

## SYNOPSIS OF THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE

This play was Shaw's version of the nineteenth-century fashion of having an anti-hero, rebelling against the Old Testament God. It is set during the American War of Independence and is the story of a bad man who against his will develops what Shaw called moral passion. He sets himself up as the devil's disciple, but when it comes to the point of crisis in his life he finds himself deliberately going to the gallows to save another man. The other man, a Christian minister who thought that he was a pacifist, finds himself constitutionally unable to keep that up. He takes off his black coat, gives up his living and joins the Resistance against the occupying British. The minister's wife falls in love with the hero, but only to enable Shaw to emphasize that he is not in love with her; that he did not do his good deed for romantic love but for moral passion.

(Adam, 1966: 151)

## SYNOPSIS OF THE SHEWING-UP OF BLANCO POSNET

This play was written in 1909, thirteen years after *The Devil's Disciple*. Shaw himself called this play as a religious tract in dramatic form. For it talked much about God.

It was about a horse-thief named Blanco Posnet who decided to turn his back on God whom he thought as an absurd Being. His brother - Elder Daniels who was a drunkard - was a minister of this absurd God. Blanco hated his brother very much for his hypocrisy. One night Blanco decided to steal his brother's horse for revenge as Elder Daniels didn't want to give him his beloved mother medallion. But, unfortunately it was not Elder Daniels' horse. It was the Sheriff's.

Meanwhile, Blanco was in his way to get away from the town when - at dawn - he met a woman with his sick child who needed help to bring her sick child to a doctor. Blanco - with a kind of surprise in his heart - gave the horse he stole to the woman. In the morning, when he went on foot, the sheriff's deputy caught him. As stealing a horse was a

serious crime at that time, Blanco was sentenced death. But, the woman saved him by telling the court that it was her who stole the horse. Blanco was free now. He also had found the answer of who had driven him to act nobly to the woman: it was God. But he was not the one he taught about in Sunday-school.

## SYNOPSIS OF SAINT JOAN

There is a general agreement that this is Shaw's masterpiece. Many people think it the greatest play of the twentieth century.

The early scenes of the play, written in a swift and exciting style, show how Joan first persuaded the local squire, who in mediaval days was also the local military commander, to help her in what she saw her divine mission to drive the English out of France; how she persuaded the Court and the uncrowned Dauphin to accept her; and how she won a victory which drove the English back and led to the crowning of the Dauphin as the rightful king of France. But the powers which stood for the security and stability of the Middle Ages, the feudal barons and the Church, conspire against her. The feudal lords are represented by the English Earl of Warwick. The Church is represented by the Bishop of Beauvais, a completely sincere but conventional priest. Joan, as an individualist, a protestant and a nationalist stands for forces which were throwing over the old order and is therefore a dangerous revolutionary and heretic. Warwick and the Bishop agree to capture her and bring her to trial for heresy. Her friends

at the French court prove too weak and vacillating to prevent it. Joan is found guilty and confesses to heresy. But when she learns that she is to be condemned to perpetual imprisonment she prefers to die, recants her confession and is burned at the stake. And English chaplain, who as a jingo Englishman has struggled for her conviction and execution, is overcome by remorse when he sees her burned and is driven insane.

Twenty years later Joan returns to the king in a dream and learns that the sentence of heresy on her has been annulled and the English have been driven from France. In the ghost-world she meets again the characters of her short period of dynamic fame. Among them appears a Vatican official of 1920 to tell them that Joan is to be made a saint. She offers to return to life if they will have her, but one and all refuse. Joan is left alone, deserted but spiritually triumphant. Shaw had never written anything as good, and he never did again.

(Adam, 1966: 163-164)

## SYNOPSIS OF ANDROCLES AND THE LION

This was about the early Christians who had to suffer from their faith in Christianity. Androcles - an animal lover - and Lavinia were ones of the Christians prisoners whom brought to Coliseum to be thrown to the lions or set to fight the gladiators.

When it came the Androcles' turn he had to fight against a hungry lion. But, as soon as the lion caught sight of him he run to hug and kiss him. It was the one that Androcles once helped.

The story ended happily. All the Christian prisoners were set free by the Emperor as he was amazed by what Androcles did with the lion.