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## The Mnemonic Maid: Joan of Arc in Public Memory

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THE MNEMONIC MAID:  
JOAN OF ARC IN PUBLIC MEMORY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduation 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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December 2016



Twenty odd years ago in a two-stoplight town in rural North Carolina, Vickie Honeycutt and Richard Miller took our class on a field trip to a university library. The same year, Brenda Furr taught me my first words of French. With great appreciation for the experiences that these teachers enabled, I dedicate this work to them.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the summer of 2015, while doing archival research at the BNF, I came across a letter that a doctoral student who had just begun researching his dissertation topic had written to Simone de Beauvoir. The correspondent's faultless French and careful lettering suggested that the words on the brittle page in my hands had been meticulously drafted and recopied. After asking several questions related to his topic, the *thésard* confessed, a little despairingly, "C'est mon premier travail de ce genre, et mon incompetence théorique et technique m'effaye souvent." I laughed in recognition at what could have been a line from my own journal. At that time, I was six months into the writing process, and what struck me about his confession was the familiar bewilderment it conveyed. I suspect that anyone who has ever undertaken a lengthy writing project confronts this feeling at some point. Now, a year and a half later, what strikes me is the realization that despite any *incompétence* he felt, he nonetheless initiated a dialogue with one of the foremost intellectuals of his time. In other words, his recognition of his limits created a space for him to connect to someone else, and that connection offered the possibility of growth. I do not know if Simone de Beauvoir replied or if she offered answers to his questions. I do know, however, that my own writing process has benefitted greatly from the involvement of others, often at moments when I felt constrained by a lack of knowledge, resources, or perspective. More than anything, this experience has taught me the value of asking for help. Looking back, I feel profoundly grateful for the various forms in which it arrived.

My co-chairs, Kate Jensen and Jack Yeager, have been kind, insightful mentors throughout this process, and I feel very lucky to have worked with two people I deeply respect as scholars and teachers. From the earliest stages, they saw potential in this work and encouraged me to pursue it, helping me to focus on possibilities instead of problems. Dr. Jensen's thoughtful

feedback, practical suggestions, enthusiasm, and regular communication have allowed me to keep up the momentum at crucial moments. As importantly, her willingness to discuss her own approach to writing has made the process of completing a dissertation much more accessible and enjoyable. I am equally thankful to have worked closely with Dr. Yeager since my first semester of graduate school. His patient guidance during the writing of my Master's thesis helped me develop the habits, discipline, and self-assurance needed to pursue a larger project. This work has benefitted greatly from Dr. Yeager's meticulous proofreading, his creative connections, and his willingness to help me think divergently, in writing as in life.

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It would have been difficult to complete this project without the funding to sustain myself while writing. An LSU dissertation fellowship during the 2015-2016 academic year made it possible to peck away at the pages full time. Additionally, a Department of French Studies summer research grant, instated by John Protevi, significantly facilitated the completion of the last phase of this project. More generally, I appreciate the support offered by both the chairs of the department during my time at LSU, Greg Stone and John Protevi, and the convivial back-to-school and holiday parties they hosted. I thank Cathy Luquette, veteran teacher and fellow yogi, for her friendship and guidance over the last several years, as well as her crucial role in facilitating an externship that has allowed me to teach at McKinley High School.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xii
PROLOGUE. JOAN OF ARC: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY.....	1
Landscapes of Loss: The Hundred Years War.....	1
Days in Domrémy: Joan's Childhood.....	3
Pagan Picnics: The Fairy Tree.....	5
Strong but Slight: Joan's Appearance.....	6
Speaking with Saints: The Voices.....	8
Of Charles and Chinon: Meeting with the King.....	11
Onward to Orléans: The Battle Begins.....	14
Crowning a King: The Coronation at Reims.....	18
The Making of the Maid: Joan's Name.....	20
Captured at Compiègne: The Fall from Grace.....	22
Political Prisoner: Captive in Rouen.....	25
Trial and Testimony: The Condemnation.....	26
Sentenced to the Stake: The Final Moments.....	32
Twice Tried: The Rehabilitation.....	35
INTRODUCTION.....	37
The Story of a Statue.....	37
Project Overview.....	41
Chapter Overviews.....	45
CHAPTER 1. INVOKING JOAN: MYTHIC HISTORIES, PUBLIC MEMORIES.....	51
Introduction.....	51
The Meanings of Myth.....	52
The 15 <sup>th</sup> Century Rehabilitation.....	54
The 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Rediscovery.....	62
A Postcolonial Joan.....	71
Memory, Identity, and Rhetoric.....	76
Memory.....	76
Identity.....	80
Rhetoric.....	83
Johannic Studies.....	84
Invoking Joan: The Maid as Muse to Memory.....	85

CHAPTER 2. “YOU SEE MY MOTHER’S PEOPLE ORIGINALLY CAME FROM FRANCE”: COLONIAL NOSTALGIA AND THE NEGOTIATION OF ORIGINS.....	87
Introduction.....	87
The Joan of Arc Statue: Origins.....	94
Unclaimed.....	94
French Intervention.....	100
Unveiled.....	105
Rich Blood.....	107
Harrah’s.....	116
Conclusion.....	120
CHAPTER 3. “ELLE SE PREND POUR JEANNE D’ARC!”: GENDERING MEMORY IN THE CASES OF JOAN OF ARC AND DJAMILA BOUPACHA.....	123
Introduction: The Prison Cell.....	123
Contextualizing Djamila Boupacha in the Algerian War.....	133
Illegible Bodies.....	139
Joan.....	139
Djamila.....	147
Interpreting the Illegible.....	150
Constructions of Virginity.....	150
Patriarchal Paratexts.....	160
Filtered Feelings.....	170
Pollution, Shame, and the National Body.....	178
Conclusion.....	183
CHAPTER 4. “HISTOIRE SANS MÉMOIRE”: FRANCE’S FRONT NATIONAL AND THE EFFACEMENT OF COLONIAL HISTORY.....	185
Introduction.....	185
Jean et Jeanne: Historical Context.....	192
Motifs of Johannic Myth in FN Rhetoric.....	201
Occupation.....	201
Exceptionalism.....	214
False Witnessing.....	223
Marine et Jean(ne): Rewriting Origins .....	230
Conclusion.....	235
CHAPTER 5. “FIERY COURAGE AND INCANDESCENT FAITH”: JOAN’S STORY AS NEW ORLEANS’ COMEBACK.....	237
Introduction.....	237
Parade Day.....	239
Historical Overview.....	242
Playing with Fire.....	249
Praying for Judgment.....	263
Bead Free.....	275
Conclusion.....	282

CHAPTER 6. PARTING SOUVENIRS: JOAN CITINGS IN FRANCOPHONE TEXTS.....	285
Overview.....	285
Summary of Shared Characteristics.....	287
Avenues for Future Research.....	291
WORKS CITED.....	303
VITA.....	324



## LIST OF FIGURES

1	<i>Jeanne d'Arc écoutant ses voix</i> by François Rude in the Louvre in Paris (1852). Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen.....	1
2	<i>La France Renaissance</i> by Holger Wederkinch on the Bir-Hakeim bridge in Paris (1930). Photo by the author. ....	1
3	<i>Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher</i> by Maxime Real del Sarte in the <i>Vieux Marché</i> in Rouen (1930). Photo by the author.....	1
4	The only existing image of Joan of Arc created during her lifetime, drawn by Clément de Fauquembergue (1429). Photo by the author.....	6
5	<i>Joan of Arc</i> by Jules Bastien-Lepage (1879).....	8
6	<i>Joan Meets the Dauphin Charles</i> , Basilica of Bois Chenu (date unknown).....	11
7	<i>Entrée de Jeanne d'Arc à Orléans</i> by Jean Jacques Scherrer (1887).....	14
8	<i>Jeanne D'Arc à Reims lors du sacre du roi Charles VII</i> , a fresco in the Pantheon in Paris by Jules Eugène Lenepveu (1874). Photo by Tijmen Stam.....	18
9	Joan of Arc's signature from a letter to the people of Reims on March 28, 1430. .....	20
10	Illustration from James William Edmund Doyle's <i>Chronicle of England, B.C. 55- A.D. 1485</i> (1864).....	22
11	Tower of the prison in Rouen where Joan was held prisoner. Photo by the author.....	25
12	Statue of Jean Baptiste LeMoine de Bienville in the French Quarter; sculpted by Angela Gregory (1955). Photo by the author.....	87
13	Statue of Joan of Arc in the French Quarter; sculpted by Emmanuel Frémiet (1889). Photo by the author.....	87
14	<i>La Pucelle d'Orléans</i> by Denis Foyatier at the Place des Martois in Orléans, France (1855). Photo by the author.....	102
15	Plaque in recognition of New Orleanians' contributions to the repairs made to the statue in Orleans. Photo by the author.....	102
16	Frémiet's statue at the French Quarter site. Photo by the author.....	121

17	Plaque on the Pont St. Michel inaugurated by Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë in 2001. Photo by the author.....	189
18	Marwa Gedhir and Tara Smithson at the Joan of Arc parade (2015). Photo by the author.....	240
19	The route for the Joan of Arc parade, from the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc’s website (2015).....	242
20	Matchbook distributed to parade goers (2014). Photo by the author.....	254
21	Flaming Heretic trading card distributed at the parade (2014). Photo by the author.....	256
22	Earplugs distributed at the parade (2016). Photo by the author.....	259
23	Joan of Arc’s birthday cake at the base of the statue (2013). Photo by the author .....	262
24	Joan of Arc pendant distributed at the parade (2015). Photo by the author.....	276
25	A Carnival participant at a parade on St. Charles Avenue wearing beads made in China (2011). Photo by the author.....	278

## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the relationship between Joan of Arc, postcolonial identity, and public memory. Since her repopularization in the nineteenth century, Joan of Arc has become one of the most emblematic figures of French history. Commemorated in public statuary, celebrated by writers, and championed by politicians, la Pucelle's story is tantamount to national myth. While Joan of Arc's centrality to France's iconic imagining of itself during the spread of its empire has received much critical attention, her postcolonial afterlife remains understudied. This project offers a counterpoint to the prevailing assumption that Joan of Arc has few implications for postcolonial studies by considering her as a medium through which French and francophone populations comment on the process of decolonization and its aftereffects, and consequently reframe their relationships to one another. Drawing on traditional literary texts as well as political speeches, social media posts, trial testimony, and grassroots public performance from the 1950s-present, this project asks when and to what ends French and francophone populations linked through colonial histories invoke the figure of Joan of Arc. Ultimately, I argue that Joan of Arc's myth offers an imaginative space where groups and individuals can revive, reject, revise, and relate memories perceived as crucial to their identities.

This work contributes to postcolonial studies by considering why Joan of Arc becomes a mnemonic trigger for the revision of national histories in the postcolonial age. This dissertation has implications for memory studies insofar as it evaluates the mechanisms by which memories exceed their own historical circumstances to become incorporated into new contexts in accordance with Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory. More generally, this project provides a case study for how groups and individuals appropriate national symbols to comment on transnational concerns.

## PROLOGUE. JOAN OF ARC: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY



Figure 1: *Jeanne d’Arc écoutant ses voix* by François Rude in the Louvre in Paris (1852). Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen.

Figure 2: *La France Renaissance* by Holger Wederkinch on the Bir-Hakeim bridge in Paris (1930). Photo by the author.

Figure 3: *Jeanne d’Arc au bûcher* by Maxime Real del Sarte in the *Vieux Marché* in Rouen (1930). Photo by the author.

### Landscapes of Loss: The Hundred Years War

In a familiar triptych of images, we most often see her: tilting her head heavenward to catch the conversations of angels, battlefield bound on a muscular steed in mid-gallop, or at the stake, flames splayed out behind her (figs. 1-3). Joan of Arc is easily one of the most emblematic figures of France, but who was she? What made up her days in Domrémy in the seventeen years before she presented herself to the Dauphin and claimed his confidence as the bearer of a divine message? If Joan’s demise was well documented, her arrival on earth remains more mysterious. No document pinpoints the date of her birth. No church register records the hour of her baptism. At her condemnation trial, Joan said she was “nineteen, or thereabouts,”

allowing, at least, for an approximation of her birth year as 1412.<sup>1</sup> But records of birth were not regularly kept in the Middle Ages, especially for families of middling means. Although there is no way of verifying Joan of Arc's exact birth date, a contemporaneous letter by poet Perceval de Boulainvilliers fixes it at January 6, 1412. As Boulainvilliers provides no source for this birthdate, it seems plausible that he chose it to coincide with the Christian feast of the Epiphany, making Joan of Arc's birthday the bookend to the twelve days of Christmas that begin with Christ's coming. Even within her lifetime, the future saint had begun to take on mythic dimensions.

Schism and scarcity defined the world into which Joan was born. If Joan's contemporaries drew comfort from the idea that a warrior prophet had emerged from the far reaches of rural France to point them to the path of victory, it is perhaps because she beamed hope into a grim existence. In 1378, rival papacies in Avignon and Rome split Christians across Europe into two camps until the Council of Constance formally reunited them in 1418. The series of battles collectively known as the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), further embroiled England and France in a conflict initiated by dynastic quarrels, struggles over trade relationships with Flanders, and arguments over the English-controlled territory of Guienne within France. After the abrupt end to the Capetian dynasty, when Philip IV died with no sons to succeed him (1314), competing cousins clamored for the crown resulting in court cases, duels, and assassinations (Adams 2).

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<sup>1</sup> The fourteen witnesses questioned about Joan's age at the rehabilitation trial are similarly tentative concerning her age, estimating it as anywhere from eighteen to twenty (Beaune 29).

By the time of Joan's birth, seventy-five years of English occupation had left France's landscape ravaged and its population internally divided into Burgundians,<sup>2</sup> who had allied themselves with the English occupiers, and Armagnacs,<sup>3</sup> who had pledged their loyalty to Charles VII, a royal heir living in exile in Chinon. While Joan was still a child, a French defeat at Agincourt in 1415 cleared the way for an English claim to the crown, which was later safeguarded with the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. The treaty guaranteed that Henry V, the English king, had access to the crown through marriage with Catherine Plantagenet, Charles VI's daughter. Catherine's brother, and Charles VI's fifth and only living son, Charles VII, was entirely cut out of the picture. The reputation of the disinherited dauphin's parents, sullied by Charles's father's bouts of madness and his mother's rumored infidelity, further discredited Charles's chances for the crown.

### **Days in Domrémy: Joan's Childhood**

Joan grew up in a tiny town of fewer than 200 inhabitants in the Lorraine region on the northeast edge of France. Ribboned off by the Meuse River to the East, Domrémy was situated near the border where France met the Holy Roman Empire (Spoto 2). As a consequence of France's political instability, Joan's childhood unfolded in a land imperiled by proximal battles and roving bands of soldiers. Practiced in pillaging, these men-at-arms had slaughtered livestock, scorched vineyards, and reduced to rubble the village church (Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar 60). Repercussions of France's embattled state rippled into Joan's own circle of *bien aimés*: her cousin was killed in battle; her godparent, captured (Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar

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<sup>2</sup> So named because they were led by John II, Duke of Burgundy.

<sup>3</sup> So named because Bernard d'Armagnac had once headed the resistance.

60). The precarious conditions of their existence once drove Joan's family to take refuge in a neighboring town for two weeks' time. Battles blustered on against the backdrop of the more quotidian hardships of medieval life: the plague festered, and as mortality rates rose, birth rates declined. A pair of harsh winters left a dire human deficit, and poverty imperiled those who survived (Contamine, Bouzy, and H  lary 33).

The fourth of five children, Joan had a fairly humble upbringing, though not so scant in resources that her parents could not host the occasional out-of-towner in a spare room of their house. Though playwrights and politicians have often depicted her as a *fille du peuple*, it is more accurate to say that, by medieval standards, Joan led something akin to a middle class existence. Her father owned a vast plot of pasture, fifty acres, with livestock to populate it, and he even held a position within the local government (Spoto 2).

By Joan's own report, her upbringing appears entirely conventional. Like most girls of a similar social standing, she tended to household tasks and cultivated skills in the domestic arts, even boasting at her condemnation trial that she could outspin and outstitch any woman in Rouen (Tisset 45). Though often assimilated into Judeo-Christian iconography as a simple shepherdess, flanked by her flocks when first accosted by the archangel Michael in Domr  my, Joan's own trial testimony states she didn't normally go into the fields with the animals (Tisset 45). As for formal education, she had none. Joan professed she "knew neither A nor B," yet she was gifted with a rhetorical agility that allowed her to sidestep scholars' barbs and theologians' traps at her trial. She attributed her religious instruction entirely to her mother, who passed on prayers and creeds orally: the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria* and the *Credo* (Tisset 41).

## Pagan Picnics: The Fairy Tree

If the influence of organized religion saturated the lives of common citizens in Joan's time, Christianity still comfortably cohabited with folk traditions. While villagers sought guidance from the local priest, they also consulted the nearby wise woman and saw no contradiction in these overlapping practices. So like the other children her age, Joan participated in the *printemps* play that appears to be a holdover from pagan rites. An ancient beech tree on the outskirts of the neighboring forest, *le Bois Chesnu*, was the centerpiece of these games. Visible from Joan's home, the storied tree was great in girth with branches that bent to the ground, its lower limbs in easy reach of children's fingers (Beaune 55). It sat alongside a spring reported to have healing properties and was called alternately *l'Arbre des dames*, *l'Abre (abri) des dames*, and *l'Arbre des fées*.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, village girls gathered around it to dance, sing, and string its limbs with garlands in Mary's honor, leaving them until the beginning of summer (Meltzer 497). In the liminal landscape where the town touched the forest, inhabitants tolerated residual rites of nature worship even if such practices appear to have become a source of embarrassment by the time of Joan's rehabilitation trial in 1456 (Beaune 60, Meltzer 498). Such discomfort may have motivated some witnesses to pass off these holdovers of religious rites simply as picnics in celebration of warmer weather (Beaune 61).



### Strong but Slight: Joan's Appearance



Figure 4: The only existing image of Joan of Arc created during her lifetime, drawn by Clément de Fauquembergue (1429). Photo by the author.

As we picture Joan's childhood, we may also wonder how to picture her in it. Simply put, what did she look like? The only existing image of Joan created during her lifetime is a daydreamed doodle of a long-haired maiden in a court clerk's margin. Clément de Fauquembergue, a parliamentary scribe responsible for documenting events of national importance, sketched an imagined Joan into the margins of his report (fig. 4). Fauquembergue had not seen Joan but imagined her with a receding chin and an ample bust, a stern arch to the eyebrows and several squiggles of long, wavy hair. Wasp-waisted with a flowing dress, she clutches a standard in her right hand, and an oversized sword in her left. It is unclear if any actual word of mouth descriptions of the Maid's appearance informed his image, but it seems apparent that the process of re-feminization had already begun: the phallic bearing of a sword offset by flowing tresses and dresses.

The assembled references to Joan's looks in trial testimony create only an impressionistic portrait, even if the most minute details, like the strawberry spot behind her right ear, sometimes come into focus. A strand of dark hair ensnared in the wax seal of a letter is one of the few clues to her physicality (Sackville-West 4). Perhaps it was not even Joan's own, given that she dictated her letters and her hair was shorn as short as any man's. Biographer Vita Sackville-West speculates that she must have been "short and stocky . . . muscular, with features homely," since not a single witness mentioned her looks during the rehabilitation trial, reasoning that if she had even the scarcest *beauté* to recommend her, witnesses would have evoked it as evidence of *bonté* (3). An Italian soldier who saw her arrive at Chinon described her as short, and the fact that she was able to learn to ride a horse wearing armor in a tidy three weeks' time suggests fortitude (Sackville-West 5). At least, she is remembered in the rehabilitation trial as being of "grande force et puissance" (qtd. in Sackville-West 5). If she was strong, she was still slight: Joan fasted in battle, subsisting on as little, some days, as a bit of bread dipped in wine.

## Speaking with Saints: The Voices



Figure 5: *Joan of Arc* by Jules Bastien-Lepage (1879).

Joan's judges wanted to place her under the fairy tree, which they saw as an incriminating space, at the moment when she first heard the voices to establish that they were the devil's doing. But by Joan's testimony, her first stirrings of mystical experience occurred at the age of thirteen in her father's fields. As pictured in Jules Bastien-Lepage's painting (fig. 5), Joan was accosted by a flash of light to her right, from the same side as the village church, a voice "coming from God" spoke to her, provoking "grande peur" (Tisset 46). *Digne* is how she described the voice, and upon the third hearing she knew, she said, that it belonged to an angel (Tisset 47).

The voice, she said, instructed her to gather an army to lift the siege of Orléans. Like Jonah and Moses, initially Joan protested, saying she knew nothing of horseback riding and had no training in the arts of war (Tisset 48). But the angel swayed her, and she vowed her virginity to the voice she later identified as Saint Michael at age thirteen, when girls could legally be married in medieval France. Still, it appears that her parents attempted to point their willful daughter down tradition's prescribed path for women. While there is no existing transcript of

Joan's very first court appearance, we do know from testimony at her subsequent trials that Joan was called to court for breaching a betrothal to a man from the neighboring city of Toul. When asked about it at the condemnation trial, Joan said, "It was he who had me summoned. And there I swore before the judge to speak the truth and in the end he roundly said that I had made the man no promise whatever" (qtd. in Goldstone 95).

In the years that followed the initial encounter with the voice, Joan greeted it with increasing frequency, eventually two and three times per week. During the trial she said that there wasn't a day that she didn't hear it (Tisset 57). Some days, the voice even roused her from sleep. While Bastien-Lepage and other artists later depicted Joan being accosted by more than one entity (fig. 5), it was not until later in the trial, that Joan spoke of "voices" with whom she consulted and conversed (Tisset 60). Although Joan said everything she did was by instruction of her voices, her relationship to the voices was far from passive. At times she requested more information from them, had difficulty interpreting them, argued with them, and when she jumped from a three-story tower after her capture in Compiègne, she disobeyed them.

Saint Michael was later accompanied by Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch, each woman venerated for her intelligence and virtue. Saint Catherine was one of the best-loved saints of Joan's time, and her ashes were supposedly held in the neighboring village of Maxey. As Marina Warner observes, Joan's own sister was probably named after Catherine, as was the infant that Joan helped to deliver in the town of Burey shortly after leaving home (Warner 132-3). A convert to Christianity herself, Catherine had faced down fifty scholars sent to refute her arguments for the Christian faith. She, instead, convinced *them*. Imprisoned, and tortured, Catherine broke the wheel designed to break her before being beheaded. Like Catherine, Saint Margaret had also vowed her virginity to God, but was commanded to break her

promise and renounce her faith when a Roman governor demanded her hand in marriage.

According to one legend, she threw herself from a building to preserve her chastity; in another, she disguised herself as a monk to take refuge in a monastery. In the most famed version of Margaret's story, Satan in the form of a dragon swallowed her, yet she was able to reemerge from his belly, untouched.

To claim communication from the beyond was not uncommon in the Middle Ages. What *was* uncommon was to keep such celestial counsel secret. Stranger still was the idea that Joan could both relay a prophecy and also take an active role in its accomplishment. Normally, one would be expected to consult with the village priest to verify the sanctity of the voices and seek assistance interpreting their message. Often considered a proto-Protestant, Joan expressed neither desire for ecclesiastical counsel nor remorse for not deferring to the church hierarchy. According to her testimony, Joan heard voices for four years, from age thirteen to seventeen, before ever revealing their existence.

Joan must, at some point, have expressed enough interest in the soldiers to have warranted her father's suspicion that she would join them, a perturbing presentiment revealed to him, he said, in a dream. But he thought she would follow the army not lead it: camp followers traveled with soldiers, sharing their beds and booze. Should Jacques d'Arc's nighttime imaginings come true, he warned his daughter, he would drown her, or instruct his sons to do so on his behalf. So when the time came to seek out her soldiers, Joan slipped away quietly, absconding to an uncle's home for an eight-day stay, then convincing him to help her to find the local captain, Robert de Baudricourt. Baudricourt was stationed at Vaucouleurs, one of the last Armagnac holdouts in a sea of Burgundians. Joan recognized Baudricourt on sight, guided, she said, by the voice. Twice he refused her requests for men and an audience with the king. Her

third try in three weeks proved successful, and she left Vaucoulours with the sword Baudricourt bequeathed to her. As biographer Nancy Goldstone and medievalist M.G.A. Vale have suggested, the eventual change in heart may have been at the orders of Charles's mother-in-law, Yolande of Aragon. The girl from Lorraine, Yolande may have reasoned, could rally demoralized troops and urge her ineffectual son-in-law to action. Although Joan arrived in Vaucouleurs in a worn, red woolen dress, she departed in armor.

### Of Charles and Chinon: Meeting with the King



Figure 6: *Joan Meets the Dauphin Charles*, Basilica of Bois-Chenu (date unknown).

Normally, an heir to the throne would live in Paris, the seat of royal power, but the Burgundians' occupation of the capital made it dangerous to do so. Thus, Charles had chosen the northwestern village of Chinon, in the Loire Valley, as his residence in exile, living there with his wife's family and an assemblage of courtiers. The perilous path from Vaucouleurs to the dauphin cut through 350 miles of enemy territory, and Joan and her convoy of six men traveled by night to avoid notice. Simply the fact that they arrived safely to Chinon recommended them. In the interim between her arrival and her meeting with the king, Joan was

lodged in the royal residence. Charles' counselors were split in their decision as to whether to give the girl an audience but concluded that, considering their otherwise bleak prospects, it couldn't hurt.

What supposedly happened next has since evolved into something of a "theatrical set piece" (Pernoud 25). In many adaptations of Joan's story, the king and his courtiers devise a ploy to debunk Joan's claims to divine guidance shortly after her arrival. Expecting to make a fool of the girl who was, herself, costumed in clothing perceived as unbefitting to her gender and rank, Charles VII swapped his royal finery for the clothes of one of his nobles. He imagined that Joan would indiscriminately bow to the wearer of the crown, unable to recognize an imposter through the flash and dazzle of his regalia. In a sense, Charles VII seems to be staging his own greatest fear: that he was only temporarily costumed as king and that nothing, in fact, distinguished him from any other claimant. By recognizing him, Joan allayed his fears, convincing the dauphin that he, indeed, radiated a royal aura. At the same time, because she remained unduped by his ruse, Joan convinced Charles and the other witnesses at the court that she was endowed with divine sight. Joan's ability to pass Charles's test by distinguishing mere props and costume from a more inherent idea of identity seems a fitting prefiguration of Joan's later dismissal of the transvestism of which she was accused. When asked to justify her choice of clothing, she told inquisitors that it was the least thing: "*C'est peu de chose, et des moindres*" (Tisset 173).

Joan's dramatic recognition of the dauphin is often staged as a pivotal moment in both literary adaptations and artwork, such as the mural painted on the ceiling of the Basilica of the Bois-Chesnu in Joan's own native village of Domrémy (fig. 6). But is it apocryphal? Of the five contemporaneous accounts of their meeting, only two mention the presentation of a faux Charles,

and even these merit skepticism. As Olivier Bouzy notes, the *chroniqueurs* may have attempted to cast Joan in a holy glow, given her proven military success, by attributing a form of divination to her (Contamine, Bouzy, and H  lary 108). When questioned by her inquisitors, Joan testified that she recognized the king “immediately,” without mentioning a stand-in dauphin. Similarly, the sole witness at the rehabilitation trial to mention the matter, Simon Charles, stated only that Charles “withdrew himself” from the crowd (Contamine, Bouzy, and H  lary 108).

Identifying Charles amidst his courtiers (whether it occurred or not) was insufficient to secure Joan an army. After this public meeting, Joan conferred with the dauphin privately. Following their discussion, he emerged saying that she revealed to him things no one could have known. Later in life, he suggested that she had referenced one of his private prayers in which he requested to know if he was the legitimate heir and requested protection. After meeting with Charles, Joan was sent to Poitiers for a period of three weeks during which bishops from the University of Paris questioned and observed her. During this time, two women conducted the first of what would be a series of pelvic examinations to know, according to the testimony of Jean Pasquerel, Joan’s confessor, “what was in her, if she was a man or a woman, and if she was a virgin or corrupted” (qtd. in Pernoud 30). After prodding her body and probing her mind, Joan’s judges settled into an eventual tempered endorsement:

The king . . . ought not to . . . reject the maid who says that God has sent here to bring him aid even though those promises may be nothing more than the works of man. Neither ought he lightly or hastily to believe in her. [...] seeing her urgent request that she be sent to Orleans to show there that the aid she brings is divine, the king should not hinder her from going to Orleans with men-at-arms. Rather he should send her there in due state, trusting God. For to fear or reject her, would be to rebel against the Holy Ghost. (qtd. in Wood 20)

As Charles T. Wood observes, despite the fact that the king delegated the decision-making to the judges, they recast the decision as the dauphin’s, cautious not to assume full responsibility. Joan



had passed the first test, proof of purity in manner and body. “No evil has been found in her, the judges wrote, “only good, humility, virginity, and devoutness, honesty, and simplicity” (qtd. in Wood 20). But a second ordeal was needed, they said, a sign; “to which she replied she would give it before Orléans” (qtd. in Wood 20).

### Onward to Orléans: The Battle Begins



Figure 7: *Entrée de Jeanne d'Arc à Orléans* by Jean Jacques Scherrer (1887).

Joan had announced her intention as twofold: to lift the siege of Orléans and to assure the dauphin's coronation at Reims. The accomplishment of the first task would be a sign, she said, when pressed for proof of her prophecies: a validation of her claim to divine guidance. Without a victory at Orléans, Joan would likely lose her credibility; and France, its hope of sovereignty.

A walled city on the north bank of the Loire, Orléans had been under siege for about six months when Joan's army arrived. As the capital of the duchy, it was one of the last cities in the northeast not to cede to English rule, even as surrounding towns fell to invaders. Orléans stood

between full access to the Loire and the countryside beyond it that had been buffering the English-occupied northeast from the dauphin's territory. Therefore, the conquest or defense of Orléans could prove decisive in the war's outcome. The solid walls encircling the city meant that Orléans was more complicated a capture, and the two sides had settled into a stalemate, but one in which the English had a clear advantage. English troops had surrounded three quarters of the city's ramparts and taken control of four of the five gates that granted access to Orléans. Only one, the Burgundy Gate, remained accessible for the transmission of food and munitions to the city's 30,000 inhabitants. As the French tried to stave off the English, the English tried to starve out the French.

But the English were weary: they had lost their first commander, the Duke of Salisbury, to a cannon's blast, and many of their troops dwindled, unwilling to brave the intemperate winter. Even their leader, the Duke of Bedford, privately expressed flagging conviction, lamenting in a letter, "And all things there prospered for you 'till the time of the siege of Orleans taken in hand, God knoweth by what advice" (qtd. in Sackville-West 149).

Still Joan remained undaunted, assured that refreshed resolve and divine guidance would swing the stalemate in the French's favor. After getting the ecclesiastical stamp of approval in Poitiers, Joan dictated a letter to the King of England, in which she announced, with Old Testament flair, her intention to lift the siege:

Jhesus-Maria, King of England, and you, Duke of Bedford, who call yourself regent of the Kingdom of France [...] acknowledge the summons of the King of Heaven. Render to the Maid, here sent from God the King of Heaven, the keys of all the good towns, which you have taken and violated in France. [...] And if so be not done, expect news of the Maid who will come to you shortly, to your very great injury. King of England, if (you) do not do so, I am chief-of-war, and in whatever place I attain your people in France, I will make them quit it willy-nilly. And if they will not obey, I will have them all slain; I am sent here by God, the King of Heaven, body for body, to drive you out of all France. And if they will obey, I will be merciful to them. (qtd. in Pernoud 70)

The dauphin outfitted Joan with all the trappings of military might: custom-made armor that exceeded the usual cost and a full military entourage comprised of a horsemaster, two heralds and two pages.<sup>4</sup> He also commissioned a seamstress to sew and paint banners, one small, one large, that Joan could wave in wartime to guarantee recognition from afar. By carrying a banner, Joan said, she kept herself from using her sword. When asked which she preferred, she replied, “I prefer my standard to my sword. I prefer it forty times as much,” which, as Harris observes, is “Biblical shorthand for a number too great to count” (120). By this time, Joan had retired her original sword, bestowed by Robert de Baudricourt, for a second one hidden behind the altar of a church in the town of Saint-Catherine-de-Fierbois. The storied sword was recovered, at Joan’s instruction, in the same church where Charles Martel had supposedly buried his weapon after defeating Muslims in the crusades, thus situating her in a line of French warriors who saw their combat as ordained by God. Like Arthur’s Excalibur, Joan’s sword, seemingly safeguarded behind the altar for her, betokened her as “chosen.”

With Joan’s aid, the French secured a victory at Orléans in a mere nine days. That said, it is harder to know exactly what role she played. A recurring theme in accounts of the battle is Joan’s exclusion from military councils where *chefs de guerre* made tactical decisions. The ire it ignited surfaced in Joan’s first meeting with her eventual ally Jean Dunois, the illegitimate son of the captured Duke of Orléans. Joan rebuked Dunois, also known as the Bastard of Orléans, for not consulting her about how best to resupply the city: “En nom [de] Dieu, les conseils de Dieu, mon Seigneur, sont plus sûrs et plus sages que les vôtres. Vous avez cru m’abuser et vous vous êtes bien plus abusés vous-mêmes, car je vous apporte le meilleur secours qui aura jamais été donné à un combattant ou à une cité: c’est le secours du Roi des Cieux” (qtd. in Contamine 124).

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<sup>4</sup> This was the customary entourage for a king or military leader.

Joan suggested that Dunois should have taken the shortest route to the Burgundy Gate in order to resupply the citizens even though it would have entailed crossing the English blockade. Instead, Dunois had opted for the more cautious but circuitous route: going five miles upstream to the town of Chézy and floating in supply-filled barges from a safer distance. Meanwhile, the French soldiers started a skirmish at the farthest fort as a diversionary tactic to ensure the safe passage of supplies.

In the following days, the French took two other forts though Joan was wounded with an arrow to the breast in the process. After treating the wound with a balm of bacon fat and olive oil, *la Pucelle* returned to battle. The final blow came on May 7, 1429, at the fort of Tournelles when the French launched a burning boat toward a drawbridge as English troops were crossing it. They downed the drawbridge and drowned the many Englishmen who sank into the Loire under the weight of sixty-pound armor. With the loss of an estimated 400 casualties, including the Duke of Bedford, the troops' morale plummeted. Following chivalric code and religious custom, Joan instructed French soldiers not to battle the following day, as it was Sunday, but to be ready to defend themselves if the English struck. The remaining English troops withdrew.

Biographer Vita Sackville-West suggests that while Joan's role in the siege may have been largely symbolic, it was no less important. That is, Joan's conviction brought cohesion and resilience to disheartened troops at a crucial moment. Indeed, after the lifting of the siege, Joan was the focus of the Orléanais' gratitude, which had messianic undertones. The contemporaneous *Journal of the Siege of Orleans* reports, "All regarded her with much affection— men and women as well as small children. There was an extraordinary rush to touch her, or even to touch the horse on which she sat" (qtd. in Spoto 73). Several centuries later, Jean-Jacques Scherrer's painting *Entrée de Jeanne d'Arc à Orléans* (1887) (fig. 7) visualizes this

moment: surrounded by admirers, Joan appears to illuminate the crowd. A swath of light connects Joan to the cathedral behind her, her raised standard echoing the cathedral's spire. The *Journal* later reports that some enthusiastic but fumbling townspeople bearing torches actually set her banner aflame in their rush to lay their hands on the woman they saw as their liberator.

### **Crowning a King: The Coronation at Reims**



Figure 8: *Jeanne D'Arc à Reims lors du sacre du roi Charles VII*, a fresco in the Pantheon in Paris by Jules Eugène Lenepveu (1874). Photo by Tijmen Stam.

Joan insisted on the importance of formalizing the French victory through Charles's coronation ceremony at Reims. Despite an absence of regalia (the traditional crown and scepter could not be bestowed upon Charles since they were still housed in the Saint Denis abbey, which was under English control), the ceremony would confer authority because the most important rite could still be performed. The archbishop would anoint the dauphin's head, chest, shoulders,

elbows and wrists with oil supposedly in use since the coronation of Clovis, the first king of the Franks, in 496. As Joan argued to the Bastard of Orléans, “[O]nce the king was properly crowned and consecrated, the power of his adversaries would continually diminish and they would finally be rendered harmless both to him and to the kingdom” (qtd. in Pernoud 56). To reach Reims, they would have to cut a path through the Loire Valley, chasing the English from the villages of Meung, Jargeau, Beaugency, Troyes, and Patay. If the lifting of the siege of Orléans foretold victory, Patay nearly guaranteed it. Often called France’s Agincourt, the battle ended with capture of several English captains and extensive losses on their side (anywhere from 1,500 to 4,000 casualties and prisoners, depending on the source) and few for the French (the lowest estimate is three; the highest, twenty).

News of the upcoming coronation buzzed through the populace and supporters flocked to Reims in a show of support. A delegation from Domrémy, including Joan’s parents and brothers, even attended. Months later, on December 17, 1431, the English staged a counter coronation in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, something of a last ditch effort at regaining credibility. But, as one Parisian in attendance bemoaned, the English celebration reflected a certain lack of *savoir-faire*, one that, in the last damning line of her critique, she attributes to their nationality: “The food was shocking, no one had a good word to say for it. Most of it, especially what was meant for the common people, had been cooked the previous Thursday, which seemed very odd to the French— the English were in charge of this” (qtd. in Goldstone 148).

When Charles was anointed king, Joan stood beside him, holding her standard in a scene that has since been reimagined in tapestries, paintings, and schoolbooks (fig. 8). When the inquisitors questioned her about it afterwards, wondering why her banner over any other

soldier's standard should be included in the ceremony, she replied, "Il avait été à la peine; c'était bien normal qu'il soit à l'honneur" (qtd. in Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyary 170).

### The Making of the Maid: Joan's Name

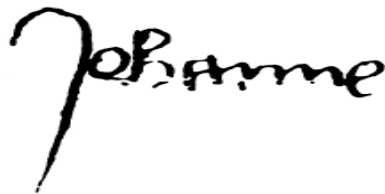


Figure 9: Joan of Arc's signature from a letter to the people of Reims on March 28, 1430.

Shortly after the coronation, Charles VII ennobled Joan and her family. The *acte d'anoblissement* that he signed is the only document, outside of the trial transcripts, that refers to her using the name by which we know her today: Joan of Arc. The "d'Arc" that trailed Joan's given name means simply "of the bridge" or "of the arc" (Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyary 61). In an age where standardized spelling had not yet taken hold, the surname appeared in various iterations: "Darc, Dars, Day, Darx, Dare, Tarc, Tart, or Dart" (Spoto 2). Arc is often assumed to indicate Joan's father's place of origin, but Jacques d'Arc was born in Ceffonds, leaving some mystery concerning the appellation.

If she wasn't known as Joan of Arc, then what names did she use? When asked to identify herself at the trial, Joan first says that in her own country (*pays*), she was called "Jeannette" (Tisset 38). She further specifies that girls in her town went by their mothers'

names, hers being “Rommée.”<sup>5</sup> In battle, she became *Jeanne la Pucelle*,<sup>6</sup> her identification with bodily purity trailing her given name like a surname. Eventually the chosen identity replaced the given one. In her wartime correspondence with others, Joan most often identifies herself as *la Pucelle*, and frequently shifts into the third person when using this title, intensifying the sense that her *nom de guerre* denotes a situationally specific role. Later in the trial, on March 24, 1431, when Joan is asked her name, she says simply, “Je m’appelle la Pucelle,” self-identifying rather than adopting the name others had given to her (Beaune 136). Certainly, when speaking about her at the rehabilitation trial, most of Joan’s other battlemates refer to her chosen moniker, *la Pucelle*. At her trial, the inquisitors refuse its use and disdainfully dub her “cette femme,” a denomination that undermines her *nom de guerre*, since a *Pucelle*, by definition, has not yet entered into adulthood. When she is concessionally called “la Pucelle,” the title is preceded by “ladite,” the so-called Maid. In the rehabilitation trial, however, she is once again referred to as a girl, reaffirming her identification with the term *Pucelle*. Although illiterate, Joan learned to sign her correspondence (fig. 9).

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<sup>5</sup> Many Johannic historians suggest that the surname Rommée designated anyone who had made a pilgrimage to Rome. Olivier Bouzy, however, contests the idea (Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar 61).

<sup>6</sup> From the Latin *pucella*, meaning a young girl, presumably a virgin.



### Captured at Compiègne: The Fall from Grace



Figure 10: Illustration from James William Edmund Doyle's *Chronicle of England, B.C. 55-A.D. 1485* (1884).

After the coronation, Joan pushed for an assault on Paris, a much more challenging target than Orléans, given that it was larger, with a population of 200,000, heavily fortified, and dominated by Burgundians. Joan's troops could not count on aid from the citizens, as they had in previous battles, when the Parisians did not necessarily perceive them as liberators. They attacked on a holy day, the feast of the Virgin, a detail that might have recommended Joan's cause in the case of victory; instead, it became a sticking point in the trial: proof of sacrilege. Upon arriving in Paris, Joan proceeded with characteristic bravado, yelling to the Parisians, "Yield to us quickly for Jesus' sake, for if you yield not before night, we shall enter by force whether you will or no, and you will all be put to death without mercy" (qtd. in Goldstone 153). Promptly afterward, a Burgundian shot an arrow into Joan's leg and she tumbled into a moat where she remained for several hours until fished out by René d'Anjou, Yolande of Aragon's

son. The Maid's immediate injury and defeat in Paris "and the unfortunate timing of these two incidents, on a holy day of obligation she failed to honor" cast doubt on her usefulness as a war leader, leaving some to wonder if she was, instead, a liability (Harrison 209). According to Regnault de Chartres, archbishop of Reims, *la Pucelle* had a reputation as a rogue warrior who "did not wish to pay attention to any counsel and did everything at her own pleasure" (qtd. in Goldstone 156).

Without the king's backing and material support, Joan became an easy target. Burgundians captured her in Compiègne, seizing her by the coat (Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar 207). An illustration from William Edmund Doyle's *Chronicle of England* imagines the scene. Propped on one elbow in a pose reminiscent of an *odalisque*, Joan raises her sword but appears ill-equipped to defend herself when she is entirely outnumbered (fig. 10). As one Burgundian chronicler described it, "an archer, a rough man and a sour [one] full of spite because a woman of whom so much had been heard should have overthrown so many valiant men, dragged her to one side by her cloth-of-gold cloak and pulled her from her horse, throwing her flat on the ground" (qtd. in Goldstone 159). The man who captured her, the Bastard of Wandonne, delighted in his treasure, "plus joyeux que s'il avait pris un roi" (qtd. in Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar 207). One English narrative of the capture seems to attribute her defeat to her gender transgressions. The removal of her armor, itself an accomplice to her crime, exposes a soft body which the chronicler reduces to an assemblage of gratuitous female parts:

Reconnue, elle est prise, elle est présentée au prince [Philippe le Bon], dépouillée de l'armure en laquelle elle se fiait, affirmant mensongièrement qu'elle est un homme. Son sexe est reconnu, car ses seins que son armure retenait prisonniers sont libérés et tombent sur son ventre, ses grosses fesses attestent son aptitude aux sornettes des femmes. (qtd. in Contamine 208)

Here, the body, itself, becomes a kind of accuser, its abundant fleshiness evidence of womanliness and by association, trickery. Like Clément de Fauquembergue's sketch, this depiction of Joan's body appears to be more informed by the author's desire (here, to project a kind of feminine grotesque onto Joan's body) than by actual fact. Joan's regular practice of fasting, and one battlemate's testimony that she never menstruated, actually suggest a lower than average body weight.

Only two of the Maid's battlemates ever tried to rescue her; perhaps the others had begun to doubt the divine backing of an army leader so easily seized. Indeed, at least one English army chief took the capture as irrefutable proof that the French's previous faith in her had been faulty. After Joan was sold to the English, the Duke of Burgundy triumphantly announced the news to his territories in a letter: "[B]y the pleasure of our blessed creator, the woman called the Maid has been taken; and from her capture will be recognized the error and mad belief of all those who became sympathetic and favorable to the deed of this woman" (qtd. in Goldstone 160).

Considering the proliferation of images of Joan that picture her on the battlefield or conferring with the king, it is easy to forget that Joan spent one full year of her public life in prison. For the first four months, the conditions were tolerable. Kept, but not cloistered, in a tower in the chateau de Beaurevoir, Joan maintained a certain liberty of movement and benefitted from the company of her guards, three French women who all shared her first name. After she learned, however, that she would be transferred to the English, Joan jumped from one of the castle's towers, some seventy feet high, in an attempt to either escape, as she maintained, or commit suicide, as her judges contended. Whatever her aim, she was knocked unconscious, unable to move, eat, or drink for two days (Harrison 239). When questioned about her *chute* at the trial, she said that while she had not intended to kill herself even if she had disobeyed her

voices in jumping. But, she said that they had forgiven her, realizing that she could no longer withstand the conditions. Soon, however, the conditions would worsen.

### **Political Prisoner: Captive in Rouen**



Figure 11: Tower of the prison in Rouen where Joan was held prisoner. Photo by the author.

Once Joan was transferred to the tower in Rouen, the conditions of her detainment deteriorated, becoming a daily exercise in humiliation. Because Joan was being tried for heresy, she would normally be under the jurisdiction of the Church, and thus guaranteed a modicum of humane treatment. Joan knew this, as indicated by her repeated requests to be moved to an ecclesiastical prison where nuns could guard her, rather than a military one, where hostile Englishmen kept her under constant surveillance and treated her as a prisoner of war.

The cell, itself, would have been comprised of a dark room with one barred window, a latrine, and a passageway where spies might observe her. It was here in the spy's annex where bishops listened as a man pretending to be from Joan's home region sought to coax his way into

her confidence with tidbits of invented news. At night, two guards were posted outside the cell while three more remained inside, where Joan slept chained to her bed. During the day, her movement was no less constrained: she wore iron shackles on her legs joined by a large piece of wood and was only unlatched when using the latrine. Several witnesses at the rehabilitation trial made mention of an iron cage commissioned by Bishop Cauchon in which Joan presumably could have been held upright, attached at the hands, neck, and feet (Pernoud 104). Although many witnesses attest to having seen it or heard of it, no one actually saw Joan inside the iron cage, suggesting that its perpetual threat may have been used as a psychological form of torment.

At least one witness at the rehabilitation trial referenced a rape attempt, signaled by the Maid's screams. Certainly, there had been precursors. One knight at Beauvoir, Haimond de Macy, testified at the rehabilitation trial that he "tried several times to playfully touch her breasts. I tried to slip my hand in but Joan would not let me. She pushed me off with all her might" (qtd. in Harrison 250). In Rouen, a tailor sent to fit her for more feminine attire than her customary armor, also attempted a grope. Although Joan's battle mates testified that they never felt any desire for her, Joan's body was under continual threat of assault while in prison. To prove her continued virtue, Joan requested another vaginal exam in Rouen, which was conducted by the Duke of Bedford's wife in the initial weeks after Joan's arrival. The Duke, himself, settled into the spy's passageway for a medieval peep show, overseeing the proceedings through a chink in the wall (Harrison 251). She was, they ruled, uncorrupted, but her bodily virtue was not enough to vindicate her from the many crimes of which she had been accused.

### **Trial and Testimony: The Condemnation**

Joan's trial lasted five months, from January 9, 1431, to May 30 of the same year. Régine Pernoud divides it into three separate but interconnected proceedings: a preliminary trial, or inquisition, to establish the accusations against her (January 9-March 26), the ordinary trial that concluded with Joan's abjuration (March 26-May 28), and a quick, decisive trial for relapse (May 28-29).

To understand Joan's trial, we must first have some knowledge of the inquisitorial system established by Pope Innocent III in 1215. The inquisition took its inspiration from the Biblical model proposed in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, in which God responds to a claim of public outcry about the activities of two cities, by going to the site and investigating the truth of the claim, saying: "I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that is come to me" (Genesis 18:21 qtd. in Kelly). Under the inquisition, informants testified to their belief that a crime had been committed. This collective belief that wrongdoing had occurred was called *fama* (fame). In response, "an ecclesiastical judge (a bishop, say) could summon the suspect and inquire, that is, 'make inquisition,' as to whether the *fama* was true" (Kelly 995). Later, in 1298, Pope Boniface VIII changed the law so that *fama* did not first have to be established. In other words, if a defendant confessed to a crime, s/he could be convicted of it even without being defamed or formally charged (Kelly 996-7). Given that there was no penalty for not presenting the charges or making defendants aware of their rights, judges could and often did conceal the charges. It was not unusual for the charges against the accused never to be stated publicly. Thus, Joan of Arc was questioned for a full month before she was accused of any particular crime. Paradoxically, as Karen Sullivan observes, "[t]hough the clerics regarded Joan's words as of dubious veracity and value, they also treated them as the sole grounds upon which their judgment was based" (83).

The process of eliciting information was often grueling. Sessions began at eight in the morning and continued for several hours until lunchtime. Alone, without an attorney, and seemingly indomitable, Joan faced as many as forty-four doctors of theology and canonical law from the University of Paris: men well versed in ecclesiastical law and trained in rhetoric. Many witnesses present at the original trial characterized the inquisitors' tactics as hostile when questioned about them twenty-five years later at the rehabilitation trial. Aiming to elicit a maximum of information and trip up the unschooled woman before them, the inquisitors interrupted one another, accumulated questions before responses could be made, and abruptly changed topics. After lunch, court was sometimes reconvened for another couple of hours to request further elaboration on certain points. During the questioning, three notaries recorded the trial: two transcribed it, while another, Nicholas Taquel simply listened. At the end of each session, they convened to compare notes and, if they were unsure of Joan's response, they marked *nota* in the margins so that she could be re-questioned the following day (Sullivan xiv). At the end of each session, Joan was asked to corroborate the transcripts' accuracy after the notaries read the minutes to her.

Given the brevity of some sessions, which on the page do not correspond to the professed multi-hour interrogations, it seems reasonable to assume that the transcripts do not represent a verbatim replication of the words spoken but rather a condensed (if still extensive) summary interjected with direct citations. Nonetheless, the sheer volume of the trial transcripts is astounding. As Sullivan has reported, while the judges devoted nearly 200 folio leaves to Joan, other women accused of heresy in the same time period<sup>7</sup> were only accorded slim files of a few pages. Indeed, the same notaries who would later record Joan's trial kept similarly scant

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<sup>7</sup> Marguerite Porete, Jeanne Daubenton, and Pierronne Brittany.

transcripts on Jean Ségueut, a lawyer accused of heresy in 1430. Even the trial transcript of Gilles de Raies was only half as long as Joan's, despite the fact that though this nobleman and battlemate of Joan's had murdered hundreds of children (Sullivan xiii). Clearly, Joan's detractors thought it crucial to bring a scrupulously documented case against her.

Of what then was Joan accused? After the first two months of questioning, Jean d'Estivet, the promoter, formulated a list of seventy accusations, enumerating every imaginable way that Joan could have transgressed against Christendom. D'Estivet paints a sinister portrait: Having only the flimsiest of Catholic educations, Joan grew up in a suspect swath of rural France, where she engaged in pagan rites and consorted with suspected *sorcières* like her very own godmother. She regularly danced under a bewitched beech tree, often alone at night, while murmuring invocations and stringing the tree with herb garlands (surely the talismans of a hex). More alarmingly, she presumed to know how to tell benevolent spirits from evil ones, indiscriminately kissing the hands and bodies of the saints who supposedly appeared to her. She never submitted these dubious exchanges to the Church's consideration. If she shared secret, rapturous hours consorting with her possible demons, she wanted nothing to do with the sacrament of marriage and had already been brought to court once before for abandoning a proper match.

D'Estivet's accusations continued. She left home without her parents' permission in violation of the fifth commandment; then once on the battlefield, she penned bloodthirsty letters to her enemies and had the blasphemous bravado to sign them with a cross or "Jhesu-Maria." She fancied herself a God, and allowed naïve commoners to kiss her enchanted rings and grasp at her cloaks as she passed on horseback. Meanwhile, she questioned the authority of the pope in Avignon and showed little deference to Church officials who had tried to steer her toward the



straight and narrow. Worse still, she flaunted her perversion. *Cette femme, ladite Pucelle*, had the audacity not only to wear clothing ill-befitting to her gender, lacking all feminine modesty; she also delighted in sumptuous ermine robes and other finery heretofore unknown to the persons of her class. Against her armored breast, she sometimes tucked a mandrake root, further proof of her witchy ways. Once finally captured, she tried to elude justice in a suicide attempt, then had the gall to suggest she'd been forgiven for this capital transgression. She must have made a pact with the devil to survive such a fall and to know the things she knew about people she had never met.

Calmly and categorically, Joan refused these accusations or offered extenuating circumstances for consideration. A few days later, the Bishop Pierre Cauchon, who oversaw the trial, worked with three other inquisitors to fine-tune the catalogue of seventy accusations into twelve articles that highlighted her lack of respect for authorities (be they parents or church officials), her aberrational manifestation of gender, her penchant for practices smacking of sorcery, and her presumptuousness. Joan's continued uncooperativeness—that is, her steadfastness to her own vision of events—eventually won her a tour of the torture chamber, where inquisitors showed her the tools they could use to convince her to submit herself to the Church and its judgment. Rip off my limbs and squeeze out my soul, she told them, but I will tell you nothing else . . . and if I did, I'd say you made me do it by force: “Vraiment si vous deviez me faire arracher les membres et faire partir l'âme du corps, je ne vous dirais pas autre chose; et si je vous en disais quelque chose, après je dirais toujours que vous me l'aviez fait par force” (qtd. in Contamine, Bouzy, and Hélyar 261).

Joan's imperviousness to intimidation here echoes her very first words of the trial, when she refused to bend to the judges' authority since their requests conflicted with the council she

received from her voices. Unwilling to take a blanket oath to tell the truth, Joan says: “Je ne sais sur quoi vous voulez m’interroger. Peut-être pouvez-vous me demander de telles choses que je ne vous dirai pas.” When the judges persist, she agrees only after establishing her own terms:

Elle répondit à nouveau qu’en ce qui concerne son père et sa mère et ce qu’elle avait fait après qu’elle eut pris le chemin de France, elle jurerait volontiers; mais pour les révélations qui lui ont été faites de par Dieu, elle ne les avait jamais révélées à personne, si ce n’est au seul Charles qu’elle dit être son roi, et qu’elle ne les révélerait pas même si on devait lui couper la tête, car elle tenait de ses visions ou de son conseil secret qu’elle ne révélat à personne. (Tisset 37)

This pattern persists throughout the trial, to the judges’ annoyance. While Joan recognizes the Church Triumphant (those beings already in heaven), she places little faith in the Church Militant (Christians on earth), with the exception of the pope. She believes that her voices have communicated lucidly and need no further verification.

It is only in the final moments that she appears to waver by signing an abjuration denying her voices and agreeing to submit herself to the Church: a choice which resulted in a sentence of “pénitence en prison perpétuelle, au pain de douleur et à l’eau de tristesse” (Tisset 342). Even then, Johannic historians generally concur that she may not have been entirely aware of what she was signing. The witnesses at the rehabilitation trial testify that she was intentionally misled. According to testimony, a short text, equivalent to the length of an “Our Father” was read aloud to Joan whereas the document she signed was much longer. Because she could not read, she would have no way of verifying that the texts were the same. The signature, itself, also raises questions: if Joan could sign her name, why did she choose to only mark a cross on the abjuration? Was she using the same code she had used in prior military correspondence by which she marked anything that should be disregarded with a cross? (Tisset 82)

A confessed (and presumably repentant) heretic could only be sentenced to prison, not death. Since Joan had agreed to abandon her masculine attire in order to submit to the Church,

resuming it would signify that she had returned to her old vices. It is unclear exactly when and how Joan ended up in masculine clothing, but testimony at the rehabilitation trial suggests a set-up. Witness Jean Massieu testified that Joan awoke to find that her jailers had stripped her of her feminine attire, leaving only men's clothing in the cell. Though resistant, she eventually put on the clothing available to her to leave the cell to go to the bathroom; afterwards, despite her pleas, the jailers would not return her dress. In another version of events referenced by several witnesses at the rehabilitation trial, Joan resumed men's clothing after an attempted rape (Pernoud 219-20). When Joan's judges interrogated her one last time, she asserted that she had resumed her *habit d'homme* of her own will, saying it was "more licit and fitting to have men's clothes since [she] was with men" (qtd. in Pernoud 221). Whatever the cause, the result was clear: Joan would be tried once more as a relapsed heretic and burned. During the relapse trial in the days before her death, she said that she had only denied her voices for fear of the fire.

### **Sentenced to the Stake: Joan's Final Moments**

Joan took her impending execution as a grievous injustice, never imagining that the deliverance her voices promised would be in death. When Joan learned of her fate at the stake, she wished instead for beheading, saying she would rather be seven times beheaded than have her body, "clean and whole," desecrated (Pernoud 134). So when she saw the Burgundian Bishop who had overseen the trial, Pierre Cauchon, the first words she uttered were an accusation: "Bishop, I die because of you." (Pernoud 134). When he protested that she had relapsed into her old vices, she persisted, stating that if she had been held in an ecclesiastical prison with women guards, her trial would have taken another trajectory. Against Church practice, Cauchon consented to have a priest administer last rites, an unlikely choice for a man

supposedly convinced that he would be offering the body and blood of Christ to a condemned, relapsed heretic.

Joan's execution was the ultimate shaming spectacle. In the hour before her end, her inquisitors brought her to the church cemetery at St. Ouen, hallowed ground where a heretic could not be buried. In view of the stake, she heard a sermon in which she was named a pollutant—a rotten limb of the body of Christ that had to be excised, lest “dans les autres parties du corps mystique du Christ ne puisse se glisser la détestable contagion de cette dangereuse souillure” (Tisset 357). She had once more fallen into vice, Bishop Cauchon lamented, “(oh douleur!) comme le chien a coutume de retourner à son vomissement” (Tisset 357). Three platforms constructed on the Old Marketplace in Rouen offered spectators of note an improved view of the execution. The fourth and highest was reserved for Joan, where her executioner tied her to the stake after first parading her through the town in a wheelbarrow. Atop Joan's head, which had been shaven to efface the “brazen crown of disrespect she'd made of her hair,” the English had placed a large miter that read in bold letters: “Heretic, relapsed, apostate, idolater” (Harrison 298). These four words abridged the accusation on the sign that sat in front of the scaffold: “Joan the self-styled Maid, liar, pernicious abuser of the people, soothsayer, superstitious, blasphemer of God, presumptuous, misbeliever in the faith of Jesus-Christ, boaster idolater, cruel, dissolute, invoker of devils, apostate, schismatic, and heretic” (qtd. in Pernoud 239). It was commonplace for merciful executioners to strangle prisoners at the stake to spare them the slower death of smoke inhalation, but with wood piled so high, Joan's executioner could not reach her.

In the moments before her death, Joan requested two crosses: one to press against her chest and another to hold in her gaze. An English onlooker fashioned the first one from bits of

sticks. She tucked it into her dress she now wore, the dress which, discarded, had sealed her demise. Jean Massieu brought her the second, a crucifix, from the church. Like Christ on whom her gaze fixed, she forgave the swell of spectators, begging them to “kindly pray for her, at the same time pardoning any harm they had done her” (qtd. in Harrison 300). In her final moments, she implored the saints for aid and gasped out her final word: “Jésus.”

After Joan had died but before the flames consumed her, the executioner briefly extinguished the fire to forestall any rumors of escape or eleventh-hour substitution. Exposing her corpse to the crowd served another purpose; it offered a third and final occasion to examine the body of the being whose transgender tendencies made her the object of fairground curiosity. As a chronicler known as the Bourgeois of Paris described the scene: “When her dress was finally burned, the fire was pulled back so that the people should have no doubt; they saw her stark naked, revealing all the secrets of a woman, and when this vision had lasted long enough, the executioner rekindled the fire high around the poor carcass” (qtd. in Pernoud 218).

It is not clear what the witnesses saw through the blur of smoke that surely surrounded Joan as she was executed. Carl Theodore Dreyer’s silent cinematic interpretation *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* (1928) presents one of the most horrific visualizations of the scene with prolonged close-ups on Joan’s face as she dies. When nothing remained but “a little bloody pile,” the executioner scattered the *Pucelle’s* ashes in the Seine to prevent stolen bones from becoming relics. Indeed, the slow spectacle of Joan’s death at the stake appears to have had immediate effects for some of the witnesses (Pernoud 218). One man so detested the Maid that he boasted that he would bring a bundle of sticks to her burning. Yet he left the execution aghast and stumbled into the village tavern to tell others gathered there that they had burned a holy woman that day (Pernoud 128).

### **Twice Tried: The Rehabilitation**

In 1450, Charles VII wrote a letter to one of his advisers, Guillaume Bouillé, concerning “Joan the Maid, [who] was taken and apprehended by our ancient enemies [and] against whom they caused to be brought proceedings” (Pernoud 258). It was the first piece of the king’s correspondence that so much as made mention of the Maid in the nineteen years since Joan’s death. During her trial, Charles VII asserted, his adversaries had “committed many faults and abuses to such a point that, by means of the trial and great hatred which our enemies had against her, they brought about her death iniquitously and against right reason, very cruelly.” Thus, he concluded, “we would like to know the truth of said proceedings” (Pernoud 258). The letter appears to have been a belated reply to Bouillé’s earlier suggestion that the king’s silence was “a stain against the throne” given that “it was as a soldier of the king that the Maid had been condemned as a heretic and sorceress” (qtd. in Taylor 175). While we might wonder why almost two decades elapsed before the king so much as hazarded an inquiry, Pernoud points out that he could not have had access to the trial records until the 1450s, when the French were once again in control of Rouen, the seat of the English Burgundian government. That is not to say that the king was not politically motivated; he had a precarious hold on his subjects, and his claim to divine right could hardly be helped by any lingering doubt about his legitimacy.

Within weeks of writing to Bouillé, the king had launched a preliminary investigation. Because the trial was under the Church’s jurisdiction, the pope would have to be petitioned to examine the matter. Only an inquisitor could overturn the original verdict. Therefore, seemingly at the behest of the royal family, Joan’s mother, Isabelle Rommée, visited Pope Calixtus III in 1454. The trial that eventually resulted was designed to establish the unlikelihood of justice in such a hostile arena as well as to expose the flaws in the original proceedings: the fact that Joan’s

judges provided her with no lawyer, kept her in a state rather than ecclesiastic prison, and handed her over to the executioner before the secular arm could intervene. The itinerate “nullification” trial began in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris then traveled to Rouen, Domrémy, Vaucouleurs, back to Rouen, then Orléans, and finally concluded in Paris. During the five months of its duration, over 115 witnesses testified about Joan’s upbringing, her behavior in battle, and their memories of the condemnation trial. At its conclusion, the Grand Inquisitor pronounced Joan vindicated and read the new verdict in both the cemetery at St. Ouen where she had been sermonized and the Old Marketplace, the site of her martyrdom: “Lesdits procès et les sentences, contenant dol, calomnie, contradiction, et erreur manifeste de droit et de fait, ainsi que la susdite abjuration, l’exécution et toutes les suites, furent et sont nuis, invalides, sans effet et sans valeur” (DuParc 229). He then raised high a copy of the twelve accusations lodged against Joan and tore it into tiny pieces, its bits scattered to the wind.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Story of a Statue

May 10, 1951, Plateau des Glières, Algiers, Algeria:

The black and white newsreel of the dedication of the Joan of Arc statue in Algiers begins by panning over the wind-rippled flags at the monument's foundation to the jaunty notes of military fanfare. From a place within the gathering crowd, the camera's eye lifts at the moment of the unveiling. A sheet drops to uncover an enormous equestrian statue: Joan of Arc sits astride her horse, her cruciform sword pointed skyward. Almost as quickly, the camera cuts to the plaque at the monument's base that succinctly identifies the woman on the steed: "Jeanne d'Arc, pur symbole de l'héroïsme français" ("Inauguration"). The camera scans the military parade in progress, where uniformed, rifle-bearing men march in lockstep to the boisterous backdrop of a brass band and cheering crowd. A buoyant off-screen voice speaks, with official import, of the recent mayoral address in which the European official now pictured at the podium announced the "fierté que ressentait sa ville" about the Maid's landing "en terre africaine." Atop her high horse, Jeanne d'Arc is hailed in an omniscient *voix-off* as "l'incarnation la plus pure des vertues françaises" ("Inauguration").

July 4, 1962, Plateau des Glières, Algiers:

Around 3:00 A.M. cars and trucks begin collecting at the base of the two-and-a-half ton statue. Algerian nationals sling ropes around Joan's neck and torso, heaving against her weight until, aided by their vehicles, they topple the monument that serves as an official reminder of France's prolonged presence in the last of its colonies ("La Jeanne d'Alger"). The production



that follows vaguely evokes Joan of Arc's actual public punishment and execution in 1431.

More immediately, the scene conjures the many acts of torture and state violence that characterized the Algerian War for Independence (1954-1962). Demonstrators dismember the statue's bronze body, eventually beheading it.<sup>8</sup> Then, the crowd fells the arm that brandishes that amalgam of signs, cross and sword, that in this context, recalls France's *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>9</sup> Joan of Arc, the figure who had, herself, once represented resistance to another imperial project during England and France's Hundred Years War (1337-1453) lay displayed<sup>10</sup> for the next two days, her fragmented body a testament to the end of an empire.

Afterwards, the monument's pieces were gathered and shipped across the Mediterranean Sea to Marseille in a voyage that retraced the route taken by tens of thousands of *pieds-noirs*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> At the Barbarousse prison in Algiers, Algerian combatants were still sentenced to death by guillotine. Only one European, Fernand Iveton, was guillotined during the Algerian war (Beigbeder 100).

<sup>9</sup> Marnia Lazreg underlines that France's invasion of Algeria in July of 1830 was perceived as a victory for Christianity. When Algiers fell to France's troops, a mass was held in both Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and in the Casbah. During the mass, the commander in chief of the operation declared to the chaplains, "You have opened the door to Christianity in Africa. Let's hope it will soon rekindle the civilization that had been extinguished" (191).

<sup>10</sup> As noted in the Prologue, after her death at the stake, Joan of Arc's executioners in Rouen briefly extinguished the flames to display her body for the purposes of removing any lingering doubt about her sex. After her corpse had been inspected, her executioners reignited the flames and left them to burn until her body was incinerated (Taylor 166). During the Algerian War, it was not unusual for the bodies of executed Algerian combatants to be left in public spaces as a messages or "mnemonic devices to remind the population that the power of life and death lay with France" (Lazreg 53).

<sup>11</sup> Literally translated as "black feet," *pieds-noirs* is the term usually used for Europeans living in Algeria prior to the country's independence as well as those who returned to France following Algerian's decolonization. According to Benjamin Stora, the exact origin of the term remains unknown but may reference the original settlers' black boots or the colonial wine growers' grape stained feet (8).

displaced by the war. A few years later, on May 8, 1966,<sup>12</sup> the statue was re-inaugurated in the city of Vaucouleurs, France, where Joan of Arc first publicly announced her intention to assemble an army to drive the English out of France. The statue had been cast anew, rendering invisible the fractures of its recent history. It stands today in the same spot, but beneath the first plaque is now affixed a second:

Statue érigée à Alger en 1951  
Mutilée en 1962  
Réparée par les soins du syndicat d'initiative  
De Vaucouleurs  
Inaugurée le 8 mai 1966

While the destruction of one ruling power's iconography by its successor is not particularly unusual, the story of the Joan of Arc statue in Algiers becomes more interesting if we look at what happened between its installation and its ultimate casting out.

In the months leading up to Algeria's independence, the statue of Joan of Arc underwent successive revisions. The monument's location on the Plateau des Glières placed it at the center of revolutionary activity in Algiers making it a highly visible space for communication between different political factions. On January 26, 1960, Governor General of Algiers, Paul Delouvrier, pleaded in a radio address with *pieds-noirs* who had begun defying the French State in more organized forms of revolt, to "avert the threat of 'secession' from France" ("Sign on Statue").<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In addition to commemorating Victory in Europe (VE) Day, May 8th also marks the day that Joan of Arc lifted the siege of Orléans in 1429. Uncommemorated in France, May 8th also marks the anniversary of the 1945 massacres at Sétif and Guelma in Algeria. When Algerians protested a post-war parade that excluded Algerian combatants who had fought with the Allies, the colonial police fired on them. A violent retaliation against the European population followed, which was met with a series of repressive measures and mass killings of Algerians by the French. Algerian casualties outnumbered European casualties exponentially (Horne 27).

<sup>13</sup> For purposes of transparency, I think it is important to note that the source for the following information was a *pied noir* publication. Although I have looked for Algerian accounts of the adaptations in consultation with the Centre Algérien in Paris, I have not been able to locate alternate sources.

The next day, signs appeared on the statue declaring “Algérie: Province Française” in seeming response to Delouvrier’s radio transmission (“Sign on Statue”). Shortly thereafter, a newly added French flag waved from Joan’s sword. Bouquets of flowers began appearing at her feet, reportedly left by both Europeans and Algerians. As journalist Kader Bakou writes retrospectively of the series of adaptations, “cette ‘Fatma n’Soumer’<sup>14</sup> française était considérée comme une héroïne de l’indépendance car elle aussi avait combattu une certaine forme d’impérialisme ou de colonialisme tout comme les nationalistes algériens” (1).

Then, on July 3, 1962, members of Algeria’s Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), the political party and revolutionary arm of the independence movement, replaced Joan’s tricolor with its organization’s banner. The following day, Joan’s face was veiled<sup>15</sup> to a chorus of *you-yous*.<sup>16</sup> Later, a sign appeared around Joan’s neck, bearing the name of Hassiba Ben Bouali, a female militant executed by French paratroopers in 1957 in a planned explosion of an FLN

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<sup>14</sup> Lalla Fatma N’Soumer was an Algerian combatant and mystic who took part in the resistance against France’s conquest of Kabylie in the mid-nineteenth century.

<sup>15</sup> The veil was the object of polemics in the years leading up to Algeria’s independence. Marnia Lazreg observes that a campaign against the veil became a key component of the French military’s strategy to gain traction among Algerian women. Women’s groups that framed colonists as liberators attempted to initiate *Algériennes* into Occidental feminism by convincing them to abandon the veil. Lazreg writes, “It was assumed that shedding the veil would pry women away from family and community; a new ‘solidarity’ (a term frequently used among gender strategists) would subsequently be built for them within colonial society” (149). Unveiling ceremonies were staged all over Algeria, most notably in Algiers. Later, archival materials revealed that many of the women, some of whom had never even worn veils, were coerced into participating (150). For an analysis of a more contemporary iteration of veil polemics, see Chapter 2 of Kelly Oliver’s *Women as Weapons of War* (2007) on the Bush administration’s adoption of a strategy to liberate “women of cover.”

<sup>16</sup> The Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (CNRTL) provides the following definition for *you-you*: “suite de longs cris aigus et modulés que poussent les femmes en certaines circonstances, généralement pour exprimer leur joie.” The *you-you* can also be an expression of mourning.

hideout<sup>17</sup> (“La Jeanne d’Alger”). Bouali was born in Orléansville, an Algerian town (re)named after the city where Joan of Arc had famously lifted a siege in 1429, and she died like Joan, at age nineteen, preferring death to the renunciation of her political aims.

Even if the authors of the adaptations of the statue remain anonymous and their intent sometimes ambiguous, this much is clear: somewhere in between the statue’s dedication and its dismantling, Joan of Arc became a site of contestation. No longer a French-issued unilateral message, the content of which could be contained on a plaque, Joan of Arc became, instead, a medium engaged by multiple populations to comment on the process of decolonization. She was simultaneously a space to assert allegiances, assign blame, and imagine other possibilities for the terms of existence.

### **Project Overview**

I begin with the story of the Joan of Arc statue in Algiers because it illuminates the driving concern of this dissertation, namely the relationship between Joan of Arc, postcolonial identities, and public memory. National symbols and their commemorative iterations often become signifiers for stories long forgotten or perhaps never known. Usually embedded in these stories (that time, retelling, and commemorative practices transform into national myth) are instances of trauma and moments of triumph that can be alternately evacuated, exploited, or extended to other populations according to the needs of the teller or the time in which the tale is told. Joan of Arc offers a particularly fascinating case. As the various individuals’ engagement with the statue in Algiers suggests, Joan was capable of representing faith in the losing battle for

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<sup>17</sup> Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo concludes his masterful film *La Bataille d’Alger* (1966) by depicting the dynamiting of the hideout from the alternating perspectives of the FLN members, including Ali La Pointe and Hassiba Ben Bouali, and French paratroopers.

a French Algeria, the imminent threat of a lost homeland for *pieds noirs*, the FLN-led battle for an independent nation, and the state-ordered brutal death of a young Algerian woman. What allowed her to serve so many different rhetorical functions at the same historical moment? Or, to ask a related question, where might we locate points of overlap in seemingly disparate appropriations?

Joan of Arc's relationship to postcolonial identity and public memory demand closer inspection when we realize that the demonstrations around the statue indicate a larger trend of referencing Joan of Arc to comment on postcolonial situations. Within the same decade as the adaptations in Algiers, Joan of Arc also became a point of reference in *l'affaire Djamila Boupacha* (1960-61), a highly mediatized trial that exposed the French military's use of torture in Algeria. Across the Atlantic, in the 1950s and 60s, debates about erecting a Joan of Arc statue in New Orleans, Louisiana, became a proxy for discussing the value of preserving a French ancestry that was a legacy of colonial contact. Likewise, when a Québécois theater troupe sought to align Québec's Quiet Revolution with other anti-colonial movements, it did so through the story of Joan of Arc (*Tu n'est pas tannée, Jeanne d'Arc?* 1968). More recently, from the 1980s onward, Joan has appeared, allusively, in the work of francophone authors, such as Leïla Sebbar, Assia Djebar, and Fabienne Kanor, often signaling failures or hypocrisies of French Republicanism. Joan's story has also been a recurring motif in the political rhetoric of France's Far Right party for the past thirty years, serving as a means by which to depict France as besieged by populations from its former colonies while positioning the party's leaders as Joan-like heroes capable of reclaiming France. Finally, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, New Orleanians have imagined Joan as an intercessor to bring accountability to negligent national leadership and profit-driven corporations in the aftermath of Hurricane

Katrina and the British Petroleum (BP) Oil Spill, connecting the English's military domination of France in the Middle Ages to the oil industry's 20<sup>th</sup> century economic domination of Louisiana. As the previous examples suggest, and as I will argue, Joan of Arc becomes a powerful rhetorical resource in the postcolonial era, allowing creators and common citizens to articulate identity narratives, testify to experiences of trauma, and negotiate the terms of public remembrance.

Given France's active alignment with the figure of Joan of Arc during the spread of its empire and her centrality to the country's iconographic imagining of itself, what is the nature of Joan of Arc's postcolonial afterlife? How do representations of Joan of Arc change when the empire she stands for begins to disintegrate? How, in turn, might this disintegration shift emphasis to Joan's own anti-imperial project, given that she fought foreign rule and sought to restore to power a ruler in exile? More importantly, when and for what reasons do postcolonial French and francophone populations conjure the figure of Joan of Arc to articulate their own identity narratives? How might her sometimes brief, ghostly appearances in texts signal the repetition of past traumas and insist on their reworking? In other words, if "ghosts" represent the unsettled dead driven by an ethical quest, why does the story of Joan of Arc act as a template for the redress of wrongs?

Attempting to answer these questions demands not only attention to the original source texts via which Joan of Arc's story is primarily communicated, namely her condemnation and rehabilitation trials, but also the cultural-historical nuances of the new narratives into which she is being introduced. This task is complicated by the ways in which Joan's story is enmeshed with commemorative texts, which tend to universalize the narratives they communicate. The commemorative impulse assimilates complex personal histories into national narratives,

codifying ways of telling and knowing to make comprehensible unspeakable events (Tal 6).

Violence gives way to victory as Joan's stake slow-fades into a standard.

January 6, 2012, marked the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Joan of Arc's birth, giving rise to numerous commemorations of the once heretic, now saint, and raising questions about how we remember the woman whose image permeates French culture and the country's physical landscape. Joan of Arc is easily one of the best documented figures of the Middle Ages, her life archived in contemporaneous letters, accounts from fellow soldiers, military reports, and the extensive legal records from the trials that condemned her as a relapsed heretic in 1431, and posthumously rehabilitated her in 1453. As biographer Donald Spoto points out, "We know more about Joan, for example, than we do about Moses, Plato, Jesus of Nazareth, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Buddha or Muhammed. For the last two and a half years of her life, we can construct almost a day-to-day account of her whereabouts and actions" (xii). Despite the relative abundance of archival material on Joan of Arc, however, scholars, artists, and laypeople have reached little consensus on how to interpret her life. Indeed, in her long afterlife, she has been appropriated by Marxists, royalists, feminists, transgender individuals, Catholics, Protestants, anti-Semites, and socialists, many beyond France's borders.

The association of Joan of Arc with an imagined idea of *francité*, and the various steps taken to imbricate her story within a national myth during the nineteenth century has been the subject of extensive scholarly study.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, numerous writers have chronicled the literary and cinematic adaptations of Joan's life, typically focusing on popular male-authored works

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<sup>18</sup> Michel Winock's chapter on Joan of Arc in Pierre Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, volume III (1992) outlines much of this process. Rosamonde Sanson's "La Fête de Jeanne d'Arc en 1894: controverse et célébration" in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (1973) offers another example.

created in Europe and the United States.<sup>19</sup> Yet for all the scholarship devoted to considering Joan of Arc's role in France's iconic imagining of itself, virtually no work has considered Joan's role in articulating postcolonial public memory. As this study demonstrates, though, creators and common citizens in countries with French colonial legacies have often evoked the figure of Joan of Arc not only as a vestige of colonial contact, but as a medium through which to voice their own identity narratives. Likewise, both francophone artists and French politicians continue to call upon Joan to explain relationships between France and its former colonies. Thus, in order to understand Joan of Arc's legacy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we must consider her from a transnational perspective. By analyzing a range of cultural texts including trial transcripts, literature, political speeches, statuary, archival materials, grassroots public performances, social media posts, and film, this study investigates how and why the figure of Joan of Arc allows for the alignment of seemingly divergent memories in a world reconfigured by the processes of decolonization and globalization.

## Chapter Overviews

Chapter 1, "Invoking Joan: Mythic Histories, Public Memories," traces the transformation of Joan's story into national myth, from her rehabilitation in the fifteenth century to her rediscovery during the nineteenth century and increasing popularization under the Third

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<sup>19</sup> Invald Raknem's *Joan of Arc in History, Legend, and Literature* (1971) provides an overview of Joan's many incarnations in the literature of Europe (Friedrich Schiller's *Maid of Orléans*, George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Carl Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*) and the United States (Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*) up to the 1950s. Ellen Ecker Dolgin's *Modernizing Joan of Arc* (2008) offers a more recent study of literary, visual, and filmic texts that focuses on issues of class and gender. Dolgin emphasizes Joan's embodiment of late nineteenth and early twentieth century concerns about the "New Woman" and the role that costuming plays in Joan's various interpretations.



Republic (1870-1940). I posit that Joan of Arc becomes a recurrent point of reference in postcolonial texts and discourse because of her centrality to France's iconic imagining of itself at the height of its empire as well as her potency as a symbol of revisionist history. In conjunction with this idea, this chapter establishes the relevance of postcolonial studies and memory studies as lenses through which to understand Joan's story and its successive retellings. By invoking Joan of Arc, creators and common citizens articulate their own national histories while also positioning themselves in relationship to a wider francophone world.

Chapter 2, "'You See, My Mother's People Originally Came From France': Colonial Nostalgia and the Negotiation of Origins," is the first of two chapters to look at the figure of Joan of Arc in New Orleans, Louisiana, an eighteenth-century settler colony of France. This chapter examines public discourse and private exchanges surrounding France's presentation of an equestrian statue of Joan of Arc to the city of New Orleans during the 1950s, linking the ambivalence it elicited to local debates about the role of a francophone past in an American present. Despite declining rates of French speakers in the state, a confluence of factors had led to a statewide effort at preserving and building upon the state's francophone heritage at this particular time period. Namely, Cajun French speakers' valorization as translators in World War II, the work of local activists inspired by the civil rights and anti-colonization movements, and legislators' recognition of the potential economic and touristic benefits of building upon the francophone presence already in Louisiana all provoked a growing investment in the state's French heritage. Nevertheless, class and race inflected ideas about what forms of "Frenchness" were best suited to preservation played into the debates. Drawing on archival sources, such as private letters, government documents, and newspaper coverage spanning more than two decades, I explore the ways in which the statue becomes a locus of postcolonial tensions and

desires. Specifically, I argue that the statue serves as a medium for some citizens to connect to a receding mythic French past while also allowing France to assert its ties to a settler colony and the powerful nation of which it was a part at a moment when its own importance as a world power was weakening.

Chapter 3, “‘Elle se prend pour Jeanne d’Arc!’: Gendering Memory in the Cases of Joan of Arc and Djamila Boupacha,” focuses on the discourse surrounding Djamila Boupacha, an Algerian political prisoner whose trial exposed the French military’s use of torture and became an international *cause célèbre* during the Algerian War (1954-1962). Boupacha’s supporters and detractors passingly compared her to Joan of Arc: indeed, both women were imprisoned, interrogated, and coerced into false confessions that they later recanted. Moreover, both women were later exonerated of their supposed crimes although Joan’s belated amnesty arrived two decades after her death. In putting Joan and Djamila’s trials in dialogue, this chapter asks why the processes by which each woman came to be publicly absolved hinged on mediated testimony that recast them as gender normative. Joan’s failure to conform to heteronormative ideas about femininity contributed to her legal condemnation. For Djamila, however, a strategically sentimental media campaign garnered support for her release by encouraging the public to perceive her as exemplifying norms of femininity and colonial subjecthood. I argue that in Joan’s rehabilitation and Djamila’s civil trial, “innocence” is established by depicting each woman as embodying traditional gender norms, with particular emphasis on the women’s status as virgins. Aligning Joan and Djamila’s stories clarifies the ways in which gender intersects with national identity.

Chapter 4, “‘Histoire sans Mémoire:’ France’s Front National and the Effacement of Colonial History,” examines how the Front National (FN), France’s Far Right party, uses key

elements of Johannic myth to position itself in relationship to France's former colonies. Since the 1980s, the party has held a yearly political rally in front of Joan of Arc's statue at the Place des Pyramides in Paris, appropriating Joan's image and the broad contours of her story to further its political platform. In an age of increasing anxiety about national identity due in part to France's membership in the European Union, changing immigration patterns, and globalization, Joan offers an anachronistic national symbol via which to gesture towards past greatness, suggest a state of present peril attributable to foreign influence, and, consequently, propagate a message of exclusionary citizenship undergirded by notions of "purity." Through a study of FN speeches from 2012-2015, with particular emphasis on Jean-Marie Le Pen's 2012 commemorative speech for the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Joan's birth, I argue that party heads Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen depict France as occupied by populations from France's former colonies. Moreover, I demonstrate that, as a corollary of this comparison, the FN's leaders depict themselves as the modern-day equivalents of Joan: exceptional figures capable of reviving a country on the edge of demise. In making this analogy of occupation, the FN represses the *actual* occupations that occurred during France's colonial rule and as well as the country's historical indebtedness to populations from ex-colonies.

Chapter 5, " 'Fiery Courage and Incandescent Faith': Joan's Story as New Orleans's Comeback," returns to the city of New Orleans to analyze responses to economic and environmental trauma with neocolonial resonances through several Joan-themed public performances including a protest prayer at the statue's base after the BP oil spill and a yearly Joan-themed Carnival parade. I argue that these Johannic productions become a medium through which to criticize national leadership and corporations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon disaster as well as a way to "rewrite" the city's recent history

of tragedy as one of persistence in the face of daunting circumstances. Through performative uses of fire, the Joan-themed Carnival parade reconfigures the element of Joan's destruction as a source of illumination. In so doing, it refuses to allow Joan or New Orleans to be defined by trauma and instead retells her story (and the city's own) as continual comeback.

Chapter 6, "Parting Souvenirs: Joan Citings in Francophone Texts," examines Joan's story as it appears in several literary and filmic texts created by authors writing at the height of the anti-colonial movement and several decades following decolonization. I begin by studying a Québécois play by Guy Thauvienne entitled *T'es pas tannée, Jeanne d'Arc?* that parallels Joan's military offensive against the English during the Hundred Years War to Québec's assertion of national identity in opposition to the Anglophone provinces during the *Révolution Tranquille* of the 1960s. Building on Michael Rothberg's work on multidirectional memory, I contend that Thauvienne attempts to situate Joan's struggle in a global postcolonial context. In the latter half of the epilogue, I analyze brief but telling mentions of Joan of Arc in the novels of two Algerian authors, Leïla Sebbar and Assia Djebar, and the work of Franco-Martinican filmmaker Fabienne Kanor. I argue that while Joan signifies a stand against colonial injustices for Thauvienne, she represents the failures of the French Republic and the experience of forced acculturation for Sebbar, Djebar, and Kanor.

*The Mnemonic Maid: Joan of Arc in Public Memory* uses Joan of Arc as a lens through which to examine the articulation of French and francophone identities in the latter half of the twentieth century and early years of the twenty-first. By examining Joan of Arc as a cultural construct that circulates via discourse and physical artifacts in spaces linked through histories of colonial contact, this study foregrounds Joan's rich potential as a memory trigger. Ultimately, I argue that Joan of Arc's myth offers an imaginative space where groups and individuals can

revive, reject, revise, and relate memories perceived as critical to their senses of self. In a world of porous borders and instantaneous communication that has seen a recent rise in nationalist movements, it is more important than ever to understand how and why national mythology functions and what allows one national history to be transposed onto another. This dissertation offers a series of case studies that attempt to shed light on the relationship between memory, identity, and national myth.

## CHAPTER 1. INVOKING JOAN: MYTHIC HISTORIES, PUBLIC MEMORIES

### Introduction

Avec Jeanne d’Arc, héroïne d’un passé lointain, historique et mythique, on remonterait aux origines mêmes de la nation. Ce retour aux origines sacralise le sentiment patriotique actuel, en assurant la permanence (Sanson 451).

Joan certainly had no idea of nationalism and nationality in the modern sense of the terms (Raknem 192).

The Prologue offered a portrait of Joan of Arc’s life as depicted in contemporary sources. This chapter will begin to look at her afterlife, outlining how a woman of humble origins came to be emblematic of a people. The goals of this chapter are twofold: (1) first, it seeks to elucidate the choices and circumstances that helped secure Joan’s place in public memory and facilitate her eventual adoption as a national symbol; (2) second, it aims to provide a critical framework for this study by establishing its relevance to Memory, Postcolonial, and Johannic Studies

The first section of this chapter, “Joan of Arc and National Myth: Historical Context,” clarifies the usage of the term “myth” as it will be employed here then examines the mythification process that Joan underwent, with particular emphasis on her fifteenth century rehabilitation and her nineteenth century rediscovery. Through a close reading of the rehabilitation trial transcripts, I argue that while the witnesses’ testimonies continuously call attention to the imprecision of individual memories, the participants in the event nonetheless attempt to create an infrastructure for future acts of public remembrance.

After establishing a working definition of myth, I will then examine the development and increasingly officialization of Joan’s myth, with particular emphasis on the years between the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) and World War II (1939-44). Tensions that emerged between Germany and France arguably facilitated Joan’s adoption on a larger scale as a national symbol,

as did the fact that Joan's home region of Lorraine became a contested piece of terrain in the years between the Franco-Prussian War and World War II. Thus, I posit that Joan takes on additional symbolic resonance at moments of national trauma when territory and identities are perceived to be under threat. Joan's popularity was also aided by the "modernization," or as Eugen Weber often calls it, "colonization" of rural France via which institutions such as public schools, the military, and the Church became more dominant presences in the lives of the common French person. In some way or another, all of these institutions saw Joan as a medium via which they could transmit national values.

### **The Meanings of Myth**

The historical person of "Joan of Arc" cannot be easily disentangled from her many mythical iterations. Because this dissertation deals with the way myth comes to bear on history, it will first be necessary to explain what I mean by "myth." The *Robert Micro* provides a useful starting point for thinking about myth in relation to history, defining myth as a "représentation des faits ou de personnages réels déformés ou amplifiés par la tradition" (870). As the previous definition demonstrates, "myth" can suggest a magnification of the facts. It can also become, as the secondary definition suggests, a total fiction or "chose imaginaire," but one that is nonetheless perceived as conveying culturally important truths (871).

While set in the far-off "temps des commencements," myths make sense of present realities, offering explanations or points of origin: "C'est cette irruption du sacré qui *fonde* réellement le Monde et qui le fait tel qu'il est aujourd'hui" (Eliade 17). As Mircea Eliade suggests, myth is a living presence in the sense that "il fournit des modèles pour la conduite humaine et confère par là la signification et valeur à l'existence" (12). Myths's emphasis on

highlighting exemplary behavior, which Eliade calls its master function, makes it the ideal space to elaborate and encode ideas about Nation (19). National heroes embody ideals, offering as Joseph Fabre once wrote of Joan, “le plus bel exemple à imiter” (qtd. in Datta 150).

Both Joseph Campbell and Roland Barthes recognize the Freudian dimensions of myth, as repositories for unconscious desires. In Campbell’s view, myths function like dreams on a societal scale, offering a space for the dramatization and potential resolution of cultural anxieties: “Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream” (19). While Campbell assumes the universal applicability of myths’ problems and solutions, stating that they are “directly valid for all mankind,” Barthes speaks, instead, of the duplicity of myth, specifying that its selective analogies are neither universal nor ahistorical: “D’abord, elle [sa motivation] n’est pas ‘naturelle’: c’est l’histoire qui fournit à la forme ses analogies. D’autre part, l’analogie entre le sens et le concept n’est jamais que partielle: la forme laisse tomber beaucoup d’analogues et n’en retient que quelques-uns” (232). Myth, then, like memory, offers a fragmentary view, activating only a portion of the possible interpretations. Barthes further clarifies that myths are made in particular historical circumstances, but efface their own origins, occulting their sources and sites of elaboration to appear timeless: “Le mythe est constitué par la déperdition de la qualité historique des choses: les choses perdent en lui le souvenir de leur fabrication” (252). This appearance of timelessness makes myth more amenable to diverse and sometimes contradictory interpretations. Several of the cases examined in this dissertation assume Campbell’s stance by taking for granted the universality of Joan’s myth. Following Barthes, I will be examining myth’s contingencies, that is the particular analogies activated in each time and place where Joan is invoked and the historical-cultural contexts that allow these analogies to accrete meaning.



Before I examine the particular cases in this study, it will first be necessary to, in Barthes's words, restore "la qualité historique des choses" in order to make visible the combination of choices and circumstances that encouraged the proliferation of Joan of Arc's myth in the first place. In the next section, I will begin by examining the transcripts of Joan's rehabilitation trial,<sup>20</sup> which in many ways inaugurated the mythification process by offering the many people who encountered Joan (and some who only knew of her second-hand) a Church-authorized occasion to present the Maid in her best light, entering into public record what had already become local lore. After analyzing the text of *Le procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, I will outline some of the ways in which the French State began appropriating the figure of Joan of Arc in the nineteenth century, as it developed into a modern nation and expanded its empire abroad.

### **The 15<sup>th</sup> Century Rehabilitation**

As outlined in the Prologue, Joan's rehabilitation trial occurred between 1455-1456, approximately twenty-five years after her death. And while the trial's *Préface des Notaires* assures future readers that the testimony gathered there is not only "complet et authentique" but also compiled by "les personnes les plus honnêtes et les plus savantes" the trial is nevertheless a constructed document at least partially motivated by the intention to clear up any confusion

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<sup>20</sup> The proceedings of 1455-1456 are also referred to as the nullification trial, which emphasizes their legal function of invalidating the first trial's verdict. Since the reversal of the verdict had no consequence for Joan, herself, I am choosing to refer to the proceedings by their other name, the rehabilitation trial, to emphasize their social function. While the trial had the express purpose of exonerating Joan and her immediate family from any lingering stigma, it also had a greater social function of mitigating the guilt or complicity of the various participants by allowing them to help restore Joan's good name through their testimonies. Politically, it functioned to remove any taint of affiliation with a convicted heretic from Charles VII and the newly reinstated French government (DuParc 2).

about Joan of Arc by offering a more comprehensive vision of her than could be derived from the condemnation trial (DuParc 3). Historian David Lowenthal generally cautions against indulging this corrective impulse towards history in his monograph *The Past is a Foreign Country*, saying, “Just because it seems so laudable, ‘setting the record straight’ involves more self-deception than any other motive for changing the past” (328). Johannic scholar Régine Pernoud takes a more measured approach, noting that the thoroughness of the trial (the establishment of a royal commission and ecclesiastical court, the involvement of two popes, and the sheer number of witnesses interviewed) precludes the possibility that it was conducted purely for political purposes. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the participants’ testimonies cannot be read as entirely reliable or neutral given the context. As Pernoud writes, considering the time that had elapsed, “memories would be faded or defaced; certain, too, that failures of the memory would be numerous among the former assessors at the Trial of Condemnation who, obviously, while they were being questioned at the Trial of Rehabilitation must wish themselves elsewhere” (265). Pernoud acknowledges the potential ulterior motives of men like Jean Marcel, a merchant of Rouen who had “collaborated”<sup>21</sup> with the inquisitors, noting that his “sole purpose in volunteering to bear witness seems to have been to whitewash himself” (266). In a similar expression of measured skepticism about the participants’ testimony, Johannic historian Philippe Contamine editorializes that Guillaume de Manchon, one of the original trial’s clerks, was “soucieux de se donner le beau rôle” in recounting his version of events, painting himself as sympathetic to Joan and critical of Bishop Cauchon (385). At times, the trial’s text reads less

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<sup>21</sup> Pernoud’s use of this particular term to describe Marcel’s involvement paired with other references to World War II throughout her writing act as a reminder that her own perception of Joan’s story was colored by her living memory of France’s occupation. When speaking of the rehabilitation trial, and the desire to inquire into what really happened, she mentions the investigation of war crimes in 1945 that took place in Ouradour-sur-Glane, an Alsatian village where 642 civilians were shot by Nazis and burned (Pernoud 258).

like an investigation into the legality of the condemnation trial and more like an extended eulogy for Joan relayed through a series of character witnesses. Several individuals attest to Joan's outstanding recall during her interrogation, her wit, and her propensity to help the sick and the poor. A few witnesses testify to hearing of initially hostile Burgundians, such as Jean Tressart, secretary of the king of England, who experienced a dramatic change of heart upon seeing Joan's death. According to the witness Pierre Cusquel, Tressart returned from "le lieu de supplice, triste et gémissant" to proclaim: "Nous sommes tous perdus, car une personne bonne et sainte a été brûlée" (DuParc 209).

Was Joan's spotless reputation so unanimously recognized? And was the second-hand account of Tressart's immediate and devastating remorse in any way indicative of a more widespread reaction? The fact that the trial was being held at the behest of the pope and that the reputation of the king hinged upon it is likely to have influenced the testimony of the witnesses in Joan's favor. As Philippe Contamine indicates, the questions posed at the trial focus on Joan's successes. Therefore, the line of questioning and the context in which it occurred oriented witnesses towards certain kinds of responses:

Dans le contexte, il était inévitable que les témoins retenus aient été plus élogieux que réservés ou critiques. Inévitablement, ils durent se concerter pour répondre à l'unisson aux questions posées. Ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'ils aient été en service commandé ou qu'ils aient été de mauvaise foi. Simplement, ils eurent à coeur d'exprimer l'admiration ou l'affection ou la pitié non-feintes qu'ils éprouvaient sans doute depuis le début pour la Pucelle. (377)

The fact that many of Joan's chief detractors had died since the condemnation trial allowed the witnesses to speak for them and, in the case of Bishop Cauchon, against them.

Changes in the way Joan is designated in the rehabilitation trial (in relationship to the earlier trial) also indicate a more sympathetic reading. In the condemnation trial of 1431, Joan is often referred to as "cette femme," suggesting adult responsibility for her actions (Tisset 5-12).

The judges occasionally recognize Joan's chosen *nom de guerre* by referring to her as "cette femme du nom de Jeanne, communément appelée la Pucelle." However the judges make the distinction between their vaguely disdainful understanding of Joan as *cette femme* (listed first) which undermines her popular reception as *la Pucelle* (Tisset 1). The designations of *femme* and *Pucelle* were not entirely compatible because a *Pucelle* was understood to be a young girl, presumably a virgin. Thus, to call Joan a woman was to suggest a level of adult accountability not connoted by the word *Pucelle* and to distance her from the default associations of youth with virginity. In the same vein, references to "cette femme diffamée" call attention to the contrary popular interpretation of Joan, which assumed a commonly recognized bad reputation (Tisset 3). The rehabilitation trial transcripts, in contrast, refer to Joan as a *fille*, suggesting a perception of her as a child, and hence more deserving of legal protection. More specifically, they refer to her as the daughter or *fille* of Isabelle Rommée, the plaintiff, encouraging sympathy in future readers by coding Joan's death as a very personal form of tragedy for the mourning mother (DuParc 2).

While witnesses claim to speak from their own experience, their testimonies are frequently sprinkled with references to what they had heard (*il/elle a entendu dire par certains*) and what, generally, was said (*on dit*). The preponderance of *on dit* in the testimonies suggests that Joan's story had already taken on a life of its own in public lore. For example, one inhabitant of Rouen, Husson LeMaistre, evokes the now legendary story of Joan's seemingly miraculous recognition of the king, which, as established in the Prologue, is unsupported by any historical document. LeMaistre testifies, "Et, comme on le racontait, lorsqu'elle arriva près du roi, elle le reconnut, bien qu'elle ne l'eût jamais vu auparavant" (DuParc 147). At other points, witnesses call attention to the imprecision of their memory even as they offer up supposed direct quotations spoken by Joan. In citing Joan's pre-execution warning to the city of Rouen, which

many witnesses repeat without ever using exactly the same words, Maître Guillaume de la Chambre states that “il l’entendit aussi dire ces paroles, *ou d’autres semblables*” (DuParc IV 37, emphasis mine).

Already in the rehabilitation trial many of the witnesses speak of fantastical or miraculous elements, always gleaned from the grapevine, suggesting that Joan was popularly perceived as divinely inspired well before the trial. For example, Messire Thomas Marie, a priest called to testify in Rouen claims “il entendit de beaucoup qu’on vit le nom ‘Jhesus’ écrit dans la flamme du feu qui la consumait” (DuParc 228). In a similar second-hand sighting, a witness in Rouen, Frère Ysambard de la Pierre, speaks of a particularly bellicose Englishman who reportedly “la haïssait [Jeanne] extrêmement et avait juré de placer de sa propre main un fagot sur son bûcher.” Yet the Englishman underwent a conversion when he beheld “dans le dernier souffle de Jeanne une colombe blanche sortant de la flame” (DuParc 212). Other translations specify that the dove<sup>22</sup> not only flew from Joan’s mouth at the moment of her death, but also flew towards France (which would have meant Paris) allowing “Holy Spirit and Country [to] conflate in the image” (Meltzer 213). As Françoise Meltzer observes:

[I]n the fifteenth century, the dove is first a symbol for the soul, and saints are occasionally depicted with the dove flying out of their mouths at the moment of death. Thus, one can say that in claiming to see the dove fly from Joan, the simultaneous claim is that her eternal life is attested to— confirmed, despite the Church’s dark pronouncements. Finality has then been short-circuited: the Maid’s soul continues and the miracle of the dove already suggests she was a saint. (*For Fear of the Fire* 214)

While a Frenchman relates the testimony concerning the dove, the fact that this acknowledgement of seeming irrefutable proof of Joan’s goodness comes from an Englishman

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<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that this detail was revealed after the said Englishman, disturbed by the execution, had run to the nearest tavern, “où il reprit des forces en buvant” (DuParc 212).

would have substantiated an idea of France as elect within the popular imagination. Like Joan's soul, as materialized by the dove in the testimony,<sup>23</sup> other parts of her remain untouched by the fire according to other witnesses' words. Informed by *on dit*, Jean Massieu and Friar Isambart, state that Joan's heart and entrails would not burn (Pernoud 234).

As Iwona Irwin-Zarecka writes, public memory does not just happen: "It is a product of a great deal of work by large numbers of people" (qtd. in Olick 127). While, in a legal sense, the rehabilitation trial functions primarily to overturn the ruling of the condemnation trial, it also engages in a form of memory work<sup>24</sup> by establishing Joan as worthy of commemoration and staging a counter performance to the trial's conclusion. Indeed, the opening text of the trial transcripts, *La Préface des Notaires*, establishes the importance of faithfully recording the words of the trial in order to make them accessible to a future public:

Les règles de la raison l'exigent et un juste précepte d'équité l'enseigne, les dispositions salutaires des canons sacrés et des lois civiles l'ordonnent tous les actes des procès réguliers doivent être mis par écrit, rédigés en textes authentiques et consignés dans des instruments publics, pour qu'ils soient ainsi connus également de ceux présents et à venir qu'ils ne périssent pas si la mémoire des hommes fait défaut. (DuParc 1)

The text's emphasis on future generations (*ceux à venir*) and the need to create an enduring memory (*qu'ils ne périssent pas si la mémoire des hommes fait défaut*) frames the trial's purpose as extending beyond its stated function of absolving Joan and the family of blame.

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<sup>23</sup> Meltzer insists on the difference in modern and late medieval perspectives: "In the fifteenth century of Joan's world, the dove is an instance of transubstantiation; it is, above all, not a metaphor" (216).

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Rivette's film *Jeanne la Pucelle I: Les batailles* (1994) begins by recognizing the memory work of the rehabilitation trial. The film opens with the words of Isabelle Rommée's supplication to the court before flashing back to the beginning of Joan's mission. By referencing the posthumous trial in what is an otherwise chronological biopic, Rivette acknowledges that current depictions of Joan depend heavily on the testimony of the rehabilitation.

Nonetheless, because only a very small minority of the public was literate, the theatrical elements of the trial take on greater importance. Indeed, it was the public's memory of the event and their understanding of its symbolic import rather than the textual record that would most likely be transmitted, orally, to future generations. Consequently, the rehabilitation appears, at times, as a restaging of the condemnation in which new and improved benevolent judges replace the corrupt judges of the first trial and carefully attend to the vulnerabilities of the plaintiff, Joan's mother, who symbolically functions as a stand-in for the condemned. The descriptions of Isabelle Rommée mirror descriptions of Joan, for whom she has become a legal surrogate: routinely denoted as a *veuve*, the aging Rommée doubles her forever young daughter, a *vierge* or *Pucelle*. Similarly, the rehabilitation judges position themselves against their predecessors in Joan's first trial by stressing their concern for providing protection and legal guidance for Joan's mother, as if to offer a corrective for Joan's lack of counsel through their intensified attention to her mother. They write, "la dite veuve, inexpérimentée en matière de litiges et procès, des complications et difficultés de l'affaire exposée dans le rescrit et la supplique, pour qu'elle pût bien connaître les phrases et l'issue de la procédure, compliquées et difficiles, incertaines et périlleuses" (DuParc 11). This process of re-playing culminates with the judges' removal of the articles of accusation from the original trial and their demand that they be destroyed (*lacerés*).

After Joan and her family are declared absolved of "aucune marque ou tache d'infamie en raison de ce qui a été dit, qu'elle a été innocente," the judges complete the public act of reparation by staging a revised ending to her trial. In the cemetery of St. Ouen, where a priest delivered a homily castigating Joan before her execution, a second sermon was delivered (an elegy, perhaps, to act as a counter speech act to the original sermon in which Joan was compared to a dog returning to its vomit) and the new sentence was read aloud. Then, the following day,

the new sentence was once again publicly delivered in the *Vieux Marché*, where Joan had burned at the stake. After the reading of the revised sentence, the site of Joan's execution was marked with a commemorative cross, described in the transcripts as follows: "une croix honorable en mémoire perpétuelle et pour implorer le salut de celle-ci et des autres défunts . . . pour future mémoire" (DuParc 229). By erecting a memory marker at the place of Joan's death, the judges recognize it as a site of commemoration and establish it as a destination for future pilgrimages. In so doing, they participate in building what Irwin-Zarecka calls the infrastructure of memory, to "secure a presence for the past" (qtd. in Blair, Dickinson, and Ott 10). Contrary to the judges at the condemnation trial, who ensured that no physical trace remained in an attempt to prevent the establishment of relics,<sup>25</sup> the rehabilitation judges sanctioned Joan's public remembrance by designating a *lieu de mémoire*. While the marking of such spaces does not guarantee their use or their popular reception (just as non-designation does not prevent memory), it does create a framework for it.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, the rehabilitation trial planted the seeds for the development of a proto-national myth elaborated through the figure of Joan of Arc first by providing a space for formally rehabilitating a figure who had already become a folk hero in the intervening years since her death, second by simultaneously aligning that project with larger aims of legitimizing the ruling power and condemning the actions of English adversaries and their Burgundian allies at the close of the Hundred Years War, and last by establishing Joan as worthy of further commemoration. In this sense, Joan's trial became a means for the various

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<sup>25</sup> In 1867, a bottle supposedly containing Joan's bones was discovered in the apartment of a French apothecary. After the Vatican accepted the relics as authentic, they were held for years at the Joan of Arc Museum in Chinon. In 2013, forensic scientist Philippe Charlier confirmed that the relics had not been salvaged from the execution site but were, instead, bits of an Egyptian mummy, a cat's femur, and a scrap of textile (Ravillious 1).



participants to assert their loyalties through a collective identification of heroes and villains in the national drama, which, like a piece of traveling theater, was enacted in several cities throughout France. The event also allowed the participants a space to attempt to make sense of an experience of national trauma (the war, itself, as well as their roles as direct witnesses of Joan's death in some cases<sup>26</sup>) at a generation's remove. While the rehabilitation trial initiated the memory work of Joan's legacy, and Joan's public remembrance survived in various forms in the intervening centuries, it was not revived on a national scale until the mid-1800s.

### **The 19<sup>th</sup> Century Rediscovery**

Why did Joan of Arc become such a prominent figure over the course of the nineteenth century? Globally speaking, she became a useful symbol for elaborating a national narrative at a time period when France was transitioning from a diverse assemblage of regions to an integrated whole.<sup>27</sup> Arguably, however, it was Germany's interest in Joan of Arc during the nineteenth century that rekindled France's. It was not until another European power threatened to tell the story of the Maid of Lorraine that French scholars promptly intervened to wrest her away, despite the fact that there had been only minimal literary or scholarly production on Joan since the fifteenth century. Indeed, Joan's loyalty to the monarchy made her an unpopular heroine after the Revolution, nearly sealing her disappearance from French culture ("The Joan Phenomenon" 270). One piece of literature, however, began to change that trend. Nadia Margolis writes that after the popular reception of Friedrich Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*

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<sup>26</sup> This dimension of the trial will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

<sup>27</sup> For a comprehensive explanation of this process, see Eugen Weber's *Peasants to Frenchmen* (1978).

(1801), “Guido Goerres, son of the German Catholic publicist [...] made plans to edit the trial manuscripts long mouldering in Paris.” Margolis continues:

This proved to be too much of a threat to French cultural hegemony. The Société de l’Histoire de France was consequently founded, bids were taken from scholars on the project, and the newly-minted chartist Jules Quicherat would edit them and also publish a wealth of literary and historical texts devoted to Joan. (271)

Not surprisingly, the loss of Joan’s own Lorraine region to Germany in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) much later in the century contributed to the upsurge in nationalistic fervor around the figure called “l’héroïque jeune fille [...] qui plane sur la France . . . comme l’ange même de la Patrie” (qtd. in Sanson 444).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Joan of Arc began to be more formally commemorated both in local festivals and official monuments, as a way for France to instill patriotic values in its own citizens as well as to position itself in relation to other countries. As early as 1790, a proposal in the National Assembly suggested making the *le 14 juillet* an occasion to honor Joan, along with a separate holiday that could act as a counterpart to American celebrations of George Washington. But the national holiday did not come about until the twentieth century, perhaps because of Joan’s association with the monarchy (Sanson 445). Despite this affiliation, even Napoleon expressed his admiration for *la Pucelle*, saying, “L’illustre Jeanne d’Arc a prouvé qu’il n’est pas de miracle que le génie français ne puisse opérer lorsque l’indépendance est menacée” (Winock 684). In 1803, Bonaparte re-inaugurated the yearly celebration of Joan’s feast day in Orléans, which had been discontinued during the Revolution. This form of commemorative practice increasingly embedded Joan’s presence into the lives of common citizens and helped garner support for the movement for a national holiday. Therefore, when Joseph Fabre proposed the institution of *une fête à l’honneur de Jeanne* in 1884 to unify the country after Franco-Prussian defeat and “créer même une religion de la patrie,” the

public was receptive (Sanson 447-8; Winock 684). A holiday honoring Joan was seen as a way to “contribuer à l’éducation du peuple, à reserrer les liens entre les citoyens” and act as “une méthode vivante d’instruction civique” (Sanson 446). Meanwhile the Johannic city of Domrémy became a pilgrimage site in the two decades following the Franco-Prussian war, with the number of visitors increasing from 20,000 in 1878 to 35,000 in 1894<sup>28</sup> (Nora 691). Eugen Weber notes that by 1893 the guest registry at the house where Joan was born reflected a wider variety of visitors who had traveled longer distances on their pilgrimages, whereas just ten years earlier most of the visitors were local (111).

It was also during the nineteenth century that the French government and private organizations began commissioning statuesque representations of Joan of Arc as part of a larger Third Republic project that French historian Maurice Agulhon later dubbed *la statuemanie* (Garval 227). During this period, images invested with a particular interpretation of greatness were set forth for public inspiration and instruction. In fact, “in Paris alone, 26 new monuments were erected between 1815 and 1870 and an astounding 150 between 1870 and 1914” (qtd. in Garval 30). While a handful of female figures, such as George Sand, found representation in the growing trend, Joan of Arc was “by far the French woman most honored in nineteenth-century monument” (Garval 118). Emmanuel Frémiet’s equestrian statue of Joan, erected in 1874 at the Place des Pyramides in Paris was one of the first and most enduring of these representations, becoming “un objet de culte” (Sanson 445). It, too, was perceived of as a way to rally morale following France’s recent wartime defeat.

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<sup>28</sup> The source for Nora’s numbers is not clear, although it appears that he may be looking at number of visitors to the city, not just to Joan’s house in Domrémy. Weber bases his information on the number of signatures in the visitors’ book at the house where Joan was born: 1,342 signatures in 1872 versus 2,128 in 1877 (111).

The prominence of a few key figures in public statuary, such as Joan of Arc, made them, as June Hargrove suggests, “a statement of national identity and an ideological weapon” (qtd. in Garval 31). This French iconography eventually spread beyond the country’s borders and was often actively exported to the colonies, leading to “such absurdities as the erection of statues of Joan of Arc in the Mauritian desert” (Stovall and Van Den Abbeele 5). While some figures fell out of fashion after the end of *statuemanie*, images of Joan continued to proliferate. Currently, in Paris, fifty-five public statues, mosaics, or bas-reliefs depict the Maid, a number that multiplies to an estimated 20,000 when including the whole of the hexagon and the rest of the world (“Sainte Jeanne d’Arc”). By the end of the nineteenth century, Joan of Arc permeated the French landscape and imaginary, commemorated in folkloric *milieux de mémoire* and officialized in state-sponsored *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1).

Much of the renewed interest in the medieval figure during the nineteenth century can be attributed to the work of French historians Jules Michelet (1798-1894) and Jules Quicherat (1814-1882). Michelet’s nineteen-volume history of France devoted three tomes to the Hundred Years War, one of which focuses on Joan of Arc. Quicherat, who was Michelet’s student, built on his mentor’s historical work when he edited and published a complete version of Joan’s trials, in Latin, in five volumes between 1841 and 1849. Quicherat’s compilation of the trial minutes of condemnation and rehabilitation and the subsequent translations into French beginning in 1867,<sup>29</sup> made Joan’s legal records accessible to a broader public, for both scholarly study and literary adaptation.

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<sup>29</sup> Vallet de Virille published the first French version of the rehabilitation trial in 1867. Then, Ernest O’Reilly published a translation of both trials the following year (Winock 685).

The nineteenth century also marked a period of increased output in literary and scholarly production about Joan of Arc after a few centuries of relative obscurity. In her own lifetime, Joan had inspired the literary admiration of Christine de Pisan, who extolled her in an epic poem, *La Ditié de Jeanne d'Arc* (1429) and contributed to the interpretation of Joan as “proof that the French are God’s elect” (Fraoli 826).<sup>30</sup> Shortly thereafter, François Villon dedicated a nostalgic stanza to her in his poem cataloging “Les Dames du temps jadis” (1453). After her death, however, Joan made very few appearances in literature for the next four hundred years, with two notable exceptions. Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part I* (1589) depicts Joan as a villainous wench who feigns pregnancy to evade execution. Then, during the Enlightenment, she resurfaces as the subject of bawdy mockery in Voltaire’s *La Pucelle d’Orléans* (1755).<sup>31</sup> As previously mentioned, German playwright Friedrich Schiller inaugurated nineteenth century Johannic literary output when he published *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* in 1801, which historian Jules Michelet cited as “the source of Joan’s cultural resurrection” (qtd. in Meltzer 13). Over the course of the next century, authors as far ranging as Victor Hugo, Arthur Rimbaud, Alexandre

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<sup>30</sup> Pisan writes: “Par tel miracle vrayement . . . / Chose est bien digne de mémoire,/ Que Dieu, par une vierge tendre,/ Ait adès voulu (chose est voire) / Sur France grant grace estendre./ O ! Quel honneur à la couronne/ De France par divine preuve !/ Car par les graces qu’il lui donne,/ Il appert comme il l’apreuve,/ Et que plus foy qu’autre part treuve” (stanzas 11-12).

<sup>31</sup> Backlash against Voltaire’s invectives arguably contributed to Joan of Arc’s popularity. An entry in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* depicts her as a fool whom others were foolish enough to believe. In chronicling the events that led to her death, Voltaire writes, “Up to the present, the ridiculous. Here now is the horrible [...] un unfortunate idiot who had enough courage to render very great service to the king and the country, was condemned to be burned by fortyfour [*sic*] priests who immolated her for the English faction (“Joan of Arc” 1).

Dumas, and François René de Chateaubriand, incorporated romantic renderings of the Maid into their work.<sup>32</sup>

In 1869, Felix Dupanloup, the bishop of Orléans, petitioned Rome to begin beatification hearings for Joan to officialize her status within the Church. Though significantly delayed by the Franco-Prussian war, the hearings began in 1892. In light of Joan's growing status as a symbol of French national identity, and given that France's colonial projects fit into a larger context of European expansion seen as supportive of the Church's evangelistic goals, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that ecclesiastical authorities opened the hearing by framing Joan of Arc as a necessary domestic counterpart to explorer Christopher Columbus. Both of the fifteenth century figures were considered for beatification within a decade of each other, and the Promoter of the Faith, (or "Devil's Advocate") at Joan's hearing paralleled their perceived achievements:

The history of the fifteenth century has consecrated two names especially for praise, for remembrance, and for perennial attention: Christopher Columbus and Joan of Arc or Joan Romée, called the Maid of Orleans. Columbus is famous because of the New World that he sought and found, and Joan because of the recovered fortunes of her native land and its restored freedom and glory. Moreover, just as Columbus did not hesitate to conquer the dark sea and to thrust himself into every kind of vicissitude in order to acquire new shores for the Gospel, and enter into their possession "in the name of Jesus Christ," so, too, the Virgin of Arc did not fear to take up arms and commit herself to the perils and hardships of war in order to restore the kingdom of France, at that time almost destroyed, and to consecrate it "through the hands of the dauphin to the king of heaven, who is the king of France." (qtd. in "Joan of Arc's Last Trial" 206-7)

Partnered in a chaste marriage impassioned by love of country, Columbus "conquers," "thrusts," and "acquires" abroad while the virgin Joan "commits," "restores," and "consecrates" at home,

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<sup>32</sup> Across the Atlantic, Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), a sentimental portrait informed by a dozen years of research, met little commercial success but remained, in his opinion, his best work. "The book may not sell," Twain concluded "but that is nothing— it was written for love" (Twain iii). Mark Twain's daughter, Susy Clemens, who died at age 24, acted as a partial inspiration for his portrait of Joan. According to one account, Twain got the idea for the novel when he found a detached page of a schoolbook about Joan of Arc blowing down the street (Twain iv).

an armored Angel of the Hearth. Similar associations of the two historical characters appear in literature: Paul Claudel wrote the drama *Le Livre de Christophe Colomb* (1927-1928) then directly followed it with a play about Joan of Arc, *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* (1934), which, as Pascal Lécroart indicates, shares many commonalities with its theatrical predecessor: “une figure historique centrale mise en jugement, un drame avec chœur et musique, une structure épique construite sur la base d’un récit présenté par un personnage parlé accompagné d’un livre” (1). In the same vein, two decades later when Jean Anouilh wrote *L’Alouette*, his play about Joan of Arc, he reportedly modeled it on Claudel’s *Livre de Christophe Colomb*, using a courtroom framework interrupted by flashback and commentary (Raknem 236, 245-6). These recurring identifications with Columbus affiliated Joan with nationalism and colonialism despite her potential to be read in contrary ways. Joan was beatified in 1909 and eventually canonized in 1920. While French law separated the Church and State in 1905, politicians and church leaders saw Joan as a figure capable of bridging this new divide, a saint who could be celebrated in public space because she was also a national heroine.

The French State’s appropriation of Joan of Arc’s image continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century as evidenced through legislative actions that recognized her as worthy of nation-wide commemoration and accorded a protected status to her statuary. On June 24, 1920, on the heels of Joan of Arc’s May 16<sup>th</sup> canonization, the French Republic instated the celebration of her feast day naming it the “fête de Jeanne d’Arc, fête du patriotisme,” making Joan, through the affiliation of her life with the ideal of patriotism, into a national mascot (Winock 716). The special status accorded to Joan’s representation in civic space reflected a growing investment in her image. While the demand for artillery in the World Wars necessitated the melting down of many of the monuments created during *la statuemanie*, a few figures remained protected by law.

They included Louis XIV, Napoleon, Henry IV, and Joan of Arc (Freeman 90). This may be partially explained by the incorporation of Joan's image into local *monument aux morts*, where a statue of the newly minted saint often accompanied lists of war casualties.<sup>33</sup> This pairing draws on Joan's engagement as a soldier against a foreign power while effacing the fact that she did not die in battle or even directly at the hands of the English but as a result of a decision of a French ecclesiastical court. Joan of Arc is further assimilated into a commemorative tradition of "grands hommes" through the phrasing of a memorial dedicated to her in Rouen. A plaque underneath a statue near the site of her death reads, "À Jeanne d'Arc, le peuple français reconnaissant," approximating the formula on the façade of the Panthéon in Paris: "Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante."

In addition to gaining an institutional status through state-sponsored monuments, Joan as a national icon was also circulated through popular forms such as film. As critics such as Naomi Green (1999) and Dayna Oscherwitz (2010) have argued, historical epics have been important vehicles for the creation of national feeling and the sense of a shared past. Not surprisingly, Joan's representation was increasingly codified and disseminated through the new medium of film, whose staging often referenced static images from French paintings, statues, and school books (O'Brien 4). Early silent movies, such as Georges Hatot's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1898) and the silent short of the same title by Georges Méliès (1900), pulled from what had become a familiar set of scenes. The narrative conventions of Joan's story were nowhere more apparent than when they were breached. When Danish filmmaker Carl Dreyer released his international production of *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928), he drew directly from the trial transcripts instead of a

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<sup>33</sup> This practice was so widespread, in fact, that when traveling in the French Alps in 2012, I came across a *monument aux morts* featuring Joan in the church of the hamlet of Fouillouse. Much too small to qualify as a village, Fouillouse did not even have a post office or a grocery store.



romanticized biography by Joseph Delteil as originally planned, and highlighted Joan's suffering at the hands of the French. Dismayed, critic Paul Achard reproached the director for his abandonment of iconographic traditions: "Certainly [the public] will not find the entry of the Maiden into Orléans, the coronation of the king, and any of the other images from the History of France that the schoolbooks have engraved in its memory" (qtd. in O'Brien 3). Other reviewers equally lamented these omissions, as well as the absence of citations of classical artwork of Joan painted by Ingres and others (O'Brien 18). As the critical reception of the film highlighted, Joan's myth had come to generate certain expectations, and the fact that Dreyer drew from a primary source did little to absolve him of the sin of abandoning tradition.

Thus, to act as a seeming antidote to Dreyer's more gruesome, visceral depiction of Joan's condemnation trial and subsequent execution, a French-financed rival production advertised as a "national alternative" began production. The high budget film *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1929) was directed by Marco de Gastyne and boasted a French writer, director and star, and on location shooting at historical sites. The film was also materially and symbolically supported by a committee chaired by none other than the France's president, Raymond Poincaré, who even accorded the production four regiments of the national army to serve as extras (O'Brien 7). As the backlash against Dreyer's production and the attempt to offer a more appropriate French-made version reiterated, Joan had become not just a figure from history but a "protected" national symbol.

Therefore, a confluence of factors allowed Joan to rise to prominence as a national symbol including her affiliation with a contested piece of territory (her homeland of Lorraine), her appeal to historians and artists attempting to produce patriotic narratives, and her usefulness

as a symbol for reconciling aims of both the Church and State at a moment when the two institutions were legally separated.

### **A Postcolonial Joan**

“On comprendra Jeanne d’Arc de mieux en mieux à notre époque qui est celle de la libération des peuples et de la fin du colonialisme” (Régine Pernoud qtd. in Winock 723).

As the previous section mentions, Joan rose to prominence at a time period when rural France was undergoing something akin to an internal “colonization”<sup>34</sup> by urban centers as well as when, beyond the hexagon, France’s empire reached its height. Despite recognitions of the potential for exploration, to date there is no scholarship on the subject of a “postcolonial Joan.” In fact, two of most high profile works of Johannic scholarship released in France in the past fifteen years never once reference the word “colony” (Beaune 2004, Contamine 2012). Yet even with its medieval makings, Joan’s story has surprising resonances with postcolonial texts, raising questions about foreign occupation, political sovereignty, and hidden histories of detainment and interrogation. Equally important, Joan’s trial transcript bears witness to acts of resistance and resilience in the face of flagrant abuses of power. It is not unusual for scholars who write about Joan to mention, in passing, the potential for postcolonial resonances in Joan of Arc’s story. In *For Fear of the Fire: Joan of Arc and the Limits of Subjectivity* (2001), Françoise Meltzer indicates the tension apparent in the imposition of Joan’s image on colonized populations, then cites Simone Weil’s analysis of this hypocrisy: “Had France been conquered by the English in

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<sup>34</sup> Weber makes a very compelling case for thinking of the incorporation of rural France as a form of colonization, insofar as it entailed the repression of local languages, religious beliefs, and culture. He notes that urban administrators used the same terminology for their internal “civilizing mission” as did colonial administrators. Likewise, urban administrators frequently made direct comparisons between rural France, which they perceived as backwards, and the Magreb and Sub-Saharan Africa (485-96).

the fifteenth century, Joan would be well and truly forgotten, even to a great extent by us. We now talk about her to the Annamites [*sic*] and the Arabs; but they know very well that here in France we don't allow their heroes and saints to be talked about; therefore the state in which we keep them is an affront to their honor" (16). In a similar vein, Emily Apter asks, "Is there a postcolonial Joan waiting in the wings, ready for combat?" She speculates that "one might expect to find Joan of Arc appropriated by pro-independence Algerian rebels" but concludes that "there is scant evidence that this occurred" (59). While I agree with Apter that Algerians had their own national heroes and am not suggesting that appropriations of Joan were widespread, I posit that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Joan's story is a medium through which France and its former colonies position themselves in relationship to each other and reimagine (for better or worse) the terms of those histories. Consequently, we would benefit from having a clearer picture of how Johannic studies intersect with postcolonial studies and memory studies.

Before proceeding, it will first be necessary to make a few clarifications about the use of the term "postcolonial," which is riddled with questions about what and who falls under its rubric. For the purposes of this project, I will be using the broad definition offered by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin as "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (194). Françoise Lionnet's definition reiterates this idea of "postcoloniality" as "postcontact" but adds that it is "a condition that exists within, and thus contests and resists, the colonial moment itself with its ideology of domination" (4). While many of the texts included in this study resist ideologies of domination, they cannot all be said to do so uniformly and some actually perpetuate colonial ideologies. If I include texts with divergent aims, however, it is to attempt to understand how they interact. So while the texts, themselves, are not always anticolonial, the project aims to clarify when and to what extent the

myth of Joan of Arc undermines or upholds ideologies of domination associated with colonial practices or their current-day incarnations. The term “postcolonial,” thus, not only refers to the materials studied but also my orientation towards them, which seeks to “critically scrutinize the colonial relationship, [...] resist colonialist perspectives” and participate in a “symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings” (Elleke Boehmer, qtd. in Corcoran 27).

With reference to the question of “who,” I have included texts from countries with recent, embattled colonial histories such as Algeria, which have sought to sever ties with France, as well as texts from former settler colonies such as Québec and Louisiana, which have attempted, instead, to revindicate minority francophone identities since the 1960s, often framing their struggle for recognition as an anticolonial one.<sup>35</sup> This project also deals with texts created in France that reflect on identities in a “postcolonial” world, that is, one in which colonialism has officially ended but nevertheless continues to impact, through its legacies, the lived experiences for populations in and out of the *métropole*.

After decolonization in Asia and Africa greatly reduced the populations and expanses of land formally under French control, demographics within France began to shift. Increased immigration from the Maghreb, facilitated in part by the *regroupement familial* program, initiated by then prime minister Jacques Chirac (1976), allowed immigrants who had arrived in France on short-term work visas to bring the rest of their families to join them in the *métropole*. Although immigration laws actually tightened during this period, the presence of families as opposed to temporary labor migrants resulted in corollary perception that North Africans were becoming more permanently implanted in France. Catherine Puzzo writes:

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<sup>35</sup> In Québécois literature, see Pierre Vallière’s *Nègres blancs d’Amérique* (1968) and Paul Chamberlain’s *Le Canadien français et son double* (1972). In Louisiana, see Jean Arceneaux’s poem “Colonihilim” (1978), David Cheramie’s “Souvenirs de Sneaux” (1997), and Kirby Jambon’s “Dernière valse du Cherokee (encore)” (2006).

During the 1970s the concern to maintain political and economic links with ex-colonial territories was constantly outweighed by the clear intention of French politicians to close a chapter of their country's history. This period was thus characterized by constant vacillation between the legacy of the past and the vision of a harmonious society, which could not possibly be based on larger immigrant communities. (74)

New immigration patterns altered the ethnic, linguistic, and religious demographics in France in ways that came to be increasingly constructed as problematic in public discourse due to the seeming incompatibility of the Republican model with plural identities.

While early postcolonial writer-scholars such as Albert Memmi and Aimé Césaire focused on colonization as forced acculturation or the unilateral transfer of the colonizer's culture to the colonized, more recent work in postcolonial studies has investigated the complex ways in which (post)colonial locales become "contact zones," a term which Mary Louise Pratt adapted from the field of linguistics to describe "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (7). Variations on these interactions and the kinds of syncretic identities they produce recur in Françoise Lionnet's writing on *métissage* (1991), Homi Bhabha's writing on hybridity (1994), and Edouard Glissant's writing on *la théorie de la Relation* and *créolisation* (1991).

In these relational spaces, the colonial subject becomes a kind of *bricoleur*, pulling from the materials at hand and "making do" with them to make new meanings (Strauss 11). Pratt uses the ethnographic term "transculturation" to describe the process of "how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them from a dominant or metropolitan culture" (Pratt 7). As Pratt writes, "While subjugated people cannot readily control what the dominant culture visits upon them, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean" (Pratt 7). Closely related to

Pratt's "transculturation" is José Estaban Muñoz's concept of disidentification, that is, how one might "tactically and simultaneously work on, with, or against a cultural form." Muñoz explains: "To disidentify is to read oneself and one's life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to 'connect' with the disidentifying subject." Thus, the disidentifying subject refuses the "one-way transfer" model of acculturation and negotiates the meaning of the cultural text without "evacuat[ing] the politically dubious or shameful components within an identificatory locus" (12). Cuban poet Nancy Morejón offers a slightly different definition of transculturation that foregrounds the notion of "*reciprocal* influence." For Morejón, transculturation is "a process of cultural intercourse and exchange, a circulation of practices that creates a constant interweaving of symbolic forms and empirical activities among the different cultures that interact with one another" (qtd. in Lionnet 325). Patrick Corcoran also underlines the value of thinking in terms of "negotiation and exchange" in order to produce more nuanced readings (23):

The postcolonial emphasis on cultural, linguistic or simply racial hybridity serves as a reminder of this fact [of negotiation] and postcolonial criticism usually involves demonstrating the myriad ways that cultural survival depends on recycling: the redeployment of slightly modified objects or practices for slightly different purposes or to slightly different effects, or the appeal to signs, symbols, and languages in ways that are recognizable and familiar but nonetheless slightly unsettling in that they gesture towards new ways of accounting for reality, new forms of knowledge, or new ways of understanding the world. In this respect creole cultures exemplify a canonical form of hybridity just as theories of creolization are eminently postcolonial, decentring as they do the symbols and discourses through which we construct and articulate myths of cultural identity. (Corcoran 24)

Since Joan of Arc is one such repurposed resource, she allows us to make visible myths of cultural identity and witness how they shift as they are adapted to other populations and contexts. In the next section, I will outline the connections between memory, identity, and rhetoric before relating these concepts to reworkings of Joan of Arc's story.

## Memory, Identity, and Rhetoric

“[A] story lives in relation to its tellers and its receivers; it continues because people want to hear it again, and it changes according to their tastes and needs” (Warner 3).

### Memory

Memory is multifaceted. We might think of it as a vast mental storage unit with some boxes more accessible than others or the process by which we sift through the items and images found there, consciously or not, to determine what to carry with us and what to cast off. Memory equally refers to the product of that mental sorting: the carefully curated (yet ever revisable) internalized scrapbook that results. Basic definitions of memory distinguish between the *process* of remembering (“Activité biologique ou psychique qui permet d’emmagasinier, de conserver et de restituer des informations”) and its *product* (“image mentale conservée des faits passés”) and generally recognize its partiality (“Memory”).<sup>36</sup> According to Fentress and Wickham, memory “can include anything from a highly private and spontaneous, possibly wordless, mental sensation to a formalized public ceremony” (x). The kinds of memories associated with Joan in this study range from the seemingly spontaneous (personal letters that relate ideas about Joan to family histories) to the highly scripted (commemorative ceremonies), all with varying degrees of publicness. Even the most private of the Joan-related memories in this study, however, are shared (if only with a limited audience) and seek to position the author in relationship to a larger public or “imagined community” (Anderson 7). That is, a community (a nation, in Benedict Anderson’s writing, but this concept works on a local scale, too) with which one feels deep affective bonds despite having never met all of its members.

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<sup>36</sup> While I have chosen to cite *Larousse*, the definitions in *Le Petit Robert*, *Merriam-Webster*, and *The American Heritage Dictionary* also make this distinction.

In attempting to define memory, many twentieth century scholars have pitted it against history, suggesting that the history is more unified and objective while memory is a multi-vocal, subjective phenomenon, which is more directly informed by the present moment. For example, French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs perceived history “as implying a singular and authentic account of the past,” while memory, on the other hand, was “conceived in terms of the multiple, diverse, mutable, and competing accounts of past events” (Kendall 2). Many decades later, Pierre Nora would echo Halbwachs’s dialectical pairing in the introduction to *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, associating history with death and memory with life:

Mémoire, histoire, loin d’être synonymes, nous prenons conscience que tout les oppose. La mémoire est la vie, toujours portée par des groupes vivants et à ce titre, elle est en évolution permanente, ouverte à la dialectique du souvenir et de l’amnésie, inconsciente de ses déformations successives, vulnérables à toutes les utilisations et manipulations, susceptibles de longues latences et de soudaines revitalisations. L’histoire est la reconstruction toujours problématique et incomplète de ce qui n’est plus. La mémoire est un phénomène toujours actuel, un lien vécu au présent éternel; l’histoire une représentation du passé. (xix)

Since history can never be separated from the present in which it is written or the motives and blind spots of those who record it, and is usually informed by individuals’ memories of events, it is problematic to position history as somehow sheltered from memory’s “évolution permanente” and “déformations successives.” However, I would agree with Halbwachs’s supposition, which Nora seconds, that histories often present the illusion of a unified, univocal narrative. Thus, in thinking about the source texts for Joan’s life, the condemnation trial, which is primarily a third person rendering of the event designed to provide a coherent narrative that culminates in the “objective” verdict of Joan’s guilt, reads like “history” as interpreted by Halbwachs. Indeed, the three notaries at the trial conferred daily to make sure that their notes were uniform. In contrast, the rehabilitation trial, aligns more with Halbwachs’s polyphonic idea of memory in that it is composed of multiple testimonies about Joan, some of which contradict each other and call



attention to memory's failings and fissures. The range of these testimonies derives from their ability, as a whole, to picture Joan from differing standpoints, drawing testimony from her friends, family, battle mates, court officials and participants in her execution.

So, in speaking about memory, we are also speaking about publics: whether it is the "memory of publics" (how people are remembered) or the "publicness of memory" (how people remember alongside or in front of others) (Kendall 3). A few decades after Freud probed the individual unconscious, which he saw as deep storage for individuals' past experiences, Halbwachs sought to understand memory's communal dimensions, which he theorized as "collective memory."<sup>37</sup> By describing memory as collective, Halbwachs was not suggesting that everyone had equivalent memories or experienced events in the same way, rather that memory "depends on the social environment" and therefore could not be divorced from the social frameworks in which it originated (Halbwachs 37). Halbwachs explains his logic: "[i]t is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories. [...] Most of the time when I remember, it is others who spur me on." (38). Irwin-Zarecka also supports the idea that memory is not entirely localized in individuals' minds, but rather takes form in response to "the resources they share" (qtd. in Blair, Dickinson and Ott 14).

Most memory scholars agree on a few basic premises, the most common of which is that memory is motivated or "activated" by the needs of the present. As Blair, Dickinson, and Ott write, "[G]roups tell their pasts to themselves and others as a way of understanding, valorizing, justifying, excusing, or subverting conditions or beliefs of their current moment." That is not to

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<sup>37</sup> The first explicit use of term "collective memory," appears in a work by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1902, described as "the damned up force of our mysterious ancestors within us" and later as "piled up layers of accumulated collective memory" (qtd. in Olick 106).

say that they unabashedly fabricate their pasts but rather that groups deem some individuals, events or actions (and not others) as “‘instructive’ for the future” (6-7). Because memories are subjective experiences that come to be emotionally inflected, the emotions that memories elicit help to establish group membership. Yet if the act of remembering can suture groups together, it can also introduce rifts since memory is always “partial, partisan and thus often contested” (Blair, Dickenson and Ott 6). No memory encompasses every detail of what occurred. Not does memory does happen in a void. It has a history (how things came to be remembered certain ways at the expense of others) and often relies on “material and/or symbolic supports” to facilitate its continued presence (Blair, Dickenson, and Ott 6). Like the tea-steeped madeleine that transported Proust’s protagonist to a forgotten moment of his childhood, encounters with objects can unlock memories previously tucked away in some cranny of our consciousness.

In recent years, Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de mémoire*, a three-volume inventory of symbols, sites, places, and people deemed emblematic of the French nation, has been a major point of reference in memory studies. Prompted by “[l]a disparation rapide de notre mémoire nationale,” Nora explains in his prefatory remarks to the first volume that he had set out to archive “les plus éclatants symboles: fêtes, emblèmes, monuments, et commémorations, mais aussi éloges, dictionnaires et musées” (ii). Thus, while *lieu* is frequently translated into English as “place,”<sup>38</sup> and many of Nora’s *lieux* correspond to particular destinations, he defines a *lieu de mémoire* more broadly as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time, has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (qtd. in Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 7). As Wood writes, these places become “invested with affective ties of longing and belonging” (3).

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<sup>38</sup> The English translation of Nora’s work uses the more abstract term “realm.”

Nora accepts Halbwachs's basic premise that memories are created and circulated through social frameworks, but he laments the breakdown of these memory-transmitting institutions: "Fin des sociétés mémoires, comme celles qui assuraient la conservation et la transmission des valeurs, église ou école, famille ou Etat" (xviii).<sup>39</sup> These *cadres sociaux*, which Nora terms *milieux de mémoire*, function as spaces where one might acquire memory as one acquires language, through everyday, embodied practices and exchanges. Ironically, it is the disappearance of these natural environments of memory that necessitates more direct instruction via realms of memory. While Joan of Arc is one of the few individuals to be included within Nora's inventory, the author explicitly recognizes the thorniness of her history of representation in the introduction, calling her a *noeud de mémoire*. By examining public memory as it accretes in both material and immaterial evocations of Joan of Arc, this work seeks to unravel some of the particular strands of the knot.

### Identity

Identities are inextricably intertwined with memories. Retrieved pieces of our pasts and the value we attribute to them coalesce into narratives about who we believe ourselves to be. As Stuart Hall argues, "Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves in, the narrative of the past" (qtd. in Olick 122). This process of positioning happens within social arrangements, and shared memories circulated amongst individuals, establishing bonds of belonging. In other words, "remembrances "serv[e] as the grounds for various identifications or perceived alignments to take shape" (Blair, Dickinson and Ott 4). We might think of memories as providing a kind of adhesive within groups. Just as

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<sup>39</sup> As we will see in Chapter 4, Marine Le Pen of the Front National paraphrases the same idea in a speech in commemoration of Joan on May 1, 2015.

certain memories “stick” with individuals more than others, prominent shared memories may also provide groups with tools for “sticking together” (Ahmed 4). Yet if memories contribute to the formation of identity narratives, these narratives are always incomplete. Identities, like memories, are “projects and practices, not properties” (Olick 122). According to Jay Assman, memories become raw materials for the continuous construction and performance of selfhood, or a “body of reusable texts, images, and rituals [that] serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self image” (qtd. in Dickinson, Blair, and Ott 7).

Recent work on memory and identity has explored the processes by which memories of an event that may be closely affiliated with one group can become a medium for the expression of another group or individual’s memories. Barbie Zelizer has done extensive work on the use of the Holocaust as a framework via which media outlets convey other genocidal histories. While working in the fields of journalism and communication studies, Zelizer’s emphasis on “images [that] have enigmatic boundaries which connect events in unpredictable ways,” informs this project’s interest in Johannic intertexts in surprising places. (2). Zelizer explains: “Like a familiar sequence of musical notes that seems to appear from nowhere, images creatively pop up in ways that challenge what we think we know about the past and how we think we know it” (2). Ultimately however, Zelizer concludes that the associations between the Holocaust and other forms of genocide flatten the dimensions of both the point of reference and the contemporary atrocities compared to it, saying, “We may need to remember [the Holocaust] less so as to remember contemporary atrocities more” (227). While Zelizer examines the relationship between the Holocaust and multiple world events, Michael Rothberg specifically looks at associations between the Holocaust and decolonization and takes a more optimistic position. Zelizer speaks of “remembering to forget,” seeing the Holocaust as a Freudian screen memory

that blocks less “comfortable,” more recent memories. Rothberg, instead, argues for the productive powers of “multidirectional memory,” which allows for valuable connections among historical events as a result of “ongoing negotiation, cross referencing, and borrowing” (3).

Joan’s historic association with nationalism and the Far Right,<sup>40</sup> would seem to overdetermine her memory or preclude identification with her for certain populations. Yet as Rothberg clarifies, memories do not belong to particular groups and are always open to repurposing, reinvention, and relationality:

Memories are not owned by groups— nor are groups owned by memories. Rather the borders of memory and identity are jagged; what looks at first like my own property often turns out to be a borrowing or adaptation from a history that initially might seem foreign or distant. Memory’s anachronistic power— its bringing together of the now and then, here and there—is actually the source of its powerful creativity, its ability to build new worlds out of the materials of older ones. (5)

Such possibilities for creative cross-referencing and anachronistic applications of Joan of Arc’s story to present day situations are the focal point of this project. Rothberg’s work looks at the mnemonic interplay between two defining events of the twentieth century, the Holocaust and decolonization, that occurred within two decades of one another, with emphasis on the Holocaust’s use as a framework by which to understand decolonization. My work builds upon this concept of the generative interplay of memories but narrows the focus to a particular figure while broadening the span of time (six centuries) that separates the figure or framework (Joan) from the present(s) in which she is evoked. Many of the works in Rothberg’s study were written when there was still a strong living memory of the Holocaust but before the event was publicly

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<sup>40</sup> For a history of Joan’s affiliation with the Action Française, see Martha Hanna’s “Iconology and Ideology: Images of Joan of Arc in the Idiom of the Action Française, 1908-1931” in *French Historical Studies* (1985). For a history of Joan’s association with the Right more generally, see Nadia Margolis’s “The ‘Joan Phenomenon’ and the French Right” in *New Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (1996).

commemorated on the scale on which it is today. In the case of Joan, however, a contrary absence of living memory and proliferation of commemorations result in a more mediated relationship between Joan-as-framework and the individuals and groups who appropriate her. Consequently, this temporal distance and the additional layers of mediation offer a greater space for creative license.

### **Rhetoric**

When memories circulate in the public realm, they can become a form of rhetorical device, used to take stances and make arguments. In analyzing the various cases that make up each chapter, I will return to two questions: (1) What kinds of arguments are being made about Joan's identity via public remembrance? (2) What kinds of arguments are advanced about the identities of the people who "remember" her?

Rhetoric, as defined by Blair, Dickinson and Ott, is "the study of discourses, objects, events, and practices that attends to their character as meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential" (2). Although other fields such as cultural studies and literary criticism also engage with diverse source texts, rhetoric differs in that it is more particularly concerned with the "public" nature of its objects of study. Since the "discourses, events, objects, and practices" via which memories are conveyed are never neutral, they act on some level to constitute and persuade publics (Blair, Dickinson, and Ott 4). Phillips elaborates on this idea:

Indeed, the study of memory is largely one of the rhetoric of memories. The ways memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories are essentially rhetorical. As an art interested in the ways symbols are employed to induce cooperation, achieve understanding, contest understanding, and offer dissent, rhetoric is deeply steeped in a concern for public memories. (Phillips 3)

As Phillips underlines, rhetoric is concerned with the diverse effects that symbols produce and the processes that allow for the making of these effects.

### **Johannic Studies**

Within Johannic Studies, the interdisciplinary academic field devoted to the study of Joan of Arc, the relationship between public memory and national identity has not gone unexplored. Most recently, Françoise Meltzer (2009) has published on the continually negotiated vestiges of Celtic influence within Joan of Arc's cultural memory. Specifically, she draws parallels between selective memory of the fabled fairy tree in Joan's trials and their subsequent literary adaptations and European politicians' attempts to evoke a pan-European genealogy through Celtic heritage. Meltzer (2003) has also analyzed the new connotations Joan assumes in public memory when transplanted to a post-Civil Rights era United States, specifically examining public discourse around a 1996 re-enactment of Joan's execution, during which a *papier mâché* Joan was burned in effigy at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Eric Jennings (1994) looks further back in history to examine the Vichy government's revision and recirculation of Joan's memory, via grade school primers, in order to further traditional ideas about gender and nation building. By the same token, there has been rich work on earlier public demonstrations around Emmanuel Frémiet's statue and the early years of the *Fête de Jeanne d'Arc* in Orléans, notably by Rosamond Samson. This dissertation builds upon prior work by examining motives that different publics have for revising Joans's memory and in looking specifically at public demonstrations and acts of remembrance. It differs, however, in its postcolonial focus and its examination of the rehabilitation trial alongside twentieth and twenty-first century texts.

### Invoking Joan: The Maid as Muse to Memory

In thinking about Joan of Arc as a cultural memory called upon for diverse purposes, we might wonder when, exactly, is she invoked? Like Joan, herself, the word “invoke” carries many connotations. In classical literature, poets called upon muses to endow them with the inspiration and skill to relay epics: hero-driven stories of adventure and adversity that conveyed important cultural values. The authors of the works studied in this dissertation call upon Joan as muse to their own myths, and while she is sometimes featured within these stories (or ostensibly their subject), they first and foremost capture something crucial about the identities, struggles, and values of the people telling them.

*The Oxford English Dictionary* tells us that to invoke, from the Latin *invocāre* is to call on “especially as a witness or for aid” (“Invoke”). The authors of the works in this study often enjoin their stories to Joan’s in moments of crisis or instability, seeking a template for their own testimonies or asking Joan to symbolically “bear witness” to wrongdoing that might otherwise go unacknowledged by official sources. Former French president François Mitterrand acknowledged Joan’s symbolic potential in moments of crisis when he proclaimed, “Quand un cri s’élève d’un cachot, d’un camp de concentration, de l’exil, ou de la misère, il fait écho à la plainte et à la fière espérance de Jeanne d’Arc” (qtd. in Winock 724). Mitterrand’s words do not merely identify Joan with suffering but with a position of dignity that flies in the face of one’s immediate conditions. As Le Pelletier writes, “In our scientific age, which no longer believes in legends but which knows that history repeats itself, Joan of Arc is called hope” (qtd. in Datta 150). This hope that Joan can conjure is not naiveté, but an investment in the contingency or, in Zelizer’s words, the “‘what if’ dimensions” of her story (“The Voice of the Visual” 164).



According to Zelizer, retrospective representations of figures whose fatal ends we already know can “activate impulses about how the ‘world might be’ rather than how ‘it is’” (“The Voice of the Visual” 164). In fact, Jean Anouilh’s play *L’Alouette* dramatizes this “imagining of another end” by interrupting the staging of Joan’s execution to perform, instead, the high point of Joan’s public life: Charles VII’s coronation. In the final scene of the play, Bishop Cauchon, the figure most directly responsible for Joan’s death, intervenes to save her life. At the last possible moment, he cries out: “Défais le bûcher, l’homme! Détache Jeanne! Et qu’on lui apporte son épée et son étendard” (187). Somewhat relieved, the character Baudricourt, who insisted on ending the play by staging the forgotten scene of the coronation, exclaims, “Heureusement que je suis arrivé à temps . . . Les imbéciles, ils allaient brûler Jeanne d’Arc! Vous vous rendez compte?” (188). By rewinding time to an earlier moment, the play asks what other course history might have taken. Likewise, by blurring the image or symbol’s referentiality and unbinding it from its inevitable end, thinking in terms of Joan’s contingency allows us to ask not what the image *is* but instead, “What does this remind us of?” (“The Voice of the Visual” 163). What other connections can we make?

Equally important, to invoke is also to appeal to a figure recognized as an authority in order to lend support to an argument or act “in confirmation of something” (“invoke”). Aligning oneself with Joan is often a means of identifying with a position of moral authority or innocence, often while assigning blame. In the chapters that follow, I argue that Joan is invoked in the following circumstances: (1) to express a sense of loss related to an earlier, mythologized time, (2) to comment on the identities of communities, (3) to recognize an abuse of power or hypocrisy, and (4) to imagine alternate endings in response to tragedies.

## CHAPTER 2: “YOU SEE MY MOTHER’S PEOPLE ORIGINALLY CAME FROM FRANCE”: COLONIAL NOSTALGIA AND THE NEGOTIATION OF ORIGINS

“You are part of the fabric of a dream  
Bienville’s dream come true  
But we wonder . . . as he dreamed and planned  
Did Bienville envision you?”

-stanza from the poem “New Orleans Welcomes Joan of Arc” read at the 1972 unveiling of the Joan of Arc statue by Amy Boudreau, poet laureate of New Orleans.

### Introduction



Figure 12: Statue of Jean Baptiste LeMoine de Bienville in the French Quarter; sculpted by Angela Gregory (1955). Photo by the author.

Figure 13: Statue of Joan of Arc in the French Quarter; sculpted by Emmanuel Frémiet (1889). Photo by the author.

In pocket parks, on opposite ends of New Orleans’s French Quarter, stand two statues. Conceived as counterpoints and separated by a stretch of several city blocks, the monuments each memorialize an aspect of the city’s multifaceted francophone heritage. The first monument depicts the founder of New Orleans, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, a Montreal-born colonial explorer of French parentage who followed his brother, Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville,

south to the swampy settlement of Louisiana in the early 1700s. In 1718, Bienville christened the city *La Nouvelle Orléans*, after Philippe le duc d'Orléans, the older brother of Louis XIV and regent of the French kingdom. Bienville then governed the colonial holding for the next three decades. In the monument, Bienville is accompanied, on lower pedestals, by a priest, Father Anthanase, peering into an open book, and an unnamed Choctaw figure holding a feathered pipe (fig. 12) (Merlin 66). Erected in 1955 by the Louisiana Purchase Sesquicentennial Commission and originally located near the New Orleans Railway station, Bienville's statue has stood in its current spot since 1996 ("Bienville Monument"). The second monument depicts Joan of Arc, a French medieval warrior whose military leadership lifted the siege of Orléans in France in the fifteenth century, turning the tide of the Hundred Years War. On a muscular steed in mid-gallop, Joan sits rigidly upright, attired in armor, raising her standard skyward with her eyes wide (fig. 13). She appears a formidable force, flanked on either side by Martinican canons from the Napoleonic era with a backdrop of four flags: those of the United States, Louisiana, New Orleans, and France.

The first statue's link to local history is clear. Bienville governed the city during four separate terms between 1701-1743 and helped to establish Louisiana as a French colony. While his merits might be debatable,<sup>41</sup> his presence is predictable. But the relationship between Joan of Arc and New Orleans (or Louisiana more generally) is less apparent. After all, Joan died centuries before the city of New Orleans had ever come into being, and when French sculptor

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<sup>41</sup> Bienville is in many ways the portrait of a colonizer implicated in a web of exploitative practices. He brought the first slaves into the colony, from Saint Domingue in 1709 (Sublette 42). Then, when Bienville began to fear that the neighboring First Nations population was not appropriately docile, he tried to forcibly deport them by organizing a trade with Haiti of one First Nation for two Africans (Foner 409). While a colonial administrator, he lived in luxury amongst his relatives and cronies "with many slaves obtained through ill-gotten gain, while most of the white population went hungry and naked" (Midlo Hall 61).

Emmanuel Frémiet completed the equestrian statue of Joan, in 1889, Louisiana had been officially incorporated into the United States for over sixty years and had witnessed a marked attrition in its population of French speakers. Despite appearances, New Orleans was not named after the French riverside city Joan helped defend, but rather after a man who neither hailed from nor resided in Orléans. Indeed, this lack of a direct connection to the New Orleans's past may partially explain why the statue's meaning and even its geographical space within the city has been repeatedly renegotiated in the fifty years since its dedication.

The poem by Amy Boudreau, which the New Orleans poet laureate composed for the statue's unveiling in 1972, hints at the difficulty of providing a neat explanation for the *Pucelle's* presence. Boudreau depicts the Joan statue as a symbolic rendering of the city's spirit, calling it the "fabric of a dream." Yet if we consider the passage from Shakespeare's *Tempest* that appears to be the origin of this phrase,<sup>42</sup> it becomes apparent that the text of reference codes dreams as spaces of elusive, illusory desires rather than imaginative projects apt to be accomplished. Even if Joan partially informed "Bienville's dream come true," the poem's final question, addressed to the anthropomorphized monument, suggests that Joan's presence within the city was unforeseen and that her continued relevance to the city is not a given: "Did Bienville envision you?"

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<sup>42</sup> Our revels now are ended. These our actors  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself  
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such a stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with sleep.  
(Act IV, scene 1: 1877-1889)

Like the city planners who positioned Bienville and Joan as geographical poles in the French Quarter's landscape, Boudreau's verses also configure them in relationship to one another, even though neither statue was in its current French Quarter location when she authored her poem. Boudreau extolls each historical figure, but in strikingly different terms. Beginning with Bienville, she tells the predictably gendered story of a "young and daring French Canadian" who came "[t]o fell the first great trees and so begin a town." This town, "built in a river's bend," served as an economic hub, whose "commerce would have no end." After this third-person rendition of the strapping man who made the "mighty port [that] would serve the world," Boudreau then shifts to the more familiar second person mode of address to welcome Joan of Arc, saying: "National Heroine, and Patron Saint of France, We are glad you have come to stay!" Whereas both Bienville and Joan are historical figures in the city's imaginary as well as bronze statuary in its topography, Boudreau imagines Bienville as a living being who "came" and "built" and "dreamed," while envisioning Joan as feminized ornamental effigy, who "graces" "adds to," and "enhances." In other words, if the city continually performs itself into being in a theater that traverses time, Bienville is historical actor (essential) while Joan is stage property (embellishment).

Boudreau elaborates this image of Joan as a tentative presence in her new setting in the poem's successive stanzas, depicting her as a bronze borrowing that nonetheless bestows a desired cultural cachet via her identification with France:

You grace the beautiful PLACE DE FRANCE  
And add to the city's charm  
Imposing equestrian statue  
Sculptured in gleaming bronze

Across from International Trade Mart  
Its prestige you enhance.

With your presence you share with our City  
The greatness and glory of France.

Even though the city created the Place de France for the express purpose of showcasing the equestrian statue, here Boudreau depicts the monument as a temporary addition to “the beautiful PLACE DE FRANCE” through her use of the verb “grace” which means “to honor or favor” [by one’s presence] or “to give beauty, elegance, or charm to,” usually for a limited period of time (“Grace”). Boudreau’s word choice also conjures the three graces of Greek mythology, situating Joan within a mytho-artistic, and implicitly more malleable, tradition: one that can be appropriated and transformed. Attention to the statue’s physical attributes, such as its “gleaming bronze,” further reiterate a reading of it as surface sheen rather than fundamentally constitutive of the space (58). In the sixth stanza, Boudreau positions the statue as a sort of decorative flourish to the International Trade Mart whose “prestige [it] enhances” (58). As the stanza’s concluding line suggests, Joan complements the contemporary incarnation of Bienville’s economic hub, the International Trade Mart, by casting it in the glow of her Old World grandeur. An emblem of the best attributes of her country of origin, she recalls all of the “greatness and glory of France” (58).

In Boudreau’s depiction, the Joan statue becomes an accessory, or essential non-essential element in the elaboration of the city’s French-influenced self-conception. According to Joseph Roach, accessories take on “supplementary yet nonetheless telling” roles as status symbols. Though they may seem purely ornamental (“the bejeweled purse too small to hold anything” or swords worn by gentlemen during the Renaissance who never deigned to use them as tools), accessories nonetheless put the finishing touches on performances of identity through their evocative powers (*It* 52). As Roach explains, “accessories make meanings under the ever-useful trope of synecdoche— the part stands in for the whole, the species for the genus, the one for the

man” (*It* 48). By this logic, the bronze Joan commemorates the city’s French origins while also containing them: “intended for show, [an accessory] is an *objet* inessential except to add intangible symbolic value to the ensemble” (*It* 51).

Given Joan of Arc’s emblematic association with France and considering Louisiana’s own multilayered, creolized colonial history, what does Joan of Arc mean to New Orleans or Louisiana more generally? Is she only a vestige of a colonial past, like French Quarter street names that attest to the distant existence of unremembered and mostly mispronounced colonial administrators?<sup>43</sup> Or has she, like the *fleur de lys*, originally a symbol of the French monarchy, once transplanted and cross-pollinated with local customs grown into something new?<sup>44</sup> In relocating Joan of Arc from her *terre d’origine* to New World soil, what takes root? As importantly, how might such roots rhizomatically relate New Orleans to a broader francophone world?

My intent in asking these questions is to consider the statue, a symbol of the city’s continued affiliation with France, as experienced (and indeed imagined) by the public that encounters it. Specifically, this chapter examines public performances and private exchanges focused on the statue from its arrival in New Orleans in 1958, to its dedication at a new site in the French Quarter in 1999, to understand when and why the figure of Joan of Arc becomes a site for the negotiation of francophone identities and how, in turn, the highly local concerns

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<sup>43</sup> One of many proposed street names in the nineteenth century that “never made it from paper to pavement” was Jeanne d’Arc street (Asher 15).

<sup>44</sup> Initially a symbol of the French monarchy, the *fleur de lys* has morphed into a more local emblem. In addition to serving as the insignia for the New Orleans’ football team, the Saints, and an official state symbol as of 2008, the it has also been identified with recovery efforts after Katrina. Among Louisianans, the *fleur de lys* is a popular badge of local identification that appears on t-shirts, bumper stickers and tattooed skin, even if historians such as Ibrahima Seck and Terrence Fitzmorris have recently pointed out its sinister history under the *Code Noir*, when slave owners punished runaway slaves by branding them with this symbol (Yates 1).

embedded in these performances intersect with international ones. To formulate a preliminary response, I examined archival materials from the New Orleans Public Library including newspaper articles, private letters to the mayor, reports, inter-office memos, and official correspondence about the statue's initial reception in 1958, its dedication in 1972, and its relocation to the French Quarter in 1999.

When I began this research, I expected to find postcolonial points of convergence between the battle that Joan waged against the English to protect her threatened homeland and the activism for French language and cultural preservation that developed in Louisiana in the late sixties. If Bienville was a starting point for the beginning of francophone influence in Louisiana, and the initiator of colonial contact, Joan of Arc, in her underdog gumption, could have become an apt symbol for the state of *francophonie* in Louisiana in the sixties and seventies, representing the proud yet often defensive position of activists for French language and culture in a majority Anglophone milieu who have often framed their struggle as anticolonial.<sup>45</sup> What I found instead is that while Joan of Arc *has* become a medium through which individuals perform identifications with one of the city's many ancestral cultures, she is also a figure they mobilize to articulate responses to a range of current political concerns. This held true whether individuals used Joan to critique American nationalism in the 1950s, identify with one variety of francophone identity over another in the 1960s, comment on race relations in the 1970s, criticize the action of corporations in the 1990s, or (as I will discuss later, in Chapter 5) censure politicians' inefficacy in the face of national disasters in the early 2000s.

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<sup>45</sup> See Jean Arceneaux's "Colonihilism" (1978), David Cheramie's "O.E.D." (1997), and Kirby Jambon's "La Dernière Valse du Cherokee (encore)" (2006). This lack of identification may be attributed to the fact that much of the language activism was concentrated in the southwestern part of the state known as Acadiana.



Through readings of Joan-themed cultural productions and archival materials, I argue that two primary trends characterize New Orleanians' appropriations of Joan of Arc's story, each intersecting the regional with the (trans)national. First, Joan's story becomes a thematic vehicle for New Orleanians to identify, nostalgically, with a status-granting ancestral French heritage at an historical moment when there had been both a significant decline in the living presence of French in Louisiana as well as a growing awareness of the value of preserving it. Secondly, Joan's story and her physical representation act as a space where New Orleanians align a strong sense of local pride with national pride. At the same time, the statue becomes a medium through which France performed identification with its former settler colony and the prosperous nation of which it was a part at a moment when France was losing clout as a world power.

### **The Joan of Arc Statue: Origins**

#### **Unclaimed**

“In death, as in life, St. Joan of Arc had more than her share of hard times. Burned at the stake for heresy in 1431, the Maid of Orleans has faced ongoing tribulations in New Orleans.”  
—opening to a 1994 *Times-Picayune* article about the statue by Susan Finch

How, then, did a nineteenth century statue of a French medieval warrior sculpted by a Parisian come to preside over the French Quarter? To briefly summarize what I will address in greater detail in this section, New Orleans first purchased the statue on credit in 1958 and immediately relegated it to a warehouse after a failed fundraising campaign. Several years later, in 1964, the French government purchased the statue for New Orleans, but it was once again returned to storage after a dedication ceremony. In 1972, the city erected the statue near the International Trade Mart and unveiled it to the public with the requisite fanfare. Then in 1999, after a prolonged legal battle about the use of public space, the Wingate Corporation refurbished

the statue and moved it to the French Quarter to facilitate the construction of their mega-casino, Harrah's. The lengthy process by which the statue arrived in its current location and the ardent dialogue it generated along the way sheds light on how citizens and other interested parties have conceptualized the city's relationship with France, as well as the challenges faced in integrating a French past into an American present.

The story begins in 1958, when an art firm in New York contacted New Orleans to offer it the chance to purchase the last known casting of Emmanuel Frémiet's famed statue of Joan of Arc. The long-lost casting had been recently discovered in the Barbedienne foundry of Paris, and the White House Art Galleries, which had purchased it, proposed that New Orleans would be a fitting location for the statue due to the city's ancestral ties to France. Frémiet had sculpted the original equestrian statue, which was commissioned by the French State,<sup>46</sup> in 1874 to rally morale after France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war. The statue's central location at the Place des Pyramides near the Louvre, guaranteed its prominence in the cityscape, and it has since become one of the best-known statues in Paris. Frémiet revised the original in 1889 when the city of Nancy requested a replica, reworking the original statue with what he believed was a more proportional version, in which the shortened horse no longer dwarfed its rider, herself twenty centimeters taller (Bruno 1). Before destroying the second, more satisfactory mold, Frémiet made ten total castings of the Nancy version, which are scattered across three continents, with sister statues in France, Australia, and the United States<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Even though the period of 1870-1914 was known as the golden age of statuary, Frémiet's sculpture was the only statue that the State commissioned during this period. All other works of public statuary were funded privately.

<sup>47</sup> The statues are found in Paris, Lille, Castres, St Etienne, Melbourne, Portland, Philadelphia, Québec, New Orleans, and Compiègne (in the museum).

Upon learning of the statue's existence, the city of New Orleans agreed to purchase it on consignment from the art firm, expecting to be able to raise the necessary funds to repay the remaining debt of \$36,500 through private donors and by soliciting smaller contributions from school children. As Mayor Chep Morrison explained in a letter to a Mrs. Fanning, a potential donor on December 2, 1958, "The City of New Orleans, long famed for its Old World charm and French heritage, has been offered an opportunity to purchase a quite impressive and beautiful bronze statue of Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans. [...] This project will cement the bond of friendship with the Republic of France, and our counterpart, Orleans, France." Other letters from potential donors enthusiastically endorse Mayor Morrison's idea. Replying to Morrison's request to serve on a committee devoted to acquiring the statue, one man writes:

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I would be pleased to serve on the Committee for acquiring a statue of Joan of Arc. I know this bronze very well from Paris. It is indeed very handsome and I hope it will be put on a high base somewhat like in Paris. I think it will show off much better than if placed on a low base.

It is also important that the proper location be selected. It should not be in too small a space.

A.Q. Peterson

As the previous letter suggests, Peterson possessed cultural if not personal knowledge of France, as indicated by the affirmation that he "know[s] this bronze very well from Paris." Moreover, he sees the statue as playing a symbolic role in replicating the kind of grandeur associated with the statue's city of origin, as indicated by his commentary that it should be accorded a place of prominence ("not too small") "like in Paris" where it will "show off much better."

But from the beginning, city officials privately expressed doubt that the public would respond to the planned fundraising campaign with enough enthusiasm to guarantee its success.

As one internal letter from Dave McGuire to New Orleans Mayor Morrison dated November 10, 1959, suggests, the statue was perceived as a burden that had to be carefully managed in order to avoid an diplomatic incident:

I feel that it would be an enormous mistake to permit the shipment of this statute [*sic*] to New Orleans prior to successful raising of the funds. This could become a most embarrassing situation to the city of New Orleans. [...] We could bring on a public controversy with nationwide news stories publicizing New Orleans as not wanting this statute of Joan of Arc that has been shipped here and it is lying unclaimed in some warehouse. (McGuire 1)

In retrospect, the letter appears prescient given that the statue spent nearly fourteen years in storage. Another letter to Mayor Morrison echoes McGuire's concern for public controversy, expressing the idea that the city's French heritage should not be accorded such a privileged place, especially given the price tag of commemorating it. A correspondant named Clay Shaw reasons that because "several Latin American governments" had communicated a desire to present statues of their heroes to the city, "If we go out and spend 40,000 buying a French statue, it might very well have unfavorable reactions" (Shaw 1). As Shaw's statement indicates, ancestral ties could not justify a special expense.

The solution, redirecting the fundraising responsibility to the general public, was also met with resistance. Repeated articles in the *Times-Picayune* requesting the financial participation of the city's francophiles in the six months preceding the unveiling indicate that the fundraising stalled for several months while still \$11,000 shy of the goal. As direct appeals to francophiles in the articles reveal, fundraisers saw them as the main stakeholders in the commemorative gesture. In addition to soliciting larger donations from private donors, the city also organized a collection drive through the schools, which provoked additional criticism. One indignant handwritten letter to the mayor dated December 12, 1958, provides a particularly staunch rebuttal to this aspect of the city's fundraising plan. The letter, which was composed in the wake

of McCarthyism, and four years after the phrase “under God” was added to the pledge of allegiance in 1954, expresses outrage at the idea that children and their parents might experience pressure to subsidize a figure perceived as fusing religious and nationalistic fervor. It reads:

Dear Sir,

Have I understood correctly that private and public school children are to donate money for the statue of Joan of Arc? If I had a child of school age, which I don’t, should I be expected to give him money to donate to the perpetuation of a legend which I think insidious? Or, should he be expected to withhold his (my) money in front of other school children (who have no understanding of religion, except what their parents have taught them, which cannot be called understanding—) have them think him uncooperative and un-American or have him think himself these things?

Let responsible adults give the money if they wish— Don’t try to beguile people with the prettiness of this plan for the children.

I have no objection to seeing such a statue in this city— only to the assumption that everyone in his right mind would want to contribute.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Robert C. Reinders

Reinders’s<sup>48</sup> letter cogently highlights the vexed nature of city’s attempt to foist the fundraising onto its citizens: despite the city’s intent to remain neutral by not purchasing the statue outright, it indirectly endorses certain markers of identity or subject positions: Catholicism, European (French) ancestry, and a certain docile regard towards the nation. The letter suggests that Reinders sees Joan of Arc primarily as a religious figure. Thus, by making her the object of a fundraising campaign enacted in the schools, Reinders believes that the city has violated the

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<sup>48</sup> The fact that Mrs. Reinders does not specify her own first name has rendered it more difficult to locate information about her. However, my research suggests a high likelihood that the letter’s author was Dorothy Alice Reinders (née Yates) of Dallas, Texas, who moved with her husband to New Orleans in 1956, two years before the letter was written. A 2006 obituary for Robert C. Reinders reveals that he taught at Xavier and Tulane Universities and was active in the Civil Rights and peace movements. Thus, as a transplant to New Orleans and as a politically engaged person, it is likely that Ms. Reinders had a heightened sensitivity to questions of political pressure and dissent and the ways in which schools become sites for the transmission of hegemonic values.

separation of Church and State, as signaled by her question, “private and public school children?” (emphasis in original). She also perceives Joan a historical personage who has taken on larger than life dimensions, as indicated by her use of the word “legend.” Reinders then reiterates that Joan’s elevation to mythic status allows others to manipulate her image to promote harmful ideas (“a legend which I think insidious”).

As Reinders’ letter indicates, despite Joan’s French origin (or perhaps because of it, in the case of New Orleans) she can be easily grafted onto other national narratives, capable of making schoolchildren feel “un-American” for not subsidizing her presence in the city with their pocket change. Given the post-McCarthy timeframe, this phrasing takes on exceptional importance insofar as the accusation of being “un-American” had, in very recent history, destroyed reputations and careers. Thus, in Reinders’s view, what might appear to be a benign collection, a can pasted with a picture of Joan of Arc passed around after the pledge of allegiance, acculturates children into compliant civic engagement. As Reinders makes evident, to funnel the fundraising through the schools is to institutionalize it, legitimizing the request for financial participation and delegitimizing dissent. In so doing, the campaign has the potential to ostracize non-participants or foster self-stigmatization, as Reinders points out, by reflecting on the impact it would have on her (hypothetical) child: “have them think him uncooperative and un-American or have him think himself these things?” The author’s shift from a series of rhetorical questions to the accusatory use of the imperative (“Don’t try to beguile people with the prettiness of this plan for the children”) underlines that Reinders sees the fundraising initiative in the schools as an abuse of power that has the potential to manipulate those least able to critically evaluate it: children. The closing line, which asserts that not everyone “in his right mind” would wish to contribute may be intended as a jab at Joan, perceived by many as delusional due to her voices.

Despite Reinders's distaste for Joan, "a legend which [she] thinks insidious," the idea of the warrior saint opens a space where Reinders can reflect on what she sees as an abuse of power (a recurring motif of Joan's story) and consider the intersection of the local with the national. As I will outline in the next sections, these tendencies recur in many New Orleanians' engagement with Joan.

### **French Intervention**

Just as the initial impetus to purchase the statue came from outside, so, too, did the majority of the funds to erect it, suggesting that France may have had more of a vested interest in seeing Joan memorialized than did the city of New Orleans. The statue had been in storage, "unclaimed in some warehouse," as McGuire predicted, for two years when French President Charles de Gaulle learned of the situation during his 1960 visit to New Orleans. Joan of Arc had already played a role in de Gaulle's own personal mythology during World War II. As the leader of the Free French, the military branch of the Resistance in the Second World War, de Gaulle had adopted the cross of Joan's native Lorraine for his organization's flag, overlaying it with the tricolor. De Gaulle's identification with *la Pucelle* earned him the derisive nickname "Joan of Arc" from Franklin D. Roosevelt and prompted Winston Churchill to quip that the biggest cross he had to bear was the cross of Lorraine (Meany 1). De Gaulle imagined himself more heroically, as a modern-day reincarnation of his heroine, once saying, "De Gaulle is difficult. He is stubborn. He is grave. So was the Maid. Like the Maid, he has a mystic view of France's destiny and sacred rights" (qtd. in Bernstein 7). Just one year prior to the visit, de Gaulle had been caricatured in a political cartoon as Henri Chapu's 1872 sculpture *Jeanne d'Arc à Domrémy* and had also presided over the 1959 Fête de Jeanne d'Arc in Orléans.

In addition to De Gaulle's own personal interest in the Maid, the fact that the last of France's colonies, Algeria, was in the process of claiming its independence at that very moment of de Gaulle's visit to Louisiana may have also prompted a nostalgic assertion of symbolic importance in one of France's former settler colonies. Indeed, just a few years later, in 1967, de Gaulle would spark an international incident by aligning himself with another former French colony. During a state visit to Québec, a uniformed de Gaulle proclaimed "Vive le Québec libre" during a speech in Montreal at the height of the *Révolution Tranquille* (Mainguy 1). In using this formula, he reprised the culminating words of his own radio addresses to the French during the German occupation, while also echoing the rallying cry of the Quebec's separatist party, the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) whose name was inspired by Algeria's Front de Libération Nationale.

Upon his return to France from New Orleans, de Gaulle pledged a personal contribution towards the statue's cost and sought additional funding from four cities important to Joan's public life: Orleans, Reims, Paris, and Rouen. Thus, in 1964, the French government purchased the statue and presented it to the city of New Orleans. This was not, however, the first time that the cities of Orléans and New Orleans had invested in each other's public statuary. According to Alex Labry, a native New Orleanian who spent over ten years of his life photographing statues of Joan of Arc across France, his admiration of *la Pucelle* began in 1949 when the nuns in his Catholic school regaled him with stories of the saint as they collected money to repair a statue in Orléans (fig. 13) that had been damaged by WWII bombings ("Personal Reflections"). New Orleanians' donations contributed to the costs of repairing the broken statue in Orléans, and the city recognized their donations with a plaque at the statue's base (fig. 14). Therefore, the French contributions may have been intended as a reciprocal gesture.





Figure 14: *La Pucelle d'Orléans* by Denis Foyatier at the Place des Martois in Orléans, France (1855). Photo by the author.  
 Figure 15: Plaque in recognition of New Orleanians' contributions to the repairs made to the statue in Orleans. Photo by the author.

While the French government's contribution covered the remaining debt for the New Orleans statue's purchase, and a US Department of Housing Grant financed the creation of a mini-park to frame the monument, the statue's base still had to be purchased. The newly formed state agency the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL)<sup>49</sup> raised the remaining funds but not without repeated pleas, as numerous articles in the *Times-Picayune* from 1971-1972 attest. In late October of 1971, the organization opened the collection drive, which was directed at "members of French organizations" in an attempt to secure the \$11,000 needed ("CODOFIL Opens Drive"). An article published in the *Times-Picayune* several months later, on April 3, 1972, reiterates the appeal for donations, once again targeting "French organizations in the city." A month later on May 7, 1972, a local columnist for the *Times-Picayune* mentions that completion of the statue's base was "contingent upon raising \$11,000 from members of

<sup>49</sup> CODOFIL continues to advocate for the preservation and development of French in Louisiana but is now housed within the Department of Tourism.

CODOFIL and others interested in perpetuating the French heritage of this area” (Jacobs 1). It is not entirely clear if the articles cited the original sum to emphasize the grand total or because no money had been raised in the interim. Indeed, at that particular historical moment in the early 1970s, white flight and the outmigration of affluent New Orleanians after the desegregation of the school system translated into a decline in the city’s population for the first time in history and greater austerity in the city government, which depended on the tax base (Kurtz 389). Despite the public’s continued resistance to footing the bill for the statue, the legitimization of Louisiana’s francophone heritage through the creation of a statewide government agency devoted to its expansion arguably facilitated the last push to get the statue erected.

The statue’s eventual placement near the International Trade Mart raised additional questions about its perceived value. While the city considered several potential venues, a 1969 report compiled by architect Frantz A. Phares for Mayor Victor Schiro evaluating each proposed location reveals that a team of architects had explicitly advised against placing the statue near the ITM. As Phares warned, the area’s unsightly surroundings and the immensity of the buildings that would frame the statue would likely diminish the monument’s intended grandeur:

This would not be a good setting. The statue, which is small in scale, would not relate well to the ITM of Rivergate because of the tremendous scale of these two buildings. Jeanne d’Arc and her horse would be lost on an island between two mountains. Furthermore, if it is true that there is a proposal to plant two service poles in the median area between these two buildings, symmetrically placed with respect to the ITM, this fine statue would be forever punished by a catinery suspended above it and framed by forms which could in no way complement it. (Phares 1, emphasis in original)

None of the archival material I examined offers any explanation as to why a spot of which the committee explicitly disapproved was eventually chosen. However, the archives do offer insight into the fears citizens had that not finding an appropriate space could harm diplomatic relations or, at the very least be seen as “tacky.” One citizen, Warren Merrihew, writes to Mayor Moon

Landrieu, “I feel that it is important to French-American relations that your administration demonstrate to all concerned that the word of New Orleans is good and honored at all times. I urge you to take all the necessary steps to fulfill our city’s pledge to France by installing their remarkable gift in the manner and place they have been promised” (Merrihew 1). The letter writer’s wife, identified only as Mrs. Merrihew, reiterates her husband’s position in a handwritten postscript to the typed letter: “Somehow I cannot picture placing this statue of Joan of Arc in any but the most gracious of settings. I do not believe the French Market is such a setting.” A letter from Edmond LeGand, dated June 19, 1971, echoes a similar sentiment, “It seems ungrateful on our part, to say the least, not to have been able to find a suitable location for the statue during all of these years” (LeGand 1). Another (unsigned) letter dated June 16, 1971, cautions that placing the statue in the French Quarter (against the French government’s original wishes) would “be deleterious to the image of the city in the eyes of the French government.” The letter writer continues, “I feel such action might give them the chance to think twice before they ever donate such a gift to our city in the future.” Although the letter writer does not elaborate on this discomfort with the alternate location, Kurtz notes that the French Quarter had become a stigmatized space among polite society by the 70s: “an area of topless and gay bars, massage parlors, and adult theaters” (390). The letter that comes closest to relating this idea outright is from the President of a theatrical company called the *Comédiens Français*, and reads, “I object very strongly to the placing of the statue of a Saint in an area where it would be exposed to profanations.” I would also speculate that the letter writers (many more of whom are not quoted here) recognized that the statue’s dedication could provide a crucial occasion to strengthen diplomatic ties with a country they saw as instrumental in the accomplishment of a

mission to reframe thinking about French in Louisiana as well as to reconnect what had become a geographically insular brand of *francophonie* to a wider French-speaking world.

### **Unveiled**

Despite anxieties about the monument's location within the city, the statue was finally unveiled on October 25, 1972, at a public ceremony that framed France's affiliation with New Orleans as longstanding, untroubled, and microcosmic of France's relationship with the United States. As French Ambassador to the United States Jacques Koscuiko-Morizet stated at the event, "The friendship between France and New Orleans, France, and Louisiana is so alive, so natural, it is no longer necessary to explain it at length," concealing the origins of France's original colonial presence in Louisiana in favor of what David Guss describes as "the staged creation of a mythic, detemporalized past" (Lee 1, Guss 14). As Guss argues in his work on public festivals, performances of heritage often expunge signs of conflict.

If Koscuiko-Morizet chooses to gloss over the details of France's historical connection to Louisiana, it is because the truth is much more complex. According to colonial historian Shannon Dawdy, the French monarchy's initial enthusiasm over Louisiana quickly waned, and it was soon evaluated as a "colonial experiment gone awry" (26). As Priest François-Xavier Martin writes, the colonial outpost had "not answered the hopes of the French court," as indicated by Louis XVI's decision to send men to investigate the colonial administrators' behavior and choice to stop furnishing supplies (Martin 111). Other contemporary sources corroborated the priest's opinion: "By the 1720s writers were describing Louisiana as a failure and the French crown's reaction as one of abandonment" (Dawdy 2). Even Louis XIV, after

whom the state was named, disdainfully declared La Salle's discovery of Louisiana "quite useless" (qtd. in Asher 26).

At the unveiling, however, Koscuiko-Morizet presented the statue to Mayor Moon Landrieu,<sup>50</sup> pronouncing that St. Joan symbolized "France's friendship with New Orleans" and "illustrat[ed] the faith in common values of courage and freedom" of their two respective countries (Lee 1). By referring to the statue as "Saint Joan" and evoking "faith," Koscuiko-Morizet tacitly emphasizes that New Orleans, unlike most of the majority Protestant United States, shares the bond of Catholicism with France. Contrary to Reinders's stance against the conflation of faith and Nation, Koscuiko-Morizet exploits the affective power of the two when fused. Landrieu expressed his "deep appreciation" for the gift noting that it would "strengthen already strong ties with France" and "add something of beauty to New Orleans" (Lee 1).

Here, it is important to recognize that France's ceremonious gifting of a statue to the United States of a woman supposed to symbolize the two countries' common commitment to freedom, has a precursor in the Statue of Liberty. One of the U.S.'s most recognizable national symbols, *La liberté éclairant le monde*, as the statue is officially titled, was created at approximately the same time (1886) as Frémiet's statue was completed (1889) and had a duplicate version in Paris. While the statues differ in style—Joan is a prototypical rendering of a military equestrian statue while *Liberté* is classical in inspiration—both statues share iconographic attributes. Namely, each monument represents a woman wearing a crown of sorts (Joan's laurel to the Statue of Liberty's spiked diadem) and raising her right arm with a symbol designed to be recognizable from afar (Joan's standard to *Liberté's* torch). The presence of a

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<sup>50</sup> The Landrieu family continues to be involved in Louisiana politics. Moon Landrieu's daughter, Mary, was a U.S. Senator from 1997-2015, and his son, Mitch, has been the mayor of New Orleans since 2010.

military band and the performance of both “The Star Spangled Banner” and “La Marseillaise” by 300 New Orleans schoolchildren also reiterated that the ceremony was designed to dramatize the continued alliance of France and the U.S. The supposed solemnity of the occasion did not, however, prevent the journalist who covered it from approaching the unveiling with a hint of humor when he likened Joan’s “début,”<sup>51</sup> to a burlesque show, writing “Joan, who was in storage since 1958 was a bit eager after waiting so long. With the help of a brisk wind blowing off the Mississippi River, she dropped her covering minutes before the scheduled unveiling” (Lee 1).

### **Rich Blood**

Much of the discourse around the statue, both public and private, suggests that citizens who identified with it did so because they perceived the statue as affiliating New Orleans with a prestigious European French lineage. For example, when Mayor Schiro accepted France’s gift of the statue in a public ceremony in 1964, he declared that “imperishable and forever, at the very gateway of our French-Founded City,” Joan would be “constantly reminding us that France and New Orleans are of the same rich blood” (Schiro). Here, Schiro evokes, without irony, the use of a woman with the most rustic of upbringings to identify his city with the aristocratic lineage implied by the words “rich blood.” In so doing, Schiro erases the particulars of Joan’s story in favor of a reading that reduces her to a national symbol. Stranger still, Schiro’s phrasing romanticizes a past that was in no way characteristic of the reality of early New Orleans, which

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<sup>51</sup> Lee’s word choice draws from the lexical field of performance, anticipating the many ways that Joan will be staged and re-staged in the years that follow. While playing off of the idea of the big reveal at the end of a burlesque show, Lee also paradoxically likens Joan to a (presumably) virginal teen debutante who is formally presented to high society at the end of her teen years, a tradition that continues in the elite families of New Orleans.

partially served as a penal colony<sup>52</sup> and veritable dumping grounds for France's indigent. In a rush to populate the colony between 1719 and 1720, French police deported vagrants, ne'er-dowells, army deserters, bootleggers, prostitutes and *débauchés*, "emptying French prisons and sweeping the streets" (Sublette 52). Sublette elaborates:

To say "Louisiana" in the France of 1719 was more or less the equivalent of saying "Siberia" in twentieth-century Russia. Forcibly wedded prisoner couples were marched across France through town after town on their way to the port, in a rolling caravan that served as a reminder that only the dregs of society went to Louisiana, and only in chains. (Sublette 52)

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall accentuates that French citizens also used the *lettre de cachet* system to denounce delinquent (or perhaps only disliked) neighbors and family members, filling police files with assertions such as, "Here is a true subject for Louisiana" and "[S/he is] a very bad subject who deserves . . . to be among those who are destined for the new colonies" (62). That is not to say that the entirety of the population was composed of criminals, only that the term "rich blood" paints an idealized portrait.

Because Schiro's comment has little to do with the reality of Joan's family lineage or the actual make-up of the original colonial population, his reflections align with a more nostalgic imagining of the city's past. Citing Svetlana Boym, Jennifer Holm explains that nostalgia is "a romance with one's own fantasy" preoccupied with "what the past was or could have been" (Holm 70). Characterized by melancholic longing for a perceived Golden Age, nostalgia grasps at what is gone, going, or perhaps what never was. Schiro's comment that Joan's presence would be "constantly reminding [New Orleans]" of a common genealogy suggests an imperiled identity. We rarely need to be reminded of what we have internalized. Indeed, as Pierre Nora

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<sup>52</sup> Literature of the colonial period, such as Abbé Prévost's *L'Histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731), also draws on Louisiana's infamy as a penal colony. As a prostitute, Manon Lescaut is exiled to New Orleans and eventually dies in the unkind climate once she and her lover flee deeper into the Louisiana wilderness after a duel gone wrong.

has proposed, *lieux de mémoire* are constructed because there is insufficient living memory to guarantee the survival of the events or people they seek to commemorate. Thus, as Joseph Roach explains, monuments are often “the artificial sites of the modern production of national and ethnic memory” (*Cities of the Dead* 2). Problematically, the mayor’s remarks reduce the city’s complex heritage to something more monolithic: a “French-founded city,” even though the actual ethnic make-up of the population was, and continues to be, more varied.

The seeming desire to identify with a European variety of French may be a distancing gesture designed to distinguish descendants of European Creoles (Here, I am using the term as it was used in the early 1800s, to designate people of European descent who were born in the colony.) from the larger population of Acadians, African American Creoles, and United Houma Nation members who actually comprised the majority of French speakers in the state at the time of Schiro’s speech (1964). As linguists such as Carl Blyth and historians such as Shane K. Bernard have noted, one of the pitfalls of institutionalizing French in Louisiana with the aid of organizations such as CODOFIL is that some forms of French tended to be valorized over others.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, elitist beliefs about what constituted “good” or “bad” French informed the attitudes and policies of the organization’s first president, James Domengeaux, a “genteel Acadian” who “claimed that native [French language] teachers were inadequate and that Cajun French was inferior to standard French” (Bernard 63). At another point, Domengeaux proclaimed, “Teaching Cajun French would be worse than teaching red-neck English” (qtd. in

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<sup>53</sup> In the decades since its inception, CODOFIL has adopted a more inclusive attitude towards the diversity of French speakers in Louisiana, offering information about the different francophone communities in the state on its website and even proposing the option of accessing the site in Louisiana Creole. The organization also sponsors cultural events such as the annual Festivals Acadiens et Créoles to educate and engage the public with the breadth of francophone cultures in the state.



Ancelet 230). Incidentally, Domengeaux was neither a linguist nor a French speaker. The practice of importing foreign French teachers, criticized by some as “educational mercenaries,” caused one South Louisianan to complain, “I can’t think of anything that is needed less [...] than imports from France or other sources to teach the French language to Acadians” (Bernard 64).

A related public disagreement about the face of *francophonie* in Louisiana erupted when Domengeaux censured Governor Edwin Edwards, who openly affirmed his identity as a Cajun French speaker, for Edwards’s use of the term “coonass.” “Coonass” remains a controversial epithet for people of Acadian origin. While the origins of the term are debated,<sup>54</sup> it appears that “coonass” was originally used as a slur towards Cajuns before undergoing a process of partial appropriation. However, identification with and use of the term varies widely and is often divided along class lines, with greater usage among working class Cajuns (Bernard 109). In fact, several years after Domengeaux decried Edwards’s use of the term, the CODOFIL president and lawyer helped a Louisianan man named Calvin J. Roach to file a suit against his Texan employer for using the word as a slur. *Roach v. Dresser Industrial Valve and Instrument Division* (1980) resulted in the identification of Cajuns as a minority group protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Perrin 1). Because of the heated feelings about the term, Brad Nation, the founder of an enormous<sup>55</sup> virtual community of Cajun French speakers via a Facebook page called “Cajun French Virtual Table Française” has banned its use and discussion on the page. As Nation explains on the “rules” section of the CFVTF page:

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<sup>54</sup> Domengeaux argued that “coonass” was a slur derived from the French “conaisse” and was an insult that French soldiers directed at Cajun GIs during World War II. Linguist Barry Jean Ancelet has contested this idea, suggesting instead the term referred Cajuns’ eating habits, which sometimes included the consumption of raccoons. Alternately, according to Ancelet, it may have arisen as a variation on a slur for African Americans that reflected the “doubly racist notion” that Cajuns were lower than African Americans (Bernard 91).

<sup>55</sup> To date (9/13/16), the group boasts 24,519 members.

Please— the word COONASS is one of those words that cause heartache. We all have our opinions either good, bad or indifferent. As a result of the many conflicts we've had to address over this topic, we will respectfully kill posts directly related to this topic. For the PRO-coonass folks, please understand posting proud coonass type posts creates heartache for us admins as we are the ones forced to moderate the fight that ensues. For the ANTI-coonass folks, please understand that not everyone shares your objections and please put the knives back in their sheaths. (Nation 1)

Edwards, however, was elected during the rise of a cultural Renaissance in French-speaking Louisiana and chose to make his Cajun heritage and identity as a French speaker part of his public image. In fact, Edwards selected “Cajun Power!” as his campaign slogan, appropriating the raised fist of the Black Power movement, but inserting a crawfish in it (Bernard 86). Thus, at a time when figures such as Domengeaux wanted to associate Louisiana with a cosmopolitan European French ancestry, Edwards was a very public reminder that the largest number of French speakers in Louisiana had ancestors who hailed from Canada and lived in the most rural reaches of the state. On the same day that the *Times-Picayune* announced the unveiling of the Joan statue in 1972, the paper also ran an article that detailed Edwards and Domengeaux’s differing evaluations of the word “coonass.” While Edwards defended the word’s use in a friendly, in-group context<sup>56</sup> and added that “‘Coonass power’ helped him get elected,” Domengeaux’s quoted remarks in the article suggest that he saw the governor as a somewhat uncouth representative of French speakers in the state, saying, “I deeply regret that the governor of Louisiana has used the word ‘coonass’ in public and private” (“Coonass or Cajun?”).

To return to Schiro’s comments on “rich blood,” it is important to recognize that in addition to potentially expressing coded biases about ethnic affiliations, references to bloodlines are commonplace in narratives that attempt to categorize (and usually disenfranchise) individuals

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<sup>56</sup> Edwards specifies, “People who are friends will continue to use the word ‘coonass’ in a lighthearted way. And people who use the term in an insulting way had better be ready to get into trouble which is as it has always been” (“Cajun or Coonass?”).

based on race.<sup>57</sup> Schiro delivered his speech in March of 1964, a few months prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act (July 2, 1964) and not long after the first school in Louisiana was desegregated, with great resistance,<sup>58</sup> on November 14, 1960. Given these factors, and considering that New Orleans is often dubbed “the most African city in the United States” (and still has a majority population of African Americans<sup>59</sup>), this identification with a white, European lineage might have been undergirded by anxieties over the country’s shifting racial dynamics (Midlo Hall 59).

A similar racially and regionally inflected nostalgia for a receding past characterizes a letter addressed to Mayor Moon Landrieu from Mrs. Emily Hosmer. Hosmer wrote to Landrieu on October 26, 1972, the day after the long-awaited dedication of the statue near the International Trade Mart. Having just finished perusing an article about the event in the *Times-Picayune* in her home in Covington, Mrs. Hosmer begins her letter: “It was with much interest I read the story in today’s *Times-Picayune* of the unveiling of the Statue of Joan of Arc. I don’t guess any Louisianan could be more interested than I. You see, my mother’s people originally came from France” (1). The letter writer then relates an illustrious family lineage starting with the story of a great uncle in the French Foreign Legion who, in his later years, retired to the role of *restaurateur* and opened an eatery in view of another Joan of Arc statue. The great uncle’s military engagement, as it turned out, had included (and perhaps began with) fighting on the side

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the one-drop rule and discussions of bloodlines within the publications of hate groups such as the Aryan Nation and the Ku Klux Klan.

<sup>58</sup> Schiro’s predecessor, Chep Morrison, publicly affirmed his personal belief in segregation. Within one week of the black students’ arrival at the first desegregated school, all but the two white students had been withdrawn (Kurtz 380).

<sup>59</sup> According to the 2010 census, 60.2% of New Orleans’ residents were black or of African descent (census.gov).

of the Confederacy at the 1874 Battle of Liberty Place, which occurred in New Orleans. While visiting a relative in the city when he was sixteen (the approximate age at which Joan went to battle), the unnamed French uncle had taken up arms alongside the soldiers in grey. At Liberty Place, five thousand members of the White League, an organization comprised primarily of Confederate veterans, attempted to overthrow the Reconstruction government in New Orleans, headed by William Pitt Kellogg, a U.S. Senator from Vermont with a primarily black base, and Caesar Carpentier Antoine, an African American Civil War veteran (Nystrom 1). Mrs. Hosmer describes the event simply as “when the carpetbaggers visited.”

Over the course of her letter, it becomes clear that Hosmer’s interest in the Joan statue cannot be disassociated from her nostalgia for the antebellum South. Hosmer’s use of the term “carpetbaggers,” an anachronistic slur southerners employed to refer to northerners who arrived in the South during Reconstruction either for economic motives or to ally themselves with newly freed slaves, perpetuates an apologist narrative that frames the Old South as a land besieged by foreign northerners bent on reform. Another of Mrs. Hosmer’s letters, held in the Covington archives, revealed that Hosmer’s great-great-great grandfather Judge Jesse Jones had fought in the battles of Shiloh and Vicksburg in a cavalry led by none other than Confederate Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest, who became the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Hosmer follows her “carpetbaggers” remark with a parenthetical aside, addressed to the mayor: “(between us, they say the handwriting’s on the wall for a repeat).” While she does not elaborate on this point and references no particular event, Hosmer clearly proposes a parallel between the Reconstruction period and the time period at which she writes. Indeed, the early seventies were characterized by social upheaval and political reform, as well as a recent history of federal

interventions in Deep South states' management of racial reform.<sup>60</sup> Mrs. Hosmer assumes that her reader, Mayor Moon Landrieu, shares her nostalgic imagining of the antebellum South as indicated by the mildly conspiratorial use of the words "between us," tacitly positioned against a "them" assumed to hold divergent views. Hosmer's use of parentheses also signals a form of privileged exchange, the equivalent of a hushed-tone comment in the context of a more formal communication.

Over the course of the letter, Hosmer elaborates a vision of herself as the inheritor by association, of a kind of glory, but one in danger of being forgotten, since she is the last of her generation. After speaking of the military feats of her great uncle and conjuring another phantom relative who was a World War I flying ace, Mrs. Hosmer laments, parenthetically, that they are "(All dead now)." But, she quickly interjects, "All these people like myself if you visit Paris will see our ancestors' name [*sic*] inscribed on the Arch of Triumph." The problem is clear: while Hosmer takes solace in the knowledge that there is a publicly marked site of memory that commemorates her ancestors, it is inaccessible to the people around her. So she must take on the role of historian if she wishes to preserve the legacy of her family or "all those people like [her]self." Further research in consultation with Covington librarian Germaine Butler revealed that Mrs. Hosmer was a member of a prominent family in St. Tammany Parish who owned plantations, which were later sold or fell into ruin.

Mrs. Hosmer's letter makes several references to lost land, which seems to translate into an anxiety about a loss of (white, southern) aristocratic identity. For example, she alludes to "a place here called Mulbury Grove owned by my grandmother's people, now the home of John

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<sup>60</sup> In 1963, for example, the Federal Guard had to be called in to remove Governor George Wallace from blocking the entrance to the University of Alabama to prevent the first African American student, Vivian Malone Jones, from registering.

McGinnis” and later mentions “the House on the Hill,” now a school called Saint Joseph’s Abbey, built on land that, Hosmer points out, “was all originally owned by my father’s people.”<sup>61</sup> Hosmer prefaces this statement of past ownership with a reference to a prior letter composed to Landrieu “some time ago” that she had sent in order to tell him the story of “the House on the Hill,” a plantation named Cedar Hill, located on the River Road since Landrieu’s son was graduating from the seminary that Hosmers’ ancestral home had become (Ellis 197). After positioning herself as a conscientious family historian through her various vignettes of deceased family members, Hosmer closes the letter with a paragraph-long invective about the more careless keepers of history that culminates with: “I get so burned up at these would be historians and book publishers and newspapers for not checking stories of people and places they print as true.”<sup>62</sup> The merging of the French great uncle’s history with the Confederacy, and Hosmer’s repeated references to lost land as a result of a changing conception of Nation, imply an anxiety about an imperiled way of life undergirded by regional and racial identities. Thus, the newspaper article about Joan’s statue acts as a memory trigger that allows Hosmer to align Joan’s battle for France with a series of nested stories about Hosmer’s personal family history, Louisiana’s French heritage, and the Confederate South during Reconstruction.

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<sup>61</sup> “The House on the Hill” was Cedar Hill Plantation, owned by James R. Hosmer, and purchased by Benedictines in 1899 (Ellis 197).

<sup>62</sup> Mrs. Hosmer’s letter in Covington Library’s Saint Tammany Parish genealogy files, penned in 1967, is thematically very similar to the one written to Landrieu in 1972. In the earlier letter, she wrote about a church for which her great-great grandfather provided the land, materials, and slave labor that would have been torn down if she “hadn’t interfered.” The 1967 letter expresses a similar anxiety for what Hosmer perceives as a menaced identity, concluding: “Is it fair for things like this to be overlooked and go into oblivion because of people who think only of the present and themselves and not of the past of which our nation was first started?”

## Harrah's

The statue once again became the space where citizens negotiated ideas about the city's identity in 1995, when the Wingate Corporation began to demolish the Place de France without a city permit to make way for the mega casino called Harrah's. In 1992, Governor Edwards expanded gambling in the state by signing the law "authorizing the construction of a land-based casino in New Orleans" (Kurtz 432). The city intervened, and the debris of the partially accomplished demolition remained strewn around the statue for months as preservationists and the Wingate Corporation battled it out in court. Since the city had constructed the Place de France with funds from a federal grant, the U.S. government had to give permission for the site to be altered or for the statue to be moved, as Harrah's proposed. The then-retired Mayor Moon Landrieu, who had applied for the grant in the first place, did not oppose the move, testifying in court that he didn't see the site or statue as historically significant. To justify his statement, Landrieu contrasted the statue to other *lieux de mémoire* of New Orleans such as Lee Circle and Jackson Square, which, he reasoned "have been there for a long time," making uninterrupted anchorage to space the only criterion for significance (Voelkner 1).

To block the proposed move, a group of preservationists headed by Dr. Homer DuPuy, who had originally chaired the committee to raise money for the statue, tried to have both the statue and the Place de France added to the National Historic Register. Speaking from amidst the debris of rubble and steel at the statue's base during the annual Bastille Day celebration,<sup>63</sup> DuPuy stated, "Joan of Arc has won many battles. We hope she wins this battle and stays right where she is" (Jackson and Treadwell 1). But Frémiet's sculpture did not meet the criteria for

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<sup>63</sup> Making a Johannic site the focal point of a celebration of the French national holiday that marks the storming of the Bastille would not, I believe, occur in France. Since Joan believed in the divine right of kings and the beginning of the French Revolution marks the end of the monarchical system, some would see this pairing as ideologically incompatible.

the National Historic Register. One reviewer of the application acknowledged that Joan of Arc was an important figure in French history and that the statue and surrounding Place de France “played an important role in symbolizing, commemorating, and celebrating the city’s French heritage and culture.” He further conceded that “[w]ith cultural prominence in a city identified so closely with France, it is to be expected that there would [be] public interest attached to any action associated with the image of Jeanne d’Arc” (Belson 8). The problem, however, as Belson is quick to point out, is that Jeanne d’Arc did not meet the minimum qualification: “The basic requirement for Register eligibility, however, is significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture (Belson 8, emphasis in original). Another reviewer, Marilyn Harper, points out that even if Jeanne *had* met the basic requirement, there was a lack of compelling evidence to support the claim that the statue even had *local* importance: “[T]he failure of initial efforts to collect the money needed to purchase the statue and the long delay in finding a location for it seems to indicate that this association [of the city with France] was not one of exceptional importance to the City of New Orleans or its citizens” (Belson 8). And as Belson editorializes in his review, “There is no information to suggest that the Place de France or the Jeanne d’Arc Statue are considered to be tourist attractions in the city” (Belson 8). Therefore, in light of its perceived irrelevance to American history and the lack of a compelling case for the statue’s local importance, on April 12, 1999, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places issued a formal declaration that neither the place de France nor the Jeanne d’Arc statue were eligible for National Register listing.

Despite the official decision, some New Orleanians, such as Michael Rouchell, publicly expressed dissent about the move. In a letter to the *Times-Picayune*, Rouchell maps the local onto the national by situating the Joan of Arc within a genealogy of presidential monuments in



the U.S. capital. Evoking the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Jefferson Memorial, Rouchell emphasizes the vision that informed each monument's placement and their careful positioning in relationship to other historical sites in Washington D.C.'s urban landscape such as the U.S. Capitol Building and the White House. He then summarizes, "The Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Jefferson Memorial remain in the same locations where they were originally built. If one should visit Washington tomorrow or 50 years from now, they will still be there in their original sites" (Rouchell 1). Rouchell goes on to lament New Orleans's recent history of displacing its monuments, arguing that the city's willingness to spatially rearrange its sites of memory at the behest of a corporation rather than expecting the corporation to adapt to fit with the existing cityscape is the most recent incarnation of the privatization of public space. The problem, as he sees it, is the encroachment of private interests on public space, resulting in the overall loss of public space since the site of the statue's relocation was "already public space"<sup>64</sup> (Rouchell 1). In his interpretation of the event, Joan comes to signify the people, that is, common citizens who use public space, as pitted against capitalist encroachment. One satirical piece in the *Times-Picayune* frames Joan of Arc's relocation as the precursor to a bulldozing blitz, one that would efface reminders of fading pasts in the name of monetized progress:

Sure, the usual gang of stick-in-the-muds and naysayers will argue that it can't be done. The Joan of Arc statue is in the way, they will point out, and the feds won't let us move her butt out of there to make way for progress [ . . . ] Some of those buildings in the French Quarter are pretty old and overdue for demolition anyway. Just raze a few Creole cottages, and we could have a tower with a neon sign visible from Grand Isle. (Gill 1)

Although Harrah's was touted as capable of bringing wealth to the city through new jobs and by attracting tourists, other private citizens' criticism of the casino accord with Rouchell's concerns,

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<sup>64</sup> This statement bears qualification since the French Market Corporation, not the city, actually owns the French Market.

centering on Harrah's "hubris" in removing France's "bothersome (to Harrah's) gift" and refusal to "[play] by the same rules" (McCall 1).

After delays in court, the casino eventually agreed to pay the \$374,417.00 price tag to move the statue to the French Quarter, refurbish it, and landscape the park where it now sits (Harper 1). Joan's standard, which had been swept away in a hurricane several years earlier, was replaced, her dulled exterior, regilded. Thus, while newspaper coverage framed Joan as a victim to corporate greed in their articles about the standoff, the move financed by Harrah's actually guaranteed the statue a more prominent place in the city and ensured that the French Market Corporation would maintain the statue. Indeed, the French ambassador at the time, François Bujon de l'Etang perceived the change as an upgrade, capable of valorizing the historic relationship between the two countries as he related in a letter to the mayor, now Marc Morial, dated December 12, 1998:

The statue of Jeanne d'Arc is in itself a strong symbol of the French heritage of New Orleans and, indeed, deserves a better location than the present one, especially as Louisiana is about to commemorate in 1999 the tercentenary of the first French settlement on the shores of the Mississippi.

The particular history of the City of New Orleans is a reminder to all of us how long and deep the relationship between our two countries has been. We must devote a particular care and attention to all events and symbols that remind us of the importance of the unique historical ties uniting our two nations. (Bujon de l'Etang)

As the ambassador emphasizes, the physical artifacts deemed symbolic of the relationship between the two countries become a space for maintenance and elaboration of the relationship itself. In the same vein, an earlier letter to a city official composed by the president of the International Trade Mart (ITM), J.W. Clark, argued for the "cleaning and embellishing" of the statue so that it might be "maintained in the same excellent condition as the original that stands outside the Louvre in Paris" (Clark 1). Clark's comment reiterates that it is not simply that all

public monuments merit care and maintenance; rather, this particular monument deserves maintenance because it builds upon a symbolic association between New Orleans and Paris, a city perceived as epitomizing, to reference Amy Boudreau's poem at the statue's dedication ceremony, "the greatness and glory of France." As the previous citations demonstrate, the statue serves as a medium for the cities to mutually enhance their status by recognizing their significance to one another.

### **Conclusion**

"This golden statue prominently displayed in the brilliant sunshine would loudly proclaim the city's heritage and its status as a world-class city. And like the other famous lady from France, it will surely be more welcoming than any other American idol."

-Hubert Smith, resident of Kenner, a suburb of New Orleans, from a letter to the editor in the *Times-Picayune* in 2015 concerning another possible move for the statue

The reconceptualization of the physical space that the statue now inhabits situates Joan transnationally, through visual referents to intersecting national narratives. She sits in the French Quarter, surrounded by buildings constructed during the Spanish colonial period. In the streets below her stone perch, the city's citizens, descendants of First Nations tribes, Africans, Europeans, Haitians, Acadians, Vietnamese relocated after the war, among others criss-cross paths with the tourists from *tout partout*. With six blocks of separation, Joan's monument mirrors Bienville's, a Canadian of French lineage. Two cannons from the Napoleonic period shipped to New Orleans from Martinique flank the monument, a tangible reminder that New Orleans has been called the "northern most city of the Caribbean," linked to the circum-Atlantic world through histories of colonization and the Atlantic Slave Trade (Andrade 1). Above the statue, flutter the flags of the United States, Louisiana, New Orleans and France, echoing the

statue's own standard and acting as a reminder of its potential for overlay of Joan's story with other national narratives (fig. 16).



Figure 16: Frémiet's statue at the French Quarter site. Photo by the author.

This chapter has focused on common citizens' perceptions of the Joan of Arc statue over the past several decades. Recent developments in national politics with local reverberations have underlined the extent to which the larger cultural framework and political climate surrounding sites of memory impact the way citizens perceive them. In conjunction with the Black Lives Matter movement that has developed in response to a wave of "extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes," the Robert E. Lee statue that sits atop a pillar in a traffic circle in New Orleans has increasingly become a source of public contention ("Black Lives Matter"). For many activists and citizens, the monument condones, in civic space, an economic system built on brutality towards black people and extols a military leader who, not only fought in its defense, but also personally owned slaves. After a self-proclaimed white supremacist named Dylann Roof shot nine African Americans in the Emanuel AME church of Charleston, South

Carolina, on June 17, 2015, the current Mayor of New Orleans, Mitch Landrieu, argued for the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue. "Symbols really do matter," he stated in a speech about his proposed racial reconciliation initiative. "Symbols should reflect who we really are as a people" (McClendon 1). Forty years earlier, Landrieu's father, Moon, had upheld the same site, Lee Circle, as unquestionably linked to the city's history in a way that Joan of Arc, he stated, was not. Several weeks after the discussion of Lee's potential removal began, a local writer and radio host, Chris Rose, suggested a replacement for the Confederate General on his show "Sound Salvation." He proposed someone he thought that everyone could support: Joan of Arc.

### CHAPTER 3: “ELLE SE PREND POUR JEANNE D’ARC!”: GENDERING MEMORY IN THE CASES OF JOAN OF ARC AND DJAMILA BOUPACHA

#### Introduction

“Elle n’est vraiment pas sympathique cette jeune fille . . . Elle se prend pour Jeanne d’Arc. Elle veut l’indépendance de l’Algérie !” -Maurice Patin, Président de la Comité de Sauvegarde, in reference to Djamila Boupacha (de Beauvoir and Halimi 106)

“Dans un milieu resté majoritairement masculin, à un moment ou à un autre de sa carrière, une femme politique qui montre quelque talent a toutes les chances de lui être comparée”  
(Contamine 468).

Lining the base of the equestrian statue of Joan of Arc at the Place du Matri in Orléans, France, are a series of bas-reliefs depicting the life of the Maid. Most of the freize’s seven scenes are familiar: *Le Siège d’Orléans*, *Le Sacre de Charles VII*, *Jeanne d’Arc au bûcher*. One panel, however, presents an image that is absent from the usual visual repertoire: *Jeanne d’Arc en prison*. In a windowless stone cell, equipped with only a crucifix and a carafe, Joan sits on a narrow bench-bed with bound hands and shackled feet, angling away from three male jailers. A battle-axe bearing guard surveils the scene as two other guards lean towards Joan. One tugs at the chain that fastens her feet to one another and that, according to the rehabilitation trial records, also locked her to the bed. Another jailer grasps at her through the spiked grate. Joan refuses the gazes of the four men and meets only the eyes of her savior, in a moment that foretells a more public scene of suffering, when Joan reportedly died looking upon a crucifix held up by a member of the crowd at her execution.

Given the lack of images of Joan’s incarceration, it is startling to realize that of the two years that make up Joan’s public life, she spent one full year in prison, from her capture on May 23, 1430, to her death on May 30, 1431. The absence of visual representations of this portion of

Joan's story may be partially explained by the dearth of words documenting it. *Le Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* offers an account of Joan's final six months, when she was interrogated for up to six hours per day in a tower in Rouen. Still, the transcripts only present an abridged record of the court proceedings: they offer little information about the conditions in which those exchanges occurred. On February 21, 1431, the proceedings began as semi-public,<sup>65</sup> or to reference the after-the-fact description of events in *Le Procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, "devant les yeux" (DuParc 108). But on March 10<sup>th</sup>, the courtroom contracted, becoming more concealed (Tisset 103). Not quite three weeks into the proceedings, the interrogation moved into Joan's cell, "une pièce assez obscure" according to witness Frère Bardin de la Pierre (Tisset 108). If the conditions of Joan's imprisonment resist full knowledge, we still get grim glimpses of them two decades later from witnesses in Joan's rehabilitation trial. In the dark room where she resided, no one could address her without permission, affirms Bardin de la Pierre (DuParc 174). The English guards who slept inside her cell called her "paillarde" and "putaine" (DuParc IV 37). Nicolas de Houpeville<sup>66</sup>, relates that he saw Joan "pleurant beaucoup" as she was conducted to the "lieu de supplice" by a crowd of over 120 men, some of whom carried medieval weaponry such as *massues* and *glaives* (DuParc 194). Several witnesses reference "une cage à fer, construite pour l'enfermer debout" (DuParc 207). One man, Pierre Cusquel, testified that it was weighed at his very home (DuParc 177). True, no one saw Joan *inside* the iron contraption, which fastened the prisoner into place at the neck, wrists, and feet.

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<sup>65</sup> By "semi-public," I do not mean that the general public attended but rather that people not directly involved in the proceedings were part of the audience. According to Pernoud, Bishop Cauchon summoned approximately sixty assessors "forty of whom sat regularly." Other figures in attendance included English bishops and cardinals. After the questioning moved to Joan's cell, the audience was "much reduced" (165-166).

<sup>66</sup> Nicolas de Houpeville's dissent regarding Joan's treatment eventually drove him to recuse himself from the trial and leave Rouen under threat of death.

Then again, why commission a blacksmith to make a custom-fitted *cage à fer* and *not* use it, if only to taunt the prisoner?

A chilling passage from the opening pages of the *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* references Joan's interrogation and detention in a way that raises more questions:

C'est dans cette cité de Rouen que celui-ci [le révérend père en Christ] . . . s'est proposé d'enquêter sur les choses déjà dites selon les lois théologiques et canoniques, et, à leur propos de faire ou faire faire la ou les informations nécessaires, d'interroger ladite femme ainsi suspecte et, si besoin est, de la détenir en prison et d'accomplir *tous autres actes* qui touchent une cause d'inquisition de cette sorte. (Tisset 19, emphasis mine)

What, exactly, falls under “tous autres actes”? And how does it relate to the making of “la ou les informations nécessaires”? Is “tous autres actes,” a vague, blanket phrase that camouflages that which it justifies, a medieval equivalent of “enhanced interrogation techniques”? The official record of the condemnation trial reads that Joan was aware of “officiers qui, sur notre [Bishop Cauchon's] ordre, étaient prêts à lui appliquer ces tourments, pour la ramener à la voie et à la connaissance de la vérité” (Tisset 301). Yet her judges feared that in view of Joan's previous resistance “les supplices de la torture ne lui fussent que de peu de profit” (Tisset 302).

In Marnia Lazreg's comprehensive study of torture during the Algerian war, she suggests that torture not be defined not by particular tools or acts lest such specificities lend themselves to discussions of what does *not* count. Rather, she proposes that torture be defined as a totalizing situation in which a power differential makes an individual's body utterly vulnerable to pain regardless of how often or in what form it is inflicted. She writes:

What goes on in the torture chamber is only one aspect of the torture situation, which includes a series of interlocking acts calculated to sustain a climate of fear and uncertainty, absolute powerlessness and dependence on the whims of the guards, incrementally weakening the tormented body with hunger, unsanitary conditions, and insufficient or lack of care. (Lazreg 122-3)



Surprisingly, a passage in the transcripts of Joan's rehabilitation, *Le Procès en nullité*, anticipates this definition, proposing that the conditions of Joan's detainment be considered torture, here indicated by its medieval synonym, "question":

En droit il est en effet sûr que par le mot "question" nous devons non seulement comprendre les tourments appliqués au corps, mais même toutes les autres souffrances pressantes, par exemple la faim, infligées aux détenus jusqu'à ce qu'ils avouent le crime qu'on leur impute. On doit même comprendre sous le mot de question ce que nous appelons une mauvaise demeure, par exemple un cachot sordide, affreux. (DuParc 120)

There's little way of knowing what actually happened to Joan of Arc while in prison. Whether by its menacing implements or the marks it leaves on the bodies that endure it, torture is sometimes recognizable only through its traces. It is then perhaps appropriate that several centuries hence, during the Algerian War (1954-1962) the training center where interrogators learned methods of "clean torture" that left no sign of *supplice* on the body was called the Camp Jeanne d'Arc<sup>67</sup> (Lazreg 114).

In the last chapter I argued that in the years between 1958-1972, when New Orleans was debating the fate of a Joan of Arc statue gifted from France, *la Pucelle* became a nostalgic figure via which Louisianans revised their history with a former colonial power, reframing France's colonial presence in Louisiana as a longstanding friendship and political alliance. French president and army general Charles de Gaulle directly participated in the process of creating a *lieu de mémoire* that tied Louisiana's history to France's by securing funds for the equestrian statue from several French cities. This gesture, I posited, indicated de Gaulle's more generalized colonial nostalgia for former settler colonies in North America that were reasserting their historic ties to France as an affirmation of a minority identity. De Gaulle's tribute to an iconic French

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<sup>67</sup> Located in Philippeville, Algeria, the Centre d'Entraînement à la Guerre Subversive Camp Jeanne d'Arc was a site where military personnel received instruction in the use of torture using water and electricity.

figure in New Orleans occurred against the backdrop of the Algerian War of Independence, a violent, multi-year conflict that sealed the demise of France's once-vast colonial empire. During the same year that de Gaulle visited Louisiana and decided to fund a statue that he saw as both aligned with his personal mythology and emblematic of the most glorious attributes of his country, a scandal regarding the use of torture erupted in France, threatening its sense of national identity as a champion of human rights. Two years prior in 1958, shortly after de Gaulle took office, he had assured the French public, via his press secretary, that practices of torture had not, to his knowledge, occurred under his tenure as president and henceforth would not be used (Surkis 41). While the case of Djamilia Boupacha was not the first or only publicized instance of torture during the Algerian war, Boupacha's story generated the most widespread public response of indignation and shame (Surkis 41).

What became known as *l'Affaire Djamilia Boupacha* concerned the torture and trials of a twenty-two year old Algerian woman who worked with the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), Algeria's pro-independence party. Djamilia Boupacha was a student from a middle-class family who had attended French schools in Algeria: in some ways, she appeared to be the model colonial subject until she became active within Algeria's FLN. Boupacha first got involved with the FLN when she realized that, despite her education and the positive evaluations she received in her nursing program, her opportunities were limited as an Algerian woman under the French colonial system (de Beauvoir and Halimi 51). As she explains to her lawyer, Gisèle Halimi, "J'ai beaucoup travaillé, j'attendais, j'étais sûre de réussir . . . J'ai vu le directeur. Je lui ai demandé pourquoi les musulmanes n'étaient pas reçues . . . Tout pour eux [les Français] et nous, on crève!" (De Beauvoir and Halimi 50). Convinced that her efforts would be best spent in the fight for independence, Boupacha began taking medical supplies for combatants from the

hospital where she worked, gathering intelligence for the party, and occasionally sheltering FLN members in secret. On February 10, 1960, military police raided Boupacha's family home and took her to El Biar detention center where interrogators accused her of placing a bomb in the Brasserie des Facultés several months earlier, on September 27, 1959 (de Beauvoir and Halimi 32). While the bomb was defused before detonation and no witnesses placed Boupacha at the scene of the crime,<sup>68</sup> she faced extended interrogation that resulted in a "confession," not only to the suspected crime but to a slew of others (de Beauvoir and Halimi 32, 21).

In violation of article 334 of the penal code, which stated that a suspect could not be held for more than twenty-four hours after the time of arrest without being charged, Boupacha was detained, interrogated, and tortured for over a month (Whitfield 79). During that time, she was subjected to an array of horrific techniques intended to elicit information. Interrogators slapped and beat her, breaking her ribs. They sent jolts of electricity into Boupacha's body through electrodes attached to her nipples, vagina, and anus using the infamous *gégène*.<sup>69</sup> They crushed lit cigarettes into her skin. They bound her to a broomstick at the wrists and feet and repeatedly dipped her into a bathtub full of water until she began to suffocate. Interrogators also raped her with objects including a toothbrush and a beer bottle, leaving her bleeding and unconscious for forty-eight hours (de Beauvoir and Halimi 221).

Just two days after Boupacha was arrested, the 12 February decree restructured military tribunals, creating a new legal context. It was now possible to try Algerian combattants in

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<sup>68</sup> Two servers at the Brasserie as well as the cashier testified to having noticed and spoken to a woman who was later seen fleeing the scene. When asked, at the hearing, whether they recognized Djamilia, neither witness identified her as the person they had seen that day (de Beauvoir and Halimi 32).

<sup>69</sup> Military slang for "génératrice," this device was originally used to provide electricity for telephones in remote areas but became a tool of torture during France's occupation of Vietnam.

military court onsite in Algeria with limited access to legal representation in order to assure swift convictions for anyone affiliated with the FLN (Surkis 42). Gisèle Halimi, the Parisian lawyer who took Boupacha's case after being contacted by Djamila's brother, realized that in order to have any chance of sparing Boupacha's life, her confession under torture would need to be thrown out. The best way to accomplish this would be to have the trial moved to a civil court in France, where evidence obtained illegally would be inadmissible (Lazreg 50). Since Halimi's attempts at communicating directly with President de Gaulle and Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux were met with silence, she turned to the public to put pressure on the government. Thus, Halimi solicited the help of feminist writer and intellectual Simone de Beauvoir. De Beauvoir, in turn, formed the *Comité Djamila Boupacha* with other high profile public figures<sup>70</sup> in order to arouse a sense of public indignation by bringing to light the practice of torture, accusing the system under which it was protected, and rattling French citizens out of the indifference that had made them complicit. As detailed in the *compte rendu* of one of the meetings dated July 12, 1961, the committee's first objective was to insure that "toutes les informations [concernant le procès] soient répandues, écrites, et publiées au maximum dans les cercles les plus variés" (Compte Rendu 1).

As one of the epigrams for this chapter indicates, it is not uncommon for politically engaged women to be compared to Joan of Arc.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, when de Beauvoir and Halimi

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<sup>70</sup> Members of the committee included Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Lacan, Michel Leiris, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, André Schwartz-Bart, and Françoise Sagan among others (Codaccioni 39).

<sup>71</sup> Examples abound: After composing a biography on revolutionary Maud Gonne, author Margaret Ward summed up her subject's identity in the title as *Ireland's Joan of Arc*, just as biographer Matthew Gallman declared abolitionist Anna Elizabeth Dickinson "America's Joan of Arc" in a biography of the same name. When Zora Neale Hurston dedicated a chapter of her ethnographic study of Haiti, *Tell My Horse*, to warrior Celestia Simon, she titled it "A Black

confronted Maurice Patin, the president of the committee for Public Safety, with Boupacha's torture, he scoffed that Djamila (wrongly) took herself for Joan of Arc, suggesting that Boupacha had an inflated sense of self and a misguided belief in her mission for independence. This comparison to Joan was later echoed conversely, as praise, in one English woman's private correspondence. Writing to de Beauvoir on September 5, 1962, after the publication of *Djamila Boupacha*, the English correspondent comments that Djamila's torture represents "une tache ineffaçable à l'honneur de votre patrie . . . Après tout, nous les Anglais, nous avons brûlé la Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, mais c'était la guerre entre nos patries. Mais l'Algérie et les bourreaux de la gentille Djamila sont de la France." The author (name illegible) assumes that Djamila, like Joan, is innocent, that her cause of national sovereignty is just, and that her presumed execution should arouse national shame. She also assumes, though incorrectly, that Joan's execution was entirely an English affair, that it did not, at the time, also, present a troubling "tache" for French honor. Certainly there are points of overlap in Joan and Djamila's stories: both women sought freedom for an occupied country, both women were tried and sentenced to death after bodily harm was either inflicted or evoked to coerce a confession, and both women later recanted their confessions. In both cases, Joan and Djamila attributed their confessions to fear of bodily harm. Finally, both women were eventually exonerated, even if their pardons represent something of a Pyrrhic victory: Djamila's came as a condition of the Evian accords which also assured amnesty for her tormentors, and Joan's arrived posthumously.

While recent postcolonial scholarship has foregrounded the role that gender and sexuality played in Djamila's trial (Branche 2001, Lazreg 2008, Condaccioni 2010, Surkis 2010, Quinan

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Joan of Arc." Similarly, Trieu Thi Trinh, a Vietnamese woman who resisted Chinese rule in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. appears on a website dedicated to honoring women as a "Vietnamese Joan of Arc." More recently, Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani activist attacked by the Taliban, has been compared to Joan in numerous news sources.

2014) and many critics have cited, without commentary, Boupacha's comparison to Joan of Arc (Whitfield 1996, Branche 2001, Kunkle 2013, Quinan 2014), I propose that we would benefit from thinking about these two things in relationship to one another. Using Joan's trials as a template to understand Djamila's allows for the emergence of surprising parallels despite different historical contexts. The changing public perceptions of Joan and Djamila expose the mechanisms by which woman's bodies become sites for the elaboration of national identity during international conflicts and the kinds of emotions that undergird these assertions of identity.

The comparison between Joan and Djamila prompts compelling questions: What does it mean to read the experience of one political prisoner through the memory of another? Why is it that Joan of Arc's extended detainment, interrogation, and possible torture figured heavily in the testimony of witnesses of her rehabilitation trial, yet they are now frequently omitted from public remembrance? And what do we gain by reading the trials and the public outpouring of support that occurred in each "retrial," namely Djamila's civil trial in France and Joan's rehabilitation, alongside of one another? In addressing these questions, I take as a point of departure the idea that the depiction of each woman's gender and sexuality played a key role in establishing her perceived guilt or innocence. Since both Joan and Djamila transgressed traditional ideas about femininity, and their bodies were initially associated with an anxiety-producing illegibility, each woman had to first be publicly reinterpreted, or made legible as a gendered subject, to be perceived as innocent. Virginity, and the "proof" of its presence or absence, was a crucial component in this process, which ultimately legitimated each woman's words and facilitated her exoneration. In this chapter, I argue that the witnesses at Joan's rehabilitation trial as well as de Beauvoir and Halimi use similar strategies to establish the innocence of the accused: namely,

they construct virginity as a defining character trait, they assimilate Djamila and Joan into traditional institutions such as the family and religion, and they orient their audiences towards affective responses of remorse and shame by continuously citing others' reactions to each woman's sufferings.

This analysis draws on the official transcripts from Joan of Arc's rehabilitation trial, *Le procès en nullité de la condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* (1455-1456), as well as the book entitled *Djamila Boupacha* (1961) that Simone de Beauvoir and Gisèle Halimi published about Boupacha's case.<sup>72</sup> Unpublished archival sources, specifically letters composed to Simone de Beauvoir and other documents concerning the case from the Simone de Beauvoir papers at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, also complement this reading. To better understand the public's perception of this event, I consulted approximately twenty-five letters written to Simone de Beauvoir after she published an editorial in *Le Monde* detailing Boupacha's interrogation and torture. The first of these letters is dated June 3, 1960, the day that the editorial, entitled "Pour Djamila Boupacha," was published. The last letter is dated April 15, 1962, a month after the signing of the Evian Accords. I also examined private correspondence exchanged among members of the *Comité Djamila Boupacha* and notes from their meetings.

Building on the work of postcolonial scholars who have foregrounded the centrality of gender in the interpretation of torture during the Algerian war, this chapter explores the cross-century links between Joan and Djamila's trials. It departs from previous work by emphasizing the interpretive tactics and narrative mediation that allowed both figures to become sympathetic when viewed through the eyes of the witnesses at Joan's rehabilitation and Gisèle Halimi, who

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<sup>72</sup> I contacted several archives to attempt to locate the full transcripts of Djamila's trials including the Colonial Archives in Aix-en-Provence, the military archives in Vincennes, and the municipal archives in Caen. None of the sites confirmed having legal documents affiliated with the case.

serves as a kind of character witness for Djamila. As a corollary, I consider how Halimi's interpretation of Djamila's torture, which shatters the colonial myth of the benevolent colonizer, also, at times, problematically reinforces paternalistic colonial tropes to garner sympathy for Djamila. Ultimately, I aim to show that while each woman is initially "read" as a threat, Joan and Djamila must be assimilated into a traditional gender narrative to neutralize the threat they represent and be perceived, instead, as innocent.

### **Contextualizing Djamila Boupacha in the Algerian War**

Often termed France's dirty war or *la guerre sans nom*, the Algerian War remains a contested event in French memory. It was not until 1999, thirty-seven years after the war ended, that it was officially recognized as one. Previously, in official parlance, the French had termed it an "opération de maintien de l'ordre." Unlike other colonies and protectorates, which had more autonomy, administratively, Algeria was divided into three departments and inhabited by one million European *colons*, the majority of whom were French. Thus, while independence was being negotiated in Vietnam, Tunisia, and Morocco, the official refrain remained "l'Algérie, c'est la France"<sup>73</sup> (Stora 30). With a death toll of anywhere from 240,000 at the lowest estimate to 1.5 million at the highest, the Algerian war resulted in a "demographic bloodletting proportionally of the same magnitude that France experienced in World War I" (Cohen 221). The brunt of the violence clearly fell on the Algerian population, three million of whom spent time in relocation camps and a number of whom, for political reasons, simply "disappeared." In the capital city of Algiers alone, 3,000 went missing (Cohen 221). The making of war differed

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<sup>73</sup> These words were first declared by Pierre Mendès-France, who negotiated independence for Vietnam, Morocco, and Tunisia, and later echoed by the Minister of the Interior, François Mitterand (Cohen 221).



too, departing from “set piece battles against the French military” in favor of “broad, decentralized, and lengthy guerilla campaigns” (Kuncle 6).

As previously mentioned, the war concluded with a blanket amnesty for both FLN members engaged in “prosecutable action for Algerian independence” and French police, administrators, and military officials for “excesses in the process of maintaining order,” phrasing that suggests that acts of torture were anomalous or necessary evils in the context of war (Cohen 222). Yet as Lazreg demonstrates in her comprehensive study of torture, such techniques were actually “central to the army’s defense of a colonial empire in its waning years . . . Torture was not just an instance of violence committed by uncontrolled soldiers; it was part and parcel of an ideology of subjugation that went beyond Algeria’s borders” (3). The justification for torture, as formulated by military leaders, framed Algeria as an exceptional situation that demanded exceptional measures:

The Algerian war was not a traditional war, they explained; the enemy did not engage them on a mutually recognized battlefield that both sides had agreed to beforehand. This was a civil war, and the army did not know who its enemy was. The French were being ambushed and violently attacked, but by whom? And who was giving aid and comfort to these invisible adversaries? The army needed to know, and for this they needed information; if no one was offering it voluntarily or for a price, then it had to be coerced—through torture, if it came down to that. (Todorov 19)

Therefore, interrogators led a sort of double life: in training camps, they learned the newest technologies for torture using water and electricity, they enforced systematized procedures for *la question*, yet they maintained euphemistic names for it. Code words from the Middle Ages distanced them from the acts they performed (Lazreg 115).

By the time Boupacha’s case became public knowledge, the testimonies of several other victims of torture were in circulation, their causes often taken up by intellectuals. Maurice Audin’s disappearance drew particular attention. On June 11, 1957, Audin, a professor of

mathematics at the University of Algiers, was arrested. While authorities claimed that Audin had escaped custody and gone into hiding, his wife, Josette, insisted upon an investigation of what was later revealed to be a case of torture and execution. Historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Laurent Schwartz published a book entitled *L’Affaire Audin* (1958) and formed the *Comité Maurice Audin* to investigate the circumstances of the professor’s disappearance and demand government accountability. Their actions would act as a model for de Beauvoir and Halimi’s later involvement with Boupacha’s case. Within a day of Audin’s arrest, Henri Alleg, a French editor for the Communist newspaper *Alger républicain*, was also taken into custody. Like Audin, Alleg was a French communist and FLN supporter. Unlike Audin, Alleg lived to report his ordeal. Alleg was imprisoned for his engagement with the FLN and managed to smuggle out a first-hand account of his treatment as a detainee, which included forced consumption of drugs, electric shock, beatings, upside down suspension, and water torture. Published under the name *La Question* (1958) with a preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, Alleg’s testimony was the first biographical narrative written by a victim. Immediately, it was seized by the French government (Kleinman 25). Audin and Alleg’s cases, described by some as the “New Dreyfus Affair,” represented a growing trend of intellectuals’ engagement with anti-colonial politics and the exposure of torture as a means of generating support for the victims (Le Sueur 197).

Alleg’s account also referenced the torture of other prisoners at El Biar, many of whom were women. As Kleinman notes, “Alleg’s widely-read book brought female prisoners into the French public consciousness, even though in his account they were only fleeting glimpses” (25). Alleg affirms that women were not spared the usual treatment even if their ordeals in the torture chamber received less attention: “De l’autre côté du mur, dans l’aile réservé aux femmes, il y a des jeunes filles dont nul n’a parlé [...] déshabillées, frappées, insultées par des tortionnaires

sadiques, elles ont subi elles aussi l'eau et l'électricité" (17). A more intimate portrait of the torture of one of the women on the other side of the wall at El-Biar emerged with the publication of *Pour Djamila Bouhired*, (1957) a book co-written by Bouhired's lawyers Georges Arnaud and Jacques Vergès. Like Boupacha, Bouhired came from a middle-class family and was educated in French schools. After her arrest for delivering a communication addressed to two high-level FLN members, Yacef Saadi and Ali La Pointe, Djamila Bouhired was accused of placing an explosive at the Milk Bar. The explosion at the popular beachside ice cream parlor killed six people and wounded sixty civilians. Vergès's defense hinged upon a "strategy of disruption": he didn't deny the charges but shifted blame, instead, to the French government. *Pour Djamila Bouhired* features first-hand accounts of Bouhired's torture, which included beating and electric shock (Arnaud et Vergès 66). Although Bouhired was originally sentenced to death, her execution was indefinitely commuted as a result of the public pressure her lawyers generated. De Beauvoir and Halimi differed in their approach in that they took greater care to make Boupacha sympathetic.

The practices of torture were not limited to Algeria. The same press that published Bouhired's story, les Éditions de Minuit, also published the testimonies of five Algerian students who had been tortured in Paris by France's secret police, the Direction de Surveillance Territoire (DST) (Le Sueur 168). The release of *La Gangrène* on June 18, 1959, verified what had previously been rumored: torture was also taking place in mainland France. Thus, when de Beauvoir published her article in *Le Monde* on June 3, 1960, detailing Djamila Boupacha's torture, she denounced not only the practice of torture but French citizens' seeming indifference to the acts being committed in their name. Her article's title, "Pour Djamila Boupacha," reiterated this insufficient public response to the scandal of torture by alluding to Arnaud and

Vergès's book about the torture of another Algerian woman (Surkis 39). Beauvoir's opening words further reiterate the danger of desensitization: "Ce qu'il y a de plus scandaleux dans le scandale c'est qu'on s'y habitue" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 220).

De Beauvoir's article presents an unvarnished account of the details of the case: the undetonated bomb, the absence of proof outside of a coerced confession, the arrest, the torture, the barriers to legal representation for Djamila, and the protections that insulated her torturers from responsibility. In fact, de Beauvoir's reporting of Djamila's testimony of her rape was considered too direct. In the phrase "on m'enfonça dans le vagin le goulot d'une bouteille," the editors of *Le Monde* substituted the less explicit term "ventre" (Surkis 44). They did, however, allow Beauvoir to keep a parenthetical aside indicating the extent of Djamila's violation, a detail that became a focal point of the trial: "(Djamila était vierge)" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 221). Like cupped hands around a whispered comment, the parentheses acknowledge the intensely private nature of this piece of information while also suggesting that the rape was doubly traumatic due to Djamila's absence of sexual experience. The article was considered so incendiary that the military had all copies of the paper in Algiers seized on the day of its publication (Murphy 272). Nonetheless, *Le Monde* received fourteen letters of sympathy and "three furious ones" decrying de Beauvoir's support of an accused *poseuse de bombe* (qtd. in Surkis 53). The letters in de Beauvoir's private papers were overwhelmingly favorable. One high schooler named Mireille wrote to de Beauvoir on a scrap of graph paper, enclosing a check in the hopes that her contribution would help the committee to "se faire connaître" (Cardot 1). A correspondent from Corsica affirms, "au fond du coeur, je partage votre indignation," saying they must "secouer la conscience de ceux qui connaissent le scandale" (Bourbin 1). A man named Benoît Brassy from Nantes proclaimed, "Si jamais la littérature fut utile, ce fut ce jour-là"

(Brassy 1). There were, however, skeptics: one letter from a man in Vichy criticized de Beauvoir for a decision to “plaider la cause des assassins” while another correspondent from Dakar castigated her for perceived political motivations: “Si la torture est affreuse, elle l’est pour ‘tous’ et pas seulement ceux dont vous partagez les idées politiques [...] votre émotion est une escroquerie au sentiment, assez basse, comme exploiter la détresse des autres est un acte indigne” (Dupuis 1). Despite some dissent, the editorial effectively mobilized public opinion within France and beyond its borders: demonstrations in favor of Boupacha’s release were organized in Tokyo, Washington, and Paris, and adherents to the Comité Djamila Boupacha poured in after de Beauvoir’s words exposed the situation (Surkis 45).

It is unlikely that the Boupacha case would have generated the same kind of public outcry if it had happened earlier in the war. As Lee Whitfield indicates, “By 1960, three out of every four French citizens (71%) favored negotiating independence for Algeria, while only 16% remained opposed, with 13% undecided” (76). Therefore, the reception of de Beauvoir and Halimi’s call to action is best understood as the culmination of a series of other testimonies that incrementally sensitized the public to the problem of torture and citizens’ complicity in such abuses of power. Still, given the general anxiety surrounding the bodies of Algerian women by this point in the war, it was no small task to make a woman who openly affirmed her association with a militant organization responsible for acts of violence that had targeted and killed French civilians, and who was, herself, accused of attempting to carry out one such act, sympathetic. The next section will examine the different contexts in which Joan and Djamila were initially established as threats and why the dangers they represented are deeply entangled with gender.

### Illegible Bodies: Joan

“What it was, God only knows.” -The Bourgeois de Paris, in reference to Joan of Arc (qtd. in Weiskopf 114).

The attraction-repulsion to Joan’s resistance to gendered definition is in some ways dramatized by the scene that takes places immediately following her death. A man known only as the *Bourgeois de Paris* recorded the event in the *Parisian Journal* in an entry dated May 1431:

She was at once unanimously condemned to death and was tied to a stake on a platform (which was built of plaster) and the fire lit under her. She was soon dead and all her clothes were burned. Then the fire was raked back and her naked body shown to all the people *and all the secrets that could or should belong to a woman*, to take away any doubts from the people’s minds. When they had stared long enough at her dead body bound to the stake, the executioner got a big fire going round her poor carcass, which was soon burned up, both flesh and bone reduced to ash. (qtd. in Weiskopf 114, emphasis in original)

As the passage suggests, even Joan’s forced return to feminine clothing, the shaving of her offensively short hair, and her public execution could not entirely quiet the fear and fascination she elicited from onlookers: her body, unveiled by the flames, had to be inspected. If it is not entirely clear what “all the people” sought in the sight of her charred carcass, whether a literal verification of her sex, as Anne Llewellyn Barstow proposes, or something less tangible, the scene acts as a grisly, ghostly double of the virginity exams to which Joan was repeatedly submitted in her lifetime (109). Yet the crowd’s questions remained unanswered, suggests le Bourgeois de Paris in his concluding phrase: “What it was, God only knows” (qtd. in Weiskopf 114).

How then did Joan’s lack of legibility as a gendered being play into her perceived guilt or innocence? Gender, as it is used here, refers to the connotations, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations that coalesce around biological sex or, as Judith Butler phrases it, “the cultural

meanings that the sexed body assumes” (*Gender Trouble* 9). Thus, while Butler sees gender as a cultural construction continuously elaborated through imperfect performances, she posits that it nonetheless compels certain ways of being insofar “people forge their gender identities within the framework of the gender identities forged by others” (McSheffrey 5). Consequently, gender becomes a “sort of regulation [that] operates as a condition of cultural intelligibility for any person” (*Undoing Gender* 52).

Stephen Weiskopf argues that Joan participates in obfuscation, constructing herself as a “revelatory text that refuses to be revealed” (115). By Weiskopf’s estimation, Joan “with tactical brilliance, construes herself as a living and breathing text: a text fraught with willful exclusions, brash eruptions, and recalcitrant disregard for the interpretive efficacy of her clerical readership” (115). While Weiskopf’s emphasis on Joan as a resistant text seems to be heavily influenced by post-structuralism, I would agree with his basic premise and shift focus to the implications of Joan’s gender expression for her legal interpretation. Specifically, I argue that Joan’s illegibility as a non gender-conforming person becomes a barrier to perceiving her as innocent. Joan’s judges fixate on her cross-dressing, the company she keeps, and the incriminating spaces she frequents as a means of identifying her with heresy, a crime to which her judges believed women were particularly susceptible. According to medieval understandings of gender, the “openness” of a woman’s body facilitated evil’s passage into it, and heretics were believed to be prone to sexual perversion (Fudge 65). Inquisitors were trained to ferret out any “savour d’hérésie,” but Joan resists making herself legible to her judges by locating knowledge within her body and refusing to reveal it.

A litany of accusations were levied against Joan at her condemnation trial, but the most damning refrain related to her unwillingness to abide by gender expectations. Joan’s

transvestism was, for the inquisitors, the clearest example of her gender deviance. Hotchkiss points out that “in the preliminary lists of accusations and admonishments, the charge of transvestism occurs almost thirty times, and two of the final charges against Jeanne concern [her] male dress” (qtd. in Milliken 240). This preoccupation may be explained by the idea that in the Middle Ages, clothing was perceived as more than a simple matter of personal taste or a superficial external layer: rather, it was a means of identifying one’s age, gender, and social standing. Consequently, as Colette Beaune notes, “Porter le vêtement d’autrui, c’était se masquer” (152). Because the Church only sanctioned masking at designated times such as Carnival, misrepresenting one’s identity in a non-authorized context was a grave offense, a form of lying.

The opening words of the preparatory trial clarify that Joan’s transvestism is, for her judges, an abomination: “La voix publique répandait que cette femme sans aucunement rappeler cette décence qui convient au sexe féminin, rompait les freins de la modestie, oublieuse de toute pudeur féminine, portait, par l’effet d’un vice étonnant et monstrueux de honteux habits convenant au sexe masculin” (Tisset 1). As this phrasing reiterates, the clothes signal not a choice motivated by practical necessity, but a perverse identity. Leslie Feinberg affirms, “[I]t wasn’t just Joan of Arc’s *cross-dressing* that enraged her judges, but her *cross-gendered* expression as a whole” (35, emphasis in original).

From the opening statement of the ordinary trial,<sup>74</sup> to their final exchanges with the accused, Joan’s judges reiterate this interpretation, describing her as “une certaine femme . . . qui vivait dans le désordre au mépris de l’état et du sexe féminin abandonnant toute pudeur” (Tisset 18). The inquisitors picture her as an envoy of the devil, sent to, in their words, *séduire* the

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<sup>74</sup> For an explanation of the preparatory versus the ordinary trial, see the Prologue.



people and *semer* ideas counter to the Catholic faith (Tisset 16-18). As this phrasing indicates, either Joan is associated with a sexualized femininity that went hand-in-hand with heresy (“seducing”), or she is associated with virility unbecoming to her gender (“sowing”). On May 23, 1431, exactly one week before Joan’s death, the inquisitors address her directly, harping on the idea that the only indicator of her biological sex is her genitalia:

[T]u as porté et tu portes continuellement un habit d’homme; et parce que tu avais commandement de Dieu de porter cet habit, tu as pris tunique courte, pourpoint, chausses liées avec de nombreuses aiguillettes; tu portes aussi les cheveux coupés en rond au-dessus des oreilles, ne laissant rien sur toi qui prouve et indique le sexe féminin, excepté ce que la nature t’a attribué. (Tisset 327)

Anxieties about Joan being mistaken for something or someone she is not underlie this statement, which in some ways foretells— or perhaps even invites— the intimate inspection that would shortly follow it.

Another way in which Joan’s judges establish her as threateningly illegible in the condemnation trial is by assimilating her into a model of femininity that stood in contradiction to the expectations of her time. Specifically, they portray her as seduced, herself, by marginal women who represented deviations from institutions like the Family and the Church. In the following passage from the condemnation trial, for example, Joan appears suspect because of her supposed association with unmarried, older women who “penetrate” her with their pagan ways: “Jeanne, dans sa jeunesse, ne fut pas entièrement instruite ni enseignée dans la croyance ni les principes essentiels de la foi, mais par quelques vieilles femmes elle fut accoutumée et pénétrée de l’usage de sortilèges, divinations, et autres oeuvres superstitieuses ou arts magiques” (163). These “vieilles dames,” presumably women who are widowed or never married since they are always mentioned without men, seem to represent a cultural fear of women who exist outside of patriarchal structures. As a virgin who refused an arranged marriage, Joan represents another

incarnation of this fear because she had, at the very least, deferred the usual prescribed path for women. While Joan testifies to being taught several prayers by her mother, this (feminine, unofficial) form of instruction is not considered sufficient to stave off sin. Left to their own devices, the previous passage suggests, unsupervised women will take up the dark arts.

We witness another such example of gendered guilt by association when Joan is rumored, in her travels, to have spent two weeks at the home of a woman innkeeper known only as “la Rousse.” Reduced to the outlying shade of her fiery hair, la Rousse was known, we are told, for hosting “de façon constante de jeunes femmes sans retenue” (Tisset 167). Here, la Rousse is figured as a Madame whose bevy of boarders challenge cultural values of heterosexual marriage and paternity because the women live together outside of familial networks, and they presumably have multiple sexual partners, including, perhaps, each other. Because Joan “demeurait ainsi dans cette auberge et se tenait parfois avec ces femmes,” she, by extension, becomes identified with them and the challenges to patriarchal values that they represent (Tisset 167).

In the same vein, the judges of the condemnation trial depict the fairy tree as another feminized space associated with deviance from patriarchal norms: a space where women-led pagan practices that posed a threat to the Church’s authority flourished. In the descriptions offered of the fairy tree in the condemnation trial, only women (especially older, *sages femmes*) seem to congregate around the tree and take part in honoring female spirits or *fées*. While the “fairies” could be understood neutrally<sup>75</sup> as “supernatural beings who were said to be neither angels nor devils but beings independent of the Christian angelology,” in the transcripts they become “evil spirits” because they do not coincide with Christian teachings (Sullivan 7). Therefore, the pre-Christian rites of spring that occur around the tree morph into a form of

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<sup>75</sup> For a more extensive discussion of the relationship between pagan practices and organized religion, see Anne Llewellyn Barstow’s *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman* (1986).

demon worship (Sullivan 7). Once the “fairies” (whom Joan does not acknowledge encountering or believing in) become “evil spirits,” any such activity in their vicinity transforms into an act of reverence. Sullivan explains: “Her garlands were offerings, her dancing veneration, and her utterances incantations” (7). Like La Rousse’s open-door *auberge*, the site of the fairy tree becomes an incriminatory space.

These transgressions might have been forgiven if Joan had shown any willingness to defer to her judges, but her rejections of their authority begin with her first quoted words in the trial, when she refuses to take an oath: “Je ne sais pas sur quoi vous voulez interroger. Peut-être pouvez-vous me demander telles choses que je ne vous dirai pas” (Tisset 37). In this statement, made on February 21<sup>st</sup>, Joan establishes that her words will not necessarily provide full access to any knowledge residing within her. A few days later, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, Joan further refuses cooperation saying, when asked to swear, “Il se peut que sur beaucoup de choses que vous pourriez me demander je ne vous dise pas la vérité” (Tisset 59). Joan insists that her words cannot automatically be taken at face value, thereby introducing the idea that she may intentionally thwart the judges’ interpretive efforts.

Later, Joan states that she will tell the judges anything concerning her childhood but that her revelations can only be shared with her king, Charles VII. The statement that follows, which is paraphrased in the transcripts, introduces ambiguity about what she will or won’t tell: [E]lle ne révélerait [ses visions] même si on devait lui couper la tête, car elle tenait de ses visions ou de son conseil secret qu’elle ne révélât à personne; et que, dans les huit prochains jours, elle saurait bien si elle devait révéler cela” (Tisset 37). Right after vehemently asserting that she would rather endure decapitation than share anything related to her secret visions, Joan contradicts this idea, hinting that she may be able to share more with her judges in the near future. This pattern

of interaction continues throughout the trial. The judges plead with increasing frustration for Joan to reveal everything she knows and she responds by negotiating terms, offering to exchange information for access to confession, or calling attention to what she's not saying. After discussing her first encounter with Saint Michael, for example, Joan adds that "son interrogateur n'obtiendrait pas d'elle, pour cette fois, sous quelle forme cette voix lui était apparue" (Tisset 47). As with the promise of information in eight days' time, her "cette fois" signals that more information may be forthcoming. While it is impossible to know Joan's motivations, we might speculate that this deferral is a way of maintaining some form of agency within a situation that allowed very little, of exercising control over an intensely personal spiritual experience. After all, Joan's claim to hear voices distinguished her as chosen by God and her willingness to only share certain messages from her voices with the king made her a privileged counselor. Her postponements might also be viewed more practically: as a tactic to prolong her life.

Joan appears, at times, like Scheherazade, the heroine of *One Thousand and One Nights*, aware of her imminent death if the judges lose interest in her testimony, much of which hinges on deferral. Joan acknowledges, at least figuratively, that bodily harm awaits her at the end of the interrogation, as indicated by her frequent evocation of dismemberment: she twice mentions decapitation, speaks of those who "voudront l'ôter de ce monde," and references the possibility of dying in prison (Tisset 9, 91, 86, 237). And while she repeatedly defers the moment at which she will divulge more information, she always offers the promise of future revelations. Joan first requests a delay of eight days' time, then fifteen. She says that the judges will "not yet" (*pas encore*) have the information or won't have it on this particular day (*ce-jour là*) or that they won't have it now (*maintenant*) or for the present (*pour le présent*) but they might have it next Saturday (*le prochain samedi*) (Tisset 59, 61, 63, 71, 84, 91, 93, 137). Other times, the promise

of future information is tantalizingly close: *demain* (Tisset 115, 122). So obstinate is Joan with her deferrals and refusals to speak, signaled by the repeated phrase “Passez outre” that her judges modify their interrogation so that they are no longer reliant on her words. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, the court transcript reads: “Et si Jeanne refusait de répondre, monition canonique lui étant d’abord faite, ces articles seraient tenus pour confessés” (151). Her silence becomes consent. While Joan’s deferrals may, indeed, prolong the trial and by extension her life, they frustrate her judges: all trained interpreters of sacred texts, who did not wish to be dependent upon Joan. Joan elicited anxiety because her actions and her physical presentation did not correspond to medieval ideas about what was appropriate for her gender. As a result, her illegibility undermined the possibility that she would be perceived as innocent.

While the trope of women as mysterious and potentially menacing is nothing new, it gains additional traction when filtered through an Orientalizing gaze. Boupacha’s ethnicity and religion added interpretive barriers for French citizens that made it harder for Halimi and de Beauvoir to establish her as potentially innocent and thus deserving of a just defense. It was not necessarily knowledge of Djamila, herself, that made her seem illegible, and by extension guilty; rather, it was a more generalized anxiety about women “like” Djamila that worked against the possibility of a fair trial. In the next section, I will examine French anxieties about Algerian women that would have impacted how Djamila’s story was received. In particular, I will focus on the fear that Algerian women could appear perfectly assimilated to French norms of dress and behavior, indeed they could pass as French, and still act as combatants.

## Djamila

A famous scene in Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Bataille d'Alger* (1960), inspired by actual events, dramatizes the kind of potential for subversion of the colonial system that Algerian women's bodies represented.<sup>76</sup> The sequence begins in a small room, where three Algerian women transform their physical appearances into a convincing mimicry of French femininity. In a matter of minutes, they shed their veils and change into V-neck blouses, exchanging their flowing clothes for fitted print skirts and pedal pushers. They apply lipstick and loosen demurely knotted buns to comb out thick locks. One woman cuts the long braids that drape over either shoulder, braids that she has probably grown since childhood, and sets about dabbing her hair with peroxide. In the next shot, she has become a blond with a bouffant. The door opens and one of the women turns to greet the man in the doorway. "Ça va, monsieur?" she asks him in flawless French. The newcomer is FLN leader Yacef Saadi, ready to distribute to each woman a straw purse containing a bomb.

The women's physical transformation is striking, but it is only costuming. The most convincing piece of the performance occurs in the next sequence of the film when the woman who represents Djamila Bouhired must pass through the checkpoint, bomb in tow, in order to leave the straw purse at an ice cream parlor frequented by Europeans. Suspense builds, underscored by a thudding drumbeat, as Bouhired eyes the guards who have stopped other Algerians from advancing past them. "Faites comme les autres! Attendez!" a guard barks as an Algerian man shows his papers and pleads in accented French, "Je suis pressé!" The "vous" is for the crowd. Individuals are addressed with the familiar "tu" reserved for children and pets. "Je vous ai dit d'attendre," the guard repeats to the crowd. At first Bouhired appears daunted by

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<sup>76</sup> For a fascinating study of metaphors of women as weapons of modern warfare, see Kelly Oliver's *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media* (2007).

the clog of people at the checkpoint and the guards who harass each crowd member. Then, in an instant, she assumes the entitlement of a French woman inconvenienced by a form of security intended for someone else. Head high, she glides to the front of the crowd and gently laying a hand on the guard's shoulder, asks, "Je peux passer, monsieur?" Automatically, he smiles and steps aside, murmuring "Je vous en prie." His eyes linger on the pretty girl, desire negating the possibility of danger. A second guard hesitates, but addresses her with the customary politeness extended to other French citizens: "Mademoiselle," he calls, "S'il vous plaît!" She turns to meet his eyes directly, as an equal: Is she French? Maybe not, but she appears sufficiently westernized to pass through. The second guard seems almost embarrassed to have doubted. A reprise of the scene occurs at another checkpoint when a soldier flirts with the newly blonde *poseuse de bombe* who appears to be on her way to the beach for a day of sunbathing. By embodying French norms of dress and behavior, the women are able to pass through the checkpoints without suspicion.

The Casbah checkpoint scenes dramatize Homi Bhabha's articulation of the menace of mimicry: colonial subjects appear to perform obedience to the colonizer by conforming to a certain idea of "Frenchness" (in this case) while also destabilizing this category, itself, by collapsing the recognizable differences between colonizer and colonized (126). As Bhabha explains, mimicry hinges on the ambivalence of "*almost the same but not quite*." He writes, "Under the cover of camouflage, mimicry, like the fetish, is a part-object that radically revalues the normative knowledge [...] For the fetish mimes the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorizes them" (130). As both sequences demonstrate, the illegibility of the women's bodies as Algerian militants acts as a cover for guerilla warfare. Another scene in *La Bataille d'Alger* presents a variation on women's bodies as a site of terror: a woman wearing a *niqab* and *abaya*

slowly makes her way along the street until, in a flash, she is revealed to be a man hiding a machine gun under the flowing cloth of his garments. It was this subversive use of mimicry, which is undergirded by assumptions about women's lack of engagement in war, that actually facilitated their participation.

By the time Djamila was on trial, the coordinated explosions at the Milk Bar, the university cafeteria, and an office at Air France that occurred on September 30, 1956, had intensified a climate of heightened vigilance that often specifically targeted women's bodies. Physically examining women's genitals for the purposes of verifying gender or attempting to determine recent sexual activity<sup>77</sup> became a routine procedure both at checkpoints and at home raids (Lazreg 166). One French soldier explains:

We had to touch them to see if they were really women... I must admit it was a little... I am sure the young conscripts who had gotten used to that milieu [of violence]... Well, it was quite horrible. We had to... The soldiers had to look, to touch the genitals of the *fatmas*<sup>78</sup>... That order to touch the genitals of the *fatmas*, it was a precise instruction. (Lazreg 165)

An entry from the journal of Algerian writer Mouloud Feraoun confirms the commonplace nature of such practices: "Lorsque les militaires délogiaient [les Kabyles] de chez eux, les parquent hors du village pour fouiller les maisons, ils savent que les sexes des filles et des femmes seront fouillés aussi" (qtd. in Branche 127). If the French military ordered such intimate, and often humiliating inspections in public, it is not surprising these practices enabled

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<sup>77</sup> As Lazreg notes, Algerian women's genitals were seen as providing information about their contact with their husbands, often fighting in the mountains. Because women were believed to shave their pubic area before having sex with their husbands, the length of their public hair was taken as a clue to the recency of their contact with male combatants (165).

<sup>78</sup> *Fatma*, from the common first name "Fatima" was a pejorative term for Muslim women.



rape. One soldier remembers being instructed by a superior officer, “You can rape, but do it discreetly” (qtd. in Lazreg 166-7).

Therefore, when Gisèle Halimi set out to defend Djamila Boupacha, she was working against a commonly circulating idea of the Algerian woman as a militarized bomb-bearing *femme fatale*, a woman who could charm her way through a checkpoint and whose shape-shifting body demanded heightened surveillance. Women militants not only represented threats to individual lives but also disruptions to patriarchal ideologies. As V.G. Julie Rajan comments in her recent work on women suicide bombers:

Instead of building and maintaining families and societies, [female bombers] present the capacity to tear apart their enemies’ families and to wreak havoc in their societies. [...] Instead of being nurturing and an object of violence, women bombers reveal that, as women, they too can negotiate and affect the most excessive forms of violence . . . thereby objectifying others in the process. (qtd. in Ponzanesi 103)

To what extent is it fair to discuss Djamila in the context of women bombers given that there are conflicting stories about Djamila’s actual role? I am not aware of a source in Djamila’s own words that clarifies the extent of her participation in the FLN’s more violent forms of resistance even though Boupacha later criticized Halimi’s representation of events (Soltane 1). According to Amira Soltane, Djamila was popularly believed to have failed in her mission: she was the combatant “qui allait déposer une bombe mais qui ne l’a pas fait,” a woman who kow-towed to a colonial audience (1). Halimi, herself, explicitly states in the book that she did not care if Djamila *had* done it: that wasn’t the point (de Beauvoir and Halimi 42). Regardless of whether or not she planted the undetonated bomb, Djamila’s anticolonial politics and identification with a form of violence that targeted civilians minimized the possibility that she would have a fair trial. In the next section, I will examine some of the gendered strategies used to reinterpret both Joan and Djamila, women perceived as threats to national security in their day, as innocent or at the

very least, sympathetic. Their defenders insisted on Joan and Djamila's femininity and docility. At the same time, they mobilized emotion (often coded as feminine) as a key narrative technique in conveying the events that led up to the confessions that Joan and Djamila later retracted and in communicating the conditions of their imprisonment.

### **Interpreting the Illegible**

#### **Constructions of Virginity**

“Je peux bien dire que je suis ainsi [vierge]; et si vous ne me croyez pas, faites-moi visiter par des femmes” -Joan of Arc (DuParc IV 128).

“Je veux être examinée pour ma virginité” -Djamila Boupacha (de Beauvoir et Halimi 22).

If *la femme fatale* has a correlating *contraire*, it must be *la vierge*. Joan and Djamila both understood that virginity lent them credibility. What does it mean, though, to be a virgin given that there has never been a religious or a medical consensus on what constitutes virginity or its loss? Hanne Blank, the foremost cultural historian of virginity, begins her book on the subject with a meditation on its elusiveness: “By any material reckoning, virginity does not exist. It can't be weighed on a scale, sniffed out like a truffle or a smuggled bundle of cocaine, retrieved from the lost-and-found, or photographed for posterity. Like justice or mercy, we can only determine that it exists at all by the presence of its effects— or side effects” (3). Despite being tricky to define, virginity remains consequential for women, a matter of life and death in the most extreme cases, and nearly always tied to the idea of reputation. The virginity that both Joan and Djamila asserted and that their defenders equally sought to foreground in their trials validated each woman, contradicting previous interpretative frames that cast Joan as a perverse heretic and Djamila as an explosive-toting *femme fatale*. As I will demonstrate in this section,

the *Procès en nullité* and de Beauvoir and Halimi's book both take great care to establish Joan and Djamila as virgins, even when it entailed negotiating the term's definition.

Before examining how virginity functioned in each woman's trial, I will first consider some of the perspectives on what, exactly, virginity is. Numerous medical and religious authorities have offered definitions for virginity. Greek Father of Medicine Hippocrates classified virginity as a disease, for which he prescribed the cure of an early marriage. Plato saw it similarly, as a state in which an unfruitful womb wanders, "obstructing respiration" until the thin membrane that separated virgins from full womanhood was punctured, presumably in the context of (heterosexual) marriage (qtd. in Meltzer 54). Saint Jerome lamented that the loss of virginity was irrevocable, proclaiming: "though God can do all things, He cannot raise up a virgin when she has fallen" (qtd. in Meltzer 74). The theologian St Augustine, however, made a distinction between physical virginity and a virginity of the soul, arguing that the latter was preserved if a woman was raped and resisted with all of her might (Blank 7).

By Joan of Arc's day, midwives played a critical role in determining virginity. In 1220, Pope Gregory IX decreed that women seeking to dissolve a marriage had to be examined by a midwife to determine the hymen's presence or absence (Meltzer 69). Therefore, the judicial codification of virginity tests assumed that the hymen was conclusive as evidence. But this standardization of gynecological practice was not immune to loopholes: a hymen can survive intercourse, be broken by vigorous exercise, and as Blank has noted, even regenerate after rupture (40). And, as some indignant theologians pointed out, the poking and prodding involved in the exam, itself, was enough to sometimes invalidate its results. Moreover, this medical verification of virginity that focused on the hymen is heavily skewed towards what Henry Abelow refers to as "intercourse, so called" that is, reproductive, heterosexual sex, even though

it only accounted for one of the various pleasures and practices that constituted the range of what might fall under the definition of sexual activity (23).

While a midwife's hymen check was the gold standard of medieval virginity tests, other forms of verification were also in circulation. In the thirteenth century, William of Saliceto averred that a virgin urinates slowly, and "with a subtle hiss" (qtd. in Blank 82). Other medieval authorities argued that a virgin's urine was clear and sparkling, unclouded by traces of sperm (Blank 82). Still others endorsed a test involving fumigation, via which a woman would squat over a container of onions or a pan of burning herbs to determine whether the smoke would rise unobstructed from her vagina to her mouth (imagined as a straight-shot tunnel). If her breath smelled of whatever substance was in the pan, she was disgraced; if not, her examiners concluded that the hymen had blocked the passage of smoke, and she was deemed a virgin. A late medieval text, *De secretis mulierum* (*On the Secrets of Women*), proposed that virginity could often be recognized by sight alone; therefore, one must take note of a woman's physical presentation for clues to her virginity. Symptoms of the sacred malady included "shame, modesty, fear, a faultless gait and speech [...] casting eyes down before men and the acts of men" (qtd. in Blank 82). Thomas Bentlye, author of *The Monument of Matrones*, concurred by describing virginity as a set of behaviors such as "sobreness, silence, shamefastness, and chastity, both of bodie and mind (qtd. in Blank). As the previous examples suggest, testing virginity was no sure science, and the results of such tests had more to do with beliefs about virgins than any verifiable reality.

As Blank has argued, as an identity marker, virginity has certain implications. While anyone can be a virgin, preoccupations with virginity emerged in Western patriarchal societies where verifying virginity was tied to protecting succession and inheritance. As a result, virginity

most often connotes femininity, whiteness, wealth, heterosexuality, youth, and (I would add) able-bodiedness. Thus, to establish a woman as a virgin is often to tacitly identify her with the aforementioned descriptors. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that the word “virgin” was first applied to women, and the first definition in the *Trésor de la langue française* is listed as a “très jeune fille qui n’a jamais eu de relations sexuelles,” offering the female descriptor “pucelle” as a synonym (“virgin”, “vierge”). Other definitions of virginity may not limit it to youth but still do not entirely uncouple it from gender, as indicated by the *Robert Micro*’s entry: “se dit de l’individu femelle adulte qui ne s’est pas accouplé” (“vierge”). This previous definition introduces another important dimension of virginity: it has more to do with what is said (*se dit*) than with what a girl or woman says about herself. As the gynecological exams involved in both Joan and Djamila’s trials reiterate, a woman’s own word was insufficient proof. In both Joan of Arc’s rehabilitation trial and Djamila Boupacha’s second civil trial in France, virginity is framed as a physical state as well as a set of actions that must be verified by others to interpret each woman as innocent by nature and therefore incapable of guile.

*Le procès en nullité* foregrounds Joan’s virginity in the document’s first pages, *la préface des notaires*, and witnesses return to Joan’s *pucelage* on numerous occasions, often noting the continual threat of its loss. As the notaries assert, one of the failures of the condemnation trial was the exclusion of the results of Joan’s pelvic exam: “une inspection, ordonnée par les prétendus juges, de l’intégrité, pudicité et virginité de ladite Jeanne, reconnues véritables par des médecins, chirurgiens, dames illustres et matrones très sûres, ont été cachés aux conseillers et notaires et omise volontairement dans la procédure” (DuParc 3). The preface follows this affirmation of Joan’s virginity with a description of the precarious conditions in which it was maintained: “un emprisonnement très rigoureux” during which Joan was bound with “ceps qui

entravaient les pieds . . . et chaînes l'attachant toute la nuit" while surrounded by guards characterized as "deshonnêtes, très grossiers et violents" (DuParc 3). The juxtaposition of Joan's immaculate character, as symbolized by her externally verified virginity, and the vile guards intent on compromising it, injects an element of tension into the proceedings. While court notary Guillaume de Manchon references a rape attempt that was interrupted, in the nick of time, when a sympathetic guard heard Joan's cries, it seems unlikely that there was only one, unsuccessful attempt (DuParc IV 107). As witness Maître André Marguerie cautioned, the English "procédaient contre elle par haine" and while Joan was taken for a virgin during the trial he admitted, "en vérité il n'ose l'affirmer" (DuParc 134).

The eventuality of Joan's sexual assault may be why several witnesses at Joan's rehabilitation trial define virginity broadly, following Saint Augustine, as more indicative of the state of one's heart than the survival of one's hymen. Indeed, this interpretation follows a certain logic given that, in the Christian tradition, Mary the mother of Christ continues to be known as a virgin even after giving birth.<sup>79</sup> If virginity is a physical state over which one may not be able to exercise complete autonomy, it is hardly fair for it to discredit Joan in the case of rape. As Jessica Valenti has argued, the cultural value attributed to virginity defines women by an "ethics of passivity," equating "goodness" with inaction rather than focusing on women as moral actors (Valenti 25). If, however, virginity refers to Joan's behavior and her perceived intentions, then it becomes a testament to her character, which may be why witnesses reference the care Joan took to sleep in her armor and her sharp rebuffs to men who attempted to touch her (DuParc IV 49, IV 62). When specifically asked about their knowledge concerning Joan's virginity, witnesses

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<sup>79</sup> In the Apocryphal Gospel of James, a woman named Salome doubts the midwife's glad announcement that a virgin has given birth. When the dubious Salome attempts to examine Mary for confirmation, her doubt is punished, and she leaves the scene with a scorched hand that "falleth away in fire" (James 20:1).

replied affirmatively that, according to their memory, she was found “vierge et intacte.” The frequent pairing of these words in their responses, suggest that “vierge” was a more holistic assessment of Joan’s comportment and character whereas “intacte” specifically referenced the state of the hymen (DuParc 70, 107). Other witnesses offer another variation on this formula, noting that Joan “gardait la virginité de l’âme et du corps” (DuParc 78, 82).

In accordance with medieval beliefs about the pure of heart, some witnesses testified that Joan’s virginal aura was so apparent that it was recognizable by sight alone. Margaret La Touroulde, who hosted Joan for three weeks in the town of Bourges and often shared a bed with her<sup>80</sup> made such a claim. Having frequently observed Joan “au bain et dans les étuves,” La Touroulde judged her short-term boarder’s behavior as symptomatic of virginity, concluding: “Elle était toute innocente” (DuParc IV 62). Later, a doctor by the name of Guillaume de la Chambre, said that while he had never *personally* performed a pelvic exam (though he had *heard* that Joan passed hers), he had once seen Joan “presque nue” while palpating her kidneys when she was sick and pronounced that “autant qu’il put voir, elle était très étroite” (DuParc IV 35). Given his affirmation that he had not examined Joan, nor even seen her fully undressed, he appears to have made this determination by some other, unnamed “test.”

One surprising testimony by Maître Jean Monnet, a professor of theology who participated in the first trial, suggests that the presence of the hymen was not the only or even the most important measure of *pucelage*. Monnet adamantly corroborated Joan’s virginity while also mentioning that she may have been “blessée” as a result of her activities on horseback, stating: “elle fut trouvée vierge; de cela il se souvient, car on dit alors, pendant qu’on examinait

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<sup>80</sup> Joan often shared her bed with other women, which was a customary practice. No testimony from the witnesses of the rehabilitation trial suggests that any form of female companionship was perceived as having implications for her virginity.

sa virginité, que Jeanne avait été blessée au fondement par l'équitation" (DuParc IV 45). While the second part of his statement is, like many of the affirmations of the rehabilitation, informed by hearsay, it supports the idea that many metrics were used to measure Joan's virginity. More importantly, it indicates that the conviction about Joan's *pucelage* was strong enough to override any doubt that would normally be raised by a broken hymen, even though the Church had prescribed verification of the hymen as the official test of virginity.

A similar pattern emerges in Djamila's trial whereby virginity is established as crucially important yet, again, without clear definition. This ambiguity comes into focus in an exchange between Boupacha and her lawyer during their first meeting. After describing her torture, Djamila desperately informs Halimi, "Je ne sais pas si je suis *jeune fille*... Tu comprends? Je m'étais évanouie, et j'ai eu du sang, quand ils m'ont redescendue dans la cellule" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 24). Since Djamila had just finished describing the forcible insertion of various objects into her vaginal canal, her coded words to Halimi raise three interrelated questions: (1) Was Djamila raped by a person (or even several) while unconscious? (2) Even if the forcible insertion of objects into Djamila's body constitutes rape, does that automatically translate to a loss of virginity? And in either case, (3) can one be raped and still be considered a virgin, as Augustine argued, precisely *because* one did not consent? Djamila's modesty, as relayed by her choice to repeatedly employ the euphemistic term "jeune fille" as opposed to "vierge" in her exchange with Halimi, suggests that, like Joan, even if she is not "intacte" she continues to exhibit the innocence that virginity is culturally coded to signify.

During another meeting with Halimi, Djamila further negotiates the definition of virginity. Even as she appears to lament the loss of her former status as virgin she also offers a critique of the value accorded to it. In the text, Boupacha pleads with Halimi, "Est-ce que tu



crois que je suis encore vierge? Puisque je n'ai pas *connu* d'homme, peut-être que la bouteille ne m'a pas abîmée partout" (51). Boupacha's comments function on several different levels. Her continued use of euphemism (*connu*) reminds readers of the injustice inherent in Djamila being labeled "damaged goods" and consequently deprived of the cultural privileges that accompany marriage because she was subject to an act she cannot even comfortably name. The dual meanings of "connaître" intensify this sense of injustice. Boupacha uses the word "connu" to indicate intimate carnal knowledge of a sexual partner, but the acts to which she was subjected were carried out by *unknown* men, whose anonymity the military formally guaranteed during the trial ("Compte Rendu" 1). Virginity, if here defined by the absence of penetration with a penis, is revealed to be subject to "fine print" as indicated by Djamila's attempts to bargain, hoping that a lingering shred of skin will prove that she is "technically" a virgin. At the same time, Djamila's use of the first person in the sentence "Je n'ai pas *connu* d'homme" refuses the subject position of victim by not framing the event as something done to her. She emphasizes that if virginity is to be perceived as a comment on her character, it should reflect her actions. Finally, Djamila's comment about not being "abîmée partout" could also be read metaphorically as an assertion of her "virginity of the soul." Indeed, in a letter addressed to Simone de Beauvoir dated November 25, 1961, Djamila describes herself as a "jeune fille de 22 ans," in a double entendre that is perhaps intended to assert the identity that she sees as consistent with her actions.

While witnesses in Joan and Djamila's second trials consistently undermine a monolithic idea of virginity, both trials rely heavily on the standard procedure of a gynecological exam to verify virginity or its loss and thereby exonerate the accused. As previously mentioned, the notaries' preface in Joan's rehabilitation states that her "intégrité, pudicité, et virginité" had been recognized by "médecins, chirurgiens, dames illustres et matrones très sûres" (DuParc 3). Still,

the range of qualities validated and the diversity of examiners who participated invite questions about the criteria used and once again suggest a more holistic assessment. Like Joan, Djamila underwent three different examinations.<sup>81</sup> In the first exam, the doctor dismissed her complaints as “period problems” or “troubles des règles qui sont de nature constitutionnelle.” In the second exam, the doctors acknowledged Djamila’s probable torture but attributed the marks on her genitals to sexual activity. In the third exam, however, the participating doctors argued for the probability of rape (de Beauvoir and Halimi 116). After examining Boupacha five months after her torture during the third exam, a team of gynecologists came to the following conclusion:

OUI, BOUPACHA DJAMILA A PU SUBIR L’INTRODUCTION D’UN GOULOT DE BOUTEILLE DANS LE VAGIN. Le 28 juillet 1960, il est impossible de préciser ni la date ni les modalités de la défloration, mais l’étroitesse du vagin, l’épaisseur de l’hymen, la stricte localisation des incisures analogues à celles que l’on observe en cas de défloration chirurgicale pour une dilatation unique au speculum plaideront peut-être EN FAVEUR D’UNE DEFLOTATION TRAUMATIQUE. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 140, emphasis in original)

This medical report, which was excerpted in de Beauvoir and Halimi’s book, constructs Djamila as a probable victim of rape while also pointing out that she had maintained physical indicators of sexual inexperience. Thus, we see her through two gendered lenses: as both the victim of sexual assault and as a virgin. The report’s conclusion differs dramatically from the verdict of the second exam, by doctors Sirot, Godard, and Bonnafos, which interpret the same evidence as proof of sexual activity: “Elle n’est pas vierge, ayant subi l’intromission à travers l’hymen d’un corps dur et contondant, tel une verge en érection” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 115). If the carefully qualified clinical language of the report on seventh of June, refrains from categorical

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<sup>81</sup> A letter to Simone de Beauvoir from Doctor Lagroua Weill-Hallé dated June 11, 1960, expresses his colleagues’ concern over his potential involvement with the case. Weill-Hallé writes, “Plusieurs de mes collaborateurs sont atterrés à l’idée que j’ai accepté d’examiner D. Boupacha. Ils craignent que mon nom [soit] mêlé à cela. [...] J’écoute les conseils sans rien décider ni permettre. Cependant, cette unanimité m’a inquiété.”

pronouncements, other notes included in the dossier for the defense are less tentative, if overtly shaped by stereotypes. A psychologist asked to evaluate Boupacha found, without hesitation, that “OUI,” Boupacha had “un psychisme correspondant à celui d’une vierge” and that her combination of pride, modesty, and social awkwardness could confirm that she “agit comme une vierge” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 142, emphasis in original). Because virginity is believed to have a recognizable profile, it is once again revealed as a socially constructed category, but one that can as Quinan has noted, be strategically deployed to the benefit of Djamila’s defense (116).

### **Patriarchal Paratexts**

In looking at the texts of the rehabilitation trial and *Djamila Boupacha* together, it becomes clear that both works neutralize the gender deviance associated with each woman’s participation in the traditionally male domain of war by reassimilating Joan and Djamila into patriarchal structures such as the family, organized religion, and colonialism in Djamila’s case. In situating each woman within these contexts, the source texts offer a counter-memory through which Joan and Djamila may be re-read as obedient to gendered norms and therefore less threatening. Both texts establish Joan and Djamila as dutiful daughters, devout members of their respective faiths, and wives-in-the-making. In Djamila’s case, de Beauvoir and Halimi include paratexts— photos, illustrations, letters of support, and even works of art— that further prime readers of *Djamila Boupacha* for a more sympathetic interpretation.

The rehabilitation trial revises one of the major accusations lodged against Joan in the condemnation trial: that she broke with her family by leaving home without permission, disobeying the fifth commandment and deliberately deceiving her parents to do something of

which they would not have approved. In the rehabilitation trial, Joan is symbolically reincorporated into her family. Indeed, the trial is conveyed as a means of removing any remaining stigma from her mother and brother, emphasizing that Joan's body cannot be seen as entirely separate from theirs. Furthermore, Joan's mother acts as plaintiff on behalf of her daughter, clarifying that she harbors no ill-will towards Joan. The citizens of Domrémy also help to resituate Joan within her family. They remember Joan as a child that "tout le monde aimait," who willingly performed "travaux de femme" alongside her mother and obediently tended her father's flocks (DuParc 241).

Joan is not just an outstanding daughter but also an exceptional member of her religious community. No longer a rotten limb of the body of Christ that must be promptly severed, as she was described in her condemnation trial, Joan becomes, instead, a model of religious devotion according to others' memories of her at the rehabilitation. One woman fondly evokes the day of Joan's baptism at the church in Saint-Rémy, an event which was attended by her parents who were, themselves, "bons catholiques et de bonne renommée" (DuParc 245). Inhabitants of Domrémy equally recall Joan carefully learning Catholic prayers "comme les filles semblables de son âge," which she recited on her knees "avec dévotion" each time the church bells rang (DuParc 244). So ideal a daughter and Christian was Joan, according to posthumous public memory, that even the man commissioned by Bishop Cauchon to go to Domrémy to dig up dirt on her returned unable to fulfill his duty. Full of admiration, Jean Moreau testified that he had heard nothing spoken of Joan that he would not feel proud to hear said of his own daughter (DuParc 235).

Likewise, de Beauvoir and Halimi depict Djamila through the prism of her family life with the aid of visual paratexts that precede the narrative and recur throughout it. Readers of

*Djamila Boupacha* first encounter a close-up portrait of a smiling girl who steadily meets the reader's eyes. Shortly thereafter, we see three vertical snapshots of Djamila's family, like a photo strip one might carry in a wallet. Another photograph features Boupacha in her nurse's uniform framed by two young children. In a mirrored shot diagonally across the page, Hamili sits pictured with her two children of approximately the same age, as if to suggest what Djamila's future family might look like. Other photos include Djamila at the hospital in Caen holding the hands of her sister during her hunger strike, then a shot of Boupacha embracing her father, when they are reunited in France after their mutual ordeal of torture. The text also includes, at a later point, a reproduction of a handwritten letter sent to Halimi by Djamila's brother and one of Djamila's own letters. All of these images offer privileged glimpses into Djamila's personal life, making the first pages of *Djamila Boupacha* resemble a scrapbook.

While the photos and letters individualize Djamila, artistic paratexts by Pablo Picasso and Robert Lapoujade generalize her, inviting readers to see her as a symbol and a subject worthy of artistic study. In fact, in a letter addressed to Picasso, dated January 12, 1962, Djamila recognizes this elevation to symbol by describing the artist's sketch of her as a portrait of Algeria: "[I]l me semble que vous y avez représenté au-delà de moi l'image de toute mes soeurs et notre espoir. J'ai un oeil triste et un oeil gai; l'un doit être tourné vers le passé et l'autre vers l'avenir et ma bouche témoigne d'une confidante sérénité; c'est ainsi, je suppose, que vous nous voyez tous et c'est une bonne image de la réalité algérienne." Poujade's sketch visually aligns Djamila with Delacroix's iconic *Liberté guidant le peuple* (1830), which in turn aligns her struggle for sovereignty with French values through its allusion to an iconic Revolutionary-era image.

As Gérard Genette has argued, these accompaniments to the formal text act as a threshold between the work and the world in which it is received, orienting readers towards certain perceptions of the material (Genette 261). While paratexts appear to be marginal to the text, according to Philippe Lejeune these fringe features “in reality [control] one's whole reading” (qtd. in Genette 261). It is worth noting that these humanizing inclusions distinguish *Djamila Boupacha* from the narratives of torture and torture-related legal battles written by Henri Alleg about his own experience and the work published by Vergès and Arnaud, about Djamila Bouhired. Placing Djamila against the backdrop of her family allows her to be envisioned as someone’s daughter or sister, cueing readers towards a protective response.

If paratexts offer an interpretive frame for the formal text, then the institutions evoked within the text circumscribe how we interpret Djamila, herself, placing not only within her own family but also situating her within the context of the heterosexual, nuclear family more generally. This heteronormative emphasis on Djamila’s prescribed role as a future wife and mother also reinforces her perceived “femininity” because, as Butler writes, “normative sexuality fortifies normative gender.” Butler explains: “Briefly, one is a woman, according to this framework, to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame” (*Gender Trouble* xi). Therefore, the trauma of Boupacha’s rape (a word that is never actually used in the book) is repeatedly discussed in terms of its foreseeable impact on Djamila’s future marriage prospects.

A meeting between Boupacha and her lawyer at the Barberousse prison illustrates the extent to which Djamila’s rape is understood as an attack on an imagined future family. During the exchange, Djamila asks to see pictures of Halimi’s children then studies them intently, with

“natural” interest. Djamila’s fixation on these family photos, paired with her reticence about her future plans, prompts Halimi to question Boupacha about starting a family. Boupacha responds that “elle voulait se marier, bien sûr, . . . Mais pas pour l’instant . . . Aujourd’hui, elle ne voyait pas pour elle d’autre avenir que celui de la lutte pour son pays” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 78). Unconvinced that political commitments could displace the desire for a family, Halimi persists, learning that Djamila sees herself as excluded from the marriage economy. A pale Djamila cries out, “Et tu crois qu’un homme voudra de moi si la bouteille m’a abîmée?” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 78). Despite Halimi’s attempts to put things into perspective, suggesting Algerian men might think of her rape as a kind of injury sustained in combat, Djamila insists that lost virginity is worse than amputation. Halimi concludes, “L’importance primordial de la virginité offerte à l’époux obsédait Djamila” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 79).

Framing virginity as a precious gift a bride offers to her husband in an age-old “primordial” rite reiterates traditional understandings of gender via which a woman’s worth is attached to her reproductive capacities. It also perpetuates, on some level, a colonial notion of Algerians as “uncivilized,” or antiquated given that even Halimi, a sympathetic cultural insider as a woman who grew up in Tunisia, is unable to anticipate or comprehend Djamila’s position. Although Halimi’s emphasis on the personal ramifications for Djamila does effectively convey the stakes of lost virginity, the shift from systemic violence to what at times reads like an overplayed personal saga, depoliticizes the case. It also mobilizes a tired trope of the victimized “third-world” woman in need of a Western savior. As Zarzycka put it, “The woman becomes an object whose honor needs to be redeemed *by others*. Rather than seen as an agent challenging the state, she appears as a victim violated by it” (232, emphasis in original). While the two categories Zarzycka proposes are not mutually exclusive, emphasis on the latter interpretation

disempowers Djamila, representing her as in greater need of the popular support de Beauvoir and Halimi were attempting to generate for her.

*Djamila Boupacha* does not deny its subject's anticolonial project, but it does depict her, ironically, in ways that reinforce colonial tropes. Halimi unfailingly returns to the idea that Djamila is childlike, a reminder that, as Rita Maran writes, "the Colonized could not reach adulthood under colonialism" (qtd. in Slaughter 418). When describing Djamila during their second meeting, Halimi writes, "Djamila était radieuse . . . Son visage me parut plus dégagé, plus pur . . . Elle parlait, elle babillait presque . . . Djamila retrouvait aujourd'hui le goût de l'enfance" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 49). At another point, Halimi cites a psychologist who comments on Djamila's "langue puérile," and proclaims that Djamila is incapable of lying, which could be read as a testament to her character or, conversely, as a belief that Djamila lacks the sophistication to dissimulate (140;123-4). While this depiction may be a tactic that Halimi consciously adopted to generate sympathy for Djamila's cause, such characterizations that idealize colonized populations as uncorrupted, and infantilize them as less sophisticated than Westerners, merit close attention given that historically they have been used as a justification for Western "protection."

Halimi's characterization of Djamila as childlike resurfaces, once more, when the attorney discusses her client's excitement at the prospect of visiting the metropole. Halimi portrays Djamila as bubbling with adolescent joy during her first ever plane ride, where she can barely contain herself at the thought of seeing the most famous French monument, the Eiffel Tower. Halimi observes with warmth and a hint of amusement: "Djamila est sous le coup de l'émerveillement: un de ses rêves de toujours se réalise, elle est à Paris. A Paris, cette ville



responsable du monde et racontée comme un conte inépuisable dans les livres qu'elle a lus. Cet enthousiasme juvénile est émouvant" (126). In the previous statement, Halimi's perception of Djamila's fascination indulges empire-tinged French fantasies of grandeur via which the storied city of Paris is both the center of the world and yet looks outward, motivated by its sense of "responsibility." As Halimi underlines, Paris is the muse to numerous French classics that Djamila read in the colonial schools where she would have studied the same curriculum as the French readers who form Halimi's target audience.

Yet if Boupacha is depicted as having the same familiarity with Hugo and Balzac as the *français moyen*, Halimi's descriptions of Boupacha's production of the written word once again reinforce a sentimental vision of her as a guileless youth. Halimi references Boupacha's "écriture ronde, enfantine," and notes that "elle écrivait en toutes lettres" (52). Later, Halimi once again calls attention to Boupacha's "petite écriture droite d'écolière, ses phrases courtoises, quelquefois un peu cérémonieuses" (76). In commenting on Djamila's writing style, Halimi portrays Djamila as an *évoluée*, a colonial subject "who, through exposure to colonial educational and assimilationist mechanisms, had internalized French cultural and social norms" yet who, at the same time has not mastered them to the extent that they are not colored with a performative element (Thomas 146). This marker of Bhabha's "almost the same but not quite/almost the same but not white" or Mémmi's "assimilation manquée" is here indicated by Djamila's misplaced formality, a linguistic quirk sometimes exhibited by non-native speakers of a language (Mémmi 141). Given that *Djamila Boupacha* also includes a doctor's remarks about Djamila's ability to speak and understand French perfectly, these vaguely patronizing comments serve to call attention to Djamila's obedience to norms that, by Halimi's report, she has only superficially internalized (de Beauvoir and Halimi 113).

While Halimi subtly highlights Djamila's difference, the author also calls attention to the ways that Djamila and her sister, Nafissa, have internalized French norms of behavior. When Halimi meets Djamila's family in a European hotel lobby in Algiers, Halimi notes that Nafissa is unveiled and fluent in French in contrast to her mother, who addresses Halimi in her native Arabic and is "coiffée et habillée à la mode arabe" (47). Halimi further observes that Nafissa appears troubled by her mother's emotional greeting, use of Arabic, and mention of God<sup>82</sup> in this formal context, commenting that Nafissa would have preferred "une réunion à l'europpéenne où elle aurait servi d'interprète" (47). Like the scene described in the plane, this exchange, which underlines the mother's "foreignness" to her own daughters depicts Djamila as part of a generation who is eager to conform to French standards of behavior.

Even Boupacha's desire for Algeria's sovereignty, as relayed by Halimi, is conveyed in the least threatening terms. Halimi reports Djamila as saying in one conversational exchange, "Comprends, les Français, on peut les aimer beaucoup si on est libre . . ." (51). Freedom from foreign rule, in this surprising formulation, is framed not as a basic human right but ironically as a way to better love the French. Later, Djamila insists upon her ability to distinguish the majority of French citizens from her torturers by stating, "Tu dois comprendre, Gisèle . . . Tous, vous devez comprendre, là-bas . . . Ce n'est pas de la haine: on veut être comme vous, comme les autres Africains, comme les autres *êtres normaux* . . . on veut être libres" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 78, emphasis in original). This last statement departs from the first in recognizing freedom as more of a basic human right, but strangely characterizes decolonization not as a needed rupture with the French but as a change motivated by Algerians' aspiration to become

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<sup>82</sup> In reporting the speech of Boupacha's mother, Halimi uses the word "Dieu" in the text rather than the more probable "Allah," which serves to elide the religious difference between Djamila and French readers, who were majority Catholic.

more like them. In alignment with colonial ideology via which the colonizer is imagined as protective and parental, and the colonized ever grateful for foreign intervention, the previous characterizations maintain the myth of amicable relations. Djamila, here appears as a child gently reassuring her parents that she, like her recently decolonized brothers and sisters, is ready to leave the nest. This attitude is also consistent with the (unpublished) archival materials I consulted in which Djamila laments, in a November 26, 1961, letter to Beauvoir, “Mais j’ai peur qu’après les gens de chez nous disent des français qu’ils étaient tous nos ennemis et qu’ils nous ont tous torturés. Il vaudrait mieux que les patriotes soient bien séparés des tortionnaires. Pour que les Algériens et les français deviennent des amis sincères.” On some level, this passage conveys the opposite message of de Beauvoir and Halimi’s book, which insists that just because one did not participate in the actual torture, that does not mean one is not, on some level, responsible. There is little doubt that French citizens took a wide array of positions on Algeria; however, Djamila’s reverential tone, her dichotomous framing of guilt and innocence, and her somewhat naïve suggestion that the only pre-condition for sincere friendship between the two countries is the identification of the torturers construct her as childlike and benign. Consequently, it is hard to imagine the deferential Djamila as a militant capable of perpetrating violence against French civilians when she demonstrates such concern about French perceptions of Algeria’s fight for independence.

While it may appear that Halimi is problematically recycling *idées reçues* about women and colonized populations, I would speculate that she may be participating in another form of colonial mimicry: one that strategically deploys stereotypes to soften the image of a figure who might otherwise find less sympathy among French audiences. Indeed, the difficulty that the textual Halimi has believing that Djamila might not want children sits uneasily with the lawyer’s

very public investment in the fight for birth control and access to abortions.<sup>83</sup> In the same vein, the text's emphasis on virginity and the traditional family finds as unlikely author in de Beauvoir, who engaged in polyamorous relationships throughout her life and famously never married. Whatever degree of remove de Beauvoir and Halimi might have had from the portrayal of Djamila that they published, it is important to note that Boupacha was unhappy with this representation. In 2012, when France 2 began production on a made-for-TV movie called *Pour Djamila*, Boupacha contacted the French minister of culture to request that production be halted. In the words of Soltane, Boupacha was indignant that the film was based on de Beauvoir and Halimi's book, which she insisted was "plein de fautes et comportant de fausses informations historiques sur sa vie, son combat et même sa personnalité" (1).

In this section, I have examined the ways the *Le Procès en nullité* and *Djamila Boupacha* work to soften public perceptions of Joan and Djamila, each initially imagined as exhibiting gender-aberrant behavior. Because they are initially imagined as renegade figures, it becomes exceptionally important to situate Joan and Djamila in the patriarchal contexts of family and religious communities to invite an alternate reading of their lives in which they embody traditional gender norms. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the ways in which each woman is perceived and remembered is dependent upon the ways that other people tell their stories. In the next section, I will examine the role of testimony in each woman's public remembrance more closely.

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<sup>83</sup> Halimi's memoir, *Le lait de l'oranger* (1988), even includes accounts of her own terminated pregnancies.

### Filtered Feelings

*Le Procès en nullité* and *Djamila Boupacha* both center around harrowing scenes of torture, namely Joan's execution at the stake and Djamila's physical violation in the torture chamber. Each of these scenes is related (and thus mediated) through the testimony of witnesses<sup>84</sup> who are either present at the scene (in Joan's case) or who hear the scene related from the person on whom the torture was inflicted (in Djamila's case). Due to their intimate and sometimes lurid nature, these scenes of physical torment often prompt sorrow and shame in their intradiagetic audiences. The scenes could easily speak for themselves, but the texts leave little room for misinterpretation by having witnesses relay an accumulation of similar responses that attach certain affects to the scenes. This inclusion of "filtered feelings," that is, pre-processed emotional responses to the scenes by insiders (direct participants or trusted confidants) reiterates the legibility of Joan and Djamila as victim-heros.

Like Joan's experience in the prison cell, her moments at the stake appear in flashes over the course of seventeen recorded testimonies in Rouen: the tears as she climbed the scaffold, the request for a crucifix to look upon, the pleas to Jesus, the sweeping up of the cinders, and their prompt disposal in the Seine. The most gruesome details of what was a longer-than-usual execution remain blotted out, a reminder that trauma is frequently defined by its "unspeakability" (Edkins 2). This void at the focal point of the scene places the often-embodied reactions of the witnesses in relief, since we can only intuit the horror of the stake secondarily, by the effects it produces.

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<sup>84</sup> Following Dori Laub's naming system, I will henceforth use the term "secondary witness" to refer to Halimi who was not physically at the scene but who listened to a first-hand account of events.

The testimonies indicate that feelings of sorrow and shame circulated amongst the spectators, touching nearly all. One man, Jean Fave, said that he saw almost everyone in the land “pleurer et lamenter” (DuParc 232). Numerous witnesses related that they were “émus aux larmes” or “pleuraient de pitié” (DuParc 138, 147, 226, 137). Maître Jean Massieu stated simply that Joan “provoquaient les larmes de ceux qui l’entendaient” (DuParc IV 115). Jean LeFevre asserted that this grief was even shared by Joan’s judges, and Ysambard de la Pierre swore that even the Bishop of Beauvais, to whom Joan had directly attributed her death, was consumed by tears (DuParc 226, 212). Categorically, de la Pierre speculates that “Nul homme, s’il avait été présent n’aurait eu le coeur dur au point de ne pas être ému aux larmes” (DuParc IV 127). But, he adds that he, personally, could not bear to stay until the very end: “il s’en alla,” the record reads, “car il n’aurait pas pu en supporter la vue” (DuParc IV 127). Four of the townspeople of Rouen called to testify refrained entirely from attending the execution, anticipating the indelibility of the scene’s horror. Pierre Cusquel stated, “Son coeur n’aurait pas pu le supporter,” and Nicolas de Houppesville corroborated the sentiment, saying, “mu par la compassion, [il] n’eut pas la force d’aller jusqu’au lieu du supplice” (Duparc IV 133, IV 125).

Witnesses who did stay for the execution seem struck by symptoms of post-traumatic stress, suggesting that Joan’s agony had been transferred to them and absorbed to a degree by their own bodies. The executioner, himself, confided his utter fear of damnation (DuParc 213). An Englishman convinced of Joan’s guilt prior to her execution staggered away from the scene “frappé de stupeur et comme en extase,” confessing afterwards that “il avait gravement péché” in his actions towards Joan (212). Another man rushed away from the scene “gémissant” claiming, “Nous sommes tous perdus” (DuParc 209). The head notary in Joan’s trial, Guillaume de Manchon, testified to his own inability to move past the memory of that day, stating that he was

“si remué qu’il resta épouvanté pendant un mois” (DuParc IV 108). Rouenais Guillaume Celles reported that, after the execution, the direct participants in the trial were not permitted to forget that they had been accomplices to an act now seen as anathema: “Les gens du peuple montraient ceux qui avaient participé au procès avec horreur” (DuParc IV 119). The stigma once attached to Joan’s body and the whispers and stares she had elicited had been transferred to her judges.

As an ensemble, the testimonies about Joan’s last moments and the witnesses’ reactions to them suggest that the crowd was moved to mirror her emotions, becoming as Laub posits, guardians of the experience (57). Indeed, Joan’s body at the stake becomes the emotional command center of the scene. Joan approached the *lieu de supplice* “toute en pleurs”; the witnesses left it equally teary. Joan “faisait de pieuses lamentations” in her last moments, finishing her life “en Catholic” according to those who watched; the crowd reciprocated with sorrowful confessions and anguished wishes that their souls were where they believed hers to be (DuParc IV 125-127). Joan mourned that her last days would be in Rouen, crying out, according to many, “*Rouen, Rouen, mourray-je cy!*” ; likewise, the townspeople expressed their displeasure that Rouen should be her deathplace: “[B]eaucoup étaient mécontents qu’elle eût été exécutée dans la ville de Rouen” (DuParc 215, emphasis in original; IV 147). The scene at the stake returns ever and again to this rippling outward. Joan’s perceived feelings move to and through the bodies of the spectators, connecting her body to theirs and their bodies to each other’s.

Here, it is necessary to clarify that, as Ahmed cautions, what can first appear to be “shared” feelings may actually be distinct, personally nuanced relationships to the “same” emotion (10). One spectator may cry because he is moved to see such drastic measures being taken to protect others from a heretic’s influence. Another may cry because the girl at the stake reminds her of her own daughter. Still another may cry in fear of being discovered for some

secret sin. Nonetheless, the similar language witnesses use to describe their feelings about the execution and their absence of explanation minimizes any nuance. I would speculate that some of the witnesses may have heard each other's testimonies<sup>85</sup> or discussed their remembrances of the event prior to giving testimony, resulting in similar accounts. By the same token, notaries may have defaulted to using similar descriptions or edited the trials to provide a cohesive narrative. Nonetheless, the recorded public memory of the event prescribes a clear interpretation: Joan's death was immediately recognized as unjust, even by her most fervent detractors.

While multiple witnesses interpret Joan of Arc's death at the stake, Gisèle Halimi, Djamila Boupacha's lawyer, is the most important witness through whom feelings about Djamila's thirty-three days of interrogation and torture are filtered. Here, I should clarify that Halimi is not present at the event. Rather, she is what Laub considers a secondary witness: that is, someone who, as an empathic listener, helps another construct and transmit what happened. As a result, Halimi becomes not only a "companion" as Djamila navigates the treacherous landscape of traumatic memory in what appears to be her first verbalization of her torture, but also, like the witnesses at Joan's execution, "a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event" (Laub 57). In the process of listening to another's experience of trauma, Halimi equally bears witness to the story's reverberations in her own mind and body. As Laub writes, trauma victims can transmit their emotions so that the listener feels "the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread, and conflicts that the trauma victim feels" (58). While victim and listener remain separate, the

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<sup>85</sup> The brief entries of a series of witnesses in Orléans raise questions about the way the testimonies were given and recorded in the *Procès en nullité*. The names and occupations of many witnesses are followed only by the words "comme le précédent" or "de même" (DuParc IV 19-21). Therefore, it appears that either the witnesses heard the testimony given before their own and agreed that it represented their understanding of the events or that the notaries decided the testimony of one witness approximated the testimony of the previous witness.



process of testimony dissolves some of the boundaries between them. Testimony implicates the listener not only to protect the memory of the traumatic experience but also to act against the possibility of its reproduction.

Halimi offers a very privileged point-of-view as a witness-interpreter. She grew up in colonial Tunisia in a religiously conservative family of Jewish and Muslim parentage. As an adolescent, Halimi attended a French lycée in Tunis then continued her studies in Paris, eventually becoming a citizen of France. Halimi's prior legal work with Algerians affiliated with the FLN also positions her as a cultural insider, making her capable of acting as a *liaison* between Djamila, who has entrusted her testimony to her, and the metropolitan French readers whom Halimi hopes to call to action.

Halimi's role in interpreting responses is especially apparent in her initial meeting with Boupacha, during which Djamila conveys the story of her torture for the first time. The text's emphasis on the women's bodily contact during the testimony, paired with Halimi's record of her physical responses to Djamila's words, underlines that Djamila is not only transmitting a series of facts that cohere into a narrative but also the affect that accompanies them. As Laub reiterates, "testimonies are not monologues" and thus must address another person with whom an intimate bond can occur (70).

The progressive physical intimacy between the two women during the scene of witnessing reiterates the bond the process creates. Contact between Djamila's body and a blank page initiates the testimony, recalling Laub's analogy that the secondary witness's body becomes a "blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed" (57). Boupacha's hair brushes the paper that Halimi has placed on the table between them. Then, Halimi kisses Boupacha's temple and takes the prisoner's hand, reassuring her, "Djamila, raconte, tu peux tout me dire; tu sais bien

que je suis ici pour toi” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 21). Next, Halimi drops her pen, which Djamila retrieves and places in her lawyer’s hand as if to acknowledge the co-narrative aspect of the event they will bring into being through witnessing. In the process of relating the event, Boupacha entrusts Halimi to view and touch her body with increasing familiarity, suggesting the embodied transfer of information. Djamila pulls open her blouse to show Halimi marks on her chest from the *gégène*. Several minutes later, she reveals a constellation of cigarette burns on her right thigh (22-23). Towards the end of the session, Djamila takes Gisèle’s hand in a reversal of the touch that initiates the scene and places it on her rib cage so that the lawyer can feel (*tâter*) the deformities resulting from Djamila’s torture. Afterwards, like the witnesses of Joan’s torment, Halimi becomes consumed by the emotions of her interlocutor. The lawyer remarks “j’avais chaud [...] La colère et la honte m’envahissaient” (23).

The fragmented, elliptical way in which Djamila relates her torture emphasizes the importance of Halimi’s role as the witness-interpreter of a traumatic episode. Boupacha speaks in “une voix sacadée, presque à hoquets” and tells her story in bits and bursts:

Ils m’ont fait mal... Si mal... à El Bair, ma côte... regardez! Ma mère m’a vue: je ne pouvais plus marcher droite, tant j’avais mal . . . ils riaient, à Hussein Dey . . . Ils crachaient sur moi . . . J’étais nue, ils crachaient la bière qu’ils buvaient . . . Les fils électriques, ils les collaient . . . Vous savez comment? Avec des bandes, des bandes de scotch... sur les bouts de mes seins . . . sur . . . oh, je ne peux pas vous dire. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 21)

To make sense of the disjointed strings of words and clarify the chronology of events, Halimi poses questions and most importantly acts as a receptive listener who is “unobtrusively present” (Laub 71). Halimi hesitates to interject and carefully records the events in minute detail. At the end of their two-hour conversation, most of which is not related in the chapter, Djamila appears to have externalized the event. Boupacha acknowledges that Halimi made the testimony possible, saying “Je ne pouvais pas écrire tout ça . . . Je ne savais pas comment . . . et puis, je ne

savais pas si je pourrais un jour en reparler” (22). Halimi then reiterates her role, which implies mutual responsibility, if also framing herself as the instrument of Djamila’s salvation: “Djamila était délivrée: elle avait enfin parlé, son calvaire était là, devant elle, sur cette feuille blanche que je remplissais. Il n’était plus seulement ce qui la rongait seule, de l’intérieur” (22). Halimi also compares Djamila’s bodily suffering to Christ’s through the use of the word “calvaire,” translating the ordeal into symbolic terms that might resonate with her primarily Catholic audience. According to Halimi’s depiction, the witnessing process has unified the individual women into a “nous,” which the lawyer repeats as she articulates a course of action: “Nous les dénoncerons! Nous déposerons une plainte! Nous les contraindrons d’ouvrir une enquête” (23). In a moment of narrative self-awareness that calls attention to Halimi’s role in constructing the text, the chapter closes with the image of the lawyer at her desk organizing her notes to then relate the narrative of Djamila’s torture.

The following chapter, entitled “Le Supplice,” appears to be the result of Halimi’s efforts. In contrast to the more sentiment-driven style of the previous chapter, “Le Supplice” reads like the legal document that it presumably is. The first-person interview in the previous chapter supplied only impressions, calling upon its audience to imagine the omissions that would have produced Boupacha and Halimi’s affective states. “Le Supplice,” however, is a third-person account of Djamila’s torture and interrogation that includes every excruciating detail from the moment the Boupacha household is raided while the family sleeps to her demand at her first trial to be examined by a doctor. Because the account begins without prefatory remarks and is related in the present tense, it implicates the reader more directly as a witness who is symbolically present as the action unfolds.

Just as the narrative of Boupacha's ordeal is preceded and on some level pre-interpreted for readers by Halimi's reception of it, it is immediately followed by another depiction of its reception. In the opening lines of the next chapter, when Halimi drops off the account with the Procureur général d'Alger, she highlights his reaction: "Il m'écoutait, visiblement bouleversé [...] A mesure que je parlais, M. Schmeck manifestait une colère" (41). Later, Halimi relates the reaction of Daniel Mayer, president of the Human Rights League, upon hearing the same narrative: "A mon récit, il se prit la tête entre les mains. Qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire? Qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire, répétait-il. Puis il pleura. De honte" (62). When Halimi relates the account once more, before the committee, she calls attention to a woman who "sanglota brutalement" and had to leave the room, after nearly fainting (de Beauvoir and Halimi 63). At another committee gathering, when one of the members reads the account of Djamila's father's torture, she is unable to continue, her voice dissolving into a sob, and Halimi remarks, "Une émotion brutale nous avait tous saisis" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 99). Indeed, the Appendix of twelve letters written by public figures that directly follow the formal text of *Djamila Boupacha* also act to reinforce sentiments of a similar tenor, even if they differ stylistically.

As previously referenced, the opening lines of Beauvoir's article in *Le Monde* emphasize the horror implicit in becoming desensitized to human suffering (de Beauvoir and Halimi 220). To look unwaveringly at the pain of another person and not flinch in sympathy, to see and not intervene is to call into question one's own humanity. Indeed, de Beauvoir and Halimi's text offers portraits of failures to act in its most disturbing forms. There is the French doctor who refuses to acknowledge the marks of torture on Djamila's body, who, unlike her lawyer, never touches the patient's body during her medical examination. There are also the various military personnel who stepped in and out of the torture chamber during the events, unfazed

*fonctionnaires* punching the clock. Most egregiously, there is the President for the Committee for Public Safety who seems unimpressed by Djamila's treatment, dismissing it as "pas du véritable supplice!" since her rape with a bottle was not *per anum*, as he said was the practice in *Indochine*, so as to perforate the victim's intestines (103). There are also the politicians who only acknowledge the receipt of the account with a line or two of administrative formalities. By foregrounding the responses of individuals, including herself, who recognize Djamila's abuse on a visceral level, and even seem to feel its reverberations in their own bodies, Halimi attempts to jar the reading public out of its apathy.

### **Pollution, Shame, and the National Body**

To read Djamila Boupacha through the memory of Joan of Arc is to ask, in part, what role gender plays in the elaboration and maintenance of a national body. One answer to this question is that gender implies a set of pre-conditions that, if met, make one more assimilable into a national body, or in case of failure, more likely to be expelled. According to Ahmed, shame is, among other things, "*the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence*" (107, emphasis in original). Joan's public shaming throughout the condemnation trial and up to her final moments at the stake is bound up in her failure to conform to gender expectations. For women, participation in a national body has more often than not assumed an investment in marriage and reproduction, making anyone who lies outside of the sanctioned reproductive economy more difficult to align with national ideals. Because Joan assumed military duties typically reserved for men and because she appears to at least temporarily refuse the reproductive economy, Joan had to be refeminized in order for her memory to become

officialized and set forth as worthy for instruction. Foregrounding Joan's "girlishness" (meaning both femininity and youth) becomes essential to making her innocence plausible.

Needless to say, in the medieval period, any conception of a proto-national body cannot be separated from a Church body, since the king was believed to rule by divine right. In Joan's particular case, the Monarchy and the Church are each involved with the trial in that the king, Charles VII, initiated the investigation, and the pope, Callixtus III, implemented it. When Joan of Arc was accused of heresy, her crimes were conceived of as an attack on the body of Christ, comprised of all of the individual bodies of his faithful followers. As described in the *Procès de condamnation*, this menaced body had to be maintained "toujours intacte dans son intégrité" (Tisset 31). Though Joan had defined her own body by her famed virginity, the final sentence issued by her judges imagined her body, instead, as a *corps corrompu*, the bearer of an infection: "la detestable contagion de cette dangereuse souillure" (Tisset 357). They compare her to a "vipère mortelle" seething with "poison fatal" (Tisset 356-7). They explain: "Le mal de l'hérésie chemine furtivement comme le cancer et tue de façon occulte les gens simples, à moins que, avec un soin vigilant, le scalpel de l'inquisition ne le tranche." Thus, her judges concluded, Joan must be severed from the communal body, lest she infect the other healthy members with the leprosy of heresy: "Tel un membre pourri, afin que tu n'infestes point également les autres membres, il faut te rejeter de l'unité de l'Eglise, te retrancher de son Corps" (Tisset 358-60). To counteract this verdict, *Le procès en nullité* had to establish Joan's body as virginal, a place where rottenness could not reside.

Ahmed theorizes that we feel shame because "*we have failed to approximate an ideal*" (107, emphasis in original). If Joan's judges attempt to shame Joan for not embodying a Christian ideal, the shame doesn't stick: it is the bodies of the witnesses that seem to manifest

physical symptoms of shame when publicly remembering the event. Joan stares out into the crowd steadfastly, while the audience members claim they cannot bear to look. But shame, for all of its sting, offers the promise of redemption. To feel shame is to identify oneself as a “well-meaning individual,” according to Ahmed, one who could have done better, and one who in a hypothetical future, will. In this way, shame can become a springboard, a means for individuals to register a past injustice as incompatible with the vision of a national identity they are in the process of articulating (Ahmed 109).

In Joan’s rehabilitation trial, I posit that this vision is at least partly motivated by a desire to distinguish the English from the French, and the English-allied French from the “well-meaning” French. The testimonies at the rehabilitation trial attest to a kind of catharsis. Still, it is not entirely clear that by manifesting what could be interpreted as signs of shame the witnesses are taking responsibility. They say they feel pity, but pity does not indicate personal accountability. Indeed, the explanatory notes preceeding the witnesses’ depositions attribute the execution entirely to the Bishop Cauchon, who, conveniently, is dead. The first article preceding the witnesses’ depositions describes Cauchon as “poussé par une passion désordonnée” and adds that he “haïssait [Jeanne], recherchant sa mort par tous les moyens possibles” (167). Naming Cauchon as the villain, upfront, clears the witnesses of any form of bystander responsibility, and makes the trial about a personal vendetta, rather than a flawed system for establishing guilt. Indeed, Cauchon is often pictured as a cardboard character we love to hate: hissing for the notaries to strike sympathetic testimony from the record, boasting about the “beau procès” he is conducting, chasing the dissenters out of town. The other figures to whom witnesses attribute responsibility are Geoffrey Thérage, the French executioner who fears for his soul, and the Englishman who laments that they have burned a saint.

During the rehabilitation trial, Joan is reintegrated into a Christian communal body through the witnesses' testimony to their embodied responses to her execution. The witnesses seem to experience Joan's innocence corporally: it prickles their skin, echoes in their bones. On some level, Joan's body becomes the most extreme emblem of the suffering more generally experienced as a result of the Hundred Years War. During the spectacle of Joan's execution, the same, supposedly polluted body of the accused heretic becomes aligned with the bodies of the audience members that the inquisition sought to protect. It is the source of sympathy, even the medium of Christian conversion. The trial thus becomes a means of reuniting a French national body severed by war. Any dishonor is transferred to the English and a few high-level Burgundian collaborators, such as Cauchon.

In *Djamila Boupacha*, a different kind of transfer occurs. Bystander responsibility takes a more prominent role because de Beauvoir and Halimi rely on it to generate support for Djamila's civil trial in France. Therefore, Boupacha's body as the object of shame shifts to an imagined French national body, suggesting that it is not only Djamila who is being protected but also, as Fanon writes, "a certain idea of French honor" (qtd. in Quinan 119). Shame in response to perceived national failing on a world stage recurs as a theme in the archival materials I examined as well as the letters appended to de Beauvoir and Halimi's text.

A few select examples will illuminate this trend: Socialist politician André Philip writes, "C'est l'honneur même de la France qui a été terni [...], ce sont les valeurs qui la définissent aux yeux du monde que les tortionnaires détruisent" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 269). President of the Human Rights League, Daniel Mayer, praises those who speak out for showing that "tout n'est pas pourri dans ce qui fut un beau et grand pays à l'esprit ouvert et généreux." He claims that



those who bear witness, himself presumably included, “sauvegardent l’espérance individuelle pour aujourd’hui, l’honneur collectif pour demain” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 263). A teacher who wrote to de Beauvoir and Halimi first expressed her shame, then concluded: “nous ne pourrions plus enseigner la morale de la même façon,” tacitly imagining a national “nous” that acts as the guardian and transmitter of morality (de Beauvoir and Halimi 67). A Belgian correspondant who identifies herself as the spouse of a Frenchman, speaks of Western civilization’s degradation and France’s failure as a champion of human rights: “Nous voudrions que l’opinion publique toute entière manifesterait son indignation féroce à l’égard de mesures aussi dégradantes pour l’humanité et la civilisation occidentale dont la France se fait la championne” (Torue). Another correspondant, A.<sup>86</sup> Postel-Vinay, asserts that aside from any anticolonial “préoccupation politique,” the real question is whether or not the Government wants to defend its own honor by denouncing torture:

L’affaire Djamila Boupacha offre encore au Gouvernement une occasion— peut-être une occasion ultime— de manifester qu’il désapprouve les tortionnaires et qu’il n’entend pas— ou n’entend plus— les protéger contre le cours d’une justice normale. La vraie question consiste à savoir si le Gouvernement veut ou ne veut pas se libérer— et libérer le pays— de la honte qu’il a à couvrir de son silence l’emploi de la torture en Algérie. Il y a là une question d’honneur nationale.

References to *honte*, *humiliation*, and *honneur*, dominated the letters I examined. The writers regret that such cruelty was carried out in their name (to borrow the phrasing Alleg used in a similar call to action), in part because it disrupts their own belief in themselves as “well-meaning

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<sup>86</sup> The correspondant signs only with a first initial, but it is likely that the letter was written by Anise or André Postel-Vinay, both members of the Comité pour Djamila Boupacha.

individuals.” But if Sartre hailed Alleg, a French citizen, for saving France’s honor by exposing torture, Djamila’s ordeal is capable of no such feat (Surkis 40). Rather, she remains in the position of the gendered and racialized colonial subject who, while lauded as courageous, must depend on the benevolence of French citizens in an odd repackaging of the Civilizing Mission.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that despite their vastly different historical circumstances, the processes by which Joan of Arc and Djamila Boupacha go from being perceived as menaces to the French nation to deserving of its protection, share a key commonality. In each case, the defense of the woman in question hinges upon depicting her as embodying gender norms and exhibiting a certain obedience to patriarchal institutions be they the family, organized religion, or colonialism. In *Djamila Boupacha*, this strategy is all the more striking, at times, because the book’s authors were famous for feminist viewpoints that stood in contradiction to the fetishization of virginity, marriage, and maternity that underlies several scenes in the text. As Quinan notes, in the decade preceding Algeria’s independence “it was under the guise of saving Algerian women (from Algerian men) that the French army and government were able to gain support for certain policies” (122). Even though de Beauvoir and Halimi differed in aim from colonial supporters, they also appealed to a French populace to “save” an Algerian woman (though from French men). While successful, this tactic results in a reductive representation that on some level maintains colonial dynamics by depicting Algeria as dependent on French intervention.

Reading *Djamila Boupacha* and *Le procès en nullité* in tandem also allows us to remember Joan of Arc differently, by unearthing memories that ask us to think about her through

the prism of her prison experience. While Joan of Arc is often popularly represented as persecuted at the hands of the English, this is a revision of memory for nationalist ends. In truth, at least as many French participated in Joan of Arc's capture, detainment, and demise as did English. In an age of outsourced torture, debates about detainee rights, increased surveillance over citizens, and the militarization of the police force, the questions raised by Joan of Arc's trials remain strikingly relevant.

De Beauvoir, Halimi, and the Comité pour Djamila Boupacha went to great lengths to compel the French public to confront what was already well-known: that the colonial system was maintained through systematic violence of which torture was one of the most extreme forms. Two decades after the war ended, a French foreign legion officer in Algeria who had been accused of participating in torture, himself, founded a political party that would go to equally great lengths to erase France's colonial history. The process by which that history was reappropriated, alongside the figure of Joan of Arc, will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: “HISTOIRE SANS MÉMOIRE”: FRANCE’S FRONT NATIONAL AND THE EFFACEMENT OF COLONIAL HISTORY

“In the epoch of Joan, the word ‘nation’ had no real sense anyway; it was forged essentially by the French Revolution, the will of free citizens to live together. She is even less able to speak for a people or a race, neither for a community welded by language. . . . What was important for Joan was respect for legitimate government. . . . In Joan there was nothing exclusive.” -Michel Rocard qtd. in Davies 115.

“L’oubli, et je dirai même l’erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d’une nation” -Ernest Renan, “Qu’est-qu’une nation?”

### Introduction

On May 1, 2012, during the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Joan of Arc’s birth, France’s Far Right party, Le Front National (FN), gathered in the center of Paris for its annual commemoration of the medieval heroine whom they have claimed as their party’s personal mascot. The event began with a procession during which the party’s patriarch, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and his daughter and chosen successor, Marine, made a ritual visit to the most prominent Johannic monument in central Paris: Emmanuel Frémiet’s gilded equestrian statue at the Place des Pyramides. Stooping in tandem, they laid a spray of flowers at the monument’s base and paused, in a moment of laicized prayer, to gaze upwards at the figure they have hailed as the savior of France. A scant half-mile away, at the Place de l’Opéra, an audience awaited the speeches of Le Pen *père et fille*. Behind the stage where they would soon speak, loomed a larger-than-life backdrop, hyperbolizing the Johannic landmark that has been the gathering place for the party’s yearly commemorations of Joan of Arc since 1988. The sky-high set piece pictured a blown-up version of Frémiet’s rendering of Joan, poised to defend the nondescript (but presumably French) village in the misty distance below, a village like Joan’s hometown of Domrémy or Jean-Marie’s, of Trinité-sur-Mer. Alongside Joan’s image flew a fluttering tricolor, echoing and enlarging the statue’s raised standard. At the top right of the backdrop, like a battle

cry emanating from the warring Joan, or perhaps a thought bubble drifting up from the inhabitants of the pastoral patch of *pays* represented by the village, read the words of a vague, patriotic proclamation: “Oui, la France!”

Jean-Marie Le Pen mounted the stage energetically as a choral hymn blaring over the loudspeakers hushed to a halt. Taking the mic, he began with an assertion about memory and national history: “On dit couramment qu’en politique les Français n’ont pas de mémoire.” When the audience’s jeers subsided, he continued that such a statement might be judged true considering the French’s “naïveté à l’aune des promesses qui leur sont faites et qui ne sont pas tenues.” But, he countered, “Il n’y a pas de peuple sans histoire ni d’histoire sans mémoire.” Positioning his speech as an antidote to this trend of historical amnesia, Le Pen then transitioned to his chosen topic: a meditation on the memory of the third of three “grands hommes” of the country’s history, each of whom serve as an exemplar of Gallic greatness. After naming Louis XIV and Napoleon as the first two Frenchmen to achieve worldwide notoriety, he turned to the third: “Ce grand homme, français mais de dimension mondiale, est une femme, mieux même une jeune fille” (JM Le Pen 5/1/12).<sup>87</sup>

In its annual public commemorations of Joan, the Front National explicitly positions its party as the guardians of national memory and often cites a supposed superior memory as proof of superior citizenship. In a speech delivered five months earlier, on Joan’s 600<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jean-Marie Le Pen reproached other parties<sup>88</sup> for reviving Joan’s memory only on the eve of elections

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<sup>87</sup> Because the speeches cited in this section are untitled and the politicians discussed share the same last name, I will parenthetically cite speeches using the speaker’s first initials and last name followed by the date of the speech’s delivery.

<sup>88</sup> This comment seems to be primarily directed at the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), the party of then President Nicholas Sarkozy, who made a commemorative speech on Joan’s 600<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 6, 2012, in Vaucouleurs.

in contrast to his own supporters, described as “les plus proches d’elle [...] qui font vivre sa mémoire et défendent bec et ongle la Nation française” (JM Le Pen 1/6/12). At a more recent commemoration of Joan in 2015, party president Marine Le Pen characterized herself similarly, as an attentive keeper of history, warning the crowd, “La France n’est éternelle que par la transmission et glorification de son histoire” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). This history, she suggests, is the very soul of France, “transmise par nos parents et grands-parents, par nos professeurs au sein de l’École républicaine, par les pages des encyclopédies et les pierres de nos monuments” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). Situating history within the purview of traditional conservative institutions: the family, the public education system, official texts, and state sponsored commemorative spaces, the FN president depicts history as something that can be handed down, relatively unchanged, like an heirloom rather than a complex cultural construction shaped by institutions and the power dynamics that work within them. The Le Pens’ use of the word “history” closely relates to the idea of “heritage” as defined by Dayna Ocscherwitz. According to Oscherwitz, “heritage” functions as a way of “defining the national present through a particular vision of the past [...] relying on glorious narratives about the past that justify nationalism. It also references particular cultural monuments, artifacts, historical figures, and historical events” (13). As Oscherwitz explains, the notion of Heritage is “inherently backward gazing and nostalgic, idealizing the past while condemning the present” (2).

Like the statue’s immobilized imagining of Joan, the FN’s fixed vision of France suggests that the nation’s history has already been formed and can only be preserved, polished, and protected. Jean Marie and Marine Le Pen’s depiction of history relies on what Michael Rothberg calls “competitive memory— a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources.” In this model of memory, “a direct line runs between remembrance of the past and the formation of

identity in the present” (3). Therefore, failures of memory disable the formation of a cohesive national identity. Rothberg further explains that those who subscribe to this model “understand the articulation of the past in collective memory as a struggle for recognition in which there can only be winners and losers” (3). In accordance with the competitive memory model, the FN often depicts its vision of French history as compromised by the country’s changing demographics and other politicians’ willingness to publicly recognize France’s colonial brutalities.

Indeed, in the French postcolonial landscape, memory has often been a particularly fraught site of struggle, as individuals and institutions attempt to claim terrain and locate themselves within the shifting topography of remembrance. If the physical *topos* of hexagonal France remained the same after decolonization, new names attempted to efface colonialism’s public traces. As Alec Hargreaves writes, following the disintegration of a once vast empire, “Public institutions and buildings which had once trumpeted the nation’s overseas possessions were renamed to airbrush out any explicit reference to the colonial past” (1).<sup>89</sup> Textbooks elided discussion of the colonies, and major works of scholarship such as Pierre Nora’s *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992) codified the erasure of a colonial past by reflecting “the almost complete absence of any discussion of the overseas empire” (Hargreaves 1). Despite such lacunae in civic remembrance, the past several decades have also ushered in a new body of scholarship in the field of postcolonial studies and numerous personal testimonies that offer counter histories of colonial rule. Other modifications to the physical landscape, such as the small plaque added to

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<sup>89</sup> Specifically, Hargreaves cites the *Jardin Colonial*, which became the *Jardin Tropical*; the *Musée des colonies et de la France extérieure* which was renamed as the *Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie*; the *Académie des sciences coloniales*, which was rebaptized the *Académie des sciences d’outre-mer*; and the *Ministère des colonies*, which became the *Ministère de la Coopération* (1).

the Pont Saint Michel in Paris in 2001 in commemoration of the police repression of an Algerian peaceful protest on October 17, 1961, acknowledge acts of state violence affiliated with colonial rule (fig. 17). In the same year, *la loi Taubira*, named after its sponsor, Christiane Taubira, from



Figure 17: Plaque on the Pont St. Michel inaugurated by Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë in 2001. Photo by the author.

French Guiana, recognized the transatlantic slave trade as a crime against humanity (Mathy 149). Although testimonies of private individuals and the work of activists, policy makers, and postcolonial scholars have revealed once occulted truths, this has not prevented other sources from attempting to instate official revisionist histories. In 2005, for example, the party of French president Nicolas Sarkozy, l'Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), backed a law that would have mandated curricular change within the public education system to teach "le rôle positif de la présence française outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord" (Thomas 1).

In a postcolonial landscape, Joan of Arc, as she is incarnated in bronze and imagined in memory, has become a *point de repère* for the FN. A *point de repère* or "landmark" is a highly recognizable feature of the scenery that individuals use to situate themselves, often when navigating unfamiliar terrain. A landmark often denotes a boundary and may be attributed special status as a cultural-historical marker. Just as landmarks indicate the point where one



territory ends and another begins, so too does the word figuratively serve this purpose when used in reference to time: a landmark can indicate a significant achievement or critical juncture (“landmark”). In what particular ways, then, does the FN use Joan of Arc to situate itself within the French political landscape? How does the party’s “remembrance” of her story establish boundaries and create a sense of critical juncture? And how does the memory of Joan change when the party’s leadership changes? Despite the party’s claim to safeguard its country’s *souvenirs*, I posit that the Front National’s conservation of national memory depends crucially on forgetting the contributions of colonial populations to the continuous construction of France as well as France’s violent past as colonizers.

Through a textual analysis of FN speeches commemorating Joan of Arc between 2012-2015 and a 2007 campaign ad interspersed with battlefield sequences of Joan from Luc Besson’s film *The Messenger* (2001), I argue that the FN uses key motifs of Johannic myth to appropriate histories of colonial trauma, such as foreign occupation, while simultaneously effacing France’s own violent history *vis-à-vis* colonial populations. Equally problematic, the FN rewrites colonial history to position itself and its supporters as the innocent inheritors of more everyday postcolonial legacies such as the micro-traumas of discrimination. Using Sara Ahmed’s work on the organization of hate and Kelly Oliver’s writing on testimony, I will examine the FN’s speeches as a case study of what Oliver terms “false testimony,” that is, bearing witness to another’s burden while claiming it as one’s own. Ultimately, I suggest that Joan’s story becomes a medium through which the Front National asserts France’s exceptionality, as well as the party’s, and thus furthers an exclusionary model of citizenship.

This study focuses primarily on the time period between 2012 and 2015 for several reasons. First, 2012 marked the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Joan of Arc’s birth, allowing for an

intensification of the usual commemorations as well as an occasion for the FN to distinguish itself from the other commemorators. Equally important, this time period marks Marine Le Pen's first year in office after taking her father's place as FN president in 2011, becoming the only other person to hold this position since the party was founded. This three-year period also marks a time of significant growth in the party's popularity, due, in part, to an active rebranding of the party paired with a political context of increased concerns over immigration and national security in relation to acts of terrorism that occurred in Paris in 2014 and 2015<sup>90</sup> and the Syrian refugee crisis. After considering how party leaders Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen have appropriated the story of Joan of Arc to position themselves within national and international politics, this chapter concludes with a reflection on Marine Le Pen's adaptation of the party's most recognizable symbol in 2015 after the party voted to oust the party member with whom it is most closely identified: Le Pen, *père*.

The Front National's identification with Joan of Arc has not gone unacknowledged in the popular or academic press. When news outlets cover the FN's annual rallies, they usually include a brief explanation of the party's adoption of Joan of Arc as a kind of mascot, situating this tendency within a genealogy that dates back to the FN's forerunner, l'Action Française.<sup>91</sup> Certainly, the 600<sup>th</sup> birthday commemorations of Joan of Arc across France in 2012 cued more extended considerations of the FN's appropriation of Joan of Arc, prompting Ariane Chemin to

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<sup>90</sup> On January 7, 2014, two gunmen, Charif and Saïd Kouachi, killed twelve people at the offices of the weekly satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* claiming retribution for the publication of cartoons satirizing the prophet Mohammed. Four other people were killed in a related hostage situation at a Parisian supermarket. On November 13, 2015, 129 people were killed and a hundred more were wounded during a series of coordinated attacks on public spaces, including bars, restaurants, France's national stadium, and a concert venue, the Bataclan theater.

<sup>91</sup> For a more extended study of Joan of Arc's adoption by the French Right, see Nadia Margolis's "The 'Joan Phenomenon' and the French Right," in *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (1996).

ask, in a 2012 article of the same name published in *Le Monde*, “A qui appartient Jeanne d’Arc?” Historians and political commentators such as Peter Davies (1999), Dimitri Almeida (2014), Pascale Perrineau (2014), and Cécile Auldy (2015) all reference the FN’s appropriation of Joan of Arc in the context of more comprehensive studies on the Front National and its increasing political popularity. Of the aforementioned scholars, however, only Davies devotes a more detailed consideration to Joan of Arc, examining her iconographic importance to the party in a short section in the second chapter of his monograph. I differ in emphasis from these scholars in my method and postcolonial focus. By conducting close readings of commemorative speeches of Joan, this chapter highlights the *particular* tropes of Joan’s myth that the FN most often activates in order to comment on France’s geopolitical situation. By examining the party’s depiction of Joan through a postcolonial lens, this chapter clarifies ways in which the party manipulates elements of both Joan’s history and France’s in order to consider the implications of such revisionist histories in national mythmaking. Finally, by focusing on the way the two most important FN figureheads identify with a symbol in the period directly after a transition in leadership, I hope to clarify how they adapt the symbol to accommodate both continuity and change.

### **Jean et Jeanne: Historical Context**

The FN has a long history of taking up a broad strokes version of Joan’s story to further its own political agenda; however, *la Pucelle* was not the party’s symbol at its inception in

1972.<sup>92</sup> When journalist Claude Villiers asked Jean-Marie to name his “personage historique préféré” ten years into his tenure as party president, he replied with “Jeanne d’Arc.” Then, Le Pen used this response to position himself in concessional alignment with the French head of state at the time, François Mitterrand:

Je n’ai pas le monopole de la célébration du culte de Jeanne d’Arc qui, je le rappelle est, légalement en France, une héroïne nationale et que sa fête est une fête nationale. Je crois que le président de la République a très heureusement choisi (il lui arrive parfois de faire des choses qui soient bonnes et que j’approuve publiquement) car il a choisi Orléans, effectivement, pour lancer son appel à l’unité nationale. (Snégaroff 1)<sup>93</sup>

As Jean-Marie Le Pen’s reproach of President Sarkozy at the 2012 Johannic commemorations attests, the party founder would not maintain the same willingness to “share” the national icon. According to Emily Apter, it was an acquaintance of Le Pen’s, Jean Marcilly, who “claims to have introduced [him] to the potential of Joan of Arc symbology in spring 1984” (57). Once the idea took root, it became critical to the party’s mythology. At that time, the FN already participated in a yearly parade in honor of Joan of Arc originally organized by l’Action Française, a right-wing royalist group, which assembled several far right groups for the event (Mestre 1). In 1988, the Front National struck out on its own, wishing to forge a more distinctive identity within the political margins as well as to distance itself from some of the other parade’s participants such as the Catholic counter-reform and neo-Nazis (Mestre 1). The new commemoration of Joan of Arc, which included a parade, the paying of respects before her

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<sup>92</sup> In the early years, Jean-Marie Le Pen identified the party with the figure of Clovis, the first king of France; however, this identification was never cultivated with the same fervor or consistency as the identification with Joan.

<sup>93</sup> In 1981, at the nadir of his popularity, Le Pen was unable to collect 500 signatures for a presidential bid. Thus, even as he positions himself as Mitterrand’s judge by noting his acquiescent approval, Le Pen also uses the occasion to establish continuities between a mainstream political figure and himself.

statue, and speeches in her honor, was also marked with an earlier date, May 1, *la fête du travail*. The date loosely coincided in time with Joan's May 8<sup>th</sup> lifting of the siege of Orléans and the *la Fête nationale de Jeanne d'Arc et du patriotisme*, the second Sunday of May. But more importantly, the new date offered a strategic advantage because it fell between the first and second rounds of the national elections. Although this is normally the point at which the FN is eliminated, the party has announced its intention to change this trend in 2017.

While Joan of Arc is visually ubiquitous in France, she is also, in some ways, an anachronistic choice for a party symbol. Perceived as an ideal "secular saint" after her canonization in 1920, her popularity spiked during each of the World Wars when French villages often paired her statue with the local *monument aux morts*. But by the late 1940s, she had begun to fall out of fashion. As a national symbol, Joan was largely replaced by Marianne after World War II, who had the advantage of never having been Vichy's preferred feminine icon and, by comparison, seemed "éthérée et laïque, de moins et moins politisée" (Rigolot 69).<sup>94</sup> Paul Cohen notes that in 1948 "only 11 percent of [French people] polled included [Joan of Arc] in a list of famous French men and women; by 1980, the number had dropped to 2 percent and by 1989 to zero percent" (146). Thus, to make Joan of Arc the centerpiece of the party's iconography at the precise historical moment when she was no longer popularly recognized as significant is to intentionally identify with her marginality and to look back to a mythologized earlier time perceived as a model for the present.

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<sup>94</sup> The Vichy régime attempted to "substituer durablement l'image de Jeanne à celle de Marianne" replacing public artwork representing Marianne with artwork of their preferred feminine incarnation of France, Joan of Arc (Rigolot 64).

Despite the victorious image that Frémiet's equestrian Joan projects, the backstory of the statue is embedded with multiple instances of initial defeat. The monument, itself, approximately marks the place in Paris where Joan was wounded with an arrow to the thigh while fighting on a Catholic holy day, the feast of the Virgin, much to the dismay of her counselors. It was in the capital that Joan's fate took a turn for the worse and that she had to withdraw her troops, who, needled by seeming defeat, now wondered if the Maid's luck in battle had come to an end. The context of the statue's commission also identifies it with military failure. Napoleon III hired Frémiet to make the monument as a way to rally morale after the country's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, during which the region of Lorraine, where Joan was born, changed hands from France to Germany. The sculptor's own reaction to his work further reiterates the statue's association with failure. Once finished, Frémiet believed his work to be disproportional and was so utterly displeased with the original version of the statue that he could not bear to look at it ("Jeanne d'Arc Statue").

In each instance, however, the initial perceived failure eventually proved an occasion for resilience: Joan's wound healed and she went on to win other battles, maintaining her sense of integrity until the end; Germany returned Lorraine to France after World War I as a condition of the treaty of Versailles; and Frémiet modified and recast the statue ten years after its unveiling. Therefore, the statue evokes reversals of fortune in which events initially perceived as defeats later become details in the narratives of hard-won triumphs. In this sense, by identifying with this particular artistic representation of Joan, the FN reframes its seeming failure to garner support on the political front as a pre-condition for a later victory, even if it is only a "moral" one.

Through identification with Joan, Jean-Marie Le Pen also cultivates his image as an everyman from rural France, a military hero, and a “visionary” persecuted for his willingness to go head to head with the powers that be. Like Joan who, as myth would have it, grew up in Domrémy in a family of “peasants,”<sup>95</sup> Le Pen has presented himself as a man of humble origins: the son of a fisherman and homemaker from the Breton village of Trinité-sur-Mer. Orphaned at fourteen, within a few years, Le Pen, like Joan, ran away to join the armed resistance against the occupying power. Le Pen claims to have participated in the 1944 Battle at Saint Marcel, when German troops discovered over 2,000 Resistance fighters, but the newspaper *Libération* called this autobiographic detail into question in a 1987 investigation, featuring interviews with Resistance leaders who had no recollection of anyone named Le Pen (Marcus 29). Several years after his alleged stint with the Resistance, Le Pen left law school to join France’s fight for Indochina as an officer in the Foreign Legion, then once again volunteered for military service in Algeria.<sup>96</sup> Le Pen also identifies himself with *la Pucelle* through his self-fashioned identity as a charismatic leader attempting to save the country from decline. Fitting with Goodliffe’s description of “providential leaders,” Le Pen “evinces the qualities of clairvoyance, self-sacrifice, and charisma, he is both prophet and savior, committing himself to identifying the evils that plague the nation and leading the campaign for its renewal” (51).

As historian Peter Davies writes, the FN’s obsession with Joan can be summed up in two overarching sentiments: “first, the idea that Joan personifies France and French virtues; and second, the rather presumptuous notion— widely held within the party— that Le Pen and Joan

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<sup>95</sup> As mentioned in the Preface, Joan’s “peasant” upbringing is somewhat romanticized, and downplays her family’s means.

<sup>96</sup> Although he vehemently denied the accusations, in 1957 Le Pen was investigated for participating in torture when a young Algerian accused Le Pen of operating the infamous *gégène*, a device that administered electric shocks, during his interrogation (Marcus 32).

share common philosophical ground, in as much as both in their differing eras have, in their own terms, sought the cleansing and purification of France” (112). In the 2015 commemorative speech, Marine Le Pen intones both of these sentiments when speaking of Joan: “Si le Front National met à l’honneur la Pucelle d’Orléans chaque année, c’est qu’elle représente tous les principes que nous défendons ardemment. L’amour de la patrie, l’esprit de [la] résistance, l’indépendance de la France, la soif de la liberté, la défense de l’identité et de la sécurité des Français, le rassemblement des forces nationales” (M Le Pen 5/1/15).

In the past three decades, Joan’s image has become almost synonymous with the party: surfacing in television ads and posters, presiding over the courtyard at the FN’s headquarters, and at one point, appearing on the party’s official letterhead (Margolis 25). Jean-Marie Le Pen claimed to receive his orders from Joan and kept a figurine of Joan on horseback on his desk during his tenure as party president (Apter 57). The Le Pen family’s identification with Joan also extends into more personal realms: Marine Le Pen chose to name her youngest daughter “Jehanne,” adopting not only the name of the party’s icon but also its original medieval orthography (Alduy 1). Marine also plays upon the identifications between Joan and herself, announcing to a crowd in 2012 that she had been criticized for wearing jeans just as Joan was criticized for her masculine attire (Alduy 1). Two years later, actress and FN supporter Brigitte Bardot publicly seconded the idea that Marine was a modern day incarnation of Joan when she called her “La Jeanne d’Arc du XXIème siècle” (De Boni 1). Indeed, so closely has Joan’s image become intertwined with the FN’s particularly virulent strain of xenophobia that, as a researcher interested in Joan’s modern-day manifestations, I have found that I often cannot evoke Joan’s name in France without prompting nervous sidelong glances from some and a visceral reaction of disgust from others.



This reaction is understandable considering the party's make-up. Jean-Marie Le Pen founded the Front National in 1972, "attracting an ultranationalist and unsavory assortment of fascist sympathizers, colonial enthusiasts, Catholic moralists and other reactionaries longing for some idealized version of France's proud past" (Dominus 1). While the FN was considered "a political irrelevancy at best" after its founding and has often been dismissed as too reactionary to gain traction among a wider voting public, in recent years it has proven to have an unexpectedly strong following (Davies 3). This trend towards the mainstream began in 1995 when the party garnered 24% of the vote (Goodliffe 25). Then, in 2002, FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen made it to the second round of the presidential elections for the first time, upsetting the predicted ticket of then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin versus incumbent Jacques Chirac. While the possibility of Le Pen as president provoked an unprecedented turnout in favor of Chirac, Le Pen's advancement to the second round indicated a growing resonance of the party's political message among voters.

The party's recent changing of the guard, from Jean-Marie to Marine, has also marked a transition in the public's perception of their radical brand of politics, due in large part to Marine's project of *dédiabolisation*.<sup>97</sup> Given Marine's increased acceptance, even among women who identify as feminists, she has the potential to broaden the party's base. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that in 2012, more women than ever before voted for the FN in the first round: 18 percent, when Marine's father only garnered the support of 7-15 percent of women voters in recent elections (Landauro 1). As Monique Halperne explains, while the party's core values have changed very little, the fact that they are now voiced by a woman makes them seem

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<sup>97</sup> While this term refers to the process of remaking the image of a frequently vilified party, it is important to note that Jean-Marie is often referred to as *le diable* in popular news outlets (Auldy 1). Thus, there is a certain logic in the idea that this process would culminate in the removal of *le diable*, himself.

more palatable: “There’s a feminine correction. Voting for Marine would seem less radical” (1). Halperne’s theory seems to have proven true in 2014, when the Front National garnered a historic win with twenty-five percent of the vote at the European elections, making it France’s “top party on the European stage” (Willsher 1). On the local level, the FN also set records with election of eleven mayoral candidates from its party (Dominus 2).

Despite core continuities in political stances on immigration and the EU, Marine has taken a (comparatively) more moderate stance on social issues when compared to her predecessor. Unlike her father, who called abortion “anti-French genocide,” Marine supports women’s right to abortion (although she proposed that the health care system not reimburse the related costs). And while she does not publicly support gay marriage, which has been legal in France since May 18, 2013, she has never vilified homosexuality in the way her father did and has appointed openly gay men to positions as top political advisors (“Battle for the Soul” 1). The Le Pens also use a slightly different political vocabulary. Cécile Alduy has conducted lexical analyses on five hundred of the FN’s speeches and found that while her policies are comparable, Marine substitutes more palatable language. While her father used the word “immigrants” an average of 330 times per speech, Marine used it only 40, using the less charged terms “immigration” and “migration policy” (Wilcox 1). As Pascal Perrineau indicated in a recent interview with Radio France Internationale, Jean-Marie Le Pen is fond of using the term *français de souche*, while his daughter does not employ this designation (Gesbert 1). *Souche* is a botanical term often translated into English as “stock,” but which can also refer to the stump of a tree, with roots firmly planted into the soil. Thus, the term makes a distinction between French people of European extraction (*Français de souche*) and French citizens with a more recent history of immigration. Le Pen, himself, often boasts that he can trace his own genealogy back

one thousand years. Therefore, despite the fact that France's official ideological refusal of hybrid or hyphenated identities is so strong that information about race and national origin cannot legally be collected via census, the term *Français de souche* reasserts racial-ethnic difference and perpetuates imagined ideas of ethno-racial purity. In the mouth of a political figure who, in 1987, infamously dismissed the gas chambers of the Holocaust as “un détail de l'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale,” then repeated his comment during an interview in 2015, any such preoccupation with bloodlines take on an especially sinister tone (Bouin 1).

Some of the tensions between father and daughter about the party's public image recently came to a head after Jean-Marie Le Pen made a series of inflammatory statements in an interview with the weekly news show *Le Rivarol* in March of 2015, defending Vichy leader Marshal Pétain and the proponents of colonial Algeria:

Je n'ai jamais considéré le maréchal Pétain comme un traître [...] Je considère que l'on a été très sévère avec lui à la Libération [...] Je n'ai jamais considéré comme de mauvais Français ou des gens infréquentables ceux qui ont conservé de l'estime pour le Maréchal. Ils ont selon moi leur place au Front national comme l'ont les défenseurs de l'Algérie française. (Bacque and Mestre 1)

Later in the interview, Le Pen actively professed his beliefs of white supremacy, stating, “Il faut impérativement sauver l'Europe boréal et le monde blanc” (Bacque and Mestre 1). In response to his extreme statements, Marine publically denounced the *président d'honneur* and announced plans to pursue legal action against him (Bacque and Mestre 1). The party also barred Le Pen from serving as a regional representative. One would expect that the father-daughter rift could cause Marine to abandon her father's trademark obsession with Joan of Arc, but the contrary has proven true. As I will discuss in a later section of this chapter, Marine intensified her identification with Joan in her 2015 May 1 speech, positioning herself as the successor to a long line of female leaders of which Joan is the most shining example.

## Motifs of Johannic Myth in FN Rhetoric

### Occupation

Occupation is a recurring idea in the FN's speeches about Joan of Arc. But what exactly does it mean to occupy a space? An examination of the sliding scale of meaning within the verb *occuper* will help to frame our discussion of the FN's manipulation of the motif of occupation in its speeches commemorating Joan of Arc. In *Le Robert Micro*, the first definition for "occuper" and its subsequent examples evoke military domination: "prendre possession de (un lieu). *Occuper le terrain*, le tenir en s'y installant solidement. *Occuper un pays vaincu*, le soumettre à une occupation" ("occuper," emphasis in original). *Larousse's* first definition also references a military presence but places tactics in a secondary position to the idea of establishing one's authority (which may or may not be accomplished via armed intervention): "Être établi en maître dans un pays, une région; s'y installer en substituant son autorité de l'État envahi ou en prendre possession militaire" ("occuper"). By this definition, which often includes armed coercion, the term can be appropriately applied to France's situation during the Hundred Years War, during the lifetime of Joan of Arc. It can equally be applied to the initial settling (i.e. militarized subordination) and continued pacification of France's ex-colonies. *Le Robert Micro's* second definition, while less aggressive in connotation, still deals with the idea of taking up an excessive amount of space; that is, appropriating space to which one is perceived as unentitled, as emphasized by the contextualized uses that follow: "remplir, couvrir un certain espace. *Il occupe deux sieges, L'armoire occupe trop de place.*" The third definition and its example equally relate to the idea of filling a space, but are described in more neutral terms, simply as "Habiter. *Ils occupent le rez-de-chaussée*" (899-900).

As outlined the analysis that follows, the FN often draws on the more inflammatory connotations of the first definition to describe the activities of French Muslims that actually fall within the third definition. However, when Muslims publicly assert an ethno-religious identity through participation in prayer and the wearing of clothing such as the *hijab* or (much less commonly) the *burqua*, the FN characterizes these practices as an example of the second definition: taking up a disproportionate amount of space. As writer Azouz Begag posits, the expectations for “étrangers” often exceed the standards to which ordinary citizens are held, translating into a social erasure designed to put and keep them in their place:

Le déni de l'autre . . . revient à attendre de lui qu'il soit invisible, aveugle, et muet . . . bref, qu'il soit là, docile, qu'il ne dérange pas ce qui préexistait avant son arrivée. Il est condamné à l'excellence sociale pour être accepté. Autant dire que lui est dénié le droit d'être délinquant, médiocre, beauf, mauvais conducteur, de faire du bruit et sentir fort . . . Au fond, le leurre voudrait signifier cela: être intégré, c'est ne pas exister socialement . . . Rester à sa place. (37-8)

Patricia Williams's discussion of language as a problematically equalizing currency becomes clearer in light of the FN's use of the term “occupation,” which conflates the primary definition of the term with its secondary and tertiary meanings (Oliver 107). In so doing, the FN appropriates Joan's suffering as well as colonial suffering, more generally, by depicting France as an occupied land even though France's population of *Français de souche* far outnumbers its population from the Maghreb and citizens of European descent do not face the kind of institutionalized racism encountered by first and second generation immigrants.

An analysis of the recurring motif of France as an occupied land in Le Pen's commemorative speech on Joan's 600<sup>th</sup> birthday will offer a starting point from which to consider how this idea becomes a template for commenting on France's geopolitical situation. In the first few minutes of the speech, Le Pen rehearses with dramatic verve the highs and lows of Joan's short life in the public eye: the year she spent in battle, then the following one,

characterized by her capture, persecution, imprisonment and eventual demise. Le Pen constructs Joan as a sort of victor-victim, triumphant in her aim of securing Charles VII's coronation at Reims, yet vanquished by France's invaders and their foreign-friendly collaborators. Gradually, Le Pen begins paralleling the English-occupied France of the Hundred Years War to current day France, its national identity dually encroached upon, in his view, by "des structures ambiguës de l'Union Européenne" and "l'immigration massive d'étrangers du Tiers Monde" (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). This is not an unusual rhetorical move. As Dimitri Almeida points out, Le Pen has been using some variation on this formula since the 1990s: "a digression on the state of France during the Hundred Years War before the siege of Orleans" to segue into "the supposedly striking parallels" between past and present (227).

Le Pen partially accomplishes this merging of past and present through his consistent use of the present tense to describe the past, linguistically collapsing the temporal distinction between the two in sentences such as the one that opens Le Pen's biographical summary of Joan's life: "Les temps d'alors sont cruels au peuple et il y a 'grande pitié au Royaume de France'" (JM Le Pen 1/7/12). Near the conclusion of his digression, Le Pen again reiterates this superimposition of time periods, while also suggesting that Joan is a symbolic stand-in for himself or his daughter: "Elle n'échappe même pas aux procédés qu'on pourrait croire de notre temps: la désinformation et la diabolisation" (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). By claiming that he and his daughter have been vilified, like Joan, the FN figurehead aligns the party with a figure closely identified with innocence and, as a result, masks the ways in which they have vilified immigrants.

Before transitioning from Joan's biography to international politics, Le Pen quotes several verses from François Villon's 1461 "Ballade des Dames du temps jadis" that will serve

as a microtext for *le président d'honneur*'s elaboration of contemporary laments. One of the first literary texts composed about Joan of Arc just thirty years after her death, Villon's elegy couples Joan to motifs of land, loss, and longing for earlier, easier times. After lauding several other honorable women of times past, Villon cites Joan as the culmination of a "catalog of great but lost women" (Meltzer 22). Hence, by referencing Villon's nostalgia for the past and his clear-cut cast of villains and victims, Le Pen endows the French with "naturalized" innocence and the non-French with ill intentions.

Villon's cited stanza reads: "Et Jeanne, la bonne Lorraine/ Qu'Anglais brûlèrent à Rouen/ Où sont-elles, où, vierge souveraine,/Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!" His first verse identifies Joan with her land of origin, Lorraine, which serves as a pre-national microcosm of France. Situated at the country's border, Lorraine already evokes precarity as a region susceptible to invasion. When viewed retrospectively, this sense of instability intensifies given that, as previously mentioned, historically Lorraine has been a contested terrain. Indeed, the backdrop for the 2014 commemoration merged Lorraine's flag with the European Union's, suggesting that France's national identity (here represented by the regional) was being subsumed by a European one, as indicated by the disproportionate amount of space dedicated to the EU's flag. A Joan pictured in profile blows the stars of the EU's flag amiss to restore the *bleu, blanc, et rouge*. By citing Villon's poem, which references the menaced territory, Le Pen primes his audience to perceive the immigrants he will reference in the following paragraph of his speech as agents of a parallel incursion.

Villon's cited stanza also develops a tension between an individualized depiction of a "noble" French citizen (Jeanne, la bonne Lorraine) pitted against a de-individualized "ignoble" invading force (les Anglais) that can then be extended to other populations. As the stanza

demonstrates, the word for Joan's birthplace (*Lorraine*) is the same as the designation for someone from that land, (also *Lorraine*) each mutually qualified by the descriptor "bonne." Thus, Villon endows the land and its citizens with the quality of goodness, which Joan personifies. Villon contrasts this characterization of Joan as an individualized exemplar of goodness to the de-individualized and presumably homogenously villainous *Anglais* in the following line: "Qu'Anglais brûlèrent à Rouen." As Françoise Meltzer observes, "Nascent nationalism and the innocence of nature are blended in the image and made all the stronger through the juxtaposition of the following line's allusion to the "Angloys"—those who had the barbaric audacity to burn Joan at Rouen"<sup>98</sup> (23). This potential for conflation of person and place due to the dual meanings of Lorraine also remind us that the land, like Joan's body, had been scorched through the English's warfare. As a result, the English are "both 'othered' (they are foreigners) and by the same token *unnatural* (they are cruel, not good, and from an unfamiliar land)" (*For Fear of the Fire* 23).

The following couplet introduces another ambiguity, which aligns the figure of Joan with Mary through its apostrophe to the *Vierge souveraine*. Arguably, this descriptor could refer either to the Virgin Mary, whom "the French famously simply call the Virgin," or Joan, whose *nom de guerre*, "La Pucelle," is almost synonymous with the word "virgin" (*For Fear of the Fire* 23). As a result of this semantic slippage, the reference to the unnamed Virgin casts a holy aura around a national figure through association with a religious figure. The virgin's description as *souveraine*, portrays her as superior (the word's first meaning) while also conjuring the idea of political autonomy as applied to states. Hence, the ideas of Joan, Mary, and the state converge, casting Joan-as-France as both innocent and elect. Therefore, by introducing this vision of the

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<sup>98</sup> See the introduction of Meltzer's *For Fear of the Fire* for a more comprehensive analysis of Villon's stanza (22-3).



state as innocent via the poem's depiction of Joan, Le Pen further primes his public to identify with a sense of injury when he compares Joan's situation to France's current "occupation."

The stanza's concluding verse echoes a rhetorical question posed at the end of each preceding stanza in the poem: "Où sont les neiges d'antan?" This nostalgic refrain associates the snow-blanketed and presumably pure *paysage du passé* with the now gone *Pucelle* of previous lines. But by this point in the poem, the question's fifth repetition, it becomes an almost accusatory, anguished cry, as indicated by the shift in punctuation from question to exclamation mark. Images of scorched skin and ravaged land intensify the speaker's longing for the ephemeral innocence implied by the snows of yesteryear.

Villon's evocation of borderland precarity and irrevocable loss set the stage for the comparison that Le Pen makes in the next section of the speech. After reading the stanza's ode to Joan, Le Pen immediately parallels the foreign-occupied France of the 1400s to France's position vis-à-vis the European Union, while blaming financial and identity ruin on immigrants.

Comme au temps de Jeanne, la France est aujourd'hui menacée de disparaître. Prisonnière des structures ambiguës de l'Union Européenne, elle a perdu l'essentiel de sa souveraineté. Elle n'a plus de frontières et 80% de ses lois sont faites à Bruxelles. Son armée est aux ordres d'un commandement étranger. Le chômage, l'insécurité, l'endettement couronnent sa ruine. L'immigration massive d'étrangers du Tiers Monde l'accable financièrement, attente au plus profond de son identité et constitue pour demain une menace mortelle. (JM Le Pen 1/6/12)

The application of the term "prisonnière" to France, in the context of a speech in which Le Pen previously described the appalling conditions of Joan's unlawful incarceration and persecution,<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> "Elle est faite prisonnière à Beauvais et vendue aux Anglais par son vainqueur bourguignon, Jean de Luxembourg, emprisonnée à Rouen, dans une cage de fer puis ferrée aux pieds et à la taille et gardée dans un cachot sordide par sept soudards anglais" (JM Le Pen 1/6/12).

depicts the French nation as the victim of a sort of “colonization” by the European Union, even though France is not only the EU’s largest member state but also one of the most well-represented nations, with 74 delegates in the European parliament (“France”). Le Pen intensifies this analogy of occupation and foreign rule by depicting France as geographically indistinct from the rest of Europe (“Elle n’a plus de frontières”) and politically and militarily submissive to the European Union, even though the EU is governed by the European council, which does not have the power to pass laws. Marine returns to the idea that France is being crowded out in her speech the following year when she asserts that “L’Europe prenait subrepticement le contrôle de nos institutions et réduisait chaque jour un peu plus l’espace de notre souveraineté nationale” (MLP 5/1/13). To return to Jean-Marie Le Pen’s 2012 speech, the concluding reference to a deadly threat looming in an unspecified time in the future in some ways counterposes Villon’s yearning for landscapes past. Villon’s “antan” translates to “last year” while implying a more distant, more perfect year of yore. By the same token, Le Pen’s “demain” implies the urgency of a literal tomorrow while meaning something more like “soon.”

After implying France’s quasi-colonization by the EU, Le Pen references the second threat to national sovereignty, “l’immigration massive d’étrangers du Tiers Monde.” Like Villon’s depersonalized depiction of *les Anglais*, Le Pen’s allusion to immigrants aims to other them, pairing an intentional imprecision with an intensified attention to alterity. Le Pen informs his audience that the immigration is massive, suggesting the second definition of “occuper” as infringing on the space of others by claiming an *inappropriate* amount of space for oneself. Yet because the adjective “massive” is neither quantified (How many, exactly?) nor contextualized (Are more immigrants arriving in comparison to previous years? In comparison to other

European nations?), the term can expand to the dimensions of the audience's fears.<sup>100</sup> Marine relies on a similar technique on the May 1 speech the following year by pairing the word "immigration" with other words that suggest being overtaken, speaking of "l'immigration incontrôlée" and l'immigration [qui] explosa" while juxtaposing it with discussions of delinquency to suggest causality (MLP 5/1/13). The redundant specification that the immigration referenced is carried out by *étrangers*, emphasizes a presumed fundamental difference between the French and such *étrangers*, as connoted by the twin meanings of the word as both "foreign" and "strange." After drawing on all of the potential connotations of ethno-racial-religious-linguistic differences contained within the word "étrangers," Le Pen also reiterates that this difference manifests itself in economic disparity, by specifying that the immigrants issue from the Third World. Although a French demographer Alfred Suavy coined the term "third world" in the early fifties to designate countries that were neither capitalist (first world) nor communist (second world), in its common usage the term has taken on pejorative connotations of primitivism and poverty (Wing 1).

Deploying the term *tiers monde* intensifies this verbal distancing by suggesting that the French and its foreigners belong to separate, economically tiered worlds, even though they most often share intimate, overlapping histories, and France's economy has been undergirded by "third-world" labor since the beginning of colonial contact. Indeed, the nation from which France's largest immigrant population hails, Algeria, was administratively considered a part of

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<sup>100</sup> It is true that the percentage of immigrants from the Maghreb has increased in recent decades: in 1958, North Africans made up 24 percent of the total foreign population whereas by 1990, they comprised 45.4 percent (Derderian 3). Because it is illegal to collect information on national origin via census in France and the Schengen Agreement allows for free passage among countries within the twenty-six European countries in the Schengen Area, it is very difficult to collect accurate data on the make-up of France's current population.

France for 130 years of colonial rule,<sup>101</sup> and France actively recruited manual laborers from the colonies during the 1950s, paying their passage to the *métropole* and facilitating the path to naturalization for immigrants and their families through programs such as the *regroupement familial* (Derderian 8). Following World War II, an estimated “350,000 Algerian men worked in the French manufacturing and construction industries in Paris, Lyon, and Marseille, contributing greatly to France’s thirty years of spectacular postwar growth known as the *Trente Glorieuses*” (Silverstein 4). As Stovall indicates, “France’s unprecedented material prosperity after 1945 would have been unimaginable without [immigrants]” (Stovall 265). A 1994 report entitled *Les Étrangers en France* from France’s Ministry of the Interior concludes, “Together with the United States and Canada, France is one of the industrialized countries whose population owes the most to immigration” (Derderian 3).

The indistinct descriptor “third world” also masks the fact that most of the immigration towards France is a legacy of colonial contact. According to a survey conducted in 2008, the largest proportion of immigrants entering France, after Europeans, come from the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, both regions where France had a heavy colonial presence (“Répartition des immigrées par pays de naissance en 2011”). Le Pen’s choice to use a blanket term rather than name specific nations maintains the illusion of historical separateness. As Edward Said and Homi Bhabha have argued, the “maintenance of artificial dividing lines” sustained the empire and continues to recur in neocolonial discourse (Derderian 7). Therefore, the FN’s pairing of emotive language with imprecise descriptors creates an ever-present specter of, in Ahmed’s terms, a “bogus asylum seeker.” This bogeyman of the border could lurk anywhere, takes the form of anyone not immediately recognizable as one of “us,” and is perceived as the cause of

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<sup>101</sup> Unlike many French colonies, Algeria was actually divided into three departments, as if it were separated from France only by the waters of the Mediterranean.

injury to the national body. As Ahmed clarifies, “Such figures of hate circulate, and indeed accumulate their affective value, precisely insofar as they do not have a fixed referent” (47).

The rhetoric of occupation recurs in Marine Le Pen’s speech, delivered after her father’s *éloge* to Joan on the very same day. Marine opens the speech by characterizing the crowd as an island of solidarity in an endangered space, menaced by an eroded sense of national sovereignty. Alluding to the *bleu, blanc et rouge* bouquets and waving flags that encircle her crowd of supporters, Marine describes Paris, here a metonymy of the Nation, as protected by the presence of like-minded citizens and thus granted a reprieve in its (presumably habitual) encroached upon existence. Describing the capital, Marine says “Paris, qui en cet instant, en cet instant de grâce, et par votre présence chaleureuse, redevient, notre chez nous” (M Le Pen 5/1/12). By naming the moment as fleeting in the twice-repeated words, “cet instant,” Le Pen creates an impression of insecurity, while attributing a quasi-religious quality to their assembly through her use of the word “grâce.” At the end of the same sentence, Marine’s seemingly tautological insertion of the possessive adjective “notre” paired with the verb “redevient” insists on original ownership, by the party’s constituency, (primarily white, working-class French of European origin), while also furthering the idea that their claim to the land has been compromised. As importantly, the addition of “notre” makes a distinction between the different valences of possession conveyed by “notre” and “nous,” in the phrase “notre chez nous.” Here, “notre” suggests more exclusivity than “nous,” underlining the idea that “nous” has expanded to include others not recognized by Le Pen’s use of “notre.” Thus, she pits a broader “chez nous des autres” against a more circumscribed “chez nous des nôtres.”

Towards the close of her speech, Le Pen returns to this idea of occupation, but intensifies the affective impact by identifying the people of France with Charles VII, the medieval king in exile:

Le peuple de France mérite mieux que les dirigeants qu'il s'est choisis, car ce n'est pas le dauphin de Bourges qui, aujourd'hui, a perdu sa couronne, c'est le peuple français. Non, ce n'est pas l'Anglais ou le Bourguignon qui font régner l'insécurité dans le beau pays de France, c'est la folle politique d'immigration incontrôlée [...] Voilà, hier c'était le roi d'Angleterre devenu le roi de France, aujourd'hui c'est le roi de Bruxelles qui est devenu maître chez nous. (M Le Pen 5/1/12)

By referencing the “dauphin de Bourges,” a pejorative term that Charles VII’s detractors used against him, Le Pen places the audience in the position of disinherited dauphin, deprived of his (that is to say *their*) birthright as a result of “immigration incontrôlée.” In so doing, she tacitly ties the idea of citizenship to ancestry— a king is only such because he has hundreds of years of traceable bloodlines on his side. In making this comparison between the occupied France of the Hundred Years War and the present, Le Pen implies that one can quickly fall from sovereign to subject as a result of another’s presence. Not only is this feared other capable of thieving one’s “crown,” that is, the position of privilege to which one feels entitled, but he can also instate a reign of insecurity.

As Sara Ahmed explains in an analysis of similar fear-based rhetoric in a publication of the British National Front, such narratives work on the emotions of the public by inviting them to identify with a position of injury and calling on them to “[develop] a certain rage against these illegitimate others, who are represented as ‘swarms’ in the nation. Indeed, to feel love for the nation, whereby love is an investment that should be returned [. . .] is also to feel injured by these others, who are ‘taking’ what is yours” (Ahmed 1). These narratives function by “generating a subject who is endangered by imagined others” (Ahmed 42). As a result, they tap into an anxiety that the subject will not only lose access to jobs, security, and wealth, but that he,

himself, will be entirely replaced. Thus, in such narratives, the “white subjects claim the position of hosts and at the same time they claim the position of victim, as the ones who are damaged by an ‘unmerciful government’” (Ahmed 42). As these emotions of fear and hatred circulate through economies of emotion, they accumulate force and attach themselves to particular bodies. Fear especially “sticks” (Ahmed’s term) to some individuals orienting others away from them. Consequently, this generalized defense against injury limits the social space particular bodies are able to inhabit: “fear works to contain some bodies such that they take up less space” (Ahmed 69).

Marine Le Pen once again draws on potential feelings of betrayal by national leaders (the “unmerciful government”) in 2015, when she lauds her audience members as “Héroïques, enfin ceux qui n’ont déjà plus rien et à qui la caste politique donne des leçons de morale en les sommant de partager ce qu’ils n’ont pas avec les migrants venus du monde entier attirés par une protection sociale dont les Français sont progressivement privés” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). Le Pen’s phrasing recalls her words from an earlier speech in 2013 when she proclaimed, “La France est généreuse, mais sa générosité doit profiter d’abord à ses citoyens. L’égalité, ce n’est pas l’égalité avec tous les citoyens du monde. C’est l’égalité entre les citoyens français . . . Et c’est l’assurance que les Français ne seront jamais moins bien traités que les autres par le gouvernement français” (MLP 5/1/13). As Ahmed explains, the attribution of generosity to Western nations is a move that frequently works to “forget the gifts made by others as well as prior relations of debt accrued over time” (22). Here, Le Pen expresses affront at the idea of “sharing” resources yet what goes unrecognized in this statement is that the nation’s wealth has been historically bolstered by colonial and migrant labor and that that labor has systematically been compensated at an inferior rate.

Indeed, Marine Le Pen's references to occupation have resulted in formal accusations of hate speech for comments she made at a rally in Lyon, France, in 2010. A Muslim rights group, the Collective Against Islamophobia in France, filed charges against Le Pen of which she was acquitted in 2015. During the event in question, Le Pen made an analogy between the Nazi occupation of France in World War II and the current-day presence of Muslims wearing signifiers of their religion (headscarves) or praying in public spaces:

Il y a quinze ans on a eu le voile, il y avait de plus en plus de voiles. Puis il y a eu la burqa, il y a eu de plus en plus de burqa. Et puis il y a eu des prières sur la voie publique [...] maintenant il y a dix ou quinze endroits où de manière régulière un certain nombre de personnes viennent pour accaparer les territoires. Je suis désolée, mais pour ceux qui aiment beaucoup parler de la Seconde guerre mondiale, s'il s'agit de parler d'occupation, on pourrait en parler, pour le coup, parce que ça c'est une occupation du territoire. Certes y'a pas de blindés, y'a pas de soldats, mais c'est une occupation tout de même et elle pèse sur les habitants. ("Islam et Occupation")

While Marine Le Pen does not directly reference Joan of Arc in this passage, she still draws on the semantic field of symbolic encroachment by using terms such as "accaparer" and "territoire" while also using more direct accusations of "occupation." Once again, we see an elision of the first and second definitions "occuper," insofar as the demonstration of (non-Christian) religion becomes a case of taking up too much space. When defending her statements, Marine Le Pen implicitly identified herself with Joan, suggesting that she was victimized for her honesty. Le Pen's insistence that she faced persecution because she "dared to say what everyone in France thinks," recalls the proverb that Joan quoted at her interrogation: "Sometimes people are hanged for telling the truth" ("EU Strips Immunity" 1).

Le Pen also enacts boundaries around the idea of "Frenchness" when she laments that the visibility of Muslims "pèse sur les habitants." Like her reference to "notre chez nous," in the 2012 speech, in her statement in Lyon, Le Pen uses the word "habitant" to circumscribe access to full citizenship. By saying that such actions weigh on France's inhabitants, Le Pen sets up the



categories of *habitant* and publicly practicing Muslim as mutually exclusive. In so doing, she refuses to recognize Muslim residents of France who publicly affirm their religious heritage or beliefs as *true* inhabitants. When Marine Le Pen states that being confronted with the visible presence of Islam weighs on inhabitants, she positions herself as a spokesperson for the French people. Yet a survey in 2006 showed that the general public did not necessarily share this feeling. Bowen affirms that 74% of respondents saw no conflict between “being a devout Muslim and living in a modern society” (3). While, like most French politicians, Le Pen has maintained a hard-line emphasis on *laïcité* as a pre-condition for a modern society, it is hard to ignore the irony inherent in the criticism of non-adherence to *laïcité* from the leader of a party so closely affiliated with a religious figure. Of course, France’s Catholic heritage still informs decisions about the public sector, such as holidays for school and work, just as it informs Marine’s speeches. Marine peppered her 2015 homage to Joan with Biblical allusions, calling the Euro a “veau d’or” and European heads of state its “idolâtres” who would predict complete chaos or “les dix plaies d’Egypte” if the currency were to change (M Le Pen 5/1/15). Such reliance on Biblical allusions reveals the uneven application of *laïcité* via which Christianity is naturalized as a point of reference within a “common culture” and therefore a tacit exception to *laïcité*.

### **Exceptionalism**

“Aimer la France [...] c’est se sentir l’héritier d’un grand peuple, un citoyen unique au monde dont la voix singulière se fait entendre dans le concert des nations.”

- Marine Le Pen, speech delivered on May 1, 2015

This belief that one *is* an exception and therefore *deserving* of exceptions uneasily cohabits with the practice of equality. To be exceptional means to be extraordinary or

unprecedented: “hors de l’ordinaire; dont les qualités sont rares, éminentes” (“exceptionnel”). Not surprisingly, a nation’s belief in its own superiority hierarchizes its relationships with other countries and has often enabled colonial and neocolonial policies. The language of exceptionalism and divinely smiled-upon destinies goes hand in hand with an investment in white supremacy that has often undergirded colonial practice, as indicated by the entry for “Colonie” in *Le Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*,: “De toutes les races actuelles, le plus propre à la colonisation, c’est la race anglo-saxonne. On dirait que les trois quarts du globe lui ont été légués par testament divin” (qtd. in Teraud 13). As Walt notes, exceptionalism recurs in Britain’s “white man’s burden,” France’s *mission civilisatrice*, the Soviet Union’s dream of a socialist utopia, and the United States’ tendency to impose sanctions on other countries when it has been unwilling to enter into international agreements, itself, or in other cases, uphold them<sup>102</sup>

(1). Because the FN often positions itself in relationship to other countries through the party leaders’ retelling of Joan of Arc’s story, it follows that one of the most striking motifs in the FN’s adoption of Johannic myth is its emphasis on Joan of Arc’s exceptionality.

Often the FN’s investment in Joan’s exceptionality manifests itself in its leaders’ tendency to speak of her in superlative terms. Several such examples appear in Jean-Marie Le Pen’s 2012 commemorative speech. First, he calls Joan “la libératrice de la France” then goes on to deem her life “la destinée la plus extraordinaire de l’histoire humaine” (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). He echoes this idea later in the speech, once again portraying Joan as elect when he states, “Il n’existe nulle part au monde une destinée comparable” (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). When discussing Joan’s military involvement, Le Pen positions his heroine as a singular savior, emphasizing her intervention at a “landmark” moment: “Tout est perdu ou presque, quand survient Jeanne” (JM

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<sup>102</sup> Since 9/11, the U.S. has resisted compliance to the Geneva Convention, which protects detainees from cruel and inhumane treatment.

Le Pen 5/1/12). Le Pen further reiterates Joan's exceptional qualities when he mentions that, while she had brothers and sisters, "c'est elle seule qui entrera, par l'écoute de ses Voix, dans l'espace mystérieux de l'exaltation spirituelle" (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). In her speech on the same occasion three years later, Marine plays on a similar idea of the FN having an exceptional destiny when Marine affirms: "notre combat est noble, notre cause est juste, et donc notre victoire est inéluctable" (M Le Pen 5/1/15).

Le Pen's discussion of Joan's military career further intensifies her portrayal as exceptional insofar as he depicts the military victory in Orléans and subsequent win at Patay as a solitary intervention, attributable to one person rather than coordinated, concerted effort carried out by a cadre of well-trained, professional soldiers. In one description of Joan's soldiering, Le Pen completely effaces the troops who accompanied *La Pucelle*, saying "Le 13 mai 1429, elle boute hors la ville les troupes de Suffolk, un mois plus tard, elle écrase l'armée anglaise à Patay le 18 juin 1423" (JM Le Pen 5/1/2012). The virile verb choice of "boute" and "écrase" inscribes Joan in a tradition of solo male military heroes, while occulting the fact that she often played a symbolic role in battle and carried her flag to safeguard herself from using her sword. Equally omitted from the speech is the fact that, despite her success at Orléans, English troops remained in France for another twenty years after Joan's death. Yet this insistence on Joan as a lone underdog is essential to the FN's own political identity as a fringe party with a certain "brand recognition" as a political outlier with a charismatic leader.

The FN's alignment of its own exceptionality with Joan's is especially apparent in a televised presidential campaign advertisement in 2007, which intersperses scenes from Luc Besson's film about Joan of Arc, *The Messenger*, with the party's political rhetoric. The ad begins with an image of a lone Joan, gripping her standard and striding forth until her face fills

the frame before planting her flag into the soil. On a misty battlefield, she appears to be the first afoot while other soldiers slumber. White words surge up on the black screen, addressing the audience in the singular imperative: “Français,/la nation t’appelle.”<sup>103</sup> The words, which start small then move forward to fill the screen, visually mimic the first shot of Joan, who appears in the barely perceivable distance then approaches a static camera to create a reverse effect of a zoom. The optical correspondence between the soldiering Joan in the first shot and the disembodied words (seemingly the voice of the FN) symbolically merges the two, an effect that is intensified by the absence of narrative voiceover. The ad cuts back to an increasingly frantic Joan attempting to rouse her sleeping comrades in arms who are anonymized as an indistinct mass of armor. While a metronomic bell tolls, she cries, “Debout! Soldats! Soldats! Allez! La bataille a commencé!” Given the absence of an onscreen representation of the sound’s origin, it appears to be extradiegetic, suggesting that Joan, like the party who is ventriloquizing her, is the only one who recognizes that it is “do or die” time, as intoned by the ever more ominous death knell.

The second half of the ad establishes a clearer audience for its message while also clarifying the party’s ideas about citizenship, which is first and foremost imagined as white and male. The words on the screen interpellate a tacitly hierarchized French citizenry: “Français de Souche/Français de Coeur/par le sang reçu/ou par le sang versé.” This formula emphasizes that while some are born into the privileges of citizenship by simply receiving blood (“Français de souche”), others have to earn it through an active affirmation of loyalty by spilling it (Français de Coeur”), presumably in the context of military service. After the phrase, “par le sang reçu” appears onscreen, the commercial cuts to an image of four white soldiers whose sepia-toned

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<sup>103</sup> Because the words appear onscreen in short segments, I have included slash marks to indicate the breaks in phrasing.

uniforms suggest that they hail from an earlier time without pinpointing when. Next, the words “ou par le sang versé” appear onscreen, and this image is followed by a shot of a single black soldier in profile, whose uniform also suggests that he fought earlier in the twentieth century, perhaps as a draftee from France’s colonies. His image, however, remains onscreen only for a split second before being overlaid with the words of an alarmist message in large font: “Ne laisse pas mourir ton pays!” Thus, while the ad grants the status of “Français de Coeur” to nonwhite citizens who have battled or “spilled blood” for France, the image of the black soldier occupies an ambiguous position. The ad others the black soldier by visually segregating him from the white soldiers and only revealing half of his face. In this way, the ad hints that he is not entirely assimilable to the group of *Français de souche* who visually preceded him. Moreover, the ad’s juxtaposition of the one image of a black soldier with the alarmist message about the impending decline of the country creates an uncomfortable association between the two, even as it superficially attempts to pay tribute to the *Français de coeur*.

In the final scenes of the ad, the FN creates a sense of critical juncture by depicting Joan at a moment of potential defeat while likening her endangered state to France’s vulnerability in the face of globalization. Via a high-angle shot of Joan on horseback, we witness Joan taking an arrow to the chest as the death knell rings one final time, reverberating as a dazed *Pucelle* gazes at the site of her wound. In slow motion, she drops her white standard and falls into the indistinct crowd below. Arms extended in crucifixion, hers is the only face in focus. The words “leur mondialisation est un piège mortel/au service de leurs intérêts financiers” appear on the screen, quickly followed by a red-eyed Uncle Sam, whose face fades to a ghoulishly green skull before evaporating. Another textual rallying cry sounds: “Nous ne soumettrons pas à leur domination. /Nous ne ferons pas leurs guerres injustes.” In rapid succession, decontextualized

images of war flash on the screen: tanks, landscapes of rubble, a hooded man on the executioner's block as Joan whimpers, wounded, via voiceover, eventually shrieking, "No!" Next, we read the words, "Nous ne voterons pas pour leurs pantins," as a devilish-looking Nicolas Sarkozy rises onto the screen, followed by a *côterie* of other French politicians, presumably his accomplices in submission to the U.S., as the face of a suffering Joan remains in the background. The on-screen words then admonish, "Ils ne sont grands que parce que nous sommes à genoux" before flashing to Joan ripping the arrow out of her chest (a detail Besson invented for dramatic effect). Victory music swells as an enfeebled France is instructed to follow la Pucelle's example: "Français, lève-toi!" The ad then instructs the viewer to "vote pour le seul homme qui leur résiste," before cutting to a rejuvenated Joan on horseback galloping at the head of an army and calling out, "suivez-moi!"

As suggested by the previous description of the ad, several of its elements imagine Joan as a singular, prophetic figure. By pairing emotionally charged clips of Besson's Joan with contemporary images, the ad mediates the transmission of the emotion from Joan (with whom the viewer is invited to identify) to the FN's leader (who becomes a modern-day incarnation of Joan). The repeated use of close-up, beginning with the opening frame, signals that Joan is the only person doing the real work of claiming ownership over the land, as signified when she plants her standard. She is also imagined as the only one protecting France, as indicated by the close-ups of her in battle. While there are other soldiers represented in the film clips interspersed with the ad, Joan's battlemates remain in soft, smudged focus, suggesting their insignificance and interchangeability. As importantly, the ad depicts Joan as the sole soldier who *truly* understands the danger, as indicated when she tries to rally the sleeping troops who dream on, oblivious. Consequently, she is the sole person who has the courage to take action, as signaled

when she deftly yanks the arrow from her chest while a befuddled battlemate stares on in shock. By concluding the ad with an exhortation to vote for “le seul homme qui leur résiste,” and juxtaposing these words with a shot of an optimistic Joan galloping off to battle while addressing a similar, more generalized command to the audience (“Suivez-moi!”), the ad positions Le Pen as the inheritor of Joan’s legacy of exceptionality: standing strong against a formidable foe (here identified as the United States and the French politicians who support U.S. foreign policy).

The use of the more familiar “tu” form in the ad’s intertitles to address an unknown, plural audience extends this idea of exceptionality to the viewers, establishing an affective triangulation between the potential voter, the onscreen Joan, and Le Pen. As Ahmed’s work on national feeling indicates, the use of the second person point of view is also prominent in the advertisements of another nationalist group: the British National Front. Ahmed explains this strategic use of the second person: “The [ad’s] narrative invites the reader to adopt the ‘you’ through working on emotions” (1). To accept this invitation or become the “you” is to agree to make others the origin of one’s feelings of vulnerability. In the ad, Joan’s arrow to the chest, fired by an Englishman, conveys an image of the national body under (foreign) attack despite precautions to secure the body’s borders (an armored breastplate). While in both English and French the “you” or second person point of view directly implicates the addressee, the French use of “tu” is even more striking. The ad’s use of the second person singular gives the impression that its message speaks to just one person, creating an unexpected sense of intimacy for this medium. Equally important to this establishment of intimacy, the “tu” abandons the customary formality when addressing an unknown public and instead assumes a more familiar mode of address, which builds on the idea of kinship. Indeed, just as the idea of kinship is not only foregrounded through the familial relations of the party’s main figures (Jean-Marie, Marine,

and Jean-Marie's niece, Marion Maréchal Le Pen) but also in their speeches about Joan, as well, in which she is alternately imagined as a spiritual foremother or a "petite soeur." While the "you" appears singular, it gestures at a plurality: "the 'you' implicitly evokes a 'we,' a group of subjects who identify themselves with the injured nation in this performance of personal injury," symbolized in the ad by the wounded Joan (Ahmed 2). Thus, the ad's unusual usage of "tu" conveys that the addressee is not a member of a minority voting bloc, who is likely to face defeat at the polls but like Joan, one individual capable of a singular, heroic intervention. The only use of "vous" that appears to be aimed at the viewer comes via Joan's invitation to follow her in the concluding shot. Therefore, while the ad asks the viewer to take a (singular) stand, like Joan, at the polls, it suggests that one affirms membership in a political community, passing from "tu" to "vous," by following a charismatic leader.

Given the FN's emphasis on Joan's singularity, to what extent then, we might wonder, *was* Joan exceptional? While it would be hard to make a case to the contrary, that Joan was la *française médiévale moyenne*, the party's portrayals of Joan as a singular, prophetic figure require contextualization. If it is true that no one in her immediate family claimed to hear voices, it is also true that Joan was not that unusual in her claims of mysticism. As biographer Nancy Goldstone comments, "In nearly every hamlet, town, or village in fifteenth-century France there lived someone who claimed to have visions, or who could interpret dreams, or who was otherwise believed to have somehow been touched by God" (93). As Goldstone has convincingly argued, while Joan was often described as having a powerful personal charisma, it is unlikely that Joan would have ever gotten past Robert de Baudricourt if Charles's mother-in-law, the politically savvy Queen Yolande, had not recognized in her a figure capable of rallying a discouraged dauphin and his troops to take military action. Nor was Joan so exceptional that she



could not easily be impersonated: when her brother toured the city of Orléans with Claude des Armoises, a woman posing as Joan just a few years after her death, their trickery convinced many citizens, including some of the men with whom Joan had fought. That said, the judges of Joan's condemnation trial faulted her with seeing herself as exceptional, that is, capable of verifying her own voices rather than submitting them to the Church for consideration. And, as Emily Apter has reflected, some of Joan's own words, such as the following statement reportedly spoken on the last day of her life, attest to a kind of nationalistic narcissism: "It was I who brought the message of the crown to my King. I was the angel and there was no other. And the crown was no more than the promise of my King's coronation, which I made to him" (qtd. in Apter 58).

Sentiments of a similar tenor are recognizable in Jean-Marie Le Pen's words about France, which he describes as "un pays qui a connu des épisodes providentiels" and whose "rayonnement éclaire encore aujourd'hui le monde" (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). Marine Le Pen also adopts this motif of light and darkness but positions the party as the lightbearer for the rest of France, saying that in these dark times "il est temps de montrer une lumière aux Français. De sortir une lanterne pour les éclairer et leur indiquer le chemin" (M Le Pen 5/1/12). These recurring quasi-religious associations with light imagine the party (in Marine's words) and France (in Jean-Marie's) as a modern city on a hill.<sup>104</sup> Christ speaks of the "city on a hill" during his Sermon on the Mount, telling his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). In the verses that follow, he speaks of letting the light with which one has been entrusted shine forth, unhindered (Matthew 5:15-16). By association, these identifications evoke heightened responsibility as a counterpart of heightened visibility

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<sup>104</sup> This motif has been featured in the political speeches of American presidents such as John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

while also emphasizing the party's self-conception as, "chosen," like Joan. Responsibility is often conceived of as a duty to others: the ability to respond. But, it can also suggest accountability or its more incriminating counterpart, blame. The next section will explore the idea of blame as it is mediated through the FN's appropriations of Joan.

### **False Witnessing**

This dissertation advances the idea that Joan of Arc's story, itself transmitted to us largely through trial testimony, becomes a template through which other groups testify to their own perceived traumas. As a corollary, Joan, herself, becomes a model through which to attempt to tell "truths" and assign blame for geopolitical situations often closely affiliated with the aftermath of colonial control. But what happens when groups conjure up ghosts of Joan to identify themselves as victims while obscuring the victimhood of others?

Kelly Oliver's work on witnessing provides a useful theoretical tool for understanding occurrences of "false testimony," or what she defines as "merely an acting out rather than a working through the ways in which the indebtedness to others is repressed" (109). Building on the work of Sigmund Freud, Patricia Williams, and Dominique LaCapra, Oliver articulates the way privileged groups co-opt the suffering of women and racial minorities<sup>105</sup> by using the same language to make parallels between vastly different circumstances without taking subject positions or historical circumstances into consideration. Oliver's work is informed by Freud insofar as she sees "false testimony" as an instance of transference, or inappropriate redirection

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<sup>105</sup> Although Oliver focuses specifically on white males' discussions of "preferential treatment" for women and racial minorities in the context of discussions of affirmative action, a similar case could be made for cisgender heterosexuals who complain of feeling aggrieved by the rights of members of LGBTQ individuals to publicly demonstrate affection for their partners or express their gender identification in non-normative ways.

of feelings, that results in a repetition compulsion. In other words, individuals from a more privileged group may reactively parrot the legitimate grievances of individuals from a less privileged group without ever demonstrating an understanding of the initial concern.

As Patricia Williams clarifies, this appropriation is possible because language creates a system by which words act as a common currency and “function as the mediators by which we make all things equal” (qtd. in Oliver 107). Therefore, applying the words “discrimination” (or “occupation”) to situations that are not analogous, creates a linguistic impression of equivalency. LaCapra expresses a similar idea when he observes that “certain statements or even entire orientations may seem appropriate for someone in a given subject-position but not in others” (qtd. in Oliver 109). Consequently, the use of the same words to describe vastly divergent situations and subject positions results in de-historicized leveling comparisons “that work to normalize horror and level differential circumstances” (Oliver 111). Ahmed elaborates on a related tension between recognizing injury and enabling misguided comparisons in her work on the politics of emotion. Ahmed explains, “The problem with wound fetishism is the equivalence it assumes between forms of injury. The production of equivalence allows injury to become an entitlement, which is then equally available to all others” (32). All the while, individuals’ access to public resources is tied to privilege. Ahmed summarizes: “The more access subjects have to public resources, the more access they may have to the capacity to mobilize narratives of injury within the public domain” (33). We might think of Ahmed’s “wound fetishism” or Oliver’s “false testimony” as variations on the competitive memory model that Rothberg works against. While the FN’s cross-referencing of Joan of Arc masquerades as multidirectional memory, the party’s privative intentions, that is, their desire to further one version of postcolonial history as a

means of suppressing another, clarifies that it is not. To further this discussion, I would like to examine the various ways the party's commemorative speeches exemplify "false testimony."

One of Jean-Marie LePen's statements in Joan's 600<sup>th</sup> birthday commemorative speech concerning affirmative action or "discrimination positive," as it is called in France, offers a useful point of departure for examining Le Pen's defense of white privilege, as well as his association of "whiteness" with "Frenchness." In his speech, which attempts to draw parallels between the challenges facing the youth of Joan's time and those of the present generation, Le Pen attacks affirmative action as "racisme anti-français de souche" saying "ce sera le jeune 'visiblement' issu de l'immigration qui sera choisi sur celui dont les parents, grand-parents, et ancêtres ont construit le pays, l'ont cultivé, développé et défendu parfois au prix de sang" (JM Le Pen 1/6/12). Here, Le Pen advances a model of exclusionary citizenship with monarchic resonances via which rights and identities are inherited. In analyzing Le Pen's statement, it becomes apparent that, despite the potential for elision, it is *not* the *français de souche*, himself, who sacrificed and built, cultivated, developed, and defended, *but his ancestors*. By this logic, one's individual qualifications are not actually a consideration; rather it is one's ancestry that becomes the predominant requirement. This is the very definition of privilege, even if Le Pen's identification of the *français de souche* with his mythologized hardworking ancestors' attempts to frame the status of nationality as earned. The ambiguity of the phrase "issu de l'immigration" poses another problem since it does not solely refer to first generation immigrants, regardless of whether or not they entered the country legally. Instead, it can be (and often is) extended to several subsequent generations until the bodies of the people in question no longer bear the phenotypical trace of migration. Le Pen's emphasis on the look of "le jeune visiblement issu de l'immigration," as pitted against the implicitly more deserving *français de souche* also suggests

that one cannot be fully French without corresponding to a certain physical profile. One may be a French citizen by birth, be educated in France, and speak French as a native language, yet these qualifications for citizenship are erased if one is recognized as “de type méditerranéen.”<sup>106</sup> The pairing of the phrase “issu de l’immigration” with the word “visiblement” emphasizes the racial dimension to Le Pen’s criticism: subjective evaluation by the *Français de souche* about whether or not one *looks* French is upheld over any objective measure, making the *Français de souche* the de facto gatekeeper for full citizenship. Despite Le Pen’s assertion that any (presumably non-white) person “visiblement issu de l’immigration” has an employment advantage over the average *Français de souche*, numerous studies have shown the contrary: nonwhite residents and citizens, as well as those with foreign-sounding names, experience higher levels of unemployment and discrimination in the hiring process (Fernando 13).

As stated earlier, repressing indebtedness to others is a crucial element of false testimony. One of the clearest ways that the Front National gives false testimony is by “forgetting” the participation of France’s colonial populations in the construction and military defense of France. Le Pen’s statement about *discrimination positive* also supposes a false dichotomy by which any youth “issu de l’immigration” could not have an ancestor who also participated in building, developing, and defending the country. Yet colonial troops fought for the French in nearly all of France’s armed conflicts, whether by choice or conscription. Louis Faidherbe, governor general of French West Africa, ordered the formation of regiments of *tirailleurs sénégalais* as early as 1857 in order to maintain military control within the colonies and eventually fight in France’s wars. These *tirailleurs sénégalais* were so called because Senegal was the location of the first African regiment; however, the *tirailleurs* eventually expanded to include any regiment of the

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<sup>106</sup> “De type méditerranéen” is a euphemism for Arab ancestry.

colonial population fighting for the French. For example, in World War I, the *tirailleurs* accounted for approximately fifteen percent of the total French troops (Michel 197). During the conflict, 200,000 *tirailleurs* participated, and 30,000 were killed (Michel 7). Although members of the *tirailleurs* also paid *le prix du sang*, their sacrifices were rarely publicly commemorated. In his monograph *Can Islam be French?* Bowen explains that Algerians have had a particularly prominent role in nation building that included but was not limited to military service:

During the first half of the twentieth century the French government and private companies brought Algerian men to metropolitan France whenever unskilled labor was needed. During the Great War, they were imported to replace French factory workers called up to active duty, and to serve in the military themselves. Labor migration continued during the interwar years, but it was the rebuilding of France after the Second World War that led to the most massive efforts to encourage labor immigration, much of it, again, from Algeria. (16)

As the previous passage highlights, the labor of immigrants, while often unacknowledged, has been critical to the success of France's military endeavors, its agriculture, and its industry. According to Neil MacMaster, despite low pay and limited health protections, immigrant workers have often engaged in some of the most dangerous and least desirable forms of work, much of which the French were loathe to do. He writes, "Overall those types of unhealthy work which involved great heat, toxic gases, acids, dust, hot metals, and dyes had a predominance of immigrant workers among which North Africans made up the largest group" (77-8).

The FN's attempt to identify immigration with threats to national security acts as another example of false testimony via which France's own participation in colonial violence is occulted, and immigrants from its ex-colonies are categorically constructed as aggressors against an innocent French populace. In the earlier cited passage from the May 1, 2012 speech, Le Pen stated: "L'immigration massive d'étrangers du Tiers Monde l'accable [la France] financièrement, attente au plus profond de son identité et constitue pour demain une menace

mortelle” (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). To say that immigrants weaken France financially can be read as a bizarre instance of projection when considered in light of France’s colonial past, which hinged upon deriving economic benefits from the countries France colonized while simultaneously denying colonial populations the benefits of unconditional citizenship. As historian Christelle Teraud points out, the French quickly replaced *le code noir*, which laid out the limited rights of slaves with the *code de l’indigénat*, which detailed the ways in which colonial subjects differed in rights from French citizens (23). Likewise, the unsubstantiated suggestions that immigrants represent a *menace mortelle*, is another instance of historical hypocrisy. While some politicians might capitalize on such tragic events as the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre in Paris on January 7, 2014, or the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015, in order to intensify fears about immigration, acts of terror carried out by extremists do not represent the actions of the vast majority of Muslims living in France (about eight percent of the total population). Nonetheless, shortly after the attacks, Jean-Marie Le Pen tweeted an Internet meme with a picture of his daughter that read “Keep Calm and Vote Le Pen,” implying that the party’s anti-immigration policies could prevent such attacks (Dominus 1).

On the other hand, the forms of genocide that occurred under colonization were a state-sanctioned, widespread “menace mortelle.” Alexis de Toqueville’s comment in 1847 is revealing: “We can only study the barbaric peoples with guns in hand” (qtd. in Silverman 47). Since Algeria is the country from which most French immigrants originate, two examples from its history in the past century will help to clarify the point. On May 8, 1945, Algerian troops were excluded from a parade honoring World War II soldiers which led to anti-colonial protests and peasant revolts during which an estimated 103 Europeans were killed and 110 were wounded (Stora 22). In reprisal, the French Air Force bombed villages in the area that surrounded Sétif

while the Navy attacked the coast. French estimates place the death toll at 15,000 Algerians, while Algerian nationalists have suggested an exponentially larger sum of 45,000 (Stora 22). A power differential that devalued and endangered Algerian lives also existed in mainland France, as indicated by the events of the night of October 17, 1961, and its aftermath. On that evening, Algerians living in the *métropole* turned out in large numbers for a peaceful demonstration against an imposed curfew for Algerians in Paris. Their demonstration was met with violent reprisals from the police that resulted in nearly 200 deaths as well as subsequent detainment and deportations for many of the demonstrators involved (Crumley 1). In citing these examples, it is not my intention to suggest that French citizens were, themselves, immune to the violence that resulted from colonial conflicts or that French citizens necessarily supported or were even fully aware of such incidents. Rather, I wish to point out that the FN's casting of blame mutes France's own violent history of colonial occupation of the Maghreb, denying responsibility for participation in the creation of the current conflicts. The party dismisses efforts to introduce a more critical examination of France's colonial past as "propaganda mémorielle antipatriotique."<sup>107</sup> In fact, in one speech, Marine Le Pen specifically references Sétif only to dismiss it, saying "De la loi Taubira de 2001 au lamentable voyage mémoriel à Sétif de la semaine dernière, tout est fait pour réécrire notre passé avec une plume coupable et mensongère." Such "re-writings," she claims, are carried out by "nos élites amnésiques qui ont oublié notre histoire" (M Le Pen 5/1/15).

As Oliver eloquently describes it, in acts of false testimony the past becomes entirely compartmentalized from the present:

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<sup>107</sup> This particular comment referenced the initiative of France's current Minister of Education Madame Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, who has supported the revision of the curriculum at the middle and high school levels to include the study of Islam, colonization, Jewish genocide, and decolonization (Vallaud-Belkacem).



Historical facts are treated as things that reside in a separate memory compartment that is roped off from current events, beliefs, or attitudes. Past oppression, exclusion, and slavery have no effect on present events because they are not themselves seen as events but as things/facts whose discreetness protects us from their continued effects. (130)

Le Pen exemplifies both his belief in France's exceptionalism and a refusal of the intricate, intimate ways in which histories can inform each other when he states, "Oui, chers amis, ceci est l'histoire de la France, notre histoire qui n'est pas celle des autres" (JM Le Pen 5/1/12). While this appears to be first and foremost a statement of pride, if read another way it implies that one nation's history can unfold without consequences for other nations with which it interacts.

### **Marine et Jean(ne): Rewriting Origins**

"Marine est notre nouvelle Jeanne d'Arc, elle va sauver la France."  
-party member interviewed during the parade on May 1, 2015, in FN-produced coverage of the event

If the FN's longtime leader adopted Joan of Arc as his personal mascot, how does the mascot change when leadership shifts from father to daughter? And how do Jean-Marie and Marine's differing appropriations of Joan reframe the party's stance on citizenship? This next section will consider how Joan of Arc, a figure who broke with her parents in order to pursue a national mission, becomes a medium through which Marine asserts her independence from her father after ousting him from the party. Marine has always taken more of a passive stance towards *La Pucelle* in comparison to her father. True, she paid her respects in front of Joan's statue, delivered her speech each year before a backdrop featuring a new image of Joan, and listened as her father rallied crowds with cries of "Vive Jeanne, Vive Marine, Vive la France!"<sup>108</sup> Yet unlike her father, Marine did not assert her own identification with Joan at these

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<sup>108</sup> This phrase concluded Jean-Marie Le Pen's May 1, 2012 speech.

commemorations. In practical terms, this meant that at each May 1<sup>st</sup> event, Jean-Marie delivered a short speech in Joan's honor before handing the microphone to his daughter so that she could launch into a more involved discourse on national politics that, in most cases, did not reference Joan at all. If Jean-Marie's annual *éloges* to Joan sounded familiar, it is perhaps because in some cases they were entirely recycled: in 2014, he delivered almost word for word the same speech that he had delivered in 2012. The example of the twice-delivered *discours* offers a comic literalization of the unchanging interpretation of Joan as a party symbol. In the 2015 commemoration, however, Marine took a different approach. Breaking with the precedent set in previous years, she chose to actively affirm her identification with Joan by including an extended reflection on the heroine in the first few minutes of her address despite expectations to the contrary.<sup>109</sup> Then, over the course of the speech, she attempted to assimilate Joan into a matrilineal tradition of feminist foremothers in opposition to her father's tendency to assimilate Joan into a masculine, military tradition.

Essentially, the party president's 2015 tribute to Joan became a means of rewriting myths of origins, both Joan's and her own, after Marine's rupture with her father. While maintaining the habitual references to destiny,<sup>110</sup> and the emphasis on Joan's exceptionality, Marine introduces the idea that destiny is consciously chosen and something for which one has to work. In so doing, she distanced herself from her membership in a political dynasty and her identity as the inevitable heir to her father's political fortune and instead shifted emphasis towards the labor

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<sup>109</sup> According to an article on TF1's website, Marine was expected to de-emphasize Joan in 2015: "Cette année, Marine Le Pen ne devrait y faire qu'un passage rapide. Le symbole de Jeanne d'Arc n'est plus la priorité pour un parti populiste et laïcisé qui préfère s'adresser aux ouvriers et employés qu'à l'électorat catholique" ("Le plan de Marine Le Pen").

<sup>110</sup> "Invoquer Jeanne d'Arc, c'est se souvenir de la plus extraordinaire héroïne de notre roman national" (M Le Pen 5/1/15).

of nation making and the earned privilege of citizenship. According to *la présidente*, “Commémorer Jeanne d’Arc, c’est fêter la Nation . . . les femmes et les hommes qui décident de s’associer pour la bâtir ensemble” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). In other words, citizenship is imagined as a chosen affiliation (not just a category into which one is born) and one that must be maintained through hard work. In the description of Joan that directly follows this statement, Marine paints Joan as a self-made woman, all the more capable because she was able to navigate her way in a man’s world, undeterred by the situation into which she was born: “C’est une héroïne qui n’a pas accepté le fatalisme de sa condition. Elle a dépassé le cadre établi de son sexe, sa modeste de naissance, pour mener à bien sa mission” (M Le Pen 5/1/15).

Like her father, Marine distances Joan from any form of overt feminist interpretation:

Nul besoin de grotesque théorie de genre pour se couper les cheveux et revêtir l’habit viril. Elle n’avait pas attendu l’égalitarisme des sexes pour monter à cheval et manier l’épée. Elle n’avait pas espéré la parité pour commander aux hommes et prendre la direction d’une armée. Elle n’avait pas attendu la libération de la femme pour donner sa vie à la libération de France. (M Le Pen 5/1/15)

Unlike her father, however, Marine interprets Joan as a trailblazer in part *because* she was a woman who overcame obstacles specific to her gender. In so doing, she both calls attention to Joan’s exceptionality as well as her own, concluding, “Quel exemple pour toutes les femmes de France! Quel modèle pour toutes les femmes du monde!” (M Le Pen 5/1/15)

If Marine recognizes Joan’s trailblazing, she also tempers it by situating it within a tradition of women’s participation in public life in the second part of her reflection. Although early in the speech Marine affiliates Joan of Arc with masculine leaders frequently evoked by her father such as Clovis, Louis XIV, and Napoleon, suggesting that they are all in danger of being banished from the schoolbooks due to the “repentance aveugle de la caste politique,” she then highlights the many women who have contributed to France’s history. Le Pen states: “A l’instar

de Jeanne, nombreuses sont les femmes illustres qui ont marqué le roman national<sup>111</sup> de leur empreinte. Si la France s’est faite à coup d’épées, les femmes, elles aussi, ont pris leur part pour influencer sur la destinée de notre Nation” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). Taking this approach distinguishes Marine from Jean-Marie, who made it a point to assimilate Joan into a military tradition reflective of his own personal mythology, never generalized his comments about Joan’s greatness to other women, and frequently effaced Joan’s femininity by referring to her as a “grand homme.” As the speech continues, Marine locates Joan within a long genealogy of feminine figures who labored to make the Nation. Among the eight women cited, there are warriors (Geneviève, Jeanne de Hachette), a wife (Clotilde), two writers (Christine de Pisan and Marie de France), a political activist (Olympe de Gouge), an artist (Camille Claudel), and a scientist (Marie Curie). After normalizing women’s presence in French history, Marine expresses that France is exceptional in relationship to other countries in that France’s greatness can be attributed to women’s participation in nation building: “la France est un des rares pays où les grandes figures féminines partagent aussi évidemment avec les figures masculines, les pages de notre roman national. C’est peut-être la raison pour laquelle les mots les plus vibrants de notre belle langue sont tous féminins: France, Patrie, Nation, Liberté, Famille” (M Le Pen 5/1/15). By citing an array of “foremothers” and establishing a link between the feminine gender and foundational concepts of the Nation, Marine positions herself within an alternate lineage, an entirely feminine *famille*, selected on the basis of shared principles.

While Jean-Marie Le Pen has imagined Joan as a spiritual mother, notably in his commemorative speech on Joan’s 600<sup>th</sup> birthday, his depiction serves, in part, to realign her with

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<sup>111</sup> Marine repeatedly imagines history as a book in this speech. By using a material object that has been inscribed with one vision of the past as a metaphor for history, she reiterates the heritage model of history even as she attempts to rewrite women’s roles.

gendered and heteronormative models of womanhood in which assuming the roles of wife and mother are compulsory. His observations suggest that had she not been thwarted by a confluence of parties, Joan would have followed the conventional path of marriage and reproduction:

Notre hommage d'aujourd'hui est plus intime, plus familial, oserai-je dire. Jeanne n'eut pas de descendance humaine, puisqu'avec la complicité criminelle des Anglais, des évêques et de la Sorbonne, elle ne fut jamais ni femme, ni mère, fixée à jamais dans sa virginité de jeune fille missionnée pour le salut de la Patrie française. En revanche, nous appartenons à sa famille spirituelle, celle qu'elle fonda par sa destinée christique, unique dans l'Histoire des Hommes, qu'elle traversa comme une éblouissante comète. (JM Le Pen 1/6/12)

Jean-Marie's final assimilation of Joan into "l'Histoire des Hommes" further reiterates the idea of her exceptionality, erasing the possibility of feminine precursors or predecessors.

Marine's out-of-character commentary on Joan of Arc serves to convey a sense of continuity at a moment of critical juncture within the party by renewing her affiliation with the party's most enduring symbol. It also allows Le Pen, *fille*, to distinguish herself from her father by rebranding the party's symbol through her foregrounding of the feminine. To what extent was this performance of (dis)identification successful? Without attending the event, it is hard to gauge audience response; however, it is worth mentioning that two unforeseen interruptions interfered with Marine's delivery and undermined her attempts to symbolically kill off her father and position herself as a spokesperson for French women. First, right before Marine was set to begin her speech, her father rushed onstage, unexpectedly, at the moment when he would normally deliver his ode to Joan. Drawing cheers from the audience, Le Pen momentarily delayed Marine's speech and briefly upstaged his daughter who then had to awkwardly wait for several moments until the applause subsided and her father left the stage. By calling attention to his absence from the official program through an impromptu appearance, Jean-Marie performed his perceived betrayal much in the way he had during the parade earlier that day. Relegated to

the back while his daughter marched in front, he stopped in front of Joan's equestrian statue to shout, "Jeanne, Au secours!"

The second, much longer interruption occurred when, shortly into Marine's speech, members of an activist group called Femen appeared on a hotel balcony behind Marine.<sup>112</sup> Their bare chests painted with anti-FN slogans such as "FN Top Facist" three Femen donning blonde wigs unfurled banners bearing the FN's tricolor flame logo that read "Heil Marine." The speech stopped for five minutes while police removed the women. According to its website, Femen is "sextremist" group of "brave topless female activists [...] the special force of feminism, its spearhead militant unit, [and the] modern incarnation of fearless and free Amazons" ("About Us"). While it is not entirely clear what the Femen activists' goal was, their demonstration conveyed that they do not see Marine as compatible with their own stated mission of "complete victory over patriarchy" ("About Us").

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to shed light on trends in the FN's appropriation of Joan of Arc. First, I argued, the FN draws on the English occupation of France during the Hundred Years War to depict modern-day France as an occupied land, its sovereignty threatened by the influence of the European Union and continued contact with populations from France's former colonies. In making this parallel, the party attempts to lend urgency to their claims for decreased engagement with the EU and more stringent border control. The second trend in the party's alignment of Joan's story with its own is a focus on exceptionality. This analogy allows the party to portray itself, as it portrays Joan, as a lone courageous defender of an imperiled place,

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<sup>112</sup> Earlier in the day, Femen protesters tried to stop Marine Le Pen from laying a wreath at Joan's monument. Femen also demonstrated at the 2014 rally, during the parade.

thus proposing itself as the singular solution to a “problem” of foreign “occupation” or its influence. The FN’s insistence on France’s innocence in this scenario portrays the shifting demographics of France not as a natural consequence of colonial contact, or as the result of France’s own labor and immigration policies following decolonization, but rather as a historical non-sequitur at best and an invasion at worst. By framing populations from France’s former colonies as foreign to rather than fundamentally constitutive of an imagined French national body, the Front National maintains the myth of a “pure” national identity and furthers an exclusionary model of citizenship that reinforces racial and ethnic privilege.

The next chapter returns to the city of New Orleans to examine another annual Joan-themed performance centered around Frémiet’s equestrian statue. Unlike the yearly FN rallies, however, the St. Joan Mardi Gras parade is fundamentally organized around the idea of inclusivity and embraces the idea of cultural *métissage*. The ways in which Joan-themed performances in New Orleans become a way to reflect on the city’s recent history and react to environmental and economic trauma will be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6: “FIERY COURAGE AND INCANDESCENT FAITH”: JOAN’S STORY AS NEW ORLEANS’ COMEBACK

### Introduction

"She represents so many things. She represents defiance, courage, virtue . . . and, especially since Hurricane Katrina, she represents strength and tenacity. It's a perfect time for a warrior saint to come lead our city." -Amy Kirk DuVoisin (qtd. in Reid 1).

“If there’s anything we’ve learned from history, it’s that Joan of Arc definitely can weather a storm” (“Joan of Arc Fighting Still”).

Over three decades after Amy Boudreau’s 1972 poem imagined Bienville and Joan as complementary characters in a historical drama and twelve years after the city positioned them as twin bookends to the French Quarter’s borders, Amy Kirk DuVoisin, an Ohio transplant to New Orleans, envisioned a Mardi Gras<sup>113</sup> parade that once again conceived of them in relation to one another, with Bienville’s statue as the point of departure and Joan’s as the terminus.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the Joan of Arc monument opened a space into which New Orleanians could project ideas about the past: reflecting on and often reimagining stories of their own or the city’s francophone origins. A common motif in these stories was the nostalgic desire to reconnect to an idealized idea of France. By the same token, negotiations over the purchase of the monument allowed for France’s president, Charles de Gaulle, and other French diplomats to reframe a relationship with a former settler colony as the antecedent to an enduring friendship in the wake of violent decolonization battles with other former colonies. In this chapter, I posit that while the Joan of Arc parade gestures toward the city’s connection with France, and was indeed partially inspired by a yearly parade in Joan’s honor in Orléans, it is more concerned with

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<sup>113</sup> In this chapter, I am using both Carnival (the more official term) and Mardi Gras (the layperson’s term) to refer to the season that begins with Epiphany and ends with Ash Wednesday. When referring to the day, itself, I use the term “Mardi Gras day.”



acculturating the story of Joan of Arc to a local context. Among other functions, the Joan-themed parade and affiliated events act as recurring performances via which the participants rewrite narratives of local trauma, such as Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill, so that these events may be remembered not only as testaments to loss but also proof of resilience.

In conducting this research, I examined the Joan of Arc parade and other affiliated Johannic celebrations organized by the Krewe<sup>114</sup> de Jeanne d’Arc as performances, or “aesthetically marked and heightened mode[s] of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience” (Bauman 41). Yet I also sought to contextualize and interpret these temporally marked displays with information about them that was shared via other media throughout the year. While this research relied primarily on my training in literary analysis, I have complemented close readings, at times, with ethnographic methods such as observations and interviews. I began by first analyzing paratexts to the parade that explicitly sought to communicate its intent: namely, the founding organization’s website, maps of the parade route, and blog postings written by the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc’s founder between 2008 and 2016. In addition, I examined local media coverage of the event (radio interviews and newspaper articles) as well as year-round social media postings on the krewe’s Facebook page between 2012-2016. I also analyzed the more ephemeral trace texts the parade generated: favors distributed to the public. Since I was a part of that public at four successive parades, from 2013-2016, my experience as a participant-observer in actual embodied performances of the Joan of Arc parade also informs my analysis, as do informal interviews I conducted with parade goers in 2016.

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<sup>114</sup> A “whimsical” and “faux-archaic” variation on the word “crew,” this term was coined in 1857 by the Mistick Krewe of Comus, the first parading organization associated with Mardi Gras in its current form. “Krewe” has since become the generic name for all parade sponsoring organizations (Gill 48).

## Parade Day

*January 6, 2015, part 1:* As Marwa and I run towards Chartres Street, the parade's main route, we each clutch at our *capuchons*, medieval princess hats that we had fashioned, earlier that afternoon, from colored poster board, iridescent tulle, and scissor-curved ribbons. We have taken creative license with our period garb. As a person of modest means, Joan did not belong to the *milieu* associated with such elaborate headgear, although we imagine she might have appreciated our *accoutrements*. At her condemnation trial, Joan's judges often castigated her for her sartorial flair, which they interpreted as a too worldly weakness for finery. Besides, we know that the sponsors of this parade, the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc, appreciate inventiveness, and we wish not only to pay homage to Joan but also to participate in the event's emphasis on "crafting" a handmade experience. Not so secretly, Marwa and I also hope that the krewe will reward our efforts at referencing both a birthday hat (in honor of Joan's special day: she would have been 603 today) and a *capuchon* (in honor of the medieval period of Joan's birth) with the highly coveted favors they distribute. As an exchange student in our French department who grew up in Tunisia, Marwa was experiencing the New Orleans version of Mardi Gras. Although it is my sixth Carnival season, and my third time at this particular parade, it is the first year I've ever come in costume.

Less than two hours earlier, we had barreled down I-10 away from Baton Rouge, hoping to have left enough time to make our way through the maze of one-way streets in the Quarter, get parked, and find a spot on the parade route. With the glue still drying on our hats and signs, all abuzz with anticipation, we helped each other to make the final adjustments to our costumes in the parking garage before running out into the crowded cobblestone street.

Our hyperbolically high party hats, pasted with pictures of Joan, slide askew as we speed toward the first strains of bagpipes, which signal the beginning of the parade. Bright signs backed with wrapping paper encumber our running and occasionally fall from our hands. They read: “Happy Joanie Gras” and “Bonne Fête, Jeannette!” One features a large, color picture of New Orleans’s Joan statue, whom some affectionately call “Joanie on a Pony,” wearing a conical birthday hat, herself, and holding a bouquet of balloons. Amused faces of onlookers reflect back to us the absurd juxtaposition of our anxious faces and festive attire. Now we hear the bagpipers more clearly. I remember reading a few years ago on the krewe’s blog that the kilted musicians pay homage to the Scottish troops who joined the French army in defeating the English. Somewhere near, the parade is rolling. “Ce n’est pas grave si on rate le début,” Marwa reassures me. *Mais si*. “Has it passed?” A blond woman in her mid-fifties who is pouring champagne into her friend’s glass flute edges over to make room for us on the sidewalk. “They’re about to round the corner,” she says, and we snap a picture as we wait (fig. 18).



Fig. 18: Marwa Gedhir and Tara Smithson at the Joan of Arc parade (2015). Photo by the author.

The parade is breathtaking. Between a bronze Bienville and a golden Joan float a myriad of moving tableaux that recreate scenes from Joan's life, patterning the parade after a medieval pageant. First, she is a child in Domrémy in a linen slip dress, amidst a flock of fluffy sheep. Then, we see Joan as a young woman accompanied by her voices: a haloed Saint Michael descending from a cumulus cloud, Saint Catherine attached to the cracked wooden wheel she broke, and Saint Margaret followed by the dragon she escaped. Next, we encounter an armor-clad Joan atop a horse, flanked by her battlemates. After that, an imprisoned Joan in brown burlap belted with a rope performs a call and response accusation to Bishop Cauchon, encircled by white-wigged skeletons. Cauchon, the clear villain in this confrontation, has been transformed into a homophonic visualization of his name in French (*cochon*) and wears an enormous *papier mâché* pig's head. Later, Joan appears in a wooden cart in a white dress consumed by electrically lit faux flames, wearing the miter inscribed with her judges' accusations: Heretic, Apostate, Relapsed, Idolater. Last, she is the shimmery-skinned statue itself, an effigy enlivened. Other actors interpret the roles of Joan's beloved friend the Bastard of Orléans, the notary Guillaume de Manchon who spoke in Joan's defense at her rehabilitation trial, and Queen Yolande who facilitated her passage. As we watch and cheer, angels with feathered wings and soldiers in chain mail press prizes into our hands and compliment our costumes. "You should join us next year," they say. It occurs to me how different the ambiance is from the first Carnival parade I attended: there is something intimate about being personally handed a "throw"<sup>115</sup> and conversing with the person who made it, rather than having a boa or rubber chicken, which you know was mass-produced in a factory, lobbed in your general direction and watching as brawls ensue. Along the way, the procession makes several

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<sup>115</sup> "Throw" is the general term used to describe anything distributed at a Carnival parade, the name, itself, referencing the usual method of delivery.

ceremonious stops: at the Historic New Orleans Collection where the Consul Général of France toasts the parade's royalty, at the St. Louis Cathedral to re-enact the discovery of Joan's sword which is then blessed by a priest, and last at the statue to reenact the crowning at Reims and partake in eating a local pastry: King Cake (fig. 19). When we have seen everyone pass, we rush to the end to watch the parade a second time, and a few of the characters playfully scold us, thinking we must want to top off our already full pockets. But it is the procession, not the prizes, that interests us. We cannot help ourselves: the parade only comes once a year, and there is too much to see to watch it only once.

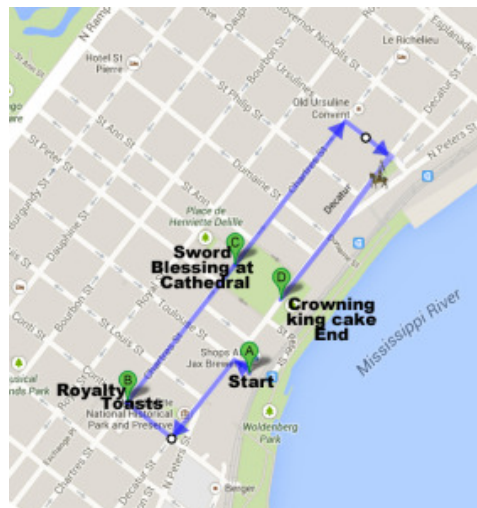


Figure 19: The route for the Joan of Arc parade, from the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc's website (2015).

## Historical Overview

The Carnival season occurs between the twelfth day of Christmas (the Christian feast of the Epiphany), which is observed on January 6<sup>th</sup>, and Mardi Gras, the day before the Lenten season begins. At midnight on Mardi Gras day, street sweepers and police call a halt to the Bourbon Street Bacchanal, and Ash Wednesday thus inaugurates the forty-day period of

Christian penitence that leads up to Easter. As folklorists de Caro and Ireland note, Carnival is a “complex celebration [...] celebrated in different ways by different people” and may involve highly ritualized forms of public spectacle as well as private gatherings” (27). While debutante balls among the city’s wealthiest citizens,<sup>116</sup> green, gold, and purple decorations, and culinary traditions all make up different aspects of Carnival, I will limit my discussion to the aspect most relevant to the topic at hand: parades.

Parades begin on Epiphany and continue with increasing frequency, with festive activity concentrated on the weekends, until the season culminates in back-to-back parades in the weekend before Mardi Gras day. According to the 2016 Parade Schedule, there were forty-three parades in the city alone, not counting any of the festivities in New Orleans’ nearby suburbs (“The Mardi Gras Schedule”). Parades vary in format, but the largest parades tend to include elaborately fashioned floats organized around a theme and marching bands from neighboring high schools (de Caro and Ireland 30). At the helm of most parades, rides a King (generally a middle-aged man or in the case of the more recently established super krewes, a celebrity) and a carnival queen (a young woman in the last years of high school or first years of college). While New Orleans is perhaps most known for the parades sponsored by the city’s elite krewes, in which membership is by invitation only, Carnival is a protean phenomenon and has continued adapting its structures and traditions to become more inclusive (“Emerging New Orleans Mardi Gras Traditions” 1). Thus, in recent decades, truck parades, walking clubs, and krewes organized by individuals historically excluded from Carnival<sup>117</sup> have reconfigured the terms of participation for the working class, African Americans, Jews, women, and LGBTQ people.

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<sup>116</sup> For a fascinating overview and autoethnographic critique of the closed culture of Carnival royalty and debutante balls, see *By Invitation Only*, a documentary by Rebecca Snedecker, New Day Films (2006).

<sup>117</sup> Krewe du Jieus, the first Jewish Mardi Gras krewe founded in 1996, is one such example.

Many of the traditional parades reference Greek and Egyptian deities; however, more recent parades, some of which parody the older parades, often have contemporary, light-hearted themes. For example, Barkus and Chewbacchus, both of which riff off of the well-established krewe of Bacchus, celebrate costumed dogs and Star Wars, respectively. Almost all parades distribute “throws” (gifts or trinkets), to the public, among the most common of which are plastic cups, coins called doubloons and, of course, beads.

How then does the Joan of Arc parade fit into this picture? Founded in 2008, the Joan of Arc Project was the brainchild of playwright and event planner for the French Market Amy Kirk DuVoisin. The organization’s primary purpose, as explained on its website, is to host a yearly foot-parade “celebrating the January 6 birthday of Joan of Arc” while also organizing “year-round events celebrating the Maid of Orléans and New Orleans’ French heritage” (“Who We Are”). Although they have chosen a saint as the focal point of their festivities and often rely on Catholic frames of reference, Kirk DuVoisin describes the organization as secular (“Who We Are”). Past events sponsored by the Joan of Arc Project have included Joan-themed book club meetings, film showings, and public prayers at the equestrian statue. The group also hosts a yearly *Salon de Jeanne d’Arc* with scholarly presentations on aspects of medieval culture, hands-on workshops, readings by biographers, and theatrical performances. In 2014, the Joan of Arc Project also began curating a collection of print resources and other media related to Joan at the New Orleans Public Library.

If the description of the organization’s primary purpose omits any mention of Mardi Gras, this is perhaps because the timing was initially a concession to local culture. According to Frank de Caro, when Kirk began pitching the idea of a Joan-themed celebration, she “couldn’t get anyone sufficiently interested until she framed it in the context of Mardi Gras” (de Caro).

Kirk, herself, corroborated this claim in an interview with WWOZ radio host Chris Rose on September 15, 2015 edition of his show, *The Sounds Salvation*, saying that her original idea was to sponsor a film festival. One of the first posts on the krewe's blog also emphasized that the parade was only envisioned as one aspect of a much larger event. As Kirk DuVoisin wrote in 2008, "In future years we look forward to growing this into a Joan of Arc festival, complete with film, theater, musical performances, costume contests, and Renaissance Fair style events reflecting the times in which Joan lived" ("Updated Press Release" 1).

Given Carnival's absence from Kirk DuVoisin's initial vision, it might seem ironic that the Joan of Arc parade now functions as one of the inaugural events of Mardi Gras;<sup>118</sup> yet, there is a certain logic to this idea. Joan's birthday coincides with Epiphany, which, in addition to being the day designated on the Christian calendar for when the Magi first saw the Christ child, is also, as previously mentioned, the official beginning of Carnival. Joan's status as a French religious and a cultural icon also makes her an appropriate figure for bridging the seasons of Christmas and Carnival. Affiliation with a well-established, multi-week festival and its infrastructure provides the added benefit of making this celebration of Joan accessible to a larger audience. In fact, the popularity of the parade has actually facilitated the production of other Joan-related cultural events, such as the Johannic film festival that Kirk originally envisioned and the yearly salon.

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<sup>118</sup> The Phunny Phorty Phellows are an older krewe, revived in 1981, whose masked revelers ride the St. Charles streetcar down the line on January 6<sup>th</sup> to "herald the arrival of Carnival" ("Phunny Phorty Phellows").



The Joan of Arc parade is loosely modeled on the May 8<sup>th</sup> military procession in Joan's honor in Orléans, France, which has taken place almost without interruption<sup>119</sup> since the lifting of the siege in 1429. The parades' main commonality is that each one features a girl from a local school to play the role of Joan of Arc, riding on horseback in armor, a borrowing suggested by Kirk's husband, who works as a high school English teacher. While the *Fête de Jeanne d'Arc* of Orléans is a state affair bound by tradition, the St. Joan parade is a campier New World cousin to its predecessor, one that interweaves verifiable histories with more whimsical aspects of Johannic lore. As one post on the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc's blog explains, "Although we are committed to the historical truth of Joan's story, we are equally intrigued by the artistry she evokes, using the many stories and myths about her as our Muse" ("The Joan of Arc Project Launch"). So, for example, one might see marchers carrying banners with direct quotations from Joan's condemnation trial alongside a cloud of gauze and sparkling wire butterflies, an image that references the legend that butterflies fluttered behind Joan wherever she went.

Who, then, puts on the parade and to whom does it appeal? The krewe's mission, posted on the website, has an inclusivity statement that "welcome[s] people of all faiths and backgrounds to join in [the] joyous, New Orleans-style revelry" ("Mission"). This invitational stance is reflected in the krewe's policy of open membership. In contrast to many of the cities' parading organizations, the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc is not "by invitation only" and presents few of the economic barriers that most krewe memberships entail: the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc has a low membership fee<sup>120</sup> and also allows volunteers, whose costumes are often provided by the krewe, to participate for free. Based on observations at the yearly salon which I attended from

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<sup>119</sup> The official website for the *Fêtes de Jeanne d'Arc* of Orléans references "une trentaine d'interruptions," notably after the Revolution and during the World Wars.

<sup>120</sup> The cost for membership for an individual in 2016 was \$100, which included non-specialty throws.

2012-2016, and the photographs posted on the organization's website and Facebook page, it would appear that many of the organizers and key participants are Caucasian women in their forties and fifties. That said, as Kirk is quick to point out, this is not a women's only krewe, and many men and children are also actively involved. It is not unusual for whole families to participate in the preparations and parade together. Some of the participants are French, and many others appear to be francophiles. The parade also draws in history buffs, artists, Catholics, and New Orleanians seeking a scaled-back Carnival experience.

A quick visual scan of the past few parades would suggest that the attendees are majority white, and in the 30-50 age range, although many of the people I spoke to did not necessarily correspond to this description. During the parade in 2016, I was able to conduct brief interviews with approximately fifteen participants, who offered various reasons for their attendance. One local man, who called himself a "Charity baby" in reference to his birth in the New Orleans hospital founded in 1736, said that he was interested in attending since his grandparents had spoken French. In the time that we stood together watching the parade, he often marveled at the artistry of the costumes and the beauty of the throws, careful to offer anything to me that he did not expect to keep. An African American woman in attendance with her teenage children said had grown up Catholic where Joan was "a staple in our culture" and had learned all about Joan as a child. When I asked one French transplant to New Orleans to explain to me why Joan was important to New Orleans he mock scolded me: "C'est Jeanne d'Arc. JEANNE D'ARC! Mais tout le monde connaît son histoire!" Then he began reciting what appeared to be a textbook version, editorializing on occasion that she was, of course, not a virgin since she came from the country ("Jeanne d'Arc, c'était un cul-terreux"). "And New Orleans?" I persisted. "Didn't you hear the toast?" he asked, referring to the French Consul Général's toast: "Pas de Jeanne d'Arc,

Pas d'Orléans, Pas d'Orléans, Pas de Nouvelle Orléans!" A couple from Madrid vacationing in New Orleans said they had serendipitously stumbled upon the parade, but the friends with whom I attended, friends who had once lived in Louisiana before moving "up North," organized their Christmas trip around attending, after being awestruck by the parade in 2014.

The Joan of Arc parade presents an assemblage of contradictions. With a saint as its centerpiece, it moves through the area of the city famed for its bawdy charm. In a carnival culture where the big name parades like Bacchus, Endymion, Thor, and Thoth evoke Greco-Roman and Egyptian deities, this procession highlights a historical figure from a Christian tradition. In a city where the traditional carnival queen is a teenage debutante who is presented to the New Orleans's elite for the purposes of finding a suitable match, this provincial carnival queen is a lifelong virgin who refused marriage in court when her parents attempted to arrange it. In a period associated with the excesses of revelry and the performance of expenditure, this parade is a "calmer, gentler" incarnation of the season, a subdued, candle-lit processional (Shelton 1). As one journalist described it, the parade is a "totally family friendly" experience and the "complete antithesis of Krewe du Vieux"<sup>121</sup> (Shelton 1). And unlike the old line krewes, which perform a class-stratified spectacle via which "beautifully dressed aristocrats, physically raised above the multitude, riding through the populace either on horseback or exquisite, expensive vehicles [throw] bits of their riches to the clamouring mob," the St. Joan Krewe celebrates a person of modest means and has open membership (de Caro and Ireland 30). If, according to Bakhtin, the carnivalesque usually suggests "le monde à l'envers," then the St. Joan Parade subverts the traditional mode of Carnival while retaining elements of its whimsy and

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<sup>121</sup> Founded in 1987, Krewe du Vieux (short for *Vieux Carré*, the "Old Square" that is more commonly called the French Quarter) is another parade with a route that moves through the Quarter. Their parade is famed for its earthy humor with usually combines political satire with *papier mâché* phalluses.

critical stance (11). As we shall see in the next section, the parade's penchant for playful reversals manifests itself in its reworking of a crucial aspect of Joan of Arc's story.

### **Playing with Fire**

“From the burning bush to the Viking funerals to the iconography of hell, fire carries an intense symbolic load. [...] We are all metaphorical children before arc lights or bonfires or propane explosions, fascinated by fire's all-consuming alchemy of beauty and threat” (Davis 29).

Fire serves as a traumatic trigger in Joan's story. For Joan, fearfully imagining her flesh in the fire elicited what appears to be the sole moment of inconsistency in a narrative that testifies to an otherwise unshakable faith. On May 24, 1431, Joan signed an abjuration in which she essentially confessed to all of the transgressions that her accusers leveled against her and denied the sanctity of her voices. Four days later, when she denied the denial, Joan attributed her seeming moment of weakness to “peur du feu” (Tisset 346). Twenty-five years after that, the words of Joan's posthumous rehabilitation trail echo this fearful reverence of fire by repeatedly referring to the element of Joan's destruction as “un feu très cruel” (DuParc 8). Now, several centuries hence, it is hard to evoke Joan without referencing her fiery demise. It is likely that even individuals who cannot place Joan within a century or specify what, exactly, she did to gain acclaim, know at least of her fate at the stake.

Many visual retellings of Joan's story certainly exploit the affective power of her burning through spectacular pyrotechnics and gut-wrenching glimpses of Joan's contorted face amidst the smoke. For example, Victor Fleming's film *Joan of Arc* (1948), places Joan atop a mountain of kindling that could have easily incinerated the entire town of Rouen. In a similar vein, the lingering close-ups of Carl Theodor Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) “hinge on excruciating nodes of pain,” which are most apparent in the staging of Joan's death at the stake

(Apter 40). Indeed, her filmic execution goes on for an agonizing seven minutes. Twentieth century authors such as Jean Anouilh and Guy Thauviette have chosen to mark the fire by its absence, either to register its semic potential all the more powerfully through its suppression (as I would argue is the case for Anouilh) or to shift emphasis away from the classic interpretation of Joan as a tragic figure<sup>122</sup> (the case for Thauviette).

The Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc takes an alternate approach to depicting Joan’s elemental encounter: it makes fire a crucial component of the parade’s visual pageantry while also using it as an ironic conduit to disengage with the view of Joan as *simply* a martyr. As krewe captain Kirk DuVoisin reflected on the organization’s blog in 2011, “It’s a crime she is remembered only for her dying moment. We have modern-day martyrs like Martin Luther King, Jr. and John F. Kennedy, Jr. and it’s not as though people say ‘oh that guy who was *shot!*’ as their first reference to them” (“I was born for this!” emphasis in original). Although the blog entry does not draw a direct parallel between the tendency to telescope Joan’s life to a moment of trauma and the ways in which Louisiana is often reductively viewed through the lens of recent catastrophes such as Hurricane Katrina, the BP Oil Spill, or the floods of 2016, the potential for comparison is clear. As Bob Mann writes, Louisiana is often depicted as “a hapless state in a perpetual state of disaster and crisis” (qtd. in Miller, Roberts and LaPoe 7). In addition to its recent catastrophes, Louisiana is also closely identified with multiple interlocking histories of trauma including the Atlantic slave trade, Indian removal, and Acadian exile. In fact, these imbricated traumatic histories are considered so foundational to the state that the organizers of a new festival in

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<sup>122</sup> While it may appear that Anouilh and Thauviette are borrowing a trope from Greek theater by locating the violence offstage, they differ from classical authors insofar as the violence *never* occurs within the space of the play, whether on or offstage. Instead, the authors evoke Joan’s burning as a historical fact that is consciously written out of their adaptations.

Eunice called “Experience Louisiana” planned to open the event in October 2015 with a ceremony with healers from three different ethnic groups (Larroque).

The Joan of Arc parade features fire in many forms, often using the element to ceremoniously open the event. For example, in 2010, a local fire artist, Monica Ferroe, performed before the parade, in order to “[show] us the power of fire— and the power of a woman who wields it” (“Owning the Fire”). Kirk DuVoisin elaborated on this idea in greater detail in a pre-parade blog post about the symbolic import of including a fire swallower:

[B]ecause Joan is so deeply and obviously associated with fire, we have [a] representation of it at the beginning of our parade. [...] In this way, we are turning the tables on the fire that surrounded and extinguished Joan. While the religious Joan may find it perhaps not as reverent as our processional candles, I think Joan’s soul would rejoice to know that the fire is not swallowing the girl— but instead, the other way around. (“Owning the Fire”)

In another blog post, Kirk reiterates this idea and frames it as a feminist interpretation: “That’s an example of The Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc taking history into our own hands . . . beginning Joan’s story with fire in the hands of women rather than ending her life with fire in the hands of men” (“Why Bienville and Bagpipes?”). By inaugurating the parade with a performance during which a young women consumes fire, the Joan of Arc parade exemplifies Mikhail Bakhtin’s characterization of the “rich idiom” of carnival form, governed by the logic of reversal. Bakhtin writes:

This experience, [of the medieval carnival] opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretense of immutability, sought a dynamic expression; it demanded ever changing, playful, and undefined forms. All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with this pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the “inside out” (*à l’envers*). (11)

This “inside-out” quality is apparent in the parade’s reframing of fire as a festive form, a source of levity rather than the inquisitors’ instrument of intimidation, as well as the krewe’s choice to

foreground fire's beauty over its threat. Instead of remaining an outer force that extinguishes Joan, fire becomes instead an inner light that she emanates. In 2013, the parade once again featured a fire-themed performance with a single female fire dancer. Cat Landrum, the performer, authored a guest post on the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc's blog prior to the parade that connected her personal relationship with fire to the parade's revision of fire in Joan's story. Landrum writes that she, like Joan, feared fire, "feeling intimidated and resentful toward the element" after losing all of her belongings and having her life threatened in two apartment fires ("Words From Our Fire Dancer"). She then explains that fire dancing became a way to master her own negative perceptions of fire and instead connect to its "beautiful glow." Landrum continues, "It was when I first discovered the art of fire dancing that my thoughts changed. Watching dancers move the element to create patterns of light and shadows made me realize how beautiful fire could be. [...] The fire that is my dance partner is not a fire of destruction, but a shining light that reflects the fire burning within" ("Words From Our Fire Dancer").

Fire is thus re-contextualized from an element synonymous with destruction to a source of metaphorical and material light that we are capable of internalizing. Landrum's words also imagine fire as a Bakhtinian site of "change and renewal," able to catalyze transformations in perception. This textual message of renewal is intensified in the photograph of Landrum that precedes her reflection on fire. Landrum's position recalls a phoenix, the cyclically regenerating creature of Greek mythology: the sharp focus in the foreground fades into the blurred flutter of Landrum's arms, which appear almost as feathers of fire. She, like the Joan of the parade, seems a hybrid incarnation of the real and the fantastical. The superimposition of the Krewe's Coat of Arms above the golden-glowing performer highlights, via proximity, the resemblance between

the monarchic symbol on each side of the sword and the dancer's body, a fiery *fleur de lys* with upturned petals.

The inclusion of a fire dancer assimilates the local Carnival tradition of beginning a parade with flambeaux bearers. In the first old-line Mardi Gras parades, beginning with the Mistick Krewe of Comus in 1857, flambeaux bearers were African American men, either slaves or free men of color, who walked in front of floats carrying lanterns with candles to illuminate the streets so that parade watchers could "better enjoy the spectacle of nighttime festivities" ("The Flambeaux Tradition"). Eventually, electric lights eliminated the practical need for flambeaux, and the lithe lightbearers who jerk and twirl through crowd-lined streets with iron torches became somewhat of a Mardi Gras institution, an aspect of the spectacle of Carnival, itself, rather than ancillary to it.

The flambeaux bearers' continued participation is not without controversy, often viewed as a racist remnant of the segregated history of Carnival. Critics see flambeaux toting as a form of minstrelsy because primarily black participants dance and clown for primarily white crowds who toss quarters at them or tuck larger bills into their cans. Flambeaux bearers, themselves, however, may see their parade participation differently: as a family tradition in some cases and a proof of manhood that yields several hundred dollars on a good night (Berry 323). Many African American men still take part in this tradition, and bear their burn marks, where dripping kerosene has seared souvenirs onto their skin, as badges of honor. As Molly Peterson reports, "Carriers say if you tote the flame it's understood that you're gonna get burned" (1). One might consider those who tote flambeaux as the original Mardi Gras fire dancers. As southern journalist Rick Bragg affirms, "The men who march underneath the oily black smoke say it is not enough to carry the fire, you have to dance with it, and sometimes in it" (1). While Bragg



relays a poetic vision of this embodied performance, the mingling of fire and black bodies also recalls sinister southern histories, ones that, in more recent eras, have echoed Joan's end. While there is no evidence to suggest that the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc is trying to directly appropriate flambeaux,<sup>123</sup> it riffs off of this tradition by inaugurating the parade with the fire dancer, who gestures at an alternate end for Joan: bending and twisting through the flames, untouched.

During the parade, krewe members give out a number of fire-themed favors, some of which treat fire with Carnival's characteristic playful irreverence. Atomic fireballs have been a staple at each parade, as are matchbooks embossed with a golden silhouette of the French Quarter statue and the words "Joan for Mayor"<sup>124</sup>(fig. 20).



Figure 20: Matchbook distributed to parade goers (2014). Photo by the author.

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<sup>123</sup> In 2014, a group of (primarily Caucasian) women who named themselves "Glambeaux," marched in the Krewe of Muses parade. The group's suggestion that their participation in the male-domain of flambeaux toting was a feminist act incited criticism from some who saw it as a trivializing cultural misappropriation.

<sup>124</sup> One of the blog entries on July 10, 2009, on the krewe's page contrasts Joan's uprightness and vision with the corruption and apathy of local officials "who couldn't hold a flame to her" ("Joan of Arc for Mayor of New Orleans").

Perhaps most importantly, each year the krewe distributes a set number of electric candles, one for each year since Joan's birth.<sup>125</sup> As folklorist Frank de Caro explains, the tongue-in-cheek references to fire serve as creative re-appropriation: "Kirk Duvoisin sees both the distribution of matches and a performance by fire dancers before the parade as referencing Joan's execution by burning but as 'taking control' of this fact" (1). By ironically rewriting fire, the krewe shifts attention away from the tendency to reduce Joan of Arc to a martyr or gendered emblem of suffering, using fire, instead, to symbolize her radiance.

This rethinking of fire is especially apparent in one of the favors handed out at the 2014 parade, a playing card featuring "Flaming Heretic Joan," with an image of Joan from the torso up, against a stake, orange-hued flames fanning out around her (fig. 21). The narrative on the back of the card summarizes Joan's life story with continual references to fire, but recasts each one in a positive light. For example, we're told that Joan "ignites passions 600 years after her short, brilliant life." Later she's called the "original girl on fire" in a seeming pop culture reference to a 2012 Alicia Keyes song called "Girl on Fire" about a willful, free-spirited woman who lives with "her head in the clouds/but she's not backing down" (Keyes).<sup>126</sup> The flaming heretic card also notes that Joan "kindled hope" by "blazing a trail deep into occupied territory," led by her "incandescent faith" and "fiery courage." The resignification of fire casts Joan's story as a *life* that exemplified resilience in the face of daunting odds rather than a *death* that reiterated unjust circumstances.

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<sup>125</sup> In the first years of the parade, the krewe distributed actual candles. Now, due to fire codes, they use LED votives.

<sup>126</sup> The card may equally reference another pop culture phenomenon: the heroine of *The Hunger Games* series, Katniss Everdeen. In the 2012 film, Katniss is deemed the "girl on fire" after making an entrance to the games in a flaming chariot and later becomes known for her trademark dress of flames. Like Joan, Katniss is an underdog from a modest background.



Figure 21: Flaming Heretic trading card distributed at the parade (2014). Photo by the author.

In addition to referencing Joan's conflagration at the stake, the use of the adjective "flaming" to describe "heretic" plays on another colloquial usage of the adjective and its application to gay men who exhibit characteristics perceived as signifiers of homosexuality. The most popular definition of the adjective "flaming" on the crowd-sourced online lexicon Urban Dictionary reads: "in a state of being overtly gay and homosexual in appearance" ("Flaming"). Thus, while speakers use the adjective to police "excessively gay" behaviors, embedded within the idea of "flaming" is an unapologetic willingness to transgress heteronormative expectations.

Joan of Arc certainly has the potential to be read as a liminally gendered being who troubles and makes visible what Foucault would call normalizing discourses. Writers such as Vita Sackville-West (1936), Marjorie Garber (1991), Carolyn Gage (2011), and Leslie Fienberg (1997) have all proposed queer readings of Joan. And, I would argue, her queerness is essential to understanding her story, even if it is often tempered to the point of erasure in official narratives. Here, I am not using the term "queer" to suggest a particular identity but rather, to

cite David Halperin, to indicate a disruptive “positionality *vis-à-vis* the normative” (qtd. in Sullivan 43). I also rely on Cherry Smith’s explanation of queerness as a “strategy or attitude” [that] articulates a radical questioning of social and cultural norms, notions of gender, reproductive sexuality, and the family” (qtd. in Sullivan 46).

Joan of Arc first entered public record in 1426 in the transcript of a legal hearing in which she refused an arranged marriage with a local man, flouting her father’s intentions and societal expectations in favor of the divine mission she believed had already been entrusted to her (Contamine 72). While Joan’s fiercely guarded *pucelage* translated into a refusal to adopt the traditional gender scripts of wife and mother, her untouched state also kept her in full legal possession of her body until her death. As Benjy Kahan argues, celibacy’s refusal of the sexual economy whether as “political self-identification” or “resistance to compulsory sexuality” is itself, a queer state (2). Joan’s consistent cross-dressing and close-cropped hair indicated refusals of the traditional physical signifiers of femininity when they thwarted her military aims. In fact, her decision to reassume men’s clothing after promising to abandon such perceived gender-aberrant behavior sealed her demise, changing her sentence from life imprisonment to death at the stake. After Joan’s suffocation by smoke, but before her body could be consumed by fire, her executioners briefly extinguished the flames so that her genitals could be displayed to the onlookers, to prove that she was, indeed, biologically legible as a woman.

What, then, does it mean to characterize Joan as a “flaming heretic” in a parade in New Orleans’ French Quarter? For the purposes of contextualization, I should note that this is not the only time the parade has drawn from a vocabulary with queer resonances. For instance, a prayer card distributed at the 2012 parade playfully implored Joan to “Please bless New Orleans in 2012, and keep us fierce and fabulous, like you.” While these words are in wide circulation in

the general populace, both of the top definitions of “fierce” and “fabulous” from Urban Dictionary reiterate that they connote a gay (albeit dated) context: “fierce” is defined as “a term that gay men used in the late 1990s and early 2000s to describe everything that was of ‘exceptional quality,’” while “fabulous” is “the ultimate compliment in the gay community.” Therefore, to pair them privileges a reading of their queer semantics. In one sense, discussing Joan in these terms acculturates her to one dimension of her new locale, where, as one travel writer put it, “Flamboyance is part of the culture and queer life has been an active part of this city's identity for decades” (Broverman 1). The krewe’s use of queer-inflected vocabulary creates subtle points of identification between Joan and queer subject positions without imposing any particular interpretation of her identity. By pairing “flaming” with “heretic,” the cards also recognize that Joan was burned as a heretic less because of what she did and more because she adopted an unapologetic stance about her actions. We witness a similar interpretation of Joan as unwilling to allow others to determine her reality despite the threat of fatal consequences<sup>127</sup> in a clever throw from the 2014 parade: a set of earplugs affixed with a sticker that reads, “Choose the voices you hear” (fig. 22). A friend with whom I attended the parade in 2016 remarked that while she appreciated the intended humor in this particular throw, she also saw it as a very non-judgmental way to reference Joan’s voices, which have often been interpreted as mental illness.

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<sup>127</sup> Today, we might think of the menace of fatal consequence as hate crimes.



Figure 22: Earplugs distributed at the parade (2016). Photo by the author.

In 2014, krewe captain Amy Kirk DuVoisin interpreted a living effigy of the figure represented on the trading card. “Flaming Heretic Joan,” as this representation was named, wore a dress licked by translucent flames and lit from underneath by red LED lights. A blog post written two years prior, just days before the 2012 parade, offers insight into what some might consider a particularly irreverent brand of humor. As Kirk DuVoisin explains, her personal willingness to ludically de-sacrilize Joan (and perhaps the public’s reception of a more parodic celebration of her) is an extension of the city’s own year-round carnivalesque spirit, which mingles high and low, solemnity and levity. This ironic stance, which she says New Orleanians just as easily extend to other subjects, finds its origins, she says, in intimacy with tragedy. Jason Saul seconds this idea in his writing about post-Katrina displays of humor, saying “humor became the tool of choice both within the city and without to frame the discussion of the storm and its aftermath” (1).<sup>128</sup> Humor is thus a form of critique and a coping mechanism. This

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<sup>128</sup> The 2005 Christmas display at the Lakeside Mall in Metairie, Louisiana, drew national attention for its satirical depiction of a post-Katrina New Orleans. The Christmas village display, set up inside the mall by the Santa station, featured blue-tarped houses, rescue helicopters, and graffiti proclaiming, “You Loot, We Shoot.” Although some shoppers’ complaints of poor taste

becomes particularly apparent in one of Kirk DuVoisin's blog entries, which links Joan with Hurricane Katrina. She writes:

I founded the krewe with a deep respect and love of Joan, first inspired in my teens when I read "Saint Joan" by George Bernard Shaw. As I grow older my appreciation for her deepens . . . as does my own sense of humor about all things bright, beautiful, and terrifying.

(Was it Katrina that made me this way, or was it just that Katrina happened when I'd reached a point where so many sad and bad things seemed to have happened . . . it kind of opened the floodgates for me and washed it all away???)

I think that New Orleanians— natives or transplants— embrace irony on a deeper level than elsewhere. (Very humid town, very dry humor . . .) At first I thought this was a really negative place; now I realize people here have surrendered in ways that allow one to experience life more fully [...]

All this to say, no matter how sincere and passionate one may be here about anything, there is often a more brutal reality that kind of, well, takes things down a notch and might make you a little more sarcastic than usual. As a friend of mine says, this place can make you into a "weathered stone." But some of us accept that, and sprinkle glitter on our stoney [*sic*] selves, and step out into the brutal sunshine...and the light bounces off of us! ("We do have a sense of humor!")

Once again, reflecting on the statue of Joan seems to elicit an expression of personal loss. Like the letter that Mrs. Emily Hosmer of Covington wrote to Mayor Moon Landrieu following the statue's unveiling in 1972, in which she recalled an illustrious familial legacy of ghostly relatives, "all dead now," Joan appears to occasion memories of a temporal "before" that concluded when Katrina "washed it all away." Yet Kirk DuVoisin, unlike Hosmer, does not wish for what was; rather, she sees the choice to celebrate life in earnest, even if one does so with an occasional dose of cynicism, as proof of rejuvenation. At the end of her blogged reflection, Kirk DuVoisin parallels the citizens of New Orleans, who have become like a "weathered stone" through their experiences with "brutal reality," with the statue, itself,

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caused the village to be removed, it was eventually reconstructed when public outcry in favor of the display overwhelmed the dissent (Dall 1).

concluding: “But some of us accept that, and sprinkle glitter on our stoney [*sic*] selves, and step out into the brutal sunshine . . . and the light bounces off of us!” (“We do have a sense of humor!”)

Bodies flecked with glitter recall the aesthetic properties of the statue, whose gold leaf gilding catches and reflects light. In Kirk DuVoisin’s analogy, the functions of glitter are twofold. In the most literal sense, glitter acts as a decorative layer applied in a celebratory context, the equivalent of confetti that clings to the skin. On a more symbolic level, it serves as protection, a shimmering war paint composed of particles that “act like tiny mirrors in reflecting light” (Blackledge 5). Like the golden statue, the beglittered citizens that Kirk DuVoisin conjures radiate rather than absorb the “brutal sunshine,” a symbolic substitute for fire. As Blackledge remarks of glitter’s physical properties, the seemingly fragile shimmering bits of mica or plastic are surprisingly durable and “will survive most environmental insults” (3).

The parade also closes with a ceremonious emphasis on fire. After parading Joan’s three-foot tall tiered “birthday cake” through the city and distributing over six hundred electric candles, one for each year since her birth, the krewe then invites parade participants to add their candles to the cake, which is placed at the base of Joan’s statue (fig. 23). The softly glowing tea lights arranged on the cake in view of the figure they commemorate take on a dual meaning, gesturing at both death and rebirth. In a Catholic context,<sup>129</sup> votives commemorate the loss of a loved one when lit within the semi-private atmosphere of a church. In the parade, the votives not only honor the departed Joan but also become the ever-multiplying candles on her cake, a

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<sup>129</sup> According to a Pew Research poll published in the *New York Times* in 2008, Orleans parish, (where the city is located) is 28% Catholic, while the neighboring Jefferson parish is 42% Catholic. Thus, while the city is not overwhelmingly Catholic, Catholicism still has a much stronger presence than it does in most cities in the United States: Hartford, Newark, and New York, the most Catholic cities topped out at 44, 41, and 40 percent, respectively.



testament to the city's own perseverance amidst loss. As a prayer card distributed in the 2012 parade reads, "We burn candles to brighten this Twelfth Night, lighting the way for a joyous and safe Mardi Gras season and for brighter futures for us all" ("Prayer Card 2012").



Figure 23: Joan of Arc's birthday cake at the base of the statue (2013). Photo by the author.

The final celebration also serves to resituate Joan's story in a local context by accompanying the *papier mâché* cake with actual King Cakes, defined in one explanation of Carnival as "the only food designated as absolutely necessary" to the celebration of Mardi Gras (Berry 320). Following the parade, krewe members distribute servings of King Cake to the attendees.<sup>130</sup> The eating of King Cake on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the Christian feast of the Epiphany, ties the city to its ancestral French heritage through shared foodways since the French consume a similar pastry on the same date. Yet the differing form of the cake itself (more of a yeast-based,

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<sup>130</sup> In the first years of the parade, the King cake was accompanied by Goldschlager, a cinnamon flavored liqueur with flecks of gold in it. Sipping bits of gold in front of the golden statue recalls other forms of symbolic funerary cannibalism in which members of a community ingest the body of an important figure to incorporate his or her qualities.

cinnamon-laced brioche with colorful sprinkles as opposed to the flaky-phylo-dough French *frangipane* treat),<sup>131</sup> and its hidden favor (a plastic baby rather than a *santon*) reflect how the custom has been adapted. The King Cake takes its name from the three Magi who, according to the Bible, visited the Christ child on January 6<sup>th</sup>. In the krewe's celebration of Joan of Arc, however, the pastry takes on an additional meaning, since it is distributed after a reenactment of Charles VII's coronation, reiterating what Kirk DuVoisin refers to as Joan's "crowning achievement." As the krewe captain writes on the krewe's blog, "Joan is most often pictured at the stake, when she should be pictured at the coronation, standing in armor near the Dauphin as he becomes King" ("I was born for this").<sup>132</sup> By emphasizing Joan's legacy and what *she* saw as her most important accomplishment, the parade once again emphasizes individuals' and communities' right to self-define.

### Praying for Judgment

While the parade does not define Joan by her demise, arguably one of the most powerful additions to the 2014 parade was the call and response drum circle led by "prisoner Joan," who repeatedly spoke a mic-amplified accusation to Cauchon when she learned of her eminent death: "Bishop, I die through you." In response, bongo-bearing, wig-wearing judges in skeleton

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<sup>131</sup> Marcia Gaudet notes that the 1961 edition of the *Larousse Gastronomique* specifies that the cake's form varies per region and references a yeast-based cake in the south of France. The 2004 edition did not acknowledge different forms of the cake, which may mean that the flaky pastry purchased at the *pâtisserie* rather than the homemade variety has become the standard (50).

<sup>132</sup> Kirk DuVoisin's words in some way corroborate the pronouncement in the final scene of Anouilh's *Alouette*: "La vraie fin de l'histoire de Jeanne . . . 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" (188). As a Joan of Arc enthusiast with a background in theater, Kirk DuVoisin may very well be familiar with this play or its English adaptation, *The Lark*.

costumes chanted a percussive echo: “Die through you, die through you, die through you . . . Die through you, die through you, die through you.” This particular emphasis on Joan as a figure who speaks truth to power is significant when we consider that her story has become an infinitely malleable metaphor for integrity in the face of state abuses of power, providing a cast of clear victims and villains to be adapted in accordance with historical circumstance and the performers’ intent. As we shall see, Joan’s story provided the medium for the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc to express outcry against local environmental devastation fueled by corporate greed after the Deepwater Horizon Disaster of 2010.

May 30<sup>th</sup> marks Joan of Arc’s Catholic feast day and the anniversary of her 1431 execution at the hands of an ecclesiastical court in Rouen, France. In 2010, it was also the day when the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc held a public prayer “for Joan [and] the Gulf Coast” that framed Joan’s historical stand against the English as a model for resilient resistance against capital-driven decisions and complicit national leadership (“Prayer on Joan’s Feast Day”).<sup>133</sup> Five weeks prior, on April 20, 2010, Deepwater Horizon, one of British Petroleum’s offshore oil rigs located approximately forty-one miles off of the coast of Louisiana had exploded, claiming human and animal life and wreaking havoc on the environment. For the eighty-seven days that followed the explosion, oil gushed into the Gulf until an estimated 4.9 million barrels had emptied into the water, making it the worst oil spill in U.S. history (“Gulf Oil Spill”). Eleven men who worked on the oil rig died in the explosion, their bodies incinerated in the fiery blast that flared up on the ocean’s surface, burned for a day and a half, then sank into a black and blue patch of Atlantic. Five of men on the rig had lived in Louisiana. In addition to the human life

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<sup>133</sup> I did not attend this event; thus, my reading of it is based on descriptions documented on the krewe’s blog.

lost, Gulf sea life sustained vast casualties. As the National Wildlife Federation reports, “More than 8,000 birds, sea turtles and marine mammals were found injured or dead in the six months after the spill” (“How Does the BP Oil Spill Impact Wildlife and Habitat?”). In the four years that followed, some species, such as the sea turtle and bottlenose dolphin have died at significantly higher than normal rates, while others, such as the sperm whales and tuna, show proof of higher rates of DNA damaging metals or other toxic chemicals in their blood (Inkley 1).

The event the krewe curated used Joan of Arc’s story as the template for conveying and commenting on local experiences of trauma. The feast day event began with a jazz funeral, a local mortuary rite that, as Sakakeeny explains, “celebrates life at the moment of death” (1). Then, from their starting point at the statue, participants second-lined<sup>134</sup> through the French Market and back again before settling into a more solemn, if still satirical, mode of public performance: a protest prayer. After a crowd of New Orleans residents gathered at the statue’s base, krewe members distributed copies of a prayer composed by Kirk DuVoisin before reading it aloud. The ceremony concluded with the laying of wreaths and flowers (“Jazz Funeral for Joan of Arc!”). The prayer’s full text is quoted below:

Oh Saint Joan,  
On this anniversary of your day of suffering we honor and celebrate your life. We come to you to pay respect and to ask for your intervention as we enter a potentially brutal hurricane season and a perpetually brutal summer.

You who of all people can appreciate heat . . . You of all people can appreciate our hatred of British Petroleum . . . you of all people know what it is like to be frustrated by your kings and generals . . . We come to plead for your assistance and guidance to “put the heat” on the United States Government and British Petroleum— and to shield us from further environmental destruction.

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<sup>134</sup> In a traditional jazz funeral, the “first line” is made up the musicians, immediate family close friends, and the funeral directors. The crowd marching and often dancing behind the most prominent funeral participants makes up the “second line.” Helen Regis defines a second line as “a single flowing movement of people unified by the rhythm” (qtd. in Sakakeeny 1).

Although you were aided by government and God, you alone fought and suffered and persevered. We understand the battles ahead and the suffering we may endure and ask that you help us to persevere in this— another!— man-made disaster.

We pray that you help BP be brought to justice. You who were unfairly judged and tried— bring these men to trial SOON and swiftly aid in their sentencing. May the Judges of Heaven and Earth hold them responsible for every pelican and oyster lost. You who won your country but lost your life— stand up in Heaven for all life lost due to active greed and inactive response.

Our livelihood and culture is at stake. We beseech you! Rise up from the ashes and stop the flow of oil and tears!

Bring your armor of love and light to the Gulf Coast and let it serve as a barrier to the darkness washing ashore. Call on Saint Catherine, Saint Michael, and Saint Margaret to assist everyone in raising their voices so that the President and BP can hear them.

Lift your sword, Saint Joan, and cut through the lies to lead us to justice and salvation!

AMEN!

In many ways, the krewe's prayer mirrors the basic form of the "Hail Mary,"<sup>135</sup> the most well-known Catholic prayer addressed to a woman. Like its possible model, the prayer on Joan's feast day begins with an apostrophe ("Oh, Saint Joan"), renders homage to its saintly auditor ("We come to you to pay respect"), then requests intercession ("Put the heat on the United States Government and British Petroleum— and [...] shield us from further environmental destruction"). Thus, the prayer's structure at first appears to situate it within a Catholic tradition that reinforces a reverent mode of address.

Despite its basic structural similarities to the "Hail Mary," the prayer's content diverges from the traditional supplication in its characterization of the intercessor's claim to divine power. In the Catholic prayer, the intercessor's blessedness derives from her function as the mother of

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<sup>135</sup> Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen ("Hail Mary").

Christ. Indeed, the prayer's first line, "Hail Mary," reinforces Mary's role as a virginal vessel by echoing the archangel Gabriel's salutation to Mary in the Bible when he announced the Immaculate Conception (Luke 1:28). The "Hail Mary" further associates Mary's authority as an intercessor with motherhood in the third line: "blessed is the fruit of thy womb" and the fourth, when she is addressed as "Holy Mary, Mother of God." Thus, Mary's holiness is highly identified with her femininity and cannot be disarticulated from the spiritual duty Gabriel entrusted to her. In the krewe's prayer however, Joan as virginal intercessor is blessed not because of the mission to which she was entrusted, at a young age, in a similar annunciation by another archangel, Michael. Rather, she is depicted as deserving of reverence due to her perseverance in the face of suffering, even when it appeared that her mission had gone wildly awry. As Kirk DuVoisin's prayer reads, "Although you were aided by government and God, you fought alone and suffered and persevered." Therefore, Joan serves not only as a potential intercessor but also as a model for perseverance for the praying public who recognizes the imminent "battles ahead, and the suffering [they] may endure" ("Prayer on Joan's Feast Day").

The krewe's prayer further diverges from the "Hail Mary" by reframing the role of the supplicant in relation to the intercessor and reconfiguring blame. The text of the "Hail Mary" assumes the inherent guilt of s/he who speaks it. Born into original sin, the supplicant presumably perpetuates his state of sin through daily transgressions, never able to entirely transcend his inborn iniquity. Redemption for current or future infractions, the "Hail Mary" suggests, is only possible through grace, as reiterated by the invocation's final two lines: "Pray for us sinners/Now and at the hour of our death." The context of the prayer's utterance further reinforces the speaker's dependence on grace: prescribed by priests as penance, one recites the "Hail Mary" to absolve *particular* sins even as the prayer's words remind one of the

impossibility of atoning for the *state* of sin. In judicial terms, it might be equated to a “prayer for judgment;” that is, when an offender readily admits guilt to a petty offence before a judge with a plea of mercy that the guilty will suffer no grave consequence.

The krewe’s public pronouncement performs another kind of prayer for judgment, one that satirically subverts the typical intention of a prayer. Instead of the supplicant recognizing her own guilt and requesting that the intercessor facilitate forgiveness, the supplicant in this prayer is, instead, the injured party, insisting on another’s guilt and soliciting the intercessor to ensure accountability for a third party framed as a common foe. Kirk DuVoisin parallels the BP corporation’s encroachment on the coast of Louisiana to the English troops’ occupation of France during the Hundred Years war, as implied by the line, “You of all people can appreciate our hatred of British Petroleum” (“Prayer on Joan’s Feast Day”). In so doing, Kirk DuVoisin parallels the English’s military presence in medieval France to BP’s economic presence in Louisiana.

In this analogy, Kirk DuVoisin equates the ocean to the land or at least, presents it as an extension of the land. In Louisiana, the distinction between land and water is murkier than in most places, since the state has about three million acres of wetlands and loses an estimated seventy-five square kilometers of wetlands per year, or the equivalent of one football field per hour (Williams 1). While multiple factors contribute to the loss of wetlands, environmentalists have identified offshore drilling as a primary cause. The 10,000 miles of canals that corporations have dredged through the wetlands to access oil rigs disrupt its delicate ecosystem. The canal system has also increased the wetlands’ exposure to saltwater from the Gulf, which, in turn, kills the plants and trees whose roots previously prevented further erosion (Marshall, Jones, and Shaw 1). While scientists also cite storm protection levees as a cause of wetland loss because they

prevent the Mississippi's sediment from providing "starving wetlands [with] nutrients and raw material," LSU Professor of Oceanography Gene Turner suggests that it may not be the levees but rather the "local cuts and nicks, one acre at a time" that are more directly responsible for wetland loss (Carey 1). Tulane Law professor Oliver Houck, who has litigated the suit brought against British Petroleum, maintains that the "damage coincides with the oil and gas industry activities, not the levees." He points out that significant portions of the marsh are not created from sediment but rather "masses of plants and organic material, as much as five meters thick, which have built up over many decades" (Carey 1). In the years since the spill, land loss has quickened as islands off of the coast disappear, no longer held together by the mangrove trees that died when their roots were coated in oil (Elliott 1).

Earlier in the prayer, Kirk DuVoisin evokes two kinds of trauma familiar to New Orleanians, both associated with heat, before then relating them to Joan's death at the stake. First, the krewe leader asks for Joan's intercession at the onset of a "potentially brutal hurricane season and a perpetually brutal summer." Next, she continues to establish mutual vulnerability to "heat," with the satirical aside, "You who of all people can appreciate heat . . ." ("Prayer on Joan's Feast Day"). In the text, the punctual threat of hurricanes, set into motion by the crucial combination of warm water combined with warm, moist air intermingles with the perpetual: the everyday *ennui* and day-to-day discomforts of a sweat-soaked southern summer. While presented as a spectrum of heat-induced difficulties, for the most vulnerable portions of the population—the sick, the elderly, and the poor—the seemingly more benign heat associated with higher temperatures can also become deadly, causing heat stroke. In New Orleans, the average mortality rate due to extreme temperatures is twenty-two deaths per summer ("Killer Summer Heat"). Though not directly mentioned in the prayer, dependence on petroleum, as



literalized by the abundance of oil rigs in the Gulf and the high concentration of petroleum refineries in the state, directly contributes to climate change through increased carbon emissions. The petroleum industry is also indirectly related to Hurricane Katrina's destruction through its association with land loss. When a hurricane hits land, it loses speed and power. However, due to the state's loss of land in the past century, which is in part caused by disruption of the ecosystem via pipelines and canals, hurricanes have become increasingly catastrophic because wetlands no longer buffer more densely populated areas.

The first line of the second stanza, "You of all people can appreciate heat . . ." directly invokes Joan's own death by fire but alludes to the deaths of the men on the oil rig whose bodies, like hers, were also reduced to ashes. By conjuring the men's deaths through the evocation of Joan's, the prayer refuses the blamelessness implied by the term "spill," which privileges an interpretation of the event as accidental and misrepresents its environmental impact by reducing the imagined proportions of the leak. As Miller and Roberts emphasize, the scientific community uses an alternate term: "gusher" (9). Although Joan's execution was intentional and the men's deaths could feasibly be described as an accident, albeit a tragic one, Kirk DuVoisin rejects this interpretation. Instead, she likens the incident to "another! man-made disaster," inscribing Deepwater Horizon within a local mnemonic history of trauma. The presumable precedent for the disaster, the one that elicits the indignant exclamation point, is Hurricane Katrina, conjured, if unnamed, in the earlier request for protection at the beginning of hurricane season. While Katrina was equally termed a "natural disaster," which also suggests blamelessness, the hurricane can be described as "man-made" insofar as the federal government was aware of the insufficiency of the levees to prevent flooding in the case of a category five

storm<sup>136</sup> and intervened at a sluggish speed in the days directly after the storm, when the city flooded. As *Time* reported five years out, the “prevailing narrative is finally starting to reflect that Katrina was a man-made disaster, not a natural disaster, triggered by shoddy engineering, not an overwhelming hurricane” (Grunwald 1).

The prayer reiterates a similar understanding of Deepwater Horizon, by refusing to participate in what Anne McClintock has called “reading history as tragic destiny,” which minimizes human responsibility by attributing disasters not to policies or calculated decisions but by instead depicting them as inevitabilities beyond human control. McClintock explains: “Reading history as tragic destiny— the stage on which outcomes are driven by contingent forces larger than human intention— lends itself to historical amnesia and the denial of political guilt. To identify a tragedy as a political atrocity, by contrast, is to allocate agency, identify political intention, acknowledge historical complexity, and claim ethical accountability” (821). Five years after the incident, senior vice-president of British Petroleum, Geoff Morrell, continued to use the language of tragedy to describe the Deepwater Horizon Disaster, stating: “The Deepwater Horizon accident was a tragedy. It was deeply regrettable” (Elliott 1). Kirk DuVoisin’s prayer, however, demands accountability.

The prayer places blame on the federal government, rallying a praying public who like Joan, “know what it is like to be frustrated by your kings and generals.” Kirk DuVoisin’s plea that Joan and her voices assist “everyone in raising their voices so that the President and BP can hear them” further implicates the federal government in the disaster (“Prayer on Joan’s Feast Day”). By naming “the President” alongside BP, Kirk DuVoisin suggests an alliance between

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<sup>136</sup> The National Weather Service declared a category five storm on August 28, 2005. When it first made landfall on the Louisiana coast, Katrina was downgraded to a category four storm. Then several hours later, when it hit the Louisiana-Mississippi border, it was downgraded to a category three storm (Waple 2-4).

the two entities as positioned against the “everyone” whose voices might go unheard without the requested otherworldly intervention. Kirk DuVoisin’s use of the impersonal “President” in lieu of the titleholder’s name also assimilates Barack Obama into a tradition of collaboration with the oil industry<sup>137</sup> and federal neglect of the Gulf Coast. By associating Obama with his predecessor, George W. Bush, who was widely criticized for his delayed deployment of federal disaster relief after Katrina, Kirk DuVoisin emphasizes a similarly “inactive response” to the BP disaster. As Miller and Roberts write, “A perceived delay in Federal response to both disasters saw back-to-back U.S. presidents having their legacies tainted with apathy toward the Gulf Coast.” They also point out that local media coverage sometimes framed the Deepwater Horizon disaster as “Obama’s Katrina” though they recognize that this was “a knee-jerk media frame” used to “pull leaders into the unfolding regional crisis” (12).

Part of what Kirk DuVoisin appears to be doing is responding to Ann Cvetkovich’s call to “think of trauma as part of the affective language that describes life under capitalism” (Cvetkovich 19). The oil industry is at the origin of much systemic violence in Louisiana. The first offshore oil rig was built off of the Louisiana coast in 1936, and currently Louisiana has “the greatest concentration of crude oil refineries, natural gas processing plants and petrochemical production facilities in the Western Hemisphere” (“About Louisiana”). At one point, in 1982, mineral revenue accounted for 42 percent of the state’s total revenue (O’Donaghue 1). While, it is down to 13 percent to date, when the price of oil plummets, petroleum dependence can contribute to dramatic budget shortfalls, which impact higher education and health care most harshly (O’Donaghue 1). Given the number of oil refineries, the chemicals’ permeation of the environment has also contributed to a disproportionately high rate of cancer in the state,

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<sup>137</sup> While an in-depth evaluation of this idea is beyond the scope of this project, Greg Muttitt’s *Fuel on the Fire: Oil and Politics in Occupied Iraq* (2012) is a useful resource.

reflecting a logic in which profit takes precedence over quality of life or even life itself. Indeed, Louisiana has the dubious honor of having the second highest cancer rate in the United States (“Cancer Burden”). The 150-mile stretch along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge averages more than one petrochemical plant per mile, earning it the name “the petrochemical corridor” or, more familiarly, “Cancer Alley.” The geographical space itself also bears witness to the reproduction of economics-driven trauma that falls most heavily on poor people of color: the petrochemical processing plants frequently purchased the land of former plantations. Lower-income African Americans who descended from the slaves who had worked on the plantations often inhabited the spaces between the large tracts of land where former plantations, now replaced by petrochemical processing plants, sat. Therefore, they were the most vulnerable population to the newly toxic environment and the least likely to have access to health care.

The location of the accusation, spoken before a French statue, intensifies the indictment against BP given that the implantation of the oil industry on the Gulf Coast is one of the many factors that contributed to attrition of French speakers in Louisiana. During the early twentieth century, the promise of petroleum drew English-speaking newcomers to the state, whose presence began to dilute the heretofore geographically isolated concentration of native francophones in South Louisiana (*Dictionary of Louisiana French* xii). During the same period, the rise of the automobile demanded a new transportational infrastructure to match. In response, Governor Huey Long orchestrated the construction of a vast network of roads and bridges connecting pockets of rurally remote French-speaking communities to urban centers. Labor-motivated commutes out of communities paired with the influx of *américains*, or English

speakers, into Acadiana<sup>138</sup> made English the language of social mobility and a practical necessity. As a result, French speaking became increasingly circumscribed to private exchanges among friends and within families. Due to policy changes that forbade the formal instruction of French and the growing stigma attached to the language, language attrition accelerated.

Kirk DuVoisin's prayer emphasizes that, while oil companies may bring jobs to the region, they often do so at the peril of local industry, the coastal ecosystem, and defining attributes of the state's culture. In the fourth stanza, she writes, "May the Judges of Heaven and Earth hold [BP] responsible for every pelican and oyster lost," specifically citing animal life that is emblematic of Louisiana ("Prayer"). In the weeks following the Deepwater Horizon Disaster, 47.3 percent of Louisianans reported that the image they most closely associated with the spill were photographs of oil-covered animals, most often specifically naming the pelican, which is the state bird (Miller and Roberts 137). While the oil industry has deep roots in the state and has been defended by the Louisianans who work there as well as the politicians who have facilitated its expansion,<sup>139</sup> the prayer allows for the expression of outrage at an industry that prioritizes profit over human life. Moreover, it articulates the feeling of abandonment that Louisianans

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<sup>138</sup> "Acadiana," combines the words "Acadia" and "Louisiana." A Lafayette television station coined the term in the 1960s, and the Louisiana State Legislature officially adopted it in 1971 to refer to 22 parishes that make up South Louisiana, where a high concentration of Acadians settled. While it arose in the context of a more general assertion of Cajun pride, the term is still somewhat problematic in that it associates the French-speaking area with a single ethnic group, effacing Creoles and Houma First Nations. For further information, see "The Cajunization of French Louisiana: Forging a Regional Identity," by Cécyle Trépanier in *The Geographical Journal* 157: 2 (1991) 161-71.

<sup>139</sup> As Alan Neuhauser observed of the state's Governor in 2014, "Rejecting the advice of his own attorney general and dozens of legal scholars, Louisiana governor and potential presidential contender Bobby Jindal effectively blocked a New Orleans-area levee board from suing oil and gas companies for allegedly destroying the state's coasts— and in so doing, may have also derailed state and local claims against BP for damages and tax revenue lost" (1).

have expressed in response to perceived federal indifference. The statement, “Our livelihood and culture is at stake” evokes the urgency of the “about to die moment” that Zelizer references<sup>140</sup> while also attending to its contingency. Like the “jazz funeral” that framed the event as well as the allusion to the phoenix in the command to “Rise up from the ashes to stop the flow of oil and tears,” the overall message is one of faith in the city’s regeneration.

### **Bead Free**

*January 6, 2015, part 2:* When my friend Marwa and I empty our pockets on Twelfth Night, spreading out all of the parade favors onto the red formica table of a pizza parlor on Decatur Street to examine our parade prizes more closely, we marvel at the personalized quality of the items we have collected. Among our treasures, we discover découpaged magnets, glossy trading cards featuring characters from Joan’s entourage, a packet of wildflower seeds tucked inside a decorative envelope, a miniature book about Joan’s voices, a hand-sewn doll, and a tightly stitched yarn cross. Unlike many of the objects one might collect during a traditional Carnival parade, we will keep these trinkets. The magnets will find a place on the refrigerator, the flower seeds will settle into the soil of my backyard, the doll will be passed on to a friend with a young child, and the cross will hang from my Christmas tree the following year. While the booklets and cards are the most ephemeral of our finds, the knowledge they impart is not: few parade favors are so explicitly designed to educate.

Our most prized throw, one that we suspect our costumes had won us, was an oval pendant with a portrait of Joan’s face suspended from a delicate silver chain (fig. 24). We turn it over. Printed on a sticker on the back was the date. We turn it over again. A bubble of glue

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<sup>140</sup> See Chapter 1 for a discussion of this idea.

under the convex glass cover attests to hand assembly. Then we notice initials on the card that accompanies the pendant: one set for the krewe member who had pieced it together and another for the krewe member who had prayed for the wearer. I fasten the pendant around my neck, thinking that it is the antithesis of the ubiquitous beads that would soon deluge the streets.



Figure 24: Joan of Arc pendant distributed at the parade (2015). Photo by the author.

For tourists as well as many locals, glittery strands of plastic beads have become emblematic of Mardi Gras, and few krewes hazard to produce a parade without them. Super-krewes such as Endymion, toss upwards of 100 million strands of beads in a single evening of parading (*The Economist*, 2013- qtd in Redmon 95). That sum swells to 420 million beads when considering the sixty official krewes and almost as many unofficial krewes in the New Orleans and Metairie area (Redmon 95). Yet many of the purple, green and gold adornments so coveted by the throngs of revelers who grasp after them below Bourbon street balconies or scream for them along Saint Charles Avenue lose their perceived value within seconds. Beads often go untouched once they strike the pavement, and strands that go uncaught remain trampled

underfoot in post-parade sludge until they're swept up by street cleaners and deposited in landfills. Many of the Mardi Gras participants who clamor after them as they sail through the sky find them cumbersome once caught. Revelers frequently deposit their beads in large plastic sacks, removing the proof of their won wealth and re-performing their bead poverty. When I have hosted out-of-state visitors during Mardi Gras, they almost inevitably leave their bags of beads behind when they leave Louisiana.

In addition to representing a spectacle of waste that is especially disturbing given that Louisiana is one of the poorest states in the U.S., the beads, which are made from petroleum products, participate in a kind of environmental trauma. Their centrality to Mardi Gras as it is currently celebrated in New Orleans, guarantees that, in addition to the typical petroleum consumption demanded by transportation of the many floats and trailers that idle their way to the end of the parade routes, and the various forms of transport that bring tourists into the city, Louisiana also reinforces its dependence on oil through the ever-increasing bead needs of the Mardi Gras season. The beads introduce toxins into the environment. Recent studies of the composition of beads have revealed that they contain trace amounts of lead, which can be absorbed into soil and skin. Even the most conservative estimates suggest that the beads introduce 773 pounds of lead per season into the environment. The work of Howard Mielke, a chemist at Tulane who maps the lead content in neighborhoods of New Orleans, has discovered that the streets along the parade routes have higher concentrations of lead in the soil (Redmon 104).

This recognition of beads as a signifier of eco-trauma, especially in the aftermath of Deepwater Horizon, has led some activists in New Orleans to push for alternate models of Mardi Gras that conserve both resources and local culture. As the website of the organization



VerdiGras asserts, “**Mardi Gras** is about the **show**,/not the throw, the **community**/ and the *joie de vivre*” (emphasis in original). Holly Groh, the founder of VerdiGras, explains:

It was Mardi Gras the year after the BP oil spill. The spill had devastated our local and coastal economy. For me personally, this was very palpable in my weekly trips to the local farmers’ market and flights over the Gulf. Our city was just recovering in the wake of Katrina. Mardi Gras day after the spill, I was flabbergasted as we sat in our usual spot with family and friends to be surrounded by a sea of discarded petroleum products— plastic bags, cups, beads, throws, etc.— all into the streets. Nothing had changed! I felt that something had to change [...] We wanted to preserve the world’s resources, not just Louisiana’s. Mardi Gras is about the community, creativity, joie de vivre, not about the stuff, especially foreign-made stuff. (qtd. in Redmon 107)

Groh’s description of a “sea of petroleum products” that remains on the street as post-parade debris figuratively evokes the blobs of oil that continued to wash ashore in the weeks after the spill. When recontextualized through the lens of the BP disaster, the familiar sight of the lingering litter of Carnival elicits newfound disgust because Groh perceives it as a participating in a pattern of environmental irresponsibility with global implications. Groh’s closing comments about “foreign stuff” act as a reminder that the increasing mass production of Carnival results in reliance on outsourced labor and the perpetuation of exploitative practices which generally remain invisible to the revelers who catch the bunches of beads tagged with the label, “Made in China” (fig. 25).



Figure 25: A Carnival participant at

a parade on St. Charles Avenue  
wearing beads made in China  
(2011). Photo by the author.

Accent Annex, the greatest supplier for Carnival trinkets based in Metairie, Louisiana, outsources its bead production to the Tai Kuen factory in Fuzhou, China. The workers, who are primarily teenage girls, live and labor in the compound, for six to seven days per week, their wages docked if they speak while working or fail to meet the ever escalating quotas. Shifts last fifteen hours and yield a modest salary of two dollars per day, or as Redmon remarks, “the cost of one cheap bead in New Orleans” (4).<sup>141</sup>

Kirk DuVoisin’s writing on the krewe’s blog reflects a philosophy similar to Holly Groh’s: shifting the emphasis away from the “stuff” and refocusing it on the “spectacle.” The krewe captain writes, “We are a procession and spectacle more than a parade” (“We are ... blessed!”). One of the primary ways that the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc distinguishes itself from other groups that organize parades in New Orleans is through its wholesale rejection of beads.<sup>142</sup> As Kirk DuVoisin suggests, beads strip Mardi Gras of its artistry and homogenize the identities of the many krewes that participate in Carnival. In an early blog post, she offers an alternate vision for the Joan of Arc parade: “We want this to be a unique parade so we discourage throwing Mardi Gras beads.” She then encourages participants to “[m]ake [their] throws unique and relevant” (“Ideas for Throws”). In one blog entry entitled, “Not Throws . . . We Call em

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<sup>141</sup> For more information, see David Redmon’s *Bodies, Beads and Trash: Public Sex, Global Labor, and the Disposability of Mardi Gras* (2014) as well as his documentary *Mardi Gras: Made in China* (2005).

<sup>142</sup> The krewe’s ban on beads also links it to other francophone celebrations of Mardi Gras in South Louisiana with medieval antecedents, namely the *courirs de Mardi Gras* in Acadiana. During a *courir*, a band of maskers in hand-sewn carnival garb travels from house to house begging for the ingredients of a gumbo.

GIFTS,” Kirk DuVoisin points out that like the wise men who presented gifts to the baby Jesus on Epiphany, the krewe will distribute (“not THROW”) favors to the public on the same day as a nod to Joan’s Christian beliefs. She then invites the public to come out and catch “cool stuff that’s not plastic . . . made by local hands.” The Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc also exercises a creative frugality in their distribution of what they often refer to as “favors” and “gifts.” It is not uncommon for the krewe to have a pre-announced limited number of items, where the number, itself, has some kind of symbolic quality. In past parades, for example, the krewe has distributed sixteen handcrafted wooden swords to parade goers because Joan was sixteen when she went to war. In 2014 and 2015, they also distributed a limited number of wooden doubloons, as well as the locally crafted necklaces that Marwa and I received in 2015.

Contrary to most groups that sponsor Mardi Gras parades, the Krewe de Jeanne d’Arc handcrafts and locally sources the majority of the items it distributes. Indeed, the “handmade” quality of the krewe’s offerings is so essential to their identity that Kirk DuVoisin offered a mock public apology to Joan on their blog when she purchased some items that had been made in China: “I am feeling quite guilty . . . forgive me, Joan, for I have sinned . . . *I ordered something made in China to give out at your parade!*” As penance, she offers to “hand-change” the items before “hand-delivering” them to parade-goers concluding that even if the favors weren’t homemade, there were still a step up from “store-bought” or “machine made” and “better than plain old beads, baby” (“Confessions,” emphasis in original). Two days after the 2014 parade, a post on the group’s Facebook page reaffirmed a commitment to making items, and invited community members to participate in the process.

This year's props and throws included some recycled items [...] Please save items that you think can in ANY way be transformed into props for our medieval themed handmade parade! Yesterday a coworker asked if I wanted a gallon of bottle caps that she's been saving . . . why, yes!! I also have a collection of coffee mugs with[out] handle[s] that I'd

love to turn into drums . . . We will post something soon regarding upcoming events and gatherings . . . and one of them will include a recycling drive for items like this . . . until then, stash away!! We welcome artists who love these types of projects to lead a workshop or two on creating handmade instruments, props, and throws out of recycled materials. (Joan of Arc Project Facebook Page 1/8/14)

Recently, Kirk DuVoisin's stance on beads appears to have hardened into a more critical refusal. In a vehement post to the krewe's Facebook page during the summer of 2014 that has since been deleted, she addressed the many people who had contacted her about where to take beads to be recycled. Bluntly, she advised them to remove the beads from circulation by throwing them in the trash. She cited the beads' toxicity and pointed out that bead recycling centers, while perhaps well-intentioned, expose their workers, who are most often mentally-disabled adults, to harm through extended contact.

The participants with whom I spoke appreciated the lack of waste the parade generated and the quality of the favors distributed. One friend who attended the parade in both 2014 and 2016 remarked that she was struck by how the krewe members were careful to pick up anything dropped or discarded, so as not to leave the usual trail of trash. One first-time attendee observed, "They must have very strict guidelines about what they give out. Everything *means* something. Not the typical junk!" An acquaintance who attended the parade in 2016 showed me a hand sewn doll in a translucent orange bag, designed to look like a flame-kissed Joan, exclaiming, "You can just imagine someone in their living room, making this!" She also speculated that she, in turn, would like to design a Joan-themed shadowbox with the items she had collected.

In addition to being a physical pollutant, beads could also be considered a cultural contaminant. Beads homogenize the experience of Mardi Gras by their ubiquitous presence in nearly every New Orleans parade, in a city that prides itself on its uniqueness and is often characterized in critical work, as in passing mentions on tourists sites such as Yelp or Trip

Advisor, as “like another country” or “like nowhere else in the United States.” Beads flatten the temporal framing of Mardi Gras as a specific season: they linger in the landscape, draped over power lines, strung around the necks of tourists who can acquire them, year-round, at the stores lining Bourbon Street, and most often tangled in tree limbs. The metallic strands of beads hanging from tree branches along parade routes recall the flower garlands that Joan and her childhood friends draped over the boughs of the Fairy Tree each May to greet the spring.

### **Conclusion**

“When they burned [Joan of Arc], her ashes went up into the atmosphere and the wind picked ‘em up and blew her around and around the world. When you look at her statues, her horse is in motion.” -Charles Filhiol, from the documentary *Invisible Girlfriend*

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which the Joan of Arc statue in New Orleans has become a dynamic site of multidirectional memory in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill: Joan’s memory is mobilized to speak out against perceived abuses of power and to offer a model for response. While the Joan-themed performances the krewe stages draw on the powerful affective charge of Joan’s fiery demise, they do not make a martyr of her or reduce her to her dying moments. Instead, they recognize her as a figure that refused to allow others to determine her reality and who maintained her integrity even in the most harrowing circumstances. Thus, the statue and the performances that feature it become public spaces to negotiate how recent events in the city’s history are remembered. While memory work is not necessarily the krewe’s focal point, some of their celebrations of Joan have allowed for a reframing of the aforementioned events that demand accountability without assuming a stance of victimhood.

Joseph Roach has suggested that if performances often hinge on repetition they also deal in reinvention (*Cities of the Dead* xi). Unlike the procession after which it is loosely modeled in Orléans, the Joan of Arc parade offers its public multiple interpretations of Joans. By encouraging creative license and activating several possible readings of Joan, the parade disrupts the traditionalism and associations with purity that sometimes characterize public celebrations of her in France. When Joan's statue was first purchased, the desire to closely identify with a romanticized idea of French ancestry undergirded many citizens' identifications with the monument. This nostalgia for fading Frenchness does not appear to be a prominent aspect of the way parade organizers and participants currently approach Joan, even if the parade includes several nods to Joan's country of origin. Like other interpretations of Joan, however, the parade and its paratexts do register a concern for pollution: not of identities in need of preservation, but of the land, itself. As an effect, the parade organizers do not participate in consuming resources and generating waste on the same scale as many other parades. While Carnival is not monolithic and there are certainly other festive forms that valorize artistry, such as the costume making and masking of the Mardi Gras Indians,<sup>143</sup> the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc stands out as an organization that celebrates the creative process and draws upon local talent and resources to realize their vision of Joan and Mardi Gras.

The Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc has been able to make Joan relevant to New Orleanians in a way that the citizens and preservationists who initially fought to erect her monument could not. A mutual affiliation with France was not, in itself, enough to create a favorable reception for the

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<sup>143</sup> Comprised of primarily African American men, the Mardi Gras Indians pay tribute to First Nations in Louisiana who harbored escaped slaves. Each year, the Mardi Gras Indians design and hand sew elaborate costumes with intricate beadwork and feathers that they then wear only a few times before retiring, usually on Mardi Gras day and on the Sunday that falls closest to Saint Joseph's day (the halfway point of Lent).

statue in New Orleans. To develop popular appeal, Joan of Arc had to become a mascot, to symbolize an aspect of the city's spirit, and to become aligned with practices already integrated into the lives of the people in New Orleans. The Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc has sought to creatively acculturate Joan to aspects of the city's culture, not just during Carnival but on other locally important occasions. In 2010, for example, the krewe held a pep rally at the base of the statue shortly before New Orleans's professional football team, the Saints, went to the Super Bowl, dressing her in a jersey and pinning a Saints flag to her standard. By assimilating Joan of Arc into a yearly event, a birthday celebration that honors Joan's long afterlife alongside New Orleans's post-Katrina rebirth, the krewe has created a favorable climate for her reception. And by making Joan's gilded effigy the centerpiece of a local popular genre, the Carnival parade, the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc has broadened Joan's appeal beyond francophiles and Louisianians with French ancestry.

## CHAPTER 6: PARTING SOUVENIRS: JOAN CITINGS IN FRANCOPHONE TEXTS

### Overview

“What do I know about Joan of Arc? Well, I know that the English killed her, and that’s why we hate them,” a French friend quipped. It was the response to a question that I have frequently asked myself, and others, since beginning this project: “What do you know about Joan of Arc?” My friend is an English teacher and lifelong Anglophile, and she laughed at her answer, a parody of a patriotic pronouncement that hardly reflected her own views. I laughed too, then added, “But wait—I don’t even know if it’s fair to say that. The English captured Joan of Arc but only after she had been mostly shut out of the French army. The inquisitor who condemned her was French, and so were most of the people who assisted him. And her executioner was French, too.” She looked at me, a little startled, and asked, “Really?”

National symbols are designed to “condense the knowledge, values, history, and memories associated with one’s nation” (Butz 780). But the processes by which symbols become imbued with meaning are neither ahistorical, nor apolitical, nor complete. In the age of Brexit, discussions of wall-lined frontiers in the U.S., and the rise of politicians across Europe who exploit anxieties over porous borders, our ability to evaluate the narratives that national symbols are used to communicate is critically important. I chose to study Joan of Arc because, despite her somewhat institutional status in French culture, she is a fundamentally ambivalent figure and a potent symbol of revisionist history. Joan is most often hailed in public memory as a heroine who represents the glory and grandeur of France, lauded for the unwavering faith that impelled her to accomplish impressive feats in the face of daunting odds. Yet her story might just as easily be read as a cautionary tale, one that reveals the failings of the institutions and individuals who have most often appropriated her. Joan’s religious conviction did not spare her



from a horrific death at the hands of the Church, nor did her devotion to the king guarantee his intervention after her capture. If Joan's two trials and the numerous adaptations that they have inspired teach us anything, it is that Joan's public memory has been infinitely spun to suit diverse ends, most of which have political aims.

The purpose of this dissertation has been to provide a series of case studies for how different groups in the French and francophone world mobilize the myth of Joan of Arc to comment on postcolonial dynamics and transnational relationships during the second half of the twentieth century and early years of the twenty-first. This project's premise is that Joan of Arc functions as a kind of mnemonic muse, triggering the elaboration of memories and personal mythologies that are encoded with identity narratives. In particular, I have chosen to emphasize how the story of Joan of Arc circulates in spaces linked by colonial histories and how both France and populations of its former colonies talk *through* Joan of Arc to talk *to* (and about) each other. While the memories studied here sometimes play fast and loose with facts, they nonetheless reveal crucial information about the ways their tellers see themselves and their histories.

This dissertation has sought to intervene in four fields: Johannic Studies, Memory Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and Gender Studies. This work has implications for Johannic Studies insofar as it offers a framework for understanding a defining event in Joan's mythification process. Through a close reading of the rehabilitation trial, I call attention to the way the testimonies contained in the trial transcripts perpetually recognize the failing of individuals' memories while simultaneously creating an precedent for future public memory. Moreover, it clarifies some of the ways in which the rehabilitation trial revises some of the more problematic aspects of Joan's public image. Additionally, this dissertation's focus on popular

forms, such as political rallies and Carnival parades, offers insights into when and why larger audiences engage with and reinterpret Joan. In the field of Memory Studies, this study reveals some of the processes by which Joan of Arc's myth becomes a space for the revision of memories and identities. Moreover, it demonstrates how different publics position themselves in relation to one another via acts of public remembrance to generate new mnemonic connections between disparate events. This work also contributes to the field of Postcolonial Studies through its examination of the ways in which national symbols can come to bear on conversations related to postcolonial concerns. Lastly, this work has implications for Gender Studies because it examines the way gender non-conforming figures often undergo revision before being accorded a place in public memory. As importantly, it clarifies how witnesses in Joan's rehabilitation trial posthumously construct and validate her virginity, which becomes an enduring aspect of Joan's public memory. Thus, *The Mnemonic Maid: Joan of Arc in Public Memory* constitutes a starting place from which to understand the phenomenon of Joan of Arc's popularity as a figure via which to negotiate public memory, especially in relationship to postcolonial identities.

### **Summary of Shared Characteristics**

While each of the interpretations of Joan of Arc that I studied differed in form and expression, I identified four recurrent themes: (1) nostalgia for a lost time, place, or way of being, (2) a preoccupation with ideas of purity and contamination, (3) a focus on perseverance, and (4) the assertion or rejection of identities. While not all of these themes are present in equal measure, each theme in some way inflects the interpretations of Joan of Arc that I studied.

The first, and perhaps most pervasive theme, was a sense of nostalgia for a time, place, or way of being. A form of colonial nostalgia characterizes the conversations about the Joan of Arc

statue presented to New Orleans in the 1950s. This idealization of a colonial past manifested itself via many citizens' expressed longing for an ancestral French identity, imagined as aristocratic, that is even, at one point, conflated with a romanticized vision of the Confederate South. By the same token, in giving a statue of a French heroine to New Orleans, Charles de Gaulle asserted France's importance both to Louisiana, and by extension the United States, at a time when France's position as a world power was waning. In the case of Djamila Boupacha, the perceived loss relates to a sense of political engagement on behalf of shared national values that appear to have been abandoned due to the French public's tacit acceptance of the military's use of torture. Identifying this political engagement with the figure of Joan of Arc as well as the spirit of the French Resistance during World War II, one member of the Comité pour Djamila Boupacha explains, "Toutes, à vingt ans, nous nous sommes un peu prises pour Jeanne d'Arc en 1943" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 106). Thus, the Comité pour Djamia Boupacha mourns the sense of indignity and the courage that propel political action even when one is fighting what would appear to be a stronger foe. In other words, they regret the disappearance of qualities incarnated by Joan of Arc, Djamila Boupacha, and a younger, more idealistic version of themselves. The Front National's speeches about Joan lament a loss of racial and cultural homogeneity, an imagined time when France's colonial populations did not live in mainland France and could not claim full French citizenship. Finally, the Saint Joan Krewe's demonstrations and blog posts use the figure of Joan of Arc as a medium to express regret for the loss of life and livelihood in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill. The krewe also looks back to an earlier, less commercialized version of Carnival through its emphasis on hand-crafted costuming and visual pageantry as well as its reliance on anachronistic features such as horses and wooden carts.

The second common theme in the Johannic interpretations I studied was a preoccupation with purity and contamination. The discourse around the Joan statue in New Orleans emphasizes Louisiana's European French lineage. While French settlers represent one aspect of the state's francophone heritage, it is also made up of Acadians, Creoles, Native Americans, and Haitians; thus, I would speculate that this emphasis on one francophone heritage without mention of others may reflect a desire to downplay the actual diversity of French speakers at a time when the public face of "Frenchness" was being negotiated in the state. In the second trial of both Joan of Arc and Djamila Boupacha this preoccupation with purity manifests itself in the attention accorded to each woman's status as virgin, and the desire to identify and expel persons who contaminate an idea of French honor, such as Djamila's torturers and Joan's inquisitors. The FN's speeches depict the presence of (non-white) immigrants and Muslims as threatening to the myth of ethnic purity that the party perpetuates. Finally, the Joan-themed Carnival parade demonstrates a heightened awareness for the environmental impact of Mardi Gras. Careful to minimize the contaminants it introduces into the environment, the krewe organizes locally-produced, sustainable festivities. In so doing, it refuses the trend of an outsourced, consumerist Carnival, as symbolized by the petroleum-based plastic beads mass produced in China that the krewe opts not to use.

The third theme I identified was a focus on perseverance. In New Orleans, Joan's perseverance is likened to the determination exhibited by the supporters of the statue, who remain invested in the civic project despite years of setbacks, and fought for the statue to remain in its original location when it was slated to be moved for the construction of Harrah's casino. This determination also characterizes the French language and culture activists in the state who fought for the recognition of a minority language and identity. Likewise, in *L'affaire Djamila*

*Boupacha*, the perseverance of both Halimi and her client is foregrounded as they fight institutional barriers to a fair trial. The FN's political brand is built, in part, on its willingness to continue to campaign even though the party has never won a presidential election. Thus, like Joan, it frames itself as capable of victory despite slim odds. In the same vein, the Saint Joan Krewe defines Joan, and by extension the city who celebrates her, as a model of resilience who remains steadfast, even when facing disaster, here identified with the state's recent environmental catastrophes.

Finally, negotiation of identities was a recurrent theme. The equestrian statue in New Orleans allowed for the projection of a particular kind of French identity. While historically French speakers in the state have been pitted against (or often intentionally distinguished themselves from) *les américains*,<sup>144</sup> the dedication ceremony of the statue acted to reinforce an American identity galvanized through alliances with other world powers. Joan's rehabilitation trial and Djamila's civic trial in France reveal the extent to which problematic or non-normative identities have to be modified for incorporation into a national body or considered worthy of defense. At the same time, these cases highlight that shame at not abiding by one's own ethical norms can be the basis for the reformulation of a national identity. The FN's speeches reveal how party leaders negotiate political identities and personal brand recognition when party leadership changes. In opposition to her father, Marine Le Pen's identification with Joan focuses less on the idea of an inherited birthright to citizenship and more on the idea of citizenship earned through labor performed for the nation. On the same note, while Jean-Marie Le Pen assimilated Joan into a masculine military heritage that reflected his background, Marine focused on Joan's identity as a pioneering woman in a predominantly male domain to align the party

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<sup>144</sup> Historically, Louisiana French speakers have often referred to English speakers as *les américains*.

symbol with her own personal mythology. The Joan of Arc parade draws on attributes of Joan's that are also identified with the city, such as her Catholicism and French origin. However, the parade's pairing of historical aspects of Joan's life with more mythically inspired interpretations suggests an appreciation for the fluidity of identity not apparent in the other cases I studied.

### **Avenues for Future Research**

When I began this project, I anticipated finding more material on non-Western postcolonial populations's engagement with Joan of Arc; however, the most relevant source material I found tended to focus on Western perspectives. Perhaps somewhat predictably, Joan of Arc was more likely to be adopted as a symbol in former settler colonies such as Louisiana and Québec that sought to assert a French identity in the latter half of the twentieth century. While other authors that might be classified as post or anticolonial feature Joan in their works, it is often the case that this tendency is more apparent among authors who have spent at least a part of their lives in France or attended French schools. Therefore, this work's focus on French perspectives in Chapters 3 and 4, and its emphasis on Louisiana, a settler colony with a very distant colonial past, limits the scope of this dissertation's implications for Postcolonial Studies. Additional incorporation of literary work by francophone authors, as relevant, could extend this work's relevance to Postcolonial Studies.

My background is in literary analysis, and conducting close readings is my scholarly comfort zone. This project challenged me because it included a diverse array of texts, most of which fell outside of my normal reading practices. Therefore, I have no doubt that there are conventions for analyzing trial transcripts, social media, blog posts, public speeches, performances, and material culture with which I am unfamiliar. While revising Chapter 5, I

audited Dr. Helen Regis's class on festivals in LSU's Anthropology department, which allowed me to gain experience using ethnographic methods, including field notes and interviews. Due to practical constraints, I was only able to include these methods in a limited way in the last chapter. However, in the future I would also like to conduct interviews with the founding members of the Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc and consult any archival materials they would be willing to share with me. Similarly, I believe that the inclusion of ethnographic methods in Chapter 4 would provide a clearer image of the public who participates in the FN's rallies and their engagement with the figure of Joan of Arc. Finally, as a future project, I would like to conduct a comparative ethnographic study of festivals that celebrate Joan of Arc in spaces that are directly tied to her history such as Orléans, Reims, and Rouen. Such a study could provide further insight into the role of symbols in articulating the intersection of regional and national identities.

While this project has focused on the varied and often surprising ways that Joan of Arc's memory is taken up in public space and incorporated into other identity narratives, I have found that she also appears allusively in several literary texts in relationship to questions of memory and postcolonial identity. Sometimes she seems, at first, to be the focal point, even if remembrance of Joan quickly sparks the forging of unexpected connections to other national histories. At other times, however, Joan resurges in brief but telling references in works that, at first glance, have nothing to do with her. The recurrence of these references raises questions about why Joan's myth continues to have such an enduring afterlife in public remembrance, and what kinds of politics come into play when authors conjure her, if only momentarily, in creative works. Before concluding, I would like to examine a few of Joan's appearances in literary works of the past few decades, which could be incorporated into future projects.

One of the most fascinating instances occurs is the Québécois play *Tu n'es pas tannée, Jeanne d'Arc?*, which exemplifies the kind of mnemonic riffing that Rothberg theorizes as multidirectional memory. A piece of improvisational theater conceived and performed by the theater troupe Le Grand Cirque Ordinaire, *Tu n'es pas tannée, Jeanne d'Arc?* alternates scenes from everyday life in Québec with excerpts from Bertolt Brecht's 1932 play depicting the life of the Maid. One of the troupe members, Guy Thauviette, published the play in 1991, along with contemporary newspaper articles about the performance.

This theatrical production was performed over a two-season run, from 1969-1971, at the height of Québec's assertion of a distinct socio-cultural identity during the *Révolution Tranquille*. During this period, economic and government reforms allowed for the francization of industry, and Québec established more political autonomy, withdrawing from thirty federal cost-sharing programs. It was during this time, as well, that the Official Languages Act of 1969 recognized both French and English as official languages, making federal institutions responsible for providing services in each upon request. Québec's economic nationalism was matched with a desire to valorize its cultural differences not only at home but also abroad, as indicated by the opening of *Maisons du Québec* in Paris, London, and New York. The *Parti Québécois* was formed, as was a separatist group called the *Front de Libération du Québec* ("Quiet Revolution").<sup>145</sup>

As one of the troupe members described it, Joan's story acted as a useful metaphor because, in his words, "notre combat au Québec pour la survivance d'une identité et d'un territoire relève de la même impulsion." Hence, Joan's combat for national sovereignty offers an analogy or "image collective qui puisse permettre de comprendre tout cela, le goût d'être soi-

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<sup>145</sup> See also *A Short History of Quebec* by John A. Dickinson and Brian J. Young (2008) and "Revolution Tranquille" in the Canadian Encyclopedia.



même, jusqu’au bout, le goût d’écouter son inspiration, ses voix” (Thauviette 251). One cast member even likens Joan to the literary heroine Maria Chapdelaine, from Louis Hémon’s 1913 novel of the same name. The novel famously concludes with Maria hearing three voices that instruct her to stay in her homeland of Québec rather than leaving it for America. Given Québec’s assertion of a national identity distinct from the bloc of Anglophone provinces during the *Révolution Tranquille*, the adoption of Joan of Arc as a symbol follows a certain logic. However, the play also uses two scenes featuring Joan to situate Québec’s political and identity struggle within a wider colonial context that both predates and extends beyond the *Révolution Tranquille*.

The first scene, called “la Ballade au Québec,” uses Joan’s story as a point of departure for a timeline of North American colonial history that commences in the year of Joan’s Condemnation Trial, 1431 (Thauviette 61). The first entry, “L’année où a lieu le procès de Jeanne d’Arc” is followed by an occurrence that appears to be only symbolically related: “Les côtes de l’Amérique sont connus de certains peuples européens qui viennent y pêcher” (Thauviette 61). Thus, the timeline establishes a mnemonic link between Joan’s capture and demise and the arrival of Europeans on North American soil, or the beginning of modern colonial history. Because the entries that follow offer an explanation of the event referenced, rather than a temporal parallel, it is clear that the specifics of Joan’s story are unimportant. As the inaugural entry on the timeline, she functions as a symbolic repository, capable of communicating something essential about the battles and treaties listed beneath her. While Québec’s history is foregrounded in this timeline, it is continuously intersected with other colonial histories and neocolonial aftereffects, through references to the dispossession of Native American land, the Atlantic slave trade, the Civil Rights movement, Acadian exile, the Vietnam

war, Cajuns in Louisiana, and struggles against imperialism in Latin America. The timeline culminates in 1970 with “Les mesures de guerre au Québec.” This final entry references Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s response to the FLQ’s acts of terrorism, which reached its zenith with the assassination of the Minister of Labor, Pierre LaPorte. Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act, which limited civil liberties and allowed for detention of figures associated with the sovereignty movement.

In addition to bringing together disparate histories in surprising ways, such as connecting the economic burden borne by French-Canadians under British rule in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the plight of African slaves in North America, the timeline also offers a counter-history to the sanitized commemorations of such events in textbooks and national histories. Decontextualized lists of discoveries, wars, and treaties often work to normalize or render invisible imperial relations through the information they omit. The timeline, however, self-consciously pairs the euphemistic language of “settling” or “claiming” land with the more unsavory, violent details of such affairs. Consequently, the timeline for which Joan is the point of origin attempts to revise the ways these events register in public memory. For example, the entry on Columbus’ 1492 crossing of the ocean blue cannot be divorced from the First Nations genocide it inaugurated. The entry on Columbus reads: “Il ‘découvre’ l’Amérique, ignorant complètement et pour toujours les grandes Nations amériendiennes qui y vivent depuis des siècles” (Thauviette 61). The same critical eye is turned toward the founders of “la Nouvelle France” and Québec, Jacques Cartier and Samuel de Champlain, respectively. Cartier is described, in quotations, as “taking possession” of the land, on which he plants a cross before he “laisse aux ‘sauvages’ ébahis quelques miroirs et la syphilis” (60). In a similar vein, Samuel de Champlain is ironically extolled for his self-interested sabotage of agreed-upon negotiations with Mohawk tribe leaders.

The timeline notes that Champlain arrived packing a hidden pistol that he used to assassinate his perceived opponents and become, in Thauvienne's dark assessment, "un héros, notamment pour les négociateurs à venir" (61).

A second scene in which Joan of Arc becomes the point of origin for a series of mnemonic cross-references is called "La Vente du Québec." As with the timeline, Joan's myth acts as the premise but is quickly overlaid with allusions to colonial encounters. During the scene, buyers from Montreal, Ottawa, France, and New York examine the shackled and gagged girl on the auction block, speculating about her worth and the practical arrangements to be made in case of her purchase. They comment on her physical condition, noting that she is a "young virgin . . . of three hundred years old,"<sup>146</sup> and refer to the color of her skin, confirming, "All white? Yeah! . . . No racial problem here!" (122). One buyer asks what language she will speak and is quickly informed that she will, of course, "parler la langue de la personne qui va l'acheter" (125). Another buyer wants to know what else comes with Joan as part of the deal and is reassured that the vendor will throw in "les forêts . . . la rivière Saint Laurent . . . le ciel . . . la terre . . . Oh! Six millions de braves gens" (125). With dark humor, the auction block scene juxtaposes the petty questions of the bickering bidders with the genocidal histories they evoke, skillfully intersecting references to the slave trade and Native American removal with Québec's sale. As the scene underlines, the evocation of Joan of Arc ultimately serves to reflect on the kinds of negotiations that occur in colonial situations rather than to comment on anything directly related to Joan's story. In *Tu n'es pas tannée, Jeanne d'Arc?* Joan's myth expands to encompass a macro-memory that calls attention to the intersection of injustices on a global scale.

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<sup>146</sup> "Three hundred years old" coincides with the date of Québec's purchase rather than Joan's birth date.

Like Proust's madeleine, Joan's mention can also unlock more individualized remembrances. Such is the case for a lengthy meditation on Joan of Arc in the epistolary memoir *Lettres Parisiennes: Histoires d'exil* (1986) by Nancy Huston and Leïla Sebbar. The text is comprised of a series of letters that the two Paris-based authors write to one another over the course of a year and a half, from 1983-1985, during which they reflect on the nature of their creative lives as women writers. Huston is a Canadian author who emigrated to France in her twenties and writes primarily in her second language, French. Sebbar is a Franco-Algerian author who spent her childhood in Algeria, but lives in France and writes in her first and only language, French. While Huston sees Joan of Arc as an emblem of "le patriotisme, le nationalisme, donc forcément la haine," Sebbar's memories of Joan construct a very different, more personalized picture (Huston and Sebbar 74). Sebbar categorizes Joan as a "femme exploratrice" who intrepidly bucked the customs of her *pays d'origine* and left her mother's home to lead a more nomadic, eccentric existence. Sebbar explains her awe, saying, "elle n'a pas répété le geste domestique . . . Elle n'est jamais revenue au pays natal" (66). Sebbar relates that for years she kept a folder labeled "Institutrices, guerrières, putains" bursting with photographs, newspaper clippings, reading notes, and postcards featuring Joan and other rebellious women such as Russian explorer Isabelle Eberhardt.

The two memories that Sebbar relates of her encounters with Joan of Arc occur in the context of the colonial school she attended in Algeria, but the author refuses to reduce Joan to a dimensionless mascot used to inculcate national pride. Sebbar remembers sitting in a vast classroom, "un peu au fond, seule à une table comme souvent" and listening to her teacher, "une Française de France, jeune professeur diplômée envoyée aux colonies" (64). Here, Sebbar establishes a triangulation between herself as a loner adolescent, the teacher who left her French

homeland to make a career in the colonies, and the soldiering Joan, each in some way an outsider in her society. This memory gives way to an earlier moment in a schoolroom, when Sebbar relates her very first memory of Joan as a child. A widowed *institutrice*, “toujours vêtue de gris,” told the children the story of Joan of Arc as they gazed upon colorful images of the Maid keeping sheep and later brandishing her sword. Moved by her beauty, the child Sebbar marks the page of her textbook “pour la regarder sans chercher” (65). Sebbar notes that she is glad to have been spared the third image in the traditional triptych, of Joan suffering at the stake, for fear that it would have created an association in her mind between Joan’s death and her gender. Finally, Sebbar concludes with the reflection that, in one fashion or another, she has written about Joan in several of her own works, especially in relationship to Algeria, overlaying Joan’s memory with that of another rebellious woman, Kahina, the queen of the Berber people.

One such work where Joan appears, in ghostly glimpses, is Sebbar’s novel *Shérazade, 17 ans, brune, frisée, les yeux verts* (1982). *Shérazade* chronicles the nomadic existence of a fictional incarnation of Sebbar’s loner adolescent, a seventeen-year-old runaway of Algerian parentage who shares a communal “squat” with other youth who live on the margins of French society. The most explicit references to Joan occur in the final chapter of the book, when Shérazade is confronted with a statue of Joan of Arc after attempting to bypass it. While the young Sebbar gazed fondly upon the image of Joan in the marked page of her *manuel scolaire*, Shérazade dismisses her with vague disdain. The image that becomes a source of fascination for Shérazade, instead, is the *odalisque*. This figure of the reclining nude harem girl featured in nineteenth and early twentieth-century paintings is often interpreted as an orientalist colonial fantasy. While Shérazade acknowledges this idea, she is nonetheless moved by the paintings that feature a homeland she has never known. After spending a night studying artwork of *odalisques*

in the Centre Pompidou, Shérázade decides to go to Algeria (238). With this destination in mind, she hitches a ride south with her friend Pierrot, who proposes that they stop in Orléans to see the statue of Joan of Arc (fig. 14). In the end, Shérázade convinces Pierrot to bypass Orléans, observing flatly, “Jeanne d’Arc, elle s’en foutait” (261). Despite Shérázade’s attempt to avoid Joan, Pierrot and Shérázade are confronted with another statue of her when they stop for a sandwich at the next town, Beaugency. Pierrot seems mesmerized by the town of Beaugency, which he describes as “une petite ville française, vraiment française, comme elle [Shérázade] n’en verrait nulle part ailleurs” (262). Swept up in the sentiment of patriotism that leaves Shérázade skeptical, Pierrot professes his love for France and stops to admire the statue of Joan at length. Impatient, Shérázade wonders aloud why Pierrot is talking like they are about to die and snaps, “Tu délires ou quoi?” implicitly identifying both the sentiment of patriotism and Joan, herself, with delusion (262). Shortly afterwards, Pierrot intentionally wrecks the car, killing himself. Shérázade quickly gets out of the mangled car just in time to see it explode. Blown back by the blast, Shérázade appears in the last scene of the novel in an image that mimics Joan’s death, with her back against a *platane* tree, a stand-in for the stake, swirled in smoke and flames (265). But Sebbar refuses to condemn Shérázade to Joan’s tragic end. Instead, the author reworks the image that Sebbar said she never wished to see, allowing Shérázade to escape the stake-like scene and live other adventures in the two books that complete the Shérázade trilogy. Like the *odalisques* that demand closer inspection, the Joan statue that cannot be circumnavigated without reappearing for a second look suggests that the context of an object’s creation does not preclude the possibility for unexpected identifications.

The Joan of Arc statue that Shérázade and Pierrot bypassed in Orléans makes a brief appearance in *Des pieds, mon pied* (2014), a documentary by Franco-Martinican author and

filmmaker, Fabienne Kanor. This experimental short film chronicles the multiple paths traveled in the quest for a home and the reconciliation of identities, situating Kanor's familial history of labor-motivated emigration from Martinique to the *métropole* within larger colonial contexts. While Kanor's parents made efforts to assimilate and taught their daughter to see her birth country of France as her home, Kanor expresses that she feels rooted neither in France nor in Martinique in a filmed conversation with her father. In one sequence, Kanor reminisces about her childhood home, a top floor apartment building that became the weekend gathering place for her parents' friends: a haven traversed by "beaucoup de rires, beaucoup de pieds." Her description of those evenings in the comfort of familiar company concludes as the camera settles on a yellowed photo of smiling adults and children on a living room sofa. The safety and warmth of Sunday evening in the apartment are contrasted with fears of Monday morning and the exterior world it implies. In the city of Orléans, Kanor learns to "marcher tête baissée," with circumscribed movement, beset by the prickling of pins and needles in her feet. While her parents tell her that this is her home, Kanor's childhood memories of it suggest that it is not an entirely hospitable one.

The following sequence concretizes the vague dread of Monday morning that Kanor references to two specific images: the educational institution that inculcates the Republic's values, and Joan, one of the symbols used to this end. The first shot pictures a vacant school courtyard, puddled with rain, and narrated with the words, "Tiens, j'avais oublié l'école . . . et la Jeanne, là." The image of the school quickly cedes to a shot of the national symbol that presides over the Place des Martrois in the center of Orléans (fig. 14), although the decontextualized nature of the shot suggests that Joan could just as easily be floating over the school yard. The low-angle medium shot of the Joan of Arc statue divorces her from time and space. She appears

sinister: a dark bronze who floats in a white sky and appears to stab at the viewer with her downturned sword. Kanor's choice of low-angle framing, matches her earlier shot of the apartment building, seen from the ground, where, she reflects, "là-haut . . . mon père fait semblant de me jeter par la fenêtre." But, the bounded fear of a childhood game where the danger of falling from the window is always undermined by the strength of her father's embrace, is contrasted with the more generalized anxiety that the statue seems to elicit, one that relates to finding one's way in a foreign, and often racist, world. Nevertheless, the filmmaker's description of her fear, "Je deviens une fille immobile," creates a link between the childhood Kanor, partially paralyzed by her fear, and the adolescent Joan, frozen in an image of fearlessness, though she spoke openly of her fear on the day of her death.

Curious to understand this intentional yet unexplained referencing of an image introduced by the words "I had forgotten," I asked Kanor what Joan represented to her after a viewing of the film at Louisiana State University. The filmmaker said that Joan was, for her, "le symbole de la déculturation, de l'acculturation forcée." Kanor then shared a memory that did not make it into the film, one of a photograph taken of her in front of the same statue at age twelve. It was during the yearly Fête de Jeanne d'Arc in Orléans, and it was drizzling. She and the other girls her age were dressed in regional garb, wearing oversized hats and wooden shoes that made it hard to walk. In her words, she was "la petite négresse parmi les blanches," as they all clustered around the statue so that someone's mother could take a picture. The overall impression conveyed by the scene Kanor described was one of discomfort: the chafing of the *sabots*, the soggy costume, the awkward hat, the awareness that one is ostensibly not like one's peers, the feeling of being twelve and having to pose for a picture, and the artifice of smiling on command in spite of it all. She concluded her reflection on Joan of Arc with the words, "C'est pas que c'est mon ennemi,



mais quand même . . . elle te tranche.” As I listened, my mind flashed back to the image of the film with the bronze Joan and the sword that seems to stab at the viewer. Like *Shérazade, Des pieds, mon pied* associates Joan of Arc with a kind of death, one that relates to a nostalgia for a past France that is inhospitable to anyone who does not embody its norms, whatever discomfort this process may entail. Like *Shérazade*, who seems perturbed by Pierrot’s nostalgia for this “ville vraiment française” and the statue at its center, Kanor conveys the alienation of her childhood memory of acquiescent participation in the Fête de Jeanne d’Arc.

All of these examples in some way comment on Joan’s rich potential as a symbolic shorthand, capable of being employed to uphold networks of oppression as well as to resist them. While it would seem that Joan’s officialization over the years might result in a semic stasis, rendering her a “fille immobile,” Joan of Arc continues to be an ever-mutable muse, finding new resonances with new audiences. By considering some of the various ways that Joan of Arc has been interpreted in public memory, I hope to contribute to our understanding of the way national symbols can be adapted and transformed to comment on local, national, and international concerns.

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## VITA

Tara Smithson grew up in North Carolina, on a stretch of Highway 73 that connected the tranquil pastures and family-owned drugstores of Mount Pleasant to the boom and bustle of Concord, famed for its multi-acre mall and motor speedway. On Christmas vacations, her family would pile in the burgundy VW Jetta, and to her and her sister Holly's dismay, endure seven straight hours of NPR as they made their way down I-40 towards her parents' birthplace. Tennessee was a magical place, for no reason other than that her grandparents lived there. Her grandmother, a writer and elementary school principal who alternately went by the names of Tee Tee and Dr. Carr always allowed Tara to borrow books from her *livre*-lined shelves. The fact that these books were far above her reading level and occasionally a little scandalous encouraged Tara's reading habit. The reading habit led to a writing habit, and the combination of these pastimes led to an education habit.

Eventually, Tara left Highway 73 for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she majored in English and Romance Languages. While at UNC, she studied at the Université Paul Valéry in Montpellier, France, a city where she would live for two more years, teaching English to middle and high school students. In between stints in France, she completed an M.A.T. in Secondary English Education at UNC and taught high school French and English for several years near her hometown before returning to school in the most francophone place she could find in the United States. In 2012, Tara completed her Master's degree in French Literature then pursued doctoral studies. After the anticipated completion of her degree, Tara plans to continue writing and teaching French.