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MACMILLAN MASTER GUIDES

ST JOAN

BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

LEONÉE ORMOND

M
MACMILLAN

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CONTENTS

<i>General editor's preface</i>		vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		ix
1 Life and background		
	1.1 Early years	1
	1.2 Plays before the First World War	2
	1.3 1914-1923	3
	1.4 <i>Saint Joan</i>	4
	1.5 Shaw after <i>Saint Joan</i>	4
2 Plot synopsis and critical commentary		7
3 Themes and issues		
	3.1 Joan of Arc: the historical figure	33
	3.2 Shaw's sources	34
	3.3 Shaw's nineteenth-century predecessors	36
	3.4 Shaw and history	38
	3.5 Joan as a revolutionary heroine	40
	3.6 The waning of the Middle Ages	42
	3.7 Joan as a bourgeoisie	43
	3.8 Joan as a feminist	44
	3.9 Joan and creative evolution	45
	3.10 Shaw and Joan's 'voices'	46
	3.11 Joan and Christ	49
4 Technical features		
	4.1 The structure of the play	51
	4.2 <i>Saint Joan</i> as tragedy	53
	4.3 Characterisation	55
	4.4 Rhetoric and debate	58
	4.5 Humour	59
	4.6 Stage directions	61
5 Critical analysis of a selected passage		
	5.1 Passage	63
	5.2 Commentary	65

6 Critical reception

6.1 The early reviews and commentaries 69

6.2 Later standing of *Saint Joan* 72

Revision Questions 73

Further reading 75

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The aim of the Macmillan Master Guides is to help you to appreciate the book you are studying by providing information about it and by suggesting ways of reading and thinking about it which will lead to a fuller understanding. The section on the writer's life and background has been designed to illustrate those aspects of the writer's life which have influenced the work, and to place it in its personal and literary context. The summaries and critical commentary are of special importance in that each brief summary of the action is followed by an examination of the significant critical points. The space which might have been given to repetitive explanatory notes has been devoted to a detailed analysis of the kind of passage which might confront you in an examination. Literary criticism is concerned with both the broader aspects of the work being studied and with its detail. The ideas which meet us in reading a great work of literature, and their relevance to us today, are an essential part of our study, and our Guides look at the thought of their subject in some detail. But just as essential is the craft with which the writer has constructed his work of art, and this is considered under several technical headings — characterisation, language, style and stage-craft.

The authors of these Guides are all teachers and writers of wide experience, and they have chosen to write about books they admire and know well in the belief that they can communicate their admiration to you. But you yourself must read and know intimately the book you are studying. No one can do that for you. You should see this book as a lamp-post. Use it to shed light, not to lean against. If you know your text and know what it is saying about life, and how it says it, then you will enjoy it, and there is no better way of passing an examination in literature.

JAMES GIBSON

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I owe a special debt to my husband, Richard, both for his interest in the project, and for making it possible for me to complete it.

LEONÉE ORMOND