Write a critical appreciation of the following passage, relating it to the dramatic presentation of divine vocation or calling, here and elsewhere in the play. [A Levels 2021]

Situated near the climax of the play, this passage depicts the events of Joan's trial, as various figures of authority from the Church question Joan on her suspected heresy. This moment presents the clash between their conceptions of divine vocation, a conflict visually reinforced by the physical separation of Joan's "prisoner's stool" and the Church's "judicial chairs" on opposite ends of the stage. As various ecclesiastical figures — for whom divine vocation is attached to institutional loyalties — challenge Joan's individualistic divine calling, the audience discerns that society is unable to escape its preconceived beliefs to accept Joan's visionary ideas regarding divine inspiration. Ultimately, Shaw reveals that an individual's divine calling cannot be understood by society because it is inherently subjective: it cannot be verified by our limited, human faculties.

Shaw first establishes that an individual's and society's understandings of divine vocation can come into conflict: while Joan believes that one's divine vocation involves direct service to God, figures of clerical authority view divine vocation as obedience to ecclesiastical institutions. Throughout the scene, this clash of perspectives is reinforced through the structure of interrogation, as the Church's leading questions and Joan's resolute answers juxtapose their contrasting understandings of divine vocation. Ladvenu asks if Joan is "subject to our Lord the Pope, to the cardinals, the archbishops, and the bishops for whom his lordship stands here". Ladvenu's long list of ecclesiastical figures in decreasing order of hierarchy evinces his firm commitment to upholding the institutional structures of the Church, with his respect for authority further emphasised by his formal, reverential address of these figures ("our Lord the Pope", "his lordship"). In addition, he repeatedly employs diction associated with obedience ("subject", "submit") when discussing Joan's relationship with the Catholic Church, suggesting that one's divine vocation must be circumscribed by religious institutions. This conception of divine vocation is dismissed by Joan, who repeatedly states that "God must be served first". By omitting mention of the many layers of clerical hierarchy, Joan bypasses the Church to place herself directly and principally beneath God, revealing her individualistic understanding of divine calling that dissociates the concept from institutional loyalties. As such, Shaw foregrounds the way divine vocation can be understood in conflicting ways. Subsequently, Cauchon asks Joan if "you, and not the Church, are to be the judge" of how to serve God, and Joan retorts with the rhetorical question "What other judgment can I judge by but my own?". The repetition of "judge" across the lines creates a stichomythic quality that emphasises the intense clash between their two perspectives of personal and institutional

wisdom, while the incredulous tone of both rhetorical questions reveals how resolutely each of them clings to their respective view. In this way, Shaw presents the fundamental differences that underpin the characters' diverse conceptions of divine calling. In fact, these ideological disagreements were first outlined in Scene 4 of the play by Joan's adversaries: Cauchon claims Joan has "never" "in all her utterances said one word of The Church", and instead "it is always God and herself". In discussing Joan's divine vocation, Cauchon uses contrasting absolutes: it is "never" about the Church and "always" about a personal relationship with God. In this manner, the Catholic, institutional conception of divine calling is pitted against Joan's Protestant, individualistic conception. The intensity of this ideological conflict is further demonstrated by Cauchon's vehement disapproval of Joan's view, revealed by his accusatory tone. Warwick goes on to call Joan's version of divine vocation "Protestantism", even though Joan precedes the Reformation. For a 1920s audience familiar with the long-standing Protestant-Catholic divide, Shaw's explicit, anachronistic labelling of Joan as Protestant prompts them to recognise the fundamental conflict between her visionary ideas and the Catholic Church. Overall, by presenting the way Joan and the Church interpret divine vocation in conflicting ways, Shaw situates his portrayal of divine vocation within the play's larger thematic conflict between the individual and society, inducing the audience to consider how society responds to individuals with new ideas and ideologies.

Subsequently, Shaw highlights that visionary understandings of divine vocation cannot find acceptance in a narrow-minded, intolerant society. This insight is revealed as clergymen cling to their preconceptions of divine vocation, seeking not to understand Joan's calling on its own terms but rather to persuade Joan that her calling is mistaken. The passage begins with Ladvenu urging Joan to "listen", telling Joan "you do not know what you are saying, child". By calling Joan "child" and instructing her using the imperative ("listen"), Ladvenu positions himself and the Church as a parental figure trying to guide Joan to recognise the errors of her ways, reflecting his unquestioning belief in the veracity of the Catholic Church's teachings. In fact, he dismisses Joan's conception of divine calling as mistaken by proclaiming that she "do[es] not know what [she is] saying", a sentiment echoed by Cauchon's rhetorical question at the end of the passage ("do you know what you are saying?"). As such, Shaw reveals that the Church's main goal is not to learn about Joan's calling but to convince her to abandon it, highlighting the fixed mindsets that preclude society from accepting such new conceptions of divine vocation. Cauchon later declares that the clergymen at the trial have "striven for [Joan's] salvation to the verge of sinning" themselves. This declaration is laden with theological assumptions: his presumption that Joan needs to renounce her private voices to achieve "salvation" and that it would be a "sin" for him not to condemn her beliefs presupposes that individuals can only access divine calling through the Church. Thus, Cauchon's intolerance

prevents him from considering — let alone accepting — Joan's unorthodox understanding of divine vocation. He goes on to declare that the Church has "opened the door to [Joan] again and again", which Joan has "shut in [their] faces and the face of God". While Cauchon justifiably accuses Joan of having a closed mindset as symbolised by the image of the "shut" door, his indictment of Joan is laced with irony: rather than being "open" to the prospect of Joan's divine inspiration, the Church has also "shut" its mind to the possibility. In fact, Shaw reminds us of his preconceived notions about divine calling in this same image: Cauchon conflates the authority of the clergy and that of God via the repetition of "face", a distinctly Catholic view that denies Joan's individualistic version of divine calling. In this manner, Shaw underscores society's inability to escape its ideological assumptions and accept different views of divine vocation. This prevalent intolerance has been foreshadowed since Scene 1, when the audience first caught glimpses of Joan's individualistic divine calling: she tells Robert that "it is the will of God that you are to do what He has put into my mind". Shaw reveals the dual unorthodoxy of Joan's beliefs: not only does she claim that God directly speaks to her rather than through the Catholic Church, but she also positions herself as a messenger for God, conveying his "will" to the political leaders of France even though she is not part of the Church. In response, Robert threatens to get her "father" to "thrash the madness" out of her. Just like Ladvenu and Cauchon in this passage, he views Joan as a naive, misguided child in need of correction, dismissing her Protestant conception of divine calling. His narrow mindset is further revealed by his labelling of her as "mad", unable to set aside medieval conceptions of divine vocation and rationally consider the possibility that Joan is divinely inspired as well. In this manner, Shaw fulfils a goal he outlines in his Preface: he prompts the audience to "face the fact that society is founded on intolerance", and by extension, recognise that this intolerance prevents society from understanding the divine calling of its visionaries.

Finally, Shaw presents one's divine calling as inevitably subjective: it cannot be confirmed by limited, human perception. He conveys this insight by juxtaposing Joan's and the Church's competing views on the veracity of Joan's visions, leaving the audience uncertain of whose subjective judgement to trust. D'Estivet asserts that Joan is guilty of the "very horrible" and "blasphemous crime" of intercourse with "evil spirits", making her a "sorceress". D'Estivet's extreme diction — peppered with intensifiers, condemnatory epithets and accusations of diabolical influence — leaves the audience sceptical of his claims, especially since they are substantiated by little more than the Church's opinion. However, the audience is equally led to question Joan's explanation of her visions when she rhetorically asks if "St Catherine", "St Margaret" and "Michael the Archangel" are evil spirits. Not only are Joan's claims to have seen these saints equally unsubstantiated, but Catholic doctrine also holds that apparitions of saints are rare, with most purported apparitions rejected by the Church. Thus, her emphatic use of

the rule of three could also cast doubt on the veracity of her visions for the audience: it is even less likely that Joan could speak to *three* distinct saints. Thus, Shaw's ambivalent portrayal of these competing accounts of Joan's visions highlights the difficulty of ascertaining the truth of one's divine calling: whether the call stems from divine or diabolical sources is a matter of one's subjective judgement. This uncertainty is underscored once again at the end of the passage: when the Inquisitor asks Joan if she "accept[s] the instruction of the Church" that her "apparitions are demons", she declares that she instead "accept[s] the messengers of God" as a "faithful believer". These antithetical verdicts on the authenticity of Joan's calling are built on similarly shaky foundations: the Inquisitor's judgement has no evidence other than the Church's authority as referenced by his commanding use of "instruction", while Joan's judgement has no evidence other than appeals to "faith" and "belief". In addition, the repetition of "accept" — a word typically used when one did not believe something for a time — highlights that subscribing to either judgement requires a leap of faith: one has to actively suspend disbelief to trust an explanation. In this way, Shaw leaves the question of the accuracy of Joan's visions unresolved: audience members are left to draw their own conclusions as to whether she truly experienced a divine calling, allowing them to recognise the subjectivity that inheres in this unverifiable concept. This insight is further explicated in the Epilogue, as Cauchon declares that "mortal eyes cannot distinguish the saint from the heretic". By invoking the faculty of sight and qualifying it as "mortal", Cauchon identifies limited, earthly perception as a key impediment to our understanding of divine calling: we cannot identify if this inspiration is truly heavenly (as in the case of a "saint") or actually satanic (as in the case of a "heretic"). Additionally, his use of the present tense presents this fallibility as an enduring reality, with society no closer to objectively verifying one's divine calling despite Joan's posthumous canonisation. By depicting the ambiguity of judgements regarding the divine calling of individuals, Shaw also induces the audience to recognise the moral ambiguity of his characters: Joan's enemies were not bloodthirsty villains but men with good intentions, and Joan's tragic burning was the product of society's subjective judgements about her divine mandate.

Overall, it is in this passage where the fundamental clash between Joan's and the Church's conceptions of divine vocation — built up throughout the play — comes to a head. While Shaw criticises the narrow-minded intolerance that prevents society from understanding and accepting the divine calling of the visionaries in its midst, he ultimately acknowledges that we will perhaps never fully understand such a calling: we will have to decide whether it is God or the Devil calling, and sometimes we may get the call wrong.