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How Legend Constructs French National Identity: Jeanne d'Arc

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HOW LEGEND CONSTRUCTS FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY:
JEANNE D'ARC

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of French Studies

by
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Abstract

Since the fifteenth century, French authors have (re)told the story of Jeanne d’Arc. There is a sense of timelessness that accompanies her reception by the French public. In this transhistorical study, I look at Jeanne’s legend in light of four centuries and reveal how French authors (re)appropriate the Maid for their own political purposes. Along with the *timeliness* of Jeanne’s appearance, I investigate the gendered nature of her depictions. In short, I examine how Jeanne’s legend constructs, reconstructs, and deconstructs French national identity.

In 1429, Christine de Pisan composes *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*, a poem that celebrates her contemporary in fifteenth-century France. Pisan’s poem appears near the end of the Hundred Years War when France is occupied by the English. During this period, the people doubted Charles VII’s legitimacy and the French monarchy was in danger. As the different factions within France begin to join forces, the new nation of France is born.

In seventeenth-century France, the monarchy gains prestige as Louis XIV will soon take the throne. In 1642, François Hédelin d’Aubignac penned the drama *La Pucelle d’Orléans*, in which he depicts the Maid as an eloquent rhetorician who commands the courtroom. In this period of Absolutism, d’Aubignac’s Jeanne parallels the king.

During the Age of Reason, Voltaire writes his mock epic *La Pucelle d’Orléans* (1762) in which he questions Jeanne’s purity. This scandalous work offers a political commentary, advising the gullible French public to question the established institutions—namely, the monarchy and the Church. Voltaire’s epic anticipates one of the greatest national turning points for France: the revolution.

In the twentieth century, France endures German occupation in World War II. Jean Anouilh’s drama *L’Alouette* (1953) offers a postwar commentary on the state of France as they

must rebuild French national identity after the Liberation. In a period when Absurdist theatre emerged, Anouilh's play reflects the absurdity of war. The author writes a masculine hero and champions the individual: true to himself and responsible for his own actions.

Introduction

“Joan was a being so uplifted from the ordinary run of mankind that she finds no equal in a thousand years. She embodied the natural goodness and valour of the human race in unexampled perfection. Unconquerable courage, infinite compassion, the virtue of the simple, the wisdom of the just, shone forth in her.” --Winston Churchill

*“I could not kill the Maid. She is up and alive everywhere.”
--Executioner in Saint Joan by George Bernard Shaw*

Two Burgundian nobles are discussing Jeanne's imminent arrival when one exclaims: "She's the Maid of Lorraine." The other seemingly dismisses the gravity of the situation when he replies skeptically: "That's a myth." To this remark, the first Burgundian admonishes his comrade with a warning: "*Never underestimate the power of a myth*" (emphasis added). This scene from Christian Duguay's film *Joan of Arc* (1999) captures the French people's enduring belief in the celebrated maid as deliverer of the nation of France.

In 2005—over five hundred seventy-five years after the city's famous deliverance by the Maid—I walked the streets of Orléans where I personally discovered Jeanne's ongoing popularity. One may peruse the holdings of the Centre Jeanne d'Arc, founded in 1974 by leading Johannic scholar Régine Pernoud or simply visit the Cathédrale Sainte-Croix where the stained-glass windows retell Jeanne's story. In the city's center at the Place du Martroi stands a huge statue of Jeanne on horseback with her sword in hand. Famous as a standard bearer before the army, the Maid here is surrounded by the flags of the European Union, France, and Orléans. One may tour the Maison de Jeanne d'Arc, the house where the Maid lodged is now a modern-day museum.¹ Filled with historic monuments, Orléans also capitalizes on the Maid's appeal to tourists. For example, I stayed at the Hôtel d'Arc and strolled down the Rue Jeanne d'Arc to find the Pâtisserie Jeanne d'Arc, Café Jeanne d'Arc and the Charcuterie Jeanne d'Arc. Orléans, however, is not the only city to celebrate the historic maiden. Heralded as the "première étape de la mission de Jeanne," the town of Chinon offers the opportunity to stand amidst the remains of the chateau where Jeanne first met the dauphin Charles. Likewise, the Maid's hometown of Domrémy--later renamed Domrémy-la-Pucelle in her honor--boasts the family home of Jacques d'Arc. And in Rouen, one can visit the infamous Vieux Marché, where the stake was replaced

¹ As much of Orléans sustained significant damage during the bombings of 1940, the Maison Boucher where Jeanne lodged was reconstructed after World War II.

by a tall cross in memoriam of Jeanne's tragic death. Thus, even today from the smallest villages to the capital city of Paris, her remembrance pervades the nation of France. She has become a prominent figure in the history of France and her legend reverberates in both literature and film.² Jeanne's legend also transcends national borders and artists' portrayals of the simple French maiden-turned-soldier appear in many languages.

In his multi-volume work *Lieux de Mémoire* (1992), Pierre Nora treats the traditions, ideals, and places that constitute the notion of France and French-ness. In the third volume *De l'archive à l'emblème*, he examines the various symbols associated with the Hexagon, including *le coq gaulois* and *le roi* among others. In the section entitled *Identifications*, Michel Winock devotes a large section to Jeanne d'Arc who is the only female and one of only three great symbolic figures in French history (to Nora's mind).³ I include these specific details regarding Jeanne's placement in the work because it conveys her significance when modern scholars discuss the notion of what defines France and those symbols that identify the French. As Winock notes, the iconography of Jeanne persists in all arenas:

À vrai dire, le nom de Jeanne d'Arc, à partir du XIXe siècle, s'est prêté à tous les usages, patronnant des eaux minérales, des cercles de jeunes catholiques et des associations politiques...On a vu et revu la jeune fille dans quelques attitudes stéréotypées...à travers les multiples expressions d'hier et d'aujourd'hui—cérémonies officielles, fêtes locales, cartes postales, vitraux d'église, almanachs, livres illustrés, « souvenirs » en tout genre pour pèlerins et touristes; son prénom est gravé dans le fer, le bronze, la pierre; des milliers de statues la représentant en bergère inspirée ou en guerrière intrépide, peuplent les villages de France, ornant les monuments aux morts, nichant dans les déambulatoires d'églises ou trônant sur la place de la mairie (679).

² Spoto briefly alludes to the importance of Jeanne in cinematic history: "One of the first films ever made, in 1898, was about Joan of Arc, and producers, directors and actors have since then found her story irresistible. At least fifty-three feature films have reached the screen...Documentary films about her are legion" (204-05). For more information on filmic representations of Jeanne, see Robin Blaetz's *Visions of the Maid: Joan of Arc in American Film and Culture* (2001).

³ In Nora's project, the Maid is listed after Charlemagne and before Descartes.

While her name/image is omnipresent and attached to even mundane items, Jeanne d’Arc takes on much greater significance as she was a living symbol of the French nation.

Historically, France has often faced political division. At the time of Jeanne’s arrival on the political scene, two factions—the Armagnacs and the Burgundians—opposed each other in the Hundred Years War. This trend would continue for centuries after Jeanne’s death and Winock describes this disunity as characteristic of France:

La France a toujours été divisée. La guerre entre les Armagnacs et les Bourguignons n’est qu’un avatar lointain des divisions gauloises ...L’anarchie est consubstantielle à la France: qu’elle soit tribale, féodale, intellectuelle ou populaire; qu’elle soit de gauche ou de droite. Un indéracinable individualisme—de personne ou de groupe—n’a jamais cessé d’affaiblir la défense du pays et sa cohésion sociale (724).

In the midst of division however, the French took great pride in their country and saw themselves as one nation. Despite the internal disagreement, French citizens believed in their state: “Les Français ne s’aiment pas mais ils aiment la France” (727). Even with regional disputes and the diversity of France’s citizens, nationalism and strong patriotic sentiment created a sense of solidarity.

To speak of nationalism thus raises the question: what constitutes a nation? To grapple with this notion, I turn to Ernest Renan who gave a lecture at the Sorbonne in March 1882 entitled “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?.” Renan asserts that the creation of a unified France came at a high price, and one often forgets the violence that precedes national stability:

L’oubli, et je dirai même l’erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d’une nation...L’unité se fait toujours brutalement; la réunion de la France du Nord et de la France du Midi a été le résultat d’une extermination et d’une terreur continuée pendant près d’un siècle.⁴

⁴ Renan’s lecture is taken from an online source:
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation04.htm.

In his discourse, Renan then offers possible criteria that are frequently linked to the concept of nation: race, language, religion, and geography. While Renan admits that members/citizens of a nation may share one or more of these factors, he gives specific examples that oppose these criteria as definitive of nationhood.⁵ In the end, Renan acknowledges the human element as the basis of all nations:

L'homme est tout dans la formation de cette chose sacrée qu'on appelle un peuple. Rien de matériel n'y suffit. Une nation est un principe spirituel, résultant des complications profondes de l'histoire, une famille spirituelle, non un groupe déterminé par la configuration du sol.

For Renan, a nation is a soul, a spiritual principal based on two parts: a shared past of memories, experiences, and suffering as well as a present desire to live together and continue creating a heritage. Renan explains the citizen's personal investment in national identity as it involves a willingness to participate: "Une nation est donc une grande solidarité, constituée par le sentiment des sacrifices qu'on a faits et de ceux qu'on est disposé à faire encore." I agree with Renan's definition of nationhood and subscribe to his theory of nation based on solidarity among its citizens. Indeed, Renan's reading fits into the discussion of Jeanne d'Arc and her goal of uniting the French under one king in 1429.

While Jeanne sought to bring together the French under Charles, the Maid actually became the cohesive force that unified the nation. Allegiance to 'France' quite literally personified the nation, as *la France* became a beloved protector of her inhabitants. With the interpretation of France as a person, it was natural to search for an actual human being behind whom they could rally themselves. Winock concludes that Jeanne d'Arc--not Charles VII--fit this role for the nation; and thus, the Maid was France personified:

⁵ In the case of language, for example, Renan points to Switzerland whose many languages do not preclude its status as a single nation.

L'anarchisme français aboutit assez régulièrement au culte de la personnalité. Les Français, il est vrai, ont depuis longtemps fait de leur pays une personne: «Le cri 'Vive la France', écrivait encore Curtius, ne s'adresse pas à un État, à une nation, ou à un pays, mais à un être vivant que des millions de Français nourrissent de leur sang et de leur moelle, de leur esprit et de leur volonté. La France a su forger ce mythe d'elle-même. C'est là le secret de la puissance inégalée qu'elle a toujours exercée sur les âmes, à toutes les époques de son histoire, et plus encore à partir de 1789.» Si leur pays est une personne, inversement une personne, un mythe vivant comme Jeanne d'Arc, devait lui donner sa première expression humaine (729).

Not only was Jeanne the first human expression of *la France*, but I believe she remains the lasting French emblem as she is still celebrated today.

One testament to this fact is the *Fête Jeanne d'Arc* that draws locals and tourists alike to the city of Orléans each year for a commemorative festival honoring their deliverer: *la Pucelle d'Orléans*. Celebrated the first weekend in May when historically Jeanne liberated the city,⁶ the *Fête Jeanne d'Arc* includes parades, markets, concerts and spectacles. A committee selects a local maiden to play the famous role and she leads a procession of military, clergy, and local dignitaries among others through the streets of Orléans:

Invités et personnalités défilent sur une dizaine de kilomètres derrière l'héroïne du jour, une Jeanne en armure et à cheval incarnée par une adolescente née à Orléans, catholique pratiquante, alternativement choisie dans l'enseignement public et privé pour ses qualités morales et de dévouement.⁷

The city's annual festival with its customs and pageantry is an enduring tradition.

Historically, the citizens of Orléans have long remembered the Maid. Even before Jeanne left the city, the residents of Orléans celebrated this great triumph: “Le 8 mai 1429, c'est-à-dire le jour même où les Anglais lèvent le siège d'Orléans, les habitants de la ville libérée

⁶ History records that Jeanne entered Orléans on April 29, 1429. After several days of strategic military moves, the Maid led her soldiers to victory and the English lifted the siege of Orléans on Sunday, May 8.

⁷ This citation is taken from an online source *Le quotidien du peuple* in an article “France: Fête Jeanne d'Arc le 8 mai à Orléans”(05/08/2003)[website: http://french.peopledaily.com.cn/french/200305/08/fra20030508_60912.html].

improvisent une procession d'action de grâces, pour remercier les saints patrons de la cité, Aignan et Euverte” (Winock 686). Since 1429, the *Orléanais* have commemorated the city's liberation, and this tradition continued for centuries. Unlike the contemporary festival however, the early reenactments featured the Maid played by a young male:

Au XVI^e siècle, après l'interruption due aux guerres de Religion, la fête s'enrichit d'une *véritable reconstitution historique*: ...‘un jeune homme vêtu à l'antique [Renaissance oblige] représente la Pucelle. Salves de canons et feux de joie accueillent la procession. Aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles un jeune garçon portait la bannière dite « de Jeanne d'Arc »; le Puceau choisi par le Maire et les Échevins de la ville participera aux fêtes jusqu'à la Révolution’ (688 emphasis added).

I take issue with Winock labeling these early fêtes as a “véritable reconstitution historique” when the heroine is male.⁸ But putting aside the problematic of gender for a moment, I must underscore the longevity of this celebration. Sources tell us that the festivals continued until revolutionaries interrupted them in 1793 as they saw the festivals as too religious and royalist (689). Bonaparte reinstated them in 1802, but France's leaders after him during the nineteenth century struggled with the religious aspect of the celebration. At one point, government officials were prohibited from participating in the procession with the clergy.

Joseph Fabre, whose book *Procès de condamnation* was published in 1884, took the initiative that year to lobby for a law establishing an annual holiday in Jeanne's honor (707). To argue his case Fabre used another country as a model, explaining that the United States celebrated not only Independence Day but also a holiday for their beloved Washington. In 1894, Charles Dupuy reiterated Fabre's claim when he spoke before the French senate. The two fêtes were complementary and both were significant to the nation: “La fête du 14 juillet, c'est la fête de la liberté; celle de Jeanne d'Arc, M. Fabre l'appelle la fête du patriotisme. On pourrait

⁸ This notion of Jeanne's virility resurfaces in literary works and the tendency for French authors to portray her masculine nature will be addressed in this study.

l'appeler la fête de l'indépendance" (Winock 707-08).⁹ Finally in 1920—the year of the Maid's canonization—the government held the vote instituting the *fête nationale de Jeanne d'Arc*. The legislation included three articles, granting the Maid an official holiday in Orléans and a historical monument in Rouen:

--La République française célèbre annuellement la fête de Jeanne d'Arc, fête du patriotisme.

--Cette fête a lieu le deuxième dimanche de mai, jour anniversaire de la délivrance d'Orléans.

--Il sera élevé en l'honneur de Jeanne d'Arc, sur la place de Rouen où elle a été brûlée vive, un monument avec cette inscription : « A Jeanne d'Arc, la France reconnaissante » (Sanson 457).

In 1920, Jeanne's formal acknowledgement by the government was long overdue--it had taken almost five hundred years since Orléans's deliverance in 1429 for the *fêtes johanniques* to become nationally recognized.

From the celebration at Orléans to other festivals throughout the nation, Jeanne's remembrance in contemporary France testifies to her status even today as a French icon. An integral part of French identity, Jeanne d'Arc becomes a figure often inscribed in French literature. During and since the Maid's lifetime, many French authors have retold her story. What is it that keeps drawing us to the extraordinary life of the young woman from Domrémy who convinced the frightened heir to the throne to assume his kingship of France during a time of national uncertainty? Her popularity amidst the literati is perhaps due—at least in part—to the extensive factual accounts surrounding the Maid's life. In a recently published biography entitled *Joan: The Mysterious Life of the Heretic Who Became a Saint*, Donald Spoto reveals that the Pucelle ranks first among the famous figures that history records up to her day:

So far as the facts of her life are concerned, it is astonishing to learn that we have more detailed evidence about her than anyone else in the history

⁹ It is ironic that Jeanne's holiday is referred to here as *la fête de l'indépendance*, as she is the one who restored power to the monarchy.

of the world up to her time. We know far more about Joan, for example, than we do about Moses, Plato, Jesus of Nazareth, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Buddha or Muhammad. For the last two and a half years of her life, we can construct almost a day-by-day account of her whereabouts and actions (xi-xii).

With all this data at hand, historians and writers for centuries (myself included) cannot resist the Maid's magnetism.

One may now pose the question of just how extensive is this domain of Johannic writing. Excluding the historians for a moment, I turn to the realm of literature. During the Maid's lifetime, Christine de Pisan penned the first poem on Jeanne immediately after Charles VII's coronation at Reims. Thus, even before her death, Jeanne became a literary hero. One source also records that shortly after the Maid's execution, this tradition continued: "four years after her death, the first of several plays was staged at Orléans" (Spoto 202). A plethora of works by countless authors would follow; and as *le culte de Jeanne* thrived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an explosion of Johannic texts occurred:

in the nineteenth century no fewer than eighty-two French plays sympathetic to Joan were performed...in the twentieth century poets, historians and playwrights inevitably turned to her for inspiration, and in 1909 alone (the year she was beatified) seventeen plays were written and produced (202).

But aside from the extensive historical data that survived, to what else do we attribute the Maid's popularity as literary hero?

Initially, Jeanne's extraordinary status as a female deliverer of her people might come to mind. After all, the intrigue and mystery surrounding a *woman* national savior make a captivating story. Jeanne's heroism in war, however, is not an exclusive phenomenon among women. Before the Maid, other celebrated women led men into battle:

The Greek poet Telesilla was famous for saving the city of Argos from attack by Spartan troops in the fifth century B.C. In first-century Britain,

Queen Boudicca led an uprising against the occupying Roman forces. In the third century Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra (latter-day Syria), declared her independence of the Roman Empire and seized Egypt and much of Asia Minor. Africa had its rebel Queen Gwedit, or Yodit, in the tenth century. In the eleventh appeared Sikelgaita, a Lombard princess who frequently accompanied her husband, Robert, on his Byzantine military campaigns, in which she fought in full armor...In the twelfth century Eleanor of Aquitaine took part in the Second Crusade, and in the fourteenth century Joanna, Countess of Montfort, took up arms after her husband died...She organized resistance and, dressed in full armor, led a raid of knights that successfully destroyed one of the enemy's rear camps (Spoto 73).

In fifteenth-century France however, it is Jeanne's humble birth that sets her apart from these great women who commanded soldiers. As Spoto has remarked, the Maid was simply a maid: "Joan was not a queen, a princess, a noblewoman or a respected poet with public support" (73). Unlike these feminine warriors, Jeanne had to fight for her own country's backing before facing her enemy on the battlefield.

Throughout history, Jeanne's life also makes a compelling story due to the religious aspect. The Maid was called to her divine mission for France when she heard saints' voices. Throughout her military campaign, Jeanne dedicated herself to prayer and frequently took communion. Despite her constant religious devotion, her life would end at the hands of the Church who ultimately declared her a heretic and executed her in 1431. After her death however, many still viewed Jeanne as a model of purity and piety. And centuries later in 1920, the Church canonized the Maid to seal her legend with the utmost irony: "Joan is unique in that she is the only person to be condemned by a Church court for crimes against religion and faith and then later declared a saint of that same Church, worthy of universal reverence" (Spoto xii). It seems that the savior of France was finally reclaimed by the Church.

The Johannic Paradox

As the Church has demonstrated, the persona of Jeanne d’Arc embodies contradiction; and what I will call the “Johannic paradox” exists on many levels. For the religious, she seemed to them at first a witch and heretic only to be declared later a divinely inspired saint. With regards to her social background, Jeanne was born a humble peasant that would ultimately restore power to the French king. As for her education, the Maiden’s status as an illiterate teenager contrasts greatly with her clever demeanor before her judges. Although she cannot sign her own name, Jeanne exhibits wisdom beyond her years during the trial questioning. Likewise, the Maid’s profession was extraordinary: this shepherdess-turned-soldier went from the pasture to the battlefield. Her gender, also, seemed paradoxical: male attire masked the Maid’s feminine purity. In addition, if we consider Jeanne’s maidenhood, we see that the virginal status does not preclude her maternal role when she becomes mother to the French nation. Furthermore, the Maid is a single individual who brought together a multitude of local identities. From a plurality of distinct peoples (Armagnacs, Bourguignons, and many other groups), a singular notion of “Frenchness” was born.

Even after the Maid’s lifetime, the Johannic paradox continues. Jeanne the medieval maiden reaches out to the modern reader as she is timeless. Furthermore, while Jeanne historically represents the French, she also maintains a universal appeal even today. This is certainly the case in literature as many have retold the Maid’s story. To name only a few, I mention British authors William Shakespeare (who portrays Jeanne in a negative light) and George Bernard Shaw, American novelist Mark Twain, and German playwrights Friedrich von Schiller and Bertolt Brecht. But as these authors recount Jeanne’s *French* story, one may wonder if the Maid’s legend “translates” around the world? In other words, is it possible to

separate Jeanne d’Arc from France? To these questions, I answer yes, as nationalist literature on a global level finds inspiration in the Maid:

In general, we find that Joan of Arc all over the world is to many peoples a symbol of nationalism. We find her presented in this light in the national literatures of peoples as remote from France as Latvia and Poland and Brazil. Even in Maltese there are books which present Joan as a nationalist symbol (Lightbody 164).

But going beyond the pages of literature, the Maid inspired actual heroines abroad. One historian records, for example, an account of Madeleine de Verchères, the “Jeanne canadienne” who in 1692 at the age of fourteen defended the fort de Verchères against the Iroquois for eight days (F. L. 56). Another historical account records a young African woman known as “Kimpa Vita, Jeanne d’Arc du Congo.” As an aside, her story offers a striking parallel to Jeanne’s and deserves further exploration. Instructed by a saint, this young woman brings the king to her capital, only to be betrayed in the end. Her journey--even her execution--mirrors the Maiden’s:

Au plus fort de la guerre civile qui opposait, au XVIII^e siècle, les partisans de deux prétendants au trône du Royaume du Kongo, apparut l’étonnante figure de Kimpa Vita, appelée aussi Dona Béatrice, la « Jeanne d’Arc du Kongo ». Fondatrice du mouvement messianique des Antoniens, Kimpa Vita avait entendu en rêve saint Antoine lui ordonner de ramener le roi Pedro IV à São Salvador, la capitale du Kongo, détruite par la guerre, et de récupérer les insignes royaux détenus par l’usurpateur Jean II. Grâce à l’influence que prit sa secte au Kongo, la prophétesse réussit à ramener le roi dans sa capitale, mais ce dernier ne lui en sut aucun gré, bien au contraire, et la livra aux autorités ecclésiastiques portugaises. Condamnée comme hérétique, Kimpa Vita fut brûlée vive en 1706. Dona Béatrice et ses disciples appelaient à rejeter les valeurs importées par les Portugais et à retrouver leur dignité et leur authenticité. Elle devint alors le symbole de la résistance à l’acculturation (Klotchoff 56).

Thus, the final paradox among the plethora of Johannic contradictions lies in her survival (or reincarnation) after death. As I see it, this phenomenon--the Johannic paradox--results in a broad public appeal. For the feminist, Jeanne represents the triumph of woman. For the spiritual, the Maid embodies self-sacrifice and devotion to God. Indeed, her martyrdom renders her a Christ-

like figure. To the humble, she demonstrates the potential to rise above social rank and influence the powerful. For the youth, Jeanne's young age does not exempt her from fulfilling a significant destiny. And for the patriot, the Pucelle signifies the vehicle to bring national unity. It is this political appeal I will now address as Jeanne, the famous liberator of Orléans, becomes a political prisoner.

History records that the English captured Jeanne at Compiègne in 1430, and the Maid became a prisoner of war. As an English captive, Jeanne faced interrogation by her enemy and ultimately a trial with a fatal outcome. Spoto comments on the Maid's status as a victim: "Joan of Arc is certainly an example of the victimized political prisoner, of the hostage unjustly taken, betrayed by those to whom she was devoted" (205). Not only did the Maid fall prey to the English government, but the politics of her own Charles--to whom she gave the crown--prevented her rescue. In her own lifetime and since, the Maid remains a prisoner of her nation's politics. Jeanne becomes the political symbol that France consistently turns to for national inspiration. As this study will show, many French leaders seek to associate themselves with the Maid's name.

During the nineteenth century, Casimir Delavigne presents Napoléon as the reincarnation of a messianic Jeanne. In the article "Un mythe et sa démythification: Jeanne d'Arc dans la littérature française," critic Dietmar Rieger notes the appropriation: "Le but principal de Delavigne est l'apologie de l'empereur destiné à sauver, comme jadis Jeanne d'Arc, la France à une époque de crise nationale. Les traits messianiques de Jeanne et de Napoléon seront développés au cours du XIXe siècle" (246). In the following century, the political appropriation of Jeanne d'Arc continues, as seen most recently in French presidential candidate and founder of Le Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen. The extreme right-wing politician appropriates the Maid

for his policy of a *France pure*, as Michel Winock explains: “Cette fois, Jeanne est appelée à sauver la France des nouveaux « envahisseurs » c’est-à-dire les immigrés” (723).¹⁰ Thus, from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first, political figures--of the right and the left--employ Jeanne as a pawn in their own endgame. As Winock rightly concludes, the Maid’s memory has always been subject to political appropriation: “La politisation de la mémoire de Jeanne d’Arc n’a pratiquement pas cessé depuis 1431” (724).

The perpetual political use of Jeanne’s legend in French history often manifests itself in writing. In truth, the extensive literary devotion to Jeanne can be overwhelming when one starts to explore the various depictions of the Maid. Examining these various portrayals of her story is nonetheless problematic when we consider how authors--like the politicians--have altered and made use of Jeanne for their own purposes.

Timeless Jeanne, yet Timely Depictions

In this study, I investigate the gendered nature of her depictions, taking into account the ideological underpinnings that shape the portrayal of Jeanne in French literature and conversely how the legendary Jeanne shapes the collective French body. While previous critics have examined various individual works on Jeanne, my analysis is an original contribution to the field because it is a diachronic study of the “Jeanne phenomenon” in works throughout French history. With the Maid’s lasting impression and continuous revival, there is a sense of timelessness that accompanies her reception by the French public. In this transhistorical study, I argue, however, that Jeanne’s appearance carries with it a specific *timeliness* that deserves further exploration. In his book, Donald Spoto asserts the necessity of remembering Jeanne within the particular reality

¹⁰ To my mind, it is Le Pen’s recent xenophobic and racist depiction of Jeanne that pervades the mentality of a new French generation and thus, estranges many young scholars from pursuing Johannic studies.

of her own lifetime. Rather than take the Maid out of her historical context, Spoto shows that her story has a certain effect when situated in fifteenth-century France:

The specifics of her time, place, language, religion and economy must be carefully considered if we are to gain something close to a realistic picture...Only by interpreting her words and gestures in light of her own time and place—only by giving them context and trying to understand what they meant for her and her contemporaries—can we come close to her (xvii).

I subscribe to Spoto's socio-historical approach to reading Jeanne, and I begin my analysis with this notion in the fifteenth-century work by Pisan. Unlike Spoto and other Johannic scholars, however, my study looks at Jeanne's reappearance in subsequent centuries and reveals how French authors (re)appropriate the Maid throughout history. Thus, this project differs from previous works in that my goal is to ground my analysis of the Maid's portrayal by situating it within the politics of the day. This method allows me to better grasp the author's use of the heroic figure and thereby, the national--and sometimes personal--implications. In short, how is Jeanne's legend used to construct French national identity? Beginning with Jeanne's France in the fifteenth century, I first consider the Maid's contemporary Christine de Pisan. But ultimately, this study investigates three subsequent authors whose works on Jeanne d'Arc appeared at different moments that I see as turning points in the history of France as a nation.

During and after Pisan's lifetime, France struggled in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). The region known today as France was divided into many diverse identities, and the notion/nation of France was only beginning to take shape. Indeed, Alain Boureau confirms that the Hundred Years War marked the beginning of France as a nation:

Certes, il est bien difficile de dater une émergence générale de la nation, tant elle mêle des réalités et des mythes divers et complexes, mais on s'accorde généralement pour loger cette construction dans la forme étatique et royale du territoire, à partir du XIV siècle, et notamment à partir de la guerre de Cent Ans (Boureau 799-800).

During the Hundred Years War, northern parts of the country were occupied by the English, and some French began to side with the British in this struggle for power. Thus, the future of the French monarchy was at stake: would it be Henry VI of England or Charles VII of France? It is at this crucial moment in French history that Jeanne d'Arc arrives on the scene. Her mission is to lead the French soldiers to victory, rout the English enemy, and ensure for Charles the French crown. Jeanne accomplishes her mission, and Christine de Pisan records this triumph in the first literary text to celebrate the Maid: *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*. Written immediately after Charles's coronation in 1429, the *Ditié* makes a personal address to Charles, the Maid, the loyal French citizens and the French rebels who collaborate with the English. Pisan intends to rally the French behind their new hero--the Maid--and unite a people whose impotent king provided them no example of leadership. At this time, which I see as the birth of a nation, Pisan had no choice but to use a strong religious tone and Biblical imagery in her poem to discuss national identity. As the monarchy was in shambles, the Church was the powerful institution on which Pisan could build a sense of national unity. Thus, using God's authority to authenticate the Maid and the new king, Pisan looks back to the Crusades and raises the notion of holy war to establish the French as "God's chosen people." Along with the unifying, national goal evident in the *Ditié*, Pisan's work also carries personal implications. In terms of identity, the poem's homage to Jeanne resonates with the author who inscribes herself, "Je, Christine", in the text.

After this period during the Hundred Years War, I then found it critical in my transhistorical approach to examine the Maid in light of the seventeenth century when France's royalty reached the pinnacle of power with *le Roi soleil*, Louis XIV. Far from the impotent Charles VII, the monarch's supreme authority would become the centerpiece for French national identity. During this period of Absolutism, classicism flourished, emphasizing the importance

of rhetoric and language. Scholars of this century birthed the *Académie française* in 1634 and a new phenomenon known as the salons thrived. With that in mind, the drama *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1642) by François Hédelin d'Aubignac offers us an interesting depiction of Jeanne. No longer an illiterate youth, the Maid is transformed by the drama theorist into an eloquent rhetorician. Cloaked in masculine rhetoric and attire, the virile Jeanne dominates the courtroom drama. Although not well-received by the public, d'Aubignac's play demonstrates a powerful monarch figure which is quite telling of that time. In 1642, his drama emerges just before the Sun King's reign (1661-1715). Furthermore, while this articulate Jeanne represents the royal persona, the Maiden also bears a resemblance to the author. For d'Aubignac, there seems to be a personal investment in writing a Jeanne whose rhetoric captivates her audience.

Following the monarchy's fluctuation--the lows of Charles VII and the highs of Louis XIV--it seemed indispensable to consider the eighteenth century when the French nation was reshaped by the most significant political event in its history: the revolution of 1789. At this historical moment, the French witnessed the literal death of the monarchy. As revolutionaries obliterated the monarchy in favor of a republic, the nation of France was redefined. During the eighteenth century leading up to this pivotal point, the Age of Reason flourished and the principles of the Enlightenment began to dominate French thought. Among the leaders of this movement in France was Voltaire. Although recognized most often for other works, Voltaire's epic poem *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1762) became the center of controversy during his lifetime and met with much criticism and success. In this pre-revolutionary text, Voltaire encourages the gullible public to question the established institutions such as the monarchy and the Church—and here, even the legends we accept as truth. His *Pucelle* seems to ridicule the heroine by making her a sexualized Jeanne. The poet offers a depiction that focuses on Jeanne's

maidenhood and questions her purity. In a striking parallel, Voltaire's Jeanne matures from maiden into womanhood as France too will undergo a radical transformation. Shortly before the establishment of the republic, Voltaire's satirical depiction of the heroic maiden looks ahead to France's future. The commentary behind the veil of profanation and irony reveals a political message not unlike Pisan's poem written more than three centuries before: France is being redefined.

Finally, I turn to twentieth-century France which experienced a revival of Jeanne in the midst of national turmoil. After World War I, Jeanne d'Arc was canonized as a saint in 1920. Then, during World War II, the Germans invaded France and their oppressive force remained there between the years of 1940-1944. The foreign occupation of French soil in the Second World War replayed the scene of Jeanne's own day during the Hundred Years War when the English governed parts of France. Thus, during the twentieth century, Jeanne became a fitting emblem for expelling the foreign enemy. During the occupation, France itself was divided and political leaders of both sides appropriate the Maid's legend: the collaborators of the Vichy régime headed by Pétain as well as the Resistance and Free French led by de Gaulle.

Throughout the German occupation, French theatre thrived, and the popular heroine onstage was, of course, la Pucelle. In this study, it was therefore natural to select a drama. Also at this moment in the theatre, the dramatic genre was marked by change. Ideologically, this period saw the emergence of Absurdist theatre when dramatists made a conscious choice to revolt against the classical traditions and invent something new. With that in mind, I specifically chose Jean Anouilh's play *L'Alouette* (1953) which had great success in France and abroad and which offers a postwar perspective. The playwright Anouilh depicts the Maid whose foreign enemy, the English, is quite easily replaced by France's modern adversary, the Germans. In a

play situated after France's liberation from German occupation, I see the rebirth of a nation and the struggle to reestablish or renew French identity after German control. Influenced by the Absurdist movement, Anouilh's drama—although quite different stylistically and structurally from d'Aubignac's—presents a Jeanne not unlike the seventeenth-century playwright's. Anouilh's *hero* rejects the feminine role and specifically the mother figure. In Anouilh's reinvention however, the focus seems to champion the individual being true to oneself. In the lark's song--both joyous and absurd--the playwright captures the paradox of postwar sentiment: the frustration of liberation.

With my argument thus outlined, I must address two possible areas of contention. Firstly, the reader may question why I did not include the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries in this study. It is indisputable that authors from these periods also penned Johannic texts, and these centuries, likewise, perpetuate the pattern of using Jeanne for their own reasons. The Maid remains a popular subject—whether inspirational or controversial—throughout French history. In *The Judgements of Joan*, Charles Lightbody records that the Maid caused an uproar among sixteenth-century Protestants who disqualified the Maid as a religious symbol because of her association with the King: “The Protestants of the sixteenth century saw Joan of Arc as the Joan of the Rehabilitation, ‘tainted with idolatry’, identified with Church and King. They destroyed every representation of her upon which they could lay their hands” (155). And concerning the nineteenth-century view of Jeanne, I remind the reader of the messianic parallel with Napoleon. Inherent in these readings of the Maid is a strong religious association. For my purposes here, I will focus on the political aspect of France. Thus, it is my view that the specific political events offered here—the Hundred Years War, the rise of Louis XIV, the *Révolution française*, and

World War II—weigh most heavily on the collective French consciousness when scholars discuss the construction of French identity.

The second question that the reader of this study may pose relates to the issue of literary genre. In my transhistorical approach to Jeanne in literature, I look specifically at two poems and two dramas. I acknowledge that a diachronic study of epic poetry alone or solely theatre is quite possible—considering the plethora of Johannic texts—but I believe that both genres are indispensable to this study of nation building. Epic poetry establishes (and propagates) the feats of national heroes, as in the case of *La Chanson de Roland*. At this point, I must interject that Pisan's *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, although shorter in length than the typical epic, accomplishes this goal. Likewise, Voltaire's poem, considered to be a *mock* epic, employs satire but still highlights the famous Maid. With that in mind, I turn to the dramatic genre, which appears to be not unlike poetry in its expression. If we remember that poems were often read aloud, the performative aspect seems quite comparable to the drama. Indeed, I would assert that the two genres are complementary and theatre can be seen as a dramatic poem. Renowned drama theorist d'Aubignac iterated this notion in the seventeenth century. In fact, the full title of his celebrated work on dramatic theory reveals the poetic aspect of theatre: *La Pratique du Théâtre, ouvrage très nécessaire à tous ceux qui veulent s'appliquer à la composition des poèmes dramatiques, qui les récitent en public, ou qui prennent plaisir d'en voir les représentations* (emphasis added). Like the epic poem, a dramatic poem plays a key role in this notion of constructing national identity. The theatre represents or reenacts the state on a smaller scale before its citizens. Mitchell Greenberg explains that the theatre acts as a sovereign who influences the spectator-citizen:

The theater functions...like a mirror. It holds up to view both the individual desires of the spectators and the societal Law that informs these

desires and prohibits their fulfillment. The spectators [are] in front of this spectacle – a spectacle that is, in its symbolic dimension, a representation of the Prince, of the Law...Classical theater reflects back to the spectator an image, social and individual, that is totalizing (19).

In the Absolutist France of d'Aubignac, this notion is quite clear; but is it possible to relate this reading to Anouilh's theatre in the twentieth century? I believe the answer is yes for two reasons. In place of the monarch, the *republic* often becomes the 'sovereign' voice that addresses the spectator. Furthermore, even as the twentieth century redefined French drama, the theatre still acted as a mirror: capturing the absurdity of a post-modern society and reflecting this frustration onto the audience. In conclusion, both epic poetry and theatre figure prominently in the area of nation formation, and the two offer distinct advantages. In his summary of d'Aubignac's theory, Charles Arnaud asserts: "Tandis que le poème épique s'adresse directement à l'imagination, le poème dramatique est un tableau « qui tombe sous les sens »" (14). According to d'Aubignac, the epic operates in the imaginary world while the theatre creates a corporeal experience for the physical senses grounded in the real world.

Myth, Legend, or History?

In reflecting upon Jeanne's enduring popularity, one may wonder why stories are passed down and what do we gain in their retelling? In *Aspects du mythe*, Mircea Eliade explains this tradition as more than a ritual remembrance, but rather it involves reviving the characters again and again: "Il ne s'agit pas d'une commémoration des événements mythiques, mais de leur réitération. Les personnes du mythe sont rendues présentes, *on devient leur contemporain...*" (31, emphasis added). Eliade's reading of myth is especially pertinent in Jeanne's case. For centuries, the French resurrect the Maid's story, but in a personal and timely way. Eliade's interpretation of myth, however, requires one modification. Instead of the story taking the audience back to Jeanne's day (as Eliade writes: '*on devient leur contemporain*'), it seems that

the French actually bring Jeanne to the present day: thus, '*elle devient notre contemporain.*' The Maid leaves behind fifteenth-century France and steps into a new time period where she takes on the characteristics deemed appropriate by the author. Indeed, the seventeenth-century Jeanne of d'Aubignac--eloquent and authoritative--does not resemble Voltaire's Jeanne in the eighteenth century who is suspect and sexualized. Thus, as this study demonstrates, certain authors pass over a simple retelling of Jeanne's medieval story in favor of a more contemporary rendering.¹¹

Before proceeding any further, I must reiterate the title *How Legend Constructs French National Identity* and explain my choice of the word *legend*. In various accounts, many authors refer to Jeanne's story as a myth while others call it a legend. My preference for *legend* stems from the idea that it connotes a story--often heroic--passed down for generations. A myth can meet these criteria, but the term *myth* can also explain the existence of natural phenomena (as found in the stories of Greek mythology). According to Webster's definition, a *legend* is also "believed to have a historical basis." As we know this to be true in Jeanne's case, her account fits more precisely into the category of legend than myth. Furthermore, according to the *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, the term *légende* is appropriate for Jeanne as "le mot désigne d'abord le récit de la vie d'un saint" (Rey).

Also, my use of the word *history* throughout this study denotes the facts that are recorded in the trial records or by historians who reported from those 'official' documents. Here, I hesitate to say *official* as the trial records themselves are subject to dispute. From what is known about the process, it seems that three French copyists were selected to record the daily interrogations: "Guillaume Manchon, Guillaume Colles, also known as Boisguillaume, and Nicolas Taquel, [who were] all attached to the ecclesiastical court of Rouen" (Gies 156). Each

¹¹ Here, I must mention that the exception, of course, is Christine de Pisan who lived and wrote during Jeanne's lifetime.

night, they allegedly compared and compiled notes. Thomas de Courcelles, a University theologian, then translated the notaries' work to create the Latin version of Jeanne's trial. Based on three separate eyewitness accounts--and then translated by another official--these records must contain subjective viewpoint(s) of the trial proceedings. Thus, even the 'official' rendering--the trial records--still distance us from the actual historical event.¹²

In the discussion of historical accuracy, it is necessary to consider that the start to Jeanne's illustrious military career hinged upon fiction. Prior to Jeanne's appearance before the dauphin, a legend/prophecy existed that declared France would be laid waste by a woman and that it would be restored by a Maid from the Lorraine region.¹³ This famous legend of the Maid of Lorraine provided Jeanne the means through which to gain initial acceptance by French authorities. Had Jeanne not capitalized on the Maid of Lorraine's fame, it is doubtful that she could have garnered support to accomplish her own mission. She was, after all, a young peasant girl from a small village in eastern France. Who would have believed that this teenager heard the voices of Saints Michael, Margaret, and Catherine and that they told her to visit the dauphin? Moreover, how could this illiterate maiden lead men into battle? Jeanne quickly learned that she must claim to be the Maid of Lorraine in order to accomplish the divine mandate revealed to her through her voices. The Dauphin Charles would also exploit her legendary status as a military strategy to motivate the French army. As the Maid of Lorraine, Jeanne was able to rally the French troops to fight together for France. Her legendary role-playing led them to victory as they lifted the siege at Orléans. Furthermore, when the French rulers and soldiers embraced Jeanne as the embodiment of the Maid of Lorraine, the French public followed suit and accepted

¹² Procured at the Centre Jeanne d'Arc in Orléans, I analyzed *Manuscrit 518 d'Orléans*, which is even further removed: this account of the trial was translated from Latin back into French under the orders of Louis XII.

¹³ Many regarded Isabeau de Bavière--Charles VII's mother--as the woman who brought about the desolation of France. Charles VII's savior, Jeanne d'Arc, would be the one to fulfill the latter part of the prophecy.

her. To borrow from Pierre Nora, the Maid's legendary status was based from the beginning on a certain *lieu de mémoire*, or "place of memory" found within the French consciousness of Jeanne's day. In looking back, we realize that Jeanne's story not only became a legend in its own right, but her success depended upon another earlier legend, thus raising the question: which came first, legend or history?

Jeanne d'Arc Reborn in Twentieth-Century France

Jeanne's death at the stake on May 30, 1431, was not the end of her story. Thus, before taking up the Maid's depictions in literature, I offer here the historical developments that followed Jeanne's death and led to her canonization in 1920. In *Joan of Arc: The Legend and the Reality*, Frances Gies describes that a few years after the trial and execution Jeanne's case was reopened for further examination. In 1449, the Hundred Years War was nearing an end and things were looking up for Charles VII and the French. In 1450, Charles officially requested an inquiry be made into Jeanne's trial. Gies speculates about the monarch's motives for this inquiry:

Whether out of his own curiosity and concern or in response to public opinion or both, Charles appointed one of his councillors...to study the trial record...[as] a vindication of Joan would benefit Charles by removing the stigma of heresy and witchcraft from the instrument by which he had gained his crown (231).

After studying the trial, the councillor "summoned seven participants in the trial to make depositions about its fairness and propriety" (232). Pope Nicholas V selected Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville to handle Jeanne's retrial. With his lawyers, the Cardinal "produced a critique of the 1431 trial consisting of twelve articles designed to form a basis for further inquiry" (233). With the testimony of more witnesses, the articles grew to twenty-seven; and finally, theologians and lawyers assessed the inquiry and ruled in Jeanne's favor. But after two years, Jeanne's own family grew discontent that nothing was being done on her behalf, and they

petitioned the new pope Calixtus III to begin the Rehabilitation process (235). Gies remarks that “On November 7, 1455, the inquiry opened in the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, crowded with spectators” (235). From that point, hearings began again; but this time, the interrogations also included witnesses in Domrémy, Vaucouleurs, Toul, Orléans, and Paris. The official verdict to absolve Jeanne was rendered in Rouen cathedral on July 7, 1456. Gies comments on the extensive proceedings of the nullification trial:

Joan’s exhaustively formal [first] trial had required four months. The trial was condemned in an even longer process, seven years from the first inquiry to the final judgment, two years for the official investigation. The testimony of over a hundred witnesses was heard and recorded, some testifying several times, and an enormous array of opinion from jurists and theologians was compiled (237).

It seems that only twenty-five years after Jeanne’s death, her honor was officially reinstated.

But after Jeanne’s *procès de réhabilitation* in 1456, another individual felt it necessary to take up Jeanne’s case over four centuries later. A bishop in Orléans introduced Jeanne as a candidate for sainthood. Frances Gies notes the political situation in nineteenth-century France that led to Jeanne’s reappearance:

The rising European nationalism of the century following the French Revolution revived interest in Joan as a patriotic figure, and simultaneously as a Catholic heroine. In 1869 an illustrious bishop of Orleans, Felix Dupanloup, launched an initiative toward Joan’s canonization. In the 1890s a great liberal pope, Leo XIII, opened the investigation that led in 1909 to her beatification (238-39).

This act of beatification—which Kenneth Woodward describes as the “penultimate declaration of blessedness”—was the precursor to Jeanne’s canonization as a saint in 1920 by Pope Benedict XV (16).¹⁴

¹⁴ For more information on the process and history of sainthood, see Kenneth L. Woodward’s book *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn’t, and Why* (1990).

At this point, one may ask what it means to be canonized. In *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why*, Woodward offers an explanation of the holy process:

to 'canonize' means to declare that a person is worthy of universal public cult. Canonization takes place through a solemn papal declaration that a person is, for certain, with God. Because of that certainty, the faithful can, with confidence, pray to the saint to intercede with God on their behalf. The person's name is inscribed in the church's list of saints and he or she is 'raised to the altars'—that is, assigned a feast day for liturgical veneration by the entire church (17).

Jeanne is known as the patroness of soldiers and France, and her feast day is May 30--the day of her death. In the process of sainthood, three categories exist into which all saints are classified: “*Confessors* (men and women of faith who have lived lives of heroic virtue); *Martyrs* (men and women who have suffered and died for their faith); or *Virgins* (those faithful...who have heroically preserved their chastity)” (Heimann 38). Based on these definitions, Jeanne meets the criteria for all three groups; but of these three classifications, “it was under the rubric of Virgin—not Confessor or Martyr—that Joan of Arc was canonized in 1920” (38). Frances Gies comments on Jeanne’s Virginal status: “The Church raised Joan to sainthood strictly for her virtues. No mention was made of her military accomplishments, her martyrdom, her voices, or her visions” (239). Gies seems surprised by Jeanne’s distinction, but it appears that most female saints are placed into this category. As further evidence of this statement, I turn to Heimann’s look at *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*. She explains that female saints are often classified as virgins:

in *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*...a classic work on Christian sainthood that recounts the vitae of hundreds of canonized men and women whose sanctity has merited special devotion in the Church’s liturgical calendar, there are no male saints remembered specifically for their sexual virtue; by contrast, over two-thirds of the female saints are listed as holy virgins (39).

Thus, in Jeanne's case—as in many others'—her life as a maiden becomes the basis for her canonization.

Jeanne's sexual purity determined her sainthood by the Church, but one can also consider the Maid's *canonization* in another light. In his article “Jeanne d’Arc canonisée et non canonisée: Remarques sur la Pucelle littéraire au XXe siècle,” Dietmar Rieger analyzes the double meaning associated with the term: “le terme technique *canonisation* a deux acceptions différentes: la canonisation au sein de l’Eglise et la canonisation en littérature” (361). If the place of canonization is found inside the Church and/or within literature, Jeanne d’Arc succeeds in both arenas. In fact, the Church canonization in 1920 was secondary to Jeanne's literary triumph which had lasted throughout previous centuries. Frances Gies explains that Jeanne remained a constant in literature: “For the Church, a more positive expression of change in attitude took more than four centuries, during which Joan was by no means forgotten, and during which *she became almost more a literary than a historical figure*” (238, emphasis added). As seen in my transhistorical study, authors such as Pisan, d’Aubignac, and Voltaire ‘canonized’ Jeanne in their texts--long before the religious declaration in 1920. It seems that the Church was finally catching up to the literati's obsession with this famous figure.

To go a step further, I propose that Jeanne's canonization through both the Church and literature is not surprising, as the two are inherently linked. If we consider the origin of the Church's declaration of someone as a saint, we remember Woodward's description of how “the *person's name is inscribed* on the church's list of saints” (17, emphasis added). Thus, the notion of inscription or writing is fundamental in the process of sainthood. Woodward confirms this notion when he looks at the essence of canonization—that is, knowing the saints' lives: “to make a saint, or to commune with the saints already made, one must first know their stories.

Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the saints *are* their stories. On this view, making saints is a process whereby *a life is transformed into a text*” (18, emphasis added). In Jeanne’s case, the transformation of life into text was not a new phenomenon. For the Maid, this process had been going on for centuries before the Church officially recognized and recorded her story. Thus, Jeanne’s canonization was initially a secular one that would later render her a Catholic hero.¹⁵

With that said, the Johannic works examined in this diachronic study do not find a place in the ‘official’ canon of French literature. These texts, for example, do not typically appear on graduate reading lists. But as Jeanne is a national hero and countless French (and non-French) authors have retold her story for centuries, one may raise the question: what qualifies a text for French canonization? In *Tender Geographies*, Joan DeJean examines the history of canon formation in France. Originally meant to contain only those works from antiquity, the canon expanded during the seventeenth century to include the texts of contemporary authors. In the eighteenth century, the Abbé Charles Batteux outlined his criteria:

the French educational system should use its power to create the ideals and *the standards of Frenchness*...he [Batteux] selects the precise examples that should be imposed upon the minds of those to be made into model Christian citizens, to mold them, without their knowledge, into the *recognition of socially correct greatness*. In his *Cours de belles-lettres*, he provides the outline for the teaching of literature designed to produce *educated French male Christians* (DeJean 189-90, emphasis added).

Under this rubric for literary greatness, Jeanne’s story resists canonization for several reasons.

The Maid is not only uneducated, but she is also a woman. How could such a figure serve as the ideal to produce educated Frenchmen? One might argue that Jeanne’s devout Catholicism is her

¹⁵ The notion of life becoming text also occurs in the Holy Scriptures with the many accounts of great men and women of faith. And with reference to Christ, he too is depicted as the *Word of God*: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1: 1). But through Christ, this process is actually reversed whereby the text becomes a person. As John describes, “The *Word became flesh* and made his dwelling among us...” (Jn 1: 14, emphasis added). In this case, *logos* preceded human life.

redeeming quality, but as the Maid was condemned as a heretic—and only canonized in 1920—her model Christian status is tainted. Furthermore, if the canon's goal is, as Batteux believes, to train students to recognize “socially correct greatness,” then Jeanne's legend fails to meet this objective, as she defied her proper place in society. In short, the Maid cannot be the *standard* of Frenchness: she is exceptional.

Chapter 1

Writing/Righting Identity in Medieval France: Christine de Pisan and Jeanne d'Arc

“If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”
--Mark 3: 24

*“Souvenez-vous toujours, Français, que la patrie chez nous est née du
coeur d’une femme, de sa tendresse et de ses larmes, du sang qu’elle a
donné pour nous.” --Jules Michelet*

Jeanne d’Arc, the Maid of Orléans, la Pucelle: these names all describe the young woman who led the French soldiers to victory during a time of national uncertainty and then was tragically burned at the stake. Her arrival near the end of the Hundred Years War proved timely in restoring a sense of unity to fifteenth-century France. In the midst of political upheaval, Jeanne provided hope that her fellow citizens—and the dauphin—desperately needed. A contemporary of Jeanne in fifteenth-century France, Christine de Pisan celebrates the famous maiden in *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc* (1429).¹⁶

Innovative of her time, Christine de Pisan--a woman writer--championed women in her writings. Among her numerous publications, *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (1405) is one of her most famous works. Charity Cannon Willard explains that Pisan’s texts were well-known during her lifetime:

the number of manuscripts containing her works which still exist indicates that she was appreciated throughout the fifteenth century...In the sixteenth century she was praised by both Jean and Clément Marot and mentioned by Jean Bouchet in his *Tabernacle des illustres dames* (61-2).

Pisan’s final work, however, is a lesser known text *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*, dated in the text itself as 1429, which celebrates the life and victories of Jeanne d’Arc. While Jeanne was a young shepherdess who was probably illiterate and most likely had no knowledge of this female author, Pisan found inspiration in Jeanne the female warrior and immortalizes her in the *Ditié*. Written immediately after Charles’s coronation in July 1429, Pisan’s work is the first literary text to record Jeanne’s military feats. Countless authors for centuries after would follow her example. These writers, however, would be influenced by the 1431 trial records that capture the few months of imprisonment and interrogation prior to Jeanne’s sentence to death at the stake. Unlike her successors, Pisan authored the *Ditié* before the Maid’s capture, trial, and execution;

¹⁶ See also Appendix A: Christine de Pisan’s *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*, Followed by an English Translation. (Taken from Kennedy and Varty, pp. 28-50.)

thus, her text provides a unique viewpoint of the heroine. In her poem, Pisan represents Jeanne extremely positively and offers her a future.

As Pisan's purpose in composing the *Ditié* was to bring about political change in France, it is necessary to address briefly the work's dissemination and reception. Three manuscripts--two complete and one incomplete--have survived. The oldest version known as the Berne 205 appears to be one of earliest copied of Pisan's poem. Discovered in 1838, the manuscript actually dates back to the fifteenth century where it was part of a large catalog featuring texts on various topics in French and Latin. The other complete version is the manuscript Carpentras 390 which also dates from the fifteenth century. In *Joan of Arc: The Early Debate*, Deborah Fraoili explains the importance of this version:

[Manuscript 390] dates from the fifteenth century and demonstrates that the *Ditié* (transcribed in full) was prized for its poetic value, apparently irrespectively of the theological, propagandistic, or Johannic content. The *Ditié* occupies the final position in a leather-bound paper manuscript of poetry, which also includes a *pastourelle*, debate love poetry and Alain Chartier's celebrated poem *La Belle Dame sans Mercy* (1424) (123).

The Grenoble manuscript, the only other extant version is a fragment transcribed in Mathieu Thomassin's *Registre Delpinal*, a work commissioned by the dauphin in 1456. In this study, I cite the Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty edition (1977), primarily based on Berne 205 but with editors' corrections in light of the other two manuscripts. Kennedy and Varty's work provides the Middle French text and their English translation used here, and their edition also includes historical and linguistic notes.

Concerning the *Ditié*'s audience and its reception, Fraoili reports that "the *Ditié* was pressed into service as royalist propaganda...within six months of its composition" (124). Another scholar speculates that it appeared in royal circles: "It is probable that the poem had its greatest success in the official circles surrounding the new king, where Christine undoubtedly

continued to be remembered and honored even after the death of her son Jean” (Willard 205).

To my mind, it seems that Pisan’s intent was to reach the French people of her day, but historical records are inconclusive. We do know, however, that the *Ditié* found renewed fame in nineteenth-century France when Jules Quicherat published it in his multi-volume work on the Maid: *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d’Arc dite la Pucelle* (1849).

And even as recently as the twentieth century does Pisan’s poem resurface. During France’s occupation in the early 1940’s, Pisan’s *Ditié* prompted Gustave Cohen, a professor of French literature, to examine World War II in light of the Hundred Years War. While in the United States in 1941, Cohen gave lectures on Pisan’s poem as well as other fifteenth-century texts “to remind his public that France had been through similar catastrophes before, and had survived” (Kennedy 107).

“France” and Friction in the Hundred Years War

Before examining the *Ditié* in greater detail, I turn first to the political situation in late medieval France that sets the scene for Jeanne’s emergence. The year 1338 signaled the outbreak of the Hundred Years War, with England and France on opposing sides. The battle over territory began and France would lose and regain control of different regions in the next few decades. During this period of instability, one French king arose to establish a strong monarchy. Charles V (the Wise) ruled from 1364-1380 with solid popular support. His son’s reign, however, would not be marked with the same success. The government of Charles VI—lasting from 1380-1422—suffered due to the king’s insanity. At this moment, political rivalries emerged among the Dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Burgundy. On the other side of the Channel, Henry V ruled as king of England (1413-1422). In 1415, he invaded France, winning a significant battle at Agincourt. Looking at the dismal state of France, Jeff O’Leary explains the devastating loss:

The French had fallen from the heights of national prestige since the loss of thousands of their best knights facing King Henry V at Agincourt in 1415. The French defeat left the Dukes of Burgundy, Normandy, and Brittany in the north to fend for themselves, and various pacts were arranged to keep their power and lands against a potential English invasion. These pacts protected the dukes but depleted any hope for a united France (73).

Of the various political divisions, two predominant factions emerged: the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. As the Burgundians allied with the English, the question of who would succeed Charles VI as king of France became a complicated one.

Initially, it seemed that Charles VI's son would become the next French king; but Charles VII encountered many obstacles along the way and his kingship looked unlikely. In 1418, the Burgundians entered Paris and massacred the Armagnacs. Among those who fled the city was the dauphin Charles. In 1419, the Duke of Burgundy, Jean sans Peur, was assassinated. His son Philippe le Bon succeeded his father as Duke of Burgundy and allied himself with Henry V of England. The following year would bring the most trouble for Charles VII. In 1420, his sister Catherine married Henry V; and Charles VII's legitimacy was called into question. Charles VII's own mother suggested he was not the king's son, thus tainting his authenticity in the royal lineage. Conversely, those who truly believed he was Charles VI's son worried that he would inherit his father's madness. It seemed to be the end of Charles VII's royal aspirations when his father agreed to the Treaty of Troyes: "Anglo-Burgundian pressure had forced Charles VI to disinherit the Dauphin by the Treaty of Troyes, 21 May 1420, and to recognise Henry V of England as his son and rightful heir to the French throne" (Willard 61). With this treaty, Henry V was next in line for the French throne; and in 1422, his wife Catherine gave birth to a son, Henry VI. When both Henry V and mad Charles VI died in 1422, little Henry VI was proclaimed King of France and England. At this moment however, the Armagnacs--resistant to

English rule--stood behind the disinherited Charles. They recognized him as the rightful heir to the French throne and submitted to his rule in the south of France as “Roi de Bourges,” where Charles had fled after the Burgundian invasion of Paris.

This is the tumultuous political scene in which we find the writer Christine de Pisan (1363?-1431). As her father was a royal secretary, Pisan spent her childhood at the court of Charles V (the Wise) where she witnessed firsthand the triumphant reign of a popular king.¹⁷ Pisan married, had three children, and, at the young age of twenty-five, she became a widow. She pursued her writing in order to support her family and was successful—placing her among the first female authors in the French tradition to earn a living through her writing. Before the strong political division between the Armagnacs and Burgundians came to a head in 1418, history reveals that Pisan’s patrons had included two Dukes of Burgundy. But as Burgundy became increasingly associated with the English, Pisan aligned herself with the Armagnacs; and her own son Jean served as a royal secretary to the dauphin Charles. When the Armagnacs were driven out of Paris in 1418 (and Charles fled to the south), Pisan sought refuge in the abbey of Poissy where she joined her daughter. It is from this convent, situated in Burgundian territory, that she contemplates the desperate state of France. Even in seclusion at Poissy, the poet felt the effects of the warring factions: “Later, the town was occupied by the English, so Christine would not have been completely removed from contact with political events” (Willard 203). As England and Burgundy wanted Henry VI of England to be the next French king, the Armagnacs, by contrast, felt that Charles VII should assume the French throne. At the end of the Hundred Years War, France was suffering under British occupation and needed to liberate itself to create a national identity. A newfound hope was necessary to rectify the tense political division in

¹⁷ Pisan would later write a biography of Charles V whom she greatly admired.

France between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians. This hope would soon come in the form of a maiden.

January 6, 1412 is Jeanne d'Arc's probable birthdate in Domrémy, a small village in northeastern France. As a young girl near the age of twelve or thirteen, Jeanne had her first angelic visitations. The trial records tell us that these voices who guided the Maid were Saints Michael, Margaret, and Catherine. In the beginning, they instructed Jeanne to attend church and pray. As she grew older, the Maid received a specific mandate to visit the dauphin. In February 1429--probably at the age of seventeen--Jeanne traveled to Vaucouleurs to visit the Duke of Lorraine. In early March, she would journey to Chinon to seek an audience with Charles. Reluctant to believe the Maid, the dauphin had the Maid examined by theologians at Poitiers. After three weeks of interrogations and a physical examination, Jeanne won the council's approval. The dauphin Charles then appointed her *chef de guerre*, and Jeanne proceeded to Orléans in late April 1429.

It is one year earlier in a divided France that Orléans—in Armagnac territory—comes to play a key role in the conflict. As Timothy Wilson-Smith explains: “in 1428 the English were poised to advance to the heart of Armagnac France and invest [invade] the city of Orléans itself. If Orléans fell, France would be bisected; and the richest, most populous parts of the country would be Anglo-Burgundian” (27). To the dismay of the Armagnacs, the English did, in fact, target Orléans and begin a siege of the city in 1428. Thus, when Jeanne began her military campaign in April 1429, the most pressing need was the liberation of Orléans. After about eight days, Jeanne--along with fellow commander Dunois and their soldiers--lifted the siege at Orléans. The Maid's victory on May 8, 1429 marked a turning point for France in the Hundred Years War and this event led immediately to Charles VII's coronation. Crowned at Reims on

July 17, 1429 with the Maid at his side, Charles VII was officially recognized as the new French monarch. From Reims, Jeanne and the French forces were destined for Paris in hopes of another great victory.

As the news of Charles's coronation and the famous Pucelle quickly spread throughout the country, it reached the Abbey of Poissy where Pisan began composing *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*. In the poem's final stanza, the author offers us the date July 31, 1429; thus, scholars assume it was written in the two-week period following the coronation.¹⁸ For Pisan, timing was critical: Jeanne provided France with a much-needed heroine whom the poet could promote in order to unite the French people. If she could rally the citizens of Paris—controlled then by Burgundians—behind Jeanne d'Arc, Pisan could ally Parisians with the Armagnacs to gain their mutual support for Charles VII as the new and rightful king of France.

It is in this precarious moment in French history that I will examine Pisan's *Ditié*. Made up of 61 stanzas, the poem features the author--in the first person--whose direct address encompasses a wide audience. In what Kennedy and Varty note as a "descending hierarchical pattern," Pisan speaks to God, Charles VII, Jeanne, the French soldiers, the English and their allies (10). Throughout the work, the poet uses a religious tone and reminds us of Biblical heroes—while emphasizing that Jeanne surpasses them. As I see it, this spiritual aspect plays a key role in the poet's goal of building a sense of national unity. When Pisan celebrates the Pucelle and her exploits, she appeals to faith to win support for Charles, thus reflecting the strong bond between the Church and the monarchy. She authenticates her key players—Charles and

¹⁸ Regarding the work's composition, Kennedy and Varty assert that certain details in the poem actually point to Pisan's knowledge of events just after the coronation—thus, shortening the writing time to one week: "While it is conceivable that at least part of the *Ditié* may have been drafted shortly after the raising of the siege of Orléans, these details [of the expected advance on Paris] would suggest rather that the greater part of the poem was composed in a very short period of time, between, say, 23 and 31 July 1429" (2). I agree with Kennedy and Varty's assertion; but for a conflicting viewpoint, see Lutkus and Walker's article "PR pas PC: Christine de Pizan's Pro-Joan Propaganda," where they claim that Pisan's poem was written much later and that she pre-dated the text.

Jeanne—by God’s authority. Two scholars, Kennedy and Varty, look at Pisan’s upbringing at court and read the *Ditié* in accordance with her previous texts that offer advice to the kings, princes, and ladies of the court: “Christine inevitably centres all her hopes on the monarchy, which she sees as the only effective force capable of protecting France against enemies both within and without her frontiers” (13). One must not forget, however, that in her body of work, Pisan does not fail to address all echelons of society.¹⁹ Furthermore, in light of the Maid’s humble origin, I propose that when Pisan champions the Maid, she recognizes the potential in the people of France. Finally, I argue that the poet juxtaposes the public objective in the *Ditié* with her personal desire for remembrance as “Je, Christine.”

In order to rally the French people, Pisan first offers Charles as sent by God. In an attempt to persuade the skeptics, the poet iterates how Charles’s coronation was accomplished through God’s grace: “Dieu a tout ce fait de sa grace” (l. 50). In so doing, Pisan reminds the reader that kings, in general, are God-ordained. The poet even asserts that, in terms of divine-right monarchy, the French crown surpasses other nations:

*O quel honneur à la couronne / De France par divine preuve! / Car par les
graces qu’Il lui donne / Il appert comment Il l’approuve, / Et que plus foy
qu’autre part treuve / En l’estat royal, dont je lix / Qu’oncques (ce n’est
pas chose neuve!) / En foy n’errèrent fleurs de lix* (ll. 89-96).

And what honour for the French crown, this proof of divine intervention!
For all the blessings which God bestows upon it demonstrate how much
He favours it and that *He finds more faith in the Royal House than
anywhere else*; as far as it is concerned, I read (and there is nothing new in
this) that *the Lilies of France never erred in matters of faith*.

Thus, as Charles VII was crowned at Reims, it was by God’s divine plan. Alongside the notion of a divinely-chosen king, the poet employs what Deborah Fraoili recognizes as “that branch of medieval prophetic literature whose origins are more mythical than Christian” (826). In

¹⁹ Pisan addresses women of all ranks in her *Le Livre des trois vertus* (ca. 1404-05). In an address to all strata of men, the author writes *Le Livre du corps de policie* (1405-07).

particular, Fraoili refers to what is known as “la Prophétie du Deuxième Charlemagne” that was popular in France since 1382:

According to this prophecy, Charles son of Charles, would expel the enemy from the kingdom, conquer Rome, and achieve peace as emperor of all Christendom...*It is Christine de Pizan who applied these promises to the mission of Joan of Arc.* Using the very wording of the Second Charlemagne Prophecy, she says, ‘Car ung roy de France doit estre / Charles, filz de Charles, nommé, / Qui sur tous rois sera grant maistre’²⁰ (827, emphasis added).

Pisan seized upon this well-known prophecy,²¹ and Fraoili reads this appropriation by the poet as verifying the Maid’s mission and thus, the Maid. As I see it however, Pisan’s prophetic reiteration seems to more forcefully validate Charles VII as the rightful king and therefore, reassure the public of his--not Jeanne’s--legitimacy.

In her insistence upon Charles’s divine backing, the poet does not neglect the Maid.

Throughout the work, Pisan depicts Jeanne as an instrument of God:

Tu, Jehanne, de bonne heure née, / Benoist soit cil qui te créa! / *Pucelle de Dieu ordonnée, / En qui le Saint Esprit réa / Sa grant grace, en qui ot et a / Toute largesse de hault don, / N’onc requeste ne te véa.* (ll. 169-175, emphasis added).

Blessed be He who created you, Joan, who were born at a propitious hour!
Maiden sent from God, into whom the Holy Spirit poured His great grace, in whom there was and is an abundance of noble gifts, never did Providence refuse you any request.

Jeanne is the one who received “an abundance of noble gifts” to use, undoubtedly, in her mission for France—for the greater good of the nation. The poet then compares Jeanne to other great heroes—male and female—who were godly instruments: Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Esther, Judith, and Deborah. Pisan’s description of Jeanne as one “born at a propitious hour” echoes the Biblical account of Esther: “you have come to royal position for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:

²⁰ In Pisan’s text, these lines appear ll. 121-123.

²¹ This notion of prophecy reappears in the *Ditié* and will be addressed later in this chapter.

14). Esther intervened on behalf of the Jewish people when she went before King Xerxes to prevent their destruction. This bold move by an orphaned Jewish girl to seek an audience with the Persian king came at a critical moment. Likewise, Jeanne plays a historical role in France's nation building as Esther did for the Jewish people. Later, Pisan reiterates that Jeanne is the chosen one: "miraculously sent by divine command and conducted by the angel of the Lord to the King, in order to help him" (Par miracle fut envoyée / Et divine amonition, / De l'ange de Dieu convoiée / Au roy, pour sa provision, ll. 225-28). When Pisan writes "conducted by the angel of the Lord to the King," she addresses those who doubted the Maid's legitimacy and emphasizes that Jeanne's mission was divinely inspired.

Pisan focuses on Jeanne's divine backing, as the Maid herself had insisted upon this notion. Early on at Vaucouleurs and Chinon, Jeanne faced opposition in gaining acceptance for her mission.²² Officials were reluctant to believe the Maid's accounts of angelic visitation. It seems that not until the triumph of Orléans would these doubts be erased. Likewise, Pisan's audience may have initially struggled to accept Jeanne. Thus, the poet sought to substantiate her heroine using God's authority and insists upon the Maid's divine backing in a forceful and blunt address to Jeanne's enemies:

N'appercevez-vous, gent avugle, / *Que Dieu a icy la main mise?* / Et qui ne le voit est bien bugle, / Car comment seroit en tel guise / Ceste Pucelle ça tramise / Qui tous mors vous fait jus abatre? / --Ne force [n']avez qui souffise! / *Voulez-vous contre Dieu combatre?* (ll. 369-76, emphasis added).

Oh, all you blind people, can't you detect *God's hand in this?* If you can't, you are truly stupid for how else could the Maid who strikes you all down dead have been sent to us? And you don't have sufficient strength! *Do you want to fight against God?*

²² Charles and his advisors initially doubted Jeanne's credibility and allegedly tested her at Chinon. According to legend, Charles hides himself among the crowd, and Jeanne--having never met the dauphin--goes directly to Charles and kneels before him. Jeanne passed this initial test, proving her divine guidance.

Pisan reminds the French rebels of the Maid's victories and thus, reveals the faction's dwindling strength. This harsh address instills fear which the author hopes will motivate the rebels to support Jeanne and the new king.

Other critics have noted Pisan's depiction of Jeanne as a divine instrument. Deborah Fraioli notes a linguistic indicator in Pisan's poem that upholds this theory about Jeanne. In her book *Joan of Arc: The Early Debate*, Fraioli points out the "insistent repetition of the word *through*" (107). Pisan writes about the "recovery of the kingdom '*through* divine command,' '*through* such a miracle,' ... '*through* divine intervention,' ... '*through* the Maid'" (107, emphasis added). The author's word choice reiterates that Jeanne is merely the vehicle through whom God operates. She is not, personally, the salvation of France but she is the conduit to bring deliverance to her country. Rosalind Brown-Grant asserts that Jeanne's divine mission reinforces Charles's authenticity as king. She points out that the Maid's extraordinary deeds are "proof that Joan has divine backing, which is the reason why the country should unite behind her, acknowledge Charles as the rightful king, and expel the English" (19). I agree with Brown-Grant's assertion, but I believe there is more at stake in Pisan's focus on the divinely chosen.

Not only does the God-sent Jeanne validate Charles's legitimacy, but the Maid's divine backing elevates her to the king's level. In a period where monarchy was believed to be divinely ordained, to depict Jeanne as a chosen instrument of God is to make her the King's double. When Pisan refers to Jeanne as the "Maiden sent from God" (l. 171), these words almost immediately remind us of Charles who was "elected as [God's] servant" (ll. 142-43). Furthermore, the poet alludes to ancient prophecy in support of Jeanne—the same tactic she employs in Charles's defense. In the *Ditié*, Pisan references the Venerable Bede and two pagan prophets--Merlin and Sibyl--who allegedly predicted that France would be saved by a woman:

Mais on a trouvé en histoire / Qu'à ce faire elle estoit commise; / Car
Merlin et Sebile et Bede, / Plus de Vc ans a la virent / En esperit, et pour
remede / En France en leurs escripz la mirent, / Et leur[s] prophecies en
firent, / Disans qu'el pourteroit baniere / Es guerres françoises, et dirent /
De son fait toute la maniere. (ll. 239-248)

But it was found in history-records that she was destined to accomplish
her mission; for more than 500 years ago, Merlin, the Sibyl and Bede
foresaw her coming, entered her in their writings as someone who would
put an end to France's troubles, made prophecies about her, saying that
she would carry the banner in the French wars and describing all that she
would achieve.

These ancient prophets foretell the coming of a heroine and these pagan predictions lend
credibility to Jeanne as the nation's hope. Jeanne is the chosen one whom the prophets foretold
as early as the tenth century.

Both Charles and Jeanne were fighting a similar battle against those who doubted their
legitimacy. For Jeanne, the skeptics, who had doubted her claims to having angelic visitations,
later questioned her ability to lead the French soldiers. For Charles, many questioned his
authority as the rightful ruler of France. But it is when Pisan boasts of the Maid's heroism that
the author enunciates most clearly the parallel between Jeanne and Charles VII:

Donc desur tous les preux passez, / *Ceste doit porter la couronne*, / Car
ses faiz ja monstrent assez / *Que plus prouesse Dieu lui donne* / Qu'à tous
ceulz de qui l'on raisonne (ll. 345-49, emphasis added).

Therefore, in preference to all the brave men of times past, *this woman
must wear the crown*, for her deeds show clearly enough already that *God
bestows more courage upon her* than upon all those men about whom
people speak

In declaring Jeanne's triumph over all past male heroes, she gives the prize—a crown—to the
Maid, emphasizing the fact that she was chosen by God and thus, is equal to the king.

Or is she truly the king's equal? At first glance, Charles—as the new French monarch—
will undoubtedly hold a position of higher authority in the reader's mind. Yet Pisan clearly

states that Jeanne is also a chosen vessel of God and suggests that the Maid is superior to Charles. With her audience in mind, Pisan celebrates Charles as the new king, but her true feelings toward him become apparent from the opening stanza. The poet begins the *Ditié* by describing how her emotional state in the abbey as she recounts a miserable eleven years of walled existence. This virtual incarceration engenders bitterness towards the dauphin Charles for having left Paris when it came under Anglo-Burgundian control:

Je, Christine, qui ay plouré / XI ans en abbaye close, / Où j'ay tousjours
 puis demouré / Que Charles (c'est estrange chose!), / Le filz du roy, se
 dire l'ose, / S'en fouy de Paris de tire, / *Par la traison là enclose*, / Ore à
 prime me prens à rire (ll. 1-8, emphasis added).

I, Christine, who have wept for eleven years in a walled abbey where I
 have lived ever since Charles (how strange this is!) the King's son--dare I
 say it?--fled in haste from Paris, *I who have lived enclosed there on*
account of the treachery, now, for the first time, begin to laugh

Remembering Charles's flight to the south of France—which forced Pisan to seek refuge in a convent—the author conveys a strong sense of betrayal and disbelief that Charles could have left Paris at a time when its people needed him. Pisan then begins to set the scene for Jeanne's arrival as she explains how the seasons have changed (ll. 10-11) and how her tears have turned to laughter and song (ll. 9, 13-14). She announces the return of a newly-crowned Charles to Paris and encourages the reader to welcome him, despite his controversial past, to the city:

le degeté enfant / Du roy de France legitime, / Qui long temps a esté
souffrant / Mains grans ennuiz, qui or aprime / Se lieva ainsi que vers
 prime, / Venant comme roy couronné / En puissance tresgrande et fine, / .../
Or faisons feste à nostre roy! / Que tresbien soit-il revenu! (ll. 33-39, 41-
 42, emphasis added).

the rejected child of the rightful King of France, who has long suffered
many a great misfortune and who now approaches, rose up as if towards
 prime, coming as a crowned King in might and majesty, ... *Now let us*
greet our King! Welcome to him on his return!

Pisan prepares the audience for the King's first arrival in Paris; but rather than attributing to Charles the credit for his triumph, the author explains how it is an act of God. Moreover, the poet reveals that He carried out this extraordinary work through a maiden:

Chose est bien digne de mémoire / *Que Dieu, par une vierge tendre, / Ait*
adès voulu (chose est voire!) / Sur France si grant grace estendre (ll. 85-
88, emphasis added).

It is a fact well worth remembering that God should nevertheless have
wished (and this is the truth!) to bestow such great blessing on France,
through a young virgin

Pisan redirects all the glory one expects to be lavished upon the new king to God and his agent Jeanne. It is this “*vierge tendre*” who embodies the saving grace for Charles and the nation of France.²³

Even after Charles's coronation, it is evident that the poet still doubts the king's ability, as she must instruct him on how to rule. In her direct address to Charles, Pisan advises him on governing the French people:

Et j'ay *espoir* que bon seras, / Droiturier et amant justice, / Et [tres] tous
autres passeras, / *Mais qu'orgueil ton fait ne honnisse*; / A ton peuple
doulz et propice, / Et crairignant Dieu, qui t'a esleu / Pour son servant (si
com prémisses / En as), *mais que faces ton deu* (ll. 137-144, emphasis
added).

I hope that you will be good and upright, and a lover of justice and that
you will surpass all others, *provided your deeds are not tarnished by*
pride, that you will be gentle and well-disposed towards your people, that
you will always love God who elected you as His servant (and you have a
first manifestation of this), *on condition that you do your duty*.

Here, the author desires that Charles will become a good ruler who loves justice and does not succumb to pride. She reminds him to remain humble as his kingship is based solely on “God who elected you as His servant.” As he was divinely appointed for this task, Charles must do his

²³ Some may argue that the author also figures Charles as Christ. He is the son of the King; and by way of a virgin, he will rule over all kings. But in my reading of the *Ditié*, I interpret Pisan to be pointing to the virgin Jeanne--not the king Charles--as the true hero. As the virgin who is executed, Jeanne seems a more likely parallel to Christ.

duty or perhaps God will find another to do His will. The author's implication here can be read as a subtle threat to Charles: "God who elected you as His servant...*on condition* that you do your duty." Like an address to a child, Pisan warns the king that his new power and privileges will be taken away if he does not fulfill his obligations to his countrymen. The poet strives to convey to Charles that the fate of the nation hangs in the balance.

From the beginning, Pisan expresses her initial sense of betrayal and subsequent distrust towards the new king. By contrast, Pisan conveys her complete confidence in Jeanne. When Pisan addresses Charles and Jeanne in the *Ditié*, the tone and content in each apostrophe convey her feelings on which one of them is the most powerful. When addressing Charles, Pisan's underlying doubts surface about his abilities as king. As previously discussed, the love of justice and denial of pride are just two areas the author recommends in what appears to be a quick how-to course in kingship (ll. 137-44). Even Pisan's word choice is telling: "I *hope* that you will be good and upright, and a lover of justice" ("Et j'ay *espoir* que bon seras, / Droiturier et amant justice" ll. 137-8, emphasis added). The author writes *hope*--not *believe*--when she speaks of the king's leadership potential. To speculate about his potential is Pisan's only option as Charles has no previous track record to prove his capability. The author, however, has no doubts in elevating Jeanne to a higher position than the newly anointed king when she writes: "this woman must wear *the* crown" (l. 346, emphasis added). In the *Ditié*, the female warrior should not wear *a* crown, but *the* crown. While both Jeanne and Charles are chosen by God to fulfill a purpose for France, it is Jeanne who demonstrates an active role in securing both their futures and thus, is more deserving of the crown.

When the poet addresses Jeanne, her tone is one of admiration and gratitude: "Oh! What honor for the female sex!" ("Hee! quel honneur au femenin / Sexe!" ll. 265-66). The author,

however, makes it clear that Jeanne is not only extraordinary among women, but that she also excels among men: “she is *the supreme captain* of our brave and able *men*” (Et de noz gens preux et abiles / Elle est *principal chevetaine*) (ll. 285-86, emphasis added). At this point, one could argue that Pisan makes a similar statement about Charles: “For there will be a King of France called Charles, son of Charles who *will be the supreme ruler over all Kings*” (“Car ung roy de France doit estre / Charles, filz de Charles, nommé / *Qui sur tous rois sera grant maistre.*” ll. 121-23, emphasis added) But one must note here again that Pisan is speculating about whom Charles *will become*. She uses the future tense “sera” which indicates that this event may or may not happen. According to Pisan, Jeanne already *is* the supreme captain while Charles *will be--possibly--the supreme ruler*.

Pisan also compares Jeanne to great Biblical heroes of the past—something she does not do with Charles—and states explicitly how she surpasses them all. One of the strongest arguments, however, for Jeanne’s superiority is her *cuer*--heart/courage--which is greater than any man’s:

*Car tous les preux au long aler / Qui ont esté; ne s’appareille / Leur
prouesse à ceste qui veille / A bouter hors noz ennemis. / Mais ce fait
Dieu, qui la conseille, / En qui cuer plus que d’omme a mis.* (ll. 203-8,
emphasis added).

*for the prowess of all the great men of the past cannot be compared to this
woman’s whose concern it is to cast out our enemies. This is God’s
doing: it is He who guides her and who has given her a heart greater than
that of any man.*

Here, the author indicates that Jeanne’s extraordinary prowess makes her stand apart from great men of the past. But I submit that Pisan implies Jeanne’s courage not only exceeds *past* heroes, but also surpasses the *cuer* of her contemporaries--especially Charles. After all, if it was not for Jeanne, would Charles even be king? Here, one may recall the opening stanza where Pisan

describes Charles as having “fled in haste from Paris.” His cowardice, or lack of *coeur*, establishes a precedent where Charles cannot receive any credit from the author for past success. In speaking to Charles, she systematically diverts the glory to God and the Maid: “thanks be *to God*, see *your honour exalted by the Maid* who has laid low your enemies beneath your standard” (“Mais, *Dieu grace*, or voiz *ton renon / Hault eslevé par la Pucelle*, / Qui a soubzmis soubz ton penon / Tes ennemis” 13, emphasis added). The Maid has demonstrated her prowess and *cuer* in overtaking the king’s enemies. Thus, the author seems to rank Jeanne above Charles in matters of courage and military leadership.²⁴

With this in mind, I return to Kennedy and Varty’s view iterated at the beginning of this chapter. They believed that Pisan “centres all her hopes on the monarchy.” As seen thus far, Jeanne’s supremacy over the king in the *Ditié*, however, would seem to undermine this theory. Other critics, as well, have maintained that Pisan elevates Jeanne above Charles. In the article “Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Charles VII,” Benjamin Cornford puts forth this notion of the Maid’s pre-eminence:

Christine would soon also make it plain that it was Joan who leads the King to his destiny, that Joan is answerable to God, and Charles should be answerable to Joan. In the *Ditié* Joan is elevated so far above the King in praise, that though Christine never doubts the divinity of Joan’s mission, it is an entirely different case with the King (93-94).

While Kennedy and Varty offer the monarch and Cornford points to the Maid as Pisan’s supreme figure, I argue that the poet’s true hero is the French people. Pisan uses God’s authority to gain the public’s trust of Charles VII and the Maid, only to show that Jeanne--a girl of humble birth--

²⁴ Here, I would also add the Maid surpasses Charles in her power. Understanding *power* as the “ability to do or act,” this definition immediately calls into question Charles’s level of power. As the author has shown, Charles’s performance up to this point has been lackluster, and his future performance is only conjecture. Jeanne, on the other hand, has lifted the siege at Orléans and thus proven her “ability to act.”

ultimately surpasses him. Demonstrating that a simple virgin can rise as a national hero is the author's strategy to bring together the people of France in a time of crisis.

As I see it, Pisan reinforces this notion in comparing Jeanne to Biblical heroes. While many would imagine a hero to be someone noble or even royal, the opposite is true of God's chosen instruments. Biblical heroes, such as David in the Old Testament, often have humble origins. Known first as a simple shepherd boy, David defeats the Philistine giant Goliath who threatened the Jewish people. Jeanne's humble background makes her the perfect candidate--like David--for one of God's heroes who usually emerge from incredible circumstances to defy reason and expectations. Jeanne is a simple shepherdess and the most unlikely of heroes for France, which implicitly qualifies her as divinely chosen since all her subsequent glory and triumph can only be attributed to God. Brown-Grant describes these challenges that play in her favor: "Joan's seeming powerlessness by virtue of her sex, her age and her humble social origins, attests all the more to her status as God's chosen instrument" (20). There exists a paradox whereby the least qualified becomes the most qualified as it is Jeanne's ordinary status that enables her to be the most extraordinary heroine.²⁵ Although the poet does not offer details about Jeanne's early days at Domrémy, Pisan does acknowledge that Jeanne is "une femme – simple bergiere" (l. 198). She even proclaims that the supernatural equips the Maid:

Une fillete de XVI ans / (*N'est-ce pas chose fors nature?*) / A qui armes
ne sont pesans, / *Ains semble que sa norriture / Y soit, tant y est fort et
dure!* (ll. 273-277, emphasis added)

A little girl of sixteen (*isn't this something quite supernatural?*) who does
not even notice the weight of the arms she bears – *indeed her whole
upbringing has prepared her for this, so strong and resolute is she!*

²⁵ This concept, however, of reversing common expectations is one that is repeated throughout the Bible. In Luke 9: 48, Christ addresses the importance of children and a childlike nature when he says, "For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."

When Pisan claims that Jeanne's background has trained her, the irony is that the Maid, as a peasant girl, was not prepared for battle. It is her lowly status, however, that calls for the supernatural. Furthermore, the poet proves that Jeanne transcends her humble birth when the Holy Spirit gives the Maid noble gifts:

Pucelle de Dieu ordonnée / *En qui le Saint Esprit réa / Sa grant grace, en qui ot et a / Toute largesse de hault don, / N'onc requeste ne te véa* (ll. 171-75, emphasis added).

Maiden sent from God, *into whom the Holy Spirit poured His great grace, in whom there was and is an abundance of noble gifts*, never did Providence refuse you any request

Following Jeanne's example in service and devotion to France, the public too can rise to greatness.

When Pisan discusses the current state of France in the *Ditié*, she does not regard it as the Armagnacs versus the Burgundians. In fact, the poet purposely avoids using the term *Armagnac* throughout the work, as she sees them to be the *true* French. Instead, she writes *France* and *François* in the *Ditié*. Kennedy and Varty note the "instinctive repeated mention of the word *France*" (14). In fact, according to their index of proper names, after *Dieu* (cited 45 times), the name *France* is used most frequently in the text (cited 13 times)—the same amount as *Pucelle/Jeanne*. By contrast, the name *Charles* is only mentioned 5 times. This linguistic indicator offers further proof of Pisan championing the French people as much as she does the Maid—and greater than Charles. In repeating *France*, the poet rallies the people around a common French—not Armagnac—identity, thus asserting that there is only one France. Pisan tries to convince the rebel Burgundians to join the *French* when she explains that it is God's will: "And know that she [the Maid] will cast down the English for good, *for this is God's will*: He hears the prayer of the good whom they [English] wanted to harm" ("Et sachez que par elle

Anglois / Seront mis jus sans relever, / *Car Dieu le veult*, qui oit les voiz / Des bons qu'ilz ont voulu grever!" ll. 321-24, emphasis added). Here again, the author strengthens her case by using God's authority. First, it was Charles as the rightful king. He is the chosen instrument of God through divine right monarchy. Next, it was Jeanne, the "blessed Maid," as God's warrior on earth sent to rout the English. Now, the author continues this parallel to construct a national identity. By way of their chosen king and their blessed Maiden, the French people must logically be God's elect. Fraioli supports this claim: "La Pucelle est la preuve que les Français sont les élus" (195). If God sent them such an extraordinary figure--a young maiden--to bring them an extraordinary victory at Orléans, then they must be His chosen people. When Pisan writes "He [God] hears the prayers of the good," she implies that *the good* are the French.

By establishing this binary opposition between good and evil, Pisan sets up the construct of crusade. Writing in the early fifteenth century, Christine knew that her audience would recall the holy wars known as the crusades. Looking back to a previous war mentality of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the poet evokes the memory of Christian military expeditions that aimed to recover the Holy Land. Christine uses this crusader mentality to evoke a unifying response from the French people. In the *Ditié*, the author refers explicitly to the crusades when she writes, "She [Jeanne] will destroy the Saracens, by conquering the Holy Land" ("Des Sarradins fera essart, / En conquerant la Saintte Terre" ll. 337-38). While it may appear that this is Pisan's prophetic voice speaking of Jeanne's future accomplishments, I propose it can also be read as an allegory for the current political situation: recovering the Holy Land of *France* from the *English* Saracens. This interpretation seems appropriate, considering that this passage directly follows her harsh address to the English: "And so, you English, draw in your horns for you will never capture any good game! Don't attempt any foolish enterprise in France! You

have been check-mated.” (“Si rabaissez, Anglois, voz cornes / Car jamais n’aurez beau gibier! / En France ne menez voz sornes! / Matez estes en l’eschiquier,” ll. 305-08). While these verses serve most likely as a hunting analogy--the English have invaded the French territory in search of “good game”--there seems to be another possible reading which literally demonizes the English. By writing “draw in your horns,” Pisan may be reiterating the devilish nature of France’s adversary. She reaffirms here that the French are God’s chosen--the “*good game*”--on whom the English seek to prey. Similarly, in the Scriptures, the devil is characterized as a lion hunting for prey: “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5: 8). Thus, in her address to the English, Pisan is actually warning the French not to fall victim to their enemy’s devilish schemes. Furthermore, she encourages them to remain persistent in fight against the English, and they will be rewarded in heaven:

Soiés constans, car je vous jure / Qu’en aurés gloire ou ciel et los! / Car
qui se combat pour droiture / Paradis gaingne, dire l’os (ll. 301-304)

Be constant, for this, I promise, will win you glory and praise in heaven.
For whoever fights for justice wins a place in Paradise – this I do venture
to say

Thus, Pisan’s promise to her loyal French soldiers also works as a threat to the rebellious who will not “win a place in Paradise.”

In his article “Cultural Comparison: Crusade as Construct in Late Medieval France,” Kevin Brownlee cites the *Ditié* as a work that employs the crusader mentality for the purpose of nation building. He also credits the author Pisan as being one of the innovators in constructing a French national identity:

A newly significant difference—cultural, ideological, linguistic—is being established between France and England as concepts and as political entities. And indeed, Christine de Pisan was—along with Alain Chartier—one of the most important among the militant intellectuals and propagandists who developed the new notion of *France* as a coherent and

axiologically self-sufficient nation state during the first third of the 15th century. *The construct of civil war correctively transformed into crusade is viewed and utilized by Christine de Pizan* in a much more exclusively French context—with spiritual as well as political and cultural dimensions (20, emphasis added).

I agree that the image of Jeanne as a crusader is Pisan's tool to construct this new notion/*nation* of France. But while Brownlee rightly picks up on the notion of holy war, I take issue with his assertion that Pisan transforms *civil war* into crusade. Reflecting on the Hundred Years War, I argue that this conflict was more than French domestic factions struggling for power. As I have elaborated, England under Henry V not only battled against France; but the English occupied Paris and other parts of northern French territory. Thus, with France's enemy a foreign one, Brownlee's designation as *civil war* seems inappropriate.

Furthermore, we must consider the essence of holy war: that is, good versus evil. As previously mentioned, Pisan sets up the construct of crusade when she labels the English as Saracens and the French as Christian crusaders. From the outset, this structure precludes Brownlee's depiction as *civil war*, specifically in the case of the French rebels. To align the Burgundians with the English is to render them as evil Saracens. Pisan's intent, however, is to unify all the French. I would argue that the poet views the Burgundians as inherently good--after all, they are French--but with displaced loyalty.

Pisan's Feminine Role: 'Je, Christine' as Prophet, Advisor, and Poet

In terms of Johannic literature, Pisan's *Ditié* is the first poem devoted to the Maid and the only work by a female author in this transhistorical study. The inclusion of Pisan's text in my corpus—offering a feminine perspective on the Maid—was not a deliberate choice to exclude other female writers. In the course of my research, I have found that most often those who retell the Maid's story are male. Critic Nadia Margolis recognizes Pisan's unique status in history: “Christine de Pizan...would be the first to praise her [Joan]...She would be the only female author

to write about Joan until the seventeenth century, and the first to expound with any militant force until the nineteenth century” (23). This fact proves quite telling if we consider that our understanding of Jeanne--as *heroine*--frequently comes by way of a masculine voice.²⁶ With that in mind, I find it indispensable to consider how a woman writes Jeanne d’Arc.

Aside from the author’s political reasons covered thus far in the chapter, Pisan found a more personal motivation in writing the *Ditié*: to assert herself as a public and political woman. Her homage to Jeanne recognizes not only the Maid’s national significance as a great French hero, but more specifically highlights Jeanne’s female gender.²⁷ In the poem, Pisan uses the following phrases—all distinctly feminine—to describe Jeanne: “une vierge tendre” (l. 86), “Pucelle beneurée” (l. 161), “une femme – simple bergiere” (l. 198), and “une fillete de XVI ans” (l. 273). In addition, the poet depicts a maternal image of Jeanne feeding her child:

Considerée ta personne, / Qui es une jeune pucelle, / A qui Dieu force et
pouvoir donne / D’estre le champion et celle / Qui donne à France la
mamelle / De paix et douce nourriture, / Et ruer jus la gent rebelle, / Véez
bien chose oultre nature! (ll. 185-192)

When we take your person into account, you who are a young maiden, to
whom God gives the strength and power to be the champion who casts the
rebels down and feeds France with the sweet nourishing milk of peace,
here indeed is something quite extraordinary!

The author offers Jeanne’s femininity alongside her status as hero: the Maid is the champion and also the mother who nourishes France. Furthermore, when Pisan exclaims that Jeanne is an “honor for the female sex,” she reiterates this notion but shows that the Maid’s female gender actually empowers her--over men--to be a great hero:

Hee! quel honneur au femenin / Sexe! Que Dieu l’ayme il appert, / Quant
tout ce grant pueple chenin, / Par qui tout le regne ert desert, / Par femme

²⁶ In the field of Johannic criticism, however, this gender discrepancy is less apparent.

²⁷ Pisan’s distinctly feminine depiction of Jeanne most likely explains why she avoids the topic of Jeanne’s male dress in the *Ditié*.

est sours et recouvert, / Ce que C^m hommes [fait] n'eussent, / Et les
traictres mis à desert! / A peine devant ne le creussent (ll. 265-272).

Oh! What honour for the female sex! It is perfectly obvious that God has special regard for it when all these wretched people who destroyed the whole Kingdom – now recovered and made safe by a woman, something that 5000 men could not have done – and the traitors [have been] exterminated. Before the event they would scarcely have believed this possible.

Thus, it is female agency that saves France: the Maid does what five thousand *men* could not do.

Indeed, the author's purpose—along with her political motivation—in writing the *Ditié* is her desire to celebrate a woman hero. Already famous for such works like *Livre de la Cité des Dames*, Christine de Pisan must have revelled in learning of Jeanne—the actual embodiment of Pisan's earlier literary heroines. The Maid provided the poet a living model of another woman--like herself--who defied society's expectations for proper feminine behavior.²⁸ And conversely, to Jeanne's benefit, Pisan promoted the Maid's exploits in hopes of winning national support for her. For Pisan and Jeanne, personal agency intertwined in a symbiotic relationship. The linking of these two women serves to benefit both by empowering and propelling them to greatness:

Not only does Joan bestow authority and dignity on Christine and on women but Christine de Pisan, as the first to record Joan of Arc's heroism, advances and supports the heroine's credibility as a miracle and as a woman. In a larger historical context, Christine marks, with the *Ditié*, the beginning of a long tradition of mythifying Joan of Arc's legendary life, a myth that, for Christine, becomes an emblem of female heroism (McWebb 142).

In both cases, female distinction is at stake: for Pisan as a politically-engaged writer and Jeanne as a warrior. The parallel is undeniable as Christine's literary effort to unite France imitates the

²⁸ Although contemporaries in fifteenth-century France, the two women's lives differed dramatically. While Pisan was an accomplished writer, Jeanne was believed to be illiterate and could not even sign her own name during the trial proceedings. In her lifetime, Pisan married, had three children, became a widow at a young age, and spent the last few years of her life in a convent. Jeanne's life was quite short in comparison to Pisan's. She remained an unmarried virgin, had a brief—but successful—career on the battlefield, and died tragically after being imprisoned and interrogated in Rouen. Yet both women played a role in the public eye.

Maid's military attempt to bring together a politically-divided nation. Christine, like Jeanne, is an exceptional woman of her time whose unlikely profession as a published author garnered her severe criticism just as Jeanne's profession as a military leader attracted much opposition.

Even in writing the *Ditié*, Pisan envisioned that some would resist her ambition to record the Maiden's deeds. The author states that she writes this text with the expectation of criticism:

Raconté soit en toute place, / Car ce est digne de mémoire / *Et escript, à
qui que desplace*, / En mainte cronique et hystoire! (ll. 53-6, emphasis
added).

May it be told everywhere, for it is worthy of being remembered, and *may
it be written down - no matter whom it may displease* – in many a
chronicle and history book!

Not only do both women face critics, but their enemies --“the displeased”-- are the same. The English and their Burgundian allies who oppose Jeanne would also oppose Christine's writing about Jeanne. Nonetheless, the poet insists on writing the *Ditié* because she knows the Maid's feats are “worthy of being remembered.” Pisan had the insight to recognize Jeanne's political importance and predicts that Jeanne's story--of *epic* proportions--will be recorded in history.²⁹

From our modern day perspective, we know that Pisan's prophecy about Jeanne's fame has been fulfilled. The author takes on this role as prophet throughout the *Ditié*. Most notably, Pisan writes a future for Jeanne that includes destroying the Saracens and recovering the Holy Land (ll. 337-338). Thus along with saving France, the Maid will go on to save Christendom:

En Christianté et l'Eglise / Sera par elle mis concorde. / Les mescreans
dont on devise, / Et les herites de vie orde / Destruira, car ainsi l'acorde /
Prophecie, qui l'a predit (ll. 329-334).

She will restore harmony in Christendom and the Church. She will
destroy the unbelievers people talk about, and the heretics and their vile
ways, for this is the substance of a prophecy that has been made

²⁹ With that in mind, Pisan initiates this literary tradition perhaps with the hope that she too will be linked with Jeanne's celebrity.

Having appropriated the ancient prophets early on the poem (to announce Charles VII's and Jeanne's coming), Pisan finds her own prophetic voice when she foretells these victories.³⁰

Here, Pisan's own agency becomes evident as she acknowledges the past which then becomes her springboard to make her own predictions about Jeanne. Rosalind Brown-Grant comments on Pisan's use of prophecy:

Christine had a particular affinity for prophecy since she had already associated it with the *power of women's speech in their role as advisors to kings and princes*...More importantly, Christine in the *Ditié* evokes three famous prophets, Merlin, Sibyl and Bede, in order to abrogate the power of prophecy to herself and to predict what Joan will go on to accomplish in the future (21, emphasis added).

I agree with Brown-Grant's remarks to a certain extent; but it seems that when Christine assumes a prophetic voice, it is for much more than advising kings and princes. She wants to persuade the rebel Burgundians to join her and their fellow French citizens. In so doing, she extends "the power of women's speech in their role as advisors" from a private one-on-one domain to a very public--and nationalistic--discourse. After all, she addresses the citizens—not just Charles—in the *Ditié*.

In her role as public advisor, Pisan writes the *Ditié* to influence the current political situation. Kevin Brownlee comments on the author's motive at the end of the poem:

In the final section of the *Ditié* (stanzas 46-60), it becomes clear that Christine's discursive act is also a political act, an attempt to influence the course of events in which Joan is involved, for Christine's apostrophes to the French allies of the English are designed to effect an extratextual transformation, to change these present enemies into the loyal French subjects they all potentially are—to effect, in other words, a (politico-religious) conversion (386).

³⁰ The irony of this prophecy--that Jeanne will destroy the heretics--is that the Maid herself is later declared a heretic and burned at the stake for her beliefs.

Here, Brownlee has rightly noted the author's intent to rally her fellow citizens. But in Brownlee's focus on the *Ditié*'s political and public effect, he fails to consider what that would mean personally for Pisan. Let us take, for example, the situation in Paris. Pisan realizes the significance of reclaiming the city of Paris from the rebels and thus tries to convince her readers to join with Jeanne and the new king. In her address to Paris, she warns its inhabitants:

O Paris tresmal conseillié! / Folz habitans sans confiance! / Ayme[s]-tu mieulz estre essillié / Qu'à ton prince faire accordance? / Certes, ta grant contrariance / Te destruira, se ne t'avises! / Trop mieulx te feust par suppliance / Requerir mercy. Mal y vises! (ll. 433-40, emphasis added).

Oh Paris, how could you be so ill-advised? Foolish inhabitants, you are lacking in trust! Do you prefer to be laid waste, Paris, rather than make peace with your prince? If you are not careful your great opposition will destroy you. It would be far better for you if you were to humbly beg for mercy. You are quite miscalculating!

Here, she initially views the Parisians not as stubborn or rebellious, but *tresmal conseillié* and in need of her advice. In her writing, she appeals to the Parisians so that they might put their trust in the Maid and the newly-crowned French sovereign. With their trust and support, Jeanne can alter the course of French history. And according to Pisan's prophecies, the Maid could even alter the course of Christianity. But what good is Jeanne's potential success if no one supports her? Thus, Pisan's role as a writer/public advisor takes on greater significance. If she can use her poem to proclaim the Maid's recent victories and predict future military success, Pisan too can perhaps alter the course of French history. In guiding the public, Pisan's political focus of her writing also serves a personal need to validate the author's own work. The poet's hope is that *her* writing--not just anyone's--will change the existing state of affairs and the Burgundians will submit to Charles VII's rule.³¹

³¹ The Burgundians' surrender of Paris might also afford Pisan another personal advantage in that she could perhaps leave the abbey where she has been for eleven years.

In considering Pisan's role as public advisor, it is interesting to note that in the *Ditié*, the Maid's advisors—her angelic voices—are noticeably absent from the story. The author avoids mentioning Jeanne's angelic visitations by Saints Michael, Margaret, and Catherine. It is unknown if Pisan thought this issue would generate controversy surrounding the Maid and her legitimacy. History reveals that it later did as the Church would equate these visitations with witchcraft. The Maid's critics disapproved, believing them to be demonic in nature or signs of madness. While the angelic voices are not mentioned in Pisan's poem, I argue that Pisan has no need for the saintly figures to give direction to Jeanne. In the *Ditié*, the author replaces these voices as she is the one who addresses the Maid.

Pisan's voice is present throughout the *Ditié*. At the beginning, Pisan opens the poem 'Je, Christine.' In attaching her name to the female "I/je," the author asserts her own feminine voice into the text. Likewise, in the closing lines of the poem, she inscribes her name twice and reiterates ownership of the work when she declares it is "a very beautiful poem composed by Christine" (Explicit ung tresbel Ditié fait par Christine) (l. 489). In restating her authorship, Pisan shows that the poem, which boasts Jeanne's heroism, functions simultaneously on a more personal level for the author. Her desire to be recognized publicly as Christine the writer is perhaps a plea for remembrance.

Here, I must interject that the author's use of 'Je, Christine' is not atypical of her style. In *The Allegory of Female Authority*, Maureen Quilligan notes that Pisan "names herself again and again throughout the text" in previous works such as *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (15). Quilligan also identifies this stylistic device as reminiscent of the chronicle tradition: "the...formula included the 'first person pronoun followed by the author's name and surname, title and rank'" (14). Christine employs this formula, yet modifies it by omitting her surname,

title, and rank. In literary texts such as poetry, however, the occurrence of the first-person speaking subject was only beginning to emerge. Writing a few decades before Pisan, Guillaume de Machaut was one of the last trouvères in late medieval France and his lyric poetry incorporated this innovative technique: “Machaut’s career...formed also an essential component in the new poetic identity that Machaut assumed in his almost exclusively first-person literary work” (Brownlee 109). His influence on Pisan and other lyricists has been noted by Brownlee: “The great lyric poets of the fifteenth century—Christine de Pisan (1363?-1431), Alain Chartier (ca. 1385-ca. 1435), and Charles d’Orléans (1394-1465)—continued to build on and to modify Machaut’s achievements” (113). After Machaut and Pisan, this tradition would appear in the works of François Villon. It seems that in using this innovative technique, Pisan stands apart from her contemporaries in that her first-person subject is feminized: ‘Je, *Christine*.’

Aside from Machaut’s contribution, evidence for the author’s first-person subject also points to Christine’s personal history. Here, I remind the reader of Pisan’s early life at the court of Charles V where her father worked. Maureen Curnow notes that Christine’s background likely influenced this technique: “[being] the widow of a royal secretary and daughter of a deceased court official...contributed to her use of legal and judicial stylistic structures and content in her written works” (157). Christine was familiar with her father’s and husband’s professions--not to mention that she herself was involved in legal battles after her husband’s death. Pisan incorporates the chronicle tradition in the *Ditié*, as in other works, and thus establishes a connection to her own past.³²

Not only does Pisan offer her name in the *Ditié*, but she also inscribes the date 1429. At the end, she gives the complete date “1429, on the last day of July” (ll. 482-484). When the author includes the date, she locates her work for the reader in a certain time period. Pisan’s text

³² This could likely be the case in the writing of Guillaume de Machaut—as he was also trained as a cleric.

thus reminds us again of a legal document. Quilligan comments on the text's legal style: "the chronicler's designation indicates a *unique person who is located in a specific social context*" (14). I argue that Pisan's *Ditié* then functions like a historical chronicle for the reader and emphasizes its importance within her day. Indeed, Pisan herself praises God for sending Jeanne at this particular moment:

Tu en soyes loué, hault Dieu! / A Toy gracier tous tenuz / Sommes, qui
donné temps et lieu / As, où ces biens sont venus (ll. 153-156, emphasis
added)

May You be praised for this, great God! It is our bounden duty to thank
You who *decreed time and place* for these blessings to come about.

The author even suggests that the story should be written--and also, read--as a chronicle of history:

Raconté soit en toute place, / Car ce est digne de mémoire / *Et escript*, à
qui que desplace, / *En mainte cronique et hystoire!* (ll. 53-6, emphasis
added).

May it be told everywhere, for it is worthy of being remembered, and *may*
it be written down – no matter whom it may displease – *in many a*
chronicle and history book!

Pisan thus begins the tradition of chronicling the Maid's feats; and as she situates her text in the present by ascribing the date, she incribes a sense of historical truth.

While others have signaled the author's past and her historical present as cause for the first-person subject, I propose it can also be read in a new light. As I see it, this stylistic trademark is also linked to her future—and moreover, (in light of Pisan's other works) this phenomenon is unique to the *Ditié*. In the discussion of legal texts, Quilligan looks at the chronicler's designations and explains how "both identifications [name and date]...echo the 'juridical' act of *signing a will or other legal contract*" (14, emphasis added). When Pisan signs and dates the *Ditié*—her life's final work—it acts as the author's last will and testament. Thus,

the poem's prophetic overtones play an important role when the reader examines the text in this light: Christine is dictating how her nation of France will, or should be, run after her own death. In the *Ditié*, she *wills* for Charles to learn how to be a good king, for the Maid to be celebrated, for the English to leave France and, most importantly, for the people of France to unite under the king's rule and live in peace.³³ Even the author's repeated references to God throughout the text render it like a legal oath. The '*Je, Christine*' of the *Ditié* occurs three times in the text: much like a past, present, and *future* for Christine. The date 1429 also appears three times in the text: at the beginning (stanza 3), in the middle (stanza 49), and at the end (stanza 61). As the *Ditié* is Pisan's swan song, it seems that her "beautiful poem" will live on in the reader who carries out her *will*.³⁴

In Old Regime France, to accept Jeanne as a female warrior hinged upon her endorsement by a higher authority. For that matter, to accept the new king Charles VII—the disinherited son of a mad Charles VI—would also require a miracle. Thus, under these circumstances, Christine de Pisan writes her *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*. If some of the French were reluctant to accept Pisan as a writer coming from a more prestigious background, how much more would their contemporaries resist the notion of Jeanne as a shepherdess-turned-general? For France to get behind a woman's military leadership--and ultimately, her new sovereign Charles--it would require the author to use Providence as a means of gaining support. In the *Ditié*, Charles is God's king and Jeanne is God's hero who represents His chosen people. With that in mind, where does Pisan as a writer fit in? Here, it becomes evident that a woman's role in

³³ Pisan's will is carried out in the sense that "the English were expelled ca. 1456; [and] Charles VII...became known as 'The Victorious'" (Margolis 23). France flourished as a nation; the Maid, however, suffered a more dismal fate. After her execution in 1431—the same year as Pisan's own death—it's not until 1456 that the French remembered Jeanne: "When the French 'rehabilitated' Joan that same year [as the English expulsion], it was not for the heroine's sake but rather for the newly-triumphant nation's collective conscience" (23).

³⁴ I propose it is also linked on another level to Jeanne's future, as Pisan's legal style foreshadows the Maid's trial. The *Ditié* acts as Christine's testimony—or deposition—for the Maid's hearing. Furthermore, in an interesting parallel, both Pisan and the Maid died in 1431.

the politics of medieval France encompasses more than that of a reporter or historian. She can be the catalyst for change on the battlefield; or in her writing, she can be the political advisor to the populace. But would Pisan also need God's authority to accomplish her mission? If so, I believe Christine finds it in her role as prophet, advisor, and specifically in her *poetic* voice. This notion of *poesis* is essential in Pisan's role as *creator*--both of the text and of national identity. At this pivotal moment in French history when a Maiden arrives and a nation is born, it is appropriate that the *Ditié* emanates from a woman.

Chapter 2

From *Victime* to *Vainqueur*: François d'Aubignac Rewrites the Trial of Jeanne d'Arc

“Vous dictes que vous estes mon juge. Je ne sçay si vous l’estes. Mais advisez bien que ne jugez mal. Que vous vous metriez en grand danger.”
--la Pucelle (trial records; Manuscrit 518 d’Orléans)

“From the snares with which she was beset the expertest man in the world could not have extricated himself but with difficulty. She gave her responses with great prudence; indeed to such a degree that during three weeks I believed she was inspired.”
--in Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc by Mark Twain

Just over two hundred years after Jeanne's death, François Hédelin l'abbé d'Aubignac published his work *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1642). As this study sets out to situate the work within the politics of the day, I will first consider the historical background framing d'Aubignac's play before examining the text itself. One major influence upon *La Pucelle*—which, we will see, treats issues of rhetoric and nation—is the founding of the famous French institution: *l'Académie française*. Established by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635, this organization was tasked with regulating the French language: grammar, spelling, and literature. Its members, known as *les immortels*, were seen as the guardians and preservers of the French language. At this moment in history, in the creation of Absolutism, the *Académie française* and other royal academies served to strengthen and promote the monarchy's power. Timothy Murray explains that King Louis XIII would “use these intellectuals in his overall program to consolidate sovereign power by centralizing the standards of literature and language” (267).

In order to centralize linguistic standards, the *Académie française* required a rigorous policing of language. With the goal of a universally understood word or statement, the *immortels* strived to eliminate all imprecision in the French language.³⁵ Murray describes their methodology: “[the] exclusion of ambiguous or loose language endorsed the beliefs that words could be defined unequivocally and that readers could know *exactly* what an author meant by the use of any particular phrase...arriving at an ‘*exact*’ or ‘*true*’ *interpretation* of literary intent” (270, emphasis added). Along with governing the language itself, the *Académie française* imposed restrictions on French literature in the matter of content which had to be “appropriate” or “*vraisemblable*.” The *Académie*'s infamous judgment against Corneille's *Le Cid* in 1637 likely affected the playwright's contemporaries, such as d'Aubignac. Deemed as inappropriate,

³⁵ The politics of the *Académie française* also involved the oppression of minority languages. This strategy would figure into the establishment, or codifying, of French national identity.

Le Cid failed to meet certain necessary criteria for the *Académie* who “insisted on the importance of preserving the dramatic unities and also blamed the author for Chimène’s licentious behavior” (Murray 270).³⁶ When d’Aubignac produced his play just five years later, the author proved himself superior to Corneille by addressing both standards that Corneille failed to meet. He wrote *La Pucelle d’Orléans: tragédie en prose, selon la verité de l’histoire & les rigueurs du Theatre* (emphasis added), choosing a virgin heroine and collapsing all the play’s action into Jeanne’s final hours. Following the *Académie*’s tradition, d’Aubignac would later go on to publish his most famous work in 1657, *La Pratique du théâtre*, where he explicates what is appropriate for the stage. Although the playwright/drama theorist was never elected to the illustrious body, it seems he zealously sought after its approval in and through his works.

In fact, d’Aubignac’s obsession with the *Académie française* grew to such an extent that he founded his own academy. The playwright held his own meetings and finally, wrote the king aspiring to officially establish the new academy. In his *Discours au Roy sur l’établissement d’une seconde Académie, dans la ville de Paris*, d’Aubignac praised the current *Académie* and explained that more royal academies like it were needed in France: “une compagnie de quarante personnes n’a pas épuisé la France d’orateurs, de poètes, de philosophes, de mathématiciens; Paris en a mille, et votre royaume en pourroit faire des armées” (Livet 201). Although the King denied his request for a second academy, d’Aubignac’s society continued to meet. Known as *l’Académie des belles-lettres*, they convened weekly for a private meeting at d’Aubignac’s residence and each month, held a public forum at the Hôtel Matignon (Livet 203).

The gathering of intellectuals was not, however, restricted to the male domain. Before d’Aubignac formed his private society and almost twenty-five years prior to Richelieu’s

³⁶ In Corneille’s text, Chimène marries her father’s murderer. The *Académie* deemed this act inappropriate for the stage.

Académie, a social phenomenon known as the *salons* emerged early in the seventeenth century. In 1610, the Marquise de Rambouillet opened the *chambre bleue* in Paris. Much like the *immortels*, the salon participants debated issues of literature and language. Joan DeJean examines the French salons: “for decades, many of the finest minds in France met there not only to discuss literature but also to set themselves up as arbiters of literary taste” (298). The salons, however, fostered a notion of language that thoroughly opposed the *Académie*’s ideal. The term *préciosité* is used to depict salon language that is flowery, abstract, and ornamental. In this linguistic practice, authors would employ a tactic of circumlocution to describe mundane objects:

en isolant ainsi certaines phrases ou certaines locutions de tout ce qui les entoure, on arrive à substituer la périphrase au mot propre, et la métaphore à l’expression simple, sans que rien justifie cet emploi hors de propos d’un mot qui, *mis à sa place*, avait sa force ou sa grâce (Livet xxvii).

An example of this imaginative use of language can be seen in the following text: “vous devez avouer qu’elle a *les miroirs de l’âme* [les yeux] fort beaux, la bouche *bien façonnée* [belle], qu’elle est d’une *vertu sévère* [que l’on n’obtient rien d’elle], et qu’elle *articule bien sa voix* [qu’elle chante bien]” (Livet xxii, emphasis added). This type of language--appropriated by a specific group and, admittedly, quite particular and even exclusive--contrasts with the *Académie*’s would-be universal language. DeJean describes the exclusivity of the *précieux* language as “displays of linguistic invention that approximated attempts at creating *private languages* comprehensible only to the initiate” (301, emphasis added). Here, some assert that gender difference--as reflected in the membership of the *Académie* and the salons--correlates to the opposing linguistic views:

the official academies were visibly different because of their all-male membership...The salons, on the other hand, were a world presided over by women; each salon leader set the tone and determined the membership,

and in large part, the subjects for discussion. Thus each salon had its own character and generally also its own designation (DeJean 299).³⁷

One of the most well known salonnières was Madeleine de Scudéry, and her famous novel “*Clélie, histoire romaine* had as its centerpiece the most celebrated document in salon literature, ‘La Carte de Tendre,’ the map of Tenderness” (DeJean 301). Scudéry’s work in 1654 instructs the reader how to both win and lose a woman’s heart. While her text is the most recognized in salon literature, it met with opposition:

Seventeenth-century detractors dismissed all salon art—‘La carte de Tendre’ and especially the explosions of linguistic creativity that critics named *préciosité*—as frivolous affectation. Certainly the digressive, conversational style was at odds with the more sober manner of classicism, the yardstick of French literary greatness until the Revolution (DeJean 302).

Traditionally, we think of the emergence of Classicism as being in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Thus, d’Aubignac and his play in 1642 are pre-Classicist; however, the author anticipates the clarity that overseers of Classicism would assert as fundamental. Whereas the supporters of Classicism strongly opposed the salons, Scudéry’s own salon participants in 1653 included Valentin Conrart and Paul Pellison, members of the *Académie française* (Jensen 431). Scudéry was also honored publicly by the distinguished institution: “[she] was the only woman in her century to be acknowledged by the *Académie française*. She received first prize for her *Discours sur la gloire* in 1671” (Jensen 432).

Amidst the Parisian academies and salons, authors took a solid stance on the importance of language and rhetoric. In his book *Mapping Discord*, Jeffrey Peters examines Scudéry’s *Carte de Tendre* and reveals the negative perspective some held of the salonnières’ language: “abbé de Pure refers to the language of literary women as ‘jargon’...the language of Tendre,

³⁷ “In 1673, women were barred even from the public receptions for new Academicians initiated by Louis XIV” (Murray 269). It was only quite recently in 1980 that the *Académie française* elected its first female member, Marguerite Yourcenar.

invented in Scudéry's salon, exemplified a form of speech in the seventeenth century that was characterized by a discursive turning away from clear and proper meaning" (89). D'Aubignac too criticizes female language when he asserts, in his *Royaume de Coquetterie*, that the "garish exterior cloaks an absence of substance" (Peters 120). Here, he views feminine speech as characterized by frills and as devoid of true meaning. Thus, by contrast, effective discourse is masculine in nature. In his article "The Rhetoric of Adornment in *Le Misanthrope*," Peters analyzes the conflicting views on rhetoric that philosophers upheld. The debate centered on rhetoric's purpose either to communicate or to mask truth: "[there is] the uncertain status of *eloquentia* as either a conceptually reliable conveyor of ideas or a suspicious form of vacuous decoration" (Peters 710). For d'Aubignac and his colleagues outside the salons, the rhetorical debate seemed to lean towards the true communication of ideas and the rejection of the excessive or ornamental as it would only dilute this truth. They classified the ornate style of rhetoric as feminine:

In the mind of these seventeenth-century theorists, nature, as it related to its expression in writing and speech, came to include both *the masculine and the literal*, while the excesses of rhetoric became both a *feminizing illness* and a compromising form of indirect signification (Peters 709, emphasis added).

La Mesnardière, for example, endorses this notion in his *Poétique*: "il vaut mieux que le Discours soit aspre & rude, que mol & effeminé" (Peters 709).

In light of this gendered distinction of rhetoric, one wonders why d'Aubignac chooses to speak through a woman. Why is Jeanne d'Arc the subject of his play? In this chapter, I argue that d'Aubignac appropriates masculine discourse for Jeanne. In addition to the Maid's masculine--clear and *unornamental*--rhetoric, her male garb constructs this unique figure as an

honorary male. In *La Pucelle*, d'Aubignac reinforces Jeanne's masculinity by juxtaposing her to both the emotional Countess and the effeminate Count.

In my view, the significance of Jeanne's dress is closely linked to her rhetoric. Peters elucidates in his article that discourse has persistently been described over the centuries as adornment:

At least since Aristotle described *eloquence as a form of clothing applied to the substance, or body, of speech* in the *Rhetoric*, Western debates about the proper relation of ideas to the words that express them have recurred to a *vestimentary metaphor* (708, emphasis added).

Thus, it is only *suitable* for Jeanne who speaks as a male to display a physical exterior to match her rhetoric. This harmony among Jeanne's male dress and discourse is what ultimately lends credibility and power to the Maid. According to Peters, the vestimentary metaphor goes beyond issues of gender to reveal the fundamental source that is power: "exterior dress becomes a signifier of authority" (718). Although Peters does not address d'Aubignac's play, the parallel with *La Pucelle* is remarkable: Jeanne's virile nature in dress and rhetoric become the basis for her empowerment.³⁸

Before examining d'Aubignac's drama any further, we must realize that this playwright is not the only author of his time to recount Jeanne's adventures. The prevalence of Johannic texts in the seventeenth century began with Virey des Graviers's work, a tragedy performed in 1600.³⁹ Nicolas de Vernulz produced *Johanna Darcia* (1629), a tragedy in Latin verse. D'Aubignac's drama followed in 1642, and La Mesnardière versified it in the same year. Lastly,

³⁸ Perhaps, this is why La Mesnardière--who expressed the "necessary masculinity of discourse" (Peters 709)--rewrites d'Aubignac's *La Pucelle* in alexandrine form: Jeanne conveys masculine discourse *par excellence*. During Classicism, Boileau praised the alexandrine form.

³⁹ Historical background regarding seventeenth-century texts are cited from Françoise Michaud-Fréjaville's article "Person vs. Personage: Joan of Arc in Seventeenth-Century France."

Jean Chapelain published his *La Pucelle ou la France délivrée* (1656).⁴⁰ Aside from these texts focusing on Jeanne, her name appears in works such as Boileau's *Dialogue des héros de roman* (1688) and others. Thus, for my look at the seventeenth century, I chose d'Aubignac's drama for several reasons. In exploring the notion of statehood, the genre of theatre seemed most appropriate:

both Richelieu and Louis XIV were ardent admirers of the theater and no less ardent patrons. Both realized that in some ambiguous way *the theater represents the state*, that it can stand in for the Prince who is its privileged spectator and for whom it is the privileged spectacle (Greenberg 18, emphasis added).

The theater reflects the state in that it depicts a living body that moves and changes. Drama enacts a story to be seen and heard on the stage. Unlike poetry that verbally describes sights, sounds, and smells, theater is a genre that invokes these sensory responses, offering the audience actual sights and sounds. D'Aubignac states the importance of spectacle in his renowned work *La Pratique du Théâtre* and emphasizes that the performative aspect of theatre sets it apart from other genres:

Ce poème est nommé Drama, c'est à dire, Action, et non pas Récit; ceux qui le représentent se nomment Acteurs, et non pas Orateurs; ceux-là même qui s'y trouvent presens s'appellent Spectateurs ou Regardans, et non pas Auditeurs; Enfin le lieu qui sert à ses Représentations, est dit Théâtre, et non pas Auditoire, c'est à dire, un lieu où on regarde ce qui s'y fait, et non pas où l'on Ecoute ce qui s'y dit (in Greenberg, 14).

This notion of performance corresponds with statehood as it too is enacted, or performed, and not simply an abstract idea.⁴¹ Having chosen the dramatic genre, I was drawn to d'Aubignac's text for its exceptionality in retelling Jeanne's story. Although Michaud-Fréjaville describes the play as "mediocre," she acknowledges d'Aubignac's innovation: "[he was] the first to contract

⁴⁰ Critic Michaud-Fréjaville dismisses the work: "[Chapelain] produced two sets of twelve cantos in alexandrines, some simply bad, some as hilarious as the worst Virey des Graviers, which Boileau charitably lampooned" (54).

⁴¹ My analysis, however, comes from *reading*--not *viewing*--d'Aubignac's drama; thus, in some ways, limiting the text from reaching its full potential in performance, as the playwright intended.

the action into one day of the trial, as Dreyer and Brecht would do” (54). Also, in d’Aubignac’s *La Pucelle*, history literally becomes *his*-story when the author takes certain liberties, such as introducing Warwick as Jeanne’s love interest. But the playwright makes no claim for historical accuracy. In the drama’s preface, he admits to the reader that Warwick’s love for Jeanne is his own invention:

Pour y mettre vne intrigue qui donnast *le moyen de faire ioüer le Theatre*, i’ay supposé que le Comte de Vvarwick en estoit amoureux, & sa femme ialouse: *car bien que l’histoire n’en parle point, elle ne dit rien au contraire*; de sorte que cela vray-semblablement a peu estre, les Historiens François l’ayant ignoré, & les Anglois ne l’ayant pas voulu dire (ii-iii, emphasis added).

For d’Aubignac, the main concern lies in what is most entertaining on the stage. And as Michaud-Fréjaville points out, Jeanne endures considerable (re)interpretation during this period: “the historical image of Joan becomes increasingly blurred in the course of the seventeenth century, even for the cultivated public” (53). Finally, little is known about the play’s reception among d’Aubignac’s contemporaries. One recent critic reports the drama’s failure: “la pièce ne rencontre aucun succès” (Bastaire 15). It seems, however, that seventeenth-century scholars focus primarily on d’Aubignac’s dramatic theory and tend to overlook the drama itself—at least, this appears to be the case of *La Pucelle*.

Raising the Stakes: Jeanne Accuses the English

In *La Pucelle d’Orléans*, d’Aubignac envisions a new Jeanne and significantly alters the historical account by using her to enact a role reversal in the courtroom. More than simply introducing Warwick as a love interest, the playwright completely modifies the protagonist. No longer on the battlefield, Jeanne becomes a skilled orator in the courtroom and wields her rhetoric as a weapon against her enemies. A far cry from the historical Jeanne d’Arc who is believed to have been illiterate, d’Aubignac’s Jeanne is an intellectual and philosophical heroine.

Indeed, he creates a Jeanne whose intelligence and eloquent speech may initially remind the audience of the distinguished *salonnières* of the seventeenth century. Critic Ann Powers describes how d'Aubignac's portrayal of the Maid mirrors the influential salon women of his day:

d'Aubignac's [Jeanne] is no simple maid. On the background of [Jeanne]'s medieval story, d'Aubignac superimposes a contemporary, seventeenth-century bluestocking, a knowledgeable, well-informed woman who considers herself the equal of men and whom men considered the ruler...of the literary salons and of the literary reputations of the male habitués (8).

This view of Jeanne as *salonnière* seems to be a glaring misrepresentation of how d'Aubignac fashions his protagonist. In her reading, Powers ignores the stylistics, such as circumlocution, that are key to salon rhetoric. Why would d'Aubignac—who disdains *préciosité*--render Jeanne as a *salonnière*? In truth, the author d'Aubignac virilizes Jeanne along the lines of classical rhetoric. In her trial, for example, she shifts the focus from herself--and her own fate--to the greater issue of nationality. Thus, she demonstrates the *Académie*'s preference for a universal discourse—as opposed to the salon's individualized and private language. In creating an articulate spokeswoman, the author regards Jeanne as an honorary male, not as a *salonnière*.

But why does the author choose the Maid as his spokesman? The Maid's virginity most likely factors into d'Aubignac's choice to speak through Jeanne. The protagonist is a pure maiden; thus, Jeanne is not threatening as a sexualized woman. At the same time, she is not really a man—thus, lowering the stakes for the playwright to use her voice. Only as an honorary male can Jeanne endorse the merits of Salic Law (81) and assertively react against the English. Although she is the accused, the Maid forcefully gives orders to her male judges: “*Escoute, & ne m’interromps point? C’est peu que l’on vous arrache des mains les Prouinces que vous auez iniustemēt pretenduës*” (83, emphasis added). For d'Aubignac, to bestow on Jeanne the status of

honorary male and to confront the English through her is more advantageous than using a male protagonist. If he were to speak through an actual male, the author would limit his own persuasive power of rhetoric. Since the audience does not expect to encounter the Maid's convincing discourse, they are surprised, impressed, and--most importantly for d'Aubignac--entertained during the drama. Thus, Jeanne's rhetoric reflects back on the author's discursive power.

In her trial, Jeanne is not a passive victim suffering at the hands of the English; rather, the Maid pursues her English aggressors--as she did on the battlefield--and confidently refutes their accusations. When the Duke of Sommerset, for example, alleges that she is a sorceress, Jeanne asks for the basis of this assumption and proceeds to elaborate the necessary conditions required to condemn someone as a witch. She demands that her accusers produce evidence when she asks:

Que n'avez-vous instruit de vos Satellites pour soustenir qu'ils m'ont
veuë souuent au milieu des tenebres...foüiller dans les sepultures des
morts,...chercher des serpens sous les ruïnes des vieux Palais,...et qu'estât
guerriere ie n'ay vaincu que par des terreurs Paniques suscitées par
enchantement? Que n'avez-vous icy, contre moy...? (105-6).

She thus unravels Sommerset's case against her, showing that he lacks sufficient evidence. Jeanne even suggests that she is disappointed with the English council's shoddy argument when she offers them this advice: "pour donner *quelque* fondement à ma condamnation, vous deuiez pour le moins *auoir suscité quelques faux-tesmoins*. Car de me nommer Magicienne, & d'en demeurer là, c'est me dire vne iniure, non pas m'accuser" (104-5, emphasis added). Without even a *false* witness, the English council's accusations against Jeanne are unsubstantiated.

The Maid not only defends herself through logic and reason, but she also turns the tables by bringing charges against the English. Jeanne goes from defendant to prosecutor when she

exclaims: “Dieu *vous* accuse par ma bouche des crimes que *vous* avez commis, & qui sont escrits en lettre de sang dans les Registres de la Iustice Eternelle” (77, emphasis added). With decisive firmness, Jeanne accuses her accusers of crimes against France and, more notably, against God. Instead of dismissing her accusations, Jeanne’s judges feel compelled to inquire as to what crimes they have committed. The Maid then explains that their first crime is common to all of England:

Pouuez-vous estre innocents apres tant d’iniquitez que vous auez commises, pour *vsurper vn Estat* qui ne vous appartenoit pas? le pillage de tant de Prouinces, l’embrasement de tant de villes, *les sacrileges*, les perfidies, les meurtres, & *tāt d’abominations* qui ont suiuy l’iniustice de vos armes (78-9, emphasis added).

And concerning their next offense, Jeanne explains that only God ordains the monarchy—He alone raises or dethrones the king. So in essence, for the English to interfere with the French monarchy disrupts the divine order of France. Jeanne then proclaims that the heavenly laws are unbreakable: “elles sont inuiolables, y contreuenir c’est vne impieté, c’est s’attaquer à Dieu mesme” (80). She believes the English have hindered God’s plan and violated his law when they intervened in French affairs. At this point, I propose Jeanne implicates the English in their second crime: heresy. This charge of heresy would have been quite familiar to d’Aubignac’s audience who expected its pronouncement against Jeanne.⁴² But for the playwright to raise this accusation against the English is an unexpected twist.

To continue this reversal, Jeanne answers their accusations of witchcraft by asserting that their outrageous allegations against her must have originated when they themselves consulted witches to concoct their story: “vous deuiez ainsi vous servir de *vos propres sorciers*, ou vous n’avez pas eu droict de les faire parler contre la verité” (106, emphasis added). Jeanne’s bold,

⁴² Due to her male dress, Joan was accused of heresy since cross-dressing contradicted the established Church doctrine.

unexpected third charge against the English seems to confound her accusers. They now find themselves accused of yet another crime for which they condemned the Maid: sorcery. While the English accusers are called into question, d'Aubignac assures his audience that the Maid is innocent of such a crime. To convict Jeanne of witchcraft would seem ridiculous as the play actually opens with Jeanne conversing with an angel.

In bringing the charges of heresy and sorcery against the English council, the Maid not only undermines their authority by planting seeds of doubt in the spectators' minds, but she also declares outright that they are not her judges. She poignantly questions British legal power over her when she reminds her accusers of her French nationality. As a citizen of France, Jeanne should be tried by her fellow countrymen. The Maid thus explains to the English council the notions of jurisdiction and national laws:

est-ce pas contre le droict des nations? Ma naissance ou la grace de vostre Prince m'a-t'elle soumise à vostre Iurisdiction? *ie suis vostre ennemie, mais vous n'estes pas mes Iuges.* Si i'estois coupable en mon pays, si j'auois...commis toutes sortes de trahisons,...deurois-je pas trouuer mon azyle dans vos terres? (121-22, emphasis added).

D'Aubignac's Jeanne is knowledgeable about the law and court procedure. The Maid proves to the audience that this is an unfair trial; any litigation against her should be judged by the French—not the English.

Jeanne not only questions the authority of the English council, but she ultimately promotes herself to the role of judge when she hands down a sentence to them. Early on in the play, the Maid defies the criminal status given her by the English council: “*ie seray vostre Iuge auant que d'estre vostre criminelle*” (78, emphasis added). We recall that Ann Powers insisted on d'Aubignac's portrayal of Jeanne as a “woman who considers herself the *equal* of men...” (8, emphasis added). Her male dress and her military profession confirm this idea. However, as I

see it, the Maid was more than a common soldier among equals. She was, in fact, a military leader: making decisions, speaking with the king, and leading men into battle. Thus, I argue that rather than being shown to be a woman who was “the *equal* of men,” d’Aubignac represents her as superior to the average soldier. She is, for him, not only an honorary male but also an exceptional male who was the leader of men.

By the same token, the playwright also shows Jeanne to be superior to the English council. Because Powers underscores Jeanne’s equality with men, the critic also equates Jeanne with her judges:

[Jeanne] behaves as *an equal of her judges as well*, discussing with them in a most knowledgeable manner sorcery and...law...And finally, [Jeanne] predicts ominous fates for her judges: *the roles are reversed. She is the judge and sentences them* (9, emphasis added).

While Powers first asserts that the Maid is on the same level as her judges, she also contradicts herself when she declares that the “roles are reversed.” What Powers does not acknowledge is that the English are demoted in this role reversal. The English become the accused and Jeanne pronounces judgment on them. Thus, by Powers’s own logic, Jeanne is more powerful and thus, cannot be equal to her judges.

After building a solid case against her enemies and pronouncing God’s judgment, Jeanne still suffers her own dismal fate. One of her judges Canchon⁴³ dies immediately and the others are sentenced to a life of misery;⁴⁴ yet Jeanne herself does not escape execution. Thus, looking back to the title of this chapter “From *Victime* to *Vainqueur*,” is Jeanne truly a *vainqueur* if she dies in the end? I believe the answer is yes for several reasons. First, after Jeanne’s execution, her predictions for the English are fulfilled. Thus, even in death, the Maid’s word lives on.

⁴³ Historical accounts and most other literary texts refer to this man as *Cauchon*, but d’Aubignac has changed his character’s name to *Canchon*.

⁴⁴ The fate of Jeanne’s accusers is further explored in the section “Punishment and prophecy: facing the inevitable.”

Secondly, a miraculous event takes place at her execution. When the English go to collect her ashes, they find her heart intact—“on a trouue son coeur tout entier plein de sang & sans aucune trace du feu qui venoit de consommer son corps” (159). So, even part of Jeanne’s physical body remains. And third, Jeanne’s memory lives on after her death. D’Aubignac’s play itself is a testament to this fact. Indeed, Jeanne refers to her own immortality: “ne croyez pas que pour espandre mes cendres au vent vous puissiez effacer la memoire de ce que ie suis” (87-8). The Maid’s memory cannot be erased as it is preserved in d’Aubignac’s drama. Thus, in Jeanne’s declaration of her eternal remembrance, she reflects back on the author’s immortal rhetoric.

Finally, it is the Maid’s agency—even in her death—that makes her a *vainqueur*. In the first scene, the play opens with the angel telling Jeanne that she will die. So from the first moment, the Maid knew that death was inevitable, and she faced her destiny with courage and dignity. In her final speech, Jeanne declares: “*Je donne mon corps au feu, & rends mon ame à celui qui me l’a donnée*” (139, emphasis added). For the Maid, life is not being taken from her, but rather something she willingly offers. Reminiscent of Christ on the cross when He says “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23: 46) and “it is finished” (John 19: 30), Jeanne conveys that she too has accomplished her mission on earth. When the Maid’s judges die, they are victims who die guilty. Yet Jeanne’s innocence in death —again, like Christ—and her agency are further evidence that she is truly a *vainqueur*. D’Aubignac confirms this notion in his preface: “la Pucelle paroist innocente en sa vie & genereuse en sa mort, ses ennemis coupables & chastiez.”

Furthermore, d’Aubignac uses the *vainqueur*--his honorary *male*--to ridicule the English on the subject of female domination. D’Aubignac iterates this idea of French supremacy when

he comments on England's monarchy in the play. Implying that masculinity defines true power, the Maid exclaims that unlike France, only England could be ruled by a woman:

car dans l'establissement de nostre Monarchie, Dieu qui pourueut *les François d'un coeur absolument incapable de souffrir la domination des femmes*, leur inspira cette fameuse loy Salicque, qui n'admet que les hommes à la succession de la Couronne : loy toute sainte dans son principe...*il n'appartient qu'à vous de pouuoir estre les esclaves d'une femme* (80-1, emphasis added).

The playwright denigrates the British monarchy as a matriarchy, and he thus uses gender to shape national difference.⁴⁵ He employs a masculine Jeanne to criticize the female rule over the British, calling them "slaves to a woman." On a metaphorical level, one could say that d'Aubignac actually replays this scenario in the courtroom when his protagonist Jeanne dominates the English tribunal. The Maid uncovers the council's flaws in logic, their inability to prosecute her effectively and conduct a proper trial. She then demonstrates the proper way to prosecute a criminal, as she brings charges against the English, and the correct approach to rule as a judge, when she delivers their sentence. This reenactment on the stage is emblematic of English subjugation to their Queen. Because d'Aubignac's Jeanne is actually more masculine than feminine, however, the metaphor of female domination over the English falls short here.

Having chided the English for their female leadership, d'Aubignac reassures his audience that France's new general Jeanne was masculine. When she addresses the Count, for example, the Maid relates that her works are not those of a young girl: "Comte, mes exploits n'ont pas esté l'ouurage d'une fille" (10). From early on, Jeanne begins to dissociate herself from a feminine identity. Further proof of this distancing occurs when the Maid continuously refuses female dress. Even as Jeanne's judges question her, the Maid never accepts feminine clothing. History, however, offers a different account: at one point during the Maid's captivity,

⁴⁵ In her article, Michaud-Fréjaville asserts that this speech is an allusion to Queen Elizabeth (54).

she dons a dress. According to the official trial records, Jeanne immediately regrets this decision, renounces her abjuration, and resumes her male attire. In *La Pucelle*, d'Aubignac omits this scene. In his drama, Jeanne never takes off her male clothing; thus, she does not relinquish, even for a brief moment, her masculine identity.

In history, the Maid's refusal of feminine dress was a means of protecting her virtue from soldiers on the battlefield. Likewise in d'Aubignac's drama, Jeanne preserves this valued possession when she refuses the Count's sexual advances: "preuiens mon supplice si tu le peux : desrobe ma vie à mes ennemis, & *me laisse ma vertu*" (69, emphasis added). Chastity is the Maid's primary concern as her purity allows her to fulfill her divine mission. She explains to the English tribunal that her virtue will live on eternally: "cette poussiere parlera cōtre vous, si mon sang ne le peut faire, & publiant vostre infamie, elle publiera *ma vertu* que vous ne sçauriez estouffer" (88, emphasis added). Here, one must not forget the origin of the word *virtue*. The Oxford English dictionary offers the Latin word *virtus* as meaning "valour, merit, and moral perfection" and coming from the Latin *vir*, or "man." Thus, the Maid's virile nature makes her an honorable hero in the play. To continue the word play, I propose that her virtue is closely linked to her male dress. Let us consider the striking similarity in French with the words *vêtu* / *vestu* and *vertu*. To clothe Jeanne in male dress—and male rhetoric—is to make her virtuous. Ironically, it is by refusing men and defending her virginal purity that the Maid attains / maintains her *vir*-tue.

In the course of the play, the issue of Jeanne's male dress emerges twice. First, it is the Countess who questions the Maid's male dress in the judges' presence. The Countess's remarks about Jeanne's clothing serve to indict her:

Et puis, ses habits d'homme qu'elle n'a iamais voulu quitter, contre le commandement qui luy en a esté fait, est-ce pas vn crime assez enorme ?

cacher ce qu'elle est, pour mettre sa débauche à couuert, est-ce pas vn reproche qu'elle fait à la nature ? est-ce pas *vne honte pour tout le sexe*, & que *chacune de nous* devroit vanger ? est-ce pas vne illusion publique, sujette à la plus rigoureuse censure des loix ? (53-4, emphasis added).

Here, the Countess—a woman—feels betrayed by Jeanne's cross-dressing. She proclaims that Jeanne's vestimentary crime is one against nature, “a shame for the whole sex that each one of us women [*chacune de nous*] should avenge.” Concurrently, d'Aubignac's male characters dismiss Jeanne's transvestism as madness. The Baron responds to the Countess's rant when he explains that her male dress is not a crime, only an indication of her insanity: “Toutes ces considerations me semblent bien legeres, & cela pourroit bien la faire passer pour folle, & non pas pour criminelle” (54).

The Countess's outrage most likely arises from the fact that her husband, the Count Warwick, is attracted to the Maid. It seems that Jeanne's male disguise is not the real issue for a jealous wife. Instead, the Countess attacks her husband for trying to hide his true feelings for the Maid. In Act III, the Countess confronts her husband about his veiled attraction: “Comte, le *déguisement* vous est desormais inutile, & vostre passion s'est *portée* trop auant pour me la cacher dauantage” (97, emphasis added). Here, the Countess reveals to him that she is aware of his secret love and that to disguise his affection is useless.⁴⁶ Thus, while the Countess is the first to protest the Maid's male dress, it is her husband's disguise—his false fidelity—which truly infuriates her.

To reinforce Jeanne's virile nature, one need only examine the other female character in d'Aubignac's play to see the stark contrast the author creates. Aside from the Maid, Count Warwick's wife is the other female character who is quite vocal throughout the play. Early on, the Countess becomes jealous of the Maid who inadvertently wins the Count's affection. The

⁴⁶ As the characters discuss the notion of disguise, the dual meaning of the verb *porter*—to carry / wear—is striking in this context.

Countess therefore sees Jeanne as her competition throughout the drama. In Act II scene ii, the Countess confides in her maidservant Dalinde her own husband's interest in Jeanne. She relates her anger and sense of betrayal, but Dalinde encourages the Countess to conceal her true feelings as this public display is improper: "Prenez garde que vos gestes vn peu violents, & que *vostre voix qui s'esleue* ne découurēt le trouble de vostre esprit, & de vostre maison" (41, emphasis added). The Countess is encouraged not to raise her voice as this will be seen as inappropriate for a woman who reflects on her household. While the Countess is defined by her potentially excessive emotions, Jeanne is defined by reason and logic.

In the end, the Countess goes from being consumed with jealousy and rage to being overwhelmed with guilt. Once the Maid is condemned and sentenced to death, the Countess feels remorse and tries to dissuade the council from their decision. She now wants to save the Maid when she proclaims Jeanne's innocence to the Duke and the Count: "Ha! Barbares, sçavez-vous pas qu'elle est innocente ? c'est moy : qui suis coupable, ouurez mon coeur, & vous verrez sa mort escrite *sans raison* dans mes intentions" (130, emphasis added). Here again, the Countess distinguishes her emotional character from the Maid's reasonable nature when the Countess states that her intentions are *sans raison*. At the end of the scene, the Countess faints into the arms of her maidservant Dalinde. At this point, the author offers the audience a picture of a frivolous woman consumed with emotion whose jealousy leads to her ultimate downfall. By the drama's end, the Countess reappears, but she seems to be completely insane: "Quels mōstres hideux viennent de sortir de mon sein ? quels serpens me poursuient ? quelle horreur m'enuironne ? (164). Shortly after this episode, the Countess's maidservant Dalinde—the only other female character in the play—comments on her degenerated mental state: "son esprit est plus calme, & ses actions plus moderees, mais *son discours ressent encore quelque chose de la*

frenesie” (148, emphasis added). The Countess’s speech, depicted here as unstable and emotional, creates a striking foil to the Maid’s logical rhetoric that dumbfounds her male accusers. Furthermore, as the Countess represents feminine language lacking substance--something d’Aubignac vilifies--the Maid’s language and demeanor would again be seen as femininity’s opposite: idealized masculinity.

Along with the Countess, her husband, the Count Warwick, is also juxtaposed to Jeanne. In *La Pucelle*, the Count’s language resembles the highly-emotional discourse of his wife. Early on, he attempts to seduce the Maid by offering her freedom from prison:

ie vous en puis tirer, & vous conduire où vous voudrez : pourueu que vous me dōniez quelque part en vostre affection,...ne vous ay-ie pas rendu ma passion assez visible ? & *n’ay-ie pas tout employé pour vous plaire, & pour vous servir ? mes souûpirs ont tant de fois porté la flâme de mon coeur iusqu’à vous qui l’avez fait naistre* (12, emphasis added).

The Count is consumed by his passion for Jeanne.⁴⁷ His effeminate nature that wants “to please and to serve” the Maid proves that Jeanne is again the dominant masculine figure. It is evident that his affectionate discourse differs from the other English judges—so much so that Jeanne even tells him: “Voicy le Duc, & Despinet, qui tiendront bien *vn autre langage*” (19, emphasis added). In an effort to convince Jeanne to go along with his plan to save her, Warwick asserts that her deliverance will bring happiness to all of France. His true motive, however, stems from his uncontrollable love: he cannot bear to see Jeanne perish. The Maid sees through Warwick’s chicanery, realizing his underlying intentions and exposing his consuming passion: “dy plustost que ie me sauue pour toy,...persuade moy de me perdre pour satisfaire à *la fureur de ta passion dereglee...car tu n’as point d’autre motif que ton sol desir*” (64-65, emphasis added). Driven by emotions and his love for the Maid, the Count stands apart from his fellow judges in language.

⁴⁷ Also, one can also read Warwick’s *flames* of passion as foreshadowing the Maid’s death.

In her reading of the text, critic Michaud-Fréjaville actually admires the Count and esteems him over Jeanne: “*the true hero of the piece is the tragic lover, one devoid of subtlety here, played by an implausibly bashful Warwick*” (54, emphasis added). From the grand overtures he makes to the Maid, it seems that Warwick is anything but heroic and bashful. The Count’s lovesickness makes him appear foolish, just as the English tribunal who do not know the law.

Warwick’s ultimate downfall, however, is that he loves the Maid sexually. His desire for her is not true love but instead, tainted with lust. The Maid confronts the Count, concerning his devious intentions: “tu ne veux pas que ie cōnoisse l’entreprise que tu faits sur ma virginité?” (63). The playwright d’Aubignac makes this an issue when he contrasts Warwick’s love to that of Jeanne’s fellow French soldiers:

Ha que tes sentimens m’outragent. Quãd ie pense qu’ayant si long-tẽps
vescu parmy les François,...dans les armees au milieu de tant de braues
guerriers, *pas vn d’entr’eux n’a iamais conceu de pensee contre ma vertu:*
Ce vaillant Dunois, Xaintrailles, la Hire, Baudricour, & tant d’autres, dans
la licence de la guerre, dans la solitude de leurs pauillons, & dans la
faueur de la nuict, m’ont tousiours respectée: ils n’ont iamais eu pour moy
que des sentiments de reuerence...ils m’ont admirée, ils m’ont estimée,
*mais avec cette loüable passion qui fait aimer les choses saintes...*il n’y
auoit que mes ennemis capables de cette lascheté, ton crime est digne d’vn
Anglois (14-15, emphasis added).

Warwick’s passion becomes a crime indicative of the English while Jeanne’s fellow Frenchmen always respected her. Their love for her was praiseworthy whereas the Count is controlled by impure motives. Through the Count’s effeminate discourse and sexual desire, d’Aubignac criticizes Warwick, and the English as a whole, to reinforce his inferiority to the French. Furthermore, I would argue that the Count is a reflection of his wife who is overcome with emotion and, in the end, with guilt. In the final act, Warwick feels responsible for the Maid’s death: “il faut que ma passion soit mon bourreau, puis qu’elle me l’a predit, & que c’est ma passion qui la laisse perir” (146). Unlike the Count who desires Jeanne sexually, the author

d'Aubignac fixates on the Maid's purity. The dramatist admires her in a praiseworthy manner—as the French soldiers did—and this defense of Jeanne's purity renders her an honorary male.

To better understand the Count's overly emotional response to the Maid, let us consider another one of her judges, Mide. This member of the English tribunal acts in a manner we expect of the Maid's accusers. From the beginning, he believes that the Maid practices witchcraft and that she must die. He is also the only judge to pursue the issue of Jeanne's male dress in the trial. In raising accusations against the Maid, her judges struggle to find concrete evidence that will ensure Jeanne's guilt. Mide then orders that she answer to them about her male clothing:

quelle nécessité de chercher en sa bouche ny de ses tesmoins, vn sujet
suffisant pour la condamner ? *porte-t'elle pas son crime sur son propre
corps* ? ces restes d'habit d'homme dont elle est encore vestuë contre la
defense qui luy en est faicte, ne peut receuoir d'excuses, & si nous ne
sommes aueugles, nous ne l'en pouuons absoudre (116, emphasis added).

The Maid, however, withstands this line of questioning and responds to Mide eloquently and logically when she explains that her male dress served a professional function. She argues that had she been sent like Judith, she could have worn feminine attire. But her divine mission was on the battlefield and thus, she had to dress herself accordingly:

Si Dieu m'auoit enuoyée comme Iudith, ...i'aurois pris vn equipage
semblable au sien, ie me serois *vestuë d'ornements precieux*, i'aurois
releué les attraits de ma beauté par les poudres les eaux & les parfums,
i'aurois employé tous ces mesmes artifices, & comme elle, ie me serois
seruie des graces de mes yeux pour me seruir auantageusement de ma
main...*Ma mission estoit armée*, & pour cela mon ordre estoit de *quitter
les apparences de mon sexe* sans en quitter la pudeur: & de *châger toutes
les marques de nostre foiblesse en appareil de guerre, & de victoires*
(115-116, [117-118], emphasis added).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The first page numbers reflect how they are enumerated in d'Aubignac's text. There is, however, a pagination error; thus, the bracketed numbers indicate the actual pages of the citation.

Jeanne's armor is fitting for the job. Just as Jeanne's calling was to be a warrior, she must forego the *ornements precieux* to fulfill her male profession in war.

In this address to Mide, Jeanne explains why she rejects feminine attire: it is due to physical necessity. Now before Mide and her judges, Jeanne's task requires rhetorical rather than physical prowess. Here too, she must reject the *ornements precieux* that would impede her effectiveness. As Jeanne offers this response to Mide's inquiry, he is frustrated by her answer and asserts that her male dress only reveals her moral corruption: "voila certes vn pretexte bien specieux pour couurir ta débauche, qui t'a fait démentir ton propre sexe" (116, [118]). But I would argue—as Jeanne does—that she is not denying her own sex; instead, the Maid is using whatever means necessary to fulfill her mission.

Punishment and Prophecy: Facing the Inevitable

Taking into account Mide's charge against Jeanne, let us examine his fate at the end of the play. As the Maid had predicted before her death, one of her judges would be struck with a terrible disease. Having condemned the Maid because of her male clothing, Mide ultimately contracts an illness that disfigures his physical exterior. A soldier reports how the judge's body has become deformed and that everyone runs away from him because of his contagious potential:

au milieu de la place Mide vient d'estre frappé d'une horrible maladie; le visage les mains & tout le corps luy ont blanchy soudainement, mais avec vne difformité si estrange que chacun s'en est facilement apperceu: tous ceux qui l'environnoient s'en font escartez avec grands cris; & vne secrette horreur qu'il semble porter avec luy, le fait abandonner de tout le monde, comme s'il auoit la peste, & qu'il la pût donner avec les regards (162-3).

With some sort of leprosy, Mide is now the object of fear, ridicule, and scorn. In what Dante calls *contrapasso*—a fitting punishment for the crime—Mide is now himself judged based on his outward appearance.

Another judge, Canchon, faces his own contrapasso in d'Aubignac's play. Jeanne's death in Act V reveals that her heart does not burn, and this miracle convinces some accusers—like Despinet—of her innocence. In the final act, Despinet declares this fact: “ie confesse à tout le monde qu'elle est morte innocente” (160). And the Maid's faithful supporter Count Warwick reiterates her innocence when her heart does not burn in the fire: “ce coeur inuincible à tant de malheurs, auoit receu du Ciel cette grace de suruiure à son supplice, & que ce miracle est vn ouurage de Dieu pour manifester son innocence” (159-60). Compared with Mide's leprosy, Canchon suffers a more severe and swift punishment. He faces immediate judgment when a sharp object pierces his heart and he dies instantly: “Bon Dieu, ie suis mort, vn traict inuisible me vient de percer le coeur” (165). His contrapasso lies in the fact that Canchon's death results from an injured heart while Jeanne's execution left her heart intact--Canchon's death revealing his guilt and the Maid's, her innocence.

In addition to Canchon, another judge, Despinet, encounters his appropriate punishment in the drama. Earlier in the Maid's interrogation, Despinet asks Jeanne if she should not suffer a harsher punishment for having attempted to escape from prison: “mais n'est-ce pas inutilemēt que cette prison t'est ordonnée? as-tu pas fait effort pour en sortir? & le captif qui trauaille à son euasion merite-t'il pas vne plus dure peine?” (112-13). After holding the Maid prisoner and denying her release, Despinet ultimately allows Jeanne to die at the hands of her English enemies. But after the Maid's death, Despinet's fellow Englishmen force him to flee. The Duke proclaims Despinet's expulsion: “qu'on le chasse hors de la ville sans fuitte & sans aucun secours, & que son desespoir dans vn general abandonnement luy conseille sa propre morte, ou quelque chose de pire” (161). Having denied Jeanne's request for refuge in their territory, Despinet is appropriately sent into exile.

At the risk of overemphasizing the notion of contrapasso, I cannot resist including the Count and Countess in this discussion. As the Maid is physically burned at the stake, the Count is consumed with the flames of passion and then of guilt. And his wife's fate is similar. Having criticized the Maid's demeanor—essentially, her presence of mind—and dress, the Countess descends into madness. As Jeanne has already put her judges on trial by identifying their offenses, she—as judge—has now doled out their sentences. Her three judges face exile, leprosy, and violent death. Jeanne foretells their impending doom, yet her sentence carries with it more authority as she communicates God's judgment: “Enfin pas vn de vous n'eschappera deuant la cholere de Dieu, & la sepulture mesme ne vous seruira pas d'azyle” (91). At this moment, perhaps many would imagine the council laughing as they dismiss the Maid's predictions. The play, however, conveys a somber tone among the members of the trial council upon hearing Jeanne's prophetic words. D'Aubignac's stage directions bring to light the fear among Jeanne's accusers at the end of the scene: “Le Comte Vvaruick, & Talbot quittent leurs sieges, & ceux qui pouuoient representer les Soldats & le peuple, sortent avec confusion, desordre, & estonnement.” (92). The authority and confidence with which Jeanne delivers their sentence has a powerful and visible effect on the English. It appears that their conscience immediately begins the torturous punishment she predicted.

All of these punishments inflicted upon the Maid's judges are no surprise as they fulfill Jeanne's predictions made earlier in the drama (83). Here, it is evident that prophecy of death plays an important role in d'Aubignac's text. In the opening scene, for instance, the angel tells the Maid of her future. She knows from the outset what distress she will endure—even her execution. The Maid accepts her fate as necessary in accomplishing her purpose and goes willingly to the stake. Early on, Jeanne speaks of death when she tells the emotional Count how

to die with dignity: “meurs en repos *comme les hommes*, & *non pas en fureur* comme les criminels” (18, emphasis added). This statement reiterates the Maid’s virile nature juxtaposed with the Count’s effeminate passion. She maintains this demeanor and sense of control throughout the play, even telling her judges that she has chosen to remain their prisoner in order to fulfill her divine prophecy: “ie seray *captiue volōtairement* cōme ie me trouue libre par l’ordre du Ciel” (21-22, emphasis added).

This reoccurrence of prophecy in d’Aubignac’s play also bears a striking resemblance to Christine de Pisan’s *Ditié* in which a thread of prophecy is woven throughout the text. While Pisan discusses ancient prophecy and then predicts Jeanne’s triumphant future, d’Aubignac’s drama deals with the foreboding of death. Some of Jeanne’s enemies dismiss her prophecy, and Mide, for example, gives it no credibility: “ie ne laisse pas d’en apprehender le presage” (140). But by the end, the English tribunal has seen her prophecy fulfilled, and the play closes with Warwick begging for mercy: “Puisse le Ciel estre satisfait des secrets tourments de mon ame, & me preseruer de tous les malheurs qui nous ont esté predits” (167). The final word of the play *predits* reinforces the notion that all was foretold from the beginning.

Masculinity and Nation: d’Aubignac’s Jeanne Personifies France

As we have seen, Jeanne’s male rhetoric/dress renders her powerful over the incompetent tribunal. In fact, the author’s articulate spokesperson highlights the buffoonery of the English council as their failed attempt at justice turns into a mock trial. Biet remarks on the judges’ inability to judge: “[ils] confondent les critères de la sainteté et de la sorcellerie, [ils] sont incapables de discernement” (226). Not only can they not recognize the signs of witchcraft, but more importantly, the fact that the English council bases their trial on sorcery proves their incompetence. Biet verifies that witch hunting was an outdated issue in France in 1642:

la sorcellerie a occupé une bonne partie de l'Europe dans la deuxième moitié du XVI^e siècle et dans le premier XVII^e siècle, elle l'occupe encore dans le Saint-Empire, mais en France elle est largement en déclin...la grande période française de la chasse aux sorcières s'éteint entre 1610 et 1630 (228-29).

So, focusing their accusations on Jeanne's alleged sorcery, the English judges only show their antiquated logic. D'Aubignac is purposefully anachronistic as he applies seventeenth-century law to the trial and depicts the English tribunal as medieval and archaic. During the trial, when the Maid questions the tribunal's reasoning for accusations against her, she finally decides that an *English* council could be expected to do no better:

Quoy ? vous estes reduits à prendre les Fées pour fonder l'oppression d'une innocente ? & pour me faire mourir, vous alleguez les fables de ma nourrice...C'est vne pensée *digne du Cōseil Anglois*, c'est vn crime que les flames doiuent expier, c'est vn magnifique pretexte à Bethfort pour *couvrir sa barbarie* (108, emphasis added).

The Maid labels the English as barbaric, and the playwright's depiction confirms this idea. Having witnessed the trial unfold before our eyes, the audience has seen the drama play out in quite an unexpected manner: an articulate Jeanne has revealed the English tribunal to be a sort of kangaroo court. Biet describes the English trial as "une parodie de justice" (228). The English council does not understand the law, nor can they present a sound argument against Jeanne. If that were not enough, d'Aubignac then shows the English council to be hypocritical: concerning their accusations of witchcraft and heresy against Jeanne, they themselves are guilty of the same crimes. Thus, the political implications from such a trial—that overtly vilifies the English—are linked to the notion of nationality. As the Maid triumphs over her enemies in the courtroom, the English are put on trial so that France's superiority is brilliantly clear.

Not only does d'Aubignac mock the English council, but he also overtly ridicules the English monarchy. We are reminded here of Jeanne's speech on Salic Law and how France

could never be “slaves to a woman.” The playwright then confirms this notion of England’s slavery in the voice of an English judge. Near the play’s end, Despinet regrets the decision against Jeanne and admits the tyrannical nature of the English monarchy: “ie confesse à tout le monde qu’elle est morte innocente, & que *nous auons esté les esclaves de la tyrannie*” (160, emphasis added). Thus, d’Aubignac attacks the English monarch as well as the nation as a whole: “qu’il indique un archaïsme antérieur à la fondation d’un Etat fort et centralisé” (Biet 229). The tyranny within the English government points back to their inferiority--and the notion of gender is inherent in that weakness. In contrast to England’s female monarch, France’s supreme authority was the king. During this time in seventeenth-century France, the king’s fame and power were growing, and the *Roi Soleil* Louis XIV would soon take the throne. We must also remember here that Absolutism used theatre as a tool, creating a collective experience for the French public. In d’Aubignac’s drama, the audience--like the state--focused on one central player.

Under Absolutism, the king not only governed but he embodied the state, as reflected in the phrase “L’État, c’est moi.” D’Aubignac’s *La Pucelle* offers the Maid who discusses issues of nationality and points to the king’s rising status in France. Furthermore, it is Jeanne’s honorary male status that makes her the perfect candidate to represent the notion of French statehood. As we have seen, rhetoric was believed to have an inherent gender. When Jeanne employs masculine rhetoric--dominating the courtroom scene by expounding on law and justice--she speaks as a male for the nation. Moreover, even the etymology of national terms underscores a strong masculine connection to the idea of *nation*. If we take, for example, the French word *patrie*--which means “homeland, country, *fatherland*”--we must note its derivation

from the Latin *pater*, meaning “father,” and the Greek *patris*, or “fatherland.”⁴⁹ Similarly, words such as *patriote* stem from Latin *patriota* for “fellow countrymen.” In addition, the word *patrimoine*, meaning “heritage,” is innately linked to the father and thus, reminds us of Salic Law that d’Aubignac references in the play. Therefore, to link the English to their feminine ruler is to lessen their status as a nation. So, it is no accident that d’Aubignac’s hero is a masculine one: to embody the *patrie* of France before the effeminized English tribunal.

In raising Jeanne from *victime* to *vainqueur*, d’Aubignac depicts French national triumph. As the Maid pursues her English aggressors, France too is no longer portrayed on the defensive side—as they were in the Hundred Years War. The Maid even predicts a victorious future for France when she addresses her military comrade: “Ouy, genereux Dunois, tu n’es qu’au commencement de tes victoires” (84). In an article, Biet explores the national theme in the playwright’s text:

car, au travers de cette pièce, ...*Il s’agit d’annoncer la venue d’un triomphe politique et guerrier* grâce au sacrifice de la sainte...Au théâtre, dire c’est faire, et par les mots de la sainte prophétesse on saura Dieu achèvera ce qu’elle, puis ses lieutenants et son Prince ont commencé (231, emphasis added).

In his commentary on national prophecy, Biet also links French success to the Maid’s personal celebrity which will continue. The critic focuses on Jeanne’s immortality:

prédire la déconfiture anglaise,...l’avenir glorieux des armées françaises du XVII siècle, et *surtout d’annoncer...sa propre gloire à elle* et son avènement au rang de personnage mythique...la Pucelle triomphera par les ouvrages, qu’ils soient de guerre ou de papier (231, emphasis added).

While Biet asserts that Jeanne promotes her own glory, it seems that the playwright’s voice is undeniable. I argue that Jeanne serves as the author’s mouthpiece; thus, to proclaim Jeanne’s greatness is for d’Aubignac to announce “sa propre gloire à *lui*” as he believes that he too will

⁴⁹ The word etymologies cited here were taken from the online reference *Oxford origins*.

attain mythic status for his work. Within *La Pucelle*, d'Aubignac informs the audience of his play's significance when the Maid explains:

ne croyez pas que pour espandre mes cendres au vent vous puissiez effacer la memoire de ce que ie suis, & de ce que vous aurez fait : cette poussière parlera cōtre vous, si mon sang ne le peut faire, & *publiant vostre infamie*, elle *publiera ma vertu...à peine deux siècles* seront-ils escoulez, qu'*vn Prince illustre*, digne heriter du nom & des vertus heroïques de ce vaillāt Dunois, établira l'immortalité de ma gloire par *vn ouurage immortel*, où se conseruera pour iamais l'histoire de ma vie...Ouy certes, biē que ie ne sois plus au monde, ie triōphera de vous par ce moyen dās la ville de Paris,...& de là mon triōphe s'espandra par tout le monde (87-9, emphasis added).

In this way, d'Aubignac inscribes himself in the text as the "Prince illustre"—like Pisan's *Je, Christine*—so that future audiences will remember the author.

But what are the political stakes of gender when the writer appropriates the Maid? While both authors speak to/through Jeanne, Pisan's *Ditié* differs from d'Aubignac's drama. The fifteenth-century poet writes a work in which she identifies with the heroine. Pisan's identification with Jeanne contrasts with d'Aubignac's appropriation of her as a *hero*. The playwright's Jeanne is an extension of the author himself as master rhetorician and renowned drama theorist. In essence, he iterates the notion of performance as he uses the protagonist as his puppet.

Even as early as the play's opening scene, the author bestows his voice on Jeanne. The drama begins with a visitation in which Jeanne is freed from prison by an angel and learns what will happen to her. At this point, Jeanne thanks the angel for her deliverance: "Quels mouuements celestes deliurent mon corps de la captiuité qui le presse, & donnent à mon ame vne si sensible joye ? Est-ce donc toy sacré Tutelaire de ma vie" (2). Here, the Maid's joy overflows due to her newfound freedom. I take the angel to be the author d'Aubignac who has freed the Maid from silence--and historical "illiteracy"--to revive her in his seventeenth-century drama. It

is d'Aubignac who is the “sacré Tuteur” of Jeanne’s life. Thus, in this opening scene, when Jeanne expresses her gratitude to the angel for being set free, she is actually acknowledging the author d'Aubignac.

Much like a spirit that enters into a person to control him, so does d'Aubignac *possess* the protagonist Jeanne in the drama. At first, he appears to her as the angelic being to release her from the chains. Then, the playwright speaks through her and controls her actions. The Angel explains to Jeanne that he must give her *his* voice as she is incapable on her own to accomplish what she is to do—accuse and condemn the English tribunal. The angel d'Aubignac conveys to the Maid her inadequacy as a youth and especially as a female:

il me reste encore à te fortifier aujourdhuy *contre toy-mesme, contre ta propre foiblesse*. C'est par cet ordre de Dieu que ie t'ay tirée du fœd des cauernes, d'une naissance inconnue, dans *vn âge foible, & vn sexe timide* (2-3, emphasis added).

Thus, the author will guide the young maiden and speak through her: “& ie conduiray *ta langue*” (5, emphasis added). Here, d'Aubignac will guide the Maid’s *tongue*, as she will appropriate his voice; but he will also direct her *language*, so as to avoid the frivolity of feminine discourse.

Chapter 3

Profaning the *Pucelle*?: Voltaire Comments on the *Body Politic*

*“I must not yield to any rites of love,
For my profession’s sacred from above;
When I have chasèd all they foes from hence,
Then will I think upon a recompense”*
--Pucelle in Henry VI Part One by William Shakespeare

*Then fire, make your body cold,
I’m going to give you mine to hold,
Saying this she climbed inside
To be his one, to be his only bride.
And deep into his fiery heart
He took the dust of joan of arc
--Leonard Cohen (song: “Joan of Arc”)*

In the preface to his seventeenth-century drama, François d'Aubignac states that Jeanne's story would make a great heroic poem: "L'Histoire de la Pucelle d'Orleans, est un grand & magnifique sujet pour vn Poëme heroïque, car elle est pleine de beaucoup d'euenements notables..." (preface).⁵⁰ In accordance with the playwright's advice, my transhistorical study takes us to Voltaire's mock epic poem on Jeanne d'Arc which Dominique Goy-Blanquet affirms was both controversial and popular in the eighteenth century: "*La Pucelle d'Orléans* raised a scandal before it was even printed, and eventually broke all publishing records in the eighteenth century" (23). When d'Aubignac requests an epic poem in honor of the Maid, he most likely references his contemporary Jean Chapelain who published his epic *Pucelle ou la France délivrée* in 1656. Written a century before Voltaire's epic, Chapelain's work was meant to be a serious text, but some critics regarded it as mediocre: "Chapelain's thirty years of hard labour produced two sets of twelve cantos in alexandrines, some simply bad, some as hilarious as the worst Virey des Gravières,⁵¹ which Boileau uncharitably lampooned" (Michaud-Fréjaville 54). Known for his *L'Art Poétique*, Boileau challenges an author to write a better epic than Chapelain's. Voltaire accepts the challenge and spends thirty years on his *La Pucelle*, a mock epic that would ridicule Chapelain's epic poem.⁵²

Voltaire's response to Chapelain is no secret as he addresses the seventeenth-century author early in the opening canto:

⁵⁰ In a striking parallel, Voltaire attributes his work *La Pucelle d'Orléans* to a mock source l'Abbé Tritême. In ascribing his poem to an abbot, Voltaire, perhaps unintentionally, makes a connection to the Abbé d'Aubignac. My own interpretation of this mock source corresponds with Voltaire's depiction of corrupt clergy within the poem. If many viewed this text as scandalous, the fact that an abbot wrote it further indicates the Church's corruption.

⁵¹ Critic Ann Powers notes that Jean de Virey des Gravières was among the first to retell Jeanne's story in seventeenth-century France: "Virey des Gravières, a Normand country nobleman, wrote his *Tragedie de Jeanne Darques dite la Pucelle d'Orleans, Native du Village d'Emprenne, près Voucouleurs en Lorraine* in 1600. This play...was quite popular having eight printings between 1600 and 1626" (2).

⁵² Bettina Knapp reveals that Ariosto also greatly influenced Voltaire's epic: "A knavish, ultrasatiric travesty of Chapelain's epic glorifying the real Joan of Arc, Voltaire's *The Maid* was modeled on one of his favorite works, *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto" (61).

*O Chapelain, toi dont le violon
De discordante et gothique mémoire,
Sous un archet maudit par Apollon
D'un ton si dur a raclé son histoire,
Vieux Chapelain, pour l'honneur de ton art
Tu voudrais bien me prêter ton génie.* (I. 19-24, emphasis added).

At the first mention of Chapelain, Voltaire even includes a footnote for the reader to explain that Chapelain authored a famous poem about the *Pucelle*. In this note, he also mentions Boileau's distaste for the epic. In his typically sarcastic tone, Voltaire asks Chapelain to lend him his "génie" as he embarks upon his own epic retelling of Jeanne's story.

While Chapelain's text comprises twelve cantos and later, twelve additional cantos—as is customary for the epic—Voltaire's work deviates from the convention. Perhaps, since he writes a mock epic, the author sees fit to purposefully defy the epic expectations:

[it is surprising] given the strong classical bent of the author [Voltaire]:
[that] the number of cantos at no stage approximates to the hallowed
figure for the epic of twelve or twenty-four...the author has liberated
himself from the formal constraints of tradition in order to produce a
wholly personal work (Mason 99).

In Voltaire's structure of *La Pucelle*, it is difficult to give a definitive number of cantos, as there were many editions of the text. In fact, much controversy surrounded the numerous manuscripts that appeared as early as 1755. The 1755 Louvain version included fifteen cantos. Some of these pirated editions contained scandalous content which Voltaire denied as his own writing. He, thus, published an authorized version of *La Pucelle* in 1762 with twenty cantos, but a subsequent canto would later be included in 1773, bringing the total to twenty-one cantos. It must be said, however, that even with the publication of the authorized version in 1762, pirated editions continued to be published, many in London and Geneva. In her book *Joan of Arc in French Art and Culture (1700-1855): from Satire to Sanctity*, Nora Heimann addresses the debate that existed surrounding the manuscripts:

there was no consensus in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarding which of the many variants of this poem were autograph; and the controversy regarding which cantos were Voltaire's and which were merely mischievous perversions by his detractors and/or by unscrupulous publishers has endured to the present day (28-9).

Heimann also notes the text's propagation during and after Voltaire's lifetime: "the poem's proliferation in over 135 different illicit and authorized editions between...1755 and 1860" (14).

There was, however, a pivotal work published in 1970 in which Jerroon Vercruysse analyzed and compared the various manuscripts of *La Pucelle*. In his *Edition critique*, he provides a comprehensive introduction to the text where he eliminates a great deal of uncertainty about the questionable cantos. For my analysis in this chapter, I will thus use Vercruysse's edition⁵³ which contains twenty-one cantos.⁵⁴ As far as extant manuscripts, Vercruysse's findings reveal the popularity of Voltaire's text:

on ne connaîtra jamais sans doute le nombre exact de manuscrits de *La Pucelle*. Nous avons vu que Voltaire parlait de 6000 copies en septembre 1775...et Collé notait le mois suivant dans son *Journal*...qu'il y en avait deux mille à Paris...Un rapide tour de France révèle à lui seul l'existence d'une vingtaine de manuscrits. Notre enquête dans les principales bibliothèques occidentales et américaines nous en fait découvrir bien davantage (87).

In addition to the French manuscripts that circulated in the eighteenth century, Voltaire's work was also rapidly translated into other languages. Vercruysse notes that Germany produced the greatest number of translations (10), with half of them arriving during the eighteenth century. England's first translation (of 3) appeared in 1758 and others would follow over time: Dutch (3), Spanish (3), Italian (2), Portuguese (1), Romanian (1), and Russian (1) (Vercruysse 234).

⁵³ Vercruysse's work is part of a larger collection *Les Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, edited by Theodore Besterman. *La Pucelle* is Volume 7 in the series.

⁵⁴ See also Appendix B: Subsequent Versions of Voltaire's *La Pucelle d'Orléans* that offers a listing of Voltaire's manuscripts with their respective number of cantos. (Taken from Vercruysse's *Edition critique*, p. 23).

During Voltaire's lifetime,⁵⁵ there was a great shift in contemporary thought and writing. Following the seventeenth-century's focus on Classicism, the eighteenth century introduced the Age of Reason, a time when the individual was encouraged to reflect and question all that was considered unquestionable. In his article "What Was Enlightenment?," Lionel Gossman highlights the two-fold objective during this period: "Enlightenment involved a double movement: the exposure and elimination of error and the discovery and establishment of truth; criticism and invention. The operation of removing the scales from people's eyes...was fundamental" (488). With the idea of rationalism and uncovering truth came the obligation of reexamining every belief, concept, and institution that was thought to be absolute. For eighteenth-century France, this of course meant that the *philosophes* would challenge the ultimate authorities that ruled the land: the monarchy and the Catholic Church. Voltaire's disapproval of corruption points to a principal concern of the Enlightenment: "écrasez l'infâme." Some of the key players in the Enlightenment were Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Diderot, as well as other British writers such as Pope, Swift, and Locke. But Voltaire's influence upon the movement was undeniable, and Gossman gives the author much credit: "it should not be forgotten that the so-called *grand siècle* was largely an invention of Voltaire and the Enlightenment" (492). During this time, Voltaire and other writers began to experiment with new genres like the parody where authors could ridicule people, principles, and politics. They often wrote sarcastically, evident in Voltaire's *La Pucelle*.

⁵⁵ François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire was born in 1694 to bourgeois parents. During his lifetime, he was exiled for writings that were displeasing to the regent and later incarcerated at the Bastille. In 1734, he moved to Mme du Châtelet's estate in Cirey where he worked on *La Pucelle*. Voltaire wrote many of his works at Cirey and his companion kept hidden the most dangerous ones—among these, *La Pucelle*. Voltaire was inducted into the *Académie française* in 1764 and died in 1778 at the age of 83. Chronology was taken from Bettina L. Knapp's *Voltaire Revisited*, 2000.

As seen in the literature, this shifting in ideology brought with it a great shift in the idea of France as a nation. In England, theorist John Locke introduced the idea of a social contract whereby there is a supposed equality among citizens. Locke's political views were distinctive in light of the seventeenth century which looked to the monarch as the absolute authority. As Sarah Maza explains, "Locke...viewed the state and other formal institutions as contractual" (208). Moving from hierarchy to supposed equality during this century, the nation grew discontented with the monarchy. The unrest eventually culminated in the French Revolution of 1789 and the execution of King Louis XVI and his wife Marie-Antoinette, found guilty of treason.

Although Voltaire never witnessed the Revolution (he died in 1778), his writings reflect—and promote—the current shift that was happening in France. Voltaire's *La Pucelle* was no exception to this practice of reexamining established values and institutions, especially the stories believed to be true. His depiction of a tainted Jeanne challenges what was accepted as fact about the legendary figure. This author is exceptional in his negative treatment of Jeanne's story. Marina Warner mentions the "unique status as the only comic treatment of the legend of Joan of Arc—a light relief in the midst of all the solemnity about her—it is a wickedly funny, racy, bawdy, clever and skilful piece of mischief" (238-9). Others, however, took Voltaire's work more seriously—as profanation. Tony Tanner defines *to profane* as "to treat something sacred with irreverence or contempt, to defile or debase it" (116). Certain authors and critics felt that Voltaire's poem defiled a national heroine.⁵⁶ While they focus on the author's profanation of the blessed Maid, it seems that with time, their disdain would dissipate: "La mort de Voltaire et les conséquences intellectuelles de la Révolution furent sans doute les causes principales d'un revirement de l'opinion en faveur de son poème" (Vercruysse 192). His eighteenth-century

⁵⁶ In his introduction, Vercruysse gives an extensive treatment of *La Pucelle*'s reception. See VIII. *L'accueil*, pp. 177-220.

audience—like the critics—also gave the work mixed reviews: while some appreciated his light-hearted take on the historical figure, others took offense at his sarcastic tone. One such angry response in 1839 reads

Homage à la *chaste* Pucelle!
Honte éternelle au célèbre écrivain
Qui trempant dans la fange un pinceau tout divin
Profana sans pudeur une gloire si belle!
(Praise to the *chaste* Maid!
Undying shame to the famous writer
Who, steeping in mire a divine pen,
Shamelessly *profaned* such a beauteous fame!)⁵⁷
(Warner 238, emphasis added)

The reactions to Voltaire's text reveal a definite controversy in its acceptance by the public; but whether for or against, both sides were passionate about his scandalous rendering of the Maid. With all the controversy surrounding the mock epic, my treatment of *La Pucelle* will center on the national effects of such a work. In my examination of his popular *La Pucelle*, I propose to show that Voltaire's parody of Jeanne d'Arc is not so much an attack on the Maid herself, but rather a political commentary on the state of France. And in an innovative and surprising twist, I plan to show how Voltaire's mock epic can, in some ways, parallel Pisan's *Ditié* which praises Jeanne.

In contrast to d'Aubignac's representation of Jeanne as *hero*—a masculine figure endowed with powerful rhetoric—Voltaire chooses to focus on the ultimate symbol of femininity: Jeanne's maidenhood. His text *La Pucelle* centers on Jeanne's virginity as he challenges the legend surrounding the Maid's purity and pokes fun at her narrow escapes from sexual advances. Some of the most famous lines from the epic highlight Jeanne's feat of preserving her virginity for a year:

⁵⁷ These remarks, referring to Voltaire's work, were inscribed in *Livre d'Or*, a visitors' book placed in the D'Arc family home where thousands of pilgrims left their signatures. See Warner pp. 237-238.

Vous le verrez, si lisez cet ouvrage.
Vous tremblerez de ses exploits nouveaux,
Et le plus grand de ses rares travaux
Fut de garder un an son pucelage (I. 15-18).

Ignoring all the military accomplishments for which Jeanne is typically recognized, Voltaire emphasizes the safekeeping of the Maid's chastity. Just as Voltaire's Jeanne is not the Maid we anticipate from legend, the Maid's guide is not whom we expect. The author blatantly rewrites history that records the Maid's guides as Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, and Saint Margaret. Instead, the poet chooses the patron saint of France to lead Jeanne and portrays him in a light-hearted manner. Saint Denis does not fulfill the expectations of saintly behavior. Voltaire introduces him in the first canto where he witnesses the current unfortunate state of France:

Le bon Denis, prêcheur de nos aïeux,
Vit les malheurs de la France affligée,
L'état horrible où les Anglais l'a plongée,
Paris aux fers, et le roi très chretien
Baisant Agnès, et ne songeant à rien.
Ce bon Denis est patron de France (I. 206-211).

The saint sees a king who cares nothing for the sad condition of his domain; but instead, spends his time in bed, engaging in sexual relations. At the first mention of Denis, Voltaire also offers the reader a footnote explaining the saint's history: *un évêque de Paris...ayant été décapité, porta sa tête entre ses bras de Paris jusqu'à l'abbaye qui porte son nom*" (nt. 11). As I see it, in the Age of Reason, the headless patron--representing France--conveys Voltaire's view of an unquestioning public. It seems that Voltaire points out the need for France to reason and challenge the political system in order to bring about change to their current shameful monarchy.⁵⁸

Denis is an unusual saint and the author recognizes the unholy nature of Denis's calling when he admits that he is a saint by trade: "Je suis Denis, et saint de mon métier" (I. 315). One

⁵⁸ This point on the public's unquestioning role will be readdressed at the end of this chapter.

critic explains that Voltaire's saint does not live up to the true notion of sainthood: "[he is] a foolish man whose only saintly characteristics are that he lives in Heaven and has an ability to make magic. His language descends below the expected level of holiness" (Mason 98). The poet's frivolous treatment of Jeanne's saintly guide shows that even Denis--an unreasonable saint (headless in history)--realizes, by way of the disappointing king, that he must use a maiden to save France:

Or si *Charlot* veut pour une *catin*
Perdre la France et l'honneur avec elle,
J'ai résolu, pour changer son destin,
De me servir des mains d'une pucelle. (I. 326-29, emphasis added).

In referring to the king, Voltaire uses the pejorative *Charlot* and explains how the monarch is willing to risk losing the nation for his mistress Agnès Sorel. The author employs irony here to demonstrate that Denis must find a maiden to deliver the nation, as Charles has foolishly chosen a harlot, Agnès.

Denis's search for a maiden to rescue France from its disastrous condition turns the discussion towards Jeanne's virginity and the power assigned to chastity. First, the notion of virginity evokes images of purity and innocence. Historically, virginity was seen as a threat to evil; and thus, an effective weapon against the enemy. In his book *Virginitas: an essay in the history of a Medieval Ideal*, John Bugge discusses *Hali Meidenhad*, a thirteenth-century homily which explores female virginity. The treatise highlights the ultimate power that chastity has over demonic forces:

Hali Meidenhad also reasserts the fundamental importance of virginity in salvation history. The author says the devil so hates virgins because he knows it was through virginity he lost his sovereignty over the world...Similar statements occur in the saints' lives of *Seinte Iulienne* and *Seinte Marherete*. Virginity is the thing which causes the devils the most pain, and all the powers of hell are no match against it (112).

Not only does virginity inflict suffering upon the devils, but this virtue can also grant the individual physical strength. As a source of empowerment, resistance to sexual sin fortifies the virgin. Bugge verifies this notion of equating chastity and power:

what lay behind the invincibility of those heavenly hosts was the principle of sexlessness...The explanation is to be sought in the ancient belief, still in evidence among contemporary peoples at the level of folk lore, that abstention from sexual intercourse adds to one's might (49).

Jeanne, therefore, whose virginity and physical prowess equip her, seems to be the ideal candidate for France's salvation from the British. But what Voltaire does in his parody is to challenge the Maid's purity. To do so, he first rewrites Jeanne's lineage, making her the illegitimate daughter of a clergyman: "Voltaire distorts history by turning Joan into a stablemaid at a hostelry and by making her the daughter of a parish priest and a chambermaid" (Raknem 73). In reinventing Jeanne's parents, the author blatantly criticizes the clergy:

Jeanne y naquit: certain curé de lieu,
Faisant partout des serviteurs à Dieu,
Ardent au lit, à table, à la prière,
Moine autrefois, de Jeanne fut le père.
Une robuste et grasse chambrière
Fut l'heureux moule où ce pasteur jeta
Cet beauté qui les Anglais dompta.
Vers les seize ans en une hôtellerie (II. 32-40).

As if uprooting her family tree was not enough, Voltaire then questions Jeanne's status as the supreme French virgin when he recounts the Maid's narrow escape from rape and her subsequent bouts with sexual temptation. Marina Warner argues that Voltaire's focus on Jeanne's virginity serves to attack her character and thus her eligibility to fulfill her divine mission: "for all his trifling, Voltaire has seized upon the crux of the legend: that Joan's virginity was essential to her role of savior" (239). While this may be true that the two—purity and salvation—are strongly linked, I propose that Voltaire's obsession with her virginity serves a greater purpose. Rather

than disqualify her as savior, Jeanne's maidenhood, as I see it, is the symbol of France's purity/nobility which has become tainted. The institutions that personify France—namely the monarch and the church—which once stood for God's chosen king and divine justice are now corrupt, or at least, questionable.⁵⁹

Furthermore, the author reiterates the state's corruption by insisting that there are no more virgins in France. When Denis explains that he is in search of a maiden, Richemont responds that his attempts are futile in this country:

Monsieur le saint, ce n'était pas la peine
D'abandonner le céleste domaine
...
Un pucelage est une arme inutile.
Pourquoi d'ailleurs le prendre *en ce pays*?
Vous en avez tant dans le paradis!
Rome et Lorette ont cent fois moins de cierges
Que chez les saints il n'est là haut de vierges.
Chez les Français, hélas, il n'en est plus (I. 338-41, 345-50, emphasis added).

A humorous moment in Voltaire's burlesque comedy, this scene also provides a political commentary: France's incorruptibility is now extinct. In closing the first canto, Voltaire invokes the reader to find out for himself, lest he doubt the author. He implores his reader to reexamine the state to see if there be any *maiden*: "Ami lecteur, puissiez-vous en amour / Avoir le bien de trouver ce qu'il cherche" (I. 366-67).

With the hope of finding another maiden now lost, let us return to the issue of what I will call Jeanne's *tainted purity*. The author demonstrates Jeanne's uncleanness through her illegitimate birth, but he also suggests it through the Maid's first meeting with Saint Denis. At the moment Denis finds her, the saint arrives just in time to prevent Jeanne from being raped:

Denis courut, amis, qui le croirait?
Chercher l'honneur, où? dans un cabaret.

⁵⁹ After Jeanne d'Arc, another woman would personify France. In *The Twilight of the Goddesses*, Madelyn Gutwirth explains that Marianne "would become the emblem of the French Republic" (273).

Il était temps que l'apôtre de France
Envers sa Jeanne usât de diligence.

...

Et si le saint fût arrivé plus tard
D'un seul moment, la France était perdue (II. 70-73, 76-77).

Thus, from the beginning of her mission, Jeanne's purity is called into question. She is found in a cabaret on the verge of losing that which is most valuable to her calling. In this moment, however, the author is not concerned with the loss of Jeanne's maidenhood. Instead, he indicates that the destiny of France is at stake. The poet later reiterates this fact when he exclaims:

"Qu'elle portait dessous son court jupon / Tout le destin d'Angleterre et de France" (II. 93-4).

While this scene can be read as irony exemplifying the author's cynicism regarding all the stories of Jeanne's heroic purity, it also conveys the seriousness of the matter: that France may soon be lost if its citizens do not intervene.

In addition, the near-rape scene reiterates the notion of clerical corruption when we meet Jeanne's aggressor: the English monk Grisbourdon. Like Jeanne's father—who was a corrupt monk—the Maid's attacker is also a crooked clergyman:

Un cordelier qu'on nommait Grisbourdon,
Avec Chandos arrivé d'Albion,
Était alors dans cette hôtellerie.
Il aimait Jeanne autant que sa patrie.
C'était l'honneur de la penaillerie,
De tous côtés allant en mission,
Prédicateur, confesseur, *espion*
De plus, grand clerc en la sorcellerie (II. 78-85, emphasis added).

In a shocking description by Voltaire, Grisbourdon supposedly loves Jeanne as much as his own country. This statement indicates that his loyalty to England is no greater than that to a mere girl. The poet confirms this when he labels the monk "espion" (ln. 84). As a spy, Grisbourdon's obsession with the Maid may be seen as ultimate betrayal of the nation. Also quite telling is the fact that the monk's first love and devotion—which, we expect, should be to God—is completely

omitted. In fact, the author reverses expectations by informing the reader that Grisbourdon delves into the black arts. In her article, Gloria Russo examines how Voltaire's text demonizes the clergy:

Depicted repeatedly as Satan's agents, they [the clergy] assume the roles of seducer, conniver, tempter, and general reprobate. Outstanding among them is the English monk Grisbourdon who combines in his person lasciviousness, sorcery, and a multitude of devious tricks, cloaking them all under the guise of his ministry (52).

Accused of espionage and sorcery, Grisbourdon embodies deception. But here, the author quickly draws the focus back to Jeanne. At the mention of the monk's witchcraft, Voltaire offers a footnote to his reader as a reminder that the Maid too was burned as a witch: "La sorcellerie était alors si en vogue, que Jeanne d'Arc elle-même fut brûlée depuis comme sorcière, sur la requête de la Sorbonne" (nt. 5). It seems that Jeanne's holiness—like Grisbourdon's—is tainted with rumors of witchcraft. Thus, the author raises the question: is Jeanne superior to her British aggressor? Here, Voltaire employs a tactic not seen in previous Johannic texts we have examined. The author does not discriminate in criticizing the French along with the British. Unlike d'Aubignac (Pisan and many others) who only demonizes the English, Voltaire mocks his fellow countrymen alongside their British enemy.

Like Voltaire, Russo criticizes the clergy and maintains that the French monks are no better than the English monks. She feels, however, that they function simply as comic relief: "Not even the bumbling, but basically well-intentioned French monks, Bonifoux and frère Lourdis escape the stigma of their *confrères*...their very names indicate the poor, albeit humorous, esteem in which the author holds them" (52). This critique goes further to indicate that the French monks' shortcomings can be overlooked because of their nationality. Russo

asserts that being French—while it does not exempt them from ridicule—is their redeeming quality:

Apparently, *the saving grace for them is their nationality*; being French, they should figure among the heroes but their *allegiance to the church* precludes a total identification with the champions of right and relegates them to a neutral, in the sense of colourless, area between the forces of good and evil in which they are treated simply as humourous but inconsequential figures (52).

In light of Voltaire's text, Russo's comment on the monks' "allegiance to the church" is quite an exaggeration. Furthermore, in my reading, being French does not save them. They are just as guilty of deception as the English clerics. To say that French monks surpass the English simply because of their nationality seems an unlikely conclusion for Voltaire.

Like the monks' tainted character, Jeanne's own character is again called into question in the final canto. The virtuous maiden and savior of France shocks the audience when she promises her virginity to Dunois. So as not to jeopardize their mission, Jeanne will sleep with the French commander once they have triumphed over the English:

Je vous promets que vous aurez ma fleur.
Mais attendons que votre bras vengeur,
Votre vertu sous qui le Breton tremble,
Ait du pays chassé l'usurpateur.
Sur des lauriers nous coucherons ensemble. (XXI. 91-95).

This vow to Dunois suggests that a victory for France will mean a personal loss for Jeanne: her virginity. In addition, the irony surrounding Dunois cannot be overlooked here. The Bretons tremble at Dunois's *virtue* (ln. 93), yet he is the one who will deflower the Maid.⁶⁰ And in the end, Voltaire assures the audience that Jeanne fulfills her promise: "De son serment accomplissait les lois, / Tint sa parole à son ami Dunois." (XXI. 459-60).

⁶⁰ Voltaire provides an interesting contrast here to d'Aubignac, whose Jeanne is seduced only by the British Warwick and revered by her French comrades. In the mock epic *La Pucelle*, Jeanne faces sexual advances from the British, the French Dunois, and even her donkey.

Immediately after the reader learns that Jeanne kept her word to Dunois, a significant event takes place at the end of the epic. In the final lines, Lourdis announces to the English that Jeanne is a maid: “Lourdis, mêlé dans la troupe fidèle, / Criait encor: Anglais! elle est pucelle!” (XXI. 461-62). I propose that this ending to Voltaire’s epic plays a key role in the author’s political commentary. After Jeanne sleeps with Dunois, the French lie about her virginity to the enemy. This deception serves to intimidate the English. In the last lines, when Lourdis proclaims Jeanne’s maidenhood in order to ensure a French victory, he demonstrates the perpetuation of myth on behalf of the monarchy. One critic describes this moment as symbolic of other propagated myths: “The final irony of *La Pucelle* is that just when Jeanne has given her ‘fleur’ to Dunois...the myth and the imposture go on just as systems of theology and blind admiration for military exploits will” (Mason 107). Consequently, Jeanne’s actual virginity holds less importance than her countryman’s ruse of her virtue. Nora Heimann reiterates this notion when she explains that “all that matters is the preservation of the *appearance* that she is virtuous” (41, emphasis added). Voltaire ends his parody *La Pucelle* by suggesting to the reader that Jeanne--and by extension, France--is not who they always believed her/it to be.

Even before her vow to Dunois, the Maid encounters an unexpected sexual temptation when she is seduced by her winged donkey. In this scandalous scene, Jeanne--after hearing the donkey’s passionate speech filled with flattery--wrestles with his proposition: “Jeanne sentit une juste colère: / Aimer une âne et lui donner sa fleur!” (XX. 244-45). She finally rejects the donkey’s advances when she explains to him “Trop de distance est entre nos espèces; / Non, je ne puis approuver vos tendresses” (XX. 281-82). Voltaire, however, highlights the donkey’s wisdom and persistence as he responds to Jeanne: “L’âne reprit: l’amour égale tout” (XX. 284). Nonetheless, it is not the author’s use of anthropomorphism that infuriates some readers of *La*

Pucelle. The fact that a talking donkey exists in the story is not as disturbing as the fact that Jeanne almost succumbs to bestiality through which she would lose her legendary virginity. In his article “Love and War: Comic Themes in Voltaire’s *Pucelle*,” William Calin notes that in other drafts of the text the donkey does, in fact, molest Jeanne: “In a suppressed version of the last canto the ass convinces Joan with an obscene gesture and deflowers her; in the official version he is stopped in time” (44). In both versions, however, the idea that Jeanne even contemplates such an illicit affair serves the author’s purpose of raising questions about Jeanne’s moral character and supposed virginity. Furthermore, as Jeanne is equated with France, this potential bestiality reiterates the nation’s susceptibility to corruption.

In addition to the sexual temptations, Voltaire employs yet another tactic to diminish the integrity of the Maid: implying that Jeanne is proud of her virginity. Early in the epic, when Charles asks her if she is a maiden, Jeanne insists upon examination to prove her virginity:

Jeanne, écoutez, Jeanne, êtes-vous pucelle?
Jeanne lui dit: ô grand sire, ordonnez
Que médecins, lunettes sur le nez,
Matrones, clercs, pédants, apothicaires
Viennent sonder ces féminins mystères (II. 401-05).

Not quite as the reader would imagine, the immodest Maid proposes for any and all officials to verify her purity. Once this is done and upon being authorized a maiden, Jeanne expresses her great satisfaction: “L’esprit *tout fier* de ce brevet sacré” (II. 424, emphasis added). With the word *brevet*, Voltaire insinuates that Jeanne displays her maidenhood like a badge of honor.

Nora Heimann also comments on the Maid’s eagerness to proclaim her innocence: “Joan of Arc sought to assert her virtue as a virgin through the name she chose for herself, and through allowing numerous physical examinations of her intact purity” (39). As this critic notes, Jeanne’s physical inspections are only one indication of the Maid’s alleged pride. The name

Jehanne la Pucelle in history was a self-proclaimed title; and some interpret this designation as the Maid's bragging about her virginal state. With regards to the medieval ideal, this arrogance taints Jeanne's purity. In his essay on virginity, Bugge explains how pride taints model virtue:

[there is a] frequent association of virginity with the virtue of humility. Augustine, of course, had viewed pride as the motive for the Fall and the chiefest of the deadly sins, and it is entirely consistent that the perfection of virginity should have come to be associated very closely with pride's opposite...*pride makes virginity useless and vain*, and this emphasis increases during the course of the Middle Ages (115, emphasis added).

Voltaire's depiction of a proud Jeanne thus discredits her virginity. In highlighting her pride as grounds for disqualifying the Maid, Voltaire's parody also foreshadows an actual historical concern. When the Church looked at Jeanne's accomplishments, they disapproved of the Maid because of her uninhibited manner:

Indeed, the Maid's insistence on her sexual virtue was vociferous enough to warrant criticism centuries later during the scrutiny of her life in the last phase of her consideration for canonization. During the investigation into her saintly virtues in Rome (1892-1903), the Promoter of the Faith Augustine Caprara criticized the Maid's immodest 'boasting' of her virginity and her challenges to her detractors to inspect her (Heimann 39).

Facing allegations of pride, the Maid is left in a precarious position. She must defend her purity while, at the same time, being careful that her defense avoid a prideful rhetoric which would jeopardize--and nullify--her virtue.

Looking at the *Pucelle*: What's in a Name?

Leaving Voltaire's text for a moment, I turn to the historical accounts surrounding the Maid. Whether or not she was a virgin, Jeanne is still recognized as the Maid of Lorraine. As Jeanne's self-proclaimed title became an issue for her critics, further examination into the significance of this choice and Jeanne's virginal status is needed here. Why does she select *Jehanne la pucelle* and what is known about Jeanne's physical body? In *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*, Marina Warner takes a close look at certain physical characteristics

and how they affected her image as *pucelle*. According to Jean d'Aulon's⁶¹ testimony, the Maid consumed very little food and did not menstruate (Warner 21). Warner discusses the toll this diet took on Jeanne's body and how anorexia along with the Maid's anxiety in battle could have likely stopped her feminine cycle: "there is evidence that women under stress can stop menstruating. Female troops...sometimes suffer from amenorrhea" (21). Thus, Jeanne as *la Pucelle* takes on greater significance here. The Maid is not only a virgin in the sense of abstaining from sexual intercourse; but her physical condition resembles pre-pubescence. This exceptional state would have seemed miraculous: "for them [her contemporaries], her condition was magically holy. To be a woman, yet unmarked by woman's menstrual flow, was to remain in a primordial state...before sexual knowledge corrupted her" (21-2). A pre-pubescent Jeanne brings new light to our understanding of her maidenhood. In an exceptional state, the Maid is completely pure, a holy being: untouched by man and unaffected by womanhood.

At this point, let us consider the origin and meaning of the term *pucelle*.⁶² Warner explains the history and connotation associated with the designation:

In Old French, it [*pucelle*] was the most common word for a young girl; in Middle French, *damoiselle* began taking over. By Joan's day *vierge* was also sometimes added to *pucelle* to clarify the meaning of chastity; this shows the underlying ambiguity of the word...the inference of virginity became firmer through the Middle Ages, especially after *despulceler*, meaning 'to deflower,' was introduced in the twelfth century (22-3).

But Warner uncovered an interesting detail in the actual definition of the term Jeanne chose:

"*pucelle* means 'virgin,' but in a special way, with distinct shades connoting youth, innocence

⁶¹ Jean d'Aulon was the Maid's squire who testified during Jeanne's Rehabilitation trial.

⁶² In my research of *pucelle*, I found no mention of the masculine term *puceau*. This omission perhaps relates to what Heimann explains is the basis of virtue and its gendered discrepancy: "Male virtue in the eighteenth century, as during the Middle Ages, was read in the *public sphere* as responsibility, probity, courage, and valor; in the realm of sanctity, it was defined by the wisdom, faith, leadership, and/or suffering endured by the male hero or saint. By contrast, female virtue (for saints, monarchs, and commoners alike) was cast in the *private sphere of virginity and chastity*, or fidelity and fecundity in marriage, whatever else the heroic woman's accomplishments might be" (42-3, emphasis added).

and, paradoxically, nubility...It denotes a *time of passage, not a permanent condition*. It is a word that *looks forward to a change in state*” (22, emphasis added). With a pre-pubescent Jeanne in mind, this definition further justifies her choice of *pucelle*. It is a fitting description for Jeanne on the verge of womanhood. I propose that this term takes on greater significance in light of Voltaire’s mock epic that treats the Maid as losing her virginity. Voltaire’s heroine does not remain in her pre-pubescent and virginal state. In the poem, the Maid leaves this immature state and develops into womanhood. Unlike previous Johannic texts, Voltaire portrays a newly sexualized Jeanne and thus, captures the true essence of *pucelage*. Furthermore, I suggest that Voltaire’s political commentary again motivates the focus on Jeanne’s maidenhood. What is at stake here is not just the Maid’s purity as a *pucelle*; but as *pucelle* designates being on the verge of change, Jeanne’s maturity and transformation become the issue. Implied here is the author’s desire on a grander scale for France’s own enlightenment as she too is on the verge of change—a literal changing of the state: revolution.

Voltaire and Pisan: A Surprising Parallel

To my knowledge, a comparative study of Voltaire and Pisan’s poetry on Jeanne d’Arc has never been done. Perhaps most avoid such a comparison since the two works--on the surface level--appear to have nothing in common but the protagonist. Pisan’s *Ditié* is the first poem in praise of the famous maiden, and Voltaire’s text is perhaps the most scandalous work on Jeanne and one many regard as blaspheming a national hero. In this section, however, I propose to reveal the common bonds that link these two poems written three centuries apart. While Pisan creates an icon, Voltaire seems to demystify the Maid’s legend in an attempt to “*écrasez l’infâme*.” But as we have seen thus far, what may be (mis)construed as Voltaire’s iconoclasm only supports the author’s intention to highlight the current political situation in a changing France: a warning that seems to echo the fifteenth-century poet Pisan.

To begin this discussion, I turn to the central canto in Voltaire's *La Pucelle*. Located at the center of the text, canto XI depicts a remarkable scene in which the English raid a convent and Jeanne arrives to combat the enemy. This moment bears a striking resemblance to the opening verses of Pisan's *Ditié* in which the author describes herself as "having wept for eleven years in a walled abbey" (ln. 1-2). In the *Ditié*, the poet's grief has lasted for *eleven* years—the same number as Voltaire's canto⁶³—and she too awaits the coming of the Maid. A striking parallel also emerges in the author's self-involvement. From the poet's first words 'Je, Christine,' Pisan inscribes herself in the text. As developed in the first chapter, Pisan's self-referral and personal commentary throughout the poem reveal the author's undeniable presence in the text. Similarly, in the first canto, Voltaire begins his mock epic with a personal admission to the reader: "Je ne suis né pour célébrer les saints: / Ma voix est faible, et même un peu profane" (I. 1-2). Like Pisan, the author establishes his voice from the first moment and Voltaire even forewarns the reader that his work on Jeanne d'Arc will differ from others that celebrate the Maid. Voltaire describes his voice as 'faible,' but the irony here is that his literary success—including his poem on the Maid—bestows upon him a strong voice. Pisan begins her poem after a lengthy period of grief in the abbey, but the news about Jeanne liberates Pisan from her sadness. Likewise, in Voltaire's epic, the Maid's arrival to the convent signals the nuns' rescue as she routs the English enemy.

This episode in canto XI reveals another parallel at the heart of the authors' works: criticism of the monarchy. In Pisan's text, she expresses her betrayal by the incompetent Charles who has fled Paris in haste (ln. 4-7). Jeanne's arrival restores hope to the author. Pisan attributes all the French victories to the God-send Jeanne, not to the king whose abilities she

⁶³ For this comparison, I am using the official version of *La Pucelle* in which this canto is XI. As previously mentioned, the number of cantos changed with various editions of the poem; and the convent scene may have also appeared as canto IX or X in other versions.

doubts and whom she advises. Likewise, Voltaire's poem depicts an inept monarch—who is in bed with Agnès—and a convent that is saved by France's true hero, Jeanne. From the beginning, Voltaire openly gives his opinion of the dastardly Charles:

...je suis plus roi que lui.
Un tel discours n'est pas trop héroïque,
Mais un héros, quand il tient dans un lit
Maîtresse honnête, et que l'amour le pique,
Peut s'oublier, et ne sait ce qu'il dit.
Comme il menait cette joyeuse vie,
Tel qu'un abbé dans sa grasse abbaye (I. 176-82).

Like Pisan, Voltaire sees the king as incapable; but his critique of Charles also slights the clergy. According to the poet, Charles's frivolous life resembles that of an abbot. It seems no one escapes Voltaire's mockery, yet the Maid appears the most noble of the dishonorable group.

As both Pisan and Voltaire depict Jeanne as the primary heroic figure who far surpasses Charles, Voltaire offers a *revealing* portrayal of the Maid in canto XI when she rescues the nuns. At this perilous moment when Jeanne must fight the English who are raiding the convent, the Maid is nude. In a bold move--again, to discredit Jeanne's chastity--Voltaire writes the Maid in a vulnerable state—without her armor—and implies that her nakedness is a more effective weapon against one Englishman who is distracted by her beauty:

Vous voici, Jeanne, au milieu des infâmes
Qui tourmentaient ces vénérables dames.
Jeanne était nue; un Anglais impudent
Vers cet objet tourne soudain la tête,
Il la convoite; il pense fermement
Qu'elle venait pour être de la fête (XI. 123-27, emphasis added).

In this moment, the Englishman is mesmerized at the sight of Jeanne's nude body. While one often imagines the Maid dressed in male attire, Voltaire emphasizes Jeanne's female body devoid of masculine covering. Wielding her sword, Jeanne strikes the voyeur as he runs towards her. Philip Stewart comments on Jeanne's unexpected nudity:

Whereas elsewhere in the poem this paragon of chastity is made to appear an ambiguous transvestite, her femininity is advertised in the most flamboyant fashion, so that in the eyes of at least one Englishman she is merely a party to the general orgy going on around her (512).

In losing her male armor, Jeanne exposes herself to the enemy, but, as I see it, still remains a powerful force. While one soldier fixates on Jeanne, the other Englishmen are preoccupied with the nuns and do not notice Jeanne's arrival. Her nakedness, thus, becomes a fitting 'disguise' to vanquish the unsuspecting English. On a metaphorical level, Voltaire's work exposes the true Jeanne to the reader.⁶⁴ He disarms the audience as a disrobed Jeanne battles in the convent. Again involved in a struggle to preserve virginity, Jeanne must not only save herself but also the nuns who are being violated by the English. Voltaire comments that even the convent could not preserve their maidenhood: "Ce saint autel, asile redouté / Sacré garant de votre chasteté" (XI. 35-6). This sacred place in which one's maidenhood should be the most secure becomes the site of its destruction. I would also argue that the author makes another political commentary here: corruption is present within the sacred walls of the Church and Voltaire's duty is to expose it, much like he does our heroine.

While Pisan does not criticize the Church in the *Ditié*, she does make religion a central issue. As discussed in my first chapter, Pisan references the Crusades and sets up the notion of a holy war. In *La Pucelle*, Voltaire also introduces this concept in denigrating the English and their savage methods of waging war. The violent raid on the convent in canto XI only proves the English to be unscrupulous in their pursuit of victory. The English penetrate the sacred walls of the convent and steal the nuns' innocence:

...dessus ces murs bénis.
Voilà les loups au milieu des brebis.

⁶⁴ One could also apply a feminist reading here. No longer covered in masculinity, the Maid's feminine essence still portrays her as a victorious warrior—perhaps, even more powerful than *with* her male armor. This depiction starkly contrasts with d'Aubignac's Jeanne who is only empowered when clothed in masculine rhetoric and attire.

Dans le dortoir, de cellule en cellule,
A la chapelle, à la cave, en tout lieu,
Ces ennemis des servants de Dieu (XI. 25-8).

In this brutal invasion, the English defy the general rules of warfare and do not respect this holy place. They desecrate the convent by making it a scene of rape. Voltaire quite literally demonizes the English in their attack: “Et qu’on prendrait, dans les fureurs étranges, / Pour des démons qui violent des anges!” (XI. 61-2). In her article “Sexual roles and religious images in Voltaire’s *La Pucelle*,” Gloria Russo refers to this scene which sets up the binary of good versus evil:

the English soldiers bent on rape are so intent on their purpose that they could be mistaken [for demons]...Those who take what is not rightfully theirs are classified as devils; those who struggle against them as angels. Thus the demarcations are clearly set; angels against devils, heaven against hell, God against Satan, and incidentally, the French against the British (33).

But it seems that there is more to the holy war than what Russo sees. It is not simply heaven against hell; but, as I will argue, Voltaire’s holy war becomes a conflict between heavenly forces. After Jeanne rescues the nuns from British invaders, two saints engage in a physical combat.

Later in the same canto, Voltaire depicts another scene of the French versus the English; but this *holy* war takes on new meaning as it is a battle fought in heaven. The struggle involves the patron saints of the warring countries: Saint Georges of England and Saint Denis of France. When Georges challenges Denis to a heavenly duel, the author describes Denis’s response:

Nous qui devons l’exemple aux nations,
Nous décrier par nos divisions?
Veux-tu porter une guerre cruelle
Dans le séjour de la paix éternelle?
Jusques à quand les saints de ton pays
Mettront-ils donc le trouble en paradis? (XI. 259-64).

After Jeanne wages war in the convent, war breaks out between the two saints. Far from setting an ‘example for the nations’ (ln. 259), the saints imitate the behavior of mere mortals. Just as Jeanne delivers a vicious blow to the nose of her English aggressor (XI. 131-32), Saint Denis cuts off Saint Georges’s nose (XI. 315). Saint Georges, however, quickly retaliates by cutting off Denis’s ear (XI. 321). The heavenly combat is finally stopped when the archangel Gabriel intervenes and reprimands the saints for their earthly and barbaric behavior:

Que vois-je ici? cria-t-il en colère,
Deux saints patrons, deux enfants de lumière,
Du Dieu de paix confidents éternels,
Vont s’échiner *comme de vils mortels*! (XI. 335-38, emphasis added).

Gabriel requires the saints to repair the damage and reconcile with each other. This battle shows they cannot rise above the earthly conflict; but instead, these celestial beings are doomed to human weakness: “Tant les saints ont la chair ferme et dodue” (XI. 369). What is more important, however, is the fact that the author equalizes the French and the English in his holy war.

Thus, if the warring patron saints reenact the current earthly battle, what does Voltaire suggest to the reader concerning the countries’ citizens? In the first canto, the poet states that the French are religious as opposed to their English enemy: “Mes chers Français seront tous catholiques, / Ces fiers Anglais seront tous hérétiques” (I. 232-33). But it seems that this designation is an arbitrary assignment he will make in his epic. In truth, rather than preferring the French over the English—as Pisan does in her holy war—this author indicates the base equality of the two sides.

Yet another striking similarity between Voltaire and Pisan’s poetry is the rewriting of the Maid’s ultimate fate. As discussed in chapter one, Pisan uses her prophetic voice to give Jeanne a future filled with victorious accomplishments. While Voltaire’s work is not as overtly

optimistic--the Maid, after all, loses her famous maidenhood--the author does purposefully avoid Jeanne's death at the stake. I propose that this is a conscious choice by the author who does burn other notable figures in his Dantesque hell. In canto V, the malicious monk Grisbourdon, who attempted to rape Jeanne, descends into inferno where he recounts his adventures to the devils. Among those found in Voltaire's hell are kings, philosophers, and writers:

Tu sais, lecteur, qu'en ces feux dévorants
Les meilleurs rois sont avec les tyrans.
...
Vous y grillez, sage et docte Platon,
Divin Homère, éloquent Cicéron,
Et vous Socrate, enfant de la sagesse (V. 76-77, 84-86).

Here, in a parody of the monarchy, the reader anticipates the kings' fate, but the inclusion of such philosophers and writers may surprise the audience. Why would Voltaire—a *philosophe* himself—burn the famous Plato, Socrates, and Cicero? Furthermore, the author lists Homer among the doomed. Would not Homer be a model for this eighteenth-century author of epic? For Voltaire, however, his duty in the Enlightenment is to question accepted beliefs; thus, these men—though great thinkers—represent philosophic and literary ideals that should be reexamined, or put through the fire. In addition to these secular figures, the church officials--as one might expect of Voltaire--are not exempt from the flames of hell:

Il [Grisbourdon] voit partout de grands prédicateurs,
Riches prélats, casuistes, docteurs,
Moines d'Espagne, et nonnains d'Italie (V. 138-140).

Here, the author reiterates the corruption of the Church as we find its leaders destined to eternal punishment. In hell, Grisbourdon is among his fellow clerics—from Spain and Italy—who are condemned by the poet. The illustrious titles and ecclesiastical service do not save them. Voltaire proves that their deceptive nature and fraudulent deeds lead to the same destiny as that of evil tyrants.

Amidst the burning, the author saves Jeanne from the fire. While many consider Voltaire's epic a desecration of Jeanne's heroism, the author seems to prefer the Maid over other despicable characters in *La Pucelle*. In spite of mocking the Maid's legendary purity, the poet does consider her to be above the shameful king and clergy and, therefore, he spares Jeanne from their ominous fate. Even though the Maid does not burn in the epic, Voltaire's text *La Pucelle* is not so fortunate. Bettina Knapp records that the work was burned in Switzerland:

When a pirated version of *The Maid* appeared in Geneva in 1755, Voltaire not only disclaimed authorship but even asked the ruling executive and legislative body to repress such a villainous work. Ironically, *The Maid*, Joan of Arc was again burned—this time not in the flesh, but in paper replica, on August 5, 1755⁶⁵ in Geneva. (61).

Considering the reception of Voltaire's mock epic, it is evident that the negative criticism surrounding the work was a concern for the author. Perhaps in an attempt to save face, the poet condemns other authors for profaning her memory. In the last canto, he addresses such writers:

Profanateurs indignes de mémoire
Vous qui de Jeanne avez souillé la gloire,
Vils écrivains qui du mensonge épris
Falsifiez les plus sages écrits,
Vous prétendez que *ma pucelle Jeanne*
Pour son grison sentit ce feu profane.
Vous imprimez qu'elle a mal combattu,
Vous insultez son sexe et sa vertu.
D'écrits honteux compilateurs infâmes,
Sachez qu'on doit plus de respect aux dames (XXI. 20-29, emphasis added).

As Voltaire denigrates the 'vils écrivains' who defile the Maid, the poet also uses irony to poke fun at his own work. Thus, there is a sense of doubleness to Voltaire's irony. On the one hand, the poet acknowledges that he is among those 'profanateurs;' but also, Voltaire reprimands those who attack his work on the Maid. Keeping in mind that others had printed pirated editions of his

⁶⁵ Vercruysse, however, offers a different date, saying it was burned on August 4, 1755 (p. 177).

work, we recognize that the author also speaks in earnest when he claims the heroine as his own: ‘*ma pucelle Jeanne.*’

While the protagonist escapes the fire in both Pisan’s and Voltaire’s poems, her safety in the public opinion is—(pardon the expression)—*at stake*. As Voltaire feared the ramifications of his work on Jeanne d’Arc, he strove to defend his epic against such opposition. Similarly, this apprehension parallels the fifteenth-century poet who expressed concern for the reception of her work. Early on in the *Ditié*, Pisan fears that some may consider her poem displeasing:

Raconté soit en toute place,
Car ce est digne de memoire,
Et escript, à *qui que desplace*,
En mainte cronique et hystoire! (ll. 53-56, emphasis added).

Like Voltaire, she assumes that she will face negative criticism but reassures the reader of the poem’s value. At the end, she reiterates this view when she writes in the final stanza:

...Mais j’entens
Qu’aucuns se tendront mal contents
De ce qu’il contient, car qui chiere
A embrunche, et les yeux pesans,
Ne puet regarder la lumiere (ln. 484-488).

Kennedy and Varty translate the previous citation as “But I believe that some people will be displeased by its contents, for a person whose head is bowed and *whose eyes are heavy cannot look at the light*” (50, emphasis added). Pisan suggests that her critics are those who are literally unenlightened. They cannot appreciate her text because their heads are bowed in a submissive, or oppressed, position. I believe Voltaire would say the same of his own detractors.

Voltaire’s Jeanne: Profanation or Pro-Nation?

This chapter began with the assertion that *La Pucelle* functions as a political commentary. The mock epic is not only iconoclastic; but rather, I would venture to say that Voltaire actually defends Jeanne d’Arc. Next to the corrupt clergy and useless monarchy, the Maid remains the

hope of France. The poet ultimately restores faith in the legendary hero, even though he questions the miraculous stories surrounding Jeanne, namely her virginity. As I have suggested, Voltaire offers Jeanne's tainted purity as symbolic of the corroding innocence of France.

Further proof of Voltaire's support for the historical maiden can be found in his *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIII* (1756). Published shortly after the first pirated edition of *La Pucelle* appeared in 1755, this text gives an overview of French history. In examining the period of Charles VII, Voltaire discusses Jeanne d'Arc and exercises poetic license in his description of Jeanne, changing her age to twenty-seven and asserting that she was not a shepherdess. Despite these discrepancies from historical records, the author deems her courageous and avows she was a virgin: "Elle eut assez de courage et assez d'esprit pour se charger de cette entreprise, qui devint héroïque...Elle fut examinée par des femmes, qui ne manquèrent pas de la trouver vierge" (408). With regards to her death, Voltaire reveals his sympathy for the Maid.⁶⁶ In his essay, the author shows that although tried and executed by the English, Jeanne was betrayed by her own country:

Enfin, accusée d'avoir repris une fois l'habit d'homme, qu'on lui avait laissé exprès pour la tenter, ses juges, qui n'étaient pas assurément en droit de la juger, puisqu'elle était prisonnière de guerre, la déclarèrent hérétique relapse, et firent mourir par le feu celle qui, *ayant sauvé son roi, aurait eu des autels dans les temps héroïques, où les hommes en élevaient à leurs libérateurs*. Charles VII rétablit depuis sa mémoire, assez honorée par son supplice même (410, emphasis added).

Intimating that Jeanne was robbed of the accolades she deserved, Voltaire faults the *French* for not rightfully honoring the Maid.

⁶⁶ Dominique Goy-Blanquet maintains that Voltaire defends the heroine: "Another of Voltaire's texts seldom quoted in his defence contributed no less than his poem to Joan's reemergence around the end of the eighteenth century, and her construction as a national heroine in the course of the nineteenth. His bright and perceptive pages...in *Essai sur les mœurs*...lay the basis for a secular apology for Joan" (26-7).

In attacking the king, the author's political critique in *La Pucelle* has itself been subject to criticism. Some view his comments on the monarchy as anti-national. In "Love and War: Comic Themes in Voltaire's *Pucelle*," William Calin raises the notion of nationalism:

Although Voltaire laughs at the French, he also mocks their hereditary enemy, the English, and his poem treats in passing cowardly Italians. The author of *La Pucelle* is not anti-French *per se*, but *against all nationalism and all exclusive patriotic sentiment*. (36, emphasis added).

Calin asserts that "Voltaire's poem is indeed *non-patriotic*, immoral, and anti-religious" (45, emphasis added). Calin's assessment raises the question: what defines patriotism? According to Webster, a *patriot* "loves and zealously supports his country." In the same manner, *nationalism* demonstrates "devotion to one's nation [and] its interests" (Webster). With these terms in mind, I propose Voltaire's text resists Calin's interpretation as anti-nationalist.⁶⁷ In writing a political commentary, the author expresses supreme concern for his nation. After all, the author does not malign the notion of monarchy; instead, he articulates his disdain for the corruption within the institution. In her book, Nora Heimann confirms this reading of Voltaire:

As with all of his satire, Voltaire's mock epic employs humor as a vehicle for a provocative political critique of what the author believed were the root causes of injustice and intolerance in his own day; that is, the corruption of the French monarchy and the Catholic Church (32).

Moreover, although satirical in nature, *La Pucelle* not only reflects Voltaire's own national interests, but it also warns his fellow citizens of the current political situation. As we have seen, the author personally addresses the reader throughout the text. He is aware of his audience and his provocative work encourages us to consider national affairs. Thus, in advocating the reader's involvement, I would classify Voltaire's text as ultra-patriotic.

⁶⁷ I also take issue with Calin's view of *La Pucelle* as 'anti-religious.' Throughout the text, Voltaire incorporates many Biblical references—as Pisan does in the *Ditié*. His treatment of the corrupt clergy does not preclude his usage of the Scripture. But as this chapter focuses on national issues, I will reserve this argument for another place.

Considering the author's nationalist aims, one may still have difficulty reconciling his purpose with the depiction of a tainted national hero. For Voltaire, however, the Maid is the vehicle through whom the poet can highlight his concern for the nation. What appears to be a personal attack on her integrity is actually a critique on the Maid's legendary status and France's blind investment in it. Her virginity is not the issue at hand for Voltaire; but rather, it is the widespread acceptance of her legend that troubles the poet. In her article, Dominique Goy-Blanquet affirms Voltaire's underlying approval of Jeanne:

Without lending any credence to her heavenly mission, he shows true sympathy for the heroine as a victim of ignorant fanaticism and cynical politics. Her lies and their exploitation by these forces need not lessen her achievements. It is not the truth of the miracle that matters, but the fact that it was generally believed (27).

For the author, the Maid had reached an unquestionable status, much like the monarchy and the Church; and his duty is to challenge this pristine reputation. His frustration stems from the fact that society as a whole readily accepts information (and institutions) as truth; and he mocks their naivete. In the poem, the author demonstrates the public's gullible nature when Frère Lourdis tells an Englishman about the Maid:

...Anglais, il faut me croire:
Elle est pucelle, elle aura la victoire.
L'homme est crédule et dans son faible coeur
Tout est reçu; c'est une molle argile.
Mais que surtout il paraît bien facile
De nous surprendre et de nous faire peur (IV. 57-62).

Voltaire demonstrates in this passage that public opinion is easily swayed.⁶⁸ Like the cliché “seeing is believing,” the author points out that for the general public, *hearing* is believing. The

⁶⁸ In her book *Voltaire Revisited*, Bettina Knapp also alludes to the author's attack on public opinion: “Via burlesque, Voltaire fulfilled his goal of destabilizing collective opinions...and encouraging new scrutinies of longtime heroes and heroines” (65-6). It seems, however, that Voltaire focuses not only on heroes; but he also targets larger problems such as the Church and the monarchy.

English need only hear from Lourdis that Jeanne is a maiden for it to surprise or inspire fear in them.

Based on this assumption of their susceptibility, Voltaire appeals to his own audience in much the same manner. The poet does not simply create a story to be seen on the page, but he admits that his work is meant to be heard, rather than read. In a footnote to the reader in canto II, Voltaire explains that he rhymes more for the ear for than the eye:

NB. Lecteur, qui avez du goût, remarquez que notre auteur qui en a aussi et qui est au-dessus des préjugés, rime toujours pour les oreilles plus que pour les yeux. Vous ne le verrez point faire rimer *trône* avec *bonne*, *pâte* avec *patte*, *homme* avec *heaume*. Une brève n'a pas le même son et ne se prononce pas comme une longue. *Jean* et *chant* se prononcent de même (II. nt. 13).

Furthermore, this notion of hearing the text proves to be more than just a reader's note. Haydn Mason, one of Voltaire's biographers, reports that *La Pucelle* was read aloud in the evenings at Mme du Châtelet's estate Cirey (105).⁶⁹ As the critic Vercruysse maintains, performing the text seems a fitting objective for Voltaire's mock epic: "*La Pucelle* gagne à être entendue à table, au salon ou sur la place plutôt qu'à être lue dans le cabinet du travail. Et c'était bien l'intention du poète de divertir et de fustiger en riant plutôt que d'écrire une oeuvre savante ou aristocratique" (139). It is through this entertaining performance⁷⁰ that Voltaire provokes his audience to reflect on the more serious matters at hand.

The eighteenth-century author uses Jeanne to spotlight the royal and clerical corruption that pervaded France during the period. Voltaire is not the first (nor the last) to appropriate the Maid's story for political purposes. Pisan started the trend in the fifteenth-century. Voltaire's

⁶⁹ Bettina Knapp also confirms this claim that Voltaire read *La Pucelle* aloud to his guests: "Wisely, she [Mme du Châtelet] ensconced it [*La Pucelle*], but she could not prevent its author from reading it aloud to those who visited Cirey" (60).

⁷⁰ The emphasis on *spectacle* parallels d'Aubignac who preferred that his play be performed on stage, rather than read silently.

mock epic *La Pucelle* does, however, stand apart from its predecessors (and successors) in that it coincides with the most significant political change in French history—the revolution:

La contestation d'une Jeanne d'Arc guidée par la providence n'est donc point nouvelle au XVIII^e siècle, et la thèse de l'intrigue politique, chère à Voltaire, avait d'illustres défenseurs avant lui. Mais l'ampleur que le siècle des lumières donnera à ce mouvement n'a d'égale dans aucune autre période (Vercruysse 130).

Thus, without question Voltaire's text plays an integral part in the study on Jeanne and national identity.

Chapter 4

Preoccupied with Jeanne d'Arc in Postwar France:

Jean Anouilh and the Frustration of Liberation

“L’illustre Jeanne d’Arc a prouvé qu’il n’est pas de miracle que le génie français ne puisse opérer lorsque l’indépendance nationale est menacée.”
--Napoléon Bonaparte

“Jeanne vint au monde à cheval,...Déjà neuf mois avant sa naissance, les maigres règles de la création furent prises de bouleversement...Jeanne naît d’un cri d’oiseau.” -- Joseph Delteil

Jeanne's Revival and World War II: "Veni, Vidi, Vichy"⁷¹

Early in the twentieth century, World War I caused great turmoil in Europe from 1914-1918. Granting Jeanne saintly status in 1920 is perhaps due in part to the aftermath of war-torn Europe and France's need for a heroic military and national figure. Although the canonization process was begun in the late nineteenth century, the following tumultuous years would see the Maid's sainthood realized. Shortly after her canonization, Europe faced the wrath of World War II from 1939-1945. During this war, the Germans occupied France from 1940-1944, thus taking a devastating toll on the nation of France.

To continue my transhistorical study, we find that the theme of revolution returns to the forefront in the minds of the French almost two hundred years after Voltaire. While Voltaire's *La Pucelle* preceded the famous French Revolution of 1789, Anouilh's drama *L'Alouette* (1953) appeared shortly after France had endured German Occupation from 1940-1944. The German army entered Paris on June 14, 1940, where the government had fled the capital city four days earlier. At this moment, the French formed two factions--led by Pétain and de Gaulle--and both would look to Jeanne d'Arc for inspiration. The Vichy régime set up a new French government (in the spa town of Vichy) led by the famous World War I hero Philippe Pétain. This group proposed an armistice to the Germans which was signed on June 22, 1940 at Compiègne and "three days later France was formally under German occupation" (Kedward 2).⁷² In his book *Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944*, H. R. Kedward paints a picture of what Occupied France looked like in 1940:

Those returning in July to their homes in the occupied zone found all tricolour flags removed from public buildings and replaced by Nazi

⁷¹ The expression "Veni, Vidi, Vichy" is quoted from Neville Lytton's *Life in Unoccupied France* (1942) but cited in Kedward's book *Occupied France: Collaboration and Resistance 1940-1944* (1985).

⁷² Here, I must mention the significance of Compiègne: the place where the French submitted to the Germans was also the location of Jeanne's capture by the English in 1430.

insignia, street directions in bold German type, a curfew imposed from eight o'clock in the evening to six in the morning, total absence of French cars and lorries, and groups of Germans everywhere... (5).

Initially, the occupied zone consisted of “the whole of the north and west of the country and extended down the Atlantic coast to the Spanish border” (Kedward 2). But by November 1942, this had changed and “the occupation itself was extended to the whole of the country” (16).

Under the Vichy régime, Pétain and his government collaborated with the Germans during the Occupation while promoting their own ideology of a *révolution nationale*. Kedward explains that the Pétainists sought to renovate French identity: “the priority in the minds of most Vichy ministers and Pétain himself was the creation not of a new Europe but a new France” (22). Their values were summed up in the slogan *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (23). The focus on work, family, and country was a reaction to the previous revolution’s cry of *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*:

thinkers and writers...articulated a spiritual challenge to Revolutionary France. Against the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity they preached an organic society in which people respected their place, in which discipline at work and the preservation of rural life dictated the rhythm of change, and from which flowed stability, a flourishing family life and the greatness of the nation (22).

Despite this totalitarian ideal, Pétain’s government garnered much support because of his own popularity.

In the 1940s, the formation of a new France hinged upon a new hero, Philippe Pétain. Many supporters were loyal to him personally rather than to his régime: “First there was Pétain, then there was Vichy. This was the order of events, and this remained the order of people’s allegiance” (Kedward 17). After World War I, Pétain’s fame expanded and with it, “an illusion of infallibility...enabling him to promote himself as the embodiment of France” (18). This war hero seemed more trustworthy than typical politicians, and the people’s devotion grew to epic

proportions. Kedward conveys the magnitude of Pétain's status when he comments: "This was no less than the creation of a myth" (18).

Loved by the people and a champion on the battlefield, Pétain qualifies as a national hero. Indeed, his mythic status can be seen to parallel Jeanne's. The Marshall and his strategists must have realized the benefit in comparing him to the newly 'sainted' Jeanne and therefore, embraced the association. In effect, Jeanne's story is used to promote another myth, as her legend helps to mythologize Pétain. Kedward mentions that Pétain's régime in its focus on training French youth used this correlation: "teachers were expected to orientate pupils towards the epic qualities of duty and sacrifice *embodied in the figure of Pétain by comparing him to Joan of Arc*, and by singing the national youth hymn, 'Maréchal, nous voilà' " (30, emphasis added). The new government appropriates Jeanne for the purpose of endorsing Pétain while also training youth for service to their country. For a brief moment, Pétain brought a unifying force to France: "The cult of the Marshal was the nearest France came to unity in defeat. It cut across political divisions, it linked generations, and it appeared to bring town and country together" (19). In a striking parallel, Pétain's celebrity lasted about as long as the Maid's military career—two years. During that time, Pétain's status rose to new heights, and the French held him in such high regard as to remind one of a monarch:

for two years the mythic structure of Pétainism held up well, and popular discontent was directed primarily against the ministers thought to be misleading the Marshal. The separation familiar to historians of the *ancien régime* reemerged. There was an absolute monarch who could do no wrong, and there were ministers behind the throne among whom evil flourished (Kedward 31).

It seems that Vichy's ideology of a 'national revolution' had led the French government back to Versailles, a monarchical state reminiscent of the absolutist King Louis XIV. In fact, one of Pétain's top ministers, Pierre Laval, iterated this notion but emphasized that the Marshall's

authority exceeded that of the famous *Roi Soleil*: “Laval told Pétain that he had more power than Louis XIV, and Pétain liked to quote that fact in ministerial meetings” (22). There were some, however, who contested Pétain’s popularity and power.

Another faction emerged during World War II known as the Free French movement which was headed by Charles de Gaulle. This group, the *Forces Françaises Libres* (FFL), consisted of those who chose to fight against the Axis powers and resisted collaboration with the Germans and the Vichy régime.⁷³ General de Gaulle based his government-in-exile out of London where he broadcast speeches to Occupied France by way of BBC radio to encourage fellow Frenchmen to resist the Vichy régime. At this moment within France, another group known as the French Resistance emerged and included those who held similar values to de Gaulle in their opposition to the Nazi forces. This faction--composed of small groups of people, clandestine publishers, and escape networks to help soldiers--began as a small rebellion against the Vichy government: “Early resistance was almost entirely a matter of secret initiatives by individuals and small groups, who made up only a very small percentage of the population” (Kedward 46-7). Kedward also points out that most of these first resisters had no knowledge of de Gaulle’s aim: “many of the pioneers of revolt *inside* France in the first six months after the defeat were unaware of each other’s existence, and often knew nothing of de Gaulle’s initiative” (48). Thus, their reactions against the German occupation remained disconnected from each other. With the opposing views during World War II, the French split into two main factions: the Collaborators headed by Pétain and the Free French led by de Gaulle. As previously described, the Vichy régime saw itself as establishing a new national identity through the *révolution nationale*. The Free French, however, viewed their Pétainist opposition as

⁷³ The Free French Forces eventually became the Fighting French Forces (*Forces Françaises Combattantes*) when de Gaulle changed the name in 1942.

treacherous to the true nation of France: “There was now a new word in the French language, ‘les collabos’, used in every clandestine publication to designate those who negotiated with the Germans as traitors” (Kedward 39). In 1942, outside supporters of France—such as England and the United States—had become Gaullist. But within France, the nation was divided: “there ensued an armed struggle between Resistance and Collaboration within France...and in the last 18 months of the occupation this struggle took on increasingly the forms of civil war” (Kedward 60). Much like Pétain, de Gaulle believed he was chosen to lead the French during this tumultuous period and saw himself as “the agent of French destiny” (68). Like his opposition, General de Gaulle felt it beneficial to associate himself with Jeanne d’Arc, the famous hero who saved the nation. One way in which de Gaulle accomplished this was to establish the Cross of Lorraine as the symbol of Free France, displayed on French flags⁷⁴ and soldiers’ helmets. De Gaulle’s tactics were more subtle than Pétain’s; but both political factions, in their efforts at myth-making, appropriated Jeanne as a vehicle for prominence. War posters for both sides featured the Maid as symbolic of France:

The struggle between French political parties to acquire prescriptive rights over *Joan of Arc as a symbol of patriotism and national unity...flares up again in the conflict between Pétain and de Gaulle during the Second World War*. This battle of symbols is epitomized in the clash between the German propaganda poster featuring the prayerful figure of the saint at the stake, superimposed on images of Rouen burning under Allied bombs, and the Gaullist poster in which the image of Joan’s martyrdom is associated with the cross of her home province of Lorraine, the emblem of the Free French movement (S. Beynon John 10, emphasis added).

Undoubtedly, Jeanne served as a historical icon for both parties and the Maid’s image represented hope for France. Life as the French had known it prior to the Occupation had been destroyed, and they had to adapt to a new reality under Hitler’s control. The liberation of France

⁷⁴ See also Appendix C: Image of de Gaulle’s Free French Flag that features the Cross of Lorraine.

finally began on June 6, 1944 – the famous D-day, where Allied forces invaded Normandy.

After the liberation, de Gaulle's own fame grew as he was celebrated as France's newest hero:

For the external Resistance the Liberation was the moment when *de Gaulle, the symbol of protest and resistance, became the embodiment of power*. His personal triumph was extraordinary, and when he walked the length of the Champs-Élysées on 26 August, the day after Paris had been finally liberated...the acclamations of the crowd sealed the epic position which he had won in the history of France (Kedward 78, emphasis added).

The General's political rival, however, faced a more dismal fate. After the war ended, Marshall Pétain, along with other Vichy leaders, was tried and condemned to death. While many were executed, Pétain "was spared execution due to [his] old age" (79). Pétain's memory was, however, tainted and the once great leader of France was "subjected to national degradation which included [his] removal from the Académie Française" (79).

From my transhistorical viewpoint, I find it understandable that both French factions during World War II appropriate Jeanne in their political strategies. I argue that she is the ideal hero in a time of national crisis and we have already seen how she has been appropriated over the centuries for political purposes: both to unify the nation and to instigate change. To capitalize on Jeanne's triumphant role in the Hundred Years War is to recognize that she represented France victorious over foreign invasion in a time when the nation was divided: a scene that foreshadows what is happening in World War II. The Collaborators of the Vichy régime resemble the Burgundian faction in Jeanne's day who allied with the English enemy. Likewise, the Free French and all who resisted the German forces parallel the Armagnacs who refused British rule. But there is a disparity that occurs in Occupied France of the 1940s. One cannot talk about World War II without discussing the Holocaust. Under Hitler and the Nazi forces, France--and Europe--experienced a purging of those who did not fit the requirements of the Aryan race. The Führer sought to banish all the Jews under his "New Order" and he began mass

deportations in 1942. This tragedy complicates the problematic task of considering national identity and looking at the Other in twentieth-century France. Along with expelling the outside enemy, Occupied France now suffered ethnic cleansing from within its borders.⁷⁵

Johannic Invasion of the French Stage

Having examined Jeanne's role in constructing both Pétain and de Gaulle as national heroes, now let us consider how this political appropriation affected the Maid's literary depiction after World War II. Works on Jeanne d'Arc flourished throughout the twentieth century. From literary texts—plays, novels, poetry—to visual art such as war posters, paintings, and statues, the Maid became a popular subject for many artists and, especially, the star of a new medium: the cinema. For my purpose here, I will limit my focus to Jeanne's literary depictions.⁷⁶ The list of written texts that reference or feature the Maid is too long to enumerate here; but two of the most famous Johannic writers during the twentieth century are George Bernard Shaw, whose play *Saint Joan* (1924) was a huge success, and Charles Péguy, who wrote many works on the Maid. Both of these authors, however, wrote early in the century, and for my study, I choose to examine a postwar French perspective on Jeanne, as Jean Anouilh tells it in his drama, *L'Alouette* (1953).⁷⁷

Not only did works on Jeanne flourish, but the French theatre thrived during the Occupation. Although Paris was in the occupied zone, many theatres remained open.⁷⁸ In his 1949 article "The Theatres of Paris during the Occupation," Leo Forkey looks back on the

⁷⁵ This xenophobic notion of a purified France resurfaces later in the ideas of the Front National under Jean-Marie Le Pen who appropriates Jeanne to symbolize and promote a pure French society. This idea will be explored further in the conclusion.

⁷⁶ For a more complete look at Jeanne's depictions in the twentieth century, see Nadia Margolis's book *Joan of Arc in History, Literature, and Film: A Select, Annotated Bibliography* (1990).

⁷⁷ Although many dramatists wrote on Jeanne d'Arc before or during World War II, Anouilh's play appears after the war. His drama, thus, offers us a unique perspective of a time when France had to rebuild national identity after German occupation.

⁷⁸ Leo Forkey reports that by the end of 1940, "some thirty-three theatres in Paris were presenting plays" (299).

previous decade as a golden age of theatre even though they faced obstacles such as censorship and physical difficulties. Here, I must reemphasize the fact that the Vichy government was reminiscent of the seventeenth century when the absolute king controlled all and Richelieu's *Académie française* governed language and literature. During the twentieth century, however, the roles had reversed. The Germans and the Vichy régime imposed the literary restriction, and the *Académie française* was now opposed to the notion of censorship: "During the first year of the occupation, *Tartuffe* was forbidden in the non-occupied zone...The French Academy, in the person of Abel Hermant, was also in revolt against this censorship" (Forkey 300). With the Maid as a prominent figure in their political strategy, the Vichy government staged many Johannic plays during the occupation:

The Vichy influence could be seen in the theatre...in a series of plays centering around the life and time of Jeanne d'Arc. Péguy's *Jeanne d'Arc*, as well as Bernard Shaw's *Sainte Jeanne* were presented...The theatre in the non-occupied zone was limited largely to Molière and variations of the Jeanne d'Arc theme (302).

Other dramas on Jeanne appeared at this time: Paul Claudel's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, and Claude Vermorel's *Jeanne avec nous* (John 12). Aside from the Johannic theme, dramatists found other myths, legends, and historical accounts to create intrigue on the stage. Some of Anouilh's other plays reflect this notion: *Médée*, *Eurydice*, and *Antigone* among others. Forkey comments on this phenomenon during the occupation:

Myths, legends and chapters from history dominated the theatre. Authors sought inspiration in periods of grandeur...The popularity of the myth and legend might also be accounted for by the fact that they represented order, stability and tradition in a period of disorder, instability and political chaos (303).

And as I have asserted, Jeanne's legend was particularly inspiring to the 1940s French audience in that she represented triumph over foreign invaders.

Even before Anouilh wrote his own version of the Maid's story in 1953, he began to stand out as a French dramatist during the occupation. Forkey notes his extraordinary ability:

The best plays of the occupation years were written by playwrights who only continued to follow the natural evolution of their talents, and this applies particularly to Jean Anouilh and Henry de Montherlant. Both were already writing before the war, and neither was inspired directly by the course of historical events (304).

Anouilh's purpose was to remain distant from politics, but other playwrights and intellectuals took a deliberate political position. In 1942, for example, several individuals--including Jean-Paul Sartre--created the *Front National du Théâtre*: "this organization became a resistance 'cell,' and actively collaborated with clandestine publications, distributions of leaflets and other resistance activities" (Forkey 304). Their pro-active approach to the political situation is evidenced on "July 14, 1943, when a shower of tracts of the Front National fell on the spectators in all the theatres of Paris during the performances" (304). During this period when the cinema lagged and the theatre thrived, one may wonder about the reason for its enduring popularity. Charles Méré asserts that in 1941, theatre was a reassuring medium because it was both current and timeless: "Le théâtre est l'image des temps dans lesquels nous vivons. Il exprime les faiblesses et la grandeur d'un peuple" (Forkey 299). Thus, the theatre reflected the current hardships while it paradoxically provided an escape from the situation into myths and legends from the past, and the public continued to support the theatre during the difficult war years: "in spite of these adversities, the population often waited in long lines at the ticket offices, groped their way at night with flash-lights to the entrances, and the theatre prospered" (301).

Jean Anouilh's Postwar Jeanne

During this time when the French theatre flourished, the playwright Jean Anouilh met with much success. Born in 1910 near Bordeaux, Anouilh wrote his first full-length play at the age of sixteen. The author took a job in an advertising agency before becoming the secretary to

actor-director Louis Jouvet at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées in 1931. Leading a rather private life, Anouilh continued to write dramas, and his work found success not only in Paris but also in London and New York. The dramatist classified his many plays into several different categories: *pièces noires*, *pièces roses*, *pièces brillantes*, *pièces grinçantes*, *pièces baroques*, *pièces secrèt[e]s*, and *pièces farceuses*. In addition, the playwright produced the *pièces costumées*, or historical plays, of which *L'Alouette* is an example. Also, in this group are the plays “*Beckett* (1959) [that] relates the tragic friendship between Henry Plantagenet and [Thomas à] Becket; [and] *La Foire d'empoigne* (1962) [that] deals with Napoleon and Louis XVIII” (104). Throughout the course of his life, the dramatist wrote more than forty plays. In 1987, he died in Switzerland at the age of 77.

One of Anouilh's greatest successes was his production of *Antigone* (1942), a *nouvelle pièce noire*, which became popular in Occupied France in 1944. Although the reclusive dramatist claimed he took a neutral position in politics, many interpreted this work as criticizing the Vichy régime: “For many, Antigone symbolized the anti-Nazi Resistance movement; she was a glorious heroine for having said ‘no’ to Creon, the symbol of an external order unjustly imposed” (22). It seems that his heroes, as seen also in *Becket*, “clearly take the extremely conservative position of non-compromise” (22). After his success with *Antigone*, Anouilh got involved in a film production about Jeanne: “the legend was to be revived in the most graphic form when, in 1952, Anouilh was involved in dubbing the Rossellini/Ingrid Bergman screen version of Claudel's *Jeanne [d'Arc] au bûcher*” (John 14). With this latest project, Anouilh was encouraged to pen his own drama on the Maid when a Jesuit priest remarked “Justement, Jeanne est l'Antigone chrétienne” (14).⁷⁹ Aside from the several Johannic dramas previously

⁷⁹ It is interesting to note here the correlation between Antigone and Jeanne. Antigone also dies as a virgin and for political reasons.

mentioned, S. B. John states that there were “two plays by French contemporaries of Anouilh which immediately preceded his own: Jacques Audiberti’s *Pucelle* (1950) and Thierry Maulnier’s *Jeanne et les juges* (1950)” (13-14). Perhaps all of these factors led to Anouilh’s text:

the accident of being involved in the Ingrid Bergman film, the challenge offered by other treatments of the legend, the spell of those powerful associations linking Joan of Arc with the national crisis of 1940-1944, all impelled Anouilh toward writing his own ‘Saint Joan’ (John 14).

Although the playwright insisted that he was not political in his art, I propose that *L’Alouette* offers a strong political commentary. I will argue here that Anouilh’s drama reflects the disenchanted French public who has lost faith in the government. In his depiction of the Maid, we learn to trust only the individual who is true to himself.

The play *L’Alouette* appeared in Paris in 1953⁸⁰ and was first performed on October 14, 1953,⁸¹ at the Théâtre Montparnasse-Gaston Baty. The play was directed by Marguerite Jamois, and actress Suzanne Flon played the leading role. One source tells us that the drama had an extensive run of 608 performances (Kelly 58). The play, translated by Christopher Fry,⁸² opened in London in May of 1955 where it played 109 shows, and in New York, *The Lark* was adapted by Lillian Hellman, and the show ran for 229 performances. After its run on Broadway, there was also a television production of the play in 1957 by Hallmark Hall of Fame. Among Anouilh’s contemporaries in France, the play met with success. In Sartre’s journal *Les Temps Modernes*, Renée Saurel wrote a theatre review in November 1953 after the play first appeared on the Parisian stage, claiming that “*L’Alouette* est fort bien jouée” (956). Saurel also compares

⁸⁰ *L’Alouette* was also published later in 1960 in the collection *Pièces costumées*.

⁸¹ There is a discrepancy here concerning the date of the opening performance. Kelly offers October 16, 1953 as the play’s first show.

⁸² On a personal note, I must warn the reader that Fry’s English translation (1955) condenses and omits certain scenes from Anouilh’s original text.

Anouilh's hero to some of his previous characters: "La Jeanne d'Arc de M. Anouilh est une Jeanne pour bal costumé. Il y a en elle un peu de la Sauvage, un peu d'Eurydice et surtout beaucoup d'Antigone" (955). In addition, the reviewer comments on the author's neutral political position in the drama: "c'est l'habileté mercantile à contenter tous les publics, le *couplet* à la gloire de Pétain aussi bien qu'à celle de la Résistance" (955). This favoring of both sides seems to neutralize the author's position; and I argue that not choosing one over the other perhaps reflects the author's disapproval of both sides. His neutrality can be seen early on as the first words in the stage directions are "un décor neutre" (9). Thus, Anouilh's stage quite literally reflects the playwright's stance during this postwar production.

To better understand Anouilh's depiction of Jeanne, I feel a glimpse at the broader picture of twentieth-century French drama is in order. In a period of French drama dominated by the Absurdist, *L'Alouette* reflects some stylistics of the *anti-théâtre* but also sets itself apart from the new conventions of the dramatic genre. Pirandello's plays helped inaugurate this new tradition of *anti-théâtre*, and his works appeared early after World War I: *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) and *Tonight We Improvise* (1930). Thomas Bishop relates how the trend spread and became popular during Anouilh's lifetime: "starting with a very small public, the new theater caught on quickly throughout the 1950s" (1010). Playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, with his work *En attendant Godot* (1952), and Eugène Ionesco, who penned *Le Rhinocéros* (1959), leave their mark on this age of absurdist theatre. Dramatists chose to focus on themes such as solitude, death, frustration, and the futility of life. Their plays were typically described as *anti-pièces*, and although playwrights did not set specific criteria for the new theatre, they all purposefully avoided the accepted conventions of theatre: "they do all share a deeply felt revolt against realistic conventions and a tendency toward more primitive forms of

nonliterary spectacle such as farce, puppet shows, cabaret, ballet, pantomime” (Bishop 1010).⁸³

Rejecting the realistic play, new dramas frequently left the audience to draw their own conclusions:

A realistic drama poses a theatrical problem and then moves on to its resolution. In the antirealistic new theater, it is not so much a matter of *what* happens (even if often very unexpected things happen), but rather the possible *meaning* of what is happening. The progression of events is not logical and sequential, but arbitrary and beyond the realm of causality (Bishop 1010-11).

In addition to the non-sequential actions--quite evident in *L'Alouette*--the absurdist plays often emphasized the notion of a repetitious cycle where there is no finality. The angst of the characters quickly spread to the spectator who felt trapped in a space filled with nonsensical dialogue and without hope of resolution or *dénouement*. Although Anouilh's style is somewhat different, his plays are definitely influenced by his innovative contemporaries. *L'Alouette* exemplifies certain characteristics of the Absurdist movement, as the play lacks a logical sequence of events. Anouilh's work, however, also distinguishes itself from the new practices of theatre by incorporating a 'happy ending.'

One stylistic device worth examining is the format of Jean Anouilh's text. His play lacks the expected divisions into acts and scenes.⁸⁴ *L'Alouette* flows from beginning to end without interruption by the playwright. The lack of scenic divisions, however, gives a false sense of fluidity to the text which appears to ignore the use of a chronological time frame. Anouilh's drama aims to present Jeanne's trial to the audience but does not hesitate to revisit scenes from the past. One such example of the illogical structure is near the end at Jeanne's death when the scene abruptly returns to Charles's coronation. Just as Jeanne is about to be burned, Beaudricourt runs onto the stage to stop the action and insists that they reenact the scene at

⁸³ It is ironic that this theatre – founded in its revolt against convention – became the new French tradition.

⁸⁴ Textual citations from *L'Alouette* will thus be indicated by page number.

Reims: “On ne peut pas finir comme ça, Monseigneur! On n’a pas joué le sacre! On avait dit qu’on jouerait tout! Ce n’est pas juste! Jeanne a droit à jouer le sacre, c’est dans son histoire!” (226). Here, we get the impression that the characters themselves—not the playwright—determine the “order” of the drama as they dictate which scene will follow.⁸⁵

A striking feature of Anouilh’s drama is the framework in which his characters stage a performance of Jeanne’s story. The “play within a play” scenario is apparent from the beginning when the stage directions read:

La scène est d’abord vide, puis les personnages entrent par petits groupes...En entrant, les personnages décrochent leurs casques et certains de leurs accessoires qui avaient été laissés sur scène à la fin de la précédente représentation, ils s’installent sur les bancs dont ils rectifient l’ordonnance (9).

As one critic, Pronko, described the drama, it’s as if we are attending the actors’ rehearsal (156) and can see the many mistakes that should have been corrected before the show’s performance. The actors skip from one scene to the next as evidenced by the death-coronation sequence; and occasionally, the characters—as actors—get confused. Near the beginning when the Inquisitor asks Jeanne if she believes herself to be in a state of grace at this moment, she is unsure how to answer: “A quel moment, Messire? *On ne sait plus où on est. On mélange tout. Au commencement quand j’entends mes Voix ou à la fin du procès*” (29, emphasis added). If the actors themselves are lost in the story, this has an effect on the audience. We as spectators can no longer escape from reality and be caught up in Jeanne’s story. Rather, we are constantly reminded that we are viewing a theatrical production. This practice of forcing the audience into reality was common among Absurdist drama. The audience’s constant awareness of the characters as actors contributes to an overall feeling of frustration as it eliminates the “magic” of

⁸⁵ This element of disorder creates a stark contrast with d’Aubignac’s drama *La Pucelle d’Orléans*. This notion will be explored at the end of this chapter.

theatre and raises the question of “what is real” for the spectators. The characters/actors break the fourth wall by revealing their likeness to the audience. As they break down the comforting barrier between them and us, the boundaries between the actors’ fiction and our own reality break down. This Brechtian notion of questioning reality frustrates the audience as they ask themselves “what makes these characters/actors different from me.” In this experience, we the audience become aware that “reality” is something we create and for which we are responsible. It is a self-conscious theatre in which the actors take control of the play.⁸⁶ As Jeanne is lost in knowing which scene they are enacting and how to answer the Inquisitor’s question, the spectator also experiences this feeling of uncertainty. Absurdist employed this technique of alienating the audience for a specific purpose:

The author deliberately keeps the audience on the outside, disoriented, incapable of identifying with characters who cannot be placed in a ‘situation’. On discovering that the rational structures they had thought to be operative in life are illusory, *the spectators are finally confronted with the irrational element of their own individual existence* and of existence in general, of the human condition (Bishop 1011, emphasis added).

In this realization, the spectacle becomes a political theatre. As seen in existentialist thought, this key element manifests in Anouilh’s drama as his work points to the importance of the individual and his personal responsibility for his actions. The playwright assures the audience that Jeanne’s heroism lies within her and, as Cauchon explains, emerges without God: “Dieu s’était tu depuis l’arrestation de Jeanne...*Mais c’est dans cette solitude, dans ce silence d’un Dieu disparu, dans ce dénuement et cette misère de bête, que l’homme qui continue à redresser la tête est bien grand. Grand tout seul*” (76-77, emphasis added). This notion of an individual hero appears earlier in the drama when Jeanne discusses the French commanders with Beaudricourt.

⁸⁶ As the drama unfolds on the stage, the characters remember Jeanne’s actual story and change the course of events. In changing the direction of the play—from the stake to the coronation—the characters act as surrogates for the audience, remembering the story as it should be. Furthermore, their actions indicate the power of legend.

The Maid explains that the downfall of these men who try to imitate the legendary heroes that were masters of single combat:

La Hire, Xaintrailles, de bons taureaux furieux, ils veulent toujours attaquer, donner de formidables coups d'épée *dont on parlera dans les chroniques; c'est des champions de l'exploit individuel*, mais ils ne savent pas se servir de leurs canons et ils se font toujours tuer, pour rien, comme à Azincourt...Tu comprends, mon petit Robert, la guerre, ce n'est pas une partie de balle au pied, ce n'est pas un tournoi...Il faut gagner. Il faut être malin" (65-6, emphasis added).

It seems that Jeanne offers strategic advice about what it takes to win a modern war. She explains that warfare is no longer about the heroic acts of the individual warrior like Roland, but instead one must use cannons and be clever in order to triumph.⁸⁷ The irony, however is that Jeanne remains the exception in that she is the individual warrior who will be written about in the chronicles of history.

In this discussion of modern warfare, Anouilh's drama stands apart from previous texts in this study in that it does not invoke the notion of holy war. While others chose to portray the French as God's chosen people, this dramatist depicts God as removed from the situation. The previous citation describes him as "Dieu disparu" (77). Anouilh also asserts that the notion of God is not unique to the French. Perhaps to reflect the public's disillusionment after war's devastation, Anouilh puts forth the concept that all factions have their own god whom they believe is on their side. For instance, when Charles teaches Jeanne to play cards, he instructs her that there is one card that is higher than the king: the ace. Jeanne likens the ace to God; but Charles points out that there is an ace for each suit:

L'as, c'est Dieu si tu veux, mais dans chaque camp. Tu vois, as de coeur, as de pique, as de trèfle, as de carreau. Il y en a un pour chacun. On n'en sait pas long, à ce que je vois dans ton village! Tu crois donc que les Anglais, ils ne font pas leurs prières aussi bien que nous? Tu crois donc qu'ils n'ont pas Dieu, eux aussi, qui les protège et qui les fait

⁸⁷ Also, in light of France's and England's devastation in World War II, there is irony here about *winning* a war.

vaincre?...Dieu est avec tout le monde ma fille. C'est l'arbitre et il marque les points. Et, en fin de compte, il est toujours avec ceux qui ont beaucoup d'argent et de grosses armées. Pourquoi voudrais-tu que Dieu soit avec la France, maintenant qu'elle n'a plus rien du tout? (119-120).

Through Charles, the playwright voices the frustration of the French who feel hopeless and as though God abandoned them. I propose that Anouilh puts forth a paradox concerning the role of God. He is absent and man is alone ("silence d'un Dieu disparu"), but God is also omnipresent ("Dieu est avec tout le monde"). This conflicting notion that God is with everyone and no one relates the frustration of a nation who is struggling to recover from German occupation.

To take this one step further, Anouilh introduces a new concept concerning God's enemy. The playwright informs us that man--not the Devil--opposes the Church. The Inquisitor speaks to Jeanne during the trial and he clarifies this idea:

Il lui [à l'Inquisition] arrive parfois de s'armer contre un empereur, elle [l'Inquisition] déploie d'autres fois le même appareil, la même vigilance, la même dureté contre un vieux savant en apparence inoffensif, un petit pâtre perdu au fond d'un village de montagne, une jeune fille...Elle [l'Inquisition] sait reconnaître et ne pas sousestimer son ennemi, où qu'il se trouve. Et son ennemi n'est pas le diable, le diable fourchu pour enfants turbulents que Messire Promoteur voit partout. Son ennemi, son seul ennemi, tu viens, te dévoilant, de prononcer son nom: c'est l'homme (148-49).

The Church targets man as their primary enemy and the Church's focus becomes silencing the infidels. Thus, Jeanne's alleged sorcery gives them a reason to pursue her. Furthermore, the notion of the Church's witch-hunt would also strike a chord with the modern spectator who experienced the Holocaust. During the Occupation, Kedward records that furthermore, besides the purging of Jews, there was a "hunt for communists thought to be behind every local disturbance" (65). After the liberation, the Resistance itself searched for any collaborators left in the region. Thus, this concept of an incessant witch-hunt for the treacherous in Jeanne's day

resembled recent history. In a scene where the Inquisitor addresses the Maid who will not renounce her actions, the playwright predicts that the witch-hunt will continue for centuries:

Les mots qu'ils rediront encore dans des siècles, avec la même impudence, car *la chasse à l'homme ne sera jamais fermée*...Si puissants que nous devenions un jour, sous une forme ou sous une autre, si lourde que se fasse l'Idée sur le monde, si dures, si précises, si subtiles que soient son organisation et sa police; *il y aura toujours un homme à chasser quelque part qui lui aura échappé, qu'on prendra enfin, qu'on tuera* (176-77, emphasis added).

Not only does he declare man as God's enemy, but the Inquisitor proclaims that the Devil is an ally of the Church:

Le diable est notre allié. Après tout, c'est un ancien ange, il est de chez nous. Avec ses blasphèmes, ses insultes, sa haine même de Dieu, il fait encore acte de foi...L'homme, l'homme transparent et tranquille me fait mille fois plus peur (175, emphasis added).

The choice of the word *ally* is also significant considering the politics surrounding the play.

Taking into account the current situation, this reference to the Devil as an ally perhaps alludes to the English. Historically and traditionally, the French viewed England as their enemy, yet the British served as their common supporter against Hitler in twentieth-century France. The playwright also incorporates other comments throughout the text which point to the current postwar sentiment in 1950s France. In a discussion between Jeanne's judges, for example, we detect the allusion to contemporary politics:

C'est pourquoi mes assesseurs et moi-même nous nous efforcerons jusqu'au bout de sauver Jeanne. Quoique nous ayons été des *collaborateurs sincères du régime anglais* qui nous paraissait alors la seule solution raisonnable, dans le chaos...Nous, nous étions dans Rouen *occupé* (74, emphasis added).

To Cauchon's account of collaboration with the English enemy, Warwick then replies, "Je n'aime pas le mot « occupé » (74). At this moment, it is clear that the terms *collaborateurs* and *occupé* would resonate with Anouilh's audience, still haunted by the memories of German

occupation and the Vichy government. Finally, Jeanne's discussion with the Inquisitor of her deliverance carries with it political overtones. The Maid relates that her voices told her she would be delivered. The Inquisitor mocks Jeanne, explaining that "delivered" could also mean death: "Délivrée! C'est un terme pour voix célestes, ça! Tu t'es bien doutée, n'est-ce pas, ce que « délivrée » pouvait vouloir dire, pour elles, de très vague et de très éthéré? La mort, bien sûr, délivre" (159). To my mind, this scene also evokes the recent war for Anouilh's audience. During the four years that France was occupied by the Germans, the French—like Jeanne—were promised deliverance by their allies.⁸⁸ In the waiting period, however, many were "delivered" in death before the French liberation occurred in 1944.

As other works that precede his own, Anouilh's *L'Alouette* offers a political commentary on the leadership. For example, when Charles speaks with his mother-in-law about Jeanne, Queen Yolande tries to convince Charles to receive the Maid at court. She assures Charles that a peasant like Jeanne would be an asset to his council as peasants have a special gift:

Je crois que vous avez tous besoin d'une paysanne, précisément, dans vos conseils. Ce sont les grands qui gouvernent le royaume et c'est justice; Dieu l'a remis entre leurs mains...je suis étonnée quelquefois qu'Elle [la Providence] ne leur ait pas donné en même temps, comme Elle l'a fait généreusement aux plus humbles de Ses créatures, meilleure mesure de simplicité et de bon sens (93).

Charles adds that they also have more courage. Endorsing the peasant as ideal was a notion put forth by the Vichy régime in World War II France: "Vichy propaganda and Pétain himself promoted the peasant as the model for revitalized France. Peasants were seen to possess 'heroic patience', 'a natural spiritual equilibrium', 'the essence of economic endeavour', 'the wisdom of

⁸⁸ Kedward reports that the French grew weary awaiting rescue from their allies: "there grew an impatient anxiety about the long-expected Allied landing on the shores of France, whenever and wherever it was to be. Jour-J, as D-Day was called in France, was first thought to be imminent in the autumn of 1943, but autumn, winter and the spring of 1944 all passed without the opening of the offensive for which so much Resistance activity was primed. Finally, when the non-existent event was becoming something of a bitter joke...the crucial day was announced on the BBC...on the night of 5-6 June 1944" (74).

the ages' (all phrases from Pétain's broadcasts)" (Kedward 24). Anouilh, however, demystifies this ideal when Charles asserts that the 'ideal peasant' cannot provide the solution to a nation's instability. During the scene with Yolande, Charles responds in a prophetic vein, predicting that one day we will choose men of the people to rule the kingdoms; but he points out that this too will bring disaster:

vous êtes pour confier le gouvernement aux peuples? A ces bons peuples qui ont toutes les vertus? Vous savez ce qu'il fait, ce bon peuple, quand les circonstances le lui offrent, le pouvoir? Vous avez lu l'histoire des tyrans?...Eh bien, moi, je la connais, cette suite d'horreurs et de cancanes, et je m'amuse quelquefois à en imaginer le déroulement futur pendant que vous me croyez occupé à jouer au bilboquet...On essaiera ce que vous préconisez. *On essaiera tout. Des hommes du peuple deviendront les maîtres des royaumes, pour quelques siècles – la durée du passage d'un météore dans le ciel – et ce sera le temps des massacres et des plus monstrueuses erreurs.* Et au jour du jugement, quand on fera les additions, on s'apercevra que le plus débauché, le plus capricieux de ses princes aura coûté moins cher au monde, en fin de compte, que l'un de ces hommes vertueux..." (93-5, emphasis added)

From a twentieth-century perspective, the playwright remarks that even in Charles's laziness as king, he makes a better leader than those whom the nation will elect to rule in the future. Having witnessed the national division under Pétain and the destruction brought about by the tyrannical Hitler, Anouilh shows Charles to be harmless when contrasted to the "hommes vertueux" that will prove costly to the world. This commentary reveals another way in which Anouilh is very political, despite his claims.

Why *L'alouette*?: Interpreting the Lark

In reflecting on Anouilh's drama, I ask myself why the author chooses the lark as the symbol for Jeanne and for France. Throughout literature, the lark has been associated with various significations. In *Birds with Human souls*, Beryl Rowland explains that in medieval times, the lark sang hymns at the gates of heaven (97) and also traditionally announced the

coming of the day (98).⁸⁹ In Anouilh's work, his *alouette* affirms these representations.

Following Rowland's gloss of the lark, I agree that Jeanne embodies the lark singing at heaven's gates. As the English hunters/judges like Warwick take aim at Jeanne, she nears her death at the stake. And furthermore, this lark announces the coming of a new day for France. For Anouilh's twentieth-century audience, Jeanne declares the advent of newfound French freedom reestablished after the German occupation.

The lark may also represent the playwright himself. This tradition was evident in the Romantics like Shelley:

In his famous poem, Shelley disclaimed the notion that the skylark was a bird: it was the soul, fully winged, in its totality and perfection as described in Plato's *Phaedrus*; it was also the symbol of the poet and an apostrophe to the power of poetry itself. Implicit in the poem is *the contrast between the joy of the spirit of the ideal poet embodied in the bird and the unhappiness of the earthly poet despairing of man's regeneration* (Rowland 100-01, emphasis added).

The poet's inner turmoil exists also in *L'Alouette*. Warwick first offers the audience the imagery of Jeanne as the lark:

C'est cette petite alouette chantant dans le ciel de France, au-dessus de la tête de leurs fantassins...Personnellement, Monseigneur, j'aime beaucoup la France. C'est pourquoi je ne me consolerais jamais, si nous la perdions. *Ces deux notes claires, ce chant joyeux et absurde* d'une petite alouette immobile dans le soleil pendant qu'on lui tire dessus, c'est tout elle (132, emphasis added).

As Warwick notes, this lark flies above the infantrymen's heads singing in the French sky. But as the judge points out, the lark has a duality in her song. It expresses two clear notes and is, at once, a joyful and absurd song. The dual song she sings reflects Anouilh who is torn between two conflicting emotions. As in the *chant absurde*, the dramatist acknowledges the absurdity of

⁸⁹ One source even records the significance of the lark in that the French supposedly carried lark's legs—much like rabbit's feet—for good luck. (Tucker, Suzetta. "ChristStory Lark (Skylark) Page." *ChristStory Christian Bestiary*. 1998. <http://ww2.netnitco.net/users/legend01/lark.htm> (28 Sep. 2007).)

war. What could be more absurd than a girl leading an army and safeguarding a king's coronation? At the same time, the *chant joyeux* reflects Anouilh who hopes for a better future. His ending reveals this notion when he has Jeanne removed from the stake and placed instead at the coronation at Reims. Although disheartened by the current political situation, Anouilh would like to be optimistic about the rebuilding of France.

The song's paradoxical effect also comments on the dichotomy in human nature and the ability to vacillate between two extremes. For example, in the twentieth century, the French who chose to collaborate with the Germans demonstrated the human tendency to switch sides. While the lark's song fluctuates from joyous to nonsensical, the listener also exhibits this quality of indecision. Warwick, for example, declares his love for France, but also mentions how one shoots at the lark. Thus, the playwright asserts that the world--and especially, man--is full of contradictions. Warwick iterates this notion when he addresses Cauchon: "L'homme est fait de contradictions, Seigneur Évêque. Il est très fréquent de tuer ce qu'on aime. J'adore les bêtes aussi, et je suis chasseur" (133). Furthermore, Jeanne's case reflects this notion, as she is first beloved by the people. Later, these same 'supporters' attend her execution. On the day of her death, Warwick explains to Jeanne that the public anxiously awaits her:

Écoute ce grondement, c'est la foule qui t'attend déjà depuis l'aube...Ils sont venus tôt pour avoir de bonnes places. Ils mangent leurs provisions en ce moment, grondent leurs enfants, se font des farces et demandent aux soldats si cela va bientôt commencer. *Ils ne sont pas méchants. Ce sont les mêmes qui seraient venus t'acclamer à ton entrée solennelle si tu avais pris Rouen. Les choses ont tourné autrement, voilà tout, alors ils viennent te voir brûler.* Eux à qui il n'arrive jamais rien, le triomphe ou la mort des grands de ce monde est leur spectacle. (180-181, emphasis added).

They are the crowd who would have cheered Jeanne at Rouen; but as the circumstances turned out differently, the same public now gathers at the stake.⁹⁰ Their loyalties have quickly shifted.

The dramatist reiterates this notion of switching sides in a scene where Jeanne learns that her fellow soldier La Hire and his men have defected: “La Hire n’est qu’un chef de bande qui s’est vendu avec sa compagnie à un autre prince, quand il a su que le tien allait faire la paix. Il marche en ce moment vers l’Allemagne pour trouver un autre pays à piller – tout simplement (173). To Jeanne’s disbelief, La Hire becomes a mercenary who fights for profit rather than for his country. He exemplifies the opportunism and corruption that typified the collaborators of World War II France.

Anouilh ends his play in a triumphant scene at Reims and this scene can be read two ways. I propose it can be interpreted as an optimistic attempt by the author to rewrite Jeanne’s story with a happy ending. Much like Pisan does in her *Ditié*, the playwright offers Jeanne a future as the curtain closes on the victorious Maid. But as the lark’s song expresses a duality of both joy and absurdity, so does the play’s final scene. Thus, it can also be read as irony. Many Absurdist plays of the period conclude with a disturbing scene or one that indicates the return to the beginning of a repetitious cycle.⁹¹ With Anouilh’s victorious scene, the author seemingly departs from the conventions of the new “anti-théâtre.” Upon closer inspection, however, we see that Anouilh’s scene choice at the end works satirically to ridicule the accepted notion of a well-made play. To poke fun at the required happy ending, he inserts the coronation scene and, in so doing, he also surprises the audience by not finishing Jeanne’s story as most people would—with her death. The irony of Jeanne’s last words—“O Rouen, Rouen, tu seras donc ma *dernière*

⁹⁰ Initially, one may be appalled at this scene when the crowd awaits Jeanne’s execution. Although the event seems savage--like those who came to view the gladiators--I argue that Anouilh’s audience bears a striking resemblance to that crowd. They come to this play to be entertained, while also expecting Jeanne’s fatal outcome.

⁹¹ See Ionesco’s play *La Leçon* in which the professor kills his student during a private lesson. The play ends with the arrival of another student at the professor’s home to repeat the violent story.

demeure?” (224, emphasis added)—lies in the fact that Rouen will not be her last residence in Anouilh’s play. The contrived nature of the final scene is evident in the lack of transition between the two scenes. Moments after Jeanne’s dying words, Beaudricourt interrupts the tragic death to advise they return to a previous scene. Cauchon then becomes like a director who shouts “cut!” when he instructs the actors to prepare for the coronation: “Défais le bûcher, l’homme! Détache Jeanne! Et qu’on lui apporte son épée et son étendard!” (227). At this moment, the audience experiences an emotional shock in moving from mourning her death to celebrating her victory. The spectator is caught off guard by the new ending to Jeanne’s story but is reassured by Charles’s character that it is the right one:

Cet homme a raison. La vraie fin de l’histoire de Jeanne, la vraie fin qui n’en finira plus, celle qu’on se redira toujours, quand on aura oublié ou confondu tous nos noms, ce n’est pas dans sa misère de bête traquée à Rouen, c’est l’alouette en plein ciel, c’est Jeanne à Reims dans toute sa gloire...La vraie fin de l’histoire de Jeanne est joyeuse. Jeanne d’Arc, c’est une histoire qui finit bien (227).

The new ending by Anouilh, while differing from other Absurdist dramas in its attempt at a joyful outcome, actually falls back into the conventions of the “anti-pièce” because he indicates the endless repetition of Jeanne’s story. Charles describes the cyclical nature when he declares “la vraie fin qui n’en finira plus, celle qu’on redira toujours.” Much earlier in the text, Warwick states the opposite when he believes her story will soon be forgotten: “Alors dépêchez-vous de lui faire raconter sa petite affaire et brûlez-la, qu’on n’en parle plus...dans dix ans tout le monde aura oublié cette histoire” (33). The irony of his statement is that there is no true conclusion to Jeanne’s legend and, as Charles believes, it will forever be retold.

Classical Convention and Postwar Reinvention: The Theatre of d’Aubignac and Anouilh

In Anouilh’s twentieth-century retelling, Jeanne’s legend takes on quite a different theatrical representation from d’Aubignac’s play. First and foremost, in the modern drama, the

scenes from the Maid's life play out in an unexpected manner: her death as the penultimate event and the coronation as the final scene. This element of disorder creates a stark contrast with d'Aubignac's drama *La Pucelle d'Orléans: Tragédie en prose; selon la vérité de l'histoire et les rigueurs du théâtre*. As the title indicates, the "rigueurs du théâtre" define the limits of d'Aubignac's text. As a drama theorist of the seventeenth-century, d'Aubignac's obsession with the three unities guides a play that closely adheres to the traditional rules of theatre. While d'Aubignac's drama treats only a few short hours of Jeanne's trial leading up to her death, Anouilh's play disregards the Classical restrictions of time and place as he moves freely from the present trial to moments in Jeanne's past. The twentieth-century playwright embraces a new tradition in French theatre, the *anti-pièce*. D'Aubignac, however, strived for the perfect theatrical model that would meet the exacting standards of the *Académie française*.

Despite their contrasting styles, d'Aubignac and Anouilh both highlight the masculine nature of the Pucelle in her rhetoric. As noted in the second chapter of this study, d'Aubignac's focus on a virile and powerful maiden reflects the current politics of an absolute king. Simultaneously, Jeanne also serves as a mouthpiece for the seventeenth-century playwright who sees himself as the dominant figure in rhetoric and dramatic theory. Moving ahead to the twentieth century, Anouilh recaptures the masculine aspect of the Maid's speech in *L'Alouette*. While both playwrights portray the Maid's virility, they do so for different reasons. For d'Aubignac, his purpose is self-serving and narcissistic; whereas Anouilh allows Jeanne her own cleverness in language. In *L'Alouette*, it is Warwick who comments on Jeanne's purity and male rhetoric; but Anouilh takes this notion a step further when Warwick introduces the paradox inherent in women who speak as men:

Malgré votre petite extraction, vous avez eu un réflexe de classe. *Un gentleman* est toujours prêt à mourir, quand il le faut, pour son honneur ou

pour son roi, mais il n'y a que les gens du petit peuple qui se font tuer pour rien...Ces intellectuels sont ce que je déteste le plus au monde. Ces gens sans chair, quels animaux répugnants! *Vous êtes vraiment vierge?...Oui, bien sûr. Une femme n'aurait pas parlé comme vous. Ma fiancée, en Angleterre, qui est une fille très pure, raisonne tout à fait comme un garçon elle aussi.* Elle est indomptable comme vous. Savez vous qu'un proverbe indien dit qu'une fille peut marcher sur l'eau?...Quand elle sera Lady Warwick, nous verrons si elle continuera! C'est un état de grâce d'être pucelle. Nous adorons cela et, malheureusement, dès que nous en rencontrons une, nous nous dépêchons d'en faire une femme – et nous voudrions que le miracle continue...Nous sommes des fous! (210-12, emphasis added).

According to Warwick, his own fiancée demonstrates the same masculine reasoning as Jeanne, as she too is a pure maiden. But as much as the maidenhood phenomenon is admired, he admits that men often are not satisfied and want it both ways. The fascination with the virile virgin becomes the urge to change her into a woman. When his fiancée becomes Lady Warwick, she can never return to that miraculous state of maidenhood. Jeanne, however, chooses to remain forever in this “state of grace” when she opts for death over marriage.

Even from the beginning of Anouilh's play, the maiden rejects her role as a typical female. The first indication is when Jeanne discusses her intentions to leave home. While most works on Jeanne overlook this part of her story, Anouilh includes the moment when the Maid must confront her family. She meets with opposition, as a controlling mother plans for Jeanne's life to imitate her own:

Tu es quand même ma petite tu sais, *pareille à moi*, qui m'a suivie si longtemps pendue à mon jupon dans la cuisine. Et je te donnais toujours une carotte à gratter ou un petit plat à essayer *pour que tu fasses tout comme moi...* Si tu veux, à la prochaine foire je t'achèterai un beau mouchoir brodé. Tu seras belle (45).

To this proposition, Jeanne replies that her mother's concerns are not her own: “Ce n'est pas être belle que je veux maman...Je ne veux pas me marier mère” (45-6). When the Maid reveals that

the saints require her to leave and to dress like a male, her mother's brusque reaction reveals her discontent. She proceeds to explain a woman's role to her daughter:

D'abord, je ne te laisserai jamais t'habiller en homme. Ma fille en homme!...Une fille, ça file, ça tisse, ça lave et ça reste à la maison. Ta grand-mère n'a jamais bougé d'ici, moi non plus; tu feras de même et quand tu auras une fille plus tard, tu lui apprendras à faire pareil. [*Elle éclate brusquement en sanglots bruyants.*] T'en aller avec des soldats! Mais qu'est-ce que j'ai fait au ciel pour avoir une fille pareille? Mais enfin, tu veux donc me voir morte? (46-8).

Thus, there is only one way to understand women--as sexual--whether properly married or improperly "servicing" soldiers.⁹² Here, it is evident that Jeanne's mother ignores her daughter's wishes to remain single, as she already plans for Jeanne to have her own daughter one day. After this outburst, Jeanne hesitates but ultimately decides to break away from her mother in pursuit of her mission.

Not only does the author include the seldom-written domestic scene in his drama, but he reiterates during the trial Jeanne's rejection of the mother figure. Throughout the play, the Maid's judges refer to the Church as *Mère l'Église*. Early on in the trial, Warwick and Cauchon discuss how the Church gave birth to Jeanne. In this dialogue, Jeanne's original judges allude to her subsequent retrials by the Church: "Neuf mois, c'est vrai. Quel accouchement, ce procès! Elle en mets du temps, notre Sainte Mère l'Église, quand on lui demande d'enfanter un petit acte politique. Enfin le cauchemar est passé! La mère et l'enfant se portent bien (75). After establishing the Church as a maternal figure, Anouilh reveals that Jeanne disregards her authority. To the English accusers, Jeanne's acts—her alleged sorcery and, in particular, her male dress—mean betrayal of the Church. Thus, they encourage Jeanne repeatedly to renounce her sins and return to her spiritual mother:

⁹² Also, this passage reveals the woman as merely a link in a generational chain. As her grandmother and her mother have done, Jeanne too should follow their example and, likewise, her own daughter one day.

Abjure, Jeanne, tu ne resistes plus que pour ceux qui viennent de te trahir.
Rentre dans le sein de ta Mère l'Église. Humilie-toi, elle te relèvera par la main. Je suis persuadé qu'*au fond de ton coeur tu n'as pas cessé d'être une de ses filles...Confie-toi à ta mère,* Jeanne, sans restriction! (174, emphasis added).

Cauchon's appeal temporarily convinces the Maiden who desires acceptance by the Church. In that moment, she replies, "Oui, je suis une fille de l'Église!" (174). With this declaration, however, Jeanne does not renounce her actions or her saintly voices. Her resistance infuriates Cauchon who again reiterates the need for Jeanne to reinstate the maternal-filial relationship: "L'Église veut encore croire que tu es une de ses filles...et tu ergotes, tu marchandes. Tu n'as pas à marchander avec ta Mère, impudente fille! Tu dois la supplier à genoux de t'envelopper dans sa robe et de te protéger" (188). The personification of the Church as mother figure echoes the depiction of Jeanne's natural mother who struggles to contain her in the proper role of a daughter.

Jeanne's rejection of the maternal figure and feminine duty qualifies the Maiden for her new role as advisor to men. As Warwick has already highlighted Jeanne's masculine rhetoric, it seems that she uses it to instruct male figures throughout the drama. Beginning with Beaudricourt, Jeanne approaches him for a "man-to-man" talk about the war against England:

Écoute, Robert. D'abord, ne pense plus que je suis une fille. Ça t'embrouille les idées...figure-toi que tu me l'as déjà donné mon habit d'homme, et que nous discutons tous les deux, comme deux braves garçons, avec bon sens et avec calme...Mon gros Robert, ta décision, tu la tiens. Ton coup d'éclat, qui va te faire remarquer en haut lieu, c'est pour tout de suite... (63-4).

The Maid has to de-sexualize herself and speak to Beaudricourt as a man in order to gain his support for her mission. She appeals to his male ego by convincing him that this decision will be the one that establishes his greatness.

The Maid's cunning resurfaces with Charles as she intervenes to teach him to be courageous. In an intimate moment with the king, she confides in Charles that she too experiences fear from time to time but she reveals to him her secret. She explains that it is quite natural to be afraid and not to deny the emotion of fear. Jeanne suggests that confronting one's fear immediately is the key to success. She recreates for Charles the scene at Orléans and explains how to conquer the enemy:

les Anglais bien solides devant Orléans dans leurs bonnes grosses bastilles. Tu dis: 'Bon, ils sont plus nombreux, ils ont de gros murs, des canons, de grosses réserves de flèches, ils sont toujours les plus forts. Soit. J'ai peur. Un bon coup. Là. Voilà. Maintenant que j'ai eu bien peur, allons-y!' Et les autres sont si étonnés que tu n'aies pas peur que, du coup, ils se mettent à avoir peur, eux, et tu passes! Tu passes, parce que comme tu es plus intelligent, que tu as plus d'imagination, toi, tu as eu peur *avant*. Voilà tout le secret (124).

Her victory lies in the strategy to fear first, before her enemies. Here the audience and Charles see a more strategic side to Jeanne. Although she is the revered conqueror of the English at Orléans, the maiden here demonstrates wisdom as she advises the king. As she does with Beaudricourt, Jeanne is able to manipulate the fearful Charles by making him believe he is the clever one because he was afraid of his enemies--in advance.

Prior to Charles's lesson on courage, however, the audience notices his remarkable relationship to women; and I argue that Charles needs a woman to affirm his own masculinity. Before Charles's encounter with the Maid, Agnès is a key character who renders Charles more masculine. Yolande explains how her daughter⁹³ was necessary for the dauphin to become a man:

⁹³ According to history, Yolande d'Aragon protected the young Charles, and her daughter Marie married the dauphin in December 1422. In *L'Alouette*, Anouilh takes poetic license with the familial relations. While Yolande remains the mother-in-law, the playwright introduces Agnès as Yolande's daughter. Historians assert that Agnès was Charles VII's mistress--not his wife.

Agnès est une fille charmante, ma fille, et qui se tient parfaitement à sa place. Et nous avons toutes les deux le plus urgent besoin que Charles se décide à devenir un homme...*Pour que Charles devînt un homme, il lui fallait une femme...Soyez sa reine, tenez sa maison, faites-lui un dauphin,...Regardez comme Charles est plus viril depuis qu'il connaît Agnès! N'est-ce pas Charles, que vous êtes plus viril?* (84-5, emphasis added).

Not only does Agnès possess a virilizing quality to transform the dauphin, but it is his mother-in-law Yolande who counsels him to marry her. Thus, one woman provides him the means--her daughter--to become a man. Here I must note that in contrast to Jeanne's character who rejects the mother figure, the playwright now offers a mother-daughter pair who works as a team. Their influence on Charles is evident as they serve as his constant advisors. In fact, Yolande suggests that he meet with Jeanne; but he initially resists, claiming that he would feel uncomfortable with the maiden: "Je n'aime pas les pucelles...Vous allez encore me dire que je ne suis pas assez viril, mais cela me fait peur" (92). It seems that Charles needs feminized women like Agnès and Yolande to bring out his manliness, but Jeanne--as she is virile--threatens his masculinity.

The true extent of the Maid's masculinity manifests in her death. In Anouilh's portrayal, Jeanne weighs her options and actively chooses her fate because she cannot bear to live out her life in the feminine role prescribed for her by her judges. If Jeanne confesses her sins before the Church, her life will be spared; but Jeanne hesitates, as she begins to contemplate what that might mean for her future:

Je ne veux pas le vivre, votre temps...Vous voyez Jeanne ayant vécu, les choses s'étant arrangées...Jeanne délivrée, peut-être, végétant à la Cour de France d'une petite pension?...Jeanne acceptant tout, Jeanne avec un ventre, Jeanne devenue gourmande...Vous voyez Jeanne fardée, en hennin, empêtrée dans ses robes, s'occupant de son petit chien ou avec un homme à ses trousses, qui sait, Jeanne mariée?...Mais je ne veux pas faire une fin! Et en tout cas, pas celle-là! Pas une fin heureuse, pas une fin qui n'en finit plus... (214-15).

Jeanne then decides to renounce her abjuration, realizing that to live out her life at court or to marry would be untrue to herself. After considering her future, the Maid ultimately rejects her femininity by acknowledging that the true Jeanne is the one on the battlefield, and she chooses that virile identity:

Je n'ai vécu que du jour où j'ai fait ce que vous [mes saints] m'avez dit de faire, à cheval, une épée dans la main! C'est celle-là, ce n'est que celle-là, Jeanne! Pas l'autre, qui va bouffir, blêmir et radoter dans son couvent – ou bien trouver son petit confort – délivrée...Pas l'autre qui va s'habituer à vivre...*Je vous rends Jeanne! Pareille à elle et pour toujours!* Appelle tes soldats, Warwick, appelle tes soldats, je te dis, vite! Je renonce à l'abjuration, *je renonce à l'habit de femme*, ils vont pouvoir l'utiliser leur bûcher, ils vont enfin l'avoir leur fête! (216-17, emphasis added).

Rather than be pardoned by the Church, Jeanne chooses to renounce her female dress that the court had given her. Jeanne's choice is not simply the rejection of feminine attire and expectation. Anouilh's hero does not succumb to the Church's pressures because she wants to be true to herself and pursue her own unique purpose, even to the death.

In death, moreover, the Maid triumphs by breaking away completely from cultural expectations for femininity. Indeed, at the end when Jeanne is at the stake, the Inquisitor notes that the Maid does not exhibit weakness. In her final moments, Jeanne appears peaceful and the Inquisitor admits defeat. In his pronouncement however, he refers to the Maid as a male: "Et il y a presque comme un sourire, n'est-ce pas, sur ses lèvres?...[L'Inquisiteur, *baisse la tête accablé, et constate sourdement.*] Je ne le vaincrai jamais" (224, emphasis added). Even in the English translation, Fry renders the line "I shall never be able to master *him*" (101, emphasis added). The Inquisitor's use of the masculine pronoun for Jeanne not only reaffirms the Maid's ultimate rejection of the feminine, but also shows that her enemies have recognized her masculinity. Here, she reminds us of d'Aubignac's masculine Jeanne whose male rhetoric commanded the courtroom and silenced her opposition.

Early on in this chapter, I mentioned Anouilh's neutral stance with regard to the opposing factions of World War II. His technique of invoking paradoxical situations such as the lark's song, the indecisive crowd, and the notion of an absent--yet omnipresent--God reveals the complex frustrations of a nation trying to grapple with the aftermath of war. Having been invaded and occupied by the German enemy, France had to rebuild. This period was a joyful moment of liberation but also a fearful struggle to regain French identity. For Anouilh, the most effective way to resolve this uncertainty was to be true to oneself. As Jeanne does with her rejection of the mother/motherly role, she follows her own purpose. The playwright's desire for individualism--versus a collective action--reveals that 'collective' identity is being reshaped: the individual is responsible for his own actions, while keeping in mind the greater good. Jeanne does this as she is an *individual* who understands solidarity. In *L'Alouette*, the Maid's martyrdom is no longer about sacrificing her *self* for the country: she remains true to her sense of self. Ultimately by preferring the individual, Anouilh writes a 'Jeanne' who goes from her execution to the coronation; and thus, as Charles remarks, she triumphs in the end: "Jeanne d'Arc, c'est une histoire qui finit bien."

For Jeanne, purity was central to true identity. According to critic Haydn Mason, Jeanne's innocence also had national implications in postwar France:

the essential purity of this girl became an integral part of the legend. General de Gaulle, himself a confirmed believer in France's noble destiny, summed it up pithily during the Liberation of France in September 1944. Ever mindful of the need to give France an unbesmirched ideal to revere, he was thinking of resigning before the name de Gaulle had become hopelessly compromised by party politics; and, characteristically, it was to Joan of Arc that his mind turned: 'La France peut avoir encore besoin un jour d'une image pure. Cette image, il faut la lui laisser. Jeanne d'Arc, si elle était mariée, ce ne serait plus Jeanne d'Arc.' (90).

In 1944, de Gaulle's image of the Maid seems to foreshadow Anouilh's Jeanne who exclaims:

“Jeanne mariée?...Mais je ne veux pas faire une fin! Et en tout cas, pas celle-là!”

Conclusion

“Le jeu de théâtre que l’on va voir n’apporte rien à l’explication du mystère de Jeanne.” – Jean Anouilh

*A Mien to move a Queen—
Half Child—Half Heroine—
An Orleans in the Eye
That puts its manner by
For humbler Company
When none are near
Even a Tear—
Its frequent Visitor—*

...

*Too small—to fear—
Too distant—to endear—
And so Men Compromise
And just—revere—*

--Emily Dickinson

Although this study examines various political readings of the Maid in literature, I echo the disclaimer made by Jean Anouilh in his play's program: "...[il] n'apporte rien à l'explication du mystère de Jeanne" (Vandromme 235). In his address to the audience, Anouilh even chides those who would attempt to demystify the Maid:

Il n'y a pas d'explications à Jeanne. Pas plus qu'il n'y a d'explication à la plus petite fleur qui pousse au bord du fossé...*Il y a le phénomène Jeanne*, comme il y a le phénomène pâquerette, le phénomène ciel, le phénomène oiseau. Faut-il que les hommes soient prétentieux pour que cela ne leur suffise pas? (Vandromme 236-7, emphasis added).

Much like nature's beauty, the Johannic phenomenon is unexplainable. Indeed, the Maid qualifies as a mystery. With this in mind, I turn to Donald Spoto's definition of the term *mystery*:

A mystery is not a puzzle, a problem or something to be worked out or resolved, and Joan is not an intellectual challenge. In the vocabulary of theology, a mystery is an event, action or person pointing to the presence of the hidden but real God, who enters time and space (xviii).

Like Spoto, the playwright Anouilh values the Maid's mysterious essence. Indeed, the dramatist began his work on Jeanne with nothing more than his childhood memories: "sans plan, sans dates, sans documents, sur mes souvenirs de petit garçon, sans rien qu'une inexplicable joie – je commençai *L'Alouette*" (Vandromme 221). Anouilh's child-like admiration offers a unique rendering of a multiple Jeanne. Critic Dietmar Rieger points out that Anouilh preserves the mystery in showing various aspects of the Maid's character. What sets his work apart from the Johannic representations of Pisan, d'Aubignac, and Voltaire is the fact that he brings to light the many existing faces of the maiden, and the spectator/reader then chooses to which one they can relate:

la ruse dramaturgique d'Anouilh consiste à proposer au spectateur non pas une Pucelle inconnue jusqu'alors, mais toute une gamme de Jeannes plus

ou moins traditionnelles...Anouilh n'aurait pas eu l'intention d'éclaircir le 'mystère de Jeanne' mais de le respecter en tant que tel (Rieger 363).

In respecting the mystery of Jeanne, Anouilh proposes many diverse roles for his play's protagonist: "l'héroïne religieuse, l'héroïne humaine, l'héroïne 'peuple', l'héroïne 'enfant', l'héroïne 'militaire', l'héroïne pacifiste, l'héroïne psychologue, l'héroïne victime, l'héroïne nationale" (Rieger 364). As I have added in this study, Anouilh also reveals *l'héroïne masculine*, reminiscent of d'Aubignac. The multiplicity of Jeanne allows the audience to choose their own sort of heroine and it opens up the text to numerous possibilities. From Anouilh's drama, we can no longer pinpoint one specific Jeanne; instead he presents the figure of the Maid in a *mise en abîme*. She remains an enigma as we can never truly recognize the many facets of her character at once. The story is thus retold again and again, each highlighting a different aspect of the Maid. For this reason, Anouilh's work is a logical choice to "end" my corpus. The play illustrates how the analysis of Jeanne is endless. With this project, I offer the reader a few (re)interpretations of the Maid with regard to the political background. Indeed, as Anouilh points out, Jeanne's story is ripe for political use: "le phénomène de Jeanne était prêt socialement, politiquement, militairement" (Vandromme 235).

The mystery and multiplicity of Anouilh's Jeanne provides a solid link to the three previous works in this transhistorical study. Having explored the Maid's masculine rendering in the dramas of both d'Aubignac and Anouilh, I will not reiterate that discussion here. Instead, I will turn to the similarity between Anouilh's and Voltaire's works. Anouilh's drama—a parody of the well-made play—mirrors Voltaire's choice of the mock epic to retell Jeanne's story. The authors' irony expresses their disapproval of the political situation. But before Voltaire, perhaps the strongest correlation exists between Anouilh and Pisan. During the lifetimes of both authors, the notion of France as a nation was physically threatened by invaders: the English for Pisan and

the Germans for Anouilh. Thus, their works depict a triumphant Jeanne to promote statehood and unite the French within to drive out their enemies.⁹⁴ Also, I remind the reader here that Pisan's *Ditié* reappeared in the twentieth-century lectures of Gustave Cohen. Critic Angus Kennedy remarks that "Christine's image (vv. 164-65) of the rope binding France captive during the English occupation has, in Cohen's eyes, its modern counterpart in the humiliating demarcation line dividing France into the occupied and unoccupied zones" (109). As an author whose prophetic voice looked to France's future, Pisan would probably be pleased to know that "more than 500 years after her death, at a time of national crisis more pressing than any she [Pisan] herself had ever known, her name would be associated with a message of restating the importance of cultural values and the need for fortitude in adversity" (Kennedy 109).

Thus, as we have seen, the political backdrop shaped the writers' viewpoint and appropriation of the Maid. For Pisan, Jeanne is the catalyst to bring about the birth of a nation. In the seventeenth century when the monarchy approaches its pinnacle of power, d'Aubignac's Maid speaks as the king. Voltaire questions Jeanne's purity and, likewise, encourages a pre-revolutionary France to challenge accepted institutions. Finally, twentieth-century France--devastated by World War II--persuades Anouilh to write a 'Jeanne' who finds her true identity in the absurdity of war.

Alongside the political background, this study has taken into account the gendered representations of the Maid. It is interesting to note here that the literary genre—not the gender of the author—produced similarities/differences among the texts. The poetic renderings of Pisan and Voltaire examined Jeanne's femininity; while the dramatic texts of d'Aubignac and Anouilh

⁹⁴ This situation contrasts with d'Aubignac and Voltaire whose France faced no immediate threat from occupying forces within their borders. Instead of uniting the French against the outsider, these authors look *inward* to the state of France. For d'Aubignac, it is to comment on the king's ultimate power and influence; while in Voltaire, it is to criticize the corrupted monarchy and Church.

captured her virility.⁹⁵ In all cases, however, the writers focus on Jeanne's virginity. As the 'Pucelle beneurée' in Pisan, Jeanne's purity accounts for her divine status. In Voltaire's epic, he undermines this notion of the Maid's virginity. Finally, in d'Aubignac and Anouilh, Jeanne's virginal status renders her a masculine hero.

Jeanne d'Arc Since Anouilh

The politics surrounding World War II strongly influenced the Maid's later reappropriation in the twentieth-century by Jean-Marie Le Pen. The ideology of the Front National reiterates a xenophobic notion--seen first in the Vichy régime--of a purified France. In his book *Vichy: L'événement, la mémoire, l'histoire*, Henry Rousso confirms the link to modern-day French politics:

Quand le Front national développe aujourd'hui une théorie sociale de l'exclusion, il emprunte, consciemment ou non, nombre d'idées à l'idéologie et à « l'expérience » de la Révolution nationale, dont l'héritage, nostalgique ou honni, appartient à notre patrimoine (72).

When Le Pen uses Jeanne to promote a pure French society, he borrows from Pétain and asserts the Maid as symbolic of true patriotism. Le Pen, however, aligns patriotism with racism.

Indeed, as recently as May 2004, Le Pen gave a speech that endorsed this notion: "in our time, Jeanne herself would also be accused of racism and xenophobia, while it is true that these accusations are only aimed at patriots" (my translation). In Le Pen's misappropriation of the Maid, he fails to recognize that Jeanne's patriotism equates to nationalism--not racism. If we return to Ernest Renan's discourse on nation, his theory resists Le Pen's interpretation of nationalism. As previously mentioned, Renan does not view race as definitive of nationality: "De nos jours, on commet une erreur plus grave: on confond la race avec la nation...La France est celtique, ibérique, germanique...La vérité est qu'il n'y a pas de race pure et que faire reposer

⁹⁵ This occurrence also raises the question: *why* does theatre portray a masculine Jeanne while poetry lends itself to her femininity? Here, I can only speculate, but perhaps a virile Jeanne plays more powerfully on the stage.

la politique sur l'analyse ethnographique, c'est la faire porter sur une chimère." Aligned with Renan's theory based on solidarity, Jeanne's purpose looked towards one *France* that encompassed--not excluded--its diverse regional differences.

Although Le Pen's misuse of the Maid still echoes in French consciousness, we can be optimistic regarding Jeanne's future. As Nadia Margolis points out, it seems that Le Pen has finally loosened his grip on the historic maiden:

Fortunately for her [Jeanne's] political posterity at least M. Le Pen has just seen fit to replace her on his party's letterhead with a more masculine, Catholic, Germanic, yet equally 'French' figure, that of Clovis king of the Franks, baptized in 496. Thus quietly disowned, Joan no longer has to align herself with the sexism, religious intolerance, racism, genocide and jingoism inherent in fascist ideology—at least, not until her next appropriation (25).

Margolis rightly concludes that we can anticipate that appropriations of the Maid will continue. What will these future appropriations look like? In the *Ditié*, Pisan raises the question: "And you, blessed Maid, are you to be forgotten?" ("Et toy, Pucelle beneurée, / Y dois-tu estre obliée" ll. 161-162). Clearly, the answer is no; but in what terms she is remembered remains to be seen. Based on this study however, it appears that the political milieu will determine Jeanne's depiction. Indeed, this has been the case for almost six centuries.

Not only will the shifting political background shape the appropriation of Jeanne; but also, as Anouilh's drama demonstrates, we must take into account the ever-changing human that constructs nation. In his discussion of nation, Renan considers the citizen--with his personal desires--as fundamental to nationhood. As he views the concept of *nation* as based on a mental agreement among citizens, Renan predicts the imminent decline of nations in favor of an international community:

Nous avons chassé de la politique les abstractions métaphysiques et théologiques. Que reste-t-il, après cela? Il reste l'homme, ses désirs, ses

besoins...Les nations ne sont pas quelque chose d'éternel. Elles ont commencé, elles finiront. La confédération européenne, probablement, les remplacera. Mais telle n'est pas la loi du siècle où nous vivons. À l'heure présente, l'existence des nations est bonne, nécessaire même. Leur existence est la garantie de la liberté, qui serait perdue si le monde n'avait qu'une loi et qu'un maître.

In the late nineteenth century, Renan saw the *nation* as beneficial; yet he envisioned an international political body decades before the creation of the United Nations or the European Union.

With that in mind, how will France's participation in the European Union affect the notion of Frenchness in the years to come? And in turn, will this international community change how French authors depict *national* identity vis-à-vis the Maiden?⁹⁶ While this is unknown, one thing is sure: as evidenced in French history and literature, the Johannic phenomenon will endure. As previously stated, the Maid is multiple, mysterious, and universal; but she is also one hero in a specific nation at a distinct time in French history. Jeanne d'Arc is the collective as one; and therefore, her legend offers the perfect model to construct and deconstruct national identity.

⁹⁶ As mentioned in the introduction to this study, Jeanne's statue at the Place du Martroi in Orléans is surrounded by the flags of Orléans, France, and the *European Union*.

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Appendix A:

Christine de Pisan's *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*, Followed by an English translation

28	DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC	
	DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC	
I	Je, Christine, qui ay plouré Xl ans en abbaye close, Où j'ay tousjours puis demouré Que Charles (c'est estrange chose!), Le filz du roy, se dire l'ose, S'en fouÿ de Paris de tire, Par la traïson là enclose, Ore à prime me prens à rire;	4 8
II	A rire bonement de joie Me prens pour le temps yvernage Qui se depart, où je souloie Me tenir tristement en cage. Mais or changeray mon langage De pleur en chant, quant recouvré Ay bon temps... Bien ma part avoir enduré.	12 16
III	L'an mil CCCCXXIX Reprint à luire li soleil. Il ramene le bon temps neuf Qu'on [n'] avoit veü de droit oil Puis long temps, dont plusers en dueil Orent vesqu; j'en suis de ceulx. Mais plus de rien je ne me dueil, Quant ores voy ce que [je] veulx.	20 24
IV	Si est bien le vers retourné De grant dueil en joie nouvelle Depuis le temps qu'ay sejourné Là où je suis, et la tresbelle Saison, que printemps on appelle, La Dieu mercy, qu'ay désirée, Où toute rien se renouvelle, S'est du sec au vert temps tirée.	28 32
V	C'est que le degeté enfant Du roy de France legitime, Qui long temps a esté souffrant Mains grans ennuiz, qui or aprime, Se lieva ainsi que vers prime,	36

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

	Venant comme roy couronné En puissance tresgrande et fine, Et d'esperons d'or espronné.	40
VI	Or faisons feste à nostre roy! Que tresbien soit-il revenu! Resjoïz de son noble arroy, Alons trestous, grant et menu, Au devant -- nul ne soit tenu! -- Menant joie le saluer, Louant Dieu, qui l'a maintenu, Criant "Noël!" en hault huer.	44 48
VII	Mais or vueil raconter comment Dieu a tout ce fait de sa grace, A qui je pri qu'avisement Me doint, que rien je n'y trespasse. Raconté soit en toute place, Car ce est digne de memoire, Et escript, à qui que desplace, En mainte cronique et hystoire!	52 56
VIII	Oyez par tout l'univers monde Chose sur toute merveillable! Notez se Dieu, en qui habonde Toute grace, est point secourable Au droit en fin. C'est fait notable, Consideré le present cas! Si soit aux deceüz valable, Que Fortune a flati à cas!	60 64
IX	Et note[z] comment esbahir Ne se doit nul pour infortune, Se voiant à grant tort haïr, Et courir sus par voix commune! Voie[z] comment tousjours n'est une Fortune, qui a nuit à maint! Car Dieu, qui aux tors faiz repune, Ceulx relieve en qui espoir maint.	68 72
X	Qui vit doncques chose avenir Plus hors de toute opinion (Qui à noter et souvenir Fait bien en toute region), Que France (de qui mention	76

- On faisoit que jus ert ruée)
 Soit, par divine mission,
 Du mal en si grant bien muée, 80
- XI Par tel miracle voirement
 Que, se la chose n'yert notoire
 Et evident quoy et comment,
 Il n'est homs qui le peüst croire? 84
 Chose est bien digne de memoire
 Que Dieu, par une vierge tendre,
 Ait adès voulu (chose est voire!)
 Sur France si grant grace estendre. 88
- XII O quel honneur à la couronne
 De France par divine preuve!
 Car par les graces qu'Il lui donne
 Il appert comment Il l'apreuve, 92
 Et que plus foy qu'autre part treuve
 En l'estat royal, dont je lix
 Qu'oncques (ce n'est pas chose neuve!)
 En foy n'errèrent fleurs de lix. 96
- XIII Et tu, Charles, roy des François,
 Vile d'icellui hault nom,
 Qui si grant guerre as eue ainçois
 Que bien t'en prensist se peu non: 100
 Mais, Dieu grace, or voiz ton renon
 Hault eslevé par la Pucelle,
 Qui a soubzmis soubz ton penon
 Tes ennemis (chose est nouvelle!) 104
- XIV En peu de temps; que l'on cuidoit
 Que ce feust com chose impossible
 Que ton pays, qui se perdoit,
 Reusses jamais. Or est visible— 108
 Ment tien, [puis que] qui que nuisible
 T'ait esté, tu l'as recouvré!
 C'est par la Pucelle sensible,
 Dieu mercy, qui y a ouvré! 112
- XV Si croy fermement que tel grace
 Ne te seroit de Dieu donnée,
 Se à toy, en temps et espace,
 Il n'estoit de Lui ordonnée 116
 Quelque grant chose solempnée

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

	A terminer et mettre à chief, Et qu'Il t'ait donné destinée D'estre de tresgrans faiz le chief.	120
XVI	Car ung roy de France doit estre Charles, filz de Charles, nommé, Qui sur tous rois sera grant maistre. Propheciez l'ont surnommé "Le Cerf Volant," et consumé Sera par cellui conquereur Maint fait (Dieu l'a à ce somé), Et en fin doit estre empereur.	124 128
XVII	Tout ce est le prouffit de t'ame. Je prie à Dieu que cellui soies, Et qu'Il te doint, sans le gref d'ame, Tant vivre qu'encoures tu voyes Tes enfans grans, et toutes joyes Par toy et eulz soient en France! Mais en servant Dieu toutesvoies, Ne guerre [plus] n'y face oultrance!	132 136
XVIII	Et j'ay espoir que bon seras, Droiturier et amant justice, Et [tres] tous autres passeras, Mais qu'orgueil ton fait ne honnisse; A ton pueple doulz et propice, Et craignant Dieu, qui t'a esleu Pour son servant (si com premisse En as), mais que faces ton deu.	140 144
XIX	Et comment pourras-tu jamais Dieu mercier à souffisance, Servir, doubter en tous tes fais, Qui de si grant contrariance T'a mis à paix, et toute France Relevée de tel ruyne, Quant sa tressainte providence T'a fait de si grant honneur digne?	148 152
XX	Tu en soyes loué, hault Dieu! A Toy gracier tous tenuz Sommes, qui donné temps et lieu As, où ces biens sont avenus. [A] jointes mains, grans et menus,	156

	Graces Te rendons, Dieu celeste, Par qui nous sommes parvenus A paix, et hors de grant tempeste!	160
XXI	Et toy, Pucelle beneurée, Y dois-tu estre obliée, Puis que Dieu t'a tant honorée Que as la corde desliée Qui tenoit France estroit liée? Te pourroit-on assez louer Quant ceste terre, humiliée Par guerre, as fait de paix douer?	164 168
XXII	Tu, Jehanne, de bonne heure née, Benoist soit cil qui te créa! Pucelle de Dieu ordonnée, En qui le Saint Esprit réa Sa grant grace, en qui ot et a Toute largesse de hault don, N'onc requeste ne te véa. Qui te rendra assez guerdon?	172 176
XXIII	Que puet-il d'autre estre dit plus Ne des grans faiz des temps passez? Moÿses, en qui Dieu afflus Mist graces et vertuz assez, Il tira, sans estre lassez, Le pueple de Dieu hors d'Egipe Par miracle. Ainsi repassez Nous as de mal, Pucelle eslite!	180 184
XXIV	Considerée ta personne, Qui es une jeune pucelle, A qui Dieu force et pover donne D'estre le champion et celle Qui donne à France la mamelle De paix et doulce norriture, Et ruer jus la gent rebelle, Véez bien chose oultre nature!	188 192
XXV	Car, se Dieu fist par Josué Des miracles à si grant somme, Conquerant lieux, et jus rué Y furent maint, il estoit homme Fort et puissant. Mais, toute somme,	196

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

3

	Une femme — simple bergiere — Plus preux qu'onc homs ne fut à Romme! Quant à Dieu, c'est chose legiere.	200
XXVI	Mais quant à nous, oncques parler N'oÿsmes de si grant merveille, Car tous les preux au long aler Qui ont esté, ne s'appareille Leur prouesse à ceste qui veille A bouter hors noz ennemis. Mais ce fait Dieu, qui la conseille, En qui cuer plus que d'omme a mis.	204 208
XXVII	De Gedeon on fait grant compte, Qui simple laboureur estoit, Et Dieu le fist, ce dit le conte, Combatre, ne nul n'arrestoit Contre lui, et tout conquetoit. Mais onc miracle si appert Ne fist, quoy qu'Il ammonestoit, Com pour ceste fait, il appert.	212 216
XXVIII	Hester, Judith et Delbora, Qui furent dames de grant pris, Par lesqueles Dieu restora Son pueple, qui fort estoit pris, Et d'autres plusers ay appris Qui furent preuses, n'y ot celle, Mains miracles en a pourpris. Plus a fait par ceste Pucelle.	220 224
XXIX	Par miracle fut envoyée Et divine amonition, De l'ange de Dieu convoiée Au roy, pour sa provision. Son fait n'est pas illusion, Car bien a esté esprouvée Par conseil (en conclusion, A l'effect la chose est prouvée),	228 232
XXX	Et bien esté examinée A, ains que l'on l'ait voulu croire, Devant clers et sages menée Pour ensercher se chose voire Disoit, ainçois qu'il fust notoire	236

	Que Dieu l'eust vers le roy tramise. Mais on a trouvé en histoire Qu'à ce faire elle estoit commise;	240
XXXI	Car Merlin et Sebile et Bede, Plus de V ^c ans a la virent En esperit, et pour remede En France en leurs escripz la mirent, Et leur[s] prophecies en firent, Disans qu'el pourteroit baniere Es guerres françoises, et dirent De son fait toute la maniere.	244 248
XXXII	Et sa belle vie, par foy, Monstre qu'elle est de Dieu en grace; Par quoy on adjouste plus foy A son fait. Car, quoy qu'elle face, Tousjours a Dieu devant la face, Qu'elle appelle, sert et deprie En fait, en dit; ne va en place Où sa devotion detrie.	252 256
XXXIII	O! comment lors bien y paru Quant le siege ert devant Orlens, Où premier sa force apparu! Onc miracle, si com je tiens, Ne fut plus cler, car Dieu aux siens Aida telement, qu'ennemis Ne s'aiderent ne que mors chiens. Là furent prins et à mort mis.	260 264
XXXIV	Hee! quel honneur au femenin Sexe! Que Dieu l'ayme il appert, Quant tout ce grant pueple chenin, Par qui tout le regne ert desert, Par femme est sours et recouvert, Ce que C ^m hommes [fait] n'eussent, Et les traictres mis à desert! A peine devant ne le creussent.	268 272
XXXV	Une fillete de XVI ans (N'est-ce pas chose fors nature?), A qui armes ne sont pesans, Ains semble que sa norriture Y soit, tant y est fort et dure!	276

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

3

	Et devant elle vont fuyant Les ennemis, ne nul n'y dure. Elle fait ce, mains yeulx voiant,	280
XXXVI	Et d'eulx va France descombrant, En recouvrant chasteaulx et villes. Jamais force ne fu si grant, Soient ou à cens ou à miles! Et de noz gens preux et abiles Elle est principal chevetaine. Tel force n'ot Hector n'Achilles! Mais tout ce fait Dieu, qui la menne.	284 288
XXXVII	Et vous, gens d'armes esprouvez, Qui faites l'execution, Et bons et loyaulx vous prouvez, Bien faire on en doit mention (Louez en toute nation Vous en serez!), et sans faillance Parler sur toute election De vous, et de vostre vaillance,	292 296
XXXVIII	Qui sanc, corps et vie exposez Pour le droit, en peine si dure, Et contre tous perilz osez Vous aler mettre à l'avanture. Soiés constans, car je vous jure Qu'en aurés gloire ou ciel et los! Car qui se combat pour droiture Paradis gaingne, dire l'os.	300 304
XXXIX	Si rabaissez, Anglois, voz cornes Car jamais n'aurez beau gibier! En France ne menez voz sornes! Matez estes en l'eschiquier. Vous ne [le] pensiez pas l'autrier, Où tant vous monstriez perilleux; Mais n'estiez encour ou santier, Où Dieu abat les orgueilleux.	308 312
XL	Ja cuidiés France avoir gaingnée, Et qu'elle vous deust demourer. Autrement va, faulse mesgnié[e]! Vous irés ailleurs tabourer, Se ne voulez assavouer	316

	La mort, comme voz compaignons, Que loups pevent bien devourer, Car mors gisent par les sillons!	320
XLI	Et sachez que par elle Anglois Seront mis jus sans relever, Car Dieu le veult, qui oit les voiz Des bons qu'ilz ont voulu grever! Le sanc des occis sans lever Crie contre eulz. Dieu ne veult plus Le souffrir, ains les reprouver Comme mauvais, il est conclus.	324 328
XLII	En Christianté et l'Eglise Sera par elle mis concorde. Les mescreans dont on devise, Et les herites de vie orde Destruira, car ainsi l'acorde Prophecie, qui l'a predit, Ne point n'aura misericorde De lieu, qui la foy Dieu laidit.	332 336
XLIII	Des Sarradins fera essart, En conquerant la Saintte Terre. Là menra Charles, que Dieu gard! Ains qu'il muire, fera tel erre. Cilz est cil qui la doit conquerre. Là doit-elle finer sa vie, Et l'un et l'autre gloire acquerre. Là sera la chose assovyé.	340 344
XLIV	Donc desur tous les preux passez, Ceste doit porter la couronne, Car ses faiz ja monstrent assez Que plus prouesse Dieu lui donne Qu'à tous ceulz de qui l'on raisonne. Et n'a pas encor tout parfait! Si croy que Dieu ça jus l'adonne, Afin que paix soit par son fait.	348 352
XLV	Si est tout le mains qu'à faire ait Que destruire l'Englecherie, Car elle a ailleurs plus son haît: C'est que la Foy ne soit perie. Quant des Anglois, qui que s'en rie	356

	DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC	37
	Ou pleure, il en est sué. Le temps avenir moquerie En sera fait. Jus sont rué!	360
XLVI	Et vous, rebelles rouppieux, Qui à eulz vous estes adhers, Or voiez-vous qu'il vous fust mieulx D'estre alez droit que le revers, Pour devenir aux Anglois serfs. Gardez que plus ne vous aviengne (Car trop avez esté souffers), Et de la fin bien [vous] souviengne!	364 368
XLVII	N'appercevez-vous, gent avugle, Que Dieu a icy la main mise? Et qui ne le voit est bien bugle, Car comment seroit en tel guise Ceste Pucelle ça tramise Qui tous mors vous fait jus abatre? — Ne force [n']avez qui souffise! Voulez-vous contre Dieu combatre?	372 376
XLVIII	N'a el le roy mené au sacre, Que tousjours tenoit par la main? Plus grant chose oncques devant Acre Ne fu faite; car pour certain Des contrediz y ot tout plain. Mais, maulgré tous, à grant noblesse Y fu receu, et tout à plain Sacré, et là ouý la messe.	380 384
XLIX	A tresgrant triumphe et puissance Fu Charles couronné à Rains, L'an mil CCCC, sans doubance, [Et XXIX, tout] sauf et sains, Ou gens d'armes et barons mains, Droit ou XVIIe jour De juillet. [Pou plus ou pou mains,] Par là fu V jours à sejour,	388 392
L	Avecques lui la Pucellette. En retournant par son païs, Cité ne chastel ne villete Ne remaint. Amez ou haÿs Qu'il soit, ou soient esbaÿs	396

	Ou asseurez, les habitans Se rendent. Pou sont envahis, Tant sont sa puissance doubtons!	400
LI	Voir est qu'aucuns de leur folie Cuident resister, mais peu vault, Car au derrain, qui contralie, A Dieu compere le deffault. C'est pour neant. Rendre leur fault, Vueillent ou non. N'y a si forte Resistance qui à l'assault De la Pucelle ne soit morte,	404 408
LII	Quoy qu'on ait fait grant assemblée, Cuidant son retour contredire Et lui courir sur par emblée; Mais plus n'y fault confort de mire, Car tous mors et pris tire à tire Y ont esté les contrediz, Et envoyez, com j'oÿ dire, En Enfer ou en Paradis.	412 416
LIII	Ne sçay se Paris se tendra (Car encoures n'y sont-ilz mie), Ne se la Pucelle attendra, Mais s'il en fait son ennemie, Je me doubt que dure escremie Lui rende, si qu'ailleurs a fait. S'ilz resistent heure ne demie, Mal ira, je croy, de son fait,	420 424
LIV	Car ens entrera, qui qu'en groingne! — La Pucelle lui a promis. Paris, tu cuides que Bourgoingne Defende qu'il ne soit ens mis? Non fera, car ses ennemis Point ne se fait. Nul n'a puissance Qui l'en gardast, et tu soubmis Seras, et ton outrecuidance!	428 432
LV	O Paris tresmal conseillé! Folz habitans sans confiance! Ayme[s]-tu mieulz estre essillié Qu'à ton prince faire accordance? Certes, ta grant contrariance	436

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

	Te détruira, se ne t'avises! Trop mieulx te feust par suppliance Requerir mercy. Mal y visés!	440
LVI	J'entens des mauvais, car des bons Y a maint, je n'en fais pas doubte, Mais parler n'osent, j'en respons, A qui moult il desplaist sans doubte Que leur prince ainsi on deboute. Si n'auront pas ceulx deservie La punition où se boute Paris, où maint perdront la vie.	444 448
LVII	Et vous, toutes villes rebelles, Et gens qui avez regnié Vostre seigneur, et ceulx et celles Qui pour autre l'avez nié, Or soit après aplanié Par doulceur, requerant pardon! Car se vous este[s] manié A force, à tart vendrez au don.	452 456
LVIII	Et qu'i[l] ne soit occision Faite, retarde tant qu'il puet, Ne sur char d'omme incision, Car de sang espandre se deult. Mais, au fort, qui rendre ne veult Par bel et doulceur ce qu'est sien, Se par force en effusion De sang le recouvre, il fait bien.	460 464
LIX	Helas! Il est si debonnaire Qu'à chascun il veult pardonner! Et la Pucelle lui fait faire, Qui ensuit Dieu. Or ordonner Vueillez voz cueurs et vous donner Comme loyaulx François à lui! Et quant on l'orra sermonner N'en serés reprins de nulluy.	468 472
LX	Si pry Dieu qu'Il mecte en courage A vous tous qu'ainsy le faciez, Afin que le cruel orage De ces guerres soit effaciez, Et que vostre vie passiez	476

40

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

En paix, soubz vostre chief greigneur,
Si que jamais ne l'offensiez
Et que vers vous soit bon seigneur. 480
Amen

LXI

Donné ce Ditié par Christine,
L'an dessusdit mil CCCC
Et XXIX, le jour où fine 484
Le mois de juillet. Mais j'entens
Qu'aucuns se tendront mal contens
De ce qu'il contient, car qui chiere
A embrunche, et les yeux pesans,
Ne puet regarder la lumiere. 488

Explicit ung tresbel Ditié fait par Christine.

A TRANSLATION OF THE DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

- I I, Christine, who have wept for eleven years in a walled abbey where I have lived ever since Charles (how strange this is!) the King's son—dare I say it?—fled in haste from Paris, I who have lived enclosed there on account of the treachery, now, for the first time, begin to laugh;
- II I begin to laugh heartily for joy at the departure of the wintry season, during which I was wont to live confined to a dreary cage. But now I shall change my language from one of tears to one of song, because I have found the good season once again... well endured my share.
- III In 1429 the sun began to shine again. It brings back the good, new season which had not really been seen for a long time—and because of that many people had lived out their lives in sorrow; I myself am one of them. But I no longer grieve over anything, now that I can see what I desire.
- IV But since the time when I came to stay where I am the situation has completely changed, great sorrow has given way to new joy and, thanks be to God, the lovely season called Spring, which I have longed for and in which every creature/thing is renewed, has brought greenness out of barren winter.
- V The reason is that the rejected child of the rightful King of France, who has long suffered many a great misfortune and who now approaches, rose up as if towards prime, coming as a crowned King in might and majesty, wearing spurs of gold.
- VI Now let us greet our King! Welcome to him on his return! Overjoyed at the sight of his noble array, let us all, both great and small, step forward to greet him joyously — and let no one hold back — praising God, who has kept him safe, and shouting 'Noël!' in a loud voice.
- VII But now I wish to relate how God, to whom I pray for guidance lest I omit anything, accomplished all this through His grace. May it be told everywhere, for it is

worthy of being remembered, and may it be written down – no matter whom it may displease – in many a chronicle and history-book!

VIII

Now hear, throughout the whole world, of something which is more wonderful than anything else! See if God, in whom all grace abounds, does not in the end support what is right. This is a fact worthy of note, given the matter in hand! And let it be of profit to the disillusioned, whom Fortune has cast down!

IX

And note how, when someone finds himself quite unjustly attacked and hated on all sides, there is no need for such a person to feel dismayed by misfortune. See how Fortune, who has harmed many a one, is so inconstant, for God, who opposes all wrong deeds, raises up those in whom hope dwells.

X

Did anyone, then, see anything quite so extraordinary come to pass (something that is well worth noting and remembering in every region), namely, that France (about whom it was said she had been cast down) should see her fortunes change, by divine command, from evil to such great good,

XI

as the result, indeed, of such a miracle that, if the matter were not so well-known and crystal-clear in every aspect, nobody would ever believe it? It is a fact well worth remembering that God should nevertheless have wished (and this is the truth!) to bestow such great blessings on France, through a young virgin.

XII

And what honour for the French crown, this proof of divine intervention! For all the blessings which God bestows upon it demonstrate how much He favours it and that He finds more faith in the Royal House than anywhere else; as far as it is concerned, I read (and there is nothing new in this) that the Lilies of France never erred in matters of faith.

XIII

And you Charles, King of France, seventh of that noble name, who have been involved in such a great war before things turned out at all well for you, now, thanks be to God, see your honour exalted by the Maid who has laid low your enemies beneath your standard (and this *is* new!)

- XIV in a short time; for it was believed quite impossible that you should ever recover your country which you were on the point of losing. Now it is manifestly yours for, no matter who may have done you harm, you have recovered it! And all this has been brought about by the intelligence of the Maid who, God be thanked, has played her part in this matter!
- XV And I firmly believe that God would never have bestowed such grace upon you if it were not ordained by Him that you should, in the course of time, accomplish and bring to completion some great and solemn task; I believe too that He has destined you to be the author of very great deeds.
- XVI For there will be a King of France called Charles, son of Charles, who will be supreme ruler over all Kings. Prophecies have given him the name of 'The Flying Stag', and many a deed will be accomplished by this conqueror (God has called him to this task) and in the end he will be emperor.
- XVII All this is to the profit of your soul. I pray to God that you may be the person I have described, and that He grant you long life, to nobody's harm, so that you may yet see your children grown up; I pray too that all joy come to France because of you and them! But, as you serve God always, may war never cause havoc there again (*or by emending face to face*[s]: 'May you never wage war to the death there again!')
- XVIII I hope that you will be good and upright, and a lover of justice and that you will surpass all others, provided your deeds are not tarnished by pride, that you will be gentle and well-disposed towards your people, that you will always love God who elected you as His servant (and you have a first manifestation of this), on condition that you do your duty.
- XIX And how will you ever be able to thank God enough, serve and fear Him in all your deeds (for He has led you from such great adversity to peace and raised up the whole of France from such ruin) when His most holy providence made you worthy of such signal honour?

- XX May You be praised for this, great God! It is our bounden duty to thank You who decreed time and place for these blessings to come about. With hands clasped, both great and small, we all thank You, Heavenly Lord, who have guided us through the great tempest into peace [ful water].
- XXI And you, blessed Maid, are you to be forgotten, given that God honoured you so much that you untied the rope which held France so tightly bound? Could one ever praise you enough for having bestowed peace on this land humiliated by war?
- XXII Blessed be He who created you, Joan, who were born at a propitious hour! Maiden sent from God, into whom the Holy Spirit poured His great grace, in whom [i.e. the Holy Spirit] there was and is an abundance of noble gifts, never did Providence refuse you any request. Who can ever begin to repay you?
- XXIII And what more can be said of any other person or of the great deeds of the past? Moses, upon whom God in His bounty bestowed many a blessing and virtue, miraculously and indefatigably led God's people out of Egypt. In the same way, blessed Maid, you have led us out of evil!
- XXIV When we take your person into account, you who are a young maiden, to whom God gives the strength and power to be the champion who casts the rebels down and feeds France with the sweet, nourishing milk of peace, here indeed is something quite extraordinary!
- XXV For if God performed such a great number of miracles through Joshua who conquered many a place and cast down many an enemy, he, Joshua, was a strong and powerful *man*. But, after all, a *woman* — a simple shepherdess — braver than any man ever was in Rome! As far as God is concerned, this was easily accomplished.
- XXVI But as for us, we never heard tell of such an extraordinary marvel, for the prowess of all the great men of the past cannot be compared to this woman's whose concern it is to cast out our enemies. This is God's

doing: it is He who guides her and who has given her a heart greater than that of any man.

- XXVII Much is made of Gideon, who was a simple workman, and it was God, so the story tells, who made him fight; nobody could stand firm before him and he conquered everything. But whatever guidance God gave him, it is clear that He never performed so striking a miracle as He does for this woman.
- XXVIII I have heard of Esther, Judith and Deborah, who were women of great worth, through whom God delivered His people from oppression, and I have heard of many other worthy women as well, champions every one, through them He performed many miracles, but He has accomplished more through this Maid.
- XXIX She was miraculously sent by divine command and conducted by the angel of the Lord to the King, in order to help him. Her achievement is no illusion for she was carefully put to the test in council (in short, a thing is proved by its effect)
- XXX and well examined, before people were prepared to believe her; before it became common knowledge that God had sent her to the King, she was brought before clerks and wise men so that they could find out if she was telling the truth. But it was found in history-records that she was destined to accomplish her mission;
- XXXI for more than 500 years ago, Merlin, the Sibyl and Bede foresaw her coming, entered her in their writings as someone who would put an end to France's troubles, made prophecies about her, saying that she would carry the banner in the French wars and describing all that she would achieve.
- XXXII And, in truth, the beauty of her life proves that she has been blessed with God's grace — and for that reason her actions are more readily accepted as genuine. For whatever she does, she always has her eyes fixed on God, to whom she prays and whom she invokes and serves in word and deed; nowhere does her devotion ever falter.

- XXXIII Oh, how clear this was at the siege of Orléans where her power was first made manifest! It is my belief that no miracle was ever more evident, for God so came to the help of His people that our enemies were unable to help each other any more than would dead dogs. It was there that they were captured and put to death.
- XXXIV Oh! What honour for the female sex! It is perfectly obvious that God has special regard for it when all these wretched people who destroyed the whole Kingdom — now recovered and made safe by a woman, something that 5000 *men* could not have done — and the traitors [have been] exterminated. Before the event they would scarcely have believed this possible.
- XXXV A little girl of sixteen (isn't this something quite supernatural?) who does not even notice the weight of the arms she bears — indeed her whole upbringing seems to have prepared her for this, so strong and resolute is she! And her enemies go fleeing before her, not one of them can stand up to her. She does all this in full view of everyone,
- XXXVI and drives her enemies out of France, recapturing castles and towns. Never did anyone see greater strength, even in hundreds or thousands of men! And she is the supreme captain of our brave and able men. Neither Hector nor Achilles had such strength! This is God's doing: it is He who leads her.
- XXXVII And you trusty men-at-arms who carry out the task and prove yourselves to be good and loyal, one must certainly make mention of you (you will be praised in every nation!) and not fail to speak of you and your valour in preference to everything else,
- XXXVIII you who, in pain and suffering, expose life and limb in defence of what is right and dare to risk confronting every danger. Be constant, for this, I promise, will win you glory and praise in heaven. For whoever fights for justice wins a place in Paradise — this I do venture to say.
- XXXIX And so, you English, draw in your horns for you will never capture any good game! Don't attempt any foolish

enterprise in France! You have been check-mated. A short time ago, when you looked so fierce, you had no inkling that this would be so; but you were not yet treading the path upon which God casts down the proud.

- XL You thought you had already conquered France and that she must remain yours. Things have turned out otherwise, you treacherous lot! Go and beat your drums elsewhere, unless you want to taste death, like your companions, whom wolves may well devour, for their bodies lie dead amidst the furrows!
- XLI And know that she will cast down the English for good, for this is God's will: He hears the prayer of the good whom they wanted to harm! The blood of those who are dead and have no hope of being brought back to life again cries out against them. God will tolerate this no longer — He has decided, rather, to condemn them as evil.
- XLII She will restore harmony in Christendom and the Church. She will destroy the unbelievers people talk about, and the heretics and their vile ways, for this is the substance of a prophecy that has been made. Nor will she have mercy on any place which treats faith in God with disrespect.
- XLIII She will destroy the Saracens, by conquering the Holy Land. She will lead Charles there, whom God preserve! Before he dies he will make such a journey. He is the one who is to conquer it. It is there that she is to end her days and that both of them are to win glory. It is there that the whole enterprise will be brought to completion.
- XLIV Therefore, in preference to all the brave men of times past, this woman must wear the crown, for her deeds show clearly enough already that God bestows more courage upon her than upon all those men about whom people speak. And she has not yet accomplished her whole mission! I believe that God bestows her here below so that peace may be brought about through her deeds.

- XLV And yet destroying the English race is not her main concern for her aspirations lie more elsewhere: it is her concern to ensure the survival of the Faith. As for the English, whether it be a matter for joy or sorrow, they are done for. In days to come scorn will be heaped on them. They have been cast down!
- XLVI And all you base rebels who have joined them, you can see now that it would have been better for you to have gone forwards rather than backwards as you did, thereby becoming the serfs of the English. Beware that more does not befall you (for you have been tolerated long enough!), and remember what the outcome will be!
- XLVII Oh, all you blind people, can't you detect God's hand in this? If you can't, you are truly stupid for how else could the Maid who strikes you all down dead have been sent to us? — And you don't have sufficient strength! Do you want to fight against God?
- XLVIII Has she not led the King with her own hand to his coronation? No greater deed was performed at Acre; for there were certainly plenty of opponents. But in spite of everyone, he was most nobly received and truly anointed, and there he heard mass.
- XLIX It was exactly on the 17th day of July 1429 that Charles was, without any doubt, safely crowned at Rheims, amidst great triumph and splendour and surrounded by many men-at-arms and barons; and he stayed there for approximately five days,
- L with the little Maid. As he returns through his country, neither city nor castle nor small town can hold out against them. Whether he be loved or hated, whether they be dismayed or reassured, the inhabitants surrender. Few are attacked, so fearful are they of his power.
- LI It is true that some, in their folly, think they can resist, but this serves little purpose, for, in the end, whoever does offer opposition must pay God for his mistake. It is quite pointless. Whether they want to or not, they must surrender. No matter how strong the resistance offered, it collapses beneath the Maid's assault,

DITIÉ DE JEHANNE D'ARC

- LII even though huge forces were gathered together, in order to launch a surprise attack and bar his return; but there is no need for a doctor's attentions now, for all his opponents have been captured and killed, one by one, and dispatched, so I've been told, to Heaven or Hell.
- LIII I don't know if Paris will hold out (for they have not reached there yet) or if the Maid will delay [*or if it will resist the Maid*]. But if it decides to see her as an enemy, I fear that she will subject it to a fierce attack, as she has done elsewhere. If they offer resistance for an hour, or even half an hour, it's my belief that things will go badly for them,
- LIV for [the King] will enter Paris, no matter who may grumble about it! – The Maid has given her word that he will. Paris, do you think Burgundy will prevent him from entering? By no means, for he does not see himself as an enemy. Nobody has the power to prevent him, and you will be overcome, you and your presumption!
- LV Oh Paris, how could you be so ill-advised? Foolish inhabitants, you are lacking in trust! Do you prefer to be laid waste, Paris, rather than make peace with your prince? If you are not careful your great opposition will destroy you. It would be far better for you if you were to humbly beg for mercy. You are quite miscalculating!
- LVI It is the evil inhabitants I'm referring to, for there are many good people there, I have no doubt about that; but, take my word for it, these good people, who are no doubt much displeased to see their prince rejected in this way, do not dare speak out. They will not merit the punishment which will fall upon Paris and cost many a person his life.
- LVII And as for you, all you rebel towns, all of you who have renounced your lord, all of you men and women who have transferred your allegiance to another, may everything now be peacefully settled, with you beseeching his pardon! For if force is used against you, the gift [i.e. of forgiveness] will come too late [i.e. not at all, never].

- LVIII And so as to avoid killing and wounding anyone [the King] delays for as long as he can, for the spilling of blood grieves him. But, in the end, if someone does not want to hand over, with good grace, what is rightly his, he is perfectly justified if he does recover it by force and bloodshed.
- LIX Alas! He is so magnanimous that he wishes to pardon each and everyone. And it is the Maid, the faithful servant of God, who makes him do this. Now as loyal Frenchmen submit your hearts and yourselves to him! And when you hear him speak, you will not be reproached by anyone.
- LX And I pray to God that He will prevail upon you to act in this way, so that the cruel storm of these wars may be erased from memory and that you may live your lives in peace, always loyal to your supreme ruler, so that you may never offend him and that he may be a good overlord to you. Amen.
- LXI This poem was completed by Christine in the above-mentioned year, 1429, on the last day of July. But I believe that some people will be displeased by its contents, for a person whose head is bowed and whose eyes are heavy cannot look at the light.

Explicit a very beautiful poem composed by Christine.

Appendix B:

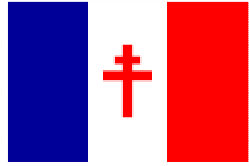
Subsequent Versions of Voltaire's *La Pucelle d'Orléans*⁹⁷

LA PUCELLE D'ORLEANS						
Edition encadrée 1775	Louvain 1755	Paris 1755	Londres 1756	sl 1762	sl 1771	sl 1773
i	i	i	i	i	i	i
ii	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii	ii
iii	iii	iii	iii	iii	iii	iii
iv	iv	iv	iv	iv	iv	iv
v	v	v	v	v	v	v
vi	vi	vi	vi	vi	vi	vi
vii	vii	vii	vii	vii	vii	vii
viii				viii	viii	viii
ix				ix	ix	ix
x	viii	viii	viii	x	x	x
xi	ix	ix	x	xi	xi	xi
xii	x	x	xi	xii	xii	xii
xiii	xi	xi	xii	xiii	xiii	xiii
xiv	xii	xii	xv	xiv	xiv	xiv
xv	xiii	xiii	xvi	xv	xv	xv
xvi				xvi	xvi	xvi
xvii				xvii	xvii	xvii
xviii						xviii
xix				xviii	xviii	xix
xx	xiv	xiv	xvii	xix	xix	xx
xxi	xv	xv	xviii	xx	xx	xxi

⁹⁷ This chart reveals the cantos that were added in various editions.

Appendix C:

Image of de Gaulle's Free French Flag⁹⁸



⁹⁸ De Gaulle's flag features the Cross of Lorraine.

Vita

Stephanie Louise Coker was born in Greenwood, Mississippi, in 1978 and raised on a cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta. After high school, Stephanie attended Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. While a student there, she participated in study abroad programs to London, England and to Montpellier, France. In 2000, Stephanie graduated *summa cum laude* with a double major in French and English and a minor in theatre.

She then moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to pursue graduate studies. In 2002, Stephanie took part in a foreign exchange, spending one year as an English teaching assistant in France at the Université d'Angers. Upon her return to Louisiana State University, Stephanie earned her master's degree in French in 2004. During her time at the university, Stephanie has taught various lower-level French language courses and was recognized in 2005 and 2007 for exceptional teaching and service in the Department of French Studies. She was also awarded the Elliot Dow Healy Memorial Fellowship in 2006 as the outstanding student in medieval studies. In 2005, Stephanie received a dissertation research grant from the Department of French Studies. She traveled to Orléans, France, in order to explore the holdings of the Centre Jeanne d'Arc.

Recently, she served as a contributing author and co-editor of *Student Manual to accompany Vis-à-vis*, 3rd edition (McGraw-Hill publishing, 2008). This work, authored by Caroline E. Nash, acts as a supplementary text for students of French and focuses on grammar, composition, and Louisiana culture. In November 2007, Stephanie successfully defended her doctoral dissertation entitled: "How Legend Constructs French National Identity: Jeanne d'Arc." In December 2007, she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French.

Stephanie's interests include dance, piano, and theatre; and she also enjoys traveling. One of her most recent adventures was to Capetown, South Africa.