.*, p.37

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁹ Pronko, *op.cit.*, p.37.

happy to go back to her very early memories.

Joan:... It is after the evening Angelus. I am very small and my hair is still in pigtaails
 ...God is good and keeps me safe and happy ...though I know no-one has touched me, and the voice says -(p.2.)

As in a trance, Joan's imitation of the deep voice of the Archangel seems to transform her child-like state into the realm of make believe. Her pleas for pity as she is just a little girl, happy to be alone in the fields, establishes her in an Arcadian environment tranquil and innocent, and unwilling to move or to be removed from it. The bright light, the bells ringing, the Fairy Tree, create an ideal of innocence; all are used here as evidence against her, yet she must remain a child for a time, pure and intact in her paradisaal world.

Joan's parents, particularly her father, are portrayed as members of Anouilh's other race: the ordinary, ugly people. Jacques, Joan's father, is exceptionally grotesque and his cruelty towards his daughter creates a sombre division between them, one that ties of blood find difficult to heal. His harsh punishment, after calling her 'a filthy little slut', is a far cry from paternal love and protection, either medieval or modern. 'He savagely beats and kicks her'(p.15). It is felt that Anouilh has gone one step further than other twentieth-century dramatists and writers when portraying Joan's father. All have noted the *Proces* records, of how he was firm in his disapproval of her going to war; how he commissioned her brothers to drown her if she did so. This is one of the situations pinpointed in her recorded history¹⁰ which is enlarged upon and emphasised by many but blown up by Anouilh into unrecognisable proportions. Jacques' sarcasm, his fear that his daughter is not only bad, but that she is also a mad idiot is a co-mingling of fifteenth-century and modern opinions of evil. When Joan's mother asks Jacques if the beating has killed her, his reply of: 'Not

¹⁰ Regine Pernoud, *Joan of Arc*, London (1962), p.123.

this time' is indicative of his ugly ferocity, and ironically is an omen of the fate which will soon overtake her. His cruelty is not only physical; he accuses her of 'whoring and blaspheming'(p.12) and when in his anger at her supposed promiscuity, he turns to his wife and refers to Joan as 'your daughter' he shows his disdain for the whole female sex, in a somewhat twentieth-century fashion.

Joan's mother's excuse: 'Our Heavenly Father doesn't have to forgive fathers for beating their daughters' is perhaps another modern interpretation of Church teaching. The mother acts the part of a subordinate female of this century, who knows her place in the world, but is not quite ready to be liberated. She is very much out of character historically; in *L'Alouette* she continues to knit during the whole play, a point which was partially used in Fry's *The Lark* but which was discarded in the adaptation by Hellman.¹¹

The stage notes before Part I of *L'Alouette* include the following:
 LA MERE se met a tricoter dans un coin, Elle tricoter pendant toute la piece, sauf quand c'est a elle.¹²

Anouilh states specifically that Joan's mother is to knit throughout the evening. In Fry's version, instead of the knitting instruction before the beginning of the play, there are two separate notes which actually cover the time when Joan's mother would be able to knit!

Father: Where's that girl got to?

Mother: (going on with her knitting). She is out in the fields.(p.4)

Father:... She's got a lover, and you know it! Give me my stick!

Mother: (gently, still knitting). You know quite well, Joan's as innocent as a baby. (p.5).

The mother quietly knitting, even though it is a theatrical detail, is

¹¹ Knepler, op. cit. pp.22-23, where it is suggested that an Anglo-Saxon audience would not be aware of 'the ritual connection of the knitting women and the French Revolution'.

¹² J. Anouilh, *L'Alouette*, (1956), p.41.

part of Anouilh's craft of highlighting Joan's isolation. According to records, when Joan is asked about her early training she replied that she had learnt her prayers and her belief from her mother. This conjures a picture of a devoted mother and daughter, one very alien to Anouilh's portrayal. The preoccupation with knitting, like that of the Revolution women in Paris, in the shadow of the guillotine, throws a sinister light on this trial flashback. Everyone is aware of the outcome and the mother goes on knitting!

Joan's often anachronistic language, when playing with her brother, highlights her complete childishness. Besides fighting like urchins she calls him a 'beastly little pig' in retaliation for his jibe 'You're a silly donkey! Why did you have to go and tell the old people all that stuff?'(p.19). She goes on to chant a schoolground style of rhyme which children have sung this century and probably last century, but not in this form in the fifteenth.

Tell tales out of school, duck him in the muddy pool!
There's your halfpenny, lardy-head.
Tell-tale-tit, your tongue shall be split,
and all the children in the town shall
have a little bit! (p.19)

Anouilh's Jeanne makes the following reply to her telltale brother:

Ah! c'est toi qui le leur as dit, petit cochon? Tiens! le voila mon sou, tete de lard! la voila ta chique, sale bete! Je t'apprendrai moi a rapporter!¹³

Beaudricourt is one of the nondescript race of people and he is explicitly portrayed in a sensual manner. Joan needs a horse and he enquires if she is a virgin. Beaudricourt - (looking at her all the time 'I agree to the horse') (p.21). He is reassured.

Beaudricourt: A greedy child I see! Well, go on; you're amusing me. If I pay well for my pleasures it helps me to believe I really want them. You understand where this conversation is

¹³ Anouilh, *op.cit.*, p.60.

leading?(p.21)

Joan is innocent and ignorant of the propositioning. The huge dose of flattery to which Beaudricourt is treated is a little out of step with Joan's usual image but she is here presented as a wheedling, provocative teenager. She manages to put into words his unspoken and half-spoken thoughts:

Joan:...It's a lucky thing you have such a tremendous idea. It's certain to alter everything.

Beaudricourt: (uneasily) I have an idea?

Joan: Don't question it Robert; be very proud of it...(p.26).

After she has exhausted Beaudricourt by injecting her ideas into his head, and calling them his own, he agrees to grant her request for a quiet horse. She has yet to learn to ride.

Beaudricourt: (delighted) 'You're going to break your neck my girl'.

Her reply is full of childish camaraderie.

Joan: I'll bet you a suit of clothes - the man's clothes which you still haven't said you'll give me - against a punch on the nose. Bring two horses into the courtyard and we'll gallop them together. If I fall off you can lose faith in me. Is that fair? (she offers him her hand). Agreed? And whoever doesn't pay up is a man of mud! (p.28)

Joan's flattery includes persuading Robert that he is not only intelligent but that he is handsome too. At first he is puzzled, as he cannot think that he could be both handsome and intelligent. He tells Joan that the general opinion is that one cannot be both.

Joan: That's the opinion of the plain people, who like to believe God can't manage both things at once. (p.23)

This is one of Anouilh's divisions as he portrays the common place, the evil and the sensual, as ugly also. This was also an idea of the Middle Ages, where some writers attributed sublime virtues to nobility and inferior ones

to the common people.¹⁴ Joan's badinage reveals a degree of worldly wisdom not usually associated with childhood. She uses childish banter to flatter and cajole, and she succeeds in not only getting her own way, but in firmly placing Beaudricourt in the race of the common people - he does not know that he does not have an idea of his own.

But it is with her meeting with Charles that Joan is shown in her complete guilelessness. The story of her finding the Dauphin, although he is disguised and almost hidden, has been told many times. Anouilh captures it in a game of hide-and-seek and Joan wins.

Joan: Gentle Dauphin, it was a good joke to put your crown on this boy, it doesn't take much to see that he is really a nobody.
(p.45)

When rebuked for his temerity by the Archbishop, Charles looks at Joan and, gathering his strength, he repeats the formula that she has given him. 'Through my father, my grandfather, and all the line of kings'...(He winks at Joan) 'Isn't that right?' ...'Leave us, my lords, when the king commands it'
(p.46)

They are a pair of childish collaborators, their combined strength in child talk more than equal for the faded worldly wisdom which confronts them. Their childish laughter signals the dismissal of the sages from the Court, and Charles, suddenly anxious, is reassured by Joan's smile: 'Are there many of you in my kingdom with such honest faces?' (p.47) he queries, and when Joan replies in the affirmative, Charles reminisces, in childish fashion, how unfortunately 'he sees only ruffians, hypocrites and whores' - the base adult race of Anouilh people.

Charles introduces Joan to a card game and instructs her that the ace is superior to the king. Joan avers that only God is greater but Charles

¹⁴ J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, (1955), p.57.

rather ingeniously demonstrates the idea that there are many interpretations of God, according to individual interests. He explains this to Joan:

The ace, or God if you like; but there's one in each camp... And my cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, he has a God for Burgundy. (p.51)

His later remark, however, portrays the changes in Charles' thinking:

God is with everybody my girl. He marks the points and keeps the score. But, in the long run, He plumps for the people who have the most money and the biggest armies.

Joan's reply of:

...God isn't with the strongest; He is with the bravest. There's the difference. God hasn't any love for cowards. (p.51)

shows a commonsense attitude towards God but it has no affinity with the faith of these particular medieval Christians - the compromisers of Anouilh's race of inferior people who value only the material and sensual rewards of life - and with whom are associated the Duke of Burgundy and his collaborators at the Court.

Charles has quickly turned away from his upside-down game of cup and ball, which earlier symbolised his desire to govern.

La Reine Yolande: Vous devriez cesser de jouer avec ce bilboquet, Charles, et de vous asseoir a l'envers sur votre trone Cela n'est pas royal!¹⁵

In Fry's translation the symbolism of the cup and ball in Charles' reply reveals that he prefers to play games because it is less dangerous than the devious practices of those who govern:

Charles: You would be sensible to let me be as I am. When the ball misses the cup, it drops on to my nose and nobody else's. But

¹⁵ Anouilh, *op.cit.*, p.80.

sit me on the throne the right way up, with the orb in one hand and the sceptre in the other, then whenever I make a mistake the ball will drop on everybody's nose. (p.39)

The skill and practice needed to toss the ball and catch it in the cup in such a precarious position, are perhaps part of Anouilh's stagecraft in suggesting the manoeuvring manipulation of those who govern at such a time. In this way he demonstrates that even the supposedly 'noble' people say yes to life.

The early conversation with Yolande concerning the desirability of him meeting the Maid has borne fruit. Yolande had said that he needed the counsel of a peasant and Charles had added, ironically, that he needed courage also. With Joan their talk has first centred on their childish fears. She points out ways in which Charles might overcome his fears. She claims that La Tremouille is not just devoid of fear but is stupid and without imagination. Her replies resemble the counsel of twentieth-century child psychologists. She explains the difference between her fear and his fear:

You say: One thing is obvious, I'm frightened which is nobody's business but mine and now on I go. And now on you go. And if you see something ahead which nothing can overcome....(p.53)
...As long as you turn and face what frightens you. But the first step has to be yours. He waits for that. (p.54)

This is Joan's formula for courage. She does not suggest that he should first ask God but rather that, when he has faced his dangers with courage, he may claim the right to God's help. The courage which she gives to Charles is the subject of one of the questions put to her by the Promoteur:

Le Promoter (surgit derriere elle, soudain). A quel signe t'es-tu fait reconnaitre de celui que tu appelles ton roi pour qu'il te confie son armee?¹⁶

When Joan replies that she does not understand what he means by a 'sign',

¹⁶ Anouilh, *op.cit.*, p.100.

she is asked if she has given Charles mandragora to drink or by what name or in what language is the secret known.

Promoteur: ... What did you give him at Chinon to make him so heroic all of a sudden? A Hebrew name? The devil speaks all languages, but he delights in Hebrew. (p.61)

Joan's reply sounds more apt in Anouilh's own *L'Alouette*:

Jeanne: (sourit). Non, Messire, cela a un nom francais et vous vous-meme de le dire. Je lui ai donne du courage, voila tout.¹⁷

Joan's simple answer shows the wisdom of her limited knowledge. She knew nothing of mandragora or of the resultant strange fancies, or the signs of which her learned questioner was so obsessed. She knew of simple courage because, being one of Anouilh's heroic race, she had plenty of it. Charles' new-found courage helps him to grow up and away from Joan. He will use his courage for devious means, as do the race of compromisers; they will have separate destinies.

The queens, Yolande and her daughter, and Agnes Sorel, the royal mistress, are figures of fun as they pursue their trivial whims of fashion and, at the same time, introduce anachronisms into the dialogue.

Agnes: But Charles, it's impossible : You can't let me appear at the Ball looking such a frump. Your mistress in one of last year's steeple hats. (p.32)

The extremely high henins, the female fashion of the times, and the long toe-curved shoes appear as costume signs of the excesses of medieval Europe. The steeple hats are given importance in *The Lark* as being, at that time, among the few commodities of French superiority.

Agnes: Imagine Charles, if they're wearing our newest fashions over there before we are!

¹⁷ *loc. cit.*

...Charles: At least they pay for them. Fashion is practically the only thing we can sell them; our fashions and our cooking. They are the only things which still give us some prestige with foreigners.

...Yolande: We have to defend this prestige. The girls aren't altogether wrong Charles. It's most important there should be no question at this ball that ladies of the Court of France are the best dressed in the world. No one has been able to decide, remember, exactly where triviality begins. A steeple hat the English have never seen before might be as good as a victory. (p.32)

These are ironic comments on Joan's idealism for the monarchy and for the human race in general. They reveal the polarity as between Joan and the royal ladies and heighten the dissimilarity between her ways and their ways. Anouilh's deliberate satire when comparing victory with a fashion symbol when the two countries have been at war for many years, however desultorily, is demeaning both to the English and to the French. The ladies are not among the heroic race; none of the three would forsake her pleasures for a principle. Their play-acting is trivial and childish, but not childlike and blameless.

The Lark, instead of the more usual scenes and Acts, is divided into two Parts. There is no change in the scenery and most of the cast are present throughout but may be obscured when not speaking. Warwick, the first to speak in Part I, is important in *The Lark* as a kind of stage manager, pushing everyone along towards the burning. At Cauchon's remonstrance that they must play the whole story, Warwick replies:

Theatrical poppycock! You can tell that story to the children: the beautiful white armour, the fluttering standard, the gentle and implacable warrior maid. The statues of her can tell that story, later on, when policies have changed. We might even put up a statue ourselves in London, though I know at the moment that sounds highly improbable... (p.1.)

The statue in London is another of the play's little ironies; there has never been a statue in London, although one was erected in Winchester Cathedral.

Warwick's words indicate that the play-acting is aimed towards the foregone conclusion and he is impatient for it to happen. With the playwright over his shoulder, he is aware that the future change of government will regard Joan in a different light. In the play Warwick's speeches are directed towards the English intolerance of French ways; the French reciprocate disdainfully.

The past-present-future time element lends itself to the art of playing games with history which results in multiple ironies.

Propaganda, my lord Archbishop, is black or white. The main thing is to say something pretty staggering and repeat it often enough until you turn it into a truth. It's a new idea, but believe me, it will make its way. (p.11)

He continues to argue the need to get Joan out of the way because of the indignities she has caused the English side.

Aller se faire sacrer roi de France a notre barbe, un Valois? Venir nous faire ca a Reims, chez nous? Oser nous retirer la France de la bouche, piller impudemment le patrimoine anglais? Fort heureusement Dieu est avec le droit anglais.? Il la prouve a Azincourt. Dieu et notre droit.¹⁸

The explanation of propaganda in Warwick's reply to Cauchon's admonition that the trial is only for heresy seems an admission of collusion behind the scenes. Like many of the profound statements in *The Lark* it cloaks a shaft of humour. His use of 'propaganda' is a modern negative one, which supposes a meaning quite different from that used many years ago.

So rattle her through the rest of it, and have her burned, and not so much talk. Earlier on I was joking. I give it ten years, and this whole incident will have been forgotten.(p.11)

¹⁸ Anouilh, *loc. cit.*, p.51.

These are words which are typical of the attitude of Warwick, in spite of his veiled admiration for Joan's physical and verbal achievements. The arrangements of the speeches in both Parts may be a subtle reminder by the author that the English, according to popular French opinion, were responsible for the death of Joan. Cauchon's reply to Warwick's first words in Part I hold the sound of delay, of gaining time, even of reprieve.

After Warwick's long, linking statement in Part II, Cauchon's words are both recriminating and mildly surprised. It is of interest that Anouilh uses the same sentiment in *Becket*.

Cauchon: But you still take aim and shoot her down.(p.57)

Warwick: A man is a mass of contradictions, my lord Bishop. It isn't unusual in him to kill what he loves. I love animals, but I hunt them too.

This is paralleled in *Becket* when Henry II, distraught, cries:

I love him! I love him! ...As long as he's alive I'll never be able to do a thing.¹⁹

It is Warwick who names Joan a lark, singing in the sky over France, as a mascot to charm the ordinary people into being killed; he is blind to the other symbolisms of the lark; the courage and the bravery, the constancy in singing from dawn until late evening. This latter quality Anouilh might have seen as a parallel of Joan's single mindedness. Anouilh's imagery, through the words of Warwick, blend Joan with France. Not only is she the image of France: she is France.

Cauchon's words are often prefaced by the stage direction 'gently', and his tone towards Joan is at times conciliatory, whilst quietly reprimanding Warwick for his impatience. He is not only correct, as in Shaw's *Saint Joan*, but Anouilh has made the Bishop one of the near-heroic people. They endeavour to resist and are aware of corrupting influences, but in the end

¹⁹ Jean Anouilh, *Becket*, London, p.110.

they are not quite worthy. His obvious aim is to save Joan and his very attitude towards this end is similar to that of Creon in *Antigone*.²⁰ It is this gentle persuasive manner which makes the character of Joan almost subservient to that of Cauchon. Anouilh is said to have been unsure whether he liked Joan or Cauchon best.²¹ Anouilh's unsureness about his two characters might mean that he had exalted Cauchon to the detriment of Joan. It is this solicitous manner which demonstrates his desire to save her.

Cauchon: I think well enough of you Joan to know that fear in itself is not enough to make you draw back. But you should have another, greater fear: the fear of being deceived, and of laying yourself open to eternal damnation. Now what risk do you run, even if your voices are from God, if you perform the act of submission to the priests of His church?... (p.81)

He goes on to say that if they, the priests, have made the mistake and that God has really spoken to Joan, then it is they who will be guilty of the 'monstrous sin of ignorance, presumption and pride, and who will have to make expiation through all eternity'. That Cauchon considers the possibility of being wrong means that Anouilh has changed his character greatly. History has recorded Cauchon as being implacable in his attitude and confident from the outset that Joan would be burned. Anouilh portrays him almost as a peacemaker, acting as a wise and gentle mediator between the self-righteous Warwick and the fanatical Promoter. Cauchon conforms more to Anouilh's Creon than to his historical self. As Creon almost succeeded in his reasoning to persuade Antigone to abandon her sisterly duty of burying her dead rebel brother,²² so Cauchon is almost successful in bringing Joan back to the fold of the Church. He senses the rightness in her, perhaps he is nostalgically envious of her child's faith but his material well-being is of more importance to him than a claim to heroism. When

20 Thody, *op.cit.*, p.50.

21 *Ibid.*, p.49.

22 McIntyre, *op.cit.*, p.49.

Warwick is speaking of Joan's entertaining tricks as she persuades Beaudricourt to believe her thoughts are his own, he suddenly asks Cauchon: 'Have you faith yourself, my lord Bishop? (p.29) Cauchon's simple answer that he has a child's faith suggests that he too looks back to childhood as the ideal state. He continues:

And that is why I shall make problems for you during the trial, and why we shall go as far as ever we can to save Joan, even though we have been sincere collaborators with the English rule, which seemed to us the only reasonable solution to chaos. (p.29)

His words are loaded with irony; his excuses for the treason - as a sincere collaborator - and his justification for it as being part of the frailty of men(p.30) are more examples of Anouilh's playing with history, so that his characters perform to his own pattern.

Cauchon's early statement to Warwick (smiling): 'put your mind at rest my lord. There are too few of us here to stage battles' (p.2) has a twofold purpose. It reassures the intolerant Warwick that he will not be embarrassed by the re-enactment of battles and it lays emphasis on the small number of characters and the play-acting. He repeatedly remonstrates with the Promoter and the Inquisitor and when their questions become dangerous, he cautions Joan to save her from self-incrimination. He is insistent that 'little girls need fairy trees' and that at fifteen, contrary to what the Promoter asserts, Joan is innocent. The Promoter questions her about her Archangel and suggests that he is really the devil. He then calls Joan an idiot because she did not say 'Get thee behind me foul Satan, and don't tempt me again' (p.6).

Joan...He couldn't have been the devil. He shone with light; he was beautiful. ...You're telling a lie Canon! I haven't any of your learning but I know the devil is ugly and all that is beautiful is the work of God. (p.7)

Cauchon shows his wisdom and how he differs from the Promoter:

Cauchon: (stopping him sternly) Canon! You are losing your way! This is very far from Joan's devil if she has seen one. I beg you not to confuse your devil with hers. (p.7)

The veiled antagonism becomes clearer when the Promoter objects to Joan having a cross.

Le Promoteur: (glapit) Pas de croix, Frere Ladvenu!

Cauchon: Laissez, Chanoine, je vous l'ordonne!

Le Promoteur: J'en refererai en Cour de Rome!

Cauchon: Vous en refererez au diable si vous voulez pour le moment, c'est moi qui commande ici.²³

Anouilh's Cauchon at intervals remembers the play-acting and the inevitability of the ending, and this is revealed in the ominous undercurrent of his soft persuasive words. When he stresses Joan's innocence he adds:

It will be another matter when we come to the trial: I shan't spare her voices then... My Lord Promoter let her talk with her Voices in peace and quiet. It is the beginning of the story. We mustn't reproach her with them yet. (p.8)

The fact clearly emerges that although traditionally Cauchon, the Promoter and the Inquisitor are working towards the same end, in *The Lark* Cauchon is pictured almost as one of the noble race, whilst the others are unmistakably of the ordinary race of people.

The long speech by Warwick which separates the Parts resembles the Chorus in early Greek and Roman plays where there was a spoken or sung commentary explaining future action and summarising past action. 'In point of fact that wasn't exactly how it happened'.

In the end they agreed to use Joan as a sort of flagpole to nail their colours to:...We started being beaten from that time on, against all the laws of strategy. I know some people have said there was nothing miraculous about that. They maintain that our system of isolating forts around Orleans was ludicrous, and all the enemy had to do was attack: which is what Joan made them agree to try. But that's not true...No: we must have the grace to admit there was more in it than that: a strong element of the imponderable -

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Anouilh, *op. cit.*, p.134.

or God, as you might say, my Lord Bishop - which the rules of strategy don't provide for. Without question, it was Joan. (p.56)

Warwick's words cover the lack of reason, on military grounds, for the defeats, and, as Joan is the illogical reason, she must be destroyed. When he mentions the 'strong element of the imponderable' there is a contradiction of his statement in Part I:

Whether we're ruling the world with a mace or a crozier, in the long run, we do it by persuading fools that what we make them think is their own opinion. No need for any intervention of God in that. Which is why I found it so entertaining. (p.29)

Unlike history, Charles and La Tremouille are with the guards when Joan is dragged away into captivity. Time is cleverly exploited in the play and the flashbacks are used to good effect. Because of the lack of reality of the present, Charles and the others quietly edge away from Joan, which makes this fictional inclusion a significant point in conveying what history has recorded. The records state that Charles was quiet after Joan's capture, and there was no attempt to ransom her or to save her. Before Anouilh's Charles disappears, Cauchon informs Joan that, in a letter sent to every town, the king has repudiated her. (p.57)

The pace quickens as Cauchon's tone grows less benign and all seem intent to get the burning done. Joan is now a self-willed obstinate child; the Inquisitor joins in a lengthy damning speech. His hitherto silent observance has led him to see that Joan is the greatest evil which the Inquisition has known. She is human!

The Promoter could see only the Devil, the Bishop only the pride of a young girl intoxicated with success. I waited for something to show itself. Now it has happened - I represent the Holy Inquisition. My Lord the Bishop told you just now with great humanity how his human feelings linked him with the English cause which he considers just; ... The princes of the earth laugh very heartily to see the Inquisition give itself such endless care when for them a piece of rope or a sergeant's signature on a death warrant would be enough. The Inquisition lets them laugh. It knows how to recognise the enemy;... His enemy, you yourself

spoke his name, when at last you came into the open: his only enemy is man. (p.64)

The lengthy discourse has been criticised by some because it is wordy and without eloquence.²⁴ It marks a change in tone as the end grows near, and although Joan is little more than a child, her answers grow more worldly wise. The Inquisition is portrayed as being ridiculous because of the manner in which the Inquisitor lists Joan's good deeds, her childish piety, her tender charity to others, her many prayers; all these seem as crimes on his lips. Her simple human faith makes her the great challenge to arbitrary divine or human tyranny.

Ladvenu, who now speaks out for Joan, and affirms her gentleness, humility and charity (p.66), is firmly chastised. He is silenced because he has confused two 'important' concepts. The Inquisitor speaks to him sternly:

...I stand here for the Holy Inquisition, alone qualified to make the distinction between Charity, the theological virtue, and the uncommendable graceless cloudy drink of the milk of human kindness. (He passes his eye over them all) Ah, my Masters. How quickly your hearts can be melted. The accused has only to be a little girl, looking at you with a pair of wide-open eyes and with a ha'porth of simple kindness. (p.66)

This is a Manichean view which, in separating divine and human, transforms them into good and evil. Her extreme youth indeed exacerbates this idea to the point of fanaticism. Anouilh portrays Joan as a child. In the play her childhood is made to appear, to her enemies, as the chief of her crimes. Ladvenu, the other person who is guilty because of his youth, is condemned on another count; he ventured to quote from scripture:

Our Saviour also loved with this loving-kindness, my lord. He said: Suffer the little children to come unto me... (p.67)

Ladvenu, as well as including other wrongdoers as the welcome people of the Saviour, makes particular mention of that same group of people which

²⁴ Thody, *op.cit.*, p.50.

the Inquisitor has just condemned as being worthy of the pruning knife of the Inquisition. Anouilh is playing games with the Church as he ridicules the severity of the Holy Inquisition. It has moreover been made clear in the Promoter's speech (p.64) that the Holy Inquisition is a separate body, not specifically associated with France, and so further ironies are present. The Inquisitor explains the Lessons of the Gospel because it would be wrong to translate them into the vulgar tongue and cause mischief by having untutored Souls play with the Texts. Finally, Ladvenu's worst crime, akin to that of Joan, is cited:

You are young, Brother Ladvenu and you have a young man's generosity. But you must not suppose that youth and generosity find grace in the eyes of the faith's defenders. Those are transitory ills which experience will cure. I see that we have considered your age and not your learning which I believe is remarkable before we invited you to join us here. Experience will soon make plain to you that youth, generosity, human tenderness are names of the enemy. (p.67)

When the Inquisitor makes the appalling statement that love of man excludes the love of God, Ladvenu's quiet response: 'And yet He chose to become a man' (p.68) provokes the Inquisitor into dispensing with his services completely. It is interesting to note that in Hellman's adaptation the youth of Joan and the youth of Ladvenu are mentioned in the same speech,²⁵ and that some of the controversial religious statements are glossed over or dispensed with.

Warwick's link has summarised the battles and this admirably suits the restriction of a stage performance. But there is a very ingenious scene prefaced by the Promoter goading Joan about her pride and presumption. She has been trying to explain why she went to war and repeats that it was a divine command.

²⁵ Knepler, 'The Lark', *Modern Drama*, 1, May, 1958, p.25.

Our Lord couldn't want the English to pillage, and kill and overrule us in our own country. When they have gone back over the sea, they can be God's children again in their own land.

When the Promoter suggests that it would have been better for her to have carried on sewing and spinning beside her mother she answers: 'I had something else to do my lord. There have always been plenty of women to do women's work' (p.69). And after the Inquisitor's ridicule about her direct communication with heaven, and his asking if she thought it better to have dedicated her life to prayer, she replies:

God likes action first, my lord. Prayer is extra. It was simpler to explain to Charles that he ought to attack, and he believed me, and gentle Dunois believed me too. And so did La Hire and Xantrilles, my fine couple of angry bulls! We had some joyful battles, all of us together. (p.70)

That is an extra sin for which Joan must ask God's forgiveness, that she loved the war. But God wished it, she said. As she asks La Hire's opinion, he suddenly appears. Illusion of event as well as time is a feature of the play. La Hire may be regarded as the representative of all her battle companions; history records that he had a special place in her heart. Imagination and nostalgia perhaps associated her two angry bulls with her childhood animal friends. Stagecraft is enhanced with the appearance of La Hire; everyone else fades into the background.

Well, Miss we've had the bit of praying we agreed to have; what's the next thing? Do we take a bash at them this morning? (p.71)

His language is colloquially and school-boyishly English. After he has apologised for his breakfast of onions and red wine and consequent stinking breath, and explained that had he been a priest, or a linen draper, his breath would have been sweet and innocent: 'But look here, you wouldn't call it a sin, would you?' he asks (p.72). The obsession with the baser human elements of the food and drink which caused his breath to stink is a humorous reminder of Anouilh's division of people into races; on the

assumption that La Hire was satisfied with bodily appetites, he is excluded from the higher race. Joan and La Hire talk of Heaven in strange slang and wax enthusiastic about the prospect of future campaigns when the English are gone and the world around is bright and happy and sweet smelling. They ride imaginary horses side by side. With the care Anouilh is reputed to have taken about the details of set and costume, this hobby horse adventure would be a spectacular sight.

The fantasy clears as La Hire rides after the imaginary English and ploughs through the three, who now reform around Joan. Cauchon, now visible, tells her that she is completely alone, that they have all deserted her. The urge to make her recant begins. The Inquisitor, in one of his long tirades, again succeeds in threading grim humour amongst threats concerning man destroying himself.

Would it were only a question of the devil. His trial would soon be over. The devil speaks our language. In his time he was an angel and we understand him. The sum of his blasphemies, his insults, even his hatred of God, is an act of faith. (p.76)

The importance of the Inquisitor has been magnified for Anouilh's purpose, which includes his Church baiting. Yet the Inquisitor's tirades have some subtle humour which lightens the gloomy messages of fear and hate. It is Cauchon, with his subdued persuasive manner and his gentle counsel, who is eventually responsible for Joan's weakening. Her words are chiefly those recorded at the trial, but Anouilh's rendering and the total message of words before and after, seem strongly at variance.

Then give yourself into the care of your mother Joan, without question. She will weigh your burden of error, and so release you from the anguish of judging it for yourself...You will do your penance whether it is heavy or light, and at last you will be at peace.

Joan: In what concerns the Faith, I trust myself to the Church. But what I have done I never wish to undo. (p.76)

Joan's persistence causes a great stir among the doctors of the Church, and Cauchon, ever vigilant, plays on the weakest spots of Joan's defence; her gentle feeling, her fear of damnation and her fear of the fire. He at last sees a chance of saving her on earth and flatters her for her good sense. His words signify his near victory, and his recognition of her child state precedes Joan's submission and willingness to sign.

I have put many to death in defence of the Church, as you have put many to death in defence of your Voices. It is enough. I am tired. I wish to die without adding to those deaths the death of a little girl.

His attitude towards Joan is the opposite of that of the Inquisitor because characterisation of the two allows him to push the fanaticism of the Holy Inquisition, and consequently part of the blame for Joan's death, further away from France. Joan's insight and her childish wisdom are shown in her answer to the Promoter concerning Cauchon, and her reply when he explains how the people of Rouen are waiting for the spectacle of the burning. 'I do forgive them. And I forgive you, as well, my lord'. This provokes the anger of the Promoter and his denunciation of her 'abominable' pride. Of Cauchon she says:

My lord talks to me gently but I don't know whether it is to save me or to overthrow me. And since in a little while he will have to burn me anyway, I forgive him. (p.80)

Anouilh uses words for this forgiveness of Cauchon which are very close to those recorded, and he has used them in a manner which is a reminder of Calvary.

The many flights from history in the second part of the play seem less obvious because all the cast are on stage, barely seen, during the whole performance. Charles appears and he explains to Joan that it is bad policy to acknowledge the help of a miracle for his crowning. This is another step beyond history, but it gives a reason for his historical desertion of Joan. He

wants to believe, he tells her, that God had no hand in it; He had neither helped nor hindered him in his kingship. Anouilh's Charles visits Joan again, after she has submitted to the Church in order to congratulate her. Yolande and Agnes make remarks which denote their place with the many, nondescript people who cannot forego the material things in life and are willing to accept life with all its flaws. Their messages of goodwill are as much without real meaning as is their very presence.

Yolande: Dying is quite useless, my little Joan: and whatever we do in life should have a use of some kind.

Agnes: It was all so very stupid. Usually I adore political trials, and I particularly begged Charles to get me a seat; to watch someone fighting for his life is desperately exciting, as a rule. (p.91)

The eagerness with which Agnes wished to attend a political trial where someone fights for life is another sign of her ordinariness. Of little courage usually are those who like to watch a fight to the death. There is a reflection of twentieth-century keenness to watch mercilessly cruel blood sports. The women are both eager to get away and Charles is unhappy in the damp prison atmosphere. They, like La Hire, are base creatures and have a partiality for material comfort. La Hire must have his red wine and onions, Agnes her henins, Yolande a comfortable existence and Charles a sneeze-free pleasant air.

Although Joan has succumbed to the soft words of Cauchon, when he compared her sufferings with the awful agony of Christ, she is tormented in her mind because she has had no signs of approval from her Voices.

I know it would be simple, too easy, if God always held me by the hand; where would the merit be? I know he took me by the hand in the beginning because I was too small to be alone and later He thought I could make my own way. But I am not very big yet, God.

It is clear that Anouilh is emphasising the smallness of Joan; that in

spite of her military prowess she is still a child. She must remain a child.

It is significant that it is Warwick who has supplied the links in the events, and who is responsible for Joan's finest hour. It is he who congratulates her on her decision to submit to the Church; he in his sporting English manner reminds her of how much living there is left for her. And it is this confrontation of what might happen in the future that establishes Joan as one of Anouilh's heroic people.

Her stay of execution, which Beaudricourt engineers at the eleventh hour, adds a final spice of humour. An extra touch of irony is seen in the knight-errant figure, who historically was one of the two witnesses who spoke for the prosecution at Joan's trial.²⁶

This man is quite the right end of Joan's story, the end which will never come to an end, which they will always tell, long after they have forgotten all our names or confused them all together; it isn't the painful end of the cornered animal caught at Rouen: but the lark singing in the open sky. Joan at Rheims in all her glory. The true end of the story is a kind of joy. Joan of Arc; a story which ends happily. (p.103)

The glory at Rheims according to Anouilh is the coronation ceremony, with Joan's beloved bells, the lights on the stained glass windows, and the holy doves, and Charles has the crown on his head at last. The coronation is one of Anouilh's masterpieces of costume and stage scenery. In spite of the makeshift appearance, costume played an important part in his presentation. The hastily prepared scene reveals Charles in a cloak, fur cape and crown, which are obviously too big, and the ceremonial costume with scalloped edges is thrown casually around Joan's shoulders. The scallops are said to suggest her vulnerability²⁷ Both the costumes are too big for the very youthful figures; they resemble dress-up garb for

²⁶ M. Warner, *op.cit.*, p.118.

²⁷ G.R. Kernodle, *Invitation to the Theatre* (1967), p.432 and illustration. c.f. Hilaire Belloc, *Joan of Arc*. 1929.

children playing at being dignified adult leaders.

However trivial might seem the reason which causes Joan to prefer death, and however it falsifies history, in wishing to keep her youth and purity, Anouilh has kept her faithful to his dramatic image of heroic people. Not for love of God or for love of France or for fear of the lonely, dark prison, but because she dreads living in the future: she dreads growing old and complacent, and perhaps of becoming a nondescript housewife. She prefers to die young and to be remembered as the warrior maid in the shining white armour. Her decision stems partly from her integrity. Her childhood is stressed throughout the play: in her encounter with Beaudricourt, her relationship with her family, with Charles, with the Inquisitor and especially with Cauchon. She is a child and will remain one; a wise child, at times a precocious child but always one of Anouilh's heroic race. Anouilh's characterisation, in highlighting Joan's ideal childhood, seems very close to the virgin saint which she finally became. At the time of her canonisation the cult of holy childhood was very strong in the Catholic Church.

The endings of both the Fry version and the American one have been altered from that of the original, and consequently much of the irony is lost. Joan's father and brother appear just as Beaudricourt has made his dramatic entry. Fry leaves out the appearance of the ugly-tempered father, thereby losing the irony of having one of the baser race sharing the glory. In Hellman's American version La Hire and not Beaudricourt arrives to save Joan and the coronation scene is distanced from the execution scene.²⁸ The result is more in keeping with the expectation of American audiences, as the spectacle is shared between Joan and Warwick.

²⁸ Knepler, *op.cit.*,

The excellence of *The Lark* lies mainly in its stagecraft. Adherence to history is most apparent in Joan's speeches which are brief in the courtroom scenes; grouped around these are the speeches of her judges, which are all arranged to suit the author's artistry. The tone is chiefly ironic and at times it is most subtle. On the surface the play is anti-clerical; the Holy Inquisition is ridiculed and the Inquisitor has reminded the audience that this institution does not stem from France but from Spain. The members of the Church, Joan's judges, appear as caricatured figures: Cauchon is the most exalted, and the Inquisitor and the Promoter are both evil in a particular way. Joan's father is likewise portrayed as far baser than history allows, and her mother is distanced from her and is indifferent. Anouilh keeps faithfully to his own categorisation of noble humans and ordinary ones, and the changes which he makes to historical characters are made for this reason. Joan is pictured always as a child, albeit often with adult wisdom.

The Lark differs from Shaw's *Saint Joan* by reason of the spectacular rescue by Beaudricourt and by the stage arrangement by which the past and the present merge. Shaw's virgin is more boisterous, earthy and is a stocky country girl. Despite evidence to the contrary, Anouilh portrays Joan as a 'little' skinny girl who looks slightly undernourished.

In his Preface G.B. Shaw has gone to great lengths to explain the history surrounding Joan, and by doing so he saved elaborate scenery, sham fights and processions. His Epilogue finally was necessary, he explains, in order to show the canonised Joan as well as the incinerated Joan. Anouilh has combined all earlier recensions in the play. Whereas Shaw has made rational explanations, the changes which Anouilh has made to history are carefully planned to highlight the character of Joan, the pure and noble child. Even the tableau in the final scene resembles a most beautiful illustration from a school prize. As Anouilh says:

You cannot explain Joan any more than you can explain the tiniest flower growing by the wayside... There is just the phenomenon of Joan as there is the phenomenon of a daisy or of the sky or of a bird'.²⁹

²⁹ Jean Anouilh, 'Mystere de Jeanne' reprinted in P. Vandronn, 'Jean Anouilh, un auteur et ses personnages', pp. 236-7 in B.A. Lenski, *Jean Anouilh, Stages of Rebellion*, p.42.

CHAPTER 9

A MAID FOR THE EXPLOITED WORKERS

Unlike Shaw, and other modern writers who gave their own versions of the story of Joan of Arc, in various literary forms, Bertolt Brecht in his *St. Joan of the Stockyards*¹ makes no claims to having a deep understanding of the Middle Ages, or of having that period as a background for his play. His Joan Dark is simply an early twentieth-century Salvation Army figure; the only real likeness that she bears to Joan of Arc, apart from the corruption of her name, is the notion of self-sacrifice. The organisations which oppose her are not the fickle French court and the powerful Church, but the wealthy barons of the meat trade of Chicago and the easily manipulated 'Black Straw Hats', who cannot abandon the capitalists because they need their financial support for their mission.

Brecht's strategy in bringing an account of medieval heroism to the understanding of a twentieth-century audience may be far different from the method used by some of his contemporaries. The alienation effect (*Verfremdungseffekt*), which is a facet of the theory of epic theatre which he espoused, seeks to make his audience receptive, to make the people think, and to contemplate the action in a detached fashion, and not to identify themselves emotionally with the characters.² Through this manner of presentation of a play which features a Joan of Arc type character, it can be clearly seen that the playwright is using his own version of a medieval saintly figure to portray and to justify his own version of political ideology.

Brecht's obvious Marxist views clashed with the swelling and ever more powerful thought of Nazi Germany, and because of this his works were

¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Plays*, Volume II, London, (1962). Page numbers quoted in this chapter refer to this edition.

² Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, London, 1980, p. 115; p. 119.

considered to be subversive. The serious nature of the antagonism of the German Government towards Brecht is proved by the fact that although *Die Heilige Joanna der Schachthoefe*, (*Saint Joan of the Stockyards*) was written between 1929 and 1932, it was not presented on stage in Germany until 1959, several years after the death of the playwright.³ Like other writers, among them Thomas Keneally, Brecht used the figure of Joan of Arc in several works. The subject of this chapter will be *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* although reference may be made to the other plays, *Simone Machard* and *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen 1431*, where this might add meaning to the interpretation.

If we concede that all history is modern history, there is little difficulty in finding similarities in the stories of Joan of Arc and the fictitious Joan Dark. There is a likeness between the manipulative French court and the devouring Chicago capitalist society, and between the powerful but sycophantic medieval Church and the compromising Black Straw Hats. Both Joans are of fairly humble stock and in different ways are concerned for the welfare of the common people; Joan Dark is initially pious as is Joan of Arc throughout her life. They are both deserted by their companions and both lose their lives as a result of their endeavours. There are many parallels and one particularly vital difference. Brecht's Joan Dark has an enquiring mind. She is continually learning and changing her ideas as she becomes aware of the greed and duplicity of Mauler, Slift and their henchmen. She sees the poverty of the people and as she lives amongst them she realises that it is their abject poverty which makes them evil and sensuous. She also comprehends that 'the poverty of the poor is useful to the rich' (Scene Eight, p.160). The medieval Joan remains faithful to her beliefs and dies crying

³ John Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*, London, 1959, p. 35, which notes: Amateur production about 1935 by Revolutionary Theatre, Copenhagen; produced by Brecht...Not yet produced in Germany. Broadcast by Berlin Radio, 11 April 1932.

aloud the name of Jesus. Joan Dark, the Marxian pupil, in death denies God! (Scene Twelve. p.196) Joan Dark learns too late for her knowledge to be of benefit. She represents ignorant subjectivity. She is exploited by the capitalists and by the Hats. She unwittingly betrayed the cause of the people because she failed to understand why she should deliver the message. On the other hand, Joan of Arc is surrounded by a certain charisma which enables her to get the confidence of all the necessary people for as long as her mission needs it. She is immolated because she will not be part of the subsequent double-dealing and compromise.

The language used is a mix of the exalted heroic, a parody of the Scriptures and stilted crude colloquialism. The Joan of Arc works of Shakespeare and Schiller are at times parodied, as are classical Greek choruses in the sung verses of the workers and of the Black Straw Hats. In informing the audience of action past and present, the singing is occasionally augmented by news announcements or by newsboys wielding placards. This is a device aimed at objectivity. By the projecting of news items, the audience must look and listen and so the emotion of the music and the accompanying action is lessened. A significant symbolic onomastic element exists in some of the names; Paulus Snyder, which suggests a combination of evangelical zeal and shady dealing; Slift, the speculator, whose name seems associated with underhand concerns; Pierpont Mauler, the king of modern capitalism, whose business reflects his surname: slaughter, flesh and blood. Joan Dark is a simple English rendering of Jeanne d'Arc. The Brecht surname 'Dark' is indicative of the psychological plight of the heroine in a complex, confusing society, which the audience should attempt to understand. The beating of the drum, a primordial sound, emphasises the action, as it does in *Mother Courage*⁴ and in *Drums in the Night*.⁵

⁴ B. Brecht, *Mother Courage*.

⁵ B. Brecht, *Drums in the Night*.

* * *

The influence of George Bernard Shaw, to whom Brecht had paid tribute in 1926,⁶ is very discernible in *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*. It is of course to *Major Barbara* that one naturally turns for similarities to Brecht's Joan, because both Joan Dark and Major Barbara have a strong allegiance to the Salvation Army. Both heroines eventually renounce their Army allegiance because of its hypocrisy and impracticality, in view of the need for capitalist money.

There are other influences to be found in Brecht's play, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*. Besides the Shavian similarities, there are parodies of Schiller's and Shakespeare's works on Joan of Arc, and of the exalted style of other German authors who strictly adhered to the theory of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and to the (later) drama of catharsis and of illusion.⁷ His play was considered to be rational, as he himself was. Literary influences include Brecht's own *The Jungle of the Cities* which was inspired by Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and *Happy End* which was prepared for the stage by Elisabeth Hauptmann.⁸ It is evident that the playwright was affected also by the socio-economic plight of the people in the early 1920s, by the materialism and the money markets which caused chaos in the Chicago of the period, and by Marxism, which Brecht projected as the salvation of the people.

Joan Dark is clearly an outstanding, courageous figure; according to Brecht her adventures span her brief life as a lieutenant in the Black Straw Hat Brigade. She is outstanding because of the extent of her learning experience, especially in her last descent into the depths as measured by the Marxian ideology. Unlike Joan of Arc she has no loving, dutiful if heavy-

⁶ Peter Demetz, Editor, *Brecht: A Collection of Critical Essays*, N.J. (1962), p. 57.

⁷ Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, p. 114.

⁸ Willett, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

handed father, or brothers who admire her and use her. She is single minded in her desire for the good of the people and in her early faith. It is her enquiring mind, her wish to know why the poor get poorer, and the possibility that she will learn the truth, which all initiate her downfall.

In gloomy times of bloody confusion
 Ordered disorder
 Planned wilfulness
 Dehumanized humanity
 When there is no end to the unrest in our cities:
 Into such a world. a world like a slaughterhouse -
 Summoned by rumours of threatening deed of violence
 To prevent the brute strength of the short-sighted people
 From scattering its own tools and
 Trampling its own breadbasket to pieces -
 We wish to reintroduce God. (Scene 2, p.85)

The words symbolise Joan's ideas at the time, and her sentiments about the impending strike, which she feels is both untimely and unwise.

This is the beginning of a chant by Joan and her 'shock troop' as she makes her first descent into the depths. The stockyards are the depths, dark and bloody from their containing the occupation of wholesale animal slaughter. A price war exists between the rivals, Pierpont Mauler and M.L. Lennox. The former, ostensibly sick at the sight and thought of killing beautiful blond oxen — which he describes in human terms — is urging Cridle, another industrialist, to take his stock at a price, and at the same time cause the ruin of Lennox. Mauler, with the opening of P.Mauler Hospitals, which is publicised by the shouting of newsboys, is both a meat baron and a philanthropist. He is seen as an exploiter of humans, and a healer of humans. A little of the money which he amasses from the cheap labour and his wheeling and dealing in the stockmarket, he doles out to heal the sick and broken bodies. In this endeavour he hopes, perhaps, for a tarnished halo.

As Joan attempts to instruct the workers to think of higher, spiritual things, and to dwell on the reason for their poverty which, she insists, results from their seeking low, sensual pleasures, she is greeted by uninterested laconic comments. Her 'heavenly text', which reflects a parable of scripture, sounds hypocritical to the hungry, cold crowd. Their needs are very basic.

Perhaps you can't think of anything sweeter than whipped cream, but God's word, I tell you, is still sweeter, honestly it is, oh, how sweet God's word is! It's like milk and honey, and in it you dwell as in a palace of gold and alabaster. O ye of little faith, the birds of the air have no *Help Wanted* ads and the lilies of the field have no jobs, and yet He feeds them because they sing His praises.
(Scene 2, page 98)

Shorter passages which are written in blank verse, classical style, and with their content describing the sordidness of the workers' conditions, strike a note of incongruity. Lack of harmony impinges on the mind when Joan's spiritual homily decrying brute force is interrupted by the hurried entry of a worker.

Joan: As if brute force ever caused anything but destruction! You believe that if you rear up on your hind legs there'll be heaven on earth. But I say to you: that way not paradise but chaos is created.
A Worker enters running: A place was just vacated!
It pays, and it's calling you over to Plant Number Five!
It looks like a urinal on the outside.
Run!
(Scene 2, page 99)

Joan learns from the workers' attitude that they believe in nothing which is intangible; wise words and songs cannot appease their hunger. Joan is the bearer of the opiate of religion to the masses, but the holy messages are empty to people who are without food.

A definite step in the course of Joan's learning occurs when she is insistent that she must know the cause of the misery and the identity of the

culprit. The Black Straw Hats are aware of the double dealing of Mauler, Lennox and Cridle, but they are unwilling to delve into the problem. As Joan refuses to go with them to their shelter for warmth and food, the Black Straw Hats' reply is a prediction of the future and an echo of the medieval Joan of Arc.

Then, Joan, we take a dark view of your further fate. Do not mingle with the quarrels of this world! He who meddles in a quarrel becomes its victim! His purity swiftly perishes.... (Scene 3, page 103)

One of Joan of Arc's early days at Chinon is reflected when Joan Dark recognises Mauler, in spite of his effort to confuse her. Her insistence, even as he denies his identity and points to Slift, is similar to the manner in which the medieval Joan ignores the French noble who pretends to be Charles, as she extricates the King from his hiding place. But the reason that Joan Dark gives for identifying Mauler is quite different from that given by the other Joan. Mauler has 'the bloodiest face' (p. 108).

Although Mauler is visibly impressed by Joan's selflessness and honesty in refusing his money, he insists that the poor are wicked people and are themselves 'butchers'. The few lines which emphasise his viewpoint have a strange humour.

On oxen I have pity; man is evil. Mankind's not ripe for what you have in mind: Before the world can change, humanity must change its nature. (Scene 3, p. 110-111)

Man is evil because society makes him evil. Mauler, like Joan, is deluded by society. He knows that change is needed but he does not have the initiative to change his own surroundings. His aside to Sullivan Slift, instructing him to offer Joan money and then to see if she uses any for herself, is a sign of the dishonest, distrusting society. The playwright, through Mauler, shows the fearlessness of Joan, 'a woman with nothing but

a Black Straw Hat and twenty cents a day' (p. 111). As she is immune to any temptation of money and although Slift discourages her from associating with the 'scum of the earth' (p. 111), she must make her second Descent into the Depths.

There she learns several gory stories; how a man named Luckerniddle failed to return from his work on the bacon machine and how his wife had been told that he had left town, and offered free meals in return for her silence on the matter. But Joan overhears the real gruesome story. He had been caught in the bacon maker and his coat and hat given to an apprentice to dispose of.

The Apprentice: Too bad about the fellow that has to go out into the world as bacon, but I feel bad about his coat too, it's still in good shape. Old Man Bacon has his can to wear now and won't need this any more, but I could use it very well. (Scene 4, p. 112)

The references to animals and butchery in the dialogue has analogues with the battle carnage of medieval France. There is also the imagery of men reduced to beasts, particularly in the language of Mauler. Joan Dark sees many cases of injury and illness caused by the deplorable working conditions. The casualties are at best merely fodder for Mauler's other enterprise: his hospital.

Joan Dark moves from the workers to the stockbreeders, and they approach Mauler to try to persuade him to reopen his factory. Slift, true to his wily sounding name, uses connivance to encourage Mauler to buy up live meat, and all think that he has saved the industry, saved the workers and averted ruin.

The materialism of the rich is reflected in the behaviour of the Black Straw Hats, whose leader, Paulus Snyder, cunningly lays the blame for the fifty thousand jobless on the heads of the packers. The Hats taunt the packers

with the prediction that the hungry workers will soon take over the factories, Bolshevik fashion. They claim that they have pacified the workers, and therefore, they, the Black Straw Hats, need a reward. Their haggling, which amounts to blackmail, signifies the permeation of the notion of money as an answer to all levels of society's problems. Everyone, it appears, except Joan Dark, has a price. Joan is completely isolated. Her idealism and her virtue have no relation to ordinary human life. Her heroic behaviour is the fruit of delusion, pitiful and futile. There is a reflection, here, of the Joan of Arc story, where the lack of soldiers' wages halts the war, and where ransoms often swallow a wealthy estate.

Joan's enlightenment occurs when she sees the people at the top of the power pyramid as they really — more like animals than human beings. Joan warns them that the time may come when, like animals, they will be slaughtered. She takes a stick to drive them out of God's House; this is a reflection of the Scriptures which, too, are used in a different situation by other Joan of Arc writers.

Get out! Are you trying to turn the house of God into a stable? Another Livestock Exchange? Get out! There's nothing for you here. We don't want to see such faces here. You're unworthy and I'm showing you the door. For all your money! (Scene 7, page 144).

Her words underline how far her sense of the sacred is from life. To Snyder she is just a crazy female, and she is told to pack her bags, remove her uniform, and to take her poor friends with her. 'There is really no pity for them up above', Joan is told. The lack of pity comes from the top of the pyramid, not from Heaven. Joan's request for help from rich man, Mauler, has a line in it which is also a biblical echo and a reminder of other evil cities. 'There must be one just man among them!' (p.145).

When Joan visits Mauler he is in the process of gloating with Slift,

because of the result of buying up all the livestock. 'This time I'll rip the skins off them for good and all in accordance with my nature'. (p. 147) His nature of 'skinner' is parallel to that of La Hire and Poton de Xaintrilles, two of Joan of Arc's comrades in arms, who behaved like bandits at times, and so were called '*echorcheurs*' or flayers.⁹

Mauler 'weeps' when he sees Joan physically changed and hungry, but she declines his offer of money and tells him that henceforth she will be in the stockyards. She will have no part in his treachery. This is her third and most awful descent into the hellish depths and this time, to add to the discomfort, the snow is falling.

The most moving speech, which is also reminiscent of Joan of Arc, occurs when Joan Dark recounts her dream. The blank verse describes her militant march, at the head of a multitude, shouting orders in a strange tongue. This is a reflection of the dream historically which Jacques d'Arc, Joan's father, describes. In the verse there are many contrasting words and phrases: small field; enormous houses; bunch of people; all the sparrows; silent; shouting; young; old; and sobbing; cursing. Perhaps these signify the great changes which must take place. Brecht's audience must learn, as they see Joan learn, that revolution is the only solution. His language, in contradiction and inversion, emphasised this solution. Yet she does not learn that only the true working class and the scientific revolution of communism will liberate men.

That was my dream.
 Today I saw its meaning:
 Before tomorrow morning we
 Will start out from these yards
 And reach their city, Chicago, in the gray of dawn.
 Displaying the full range of our wretchedness in public places
 Appealing to whatever resembles a human being.

⁹ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*, 1981, p. 65 c.f.

What will come after I do not know. (Scene 9, p. 153).

When later Joan hears the Black Straw Hats preaching, but not believing, she is very disillusioned. The words which once were so dear and pleasant are now a distressing nuisance to her. She wishes her former colleagues would stay quiet and leave. The workers are now Joan's people. Finally they trust her sufficiently to give her a letter which she must pass to workers of the Cridle plant. As she tells them that Mauler is not really inhuman, she thinks their reaction is malicious. She feels that the letter will provoke real violence, and so she fails to deliver it.

Quite contrary to the habit of Joan of Domremy, Joan Dark, when offered a 'swig of whisky by an old man', drinks copiously and begins to speak in a strange, inebriated manner. Records of Joan of Arc mention her great abstemiousness in food and drink.

Violence breaks out as the police attempt to bring order to the chaos. The perfidy and cunning of Mauler have ensured that prices stay too high for the factories to open. The workers suffer even further hunger and cold. Joan realises that she has failed them as she sees the men handcuffed who had entrusted her with the letter. Joan is frustrated and she learns another lesson; her fear of force has resulted in the breaking of the workers' ranks. Like Joan of Arc, Joan Dark hears voices, but hers do not admonish her to action. Her voices accuse her of breaking faith:

We gave you orders
 Our position was critical
 We did not know who you were
 You might carry out our orders and you might
 Also betray us.
 Did you carry them out? (Scene 9, p. 175)

She is the 'torn mesh in the net, through which the fish swim, and so the whole net is useless.' She is seen clearly as representing a useless

individuality.

The coming of Mauler to the headquarters of the Black Straw Hats, penniless and penitent, is humorous and didactic; the message is given that even if their 'hearts' are moved by his plight, Mauler in this state is useless to them. Stockbreeders, packers and his competitors seek him out and their remarks are an indication that he is neither popular nor honest.

Damnable Mauler, is this where you've sneaked off to?
 You pay for our livestock, instead of getting converted!
 Your money, not your soul! (Scene 10, p. 180).

Economic realities make personal psychological states fade into insignificance. As the double dealing of Slift is measured against the wiliness of Mauler, the banks collapse, and when total ruin seems inevitable, the New York advisers send Mauler a solution. There will be fewer workers and their wages will be lowered; Mauler's solution is spelled out as he takes over the responsibility. Perhaps in Mauler and Slift there is a likeness to Charles and the Duke of Burgundy, as they make their truces and leave the battle to disaster. This is another reflection of the historical happenings, particularly as they apply to Joan after the crowning. Charles accepted the short truce offered by Burgundy, with probable inducements and left the Anglo-Burgundians to gather strength. In his shortsightedness he failed to see the obvious disaster. His forces would not be paid whilst they were not fighting. This saved the Crown money, but the mercenaries would return to scavenging the land and 'trample underfoot the breadbaskets of the French poor.' In Brecht's play,

All this is being done so that
 In gloomy times of bloody confusion
 Dehumanized humanity ...
 The brute strength of the short-sighted people
 May not shatter its own tools and trample its own
 breadbaskets underfoot (Scene 10, p. 187).

During the confusion, as men are arrested and the snow becomes a blizzard, Joan is accidentally knocked down and returned in a sick condition to the Black Straw Hats. Slift and Mauler, together with her late colleagues, wish to venerate Joan as a saint. Mauler's words are reminiscent of the historical Joan: 'May the pure and childlike soul ever figure on our roll' (p.192) Joan of Arc's canonisation, which was said to be brought about for political reasons, is here ridiculed. Joan Dark's sainthood will aid the cause both of the stockyard barons, and of the Black Straw Hats, each communities which she has repudiated.

* * *

Brecht uses verbal and situational likenesses to the scriptures, and the parodying reveals his ideas about religion and charity organisations and about their weaknesses. The play appears to be a complete parody, devised as a means of promoting the idea of Marxism as the better state of life. The last scenes portray how the stock market may be utilized by the wily, how the ones on top can juggle resources to their own advantage, and how the ones at the bottom of the power seesaw can never benefit by any peaceful means. Brecht betrays his own glancing admiration for clever financiers, yet, on the other hand, his Marxist message is clear. The manner in which he gives the details of the speculation of the capitalists, and the buying up of stock and forcing prices to their advantage is not merely censorious. There is a likeness to Shaw's description of Andrew Undershaft and his moneymaking wizardry.¹⁰ His Joan Dark resembles Joan of Arc chiefly because they are both 'uncommon' women, who are destroyed by a false society. In this and in parallel situations, they are linked through parody. Each of the Joans is a woman who is destroyed by a false society. Joan Dark learns from her experiences and one of her final speeches embodies her change of heart, her

¹⁰ Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, 1980 (1959), p. 50.

knowledge that the Black Straw Hats are now being exploited by the capitalists, and consequently she loses her faith.

And the ones that tell them they may be raised in spirit
 And still be stuck in the mud, they should have their heads
 Knocked on the pavement. No!
 Only force helps where force rules
 And only men help where men are.

* * *

Another play, with a Joan of Arc thread of association, which Brecht wrote in collaboration with Leon Feuchtwanger, is *The Visions of Simone Machard*.¹¹ It is set in France during the second World War and contains scraps of the legend of Joan of Arc, reinforced by dreams and voices. The dreams and visions are confused with real-life figures and legendary characters and interwoven with the events of the war which was then being waged.

Simone is a young girl, a general maid in a hostelry, which serves also as a transport station. Simone has a brother, whom she loves intensely, and who is serving in the French Army. In her visions it is as the Archangel Michael that Andre, her brother, appears, not as King Charles. This obsessive love for her brother causes Simone to act courageously in her refusal to collaborate with the enemy. She steals food to feed the starving refugees, coerces the reluctant hostelry patron to release supplies, and when the Germans arrive she does all in her power to cause them hindrance. When she considers setting fire to the store of petrol, now destined for enemy use, the timid men, knowing well the consequences, show greater discretion than valour. This petrol, which should have helped the French Army, had been withheld by the patron, because of greed and self-interest.

¹¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Plays*, Volume 7, London, (1976).

Simone has no hesitation. When her crime is discovered, she is judged by her own countrymen, and sentenced, not to death, but to life imprisonment in an institution for the mentally retarded, which is administered by 'brutish nuns' (p. 61). The most awful punishment is imposed when the nuns give back to the patron's wife the copy of the book about Joan of Arc which the patron had given to Simone. There is a reverberation of sound and fiery explosions after Simone's condemnation to death in life. The refugees set fire to the quarters requisitioned by the German Army and so Simone will know that the 'drum' is still beating on the soil of France; that she has lit some spark, which the oppressed people will hopefully keep alive.

The *Simone* play was written about ten years after *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* and ten years earlier than his adaptation of Anna Seghers' radio play, *Der Prozes der Jeanne d'Arc zu Rouen 1431*.¹² Leon Feuchtwanger's *Simone* formed the plot of *Die Gesichte der Simone Machard*¹³ — so it can be seen that all three plays were the results of Brecht's reworking of the Joan story. He found the modification of other writers' works a challenge and a pleasure.¹⁴ This method of reworking and improving earlier plays was used long ago by Plautus and Terence. As the Greek originals were lost, Terence particularly adapted from Greek originals, and provided invaluable ideas of themes, roles and style, on which to build, for later playwrights. If material from one source was not considered to be suitable, some writers used *contaminatio*.¹⁵

In several instances the play of *Simone* is more directly related to the

¹² Bertolt Brecht, *Plays*, Volume IX.

¹³ Translated by Hugh and Ellen Rank.

¹⁴ Martin Esslin, 'Brecht's Language and Sources', Peter Demetz, Editor, *Brecht: A collection of Critical Essays*, N.Y., 1962, p.171.

¹⁵ G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, 1952, Pp.42-3.

historical Joan of Arc and works based on her life, than is *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*. The visions and dreams begin when she is reading a book on Joan of Arc — a subject which also fascinated and changed the life of Barbara, in Thomas Keneally's *A Dutiful Daughter*. Simone is naive and singleminded and quite guileless — admirable qualities, and some of which she shared with Joan of Arc.

When the Mayor, who is Charles in Simone's dream, remarks that 'only a miracle can save France; she is rotten to the core' (p. 15) it is like a medieval echo. Simone's 'smallness' and 'childishness' are often mentioned, particularly in the trial; these personal dimensions are historical, and are mentioned in Shaw's *Saint Joan* and Anouilh's *Alouette*. The latter play had a reference to the French export commodities: the food and the henins', and in Brecht's play, 'selling France like they sell their fancy food' (p. 42) is a reference to treachery. 'What sort of clothes did the angel wear?' (p. 53) a question put to Simone, is an echo of the records of Joan of Arc's trial and of Shaw's play and of others' treatment of the mix of history and legend. The wish of Simone that the people of her home town should be fed from the hostelry stock of food has a parallel in most Saint Joan works. Joan desires only that her home town of Domremy be freed from taxes. Simone's father gets a job with the Council (p. 41) on the recommendation of the Mayor, and Joan's father is ennobled after the king is crowned. Simone, like Joan, has too many enemies (page 62) who gradually destroy her.

Many of the parallels and allusions to other literary works are light and humorous reminders and show the change in the playwright's thoughts as situations change and his ideas mature. The newsboys and placards, and the rapid change of sentiment in the last Mauler/Saint Joan scenes, the drivers in overalls, wearing medieval weapons and the angel with the chipped wing in the *Simone* play; these and other instances have a juvenile, shock impact

in the way the past is portrayed. The first play, with its clear Marxist message, is in the Brecht early tradition of 'epic' theatre, whilst the later play, which was written while Brecht was in political exile, is perhaps more cautious in its didacticism. Between the two plays there is a visible difference; Simone is not a parody of Joan of Arc. Both *Simone Machard* and *St. Joan of the Stochyards* have a common notion of futile death, but Simone is a character in a play written when France was already occupied in World War II. There is something of a 'heroine of the people' in her presentation.

Thus it is that the Brechtian treatments of the St. Joan theme are free reconstructions, certainly only faint echoes of the situation of history, and largely adapted to totally different cultural purposes — parodies in one sense, or, preferably, loose political analogues of the events of the fifteenth-century.