

THE CHANGING FACE OF JOAN OF ARC: THE APPROPRIATION OF
JOAN OF ARC IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN THEATRE

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MASTER OF ARTS

by
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ABSTRACT

The Changing Face of Joan of Arc: The Appropriation of Joan of Arc in Twentieth-century American Theatre shows that the evolution of Joan of Arc's image reflected the culture of each era, and illustrated the changing social roles for women.

The dramatic treatments of Joan of Arc have been divided into the following categories: Joan of Arc the warrior, which provides an in-depth look at Joan's role in America during the First and Second World Wars; Joan of Arc the martyr, which examines the aftermath of the Second World War on American culture in regard to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC); Joan of Arc the woman, which investigates Joan of Arc's treatment as the proto-type for the feminist movement; and, Joan of Arc the survivor, which presents modern, imaginative retellings of the Joan of Arc legend that revolve around the premise that Joan of Arc was never executed.

The plays selected convey Joan of Arc's image for each time period. For Joan of Arc the warrior, the principle play examined is Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* (1946). Next, the principle play examined for Joan of Arc the martyr is Lillian Hellman's *The Lark* (1955), a free adaptation of Jean Anouilh's *L'Alouette*. The section for Joan of Arc the woman examines the following plays: Francesca Dunfey's *One With the Flame* (1962), Arthur Kopit's *Chamber Music*

(1963), Jules Feiffer's *Knock Knock* (1976), Lavonne Mueller's *Little Victories* (1984), and Carolyn Gage's *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1987). Lastly, *Joan of Arc the survivor* comprises analyses of Virginia Scott's *Bogus Joan* (1992), Don Nigro's *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* (1998), Erik Ehn's *Wholly Joan's* (1988) and Lanford Wilson's *Book of Days* (1998).

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “The Changing Face of Joan of Arc: The Appropriation of Joan of Arc in Twentieth-century American Theatre,” presented by Boni Newberry, candidate for the Master of Arts Degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

For my mother, Rhonda Newberry, who encouraged me to be a strong, independent woman. You inspire me every day with your integrity, compassion, and kindness. Thank you for leading by example.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my teachers—past, present, and future. Especially Dr. Richard Jones III, who told me I was too smart to *just* be an actress.

INTRODUCTION

December, 2011: My mother and I were in the kitchen, preparing Christmas treats, while I explained why Joan of Arc was so important. Finally, my mother looked at me and asked, “Have you always been this into feminism, or is it strictly Joan of Arc?” The irony of the situation was not lost on me. I am questioned on the extent of my feminist views while cooking—or rather *baking*—in the kitchen.

Actually, Joan of Arc herself was not always into feminism. The only agenda she pushed was God’s. Her mission was to re-unite France, not campaign for equal rights. It would not be until the twentieth century that Joan of Arc would re-emerge as vehicle for the exploration of women’s rights in society. What is characteristic of Joan’s ever-changing persona in twentieth-century American theatre? Each perception of Joan was fashioned by the hoped-for end result. Her image evolved from a naïve-country girl, to the beacon of patriotism, and eventually a champion of human rights.

The appropriation of Joan is a direct result of the changing social roles of women. In regards to the twentieth century, the first characterization of Joan centers on the idea of “Joan, the warrior.” During World War I and World War II, Joan of Arc’s image was synonymous with patriotism. Joan served as propaganda to inspire women to enter the workforce as a service to their country. There was also an emphasis on the sacrificial aspect of her life as a means to justify the hardships of war.

The second category deals with Joan as martyr and scapegoat. The theatre of this period reflected society’s expectation that American women return to the home and resume their traditional roles—sacrificing their new-found independence for “the cause.”

Notably, Joan's story provided an allegory for the HUAC hearings and the witch hunt of the McCarthy Era.

Finally, Joan of Arc became a feminist icon, and reflected the evolution of female social roles and equality. This period of theatre dramatized the parallels of Joan's persecution as an allegory for the treatment of women in modern society. As social policies changed, Joan's symbolism adapted to reflect contemporary issues including women's equality and gay rights. Later, the focus shifted to include the possibility of Joan's survival, and how it impacted her faith.

What does it mean to be a woman in the twenty-first century? It is a question that I have had time to reflect on during this process of writing my thesis. I have had time to evaluate my own personal views of women's issues to appreciate the struggles generations of women underwent in order to secure the rights I enjoy today. For me, Joan of Arc is an inspiration, not because she was a woman, but because she lived life on her own terms. Yes her faith came from God, but her conviction came from within herself. I wish I possessed the same self-assurance and clarity of purpose. In a world of such uncertainty it is heartening to have one constant.

And yes, Mom. Looking back, I guess I have always been "this into feminism." And if I were not, Joan of Arc makes a pretty good argument.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS SO ICONIC ABOUT JOAN OF ARC?

On May 30, 1431, in the early morning hours, a young woman was executed for crimes of heresy. In a time of political and religious turmoil, public executions were the perfect tool to exert control and incite fear amongst the populace. The young victim was not of noble birth, nor did she have the ability to read or write save for her wobbly signature, yet today she is one of the most well-known historical figures in the world: Joan of Arc.

While it is impossible to know Joan of Arc's appearance, both her image and the story of her life have been branded into American consciousness. Joan of Arc has been made into many things: a saint, a cunning military leader, a vile heretic, a schizophrenic peasant, a feminist icon, and a champion of gay/transgender rights. How is it possible that a teenage girl from fifteenth-century France, whose life in the public eye lasted from 1429-1431, could function in this variety of social roles? Joan of Arc has been viewed through so many contexts that it is easy to forget that she in fact really lived. Even in her own time, Joan's image differed from her reality. Perhaps this fluidity, in part, is what draws dramatists to her story.

In order to understand Joan of Arc's impact on twentieth-century American theatre, we must first understand her impact upon her own society. This in-depth look at Joan of Arc's life will begin to discern the facts from the myths.

France and England had been locked in a power struggle since 1337. Through the course of the skirmishes, known as the Hundred Years War, France went from a glorious

nation to an occupied territory. By 1420, England solidified her power with the signing of the Treaty of Troyes which allowed the English to inherit the French throne. France's cultural and political coherence were on the decline with little hope that France would regain her former glory. In order for the French to overthrow their English oppressors, a miracle was needed. This miracle came in the form of Joan of Arc; and, while she would not live to see the end of the Hundred Years War, or a unified France, there is no question that both were a result of her influence.

Joan of Arc was born in Domrémy to respectable, devout parents, Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Romée. While her actual date of birth was not recorded, it is believed to have occurred in 1411 or 1412. Also, she was not born Joan of Arc. She was Jehanne and later, simply la Pucelle, or the maid. "Among my own people, I was called Jehanette; since my coming into France, I am called Jehanne" (Trask 3).

Until the age of thirteen, there was nothing remarkable about Joan. She was an obedient child who helped with household chores and worked in the fields with the livestock. As was common for girls, Joan's education came from her mother who instructed her in domestic tasks such as spinning and sewing, and supervised her religious education. Her neighbors also had fond memories of Joan's extraordinary kindness and great compassion for others. Joan's goodness fits into one of the molds of religious (female) saint. Female saints are either penitent, converted sinners (most often former prostitutes), or exceptionally devout. As Ruth Mazzo Karras observed: "[...] most contemporary saints in the central and late Middle Ages were either in religious orders or lay people of virtuous life" (Karras 3-4).

Joan's first encounter with her voices occurred at the age of thirteen.

When I was thirteen, I had a voice from God to help me to govern myself. The first time, I was terrified. The voice came to me about noon: it was summer, and I was in my father's garden. I had not fasted the day before. I heard the voice on my right hand, towards the church. There was a great light all about (Trask 5-6).

This would mark the moment of Joan's enlightenment. She later identified her voices as Saint Michael, Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret and (occasional visits from) Gabriel. At first, the voices merely instructed Joan to be a good girl and pray. Gradually over the next three years, the voices would task her with a mission, to save the kingdom of France.

In May 1428, Joan embarked on her mission to unite the kingdom of France under Charles the Dauphin. Her voices had instructed her to seek out Robert de Baudricourt, for he would provide an escort to Chinon where the Dauphin Charles held court. On her first attempt, Joan travelled near Vaucouleurs to help her pregnant cousin, and while there convinced her cousin's husband, Durand Laxart, of the validity of her holy mission. Together, they went to Robert de Baudricourt. Joan credited her voices with her ability to recognize Baudricourt. "When I came to Vaucouleurs I knew Robert de Baudricourt, though I had never seen him before. The voice told me that it was he" (Trask 15). This would not be the last time her voices guided her to specific people; yet, despite her efforts, Baudricourt would not believe her and sent her away.

Joan returned to Domrémy where her parents had arranged her engagement. As was the practice of the times, Joan had no voice in the matter, nor had she consented to the match. Upon her refusal to marry, she was sued for breach of contract. Joan's rebellion against her parents' wishes for her marriage was uncharacteristic for Joan. It

represented Joan's deep spirituality and her fidelity to her voices. Joan was forced to defy her parents in order to honor her vow of chastity—a token of her commitment to God. In Joan's time, virginity held magical powers, and it was believed that the "[...] inviolate body of a woman was one of the holiest things possible in creation, holier than the chastity of a man [...]" (Warner 24). Joan never discussed her visions with her parents, but it would have hardly mattered. Joan stated:

My mother had told me that my father often dreamed that I would run away with a band of soldiers. That was more than two years after I first heard the voices. She told me that he said to my brothers, 'If I believed that the thing I have dreamed about her would come to pass, I would want you to drown her; and if you would not, I would drown her myself.' On account of these dreams, my father and mother watched me closely [...]. But since God had commanded me to go, I must do it. And since God had commanded it, had I had a hundred fathers and a hundred mothers, and had I been a king's daughter, I would have gone (Trask 11).

Joan's father's reaction reflected society's attitude towards women. Women were not in a position of secular power, let alone had the authority to command an army. Therefore, the only women to associate with soldiers were prostitutes, which was what her father assumed the dream implied.

Joan's conviction would not allow her to quit. She returned to Vaucouleurs to seek an audience with Baudricourt. Joan would be denied by him until her third attempt. She later claimed that her voices had foreseen it would take three attempts to succeed. Baudricourt provided Joan a sword, a small retinue of men, and most importantly the male clothes that would bring both her identity and damnation. His final words to young Joan were "Go, and, whatever may come of it, let it come!" (Trask 19).

By the time Joan began her journey to Chinon, she had acquired a small entourage including Jean de Metz, who would remain a close companion until her death, Bertrand de Poulengy, and Colet de Vienne. The distance from Vaucouleurs to Chinon required eleven days of travel through enemy territory. Joan was not ignorant of the dangers of the journey, but trusted God so completely that she had no fear. As she told Henri le Royer before their journey, “I do not fear their soldiers; my way lies open [...] I have my Lord with me, who will make a road for me to reach the Dauphin. I was born for this” (Trask 19).

Joan finally arrived in Chinon on March 4, 1429, and was invited to the royal court two days later. The first of many miracles attributed to Joan also occurred on this day. Legend has it that as she was about to dismount from her horse, a man rode by and lewdly called “If I could have you for one night, you wouldn’t be a maiden any more!” (Spoto 48). Joan scoffed at his remarks and warned that he was near death, and within the hour the man was dead! Whether a miracle, prophecy, or plain coincidence, this event set the tone for her arrival before Charles.

As mentioned earlier, Joan’s public persona was shaped through a variety of outside sources, especially with regard to the power of prophecy. A widespread legend of the time prophesied: France would be saved by a virgin. One popular source of this prophecy was in the writings of Marie d’Avignon:

she saw many pieces of armor which were brought to her, which frightened her, that she might be forced to put this armor on. And it was said to her that she should not fear, that is was not she who would have to wear this armor, but a certain maid who would come after her would wear these arms and free the kingdom of France from its enemies (Devries 46).

The gift of prophecy was largely attributed to women in the Middle Ages, thus it would be appropriate for Joan to be regarded as a prophetess, which would strengthen others confidence in her.

While Charles had agreed to meet with Joan, he remained skeptical. Thus an elaborate ruse was put in motion whereby he would be disguised as an ordinary citizen. If Joan were truly sent from God, she would have the ability to pick him out of the crowd and thus prove to all present that she was the long-awaited prophetic maid.

Joan went directly to Charles and bluntly said she was God's messenger sent to restore the kingdom of France and crown him king. The pair spoke privately—a conversation that was not recorded, but it has been speculated that Joan confirmed Charles's legitimacy as the heir of France, and that she performed a miracle proving her heavenly powers. As Timothy Wilson-Smith stated in his work Joan of Arc: Maid, Myth and History the first meeting between Joan and Charles has been a popular source of intrigue and conjecture of historians and playwrights (16). Regardless of the content, Charles was impressed and told those present "Joan had told him a certain secret which no one knew or could know except God" (Devries 48).

However, Joan knew that her work was far from over. Joan knew time was of the essence.

I shall last a year, and but little longer: we must think to do good work in that year. Four things are laid upon me: to drive out the English; to bring you [Charles] to be crowned and anointed at Reims; to rescue the Duke of Orléans from the hands of the English; and to raise the siege of Orléans" (Trask 27).

The first step was to liberate Orléans. The following day, Joan would meet one of her greatest supporters and dearest friends, Jean the Duke of Alençon to whom she referred

to as “my fair duke.” While at Chinon Joan gathered several supporters, but much to her chagrin Charles remained reticent to grant her request to raise a siege of Orléans.

Before Joan was furnished with an army, Charles had to be sure of her piety. She was sent to the University of Poitiers where she was examined by the finest theologians. Joan was noticeably frustrated and impatient with the proceedings. When asked to produce a sign she replied “In God’s name, I did not come to Poitiers to give signs! Take me to Orléans, and I will show you a sign and for what I am sent!” (Trask 25). Notice that Joan never claimed the miracle would come through her, but rather resulted in the deliverance of Orléans. Joan would not perform a miracle, the miracle was God’s reward for obeying his commands. In this way, the deliverance of France rested not only on her faith in God, but in France’s faith that God had not abandoned them.

After the examiners were satisfied with their findings, Joan was sent to Tours to have her virginity confirmed. Her virginity was essential to her plight. First, she called herself “la Pucelle”, the maid and if it were discovered that she was lying, her credibility would be destroyed. Also, virginity was a sacred covenant that solidified one’s commitment to God thereby providing physical evidence of her piety. Once Joan had successfully passed her examination in Poitiers and validated her virginity, there was nothing left except to grant her an army. It was up to Joan to give the people a miracle.

Charles provided Joan with a full suit of armor, and she made preparations for battle. In a letter dated March 22, 1429, Joan sent a stern warning to England’s king:

[...] Do justice to the King of Heaven; surrender to the Maid, who is sent here from God, King of Heaven, the keys of all the good towns you have taken and violated in France. She is come from God to uphold the blood

royal. She is ready to make peace if you will do justice, relinquishing France and paying for what you have withheld (Trask 28).

Also, at the instruction of her voices, Joan had a banner made:

The field of it was sown with lilies, and therein was our Lord holding the world, with two angels, one on either hand. It was white, and on it there were written the names *Jhesus Maria*, and it was fringed with silk (Trask 26).

As Donald Spoto points out in his work Joan: The Mysterious Life of the Heretic Who Became a Saint, her banner was a means of identification both on and off the field (60).

This banner would become one of her most prized possessions. As Joan herself stated: “But I loved my banner forty times better than my sword. And when I went against the enemy, I carried my banner myself, lest I kill any” (Trask 27). In this way, her banner allowed her to enter battle without the obligation of violence.

The next item Joan acquired for battle would be interpreted as miraculous. Joan sent one of her men to the monastery of Saint-Catherine-de-Fierbois. His mission required him to locate and recover a secret sword hidden behind the altar. Just as Joan had predicted, the sword was discovered and brought into her possession. The event was reported in the *Journal du siège d’Orléans* (1428-29):

The king wished to give her a fine sword. She asked that it might please him to send for one which had five crosses close to the hilt on the blade, and was at Saint-Catherine-de-Fierbois. Then the king marveled greatly and asked if she had ever seen it, to which she answered no; but she knew it was there. The king sent there, and that sword was found [...] (Devries 53).

By this point, word of the Maid had spread throughout France. Many men were inspired by the tales of her miracles, and volunteered to serve under her command. This sudden swell of numbers and enthusiasm was a large departure for the previously down-trodden

French army. Arguably, this marks the beginning of Joan's status as a mythic figure. While she had not yet achieved a military victory, her impact as an inspirational figure was recognized throughout France.

Another aspect of Joan's character served to bolster her public image. Despite being in the company of men, she was never trivialized or appropriated into a sexual object. In fact, many of the men believed it impossible to feel carnal desire towards her. It was believed that Joan's goodness and holiness would not allow the taint of immorality—her virginity and virginal persona were safe.

The spiritual welfare of the soldiers was one of Joan's top priorities. She outlawed prostitutes on camp grounds, encouraged her men to go to confession, prohibited pillaging, and would not tolerate foul language in her presence. Again, the fact that Joan was able to demand this level of control proved her power. The men respected her with an almost saint-like fervor.

On Friday evening, April 29, 1429, Joan entered Orléans through the only gate unguarded by English soldiers. She was joyously welcomed into the city by the townspeople. As the *Journal of du siège d'Orléans* (1428-29) reported:

The townspeople already felt comforted by the virtue of that simple Maid, whom they regarded with strong affection. There was a huge crowd, with everyone trying to touch her or her horse [...] 'My Lord has sent me to help this good town of Orléans,' she told the crowd. 'Hope in God—and if you do, you shall be delivered from your enemies' (Spoto 74).

Aside from Joan's popularity and the myths surrounding her persona, the city of Orléans was relieved to have the provisions she supplied. Orléans had been under English attack

since the fall of 1428, and the townspeople had suffered great hardships as a result. The arrival of Joan was their first spark of hope in nearly a year.

Despite Joan's eagerness, the forces would not engage in combat until May 4, but this first skirmish would prove victorious. Furthermore, Joan undertook this assault without the knowledge or permission of her military superiors. Joan, accompanied by around fifteen hundred soldiers, managed to destroy a crucial English stronghold and secured the Bastille Saint-Loup. This victory endeared her to the French as a military leader, and provided an extra boost of confidence for the men.

Although Joan ardently believed she carried out God's will, nevertheless the bloodshed characteristic of warfare weighed heavily on her heart. Her page, Louis de Coutes, recalled:

'Joan grieved mightily...she wept for the men who died without confession. She went to confession herself, then exhorted 'all the soldiers to confess their sins publicly and to give thanks to God for the victory that He had granted'' (Pernoud and Clin 44).

There was no combat the following day in honor of Ascension Day, but Joan did send the English a stern message:

You, O English, who have no right to this kingdom of France, the King of Heaven orders and commands you through me, Joan the Maid, to leave your fortresses and return to your country, and if you do not so I shall make a *hahay* [uproar] that will be perpetually remembered. Behold what I write you for the third and final time; I shall write you no further (Pernoud and Clin 44).

Even though Joan showed her feisty spirit through her words, the real pertness of her message was in the chosen method of delivery. The note was attached to an arrow and shot across English lines.

What Joan perceived as confidence and practicality, the English interpreted as the asinine rants of a foolish woman. Throughout the siege of Orléans, Joan was subjected to slander and defamatory remarks from the English, especially in regards to sexual conduct. From the English point of view, Joan was a promiscuous, meddling woman who had no right to engage in battle.

The conflict resumed on May 6, and the French ended the day victorious. That evening, Joan instructed her chaplain Jean Pasquerel:

Keep close to me all day, for tomorrow I shall have much to do and greater things than I have had to do yet. And tomorrow blood will flow from my body, above my breast (Trask 36).

In spite of this premonition, Joan went out on the battle early the next day and fought valiantly. Again, Joan was not focused on her own glory, but lived for the glory of God. She was aware of the risks, but chose to fight anyway.

Joan's prediction came true. She was shot with an arrow between her neck and shoulder. When confronted with the option of having a charm placed on her injury, Joan vehemently declined: "I would rather die than do what I know to be sin" (Trask 37). Olive oil was applied to the wound and Joan returned to the field.

On May 8, Joan gained the decisive victory and Orléans was won. As Donald Spoto pointed out, "The siege had lasted two hundred ten days, and in only nine it had been lifted" (80). Many historians would cite this victory as the turning point in the Hundred Years War. In other words, Joan single-handedly changed the course of French and English history.

The victory at Orléans strengthened Joan's reputation as the woman who would deliver France. As Alain Chartier wrote in July 1429:

Here is she who seems not to come from anywhere on earth, who seems to be sent from the heaven to sustain with her neck and shoulders a fallen France. She raised the king out of the vast abyss [...] and she lifted up the spirits of the French to a greater hope. By restraining the ferocity of the English, she excited the bravery of the French, she prohibited the ruin of France, and she extinguished the fires of France. O singular virgin, worthy of all glory, worthy of all praise, worthy of divine honors! You are the honor of the reign, you are the light of the lily, you are the beauty, the glory, not only of France, but of all Christendom (Devries 94).

Of course, Joan's work was not yet finished. She delivered Orléans, but her sights were still set on loftier aims. The next milestone was to escort Charles to Reims, where he would officially be crowned King of France. Joan's challenge to Charles proved her confidence in their success, "Go forward bravely. Fear nothing. If you will go forward like a man, you shall have your whole Kingdom!" (Trask 54).

On June 29, 1429, Charles began his campaign to Reims. Several towns along the journey welcomed the retinue, including those previously under Burgundian rule. Still, there was initial opposition from Troyes, which had been the setting of the infamous Treaty of Troyes.

On July 4, Joan sent a letter to the citizens of Troyes and implored them to submit peacefully to Charles. Their response was to send Friar Richard, whose sermons condemned Joan and contained thinly veiled accusations of witchcraft. When he approached her with holy water, Joan replied calmly, "Come on bravely, I shall not fly away" (Trask 53). After much deliberation and threat of violence, Troyes acquiesced and pledged loyalty to the French crown.

Finally on July 16, the royal party reached Reims. The people exuberantly swore allegiance to Charles and denounced their Anglo-Burgundian oaths. Joan watched with great pride as the dauphin Charles became King Charles VII.

Joan's wardrobe of full armor solidified her self-understanding. She did not identify herself as an icon, but as a soldier and agent of God. This complete faith and trust in God gained her the admiration of a nation. The summer of 1429, roughly two weeks after Charles was crowned, renowned poet Christine de Pizan praised Joan's triumphs with *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc*.

Pizan's *Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* (1429) incorporates seasonal imagery as a metaphor for the shifting political situation of France. Pizan describes a shift in nature from winter into spring. In the third stanza, Pizan equates France's victory with the re-appearance of the sun: "In 1429 the sun began to shine again. It brings back the good new season which we had not really seen for a long time, which made many people live in sorrow" (Pizan 253). The imagery supports the weight of oppression the French had labored under the English. The "good new season" foretells of a new world where the French are no longer occupied by her English enemies, and the country may once again experience its former glory.

Pizan praises the newly crowned king, but speaks more of God's glory not the positive attributes of her king. More importantly, Pizan references Joan as God's earthly instrument.

But now I want to tell how God has done all this by His grace [...] This should be told everywhere, for it is worthy of memory and of being written down—no matter who may be displeased [...] that God has wished

to bestow His grace on France—and this is true—through a tender virgin (Pizan 254).

While Charles was born into royalty/glory, Joan was chosen (by God) for it. In other words, Joan is the true hero, not Charles. Perhaps Pizan acknowledges this controversial idea with the line “no matter who may be displeased” (254). Furthermore, Pizan states that Charles’s power is a direct result of Joan, “But now, by God’s grace, see how your renown is exalted by the Maid, who has subjugated your enemies under your flag [...]” (Pizan 255).

Just as Joan has surpassed Charles in popularity and power, the female has surpassed the male.

[...] for all the brave men from the past cannot measure up in prowess against this woman who strives to cast out our enemies. But this is God’s doing who counseled her, who from Him received more courage than any man (Pizan 256).

In stanza twenty-eight, Pizan compares Joan to women of the Old Testament.

I have learned about Esther, Judith, and Deborah, worthy ladies, through whom God restored his people which was so oppressed, and I also learned about many others who were brave, but there was none through whom He has performed a greater miracle than through the Maid (Pizan 256).

The comparison of Joan to these biblical women provides a foundation to interpret Joan’s actions as miracles, further substantiating her claims of divine counsel. The fact that Joan was compared to these biblical female heroes, all of whom followed God’s instructions to save her people, posits Joan as God’s instrument (Spoto 82).

The poem encourages the enemies of France to surrender or face the possibility of death. Pizan praises Joan for her faith and accomplishments as a woman. Pizan esteems Joan as:

[...] an honor to the female sex! [...] That God loves it is clear with all these wretched people and traitors who laid waste the whole kingdom cast out and the realm elevated and restored by a woman—something a hundred thousand men could not have done! Before, one would not have believed it possible (Pizan 257).

In her essay, “Joan of Arc and Christine de Pizan: The Symbiosis of Two Warriors in the *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc*,” Christine McWebb suggests that Pizan’s *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc* begins “[...] a long tradition of mythifying Joan of Arc’s legendary life, a myth that, for Christine, becomes an emblem of female heroism” (142). In other words, *Ditié de Jehanne d’Arc* is the first literary appropriation of Joan of Arc. Pizan was an early feminist, who rebelled against the proscribed female role, thus it was natural for her to feel a sacred kinship with Joan. As a result, Pizan emphasized Joan’s traits as a *female* warrior and stressed Joan’s spirituality to prove that God approved of this strong woman.

Contemporary scholars have suggested that Pizan’s work was intended as pro-Joan propaganda; and, that Pizan wrote the poem much later than the, “[...] year 1429, on the day that ends July” (Pizan 262) as the last stanza suggests. If that was indeed the case, it hints that Joan’s favor had begun to wane. Perhaps Pizan foresaw the danger Joan would find herself in and produced the *Ditié* in hopes of generating public support for Joan; but, it is also possible that Pizan composed the *Ditié* in honor of Charles VII’s coronation.

The coronation represented a renewal in the spirit of France. People began to look towards the future with hope, and believe in the eminence of a unified France. For Joan, this was arguably her finest moment. She had fulfilled her promise and escorted her king to the throne; but, she would not remain on her pedestal much longer. In the

following months, Joan's faith would be tested as she became disillusioned with Charles and her mission.

Joan's disillusion began with Charles's first act as king. Joan had envisioned the return of Paris to coincide with the coronation; but Charles valued diplomacy over military strategy. He negotiated a peace treaty with the Duke of Burgundy in which peace would be observed for fifteen days, and then the Duke would relinquish control of Paris. How much Joan knew or approved of Charles's actions was probably not his concern. However, Joan sent a letter to the Duke of Burgundy on July 17. In this letter, Joan implied the possibility of a treaty. She stated:

[...] the Maid calls upon you by the King of Heaven, my rightful and sovereign Lord, to make a firm and lasting peace with the king of France [...] Prince of Burgundy, I pray you, supplicate, and humbly request rather than require you, make war no more on the holy kingdom of France. Withdraw at once and swiftly those of your men who are in certain places and fortresses of the aforesaid holy kingdom. As for the gentle king of France, he is ready to make peace with you, saving his honor, if it has to do with you alone (Pernoud and Clin 67).

Whether Joan was aware of the negotiations between Charles and the Duke of Burgundy, the letter illustrated her outlook on the situation. She expected a lasting truce or open warfare. The fact that Charles settled for so little, coupled with his lack of initiative was an insult. It also implied that Charles no longer trusted Joan, or her credibility as God's chosen warrior. Even though Joan always remained loyal to Charles, in a letter sent to Reims on August 5, 1429, she showed her displeasure:

No matter how many truces are made, I am never content and do not know if I will keep them. But if I do, it will be only to preserve the King's honor (Pernoud and Clin 255).

When Joan began her mission, her allies cited her voices as a source of truth and inspiration; and they found Joan's confidence noble. Less than a year later, these same voices and their spokesperson were a source of annoyance, especially to Charles. Every time Joan's faith was tested she retreated to prayer.

Whenever I am unhappy, because men will not believe me in the things that I say at God's bidding, I go apart and pray to God, complaining to him that those to whom I speak do not easily believe me. And when I have made my prayer to God, I hear a voice that says to me: 'Child of God, go, go, go! I shall be with you to help you. Go!' And when I hear that voice I feel a great joy. Indeed, I would that I might ever be in that state (Trask 41).

It was not that Joan lost her faith, but that others lost their faith in her. For her, the unification of France was simple because her voices had told her it was God's will.

Joan had no head for politics. She was completely unprepared for the politics of court. Furthermore, her resentment and frustration made her more outspoken, which made her a liability. No better would this be illustrated than with her capture.

Through the course of Joan's mission, she had earned several enemies. These enemies were determined to destroy the young maid who threatened to destroy their empire. On August 7, Bedford sent a letter to Charles:

You seduce and abuse the ignorant and rely upon the assistance of the superstitious and reprobate, and even of that deranged and infamous woman who goes about in men's clothes and is of dissolute conduct (Pernoud and Clin 73).

On September 8, 1429, Joan began the long awaited attack against Paris. She led her men to the Saint-Honoré gate, and within hours was shot in the thigh by an arrow. Her injury cost the victory. For her part, Joan refused treatment until she was forcibly removed from the battlefield. She cried out in despair, "By my staff! the place would

have been taken!” (Trask 69). The English popularized a sinister explanation for Joan’s injury and defeat. In their eyes, Joan’s defeat equated God’s disapproval of her mission. It has been surmised that Charles also interpreted this defeat as sign of Joan’s diminishing influence.

Joan and her men retreated from Paris on September 12, and Charles had the army disbanded September 21. More importantly, Charles discharged the Duke of Alençon, who along with his man, Perceval de Cagny, returned to his family. Joan would never see her dear friend again. Kelly Devries cited the significance of these actions:

While Joan was convalescing with her wound, she had also been stripped of her friends and power. Cagny sums up the situation succinctly: ‘And thus were the will of the Maid and the army of the king broken’ (153).

Charles began to distance himself from Joan; but, due to her popularity with the people, he could not completely break ties with her.

Charles sought to bolster his own image by asserting his preeminence over Joan. In his quest for supremacy, he had to make the people understand that God was the ruler of the heavens, Charles was the ruler of France, and Joan was subject to both. Even though Joan’s actions were the force behind his kingship, he intended that the people would never forget who was in control. In a savvy public-relations move, Charles not only exempted Domrémy from taxes, but in December of 1429, he ennobled Joan’s family. Some historians have alluded to this act as a payment for termination of services. Whether these gifts were an act of genuine gratitude, or an attempt to distract Joan from Charles’s true intentions, Joan refused to be silenced.

In March of 1430, word reached Joan that the town of Compiègne was under attack. She set out to aid the town without a moment's hesitation. As Kelly Devries pointed out, Joan acted without permission from Charles and therefore technically committed treason. "She had reached the point when she was willing to betray the king whose throne she had helped obtain [...] simply because she knew that she had to try to fulfill her mission [...]" (Devries 168).

Along the journey to Compiègne, Joan stopped at Lagny. Here she was credited with another miracle. It was reported that she resurrected the life of a dead baby for enough time for it to be baptized. The idea that Joan was able to bring a baby back to life, even if only for a few hours, must be viewed in the context of the time period. By this point, Joan was viewed as a saint by the people. This would be a source of contention during her trial. Joan was ridiculed because the public viewed her as an object of veneration. Yet, Joan never encouraged their idolatry. When asked to bless objects, she replied with a laugh "You touch them: they will be as much bettered by your touch as by mine!" (Trask 73). Thus, despite the medical reason behind the baby's brief recovery, the witnesses believed in Joan's powers. They had faith in God and Joan.

Joan placed her faith in God, and obeyed the commands of her voices without hesitation. Her loyalty was put to the ultimate test as her voices revealed Joan's fate.

Last Easter week [...] my voices told me that I would be taken prisoner before Saint John's Day, and that it must be so, and that I must not be frightened but accept it willingly, and God would help me. And I begged of my voices that, when I should be taken, I might die straightway, without long travail in prison (Trask 79).

Joan did not reveal her premonition until after she had been captured. In light of this knowledge, her bravery in battle proved even more poignant.

Joan was taken prisoner at Compiègne on May 23, 1430, by Burgundian forces. When she set out for battle that morning, Georges Chastellain described her appearance “She mounted her horse, armed as would a man, and adorned in a doublet of rich cloth-of-gold over her armor” (Devries 174). Notice he attributed masculine characteristics to Joan. He had not said armed as would a *soldier*, but rather a man.

Joan’s appearance upon her capture was recorded, but there are different versions of the capture. Once again, her reality differed from her myth. One account of Joan’s capture claimed that the enemy laid a trap. Perceval de Cagny testified:

The Maid charged forward strongly into the Burgundian army [...] Then they uncovered their ambush, and, spurring their mounts on, they placed themselves between the bridge into the town and the Maid and her company [...] The captain of the place, seeing the great multitude of Burgundians and English about to enter the bridge, for fear that he would lose the place, had the bridge raised and the gate shut. And thus the Maid remained closed outside and a few of her men with her [...] She resisted very strongly against them, and in the end had to be taken by five or six together, the one putting his hand on her (Devries 174-175).

This account illustrated Joan’s tenacity, and showed her as a willing sacrifice for the good of the town.

The Burgundian account of Joan’s capture attributed her defeat to the Burgundian’s superior military prowess. Georges Chastellain recalled:

The Burgundians then pushed back the French towards their lodgings, and the French, with their Maid, began to retreat very slowly, as they had found no advantage over their enemies [...] Then the Maid, surpassing the nature of a woman, took on a great force, and took much pain to save her company from defeat, remaining behind as the leader and as the bravest of the troop. But there fortune permitted for the end of her glory and for the

last time that she would ever carry arms. An archer, a rough and very sour man, full of much spite because a woman, who so much had been spoken about, should have defeated so many brave men, as she had done, grabbed the edge of her cloth-of-gold doublet, and threw her from her horse flat to the ground (Devries 176).

While Chastellain's interpretation, on the surface, appeared complimentary towards Joan, it was embedded with derogatory remarks. First, he stated she was the bravest of her soldiers; but, perhaps this was an insult to her men. In other words, the French soldiers were such cowards that a mere woman surpassed both their skill level and bravery. Plus, Joan's capture was directly linked to her being a woman. It was infuriating to think that a woman was capable of such damage. She was not targeted because she was the enemy, but because she was female.

The above-mentioned accounts both differ from Joan's own recollection of her capture.

I did not know that I would be taken that day. I crossed the bridge and the bulwark, and went with a company of our soldiers against Monseigneur de Luxembourg's men. I drove them back twice, as far as the Burgundian camp, and a third time half-way. Then the English who were there cut us off, both me and my men, coming between me and the bulwark. And so my men fell back. And as I fell back flankwise into the fields towards Picardie, near the bulwark, I was taken (Trask 83).

The myths surrounding her capture introduced the possibility of treason. Kelly Devries explored various angles including the possibility that the drawbridge was raised to ensure Joan's capture (177). Several historians have researched the possibility, and there were conspiracy theories even in the fifteenth century. Joan never suspected that treachery was behind her capture; but, that it was cited as a possibility proved the extent of her power and influence.

Joan's capture was an enormous victory for the English. The English touted her capture as a symbol of their dominance and their God-given right to rule the French. The Duke of Burgundy declared his glee in a letter to the Duke of Savoy:

By 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 deeds of this woman [...] that you will render homage to our Creator, who through His blessed pleasure has wished to conduct the rest of our enterprises on behalf of our lord the king of England and of France and for the comfort of his good and loyal subjects (Pernournd and Clin 90).

The University of Paris also welcomed the capture of Joan, who had been a long-standing source of displeasure. Their main objective was to convict Joan of heresy. The University proved to be the most malicious and powerful of all Joan's enemies. They wrote to the Duke of Burgundy, and requested that Joan be surrendered to their liaison Jean Graverent, the Inquisitor of France.

Since all loyal Christian princes and all other true Catholics are held to the duty of extirpating all errors against the Faith and the scandal that follows such errors among the simple Christian folk, and since it is a matter of common repute that diverse errors have been sown and published in many cities, good towns, and other places of this kingdom by a certain woman named Joan, whom the adversaries of this kingdom call the Maid, ... we beseech you with good affection, you, most mighty prince [...] the aforesaid Joan be brought under our jurisdiction as a prisoner since she is strongly suspected of various crimes smacking of heresy, so as to appear before us and a procurator of the Holy Inquisition (Pernoud and Clin 91).

Until it could be determined whether Joan would be ransomed or sold, she was under the supervision of Jean de Luxembourg. He expected Charles would pay the handsome ransom of 20,000 pieces of gold. Perhaps Joan also trusted that Charles would intervene on her behalf; but both Joan and Luxembourg were mistaken. Irrespective of his reasons, Charles permitted Joan to remain a prisoner of war until her death.

Luxembourg kept Joan captive at Beurevoir for four months. In her desperation for freedom, Joan attempted a dangerous escape. She testified at her trial:

The reason why I jumped from the tower was that I had heard that all the people in Compiègne, even to children of seven years, were to be put to fire and sword. And I would rather be dead than live on after such a destruction of good people. That was one reason. The other was that I knew that I was sold to the English, and I thought death would be better than to be in their hands who were my enemies. Almost every day Saint Catherine told me that I must not jump, that God would help me [...] And at last, for fear of the English, I did jump, commending myself to God and our Lady [...] I did it, not in despair, but in hope to save my life [...] (Trask 87-88).

Joan's leap from the tower was not an attempt at suicide. It was a way to fight back against her oppressors. Even in the depths of sorrow, Joan had not lost her spirit. Also, she freely admitted her actions were in violation of her voices' commands. Joan had not yet realized that her destiny was to be a martyr for her faith.

Joan was sold to the highest bidder, and transferred to the care of Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais on November 15, 1430. The fact that he was French would not aid Joan. Cauchon was employed by Bedford and a staunch supporter of the English. Furthermore, he negotiated the price for Joan in the name of Henry VI. Aside from his allegiance to the English, Cauchon sought vengeance against Joan for his forced exile to Rouen after the liberation of Orléans. With Cauchon in charge, there was no possibility of a fair trial.

It was imperative that Joan be condemned by the Church. As Donald Spoto pointed out:

Bedford and company understood that if Joan had been sent by God, then the English cause in France was doomed and their eternal salvation in

terrifying jeopardy. They had to demonstrate that Joan was not God's messenger, that France's security did not matter in the divine economy, and that God wanted England on French soil. That is why the trial had to be an Inquisition (118).

Joan was a prisoner of war and thus, should have been tried by a military court.

However, she had become a symbol of God's work through the individual to create change. Joan acted without the consent of the church, which weakened the Church's monopoly of God. If everyone began speaking directly to God, the church would lose its influence in society and government. Thus, it was in the Church's best interest to join forces with the English and abolish Joan.

The Church asserted that Joan's victories were not the will of God because only the Holy Mother Church served as the earthly representative of God. The Church condemned Joan's claims of divine intervention as heresy or witchcraft, which labeled her actions as religious crimes. Finally, the Church won jurisdiction over Joan.

Unfortunately, the Church's manipulation to ensure Joan's condemnation was far from over. Cauchon was in charge of arranging Joan's trial.

According to the rules of tribunals of the Inquisition, a person must be judged either by the bishop of his or her birthplace or in the diocese in which the crime of heresy was committed (Pernoud and Clin 100).

Yet, because Compiègne was under French rule, the location would have been sympathetic to Joan. Thus, the trial was moved to the Norman capital of France, Rouen. As Cauchon had no ecclesiastical jurisdiction outside his diocese of Beauvais, he was granted a "commission of territory" [...] A delegation of venue was formally requested by the chapter of Rouen and obtained by an act dated December 28, 1430" (Pernoud and Clin 101).

Joan's imprisonment at Rouen reflected the hatred of the English towards her. In violation of the rules governing an ecclesiastical prison, Joan was not put under the security of women, nor treated with respect or given humane living quarters. Instead, she was kept under the guard of men who were a threat to her safety and virginity. She was subjected to terrible, inhuman conditions. Jean Massier, whose job was to escort Joan from prison to the courts recalled:

And I know for certain that at night she slept with two pairs of irons on her legs, attached by a chain very tightly to another chain that was connected to the foot of her bed, itself anchored by a large piece of wood five or six feet long. The whole contraption was fastened by a key (Pernoud and Clin 104).

As a result of these violations, an elaborate ruse was employed in which:

The lock of the door of her prison cell was secured by three keys, of which one was to be kept by Cardinal Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester [II,8], who was to be present during the trial's entirety, and the two others were to be held by the judges, Cauchon himself or the *promotor* [prosecutor, more or less], Jean d'Estivet [II, 52], and by the vice-inquisitor, who was to be designated by Jean Graverent, the Inquisitor of France [II,53]. Since all three were clerics, the fiction could be maintained that she was entirely subject to ecclesiastical custody (Pernoud and Clin 106).

Moreover, Joan was denied a lawyer which violated the Church law mandating that a defendant on trial for heresy and under the age of twenty-five must be defended by an experienced lawyer (Spoto 124). In light of these violations and the lengths the court went to in order to manipulate the situation, there was no question that Joan's trial was agenda driven. That agenda was to destroy the Maid and end her influence over France.

Joan's trial consisted of different sections. In total, the ordeal lasted from January 9 until her execution on May 30, 1431. Pernoud and Clin divide these months into three

sections: the *process d'office*, or preliminary investigations, January 9 through March 26; the trial from March 26 until Joan's recantation; and the relapse trial on May 28 and May 29 (Pernoud and Clin 103-104).

Prior to the trial, Cauchon ordered a team of court examiners to gather preliminary evidence against Joan. They travelled to different parts of the country to interview those who knew Joan either personally or by reputation. This trip was made in vain. No scandals or ill-repute could be associated with Joan. One examiner even reported he "had found nothing about Joan that he would not wish to find about his own sister" (Pernoud and Clin 107).

Despite the lack of evidence, Cauchon was determined to convict Joan. The only hope for a conviction relied on the judges' ability to outwit Joan; and thereby force Joan to incriminate herself. As Pernoud and Clin pointed out, "Nothing was proven against her; it was on the basis of her words alone, as they were interpreted by her enemies, that she was condemned" (108).

The key players in her trial were as follows: Pierre Cauchon; Jean Lemaître, the deputy Inquisitor for northern France; Jean d'Estivet, the chief prosecutor; Guillaume Manchon, the chief notary; and an additional host of theologians and clergymen. These men were powerful, resourceful, and the most educated men of the time. This set-up begs the question, all of this for one illiterate teenager?

Any participants who refused to toe the party line were abruptly dismissed. One such dissenter, Nicholas de Houpperville, was thrown into the Rouen prison as an example of the cost of opposition. He was later quoted: "As I saw it then and still see it

today [...] the trial was more of a deliberate persecution than a juridical process” (Spoto 128).

Of course, not all those who objected had the courage to stand against Cauchon. As a result, these individuals consented to the proceedings out of fear or intimidation. As Jean Riquier confessed “Everyone was either forced to please the English or did so voluntarily, and the English wanted a quick trial and a pretext to execute her” (Spoto 129). Even Lemaître himself would eventually resign his post and allow d’Estivet to serve as chief Inquisitorial promoter.

The official start of Joan’s trial was recorded on January 9, 1431. The judges gathered to review the evidence against Joan and to formalize their tactics for court. However, Joan was not required in court until February 21. She understood the severity of the situation. “I know well that these English will do me to death, thinking that after I am dead they will win the Kingdom of France” (Trask 89). Finally, after months of imprisonment Joan faced her accusers.

The difficult months in prison had not managed to break Joan’s spirit. When Cauchon instructed her to swear an oath to tell the whole truth she replied, “I do not know about what you wish to interrogate me, [...] and perhaps you will ask me things that I will not tell you” (Pernoud and Clin 109). She finally acquiesced to speak on subjects pertinent to the trial and on issues concerning her beliefs; but, as Cauchon soon discovered, Joan determined what was pertinent to the trial, not her judges. Cauchon forbade Joan to attempt escaping from prison and she replied, “I do not accept your

prohibition. And if I escape from prison, no one can accuse me of breaking my faith, for I have pledged it to no one” (Trask 93).

This first day of interrogation focused on her life before she emerged onto the political scene. The judges questioned Joan about her childhood and her religious education. Also, the preferred method of interrogation was introduced in which the judges would shout out questions simultaneously or not allow her to answer before moving onto the next question. It was a way to overwhelm, intimidate, and bewilder Joan. Manchon summarized the judges’ tactics:

During the trial, she was often exhausted by the many repeated and complicated questions, which were sometimes put to her simultaneously. They put her through this every morning for three or four hours, and often late in the day too for another two or three hours. Many times they quoted her to herself from a previous day’s record, even changing her words in order to confuse her (Spoto 135).

In addition to the judges’ attempts to force Joan into verbal entrapment, Manchon reported that he was instructed to change Joan’s testimony in the minutes. While he refused, Cauchon was successful in persuading other notaries to notate *his* interpretation of the trial.

The next day, Joan’s trial was moved to a small chamber near the Great Hall. The subject for this line of questioning centered on Joan’s voices. She testified, “There is no day that I do not hear the voice. And indeed I need it” (Trask 94). While she was guarded in her replies, Joan did admit that she had been thirteen when the voices first came and that they were her only source of comfort.

It was not until the third session that the issue of Joan’s cross-dressing was addressed.

Questioner: Do you want to wear a woman's dress?

Joan: If you give me one, I will take it and go. Otherwise, I am content with what I am wearing, since it is God's will that I wear it (Spoto 142).

Unbeknownst to Joan, the issue of her cross-dressing would prove to be her undoing. Her dress became a focal point of the trial. Most importantly, Joan's clothing would become the symbol of her heresy and the grounds for her execution.

The persecution of Joan was based on the threat she posed to the status quo. Her real crime was that she was a woman who rebelled against her prescribed role on all levels. First, she had not adhered to society's viewpoint of proper female in attitude, action, and dress. Joan's life blurred the gender lines. Next, she exceeded the limits of her social class, a dangerous example in a world where power was extracted through oppression of the masses. Lastly, Joan acted in reverence to her voices, not within the limits of the Church. She threatened the influence of the Church and questioned its fealty to God.

The grueling trial continued and Joan was no closer to submitting to the judges. In the session on March 13, Joan was asked why God had chosen her for this mission, She replied, "It pleased God to do so through a simple maiden, to humble the king's enemies" (Pernoud and Clin 118).

The following day, Joan proclaimed to the judges that her voices had ensured her salvation. She testified:

But most often my voices tell me that I will be delivered by a great victory, and then my voices say, 'Take everything serenely, do not shrink from your martyrdom; from that you will come finally to the kingdom of paradise.' And my voices say that simply and absolutely, without fail. I call this a martyrdom because of the pain and hardship that I suffer in my

imprisonment. I do not know if I will have to suffer worse, but I defer in this as in everything to Our Lord (Pernoud and Clin 120).

While Joan interpreted this message as proof of her freedom, perhaps it foreshadowed her untimely end. The voices instructed her to embrace her martyrdom, for in it lay her salvation.

The conclusion of this first section of the trial yielded no evidence upon which to formally charge Joan. Again, the only option was to prove Joan's heresy based on her own testimony, and to prove her refusal to submit to the Church. As Pernoud and Clin summarized: "When the 'ordinary' process began on March 26, Cauchon knew that he finally had grounds for a valid accusation: inadequate submission to the Church Militant" (122).

Also, around this time of the trial, Joan's male attire had become an even more prominent issue. Her insistence on male dress, once regarded as a practical option, was now considered blasphemy. The transcripts of the trial notate various attempts by the judges' to have Joan abandon her masculine appearance. One popular tactic was to promise Joan that in exchange for wearing a dress she would be permitted to attend mass. Joan would not betray her convictions. In spite of her own, personal desires, she chose to adhere to God's command. "When I shall have done that for which I am sent from God, I will put on women's clothing" (Trask 131).

On April 18, the interrogations were conducted directly in Joan's prison cell. She had fallen ill and claimed the illness was caused by a carp sent to her by Cauchon. Joan's symptoms were severe, but whether it was an attempt on her life or merely food poisoning was unclear. While the assassination-attempt theory was viable, the issues of

improper food storage and Joan's own dietary restrictions would have been factors in the illness.

Doctors attended Joan and it was decided that the best course of action was to bleed her. The physician in charge of Joan's care, Guillaume de La Chambre, recalled the Earl of Warwick's reaction. "Be careful with the bleeding, because she is wily and might kill herself" (Pernoud and Clin 125).

By the second week of May, Cauchon lost all patience. The trial had not yielded a conviction, nor did it appear that Joan would confess to any sins. Surely the English expected results, and their displeasure was not lost on Cauchon. In a desperate ploy to coerce Joan into a confession, Cauchon threatened her with torture. Even when faced with horrendous instruments of torture, Joan refused to be intimidated. "Truly, if you were to have me torn limb from limb and send my soul out of my body, I would say nothing else" (Trask 132).

Clearly, previous threats of torture and systematic acts of humiliation brought against Joan had not produced the desired result. Joan had been a prisoner of war close to five months, and had not shown one sign of weakness to her enemies. Her resilience in the face of adversity had been her saving grace, but the end was near.

On May 24, Joan was faced with the threat of fire. She was escorted out of prison onto a platform where a sermon vilifying her was preached to the public. It was a pitiless exhibition devised by Cauchon, the goal being to intimidate Joan into supplication. Out of all present, Jean Massieu desired to preserve Joan's life; and, thus, he urged her to sign the abjuration. Laurent Calet helped guide Joan's signature. She signed her signature

with a cross, a code she had used in battle to alert the recipient to disregard the information. Whether this cross was code or coincidence, the signature resulted in a sentence of life imprisonment.

What Joan actually signed and what was cited in the court records were two different documents. Jean Massieu testified at Joan's nullification trial that:

[...] in that letter it was noted that in future she would neither carry arms, nor wear men's clothes, nor would she cut her hair short, and many other things that I do not remember anymore; and I know well that cedula contained about eight lines and no more, and I know absolutely that it was not registered in the transcript of the trial, because what I read her was different from that which was inserted in the record [...] (Pernoud and Clin 131).

Joan was hopeful that she would be transferred into the care of a religious prison. Alas, she was not so fortunate.

Joan revoked her abjuration on May 28. From her prison she stated:

What I said, I said for fear of the fire. My voices have told me since that I did a very wicked thing in confessing that what I had done was not well done [...] If I should say that God had not sent me, I should damn myself. It is true that God has sent me (Trask 139).

By May 27, Cauchon learned that Joan had regressed back into her sinful ways. The circumstances surrounding Joan's relapse were not examined in detail. It did not matter to the judges' why she had relapsed, only that she was once again a heretic.

The proof of Joan's relapse was her attire. She reverted back to male dress while in prison. Martin Ladvenu explained that Joan returned to male garb in order to protect herself and her virginity. He claimed that an English lord had attempted to rape Joan while she was in prison. Conversely, Jean Massieu recalled a different motivation for her relapse. Massieu stated that Joan's prison guards stole her female clothes and replaced

them with men's clothing. As a result Joan had two options: to wear her former male outfit, or wear nothing at all.

Cauchon wasted no time. Upon the discovery of Joan's return to male attire he commented to the Earl of Warwick "Farewell! Farewell! It is done; be of good cheer!" (Wilson-Smith 127). Cauchon finally had grounds to order her execution, which had been the goal since the start of the trial. It took only three days to accomplish what months of a tedious trial could not. Joan's relapse sealed her fate, and nothing would save her from the fire.

Joan was allowed to confess and received the Eucharist before her death. This was one of the great ironies of her execution. As a heretic, she was prohibited from absolution until she denied her actions and thus was deemed no longer a heretic. After confession Joan would have been free of sin and therefore not eligible for execution for crimes of heresy. These two incongruences reinforce the idea that the trial only ensured her execution (Spoto 187).

On the morning of Joan's execution, she cried:

Alas! Am I so horribly and cruelly used, that my clean body, never yet defiled, must this day be burnt and turn to ashes! Ha! Ha! I would rather be beheaded seven times than suffer burning. Alas! If I had been kept in the Church's prison, to which I had submitted—if I had been kept by churchmen, instead of by my enemies and adversaries, I should not have come to such a miserable end. Oh, I appeal to God, the great judge, from this great wrong and oppression! (Trask 143).

Joan wore a long white gown and white bonnet on the day of her execution. The pyre was built abnormally high to ensure the best view. It was reported that Joan was given a rudimentary cross fashioned out of sticks by an English soldier, which she hid underneath

her shift. As Joan had requested, Isambart de la Pierre held a cross at her eye-line until the moment of her death. While her body burned, Joan called out “Jesus, Jesus!” (Trask 144). Once France’s symbol for salvation and freedom, Joan suffered a cruel and painful death at the hands of her enemies. She was only nineteen.

The *Parisian Journal* recorded Joan’s death:

She was at once unanimously condemned to death and was tied to a stake on the 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 people’s minds. When they had stared long enough at her dead body bound to the stake, the executioner got a big fire going again round her poor carcass, which was soon burned up, both flesh and bone reduced to ashes [my emphasis] (Weiskopf 113-114).

There were several eye-witness accounts of Joan’s execution. While most of the accounts were factual, soon Joan’s execution was sensationalized to reflect the myth of Joan. For example, a popular story attested that at the moment of Joan’s death, a white dove emerged from the flames. Another story claimed that the secretary to the King of England, Jean Tressart, said: “We are all lost, for it is a good and holy person that was burned [...] that her soul was in the hands of God [...]” (Pernoud and Clin 137).

Perhaps the most widespread legend of Joan’s execution was that her heart could not be destroyed by the fire. Her ashes and heart were gathered up and thrown into the Seine. No physical evidence of the young Joan was left for fear that remnants would become holy relics.

Although the English were able to end her life, they could not destroy her memory. Joan’s memory was held in esteem in France, but her reputation was still soiled

by the charges of heresy and the slander of the English. In 1450, King Charles VII commissioned a re-examination of the evidence against Joan. There were several factors for this commission, notably that Charles realized the legend of his reign would be forever linked with the woman who had delivered the crown. Thus, if Joan's reputation was not rehabilitated, it would reflect poorly on his reign.

The evidence collected by the King's officials was turned over to Church officials in 1452. As a result of changes in clergy and other factors, Joan's nullification trial was delayed until 1455-1456. On November 7, 1455, Isabelle Romée traveled to Paris to advocate for the restoration of her daughter's good name. She stated:

She never thought, spoke or did a thing against the faith...Enemies had her arraigned in a religious trial. Despite her denials and appeals, both unspoken and spoken, and with no help in her defence [sic], she was put through an unjust, violent, wicked and sinful trial. Judges condemned her falsely, damnably and illegally, and put her to death very cruelly by fire. To damn their souls and to atone for the notorious, infamous and irreparable loss to me, Isabelle, and mine...I demand her name be restored (Wilson-Smith 134).

The re-trial of the evidence was a long, monotonous process. Around 150 witnesses were called forward to testify on behalf of Joan, and the wrongs of the previous trial were exposed.

The sentence against Joan was declared *unsafe* on July 7, 1456. The nullification trial proved that Cauchon's trial was little more than political vengeance disguised by religious garb. Eventually, the verdict of the 1456 nullification trial concluded that Joan's trial in 1431 was a "travesty of inquisitorial justice" (Wilson-Smith 140). Joan's reputation was rehabilitated. The same Church that imposed her death sentence exonerated her memory, and legitimized the reign of Charles VII.

The greatest irony of Joan's life was that her greatest tragedy assured her fame. If there had been no trial, the story of *la Pucelle* could have been lost, forgotten with the ages. It is in the transcripts of the trial that Joan's life was preserved. As the future would reveal, the circumstances of Joan's execution would earn her sainthood and the respect of nations.

Chapter 2

JOAN OF ARC: THE WARRIOR

Joan of Arc as a theatrical convention appeared as early as 1435, when Rouen staged a “Joan of Arc” play. The play was an adaptation of *The Mystery of the Siege of Orleans*, an anonymous poem in dialogue. The play was a tribute to the young woman who had delivered the city from English tyranny (Raknem 25).

By 1456, Joan of Arc’s reputation had been vindicated. Reverence for Joan’s memory re-established her as a “local” celebrity; but the English were not ready to let go of their animosity. As a result, Joan of Arc became a villain to the English all over again. Notably, William Shakespeare’s *Henry VI Part I* (1592) serves as an early example of this politicization of the Joan of Arc legend. The play provides one of the most notorious depictions of Joan of Arc. It is an amalgamation of historical fact and dramatic fiction. The plot centers upon the final events of the Hundred Years War and most importantly the siege of Orléans, the crowning of Charles VII as the King of France, and the capture and execution of Joan of Arc.

When *Henry VI Part I* premiered around 1592, the cultural tension between the English and French still remained relevant in Elizabethan society. Thus, the malicious portrayal of Joan of Arc functions as a ploy to gratify the Francophobic audience. Joan persuades the Duke of Burgundy to forsake the English, and then in an aside states: “Done like a Frenchman—turn, and turn again!” (III.vii.85).

Shakespeare gained further rapport with the audience by manipulating Joan’s title *la Pucelle*, the maid into *la Puzzel*, the whore. Unlike the true Joan of Arc, there is no

admirable or redeeming quality in Shakespeare's representation. Consequently, Joan is depicted as a witch, for witchcraft is the only acceptable explanation for an English defeat at the hands of a woman. Again, this animosity towards Joan was not an invention of Shakespeare, but rather reflected the English point of view towards her military success.

What does this politicization of Joan of Arc mean for twentieth-century American theatre? The manipulation of Joan's image in order to reflect the cultural and aesthetic values of the audience is not inclusive to modern theatre. From its first theatrical conception as a pageant play in Orléans, to Shakespeare's pages and the stage of the Globe theatre, the story of Joan has been molded to reflect the culture of its time.

Ingvald Raknem's book Joan of Arc in History, Legend and Literature, accounts for only four seventeenth-century dramatic works based on Joan's legend (25). The eighteenth century was a time of controversy for the Joan of Arc legend, namely Voltaire's irreverent La Pucelle d'Orléans (1756) in which he mocks the Catholic Church through his portrayal of Joan of Arc. Raknem goes on to argue that the emergence of Romanticism in the nineteenth century was a contributing factor in the re-emergence of Joan's popularity (26). The nineteenth century brought an abundance of Joan-inspired works including Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* [*The Maid of Orleans*] (1801) and Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc by the Sieur Louis de Conte* (1896).

By the twentieth century, Joan of Arc's legend and popularity had reached new heights. She became an American fixture with the unveiling of Anna Vaughn Hyatt's sculpture: *Joan of Arc* (1915); and the unofficial face of women's war efforts in both

World War I and World War II. With all this exposure, one could argue that Joan of Arc was the “It” girl of the period.

Film had also grown in prominence during the twentieth century. Now, a new medium could be implemented in the spread of political agendas and entertainment.

Thus, Joan’s popularity extended to the silver screen. In her study of Joan of Arc in film, Robin Blaetz concluded:

[...] women are positioned as heroic girl-helpmates in discreet relation to the war, with more or less reference to Joan of Arc [...] Another evocation of Joan of Arc occurs in popular tales that feature a girl, often a Red Cross nurse or a Salvation Army volunteer, who ends up sacrificing her body for her country while spying (49).

The dominant theme of such films was that women contribute to the war effort by their sacrifice for men. The women achieve glory through their relationship to men, either they sacrifice their life so their male counterpart may live, or seduce the enemy (sacrifice of virtue/chastity) to extract information. The female character achieved heroic status through her death. Blaetz credited Joan’s popularity in film to the fact that “[...] the female lead is both successful in her war work and punished for blurring the boundaries between gender roles” (50).

The first American Joan of Arc film based on the historical account of her life was Cecil B. DeMille’s *Joan the Woman* (1916). As the opening title card states: “Founded on the Life of Joan of Arc, the Girl Patriot, Who Fought with Men, Was Loved by Men and Killed by Men—Yet Withal Retained the Heart of a Woman” (*Joan the Woman*). The film projects Joan as a patriot first, and a woman second. In this way, Joan is allowed into male society because she does not attempt to circumvent male authority.

In *Joan the Woman*, Joan of Arc is depicted as a martyr and savior of France, “She gave her all for France—and her reward was martyrdom” (*Joan the Woman*). The film then cuts to an image of Joan, looking saintly with light on her face and up-cast eyes towards heaven. Suddenly, a fleur-de-lis is superimposed onto Joan, and she appears to be crucified within its frame. This imagery corresponds to her status as martyr—“JOAN OF ARC is not dead. She can never die—and in the war-torn land she loved so well, her Spirit fights today” (*Joan the Woman*). The statement connects Joan of Arc’s story to contemporary issues—World War I.

The story of Joan’s life is told in flashback form. Joan of Arc appears to an English soldier in a trench, November 1916. The soldier must decide if he will take on a suicide mission. As he contemplates the mission, the story of Joan’s life unfolds.

A key aspect of this film is the introduction of a love interest for Joan. More importantly, this love interest is an English soldier. This romantic twist helps to feminize Joan’s image and appeal to the audience’s taste for melodrama. While the romance is (mostly) one-sided, it makes her sacrifice more relatable to the audience. When the soldier admits his love to her, Joan replies: “Englishman, there is room in each heart but for one love- - [sic] mine is for France!” (*Joan the Woman*). The romantic angle neutralizes Joan as a threat to male society because it emphasizes her femininity. Even the male dress she adopts in the film resembles nothing more than a shift on top of armor.

Furthermore, the fact that Joan reveals herself to an English soldier is significant. Historically, the English were Joan’s enemy, so why would she appear to a twentieth-century English soldier? Again, the answer may relate to the political climate. First,

France and England had united against the Central Powers, thus Joan of Arc's appearance validates a spirit of reconciliation and comradeship. Second, by depicting Joan in the twentieth century she becomes a symbol against tyranny—not merely the English. Now Joan may be interpreted as an international symbol that represents all that is good, honest, and just because God is on her side. *Joan the Woman* may have been a call for the U.S. to join World War I.

The propaganda of World War I, like DeMille's *Joan the Woman* (1917), promoted the idea of female self-sacrifice. The image of Joan of Arc was so effective because it originated from historical truth. Just as Joan of Arc ultimately sacrificed herself for the good of France, American women must now sacrifice for the good of their country. One such poster read "Joan of Arc Saved France, WOMEN OF AMERICA SAVE YOUR COUNTRY BUY WAR SAVINGS STAMPS" (Dolgin 109 and 112).

During the course of World War I, a woman's place was in the home. The greatest contribution a woman could make to the war effort was to run an efficient household, and boost morale through a variety of service projects such as organizing committees to roll bandages, and invest in war stamps. In this regard, Joan of Arc's image was feminized, promoted more as a domestic hero than militant commander. It must be noted that at this time, the cultural perception of Joan was directly influenced by consumer impulse. Joan was a hero to the extent that male society permitted it. Robin Blaetz concluded: "By the late 1920s, Joan's story evidently seemed less pertinent as an example of heroism and more useful as a means to consolidate traditional authority in response to the disruptive female" (85).

Yet, World War I marked the first time that women were allowed to volunteer for the military and travel overseas. Even before America officially entered into the war in 1917, an estimated 25,000 women had volunteered. Such a woman, Margaret Duland, volunteered at the age of sixty and found herself assigned to relief work in France. She was quoted, “Has such a thing ever happened in the world before: a passionate desire on the part of the women of one people to go to the help of the men of another people?” (Collins 300).

World War I—then called the Great War—was believed to be the last international war: the war to end all wars. Thus with Allied victory in 1919, the world was eager to put the horrors of war behind her and focus on the opportunities of the future; but the legend of Joan of Arc would not be forgotten. In fact, Joan of Arc experienced a surge in popularity even after World War I.

Joan of Arc was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1920. Joan of Arc’s canonization was of great significance, especially because it had been originally scheduled for 1931. It was changed to mark the end of World War I. Joan symbolized the defeat of tyranny, and was regarded as a harbinger of peace. “She became the symbol of the new international world order: nations within their own boundaries, peaceably leagued together to combat aggression [...]” (Peters 357). The *New York Times* ran an article on the day of Joan’s canonization which stated: “The great war may have had something to do with hastening the final date” (Dolgin 113).

Arguably, the most well-known Joan of Arc play of the twentieth Century was George Bernard Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (1924). Strictly speaking, *Saint Joan* is not an

American play, Shaw himself was Irish, but the play premiered in New York. For Shaw, “[...] the important message of Joan’s story was not her martyrdom itself, but the ruling forces that cause such tragedy, and the permanence of this situation in human history” (Dolgin 117). The play had a great impact on American culture and its theatre, and would continue to be revised throughout the century.

Another Joan of Arc play of the period was Mercedes de Acosta’s *Jehanne d’Arc* (1925). *Jehanne d’Arc* premiered in Paris at the Porte-Saint-Martin on June 12, 1925. Although the play did not premiere in the United States, it featured American designers such as Norman Bel Geddes; and most importantly, the play featured Acosta’s lover, Eva Le Gallienne, in the title role. In his biography of Acosta, Robert A. Schanke states that Acosta projected some of her personal experiences onto the life of Joan of Arc (That Furious...73). The character Joan/Jehanne states: “We are each one of us chained to something. Each one of us in a different way. I have my battles, too” (Acosta 24). Perhaps this was in reference to Acosta’s tumultuous relationship with Eva Le Gallienne, or her own struggle to live an honest, open life as a lesbian in spite of social pressure to conform.

Unfortunately, the play was not a success. In a review for *Le Matin*, a critic wrote, “It is a ‘great show’ for the eyes, and nothing at all for the brain and spirit” (Schanke That Furious... 76). There poor reviews of the premiere were enough to halt any plans of bringing *Jehanne d’Arc* to Broadway.

Another notable representation of the Joan of Arc legend premiered post World War I. Carl Theodor Dreyer’s *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) is the most iconic film

adaptation of the Joan of Arc legend. Dreyer drew inspiration for *The Passion of Joan of Arc* from the trial transcripts and compressed Joan's nine month trial into a twenty-four hour period; thus, Dreyer emphasized the martyrdom of a young, naïve woman who would become a saint. The film was influenced by the World War I figure of Joan of Arc. It focused on the nature of faith, suffering, and sacrifice. As one of the opening title card states:

...à la lecture nous découvrons Jeanne telle qu'elle était—non pas avec casque et cuirasse—mais simple et humaine...une jeune femme qui morat pour son pays...

Reading it we discover the real Joan not in armor, but simple and human...a young woman who died for her country... (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*).

As the film did not illustrate Joan in battle or glory, the audience is left with the story of a young woman cruelly exploited. The film does not put emphasis on the political corruption. Rather, the Judges appear to persecute Joan because she refuses to submit herself to *their* interpretation of religious doctrine. She died for her faith. This representation as martyr influenced how the character of Joan was filmed. In the majority of her close-ups, she has her eyes towards the heavens with her head at a slight angle. This position replicates medieval depictions of saints, and recontextualizes the saintly identity of Joan into a form of expressionism—the projection of our mysticism and understanding of spirituality. Joan looks imploringly up towards God because this is the source of her strength. These spiritual moments are juxtaposed by the harsh reality of her trial.

Perhaps the most iconic aspect of *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is Dreyer's use of close-ups. Dreyer stated:

There were the questions, there were the answers—very short, very crisp. There was, therefore no other solution than to place close-ups behind these replies. Each question, each answer, quite naturally called for a close-up. It was the only possibility (Nash 53).

The close-ups themselves do not progress the plot in a narrative sense, but present the emotional truth of the situation. The effect is dramatic, and has a visceral effect on the audience. In fact, at the American premiere of *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, a reported two hundred women walked out. Local news person, Louella Parsons surmised that the women did not care for “gruesome subjects...and did not care for the cruelties” (Blaetz 88).

Joan of Arc's image was greatly influenced by the politics of World War I and World War II. She was the subject of several plays, films, propaganda posters, and even had a hit song in her honor *Joan of Arc They Are Calling You* (1915/1917). Ellen Dolgin made a thought-provoking observation in regards to the shift in Joan of Arc's function after 1920. According to Dolgin:

The interpreters of Joan's life and times which follow her canonization in 1920 no longer share the mission of redressing the wrongs of history; rather, their historiographical interest is in determining the connections between our lives and those of our fifteenth-century counterparts (38).

The main connection explored focused on Joan of Arc's role as a female soldier. This imagery was especially prevalent during the Second World War—especially in regards to wartime propaganda directed towards American women.

As a result, the iconography of Joan from the beginning of World War I (1914) until the end of World War II (1945) exemplified Joan the warrior. *The Dictionary of Human Geography* defines iconography as: “The description and interpretation of visual images in order to disclose and interpret their hermetic or symbolic meanings [...]” In its application to Joan of Arc, perhaps it is more fitting to discuss the iconology, which is Erwin Panofsky’s term for iconography in visual imagery. Joan’s image would endure several modifications as society evolved because each generation viewed Joan in a different context. Joan’s external reality could not change who she was, rather, different aspects of her legend were manipulated. Thus, within this warrior context one essential issue was examined: sacrifice as a means to justify the hardships of war.

America found itself amidst an international crisis with the outbreak of the Second World War. Theatre produced during this period reflected the change in public opinion in regards to joining the war.

Before Pearl Harbor, American plays provide eloquent evidence for the national conflict between American post-World War I isolationism and the voices of those warning that the U.S. must take a stand to stem the aggression and the ideologies of Hitler and Mussolini. And after Pearl Harbor, the drama cues the nation about the nature of American patriotism, why the United States is at war and over what issues (Wertheim xi).

Likewise, Joan of Arc served as the role-model for female patriotism. This war-time Joan of Arc embodied the feminine ideals of compassion, sacrifice, and endurance. She reflected the evolution of women’s place in American society—a direct relation to the shortage of resources caused by two world wars.

In other words, women in the workforce were a means to an end. It was in no way meant to advance women's equality. For example, women were encouraged to enlist in the military as nurses, canteen hostesses, switchboard operators, and perform other *woman's* work, but even this carried a degree of stigma. A congressman from New York was quoted:

A woman's Army to defend the United States of America! Think of the humiliation. What has become of the manhood of America that we have to call on our women to do the duty of men? (Collins 375).

The Joan of Arc image served as propaganda to inspire women to enter the workforce as a service to their country. In many ways, Joan of Arc symbolized the positive aspects of the female sex. The image of Joan of Arc as a female warrior advanced her status as "the heroic symbol of woman's willingness to fight and sacrifice for a righteous cause" (Dolgin 101).

In order to appeal to both men and women, the Joan of Arc legend was re-interpreted to glorify her sense of honor and integrity. She was moral without being ardently Catholic; and she was charismatic and courageous without being aggressive. Most importantly, Joan of Arc accomplished all these things and managed to maintain her feminine appeal. Gail Collins explained the intense pressure women were put under during the Second World War. She clarified: "Women who failed to volunteer for a factory job were dogged by pictures of idle equipment that warned a 'soldier may die unless you man this machine.' If they *did* go to work, every moment counted" (Collins 371).

Furthermore, the propaganda appealed to women by presenting the war-effort in a feminine context. It popularized the idea that defense work was similar to housework:

[...] instead of cutting the lines of a dress, this woman cuts a pattern of aircraft parts...a lathe holds no more terror than a sewing machine...after a short apprenticeship, this woman can operate a drill press just as easily as a juice extractor (Collins 383).

These tactics appealed to women's sense of duty. Joan the warrior focused on a woman's sense of duty and the feminine qualities of self-sacrifice. Joan of Arc's depiction during the First World War and the Second World War shared the idea of self-sacrifice and the idea of duty; but, whereas women in the First World War were meant to contribute to the war effort through their domestic role, women in the Second World War were encouraged to emulate "Rosie the Riveter." These qualities of duty, honor, and self-sacrifice are supported by Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* (1946).

Anderson's play *Joan of Lorraine* (1946) premiered October 29, 1946, in Washington D.C. The play conveys the anxiety of post-war America. Yet, because it premiered only one year after the end of the Second World War, the play utilizes the war-time image of Joan the warrior. American theatre reflected the apprehension of society—a time when people were reconciling what the war had meant and what the future means.

Joan of Lorraine illustrates four things: first, the inevitability of personal sacrifice as indicative of patriotism; second, the issue of integrity; third the effects or necessity of compromise for the greater good; and lastly, the prediction of the backlash of women's independence that would manifest itself in the 1950s.

Joan of Lorraine depicts a group of actors who are in rehearsal for a Joan of Arc play. The meta-theatrical structure allows for seamless transition between the

contemporary issues of 1946/47, and Joan of Arc's life in the fifteenth century. The actors play dual roles of either "character" or performer, which permits the performer to comment on the actions of his character.

Anderson had a unique interpretation of Joan of Arc's legend that subsequently affected the play. He sought to explore the connection between faith and society.

But Joan's problem was not of survival. It was one of belief [...] For Joan's problem was the problem of the whole modern world—of every one of us—the problem of faith. Of what we're to believe in—and how we can justify what we believe—not to others, maybe, but to ourselves (Shivers *The Life of ...* 223).

Anderson utilizes Joan of Arc as a means to question the validity of faith in a corrupt world; and, why it is so important to believe in something when all else is lost.

During the Second World War, many Americans were forced to confront the evils of man. It was disheartening to realize that only twenty years earlier, World War I had ended. The hope for peace had been so brief, and faith in humanity and the future turned into despair. In a letter dated November 21, 1945, Anderson wrote:

For the first time in our history the majority of thinking people have come up against a crippling lack of faith. There is no faith, political, religious, social, or personal, that remains unshaken nowadays [...] (Avery 203).

Perhaps this sentiment was the inspiration behind Chartier's line to Joan: "There's no honor or decency left around him [Charles]. None of any kind—in government, or religion—or the arts" (Anderson 27). Thus, Anderson tasks his Joan with the responsibility of re-awakening Charles's and America's faith. The character Joan states: "It may be that the Dauphin has lost faith in himself and in the kingdom of France. I shall bring his faith back to him [...]" (Anderson 27).

Joan of Arc symbolizes faith. As Masters says, “A man has to have a faith, and a culture has to have one—and an army. An army may move on its belly, but it wouldn’t move at all if it didn’t believe in something” (Anderson 52). That something to believe in was Joan of Arc. During the war, faith and patriotism were interchangeable.

In 1939, Anderson and most of America were against the Second World War. However as time progressed, Anderson realized that entering the war may be inevitable.

As he said in a speech:

Dictatorships are hard to get rid of, liberties are hard to win back [...] Just as this nation once discovered that it could not endure half slave and half free, the earth as a whole may soon discover that it cannot exist half free and democratic, half Nazie [sic] and enslaved (Shivers *The Life of ...* 182).

This change of heart corresponds to Joan’s struggle to accept God’s commands. The character Joan states:

—Oh most sweet God, you must see now that too much was asked of me, more than I could do. You must see that it is better this way, most sweet God—that I stay with my own people and live quietly at home (Anderson 12).

Likewise, America wished to remain neutral and adhere to its strong, isolationist approach. For both Joan and America, the decision to enter into war was not for personal glory, but stemmed from deep patriotism. Joan of Arc wanted to restore the kingdom of France to her rightful (French) King. She wanted to defend her country against tyranny, and protect her people from foreign exploitation and violence. The United States entered into the Second World War after the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. The United States, like Joan, had to defend against tyranny (Nazism) and violence.

Propaganda advocating the idea of personal sacrifice as an act of patriotism during the Second World War prevailed. American women were encouraged to ration supplies, buy war bonds, and work all in the name of patriotism. American men were sent off to war—possibly never to return. Anderson’s Joan is fully aware of the gravity of her voices’ commands. From the beginning, Joan knows her fate.

Joan: I know very well that I’m to die.

Chartier: You know it?

Joan: But not before I bring hope back to France. Not until I’ve taught her how to win (Anderson 28).

Joan’s commitment to her country is inspiring. In this regard, Joan is a striking combination of patriotism, conviction, and honor.

Joan’s life and death do not serve, in any version in any medium ever made, to warn against an ambition such as she entertained. Her story is always intended in the contrary sense of tragedy: to exhort and to indoctrinate others to revere her high example. She is a heroine in the sphere of moral action; in literature, she does not inspire cautionary pity and fear, but incites us to imitation. She is admonitory, not minatory (Warner 269).

Joan accepts her destiny, and embarks on her journey willingly like a model soldier. She is loyal to her voices, and accepts her destiny.

Joan’s loyalty to her voices indicates her character. The issue of Joan of Arc’s honesty is paramount to her image. Her integrity must never be in question. Therefore, when the actress who portrays Joan of Arc learns that Joan’s voices will be heard from offstage, she worries about the implications. “Won’t the audience think that the voices came from outside her—from Heaven or something like that—and not from within herself?” (Anderson 29). Marianne Warner argues “She was loyal to her voices, and

because those voices can be seen as her interior spirit [...] she can be a heroine to believer and unbeliever alike” (Warner 268).

Anderson believed Communism posed a great threat. In a letter dated March 11, 1941, he wrote:

Communism is dangerous, however, in men who occupy key positions in industry, for American communism is a conspiracy to overthrow our democratic government and is at present working in cooperation with the Nazi war on civilization (Avery 110).

So it must have been a great shock when the United States accepted Russia’s switch to the Allied Powers in 1941. We aligned with our former enemies out of necessity.

In *Joan of Lorraine*, the theme of compromise reflects Anderson’s attempt at justifying this unlikely alliance between America and Russia. Mary, the actress who plays Joan, objects to certain revisions to the play that reveal Joan’s cooperation with unsavory characters. Mary interjects:

But now it’s the story of how she was told by her saints what she must do, and how she finds that she must compromise with the world, and even work with evil men, and allow evil to be done, before she can accomplish her task [...] But it seems to me the way the play is now it means that we all have to compromise and work with evil men—and that if you have a faith it will come to nothing unless you get some of the forces of evil on your side (Anderson 20).

Even though Joan aligned herself with unethical men, she was never corrupted.

Additionally, the actors themselves must compromise in order to present their Joan of Arc play. The director, Masters, learns that the man who rented them the theatre is in jail. Corruption is everywhere, and to get anything done one must adapt. Masters tells Mary:

The world's like that. It's always been like that. And the theater's in the world, like everything else. And I still think it's worth while to put on a play about Joan of Arc—in the middle of all this. The human race is a mass of corruption tempered with high ideals. —You can't sacrifice your integrity, but short of that— (Anderson 47).

In the play, the theatre is a metaphor for society. Masters says, “You'll touch dishonesty somewhere as soon as you start to get anything done!” (Anderson 47).

On the other hand, Mary has a stricter view of the world; and she believes it is inexcusable to portray Joan in such a manner. She tells Masters:

You want the play to mean that Joan had to work with dishonest people to put a kingdom together, just as we have to work with dishonest people to put on this play. And it's not true! It's never been true! You can refuse to work with thieves! (Anderson 47).

This rigidity reflects Anderson's own high ideals. He was staunchly against Communism. However, after Russia joined the Allied powers in 1941, Anderson had to reconcile this alliance with the fact that the biggest threat was Nazism. Thus, if it took cooperation with Russia to defeat the greater threat, then it was a compromise worth making. America would retain her integrity because the compromise was for the greater good. As Anderson wrote in November 1944:

Power without wisdom is calamitous, and when a nation has great power without great wisdom its sons pay for its mistakes with their lives [...] For the peace of the earth is going to be very largely in our keeping, whether we like it or not. We must play a part, and a great part, among the nations [...] (Avery 190).

Finally, Mary accepts that compromise is sometimes necessary. She says:

It's true that she [Joan] would compromise in little things. You were right. But it's also true that she would not compromise her belief—her own soul [...] Nobody can use her for an alien purpose. Her own meaning will always come through, and all the rest will be forgotten (Anderson 79).

In fact, the only time Joan betrayed herself was her abjuration. She was able to regain her integrity through self-sacrifice. Joan would rather be executed than live a life of dishonesty. The character Joan maintains:

[...] Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, nevertheless they give up their lives to that little or nothing. One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it's gone. But to surrender what you are, and live without belief—that's more terrible than dying—more terrible than dying young (Anderson 80).

Joan may have had to enlist the aid of immoral men, but she maintained her purity of faith.

Joan of Lorraine foreshadows the anti-feminist streak found in American society post-World War II. The character Joan does not believe herself to be worthy of her mission. She tells her Voices: "I am only a girl. I know nothing of arms or horsemanship or the speech of kings and high places" (Anderson 13). Joan is not only critical of herself; the sentiment extends to all women. This is reflected in her comment, "I don't know how a girl from Lorraine, or anywhere, could go to war and give orders and save France" (Anderson 14). As Ellen Ecker Dolgin pointed out in her work

Modernizing Joan of Arc: Conceptions, Costumes, and Canonization:

Deciding to emphasize portions of the historical materials that show her reluctance to tackle so immense a mission, her powerlessness as a daughter and an unworldly country girl [...] betrays Anderson's compliance with yet another prominent trend of the late 1940s: antifeminism (Dolgin 159-160).

The post-World War II era was a restrictive time for women. Men were returning home from war, and women were expected to return to domesticity. An estimated seventy-percent of female workers wished to remain at their jobs, but were not allowed (Collins

395). One reason was that with the war over, defense-based jobs were no longer needed.

As Gail Collins explained:

The enlisted men had been guaranteed their jobs back, and sentiment for hiring the men was so high that new male applicants were given jobs over women with seniority. The public relations machine that had gotten the women into the factory worked double-time getting them out (395).

One of the biggest unintended consequences of the Second World War: women realized they were capable of more.

The meta-theatrical structure of *Joan of Lorraine* deals with the idea of playing a part or role. The actors play at being historical figures. Even the characters portrayed play a role. For example, Mary plays the role of Joan of Arc; yet, the character Joan plays the role of soldier. Joan imitates her brother Jean because she does not know how to be assertive. Her soldier persona is an act. After the Siege of Orleans, Joan weeps for the wounded English soldiers.

Joan: My wound throbs awfully—and I have been the death of many men—and I wish I had never come here. I wish I were home again. I wish I could go home.

Dunois: Why, you're a little girl, Joan. Just a little girl.

Joan: Didn't you know it?

Dunois: No

Joan: The other was all put on. So they'd respect me, and listen to me (Anderson 41).

The line between character and actor begin to blur. Mary confronts Masters about the changes to the script, and claims that the whole cast is on her side. Masters wants to know verbatim what was said, to which Mary replies: "I see what you're trying to do, of course. You are putting me on the spot to say what I mean in front of the whole company" (Anderson 46). Mary is persecuted for her beliefs or convictions. Similarly,

Joan of Arc was put on trial for her beliefs, and forced to account for the gift of her voices.

Masters has asked Mary to betray the confidence of her fellow actors. In essence, he has asked her to name names. Brenda Murphy linked *Joan of Lorraine* with the HUAC proceedings:

[...] Maxwell Anderson made his Joan of Arc play into an apologia for collaborators, like the witnesses who took a pragmatic view of cooperating with the Committee so they could get on with their work, but, Anderson would contend, stopped short of compromising their essential integrity. Anderson had taken the position in 1941 that, after the Nazi-Soviet pact, American Communism was 'a conspiracy to overthrow our democratic government and [was] at present working in cooperation with the Nazi war on civilization' (Murphy 172).

The 1950s would explore the connections between Joan of Arc's persecution, and the hostility of the HUAC proceedings.

Joan of Lorraine enjoyed a successful Broadway run, so Anderson adapted the script for film. The title was changed to *Joan of Arc* (1948). The film starred Ingrid Bergman, who had originated the role onstage, and was directed by Victor Fleming. Despite mixed reviews, the film went on to earn several Academy Award nominations which included: Ingrid Bergman for Best Actress (1949) and José Ferrer, who played the Dauphin, for Best Supporting Actor (1949).

There are several differences between the film and play. The film does not share the play's humble set. *Joan of Arc* features a sprawling cast and a high production value. Joan's story is akin to a large-scale epic, with intricate battle sequences and glamorous historical costumes. The film focuses solely on Joan of Arc's life with no mention of a

theatre troupe, Mary, or Masters. The only meta-theatrical element of the film occurs at the start of the film when a book opens to reveal Joan's life accompanied by narration.

Joan of Lorraine explored the importance of faith. Likewise, the film *Joan of Arc* illustrates the significance of faith in regards to patriotism. In the film, Joan says, "[...] our strength is in our faith [...]" (*Joan of Arc*). This connection between faith and patriotism continues through the film. Before Joan is executed she tells her judges:

[...] I have faith in them [Voices], I have none in you [...] To live without faith is more terrible than the fire, more terrible than dying young. I have nothing more to do here. Send me back to God from whom I came (*Joan of Arc*).

The film emphasizes the exploitation of an individual for political gain. Joan is merely a pawn in the political match between France and England.

Anderson was not a fan of the film adaptation of *Joan of Lorraine*. In a letter dated May 18, 1949:

If Ingrid hadn't insisted on taking out all human touches and making Joan a plaster saint the thing might have had some quality. She wrecked that one. She had the power to wreck it and she did (Avery 231).

However the studio that released *Joan of Arc*, RKO, wanted to produce a film filled with "spears and swords and flames and blood and horses and banners and roughhouse and armor" (Blaetz 127). It is more likely that the studio was responsible for the changes that irritated Anderson. The film was an action-based spectacle, completely opposite of the introspective, minimalist play; and yet, the integrity of Joan of Arc's life and the film's adherence to historical fact reflected the truthfulness Anderson had sought to depict with *Joan of Lorraine*.

The first half of the twentieth century produced several conceptions of Joan of Arc. Joan the saint became Joan the warrior—an emblem of sacrifice, patriotism, and the feminine ideal. This feminine ideal was best expressed in the radio program *Uncle Sam Speaks* (1943 broadcast):

Ever stop to wonder why Liberty is represented as a woman? Why not a man? Because in every age, women have held the torch of freedom so their men could have their hands free to work and fight (Blaetz 100-101).

Women hold the torch of freedom in the same way they were encouraged to keep the home fires burning—through their role as wife and mother. This glorification of domesticity would be the most important weapon to combat women’s growing desire for autonomy. The Second World War had blurred the gender lines, but with the war over society would attempt to reclaim traditional values. The return to tradition had a ripple effect that inadvertently would lead to the restriction of women’s social roles, and fostered a fear and paranoia of change which would come to fruition in the late 1940s and early 1950s with America’s stand against Communism.

Chapter Three

JOAN OF ARC: THE MARTYR

The Second World War came to a close in 1945. The United States and the Soviet Union had shared a common enemy, and as the old proverb states: The enemy of my enemy is my friend. The alliance between the two countries was an uneasy one born out of necessity; and by 1946, old tensions between America and the Soviet Union resurfaced. Namely, the two countries disagreed on political dogmas, Communism and Democracy. The spring of 1947 marked the beginning of the “Cold War.” Both countries became fiercely competitive and mistrustful of the other, and America found itself on high alert with the emergence of Communist conspiracy theories. The fear of subversion gave the post-World War II period the nickname “the age of anxiety” (Perucci 20). Once again, America had an enemy that must be destroyed: Communism.

America took to this ideological war with the Soviet Union with surprising enthusiasm.

An essential ingredient of our wartime euphoria had been the concentration of our energies upon a total enemy. In 1946 there was a reluctance to surrender that focusing device. Return to peacetime was looked at warily—wartime had become ‘normal,’ preferable to the prewar drift and sluggishness (Wills 16).

The government’s extreme actions against suspected communists stemmed from the belief that the Communist Party planned to infiltrate and destroy American democracy by whatever means necessary. In the government’s eyes, every Communist member was a

Soviet agent plotting to overthrow the government. On March 21, 1947, President Truman signed an executive order which allowed the FBI to investigate government employees.

‘Derogatory information’ about any person could trigger a full-scale investigation even if that information came from anonymous sources [...] Over the course of a decade, the FBI eventually investigated some four and a half million people, fostered upward of 27,000 full-scale investigations, and caused the firing of perhaps three hundred people (Kessler-Harris 236).

It was not enough to be an American citizen; one also had to prove unwavering devotion. Loyalty oaths were ordained by such mechanisms as the Taft-Hartley Act (passed June 23, 1947) which mandated that union leaders swear they were not Communists (Kessler-Harris 236). Garry Wills conjectured that Russia posed a threat to *Americanism*; and “A nation at war with *ideas* must use ideas as weapons [...]” (13). The antidote to suspicion of Communist ties was to prove one’s Americanism. In some ways, the patriotism cultivated by the Second World War found a different mode of expression. Perhaps another factor in this progression from patriotism to Americanism was that we (along with the other Allied powers) had defeated the Axis powers. The U.S. experienced a boost of pride, which may have been interpreted as arrogance. When a country believes itself to be number one, it is easier to imagine outside threats.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), a sub-committee composed of members of the U.S. House of Representatives, had been formed in 1938, but would grow in prominence after the Second World War. As Brenda Murphy explained, Martin Dies founded HUAC to investigate:

(1) the extent, character, and object of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by the constitution, and (3) all other questions in relations thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation (10).

The issue of “Americanism” came under investigation. Opponents of HUAC argued that the regulation of proper American activity, and the enforcement of policies meant to condemn un-American activities was a perversion of power that violated civil rights. However, those who opposed the formation of HUAC were in the minority. After the Second World War, America feared foreign influence—the ultimate threat to American values. Rep. James Taylor supported the creation of HUAC. Taylor believed:

There is place in the American dictionary for but one ‘ism’, and that is old-fashioned, simon-pure Americanism. And any man or woman who would...preach any other ‘ism’ except Americanism is not only unworthy of American citizenship, they are not even entitled to temporary residence in this land [...] (Wolfinger 388).

HUAC’s first order of business was to attack the progressive ideals of the New Deal and the Federal Theater Project. Dies accused the Federal Theater Project’s productions of being “[...] nothing but straight Communist propaganda” (Wolfinger 391), and eventually convinced Congress to pull the funding for the Federal Theater Project. This set up the pattern of suspicion towards the Entertainment industry that would come to fruition with the McCarthy hearings.

By the late 1940s and 1950s, HUAC reached the height of its power. The anxiety over Communist infiltration and subversive elements became commonly referred to as the Red Scare. It was a tense phase in American history where individual rights afforded

by the constitution could be suspended in the fight against subversion. Michael Freedland postulated that HUAC attacked the entertainment industry in order to garner publicity and solicit the attention of the American public. Actor Ed Asner summarized: “It was part of the subtle control that the government generates through the media, through its Congress, over the people. It’s a democracy, but not always democratic” (Freedland 17).

Of course, because it was a congressional committee, there were limits to HUAC’s power. Joan A. Noakes noted that a congressional committee affords those who testify a lesser degree of protection than a court of law. The witness was considered guilty until proven innocent (668-669). Those who were called before the Senate generally had three options:

[...] to invoke the First Amendment, with its guarantee of free speech and association, and risk going to prison like the Hollywood Ten; to invoke the Fifth Amendment, with its privilege against self-incrimination, and lose their jobs; or to cooperate with the Committee by naming others as Communists in hopes of continuing to work in the industry (Hall 16).

Being labeled a Communist was dangerous, and almost certainly guaranteed the destruction of one’s career. Another grave charge was to be accused of being a fellow traveler, which designated one who believed in the validity of Communism without being a registered member of the party. “In this topsy-turvy world, dissent was unpatriotic, refusing to betray one’s friends was tantamount to admission of communist affiliation, and calls for ‘peaceful coexistence’ [...] became declarations of Soviet sympathy” (Kessler-Harris 178).

It was in this era of the Red Scare and HUAC hearings that Joan of Arc rematerialized as Joan of Arc the martyr. As Ellen Dolgin reflected, “This renewed fascination with Joan’s story links to specific parallels to post-war social issues, especially the touting of conformity by the US government and popular culture” (Dolgin 158). These social issues Dolgin refers to include a return to traditional (American) values, reinforcement of conventional gender roles, and, of course, conformity. Therefore, Joan’s legend was re-interpreted to reflect these issues of post-war society, especially in that Joan’s story as a victim for political gain reflected the treatment of witnesses before HUAC. Bernard Shaw’s *Saint Joan* was revived on Broadway in 1950’s; but the most important Joan of Arc creation was Lillian Hellman’s *The Lark* (1955).

It is important to clarify that Hellman’s *The Lark* is an adaptation, not an original work, based on Jean Anouilh’s *The Lark* (1953). Jean Anouilh wrote in the program note of the French production of *The Lark* (1953): “The play that follows makes no attempt to explain the mystery of Joan” (Fry i). Like Anouilh, Hellman’s adaptation does not expound upon Joan’s life, but rather serves as a vehicle for Hellman’s personal agenda. Hellman’s adaptation parallels her own experience before HUAC. No doubt Hellman chose *The Lark* because of her own similarities to Joan, who was a girl forced to testify before judges intent on her destruction.

Hellman drew the ire of HUAC with her various associations with left-wing political groups and support of peace organizations. Garry Wills believes it was her sponsorship of the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace in the spring of

1949 that solidified HUAC's suspicion. In fact, her speech at the conference illustrated her critical view of the US government: "[...] He who has seen a war and plans another must be either a villain or a madman. This group of intellectuals can do no worse than statesmen" (Martinson 240). At the time, Hellman was unaware of the dangers that threatened her career and reputation. Hellman believed it was her constitutional right to speak her mind, regardless of popular opinion. In *Scoundrel Time* (1972), Hellman described the impact HUAC had on her life. She wrote:

I had, up to the late 1940's, believed that the educated, the intellectual, lived by what they claimed to believe: freedom of thought and speech, the right of each man to his own convictions, a more than implied promise, therefore, of aid to those who might be persecuted. But only a very few raised a finger when McCarthy and the boys appeared (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 40).

Hellman received her subpoena to appear before HUAC on February 21, 1952. For Hellman, cooperating as a friendly witness was not an option. She found the precedent of naming names in order to avoid punishment despicable. As she wrote in *Scoundrel Time*:

I wanted to tell him [Fortas] that the moral position for my taste would be to say 'You are a bunch of headline seekers, using other people's lives for your own benefits. You know damn well that the people you've been calling before you never did much of anything, but you've browbeaten and bullied many of them into telling lies about sins they never committed. So go to hell and do what you want with me' (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 54).

But Hellman was too fearful of the repercussions to make such a statement. Her lawyer, Joseph Rauh, advised her to take a "moral" position in which she would answer anything about her own life, but would not speak of anyone else (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 54).

Hellman's willingness to speak openly about her life posed an interesting challenge in that by speaking of herself, she would waive the right to plead the Fifth Amendment

(Rollyson 318-319). Thus, an unconventional approach was adopted in which Hellman wrote a letter to John S. Wood, the Chairman of the committee, outlining her stand. In this letter, dated 19 May 1952, Hellman wrote:

I am most willing to answer all questions about myself. I have nothing to hide from your Committee and there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed [...] But I am advised by counsel that if I answer the Committee's questions about myself, I must also answer questions about other people and that if I refuse to do so, I can be cited for contempt [...] I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people [...] But to hurt innocent people whom I knew many years ago in order to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dishonorable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashions [...] (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 92-93).

The letter presented Hellman as a cooperative witness who would be forced to take the Fifth Amendment, not out of fear of self-incrimination, but for fear of incriminating others. It must be acknowledged that Hellman had been a member of the Communist Party. In an earlier draft of a never-released public statement, she wrote:

[joined in 1938], 'attended very few Communist party meetings in Hollywood in 1938-39 and an equally small number in New York in 1939-1940. I stopped attending meetings or taking part in Communist Party activities in the latter part of 1940 and severed all connection with the Party' (Kessler-Harris 260).

Hellman's hearing occurred on May 21, 1952. In a fortunate turn of events, Hellman's lawyer distributed copies of the letter to the press in the courtroom. This changed not only the course of Hellman's trial, but set a precedent for future witnesses. Hellman described it best:

But in the middle of one of the questions about my past, something so remarkable happened that I am to this day convinced that the unknown gentleman who spoke had a great deal to do with the rest of my life [...] Suddenly a clear voice said, 'Thank God somebody finally had the guts to do it' (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 109).

Hellman was excused soon after this outburst. Sensing the implications of Hellman's letter, Chairman Wood attempted to downplay Hellman's testimony. His response to her dismissal was "Why cite her for contempt? After all, she's a woman" (Martinson 265). In total, the hearing lasted one hour and seven minutes. Hellman stood up for her convictions and won. Her letter divulged the underhanded tactics utilized at HUAC proceedings. One had the constitutional right to *believe* in Communism, so HUAC needed to find grounds to vilify the witnesses. The system (temporarily) suspended the right of individuality in both thought and morality. The following day, *The New York Times* ran an article which praised Hellman for her moral stand and the *New York Post* published an article entitled "Portrait of a Lady" (Rollyson 328). Hellman had the support of the media, and eventually the public. America began to question the validity of HUAC's proceedings and the integrity of those in power.

After her appearance before HUAC, Hellman resumed her writing. She served as editor for Chekhov's *Selected Letters*, and began work on her adaptation, *The Lark* (1955). The play has a unique structure in that the play retells the story of Joan of Arc through the actors. The actors break the fourth wall in order to consult the audience directly. The play is meta-theatrical in that it performs the story of Joan of Arc.

Warwick: So put her on trial, and burn her, and be finished.

Cauchon: No, sire. She must play out her whole life first. It's a short life. It won't take very long (Hellman 6).

The meta-theatrical structure of *The Lark* reflects the preoccupation with the theatricality of the HUAC proceedings. As Tony Perucci noted, "In the hearings, it was the theatricality of the witness's performance that came to be the measure of his/her

citizenship” (22). If the witness appeared too emphatic, he was guilty; however, if the witness was calm and validated his innocence by exposing the guilt of others, he was cleared of all suspicion. Eric Bentley summarized that HUAC created the ritual of naming names as means of intimidation or re-birth. Confession and repentance for past sins was not enough, redemption was found only with the sacrifice of naming others. Bentley goes so far as to coin it a “rite of purification” (Perucci 30).

The theatricalization of HUAC proceedings parallels the theatricality of Joan’s execution. In the play, Cauchon describes the public in similar terms of an audience waiting to be entertained.

Cauchon: The crowd has been waiting since dawn. They eat their food, scold their children, make jokes, and grow impatient. You are famous and they have nothing better to do with their lives than bring garlands to the famous—or watch them burn (Hellman 47).

By describing Joan as “famous” Hellman skillfully relates Joan to the celebrities called to testify for HUAC, both cooperative and uncooperative witnesses alike. Again, the idea is to put on a show whether that is by exposing the secrets of others, or the combative arguments between witness and committee that would often end in jail time.

Hellman’s moral dilemma of either naming names or facing contempt charges is reflected in Joan’s initial reaction to her mission. For example, Hellman’s Joan states, “I could never send men to their death” (Hellman 7). Likewise, Hellman could not testify against another because she could not bear to send someone to jail. As Hellman wrote to the Chairman of HUAC:

[...] I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past association with them, was completely innocent of any

talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 93).

A crucial difference between Joan and Hellman is that despite her reservations, Joan does accept her mission. Joan does not carry a sword or kill another soldier. She plays the role of soldier but never carries out the act of warfare. Likewise, Hellman did not appear before HUAC as a hostile witness, but refused to compromise her integrity by disclosing information about others. Both women did what was necessary without abandoning their morals. Joan's statement, "But what I am, I will not denounce. What I have done, I will not deny" (Hellman 45), is evocative of Hellman's own statement that she "[...] cannot and will not cut my conscious to fit this year's fashions [...]" (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 93).

Although the plot of *The Lark* (1955) is based on Anouilh's, the dialogue is Hellman's. Her interpretation of certain lines coincides with issues relating to the aftermath of the Second World War. For example, in Christopher Fry's English-language translation of *The Lark* (1956), Cauchon tells Warwick, "Put your mind at rest, my lord. There are too few of us here to stage the battles" (Fry 2). On the other hand, Hellman has written the line, "No, sire. We no longer have enough men to act out the old battles" (Hellman 6). Hellman's interpretation relates to casualties of the Second World War. Hellman was a staunch advocate for peace, and believed the only way to achieve world harmony was through positive international relationships. Therefore, she would have been more critical of the casualties of the Second World War.

In *The Lark*, Joan's story unfolds through the course of the trial as the characters re-enact key points of Joan's life. Joan's whole life is on trial, with every detail scrutinized by the judges. Where does (present) reality end and fiction begin?

Joan: Which moment is that, Messire? Everything is so mixed up, I no longer know where I am. At the beginning when I heard my Voices, or at the end of the trial when I knew that my king and my friends had abandoned me? When I lost faith, when I recanted, or when at the very last minute, I gave myself back to myself? (Hellman 10).

The blurring of the line between reality and performance lends a sense of inevitability to Joan's fate. Joan must be executed because if she were to live, it would be a betrayal of her integrity. Traditionally, her resumption of wearing male attire is a treacherous act of the English, who have stolen her woman's dress thereby forcing Joan to wear the forbidden man's clothes. In *The Lark*, the decision is Joan's, "Soldiers! Englishmen! Give me back my warrior clothes. And when I have put them on, call back all the priests" (Hellman 54). As she stated earlier in the play, Joan gives herself back to herself—she is her own savior.

Hellman's Joan is questioned with a rigor reminiscent of the Senate hearings.

The Promoter: Why didn't you make the Sign of the Cross?

Joan: That question is not written in your charge against me.

The Promoter: Why didn't you say to the archangel, "*Vado retro Satanas?*"

Joan: I don't know any Latin, Messire. And *that* question is not written in your charge against me (Hellman 8).

As in actual HUAC proceedings, Joan's defensive cheekiness does not impress the judges. The Promoter's response "I do not like the way you speak in this court. I warn you again—" (Hellman 9) is reminiscent of the threat of contempt. Again, when a

witness was deemed hostile, or uncooperative, the committee would hold him in contempt, which often resulted in jail time. Hellman would have been all too familiar with this reality. Her longtime partner, Dashiell Hammett, had been jailed for contempt of court. Hammett had plead the Fifth Amendment during his court appearance and refused to answer any question. Although Hellman did plead the Fifth Amendment, she had been prepared to answer those questions concerning her own life. Possibly Hellman was imagining her own convictions when she has Joan answer, “I think as I think. You have the right to punish me for it” (Hellman 38).

Hellman despised betrayal, and felt that those who divulged information to HUAC were a disgrace. Of course, there were several who felt that collaboration was their only way out. With Anderson’s Joan, the issue had been compromise for the good of the whole. For Hellman’s Joan, compromise would have been a gross betrayal. In the play, the character Cauchon represents those who cooperated with HUAC. Cauchon defends his actions, “You think of us as collaborators and therefore without honor. We believed that collaboration with you was the only reasonable solution—” (Hellman 20). Cauchon also predicts the future criticism for these collaborators:

And the time will come when our names will be known only for what we did to her; when men, forgiving their own sins, but angry with ours, will speak our names in a curse—(Hellman 22).

There is no exchange like this in Fry’s translation.

Hellman’s treatment of the character Cauchon provides an interesting perspective. This Cauchon is not represented as a villainous monster; he is merely a weak, misguided fool. He holds no personal animosity towards Joan and genuinely desires to restore her to

the Church. The only issue between Joan and Cauchon is that they disagree on the validity of Joan's visions. Cauchon's inability to set aside his ideology makes him an accomplice in Joan's death. As Hellman asked in *Scoundrel Time*, "Since when do you have to agree with people to defend them from injustice" (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 85). Hellman's presentation of Cauchon serves to bolster her own actions. Hellman may not have agreed with certain acquaintances, but she would not incriminate them, nor deliver them to HUAC to save herself.

Throughout her process of adapting *The Lark*, Hellman did historical research and examined the transcripts of Joan's trial. As she wryly noted in *Scoundrel Time* "Having read many examples of the work of court stenographers, I have never once seen a completely accurate report" (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 107). Of course, Hellman herself was known to falsify certain aspects of her own life as a means to shape them into something more dramatic, but she found the falsifying of Joan's life to be shameful. Perhaps for Hellman, the idea of falsifying information for anything except entertainment purposes reflected the misrepresentation of the era. An accusation of Communism was synonymous with guilt. As she wrote in *Scoundrel Time*, "We, as a people, agreed in the Fifties to swallow any nonsense that was repeated often enough, without examination of its meaning or investigation into its roots" (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 78).

The true villain of Hellman's *The Lark* is the Inquisitor. For Hellman, the Inquisitor symbolizes the worst of HUAC. He says of Joan:

I have spoken of the great enemy, but not even now do you know his name. You do not understand on whom you sit in judgment, nor the issues of the judgment [...] Because *we* know the name of our enemy. His name

is natural man. Can you not see that this girl is the symbol of that which is most to be feared? She is the enemy. She is man as he stands against us (Hellman 45).

In relation to HUAC, the “great enemy” the Inquisitor speaks of is Communism. In the play, Joan has inspired the French people to overthrow those in rule (the English). She is the figurehead of rebellion, and the epitome of non-conformity. The issue of individualism versus conformity was a popular issue during the 1950’s. In April 1950, Hellman gave a speech at Swarthmore College in which she said:

[...] because of the political and moral and ethical forces that surround us, we have entered an age in which it is becoming downright dangerous not to conform [...] we are—or are being unnaturally made into—a fearful people, and fearful people will stand for very little deviation (Kessler-Harris 179).

Hellman explores Joan’s individuality and how it relates to her persecution. For example, in Fry’s translation Warwick says:

Yes, well, no doubt. But if our business is politics we can’t afford to brood about such men. We seem fated, as a rule, to meet them among the people we condemn to execution (Fry 31).

In Hellman’s translation, Warwick says:

Yes, it is. But as a man of politics, I cannot afford the doctrine of man’s individual magnificence. I might meet another man who felt the same way. And he might express his individual magnificence by cutting off my head (Hellman 21).

Thus Warwick exposes the belief that individualism poses a threat to the status quo.

Joan’s personal convictions drove her to lead a revolt against the English. When the Promoter says, “I see here the germ of a frightful heresy that could tear the Church—” (Hellman 10), one can imagine this “germ” as Communism and the “Church” to be

Democracy. Likewise, Warwick and the Promoter believe themselves entitled to judge the sins of others. Warwick reflects HUAC's preoccupation with background checks and intelligence operations:

We tell people that our intelligence service is remarkable and we say it so often that everybody believes us. It should be their business not only to tell us what is happening, but what might happen (Hellman 13).

Warwick believes it to be one's social responsibility to submit to the Church, just as HUAC maintained it was disloyal to withhold information from the committee.

Hellman's adaptation of *The Lark* returns to a popular theme in Joan of Arc inspired works, the exploitation of an individual for political gain. HUAC cultivated an atmosphere of fear to coerce witnesses to inform on others. HUAC took advantage of people's fears, and infiltrated the media to promote its message. As Warwick states:

Propaganda is a soft weapon: hold it in your hands too long, and it will move about like a snake, and strike the other way. Whatever the girl is or has been, she must now be stripped and degraded. That is why we bought her high, and it is what we will insist upon (Hellman 11).

The exploitation of Joan manifests itself through the appropriation of her image. Through *The Lark*, Hellman questions Joan's role as propaganda during the Second World War, and the role of women in a post-war society. Warwick comments on Joan's function during the war:

Desperate, frightened, with nothing to lose, they decided to dress the girl in battle flags and let her go forth as a symbol of something or other. It worked well. A simple girl inspired simple people to get themselves killed for simple ideals (Hellman 33).

Likewise during the war, women were encouraged to seek work outside of the home, and be an inspiration to other women; yet, once the war ended, women had to be encouraged

to forget their war-time role and return to their domestic role. Hellman believed Joan to be “[...] history’s first modern career girl [...]” (Kessler-Harris 180). Because Joan did not want to return to a life of domesticity, an example was made of her and she had to be punished.

The major difference between the original and Hellman’s adaptation is the ending. The original version depicts an eager crowd that shouts “Death to the witch! Burn the heretic! Kill her, kill her, kill her!” (Fry 98) as Joan is led to the stake. As Joan burns, Beaudricourt rushes in and demands they perform the coronation scene because “We said that we were going to play everything! And we haven’t at all. It isn’t justice to her. And she has a right to see the coronation performed: it’s a part of her story” (Fry 102). The play ends with the coronation scene. Cauchon comments, “The true end of the story is a kind of joy. Joan of Arc: a story which ends happily” (Fry 103).

Hellman’s version does not have a crowd chanting for Joan’s death. Instead, Warwick admits that Joan’s death was “[...] a grave mistake” (Hellman 56). Both versions reenact the coronation scene; but, while the original claims a happy ending to Joan’s tale, Hellman only acknowledges that the coronation was Joan’s happiest day. Additionally in Hellman’s version, no one rushes in to save Joan. The judges are forced to confront the ramifications of their actions; there is no reprieve or forgiveness.

The title, *The Lark*, refers to Joan’s spirit.

The girl was a lark in the skies of France, high over the heads of her soldiers, singing a joyous, crazy song of courage. There she was, outlined against the sun, a target for everybody to shoot at, flying straight and happy into battle [...] But every once in a while a lark does appear in your sky and then everything stupid and evil is wiped out by the shadow of the lark (Hellman 35).

Joan was a symbol of hope. She represents all that is good in the human spirit. “And man is also strength and courage and splendor in his most desperate minutes” (Hellman 38). As previously stated, Hellman felt a kinship to Joan of Arc and admired her sense of integrity and morality. Hellman possibly understood Joan’s function as a martyr in that Thurman Arnold had once said: “You and Fortas are making a martyr of this woman [Hellman]” (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 102). But was Hellman so invested in Joan’s story that she considered herself to be a lark, a symbol of courage that could defeat the evils of HUAC? Perhaps Hellman thought of herself as a stand-in for Joan, and reveled in the idea that both women had stood for truth and “Truth made you a traitor as it often does in a time of scoundrels” (Hellman *Scoundrel Time* 85).

The aftermath of the Second World War affected Joan’s function as warrior. The time for bravery and courage was done, and in its place stood a culture of conformity and submission. Joan had been the beacon of patriotism during the first half of the twentieth century, but the late 1940s and early 1950s refashioned her image to show that women warriors no longer have a place in society.

Chapter 4

JOAN OF ARC: THE WOMAN

The legend of Joan of Arc had experienced several theatrical revisions in the early twentieth century. These plays focused on Joan's function as either the warrior archetype or sacrificial scapegoat. She was a model soldier, brave and defiant in the face of danger. Then as scapegoat, the focus shifted to Joan's trial, persecution, and death. One blatant omission in these adaptations of Joan: what about Joan the woman?

American theatre reflected the great surge of feminism in society during the 1960s and 1970s. In a world where women had begun to question their place in society, likewise the theatre presented works exploring the role of women. Lucy Winer of The New York Feminist Theatre believed:

When you begin to see sexism, [you see that] it's everywhere [...] The pan that you pick up every morning to cook an egg for your lover or husband, that's a political act in so far as it expresses the way in which you are oppressed as a woman (Rea 32).

What separates feminist theatre from traditional dramatic genres is its focus on the experiences of women from the female point of view. It expounds upon the meaning of how women relate not only to one another, but also how we, as women, relate to our world. Feminist theatre develops the truth of the female existence through its rejection of the stereotypical image of women as advocated in a male-dominated world. It challenges the hierarchy of a patriarchal society by introducing the female point of view. Within this realm of Feminist drama another issue could be explored: the power of female sexuality in terms of freedoms and identity.

What does it mean to be female? Gender socialization enforces the differences between men and women from birth. Babies in hospitals have either a pink hat for girl or a blue for boy; the differences between the sexes are defined and enforced from birth.

The male perception of female sexuality engenders our supplication.

The overall objective of female conditioning is to make women perceive themselves and their lives through male eyes and so to secure their unquestioning acceptance of a male-defined and male-derived existence. The overall objective of male conditioning is to make men perceive themselves and their lives through their own eyes and so to prepare them for an existence in and on their own terms (MacKinnon 111).

This dichotomy enforces the patriarchal society's suppression of female power. It condones the destruction of defiant, assertive women. Women who refuse to accept the status quo are ostracized.

The plays to be examined in this section focus on Joan the woman. The section illustrates how the Joan of Arc legend is appropriated in order to examine issues central to the female experience. These issues include the idea that women's history has been ignored or altered to adhere to the ideals of a patriarchy; society's suppression of female power; women's struggle to find their purpose and place in the world; and the struggle for self-acceptance.

One With the Flame

Francesca Dunfey's *One With the Flame* (1962) delves into the idea that the female experience may be skewed by male perception. The play is structured around Joan's rehabilitation trial of 1455-1456. The action unfolds in a series of flashbacks; and, the play features a chorus of women, reminiscent of a Greek tragedy, who come forward to tell of Joan's life.

One With the Flame is one of the first Joan of Arc plays without a predominately male cast. As the Publisher's Note acknowledges: "The point of view is, of course, decidedly and refreshingly logical in that the decisive high points and intimate moments in Joan's fascinating life are glimpsed through the eyes of other women" (Dunfey 9). The story of Joan of Arc relates to the universal female experience of war.

The female chorus is introduced in the beginning of the play as they lead on Joan's mother, Isabelle D'Arc. Much like a traditional Greek chorus, these women announce new characters, comment on the action, and comprise various roles throughout the play. They plead with the judges "Or allow us, // As we are women and mothers, // To speak for her" (Dunfey 16-17). Thus, the premise of the play is that Joan was wrongfully accused by her male judges because as men, these judges could not assess Joan's truthfulness.

Women: We simply ask leave

To show the Maid as *women* knew her!

Advocate: (*To the Women; soothingly.*) That will not be necessary.

It is all in the records.

Notary: (*Defensively.*) All here (*tapping stack of papers*)... duly noted and dated and sealed with the seal of Rouen.

Women: Written by *men*, by men recorded!

That story brought her to cruel, unreasonable judgment.

Joan was a woman, Your Reverence;

Women should speak for her (Dunfey 18-19).

The Women go on to say that "If men had understood, // They could not have condemned her!" (Dunfey 19). The idea that only a woman can truly understand or know another woman relates to the idea of the feminine experience. The Women possess an insight into Joan's life because they too understand her struggle to fit into a man's world. Moreover,

it suggests that Joan will finally be judged by a jury of her peers, thus ensuring a fair verdict.

The implementation of a female chorus positions the world of the play in a strict feminine context. The women shape the action. Because it is a predominantly female cast, the story explores different interactions between Joan and other female characters.

For example, the Duchess of Alençon [sic] states:

Better for whom? My *father*, captured and aging in an English cell? My *husband*, scarcely returned from five years' imprisonment in the Tower of Crotoy? [...] Shall I be fatherless and a widow, too, so France shall have her freedom? Must I surrender my Duke so soon because you choose to drag him off to war? (Dunfey 52).

In *One With the Flame*, women experience war in a different context from men. Men tend to view war in a military context—they focus on the honor, glory, and conquest.

The Women refer to the judge's war records as “[...] *man's* bloody-syllabled story!” and describe them as “[...] accurate, cold—” (Dunfey 69). For women, war can only mean loss and sacrifice. Because women are not warriors, they do not share in the glory.

Instead, the women are left to deal with the realities of war and its emotional aftermath.

Inquisitor: (*Reading*) ‘The Fort of Saint Loup was taken with small loss.’
A Woman: (*Anguished*) ‘A world of loss to me! Oh, my *son!*’
(Dunfey 70).

In other words, the women relate to the war on an emotional level, and experience it via their family ties. While the men speak of the fighting and victories, the women remember the loneliness and the waiting.

Inquisitor: But she [Joan] was triumphant! *Victorious!*
Madame Boucher: A woman's tale of war is otherwise:
Women: (*Sadly*) Etched cruelly in crooked lines
Of recollection—

Court Ladies: And chronicled in pain (Dunfey 70).

Joan is not exempt from this torment. She detests the violence and bloodshed characteristic of war. Furthermore, while Joan willingly obeys God, she longs for a day when her life can be her own. Joan reminisces, “I wish it could be *Joan’s* time...time to be a *woman* and...” (Dunfey 66). A soldier’s life is not what Joan chose, but rather what God had chosen for her. Essentially, Joan’s feminism is a direct result of her faith. She tells her judges, “No. I will submit to no man in the world but to God alone” (Dunfey 105). Joan’s spirituality is admirable, and forms the foundation of her strength and character. It gives her something to believe in, which is what women of previous generations had been lacking. Dunfey connects the importance of faith to questions of self-fulfillment. Likewise, the female chorus has faith in Joan, which gives them the strength to confront the judges.

The women do not persecute Joan because of her gender. The fact that Joan is a woman actually becomes an asset. In fact, Isabelle tells Joan: “The King of Heaven wants the girl you are, Jeannette...and the woman you will be” (Dunfey 34). In other words, little girls can aspire for greatness. Glory should not be regulated to only men. Perhaps God chose Joan for this mission *because* she was female. As Marina Warner surmises:

That God had chosen a woman to save France and thereby shown the whole sex his love was an argument that appears in subsequent feminist literature and made Joan a favorite subject among women themselves (220).

In the play, Joan desires to be an example for other women. This idea of female empowerment is echoed when Joan instructs the ladies of the court, “It will be better for France, with her women *believing*” (Dunfey 56).

The first flashback of the play illustrates Joan’s desire to educate her fellow women. The time is spring, 1428, and Joan is with the other Domrémy village girls. While the girls preoccupy themselves with games and idle gossip, Joan is withdrawn. Already Joan has separated herself from traditional female social norms and values. When confronted by her companions Joan states: “Are we less French for being women? Is the Kingdom of France to be reserved for men only?” (Dunfey 26).

Another facet of *One With the Flame* (1962) applicable to feminist theatre is the play’s treatment of female stereotypes. For instance, the Women demand to testify on Joan’s behalf in the rehabilitation trial; but the men object, citing that women are too emotional to present factual evidence. The Advocate screams out,

You see? They cannot even *talk* about Joan without emotion. This shrill talk of females and their uncontrolled tears are too great a price to pay for what little they might know of her (Dunfey 19).

Yet, as the play progresses the audience discovers that it is the male characters that are over-emotional and the female characters manage to keep the story on track. The Inquisitor points out this irony when he addresses the Advocate: “Who is getting emotional *now*?” (Dunfey 48).

In her essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” (1975) Laura Mulvey explores the predominance of the male gaze. Mulvey argues: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and

passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly” (qtd in Sherwin 175). Female stereotypes are products of the male gaze. The stereotype allows men to either accept a woman’s role/image, or provides the reason for the rejection. In the play, Joan’s soldiers cannot accept a female leader, thus she is propagated as God’s soldier. Her image is dependent on her connection with God, and enforced through superstition. Therefore, Joan’s fall from grace stems from her soldiers’ rejection of her warrior image. Now, Joan is not a soldier, but a woman—and women should know their place.

The play dramatizes the ill-fated assault on Paris. During the scene, La Hire comments on the sudden change in morale.

And most of all, I think, they’re angry about your *sword!* ‘Her sacred sword is shattered,’ they mutter, ‘and the Maid’s magic is melting away!’ Even the King is upset about that. Says you should have taken a *stick* to the trollops! (Dunfey 85).

This is in reference to the historical account that Joan once chased a prostitute out of the army camp, and struck the prostitute on the back which caused the sword to break.

Because this sword was part of Joan’s mythical persona, its destruction had a strong impact on moral. The men viewed Joan in a superstitious context with no regard to her actual abilities.

In the alternate ending of *One With the Flame*, the chorus of women say, “And for us—//Who have championed her cause—The Flame which engulfs her// Lights a Candle of Truth//And leaves us a Hope..//Unshaken...and lasting” (Dunfey 122). Joan of Arc is an inspiration for all women because she lived her life with integrity. Dunfey’s Joan is a

real woman who had to overcome obstacles through her own strength and faith—a role-model to all women.

Francesca Dunfey's *One With the Flame* (1962) portrays Joan of Arc's life through a female point of view. The predominantly female cast allows for the exploration of how history has been recorded from a patriarchal point of view, and the impact of a patriarchy on the female. Dunfey's play corresponds with the interests of the early years of the second wave of feminism—a period of renewed interest in women's rights and female history. There is more to Joan of Arc's life than her military career or statements in a transcript. The female chorus reveals the truth of Joan's life, the reality beyond her mythical persona, in order to examine Joan as a woman. The play presents a Joan who is more human than perhaps we realize. If Joan of Arc can do it, why can't I?

Chamber Music

Arthur Kopit's *Chamber Music* (1963) features a community of prolific women, who were deemed too volatile to exist within the boundaries of society. While the play is not the product of a female playwright, the subject matter exposes issues related to the female experience.

Chamber Music (1963) is a metaphor for society's ill-treatment of progressive women. The characters are identified by their appearance or function; however, within the play they are properly named. The cast of characters includes: Constanze Mozart as "Woman Who Plays Records," Osa Johnson as "Woman in Safari Outfit," Gertrude Stein as "Woman with Notebook," Pearl White as "Girl in Gossamer Dress," Amelia Earhart as "Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit," Queen Isabella of Spain as "Woman in Queenly Spanish

Garb,” Susan B. Anthony as “Woman with Gavel,” and Joan of Arc as “Woman in Armor.”

Kopit’s method of addressing characters warrants discussion. Perhaps Kopit sought to shroud his characters in mystery; or, he wanted the women to function merely as archetypes, identifiable upon appearance through the audience’s familiarity or pre-conceived notions of the icons. The relationship between the character’s name and the character’s identity serves two purposes. First, it emphasizes the conflict between the individual woman and her world. The characters strive to make a name for themselves and fight for their individuality. Society may only recognize “Woman in Armor” because it denotes her function; however, it negates Joan of Arc’s value as an individual. Second, throughout the play the women address one another by name: “The chair [Woman with Gavel/Susan B. Anthony] recognizes Joan of Arc” (Kopit 14). Women identify themselves as individuals thus they recognize the individuality of other women.

Through the course of the play, the audience learns that the women are confined to an insane asylum. The setting exemplifies a vein of societal repression of female power. There is a long-standing history of men forcibly institutionalizing women. When a woman becomes too much to control, she is imprisoned. As Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote (1861):

Could the dark secrets of those insane asylums be brought to light...we would be shocked to know the countless number of rebellious wives, sisters and daughters that are thus annually sacrificed to false customs and conventionalisms, and barbarous laws made by men for women (Chesler 62).

Sadly, this practice continued into the twentieth century. In her book Women and Madness, Phyllis Chesler argues that many women were unjustly institutionalized as late as 1972. Furthermore, the asylum represents the patriarchal institution that seeks to define and constrain women. Why this link between women and insanity? As women, we are prohibited from our individuality because our social role/function revolves around the male definition. Society's definition of what it means to be a woman is defined through the definition of what it means to be a man. Therefore, the options for women are inherently limited. The fact that women are accorded fewer possibilities strengthens the connection between women and madness. It is easier to recognize deviation when you are confined to a strict path. What results from this marginalization of female desire ranges from depression to madness. "Such madness is, in a sense, an intense experience of female sexual and cultural castration and a doomed search for potency" (Chesler 91).

The characters in *Chamber Music* are patients in an insane asylum who perceive themselves as famous, historical women; however, even in their madness, they gravitate towards their personal truth. In other words, their chosen personas are indicative of their self-value. What would inspire a woman to take on the persona of Joan of Arc? Joan of Arc was a military leader among men. It is natural that a woman who had experienced the forced submissiveness required of women would gravitate to a strong, dominate female. It connects to the character's desire to break free of the traditional stereotype.

Kopit's Joan struggles with her new-found role. "But, you see, I didn't *expect* help. I ...don't think I really even wanted it. I, well, just would have appreciated some...you know, *guidance* in the matter..." (15). The line cuts to the heart of the

matter. When women are unsatisfied with their lot in life, they have no approved outlet to express their grief. Just as Joan of Arc was persecuted by a world that did not understand her, Kopit's Joan expresses her frustration with a world that refuses to accept her.

Of course, Kopit's Joan deviates from the persona of the historical Joan of Arc.

For example, her entrance into the play is quite comical. The stage directions denote:

A beam of wood now enters through the door. At its far end, supporting it at its crossbar, is a Woman in Armor [...] In attempting to enter the room the crossbar of the crucifix slams into the door-frame and catches fast (Kopit 5).

This requires a Joan adept at physical comedy, which is a far cry from any previous representation. Visually, the beam serves as a phallic symbol. It is pushing its way in—penetrating into the world of these women.

Once she has successfully entered the room, Joan cries out in frustration “Oh shit. Well, for chrissakes one of you *help* me with this thing!” (Kopit 5). Obviously, the piety of the historical Joan of Arc is of no importance to the world of the play. Instead, Kopit introduces a Joan who retains an adolescent, immature quality. Joan's immaturity is further exemplified through her coping mechanism of shutting her visor when upset.

Woman Who Plays Records: Joan, you know I wouldn't tell a lie. So believe me, de t'ing is *enormous*. Better off you left it somevere else.

Woman in Armor: No.

Woman Who Plays Records [to the others]: Maybe if ve got her a smaller vun?

Woman in Armor: No! [And she slams her visor shut.] (Kopit 7).

Joan's inability to relate to the world on a mature, adult level emphasizes the teen-age self of the legend and articulates society's glorification of girlhood. In other words, because women are treated as children, they never evolve into strong, independent women, which (of course) is the point.

The social structure between men and women is suggested through the introduction of "the Man in White." Most likely, he is a doctor at the asylum and is accompanied by a male assistant. The Man in White interjects himself into the female community.

Well now, just what do you suppose I'm going to say? Well *this* is what I'm going to say: if you nice ladies don't behave yourselves, you'll never have another meeting. And do you know what that means? Well, for one, it means you'll never again be allowed to make suggestions to us about things you think should be done [...] And it also means that all the lovely ladies who elected you to this nice committee and place in you all their hopes and trust, yes it means all those lovely ladies will then hate you. Forever (Kopit 17).

This passage illustrates different tactics utilized to force the women into submission. He threatens to take away the one thing these women connect to. These meetings allow the women to feel they are part of something, and it empowers them.

The subtext of this passage relays the erotic aspects behind male/female roles. In Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, Catharine A. MacKinnon explains how "Male and female are created through the eroticization of dominance and submission. The man/woman difference and the dominance/submission dynamic define each other" (113).

The Man in White also introduces subtle weaponry of male domination. First, he relates to the women as if they were small children. The condescending tone enforces the idea that women are delicate, child-like creatures who must be controlled. As previously

stated, women are never allowed to grow in self-confidence because they perceive that they are not good enough. If they are conditioned to believe they are subservient to men, eventually they will become imprisoned by their fears.

Another dynamic that the *Man in White* typifies relates to how women relate to other women. He threatens that if they do not behave (or conform) they will be punished by the rest of the female populace. As they play progresses, the audience witnesses this model play out. The women turn against one another. In order to enact their attack against the male ward, the women decide to kill a patient, and send it as a warning. After much deliberation, it is decided that *Woman in Aviatrix's Outfit/Amelia Earhart* must be sacrificed. The women morph into blood-thirsty fiends who violently murder one of their own. Contemporary society reflects the abuse women subject one another to. As young girls, women compete for attention and superiority. In adolescent girls, it is a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "Queen Bee" syndrome. Go to any middle school or high school and the female social hierarchies are strictly enforced. Often times, these girls are rewarded with popularity, otherwise known as approval and desire from male peers. Women neglect to realize that by focusing their energies on male approval, they do not nurture their own individuality. Thus society cultivates an animosity between women as a means to distract them from their higher purpose. Those who should be allies are regarded as enemies further enforcing the isolation of women.

Chamber Music (1963) marks a departure in the treatment of Joan of Arc. It is one of the earliest plays to confront women's issues through the characterization of Joan.

As the women's movement progressed, Joan of Arc would continue to play a pivotal role in the theatre.

Knock Knock

The feminist movement of the late twentieth century was a re-awakening of women's issues that had been lost in the aftermath of both World Wars. The fight for women's suffrage ended with victory in 1920, after the House of Representatives passed a bill disallowing gender discrimination in reference to voting rights. Despite this major milestone, the early feminist movement gradually diminished, or at least lost its sense of urgency. It would take the intrusion of the Second World War for women to explore life outside of the home.

Women's advancement in the workforce was an unforeseen necessity of the Second World War. By 1945, women comprised over one-third of the national workforce (Collins 381). Since all eligible men were off to war, it was sensible for women to assume more responsibilities—it was by no means intended to extend beyond the war years. In fact, one slogan adopted by the War Department promised, “The WAC [Women's Army Corps] who shares your army life will make a better postwar wife” (Collins 374). The war-time propaganda served a dual purpose: first, it encouraged women to serve by promising them that it would make them more attractive to a potential mate; and second, it assuaged the man's ego by promising the men that after the war, all would return to normal.

When America welcomed her men home after the war, as promised, things began to regress back to the past. Women were expected to give up their jobs now that the men

had returned; and, once again women were indoctrinated in the domestic ideal—marriage and children measured a woman's worth. As Betty Friedan conjectured:

For over fifteen years there was no word of this yearning in the millions of words written about women, for women, in all the columns, books and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers. Over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity (15).

Women, in part, subscribed to this system that advocated their conformity. Dolgin conjectured that many women lacked the self-confidence to remain in the workforce, while others were relieved to return to the predictability of domestic life (155). Brett Harvey summarized:

What constrained them [women] was not always the blatant sexism of barred doors and low expectations. It was their own profound belief, internalized from a lifetime of messages, that achievement and autonomy were simply incompatible with love and family...independence equaled loneliness (qtd in Dolgin 155).

The end of the Second World War produced nostalgia for tradition, and American society clung to the established values in an effort to reassert its sense of security. The aftermath of the Second World War produced social conformity; yet, in terms of its effect on theatre, the disillusionment of war and society manifested itself through the theatrical movement, the Theatre of the Absurd.

These two impulses, social conformity and Theatre of the Absurd are evident in Jules Feiffer's *Knock Knock* (1976). The play is the story of two middle-aged roommates, Abe and Cohn, who spend their days bickering. One day, the status quo is interrupted by several surprise visitors including Joan of Arc. Joan has a mission—gather

two of every kind, board a spaceship, and travel to heaven before the “Holocaust” (Feiffer 27).

One of the key issues of the play relates to the power of faith. Abe and Cohn represent two archetypes: the believer and the skeptic. At the start of the play, Abe is imaginative, while Cohn is practical. Abe asks Cohn, “You only believe in what’s in front of your nose. That’s not mindless?” (Feiffer 7). As the play progresses, the roles switch and Cohn becomes the most spiritual of the pair. This reversal of roles is a direct result of Joan of Arc’s entrance into their world. She is able to give Cohn concrete proof of her identity—which actually negates, or perverts the idea of faith. Yes, Cohn regains his faith, but only after the analytical portion of his brain has been satisfied. Cohn states, “I believe in what’s concrete—in what I see, until I see something different. That at least is consistent” (Feiffer 47). Traditionally, Joan of Arc acts as the perfect foil against non-believers; but what happens when you position her in a world where words, spirituality, and action have lost all meaning?

The Theatre of the Absurd sprang from mankind’s disconnect with the world. Thus, mankind’s need for faith or ability to believe in a higher power was compromised. As Martin Esslin poignantly described in The Theatre of the Absurd:

The hallmark of this attitude is its sense that the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions (xviii).

The fact that Joan of Arc is a character exemplifies a core theory of the Theatre of the Absurd: “[...] the confrontation of man with the spheres of myth and religious reality” (Esslin 293). In this case, Joan is both myth and reality. Joan is the embodiment of

faith—a direct result of her image or myth; and, Joan has a function independent of this image. Thus, the audience sees the mythical side of Joan juxtaposed with the human side.

Knock Knock deviates from the perfect, idealized image of Joan. Feiffer's Joan experiences her own existential crisis. *Knock Knock* is Joan's journey from absolute faith to disillusion and back again. The absurdity of life is encapsulated by Joan's statement: "I'm glad you asked me that question. I, too, thought it was cruel, but my Voices tell me that people will never know it's a holocaust. They'll adapt themselves. Many may even find happiness" (Feiffer 28). This idea of adapting suggests the apprehension, angst, and isolation of contemporary society.

Joan's loss of faith reflects the disillusionment manifested in the absurd. The feelings of disconnect and impotency plunge her into despair and a sense of uselessness. Because Joan's faith is so closely tied to her identity, when she stops believing she is stripped of her identity. Again, this relates to the absurdity in the world:

[...] we have always seen man stripped of the accidental circumstances of social position or historical context, confronted with the basic choices, the basic situations of his existence: man faced with time and therefore waiting [...] (Esslin 292).

The longer Joan remains in Abe and Cohn's world, the further she deviates from her spiritual path. At the top of Act II, Joan sits down to a meal. While she eats, Cohn asks her about the impending holocaust and heaven, but Joan is too focused on the meal to answer his questions. She says, "Oh, heaven! You mean heaven! Of course! I'm sorry, this is so delicious that I—" (Feiffer 55). That Joan could be swayed from her mission by something as innocuous as food represents man's need for comfort. Thus, if the theatre

of the Absurd attacks consumerism, Joan's gluttony reflects bourgeois mentality. Even Joan's Voices are critical of her behavior.

Second Voice: Stuffs herself like a pig.

First Voice: Any second now—crash!—armor all over the place [...] Will you look at her complexion? Breaking out.

Second Voice: And why not? She hasn't been out of the house in a month.

First Voice: I think you are losing your faith, Joan (Feiffer 60-61).

The Voices view her actions as indicative of her spiritual commitment. Joan's identity is dependent on her faith. So by losing her faith, she loses her identity.

Now that we have established Joan's role in the play, it is only fitting to discuss her role in a strictly feminist context. As Betty Friedan stated in her book The Feminine Mystique (1963):

The mistake, says the mystique, the root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men, women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male-domination, and nurturing maternal love (43).

The most important outward sign of Joan's defiance was her male dress. In fact, her clothing resulted in her execution—it was the proof of her heresy. Throughout *Knock Knock*, Joan's outward appearance is significant because her clothing projects her perceptions of the world. In other words, Joan's clothing symbolizes her gradual indoctrination into social mores. Susan Crane argues that Joan's cross-dressing was a "powerful symbol of self" (Crane 74).

In the beginning of the play, Joan is described as "[...] a vision of loveliness wearing a suit of armor" (Feiffer 23). Her feminization has begun. Why the need to exploit her attractiveness as a woman? As Marina Warner observed: "They [male

clothes] announce that women can do men's work, are as good as men, are up to men of every station [...]" (Warner 155). In order to neutralize the threat posed by a self-assured woman, her function must be re-framed within a submissive context. Ultimately, Joan must revert to a traditional gender role (wife and/or mother figure), or she must be punished (die) for her refusal to conform. *Knock Knock* refashions Joan as a domestic-maternal figure, but then punishes her for her failure in this new role.

The first step is to modify the male perception of Joan, which is visually supported by her taking off of the armor in favor of an apron—literally, to strip Joan of her masculine persona. It is important to feminize Joan because women who have ambitions beyond the home are not viewed as feminine—these women are deemed less female. Joan did not wear men's clothing because she wanted to live as a male, but because she wanted autonomy of action within male society. The armor places her in male society, but she does not deny her own womanhood. In other words, had Joan worn men's clothing to pass herself off as a man and deny her femininity, it would have been more acceptable; but, because she infiltrated the ranks of men as a woman, that is what makes her a threat. Joan's armor serves as tangible evidence to her individuality; and also hinders man/society's ability to contextualize her as female. As a result, the men attempt to separate Joan from her armor because her armor separates her from the world. The Police Voice calls out, "The game's up, sister. Throw out your armor and come out with your hands up!" (Feiffer 71). Joan's armor is not a weapon in the traditional sense, but it does pose a threat. The armor represents the ambiguity of a confident female because Joan exhibits masculine characteristics such as confidence, authority, and

strength while also having the charm and attractiveness of a female. Because Joan does not adhere to the role of submissive female, she must undergo new gender socialization.

Gender socialization is the process through which women come to identify themselves as such sexual beings, as beings that exist for men [...] It is that process through which women internalize (make their own) a male image of their sexuality as their identity as women, and thus make it real in the world (MacKinnon 110-111).

After the Police Voice demands Joan remove her armor, Joan cries out “He’s drowning out my Voices!” (Feiffer 72). Next, the Police Voice sings to her “I dream of Joanie // With the light blond hair, // Floating like a vapor // On the soft, summer air” (Feiffer 72). The outside world projects a new, sexualized image onto Joan. The pressure from the outside world to conform begins to overpower Joan’s own desires; hence the singing is able to drown out her Voices.

Next the men begin to objectify Joan. Wiseman enters and proposes a compromise, “To make it interesting we play for the girl” (Feiffer 72). Notice Wiseman’s wording, he says *girl* not Joan. Joan is further separated from her identity and reduced to a social label: girl. Also, Joan is not even afforded the maturity of being called a woman. As a girl, Joan moves from submission (to a husband) to dependent (on her father). She has been uprooted from male society and made into a trivial object that needs ownership.

It is Cohn who manages to strip Joan of her identity.

You know what you can do with those buttinsky, wiseacre Voices of yours? I *wish* you never heard of them! You know what I *wish*—I *wish* you never heard of Joan of Arc! (Feiffer 80).

When Joan loses her identity, she assumes a motherly role to Abe and Cohn. Immediately after Cohn's wish, Joan puts a bandanna around her head, picks up a broom and begins to sweep (Feiffer 80). Joan had to deny herself as an individual in order to fit into this world, but it cost her happiness.

As Joan's resolve weakens, her armor corrodes. Gradually, she becomes a part of this world, no longer special. In Act III, the stage directions indicate that "JOAN's tarnished armor hangs in sections on several hooks of a clothes tree" (Feiffer 83). Joan is resigned to the home like a 1950s housewife and her depression sets in. The adherence to the domestic ideal is killing her. At one point, Joan is literally buried by dishes (Feiffer 85). This domestic Joan is unrecognizable from the vibrant, confident Joan at the start of the show. She tells Cohn, "I bore me, so I must bore you" (Feiffer 92). Joan's loss of identity has sent her into a downward spiral of depression.

Women are impaled on the cross of self-sacrifice. Unlike men, they are categorically denied the experience of cultural supremacy and individuality. In different ways, some women are driven mad by this fact [...] such madness is, in a sense, an intense experience of female sexual and cultural castration and a doomed search for potency (Chesler 91).

As Joan cannot function in her new role, the only option is punishment, which for Joan means death. After Joan's death, Cohn reveals his true intentions:

She was cute. I liked her. She was nice—in my opinion—who knows? I wanted to please her. Pleasing a pretty girl. Is that so out of the question? I did it as a favor. A little game. A flirtation. Who understands women? I thought, in time, with patience, with understanding, the power of logic, I could talk her out of it (Feiffer 103).

Cohn wants to please Joan so that he may control her. This desire to control Joan results in her death. Then, Joan is resurrected, but Cohn refuses to let her leave, so she dies

again. Cohn holds her lifeless body as says, “Joan. Don’t joke, Joan. You want to go? Is that it? Is that all you want? You’re free. Free as a bird. Go. Go, Joan. Go” (Feiffer 107). In the end, Joan’s only escape was death. She was unable to fit into her world, much like the real Joan of Arc.

A unique facet of Feiffer’s Joan is that she claims to have once been Cinderella.

Cohn: Wait. You’re confused. That’s Cinderella.

Joan: Exactly.

Cohn: You’re Joan of Arc.

Joan: Oh, I don’t mean *now*.

Cohn: You used to be Cinderella?

Joan: Of course! (Feiffer 33).

Why would Cinderella evolve into Joan of Arc? The character Joan describes her past life as Cinderella in terms of her disillusion with the Prince’s love:

After the ball, I thought the Prince loved me and I dreamed—well, no matter what I dreamed—he came looking for me, door to door, with a glass slipper. Like a salesman! ... Can you imagine my shame? That he, my true love, would only know me by trying a shoe on my foot! (Feiffer 33-34).

Of course, this Cinderella would not live happily ever after. Before the prince made it to Joan’s door, he was called to war. Perhaps this line is in reference to the loss of young men during the Second World War. Regardless, Joan/Cinderella becomes a nun and “Night after night, visions of Our Lord came to me bearing a glass slipper” (Feiffer 34). Yet Joan does not accept God’s call and instead escapes to Portugal to become a migrant fruit worker, wife and mother. This life is full of hardships and abuse so she attempts suicide only to discover herself walking on water. She says, “I walked on the water for miles trying to decipher the meaning of my fate [...] And on the fortieth day my Voices came and told me who I was and what I must do” (Feiffer 34). Again, this is another

example of how Joan's identity is dependent on her faith. Joan transforms from a damsel in distress into a warrior. In essence, Joan becomes her own knight in shining armor and does what women in the 1970s had begun to realize—sometimes a woman has to save herself.

Jules Feiffer's *Knock Knock* (1976) deals with issues characteristic of the Theatre of the Absurd. The play utilizes Joan of Arc to explore the connection between mankind and faith. Moreover, Joan's relationship with Abe and Cohn reveals the dysfunctional nature of co-dependent male/female relationships; and, that the traditional social roles must be redefined to suit the world today.

Little Victories

Lavonne Mueller's *Little Victories* (1984) bridges the gap between the suffrage movement of the late nineteenth /early twentieth century and the feminist movement. Through the play, Mueller elucidates the connection between past and present through her depiction of Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony. The play is unique in that each woman exists in her own (historical) time, and they also interact as contemporaries. Because these interactions exist in an unspecified realm of time and space, it is possible to interpret the action as occurring in our time. Therefore, the past struggles of women against a (historically) patriarchal society prove applicable to contemporary women's plight for autonomy. As Mueller states in the playwright's notes:

I chose to put Susan B. Anthony and Joan of Arc in a play because they both survived in a landscape of men. They not only survived but triumphed, yet they died believing themselves failures. It was possible to shake the world and not know it (Mueller 8).

Lavonne Mueller's interest in Joan of Arc dates back to her childhood. In an interview with Stratos E. Constantinidis, Mueller explains:

I am an army brat, and I grew up in an army post. As a kid who went to Catholic schools I always wondered who this woman general was. I would ask the nuns, but they wanted me to concentrate on Joan as a saint [...] But I saw her as a general, leading the soldiers in battle, climbing walls with them, resting next to them, eating side by side, and so on. I felt that by showing how Joan of Arc or Susan B. Anthony dealt with down-to-earth everyday situations that involved men, I was presenting a realistic appraisal of these women rather than a preconceived, abstract portrait (147-148).

It is noteworthy that Mueller chose to depict Joan in terms of her humanity rather than emphasize her gender. In this way, the audience experiences Joan's discovery of women's issues along with the character. The character of Joan and her experiences provide the foundation on which future feminists, namely Susan B. Anthony, will build.

Little Victories (1984) interweaves the lives of Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony. In this fictional world, the two women exist within their own historical times; yet transcend time to develop a fruitful friendship. The relationship symbolizes the idea of female solidarity. These two women draw strength from each other. Thus, the play establishes a connection between contemporary women's issues with those of their ancestors. As the Marshall in the play points out, "History is traced wars to women like that. They incite folks to take up arms and rescue them" (Mueller 11).

The relationship between Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony evolves throughout the play. In their first interaction, the two meet as children. Joan is depicted as the stronger, more adventurous of the pair. She tells Susan, "The thing you're scared of is the thing you have to do [...] Be a soldier with me [...] Together. Partners. Stitched

inside each other like a secret pocket in a spy's coat" (Mueller 15). Joan embodies the very definition of courage—being afraid, but doing it anyway. At this moment, Joan *is* a leader. Her bravery allows little Susan B. Anthony to be bold. Plus, the idea of being a “secret pocket in a spy's coat” signifies that they will carry each other through the battle as they infiltrate the system. Clearly, Joan perceives her function as an emblem or symbol for Susan B. Anthony.

The character Joan states: “I have an eye that doesn't close. It doesn't even blink. *[Pause.]* I know about eyes. One always wants out” (Mueller 12). Perhaps this is in reference to Joan's state of preparation. She is ready for battle and committed to the call, yet acknowledges others' reservations.

The connection portrayed between Susan B. Anthony and Joan posits an interesting dynamic. When Mueller's Joan exists within the confines of the fifteenth century, the character exhibits an attitude of girlish frivolity. She tells Lavour, “I've always wanted a knight to wear my scarf on his lance” and proceeds to play an impromptu game of dress-up (Mueller 19). When Lavour does not comply, Joan breaks into an infantile tantrum, “I give the orders here [...] Don't bully me. I'll tell the Dauphin. Do you hear me? I'll tell the king. *[stamping her feet.]*” (Mueller 20). However when Joan interacts with Susan B. Anthony, she transforms into a maternal figure who strengthens Susan B. Anthony's resolve. Susan B. Anthony admits to Joan: “Maybe mother's right...maybe a woman can't take it [...] I have bad dreams [...] I dream...I never change anything [...] I'm afraid...afraid to stop...afraid to go on” (Mueller 24-25). Joan comforts her with encouraging words while tenderly brushing

Susan B. Anthony's hair. Joan gently speaks, "[...] I'll brush your hair...then you brush mine. Women have always done that for each other" (Mueller 25). The mother/daughter symbolism suggests the idea that Joan is the mother of the feminist movement: she is the source of its inspiration.

In this way, Muller utilizes Joan's aptitude for rallying the troops—the women who will fight for equality. While the character of Joan may be inept at navigating her own life, she excels as Susan B. Anthony's mentor.

JOAN: [...] I reached out for you with this, my oldest arm. I found you
SUSAN: I turned back. I found you.

JOAN: Reach. *[Pause.]* I had to. *[Pause. Points to audience.]* It's just another prairie [...] You won't be alone [...] The future will help you. [...] Take the dark. *[Susan reaches out to the audience as the lights go dark.]* (Mueller 59).

In the end, Joan charges Susan B. Anthony to continue the fight for equality. With Susan B. Anthony's reach to the audience, she enlists the audience's support. Again, the character of Joan may not have been the strong champion of women's rights à la Susan B. Anthony, but Joan *was* Susan B. Anthony's guide. Therefore Joan functions as an icon of the feminist movement; and, perhaps even Susan B. Anthony's patron saint/spiritual guide.

In *Little Victories* (1984), Mueller introduces several parallels between the real-life Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony—as if the two were kindred spirits. For example, Joan was condemned based on her refusal to submit to the church militant. Likewise, Susan B. Anthony was arrested and tried for voting. Mueller dramatizes Susan B. Anthony's trial in a manner that parallels Joan's inquisition. In the scene, the judge's voice shouts from a speaker "Whether you believe you have a right to vote or not is a

question of law” (Mueller 18). This logic applies to Joan in that the Cardinal’s voice shouts from a speaker “Whether you have a right to lead armies or not is a question of this council” (Mueller 20-21).

The correlation of these two trial scenes harkens back to Mueller’s idea that Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony inhabited this “[...] landscape of men” (Mueller 8). The representation of the judge is a metaphor for patriarchy. An ever-present, male voice dictates the structure of society. The image of each woman, alone on stage, emphasizes her isolation. Both have been ostracized because of their visions for the future.

Another strong parallel between Joan and Susan B. Anthony rests upon their clothing—both wore male garments. As Susan B. Anthony voices in the play, “I wear bloomers and logger socks because I ride a horse and I’m freezing cold [...] A skirt drags in the mud. I refuse to get pulled down by the mud” (Mueller 25). Likewise, Mueller depicts a snippet of Joan’s trial in which she is asked to explain the origin of her male dress. The character Joan replies, “I don’t wear men’s clothing by the counsel of any voices. I climb the underside of scaling ladders...using just my hands. The rest of me dangles in mid air” (Mueller 30).

Although Mueller explores feminist issues in *Little Victories* (1984), she is hesitant to define herself as a feminist playwright. She states:

David Mamet isn’t called a ‘male’ playwright. I want to be called a playwright. I would hope that I am a humanist more than I am a feminist [...] As a playwright, I adhere to the truth of a character before being a woman (Constantinidis 148).

Mueller acknowledges the perceived limitations that exist within the label of *feminist*.

She deftly navigates the double standards against women:

[...] the critic of the New York Times gave me what he thought was the greatest compliment: 'If I did not know,' he wrote, 'I would say that this play was written by a man.' All newspaper critics who reviewed *Warriors From a Long Childhood* commented on the unusual fact that it was written by a woman. However, across town, Jack Heifer's [sic] play, *Vanities*, was performed and in it women talk about their periods, and their pregnancies, and their divorces, but no critic wrote 'Isn't this wonderful that a male playwright wrote a play about women?' This made me think that perhaps there are plays that the critics and the public expect a woman to write. If this is true, this attitude becomes a subtle form of censorship (Constantinidis 148).

The term feminist has become stigmatized, perhaps even appropriated by man in order to define or "make sense" of women. The essence of feminism, as I believe, is not an expression of woman's inherent hatred of man; but an expression of what it means to be female and a desire to protect our identity from man's control. Man does not want to be ruled by another man, so how is it admissible for man to rule woman? More to the point, a man does not have to justify or label his views of autonomy, thus forcibly labeling a woman (in that a woman must justify her beliefs) equates a violation of the very rights we seek.

Alongside Lavonne Mueller's desire to not be limited in terms of gender, she further champion's a humanist position through her pacifist stance. When asked her views on the "woman warrior" archetype, Mueller articulated:

I do not admire any warriors of any kind and that includes 'women warriors.' But I admire men and women who campaign for such causes as equality and human rights, preferably in non-violent ways. For instance, I have no regard for the women warriors who participated in [...] Desert Storm in Kuwait and Iraq in 1991. Those women emulated the bad traits of men by trying hard to be tough like the boys. Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony were lucky to be motivated at an early age by religion and education respectively. Joan was not the medieval counterpart of the Desert Storm woman warrior. Her intuition (voices) gave a human dimension to her 'warrior' identity (Constantinidis 149).

Thus, Mueller's *Little Victories* (1984) is an allegory of woman's fight for equality in terms of human rights. Likewise her protagonists, Joan of Arc and Susan B. Anthony, are not depicted as infallible paradigms of virtue, but as real women with real emotions.

The Second Coming of Joan of Arc

As feminist theatre exists under several definitions, this section will explore the idea that lesbian theatre is a subset of feminist theatre. In her essay "Notes on Lesbian Theatre," Emily Sisley states that both feminist and lesbian theatre present:

[...]an emphasis on personal, internal reality, retelling old stories (e.g., classic myths, socio-political history, societal expectations) from a female or feminist perspective; and a reliance on other women for support (56).

While lesbian theatre focuses on a specific type of female experience, both feminist and lesbian theatre revolve around admiration and respect for women.

Lesbian theatre is conscious-raising in performance—i.e., the lesbian audience requires theatre specifically dedicated to clarifying points concerning oppression, the validity of woman-to-woman relationships, and heroism divorced from male identity (Sisley 52).

The idea of re-interpreting history from the female gaze forms the basis of Carolyn Gage's work *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1987). Once again, the image of Joan is appropriated in order to reflect the needs of society. "I envisioned this Joan of Arc, returning from the dead after the Second Wave of feminism, to warn us of the betrayals she experienced at the highest levels of church, state, and military" (Gage 3).

Carolyn Gage's *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1987) is a one-woman play in which Joan has been brought back to life in order to confront the world that so callously betrayed her. This Joan illuminates the inner turmoil brought about by the betrayal of her king, and her subsequent acrimony towards the memory. Joan is also a

spokeswoman for equal rights. What is effective about the play is that Joan is presented as an everyman character. “My story is the story of all women, and my suffering is *identical* to yours. My trial is the trial of all women” (Gage 7). Most importantly, Gage’s Joan is a lesbian.

The Second Coming of Joan of Arc was an attempt to recruit my audiences to my radical, lesbian-feminist perspective. *The Second Coming* was also an exorcism of my confused, teenaged, survivor self. I was coming to understand the sources of the anger, confusion, and identity issues I had experienced as a young woman, who was ignorant of the fact that she was both a survivor and a lesbian. So many young women go through similar confusion, and I wanted to create a character who could transform shame into pride, self-doubt into militant conviction, and self-hate into blazing anger at a system that is bent on turning women against ourselves and against each other (Gage IV).

Joan’s sexuality is not the focus of the play, but serves to highlight the danger of femininity. It is the ultimate rejection of the male influence, and an alternative explanation for her ruthless persecution.

Gage’s treatment of Joan’s sexuality transcends the issue of gay rights. Gage’s Joan summarizes:

So there was no ‘Saint Joan of Arc,’ with her legacy of glorious martyrdom. But there was a Jeanne Romée who made the terrible, terrible mistake of trying to find a substitute in the world of men for the love she had experienced in the arms of a woman (Gage 34).

Gage portrays Joan as a lesbian in order to illustrate the need for women to accept themselves and not strive to conform to society’s norm.

The character of Joan is grounded in historical fact, but also exudes a contemporary-female sensibility.

Joan of Arc is *not* my name, and ‘saint’ is just another word for a woman who got burned, and it’s time we woke up and stopped letting other people change our names, and it’s time we stopped believing it’s some kind of honor to be tortured by men—and most of all, it’s time we started telling the truth about our own lives. These myths are killing us! (Gage 8).

She addresses the audience with her trademark wit, but the impetus is not her own survival. Instead, Joan relates her story in order to inspire women to take control of their own lives and not resign power to man. Joan fights to reclaim her own identity, and take back the life that was unceremoniously extinguished.

Gage’s Joan has strong feelings concerning her “saintly” status. Joan proclaims:

[...] I never gave anybody permission to make me a saint. Think about it. The same boys that burned me at the stake want to turn around and make me a public relations officer for their church! (Gage 8).

The irony of Joan’s sainthood solidifies man’s hypocrisy, and the idea that women are mere objects. Just as Joan was executed in order to enforce male dominance by a man’s order, she was canonized to improve the image of the male-dominated church. Even in death, Joan is subjected to the whims and greed of man.

In *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc*, the issue of Joan’s voices is akin to female independence. In this context, Joan proves an even greater threat to the status quo. “No, the real problem for civilization comes when a woman decides to invent her own voices and then believe in them. See, that’s almost like thinking for yourself” (Gage 9). The voices come from within herself, rather than a gift from the divine. Now, the voices are separated from the male for they are no longer controlled by the heavenly *Father*. These voices are a symbol of a woman’s right to individuality and free-will. Joan’s power is not dependent on any source except her own. The power comes from within herself.

Additionally, Joan asserts that her voices were a form of rebellion against society's systematic oppression of women. She states, "Mine [the voices] were just more blatantly fictional, that's all. And that is because I did not like the selection available to young women in Domrémy" (Gage 9). Furthermore, Joan wryly comments on her choice of saints and the impact these role-models had on her life. "I had two female martyrs, both beheaded, and one male conquering hero. What I should have noticed was that the only happy ending was the man's" (Gage 11).

The issue of rape plays a vital role in *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc*. This physical violation of Joan strengthens her hatred of men and emphasizes the extent men will exploit women, when given the chance. It links the physical trauma of rape with the psychological effects of male aggression against women. Rape has been a weapon against women for centuries. Even the threat of rape constitutes a form of psychological abuse. In Gage's play, Joan states:

The fear of rape, as men have known for centuries, is just as effective as the real thing. The woman is scared to live alone, scared to go places by herself, scared of the dark, always looking over her shoulder, waking up at the least sound in the middle of the night. She is perpetually distracted, self-conscious, subverted, terrorized. She might just as well have been raped, which of course, is the whole point (Gage 23).

At first, it appears difficult to reconcile that the threat of rape is as effective as the physical act; and, that women's daily lives are impacted by this threat of rape.

The *Psychology Of Women Quarterly* supports the theory that the threat of rape equates psychological control.

The fear of male violence, and specifically the fear of rape, is at the heart of women's fear of crime and is a primary safety issue for women [...] Fear of rape acts as a barrier to women's full participation in society by

limiting their access to night classes, jobs requiring night work, or travel to strange cities and so on [...] (Rozee and Koss 295).

Perhaps our ignorance on the link between rape and psychological control is a result of female-social conditioning. “Socially, femaleness means femininity, which means attractiveness to men, which means sexual availability on male terms” (MacKinnon 110). Women are defined by their sexuality in terms of their desirability by men. This highly sexualized concept is the basis of female objectification.

Sexual objectification is the primary process of the subjection of women. It unites act with word, construction with expression, perception with enforcement, myth with reality. Man fucks woman; subject verb object (MacKinnon 124).

Gage’s Joan understands the connection between rape and control. She expresses to the audience, “When a woman challenges a man, it’s not enough for him to prove she’s wrong. In order to save face, he has to annihilate her” (Gage 26-27). Rape is a crime primarily directed at women by male attackers. In this context, rape is an extension of man’s desire to oppress women, or in Joan’s case, annihilate them. Yes rape is a criminal act of violence, but the motivation connects to the male ego. It is a reaction to the threat women pose to the male psyche.

The power of the threat of rape extends beyond the fear of physical violence. Not only is it a traumatic event to suffer, the aftermath is often difficult to face. Rape remains one of the only crimes where the *victim* is stigmatized. As the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* discovered:

Women seem to understand that the credibility of rape survivors is examined more closely than other crime victims. [...] Surveys of U.S. rape crisis centers revealed 17 states where adult rape complainants, unlike adult victims of other crimes, are required to take a polygraph exam before

their charges are accepted [...] Many survivors faced with these unsupportive early warning signs withdrew their charges, and police listed their cases as false rape allegations or ‘recantations’ [...] And, although police training has improved, case processing is still influenced by officers’ private stereotypes [...] (Rozee and Koss 302).

Gage’s Joan understands what few women even acknowledge. The threat of violence is pervasive, and often impacts our lives without our knowledge.

The victimization of women through sexual assault dates to the start of history. This sentiment is reflected in Joan’s line, “That’s what dresses are about, isn’t it? Accessibility? I don’t see where that’s changed much in five hundred years. And neither has rape” (Gage 29). The fact that rape remains prevalent in the twenty-first century indicates society’s intrinsic apathy towards issues of women’s rights.

Some researchers have concluded that the United States is a ‘rape culture’ where the act of rape is functionally normative, meaning it is essentially a condoned behavior [...] In a rape culture the sociocultural supports for rape are structurally integrated in all levels of society. This includes the institutionalization of patriarchal values; socialization practices that teach non-overlapping notions of masculinity and femininity with men viewed as tough, competitive, and aggressive and woman as tender [...] and weak; social, familial, political, legal, media, educational, religious, and economic systems that favor men; and criminal justice and legal systems that fail to protect women (Rozee and Koss 295-296).

Gage links the perceived acceptability of rape with society’s insistence that Joan adhere to her proper gender role. Rigid gender roles serve to highlight the differences between men and women. In essence, men and women become two different social classes complete with different rights. This dichotomy enforces the idea that women are subservient to men, which exacerbates the notion of male entitlement to rape.

Women are conditioned to be targets. They are socialized to be gracious, to smile, to let men win, and to acquiescence to the needs of the man. As Joan states:

“Let me tell you something about men...They can't stand to lose face” (Gage 26).

All these factors are situated in a context of women's socialized lack of feelings of ownership and entitlement to control their own bodies, ambivalence about their own sexual desires, and a need to maintain relationships with men [...] (Roze and Koss 299).

The Second Coming of Joan of Arc also highlights the implementation of rape as a war crime, remember, Joan is a prisoner of war. In some cultures, rape is an acceptable tactic of warfare. The violation of a woman's body both physically and mentally forces her subjugation to her (male) attacker.

After the character Joan is raped, she returns to her male dress. “I said that as long as I had to live in a man's world, I would dress like a man. If they would move me to a decent prison where I could be with other women, I would wear anything they liked” (Gage, 30). Joan's rejection of female dress symbolizes her rejection of gender inequality.

If rape is a manifestation of man's need to dominate women, then the crime must be regarded beyond terms of sexual desire. Rape extends beyond physical/sexual fulfillment (male orgasm). It is a means to re-enforce gender inequality—to force the female into submission. The character Joan states:

Rape is the crucifixion of women [...] because when a woman is raped, she buries that part of herself which is accessible to men. Now, in a rape culture, they'll try to make you believe that's everything—but it's not. She rises again with what no man can penetrate, her self-esteem. She is reborn, in her own image (Gage 30-31).

The Joan depicted in Gage's play exhibits symptoms of post-traumatic stress, admits to an eating disorder, and adopts male dress as an act of defiance against society. Cross-dressing also provides an outlet for her sexual identity. Gage argues that her interpretation of Joan represents the truth hidden in the historical records. She believes "[...] if it were not for the complete censorship of authentic lesbian archetypes in the culture, there would be more recognition of this" (Cramer and Gage 10).

The second Act of *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* explores the different ploys that contemporary society employs in order to exert control over women. It juxtaposes the threat of physical torture with the more subtle threat of mental torture women are confronted with daily.

So...how *do* you torture a woman? [...] You can pry her body away from her mind, or you can pry her mind away from her body [...] To pry her body away from her mind, you need to physically humiliate her. Of course, rape is the most traditional method, but it's not the only one [...] You can ridicule her body [...] you can make her strap her breasts in. You can make her embarrassed about her periods. You can make her frightened of puberty, frightened of sex, frightened of aging, frightened of eating. You can terrorize her with her own body, and then she will torture herself (Gage 21).

Gage's Joan exposes our society's long-standing doctrine which enforces the shame of being a woman. Inherently, women are taught to believe they are not good enough, and thus must strive towards perfection. The character Joan points out the use of low self-esteem as a means to keep women oppressed.

Every woman who's ashamed of her body is a victim of torture. Every woman who doubts her own judgment is a victim of torture. So just how many women do you know who *haven't* been pulled apart? (Gage 22).

In contemporary society, low self-esteem has become the perfect weapon against women. When a woman has confidence in herself, she becomes a threat. This type of woman is not afraid to assert herself, and if history proves anything, it is that a woman who asserts herself is a woman who must be silenced. However, if a woman has low self-esteem, she is tamed. That Joan tells the audience how a negative body image is analogous to a victim of torture indicates the extreme mental agony some women suffer because of their pursuit of the ideal. The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) estimates that as many as ten million women struggle with an eating disorder. There has been a significant rise in the numbers of women with anorexia and bulimia. Furthermore, studies indicate that eight out of ten women are dissatisfied with their appearance. More disturbing than these staggering numbers, 40% of newly-identified cases of anorexia are in girls fifteen to nineteen years old (National Eating Disorders Association).

Girls are taught at a young age to be self-conscious of their bodies. Consequently, victims of eating disorders are younger than ever. The website for the National Eating Disorders Association cites that “42% of 1st-3rd grade girls want to be thinner.” Eating disorders and low self-esteem are a social epidemic! Yet, it is one of the most underfunded mental illnesses, arguably because the majority of its victims are female; and thus, it is viewed as strictly a female problem. It has become the dirty little secret of the female experience.

The female obsession with food, weight, and appearance are projections of the male-societal impulse to control women. Phyllis Chesler argues:

[...] when girls and women are more obsessed with losing a few inches from their bodies than with changing history by a few inches, [...] as

isolated individuals, they do not have the ego-strength to resist being culturally diminished and pornographically sexualized (8).

While Gage's Joan uses her restrictive eating as a source of control, and not to achieve an idealization of beauty, it is still the result of a repressive society. This aspect of Joan's life is historically accurate. Joan had a very restrictive diet of mostly bread and wine.

However, her motivation for this lifestyle is not known. A plausible explanation cites Joan's piety, and therefore her fasting and restrictive diet would have been in atonement for sin.

Conversely, Gage's Joan uses her eating disorder as an open act of defiance.

They can't threaten you with starvation if you learn not to eat [...] And that's exactly what I did. I would eat as little as possible, one piece of bread a day. And it worked. My body stayed the body of a young girl. When I died at nineteen, I had still never menstruated. See, I *had* found a way to avoid puberty (Gage 14).

In the play, Joan reacts against the society that affords her little choice or control by taking back her physical body. Joan's eating disorder allows her to remain in a pre-pubescent state, a slap in the face to a society where a woman's value is tied to her ability to procreate. This theory is corroborated by Robin Blaetz who argues "[...] one might also see the virgin's refusal of food and amenorrhea [...] as a harbinger of anorexia, a condition associated with a desire for control" (Blaetz 29).

The Second Coming of Joan of Arc is an allegory for how women are still hemmed in by a patriarchal society. Joan cries out to the audience, "You [women] are insets in the lives of men" (Gage 7). Female social roles are still largely determined by men. Joan of Arc was punished for acting heroically—a trait reserved for men. "They wanted me to renounce my voices [...] to alter my identity to suit them. Of course.

Haven't we all?" (Gage 25). All women are guilty of perpetuating the cycle of male abuse. It is a sobering realization. We compromise our integrity through our conformity.

As Joan explains:

What happens to women when we finally do break—which is usually after almost superhuman suffering? Do we win a reprieve? Are we released, forgiven? Does the torture stop, the pressure let up? I have seen all kinds of women give in in all kinds of ways: to harassment, to guilt, to sex, to drugs, to alcohol, to mental illness. And in every single instance—listen to me!—the abuse increases. There is no mercy for women, because our crime is our sex (Gage 28).

Carolyn Gage's *The Second Coming of Joan of Arc* (1987) juxtaposes the strict social hierarchy of the fifteenth century to contemporary society. Through her characterization of Joan, Gage explores the impact of female sexuality and the threat it poses to a patriarchal society. The subject matter of the play exposes a deep-rooted, misogynistic impulse that exists within American culture. Of course, not *all* men wish to order women back into the kitchen; but women are not always afforded the level of respect they deserve. Through Joan, Gage shows women the importance of self-awareness.

Joan of Arc found her place within the feminist movement. Women had begun to question their place in the world, and seek new forms of expression. In many ways, Joan of Arc's portrayal was in response to the previous incantation of her image—Joan of Arc the martyr and the post-Second World War backlash against feminism. In fact, the idea of Joan of Arc the martyr is heavily criticized throughout the 1970s and beyond. Joan of Arc the woman indicates the subtle shift in American society with regards to women's rights and function in society. The plays of this period do not depict Joan of Arc's heroism or success as being dependent on a man—Joan of Arc was regarded as an

independent woman for the first time. The events of Joan's life did not change, but her meaning did.

Chapter 5

JOAN OF ARC: THE SURVIVOR

The Joan of Arc legend underwent another transformation in the 1990s. In the 1970s, women had fought for equality and the right to independence and by the 1990s, women experienced a level of autonomy unknown to previous generations. During the Gulf War (1990-1991), Joan of Arc's legend came full circle—American women were allowed to engage in military combat for the first time, following in the footsteps of Joan of Arc. As a result, America became less concerned with feminist interpretations or the warrior aspects of Joan of Arc because now there were contemporary, real life examples of female heroism (Blaetz 182). As a result, America shifted its focus to issues concerning Joan of Arc's spirituality, psychological state, and the question: what if? What if Joan of Arc had survived the fire, and how would this survival shape her faith?

The plays examined in this chapter characterize society's interest in the possibility of Joan of Arc's survival, and a re-examination of her spirituality as modern society attempts to regain its own belief in faith. Both Virginia Scott's *Bogus Joan* (1992) and Don Nigro's *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* (1998) center upon the premise that Joan of Arc was not executed. Next, Erik Ehn's *Wholly Joan's* (1988) focuses on Joan of Arc's spirituality and the psychological torment she experienced as a result of her intense connection to God. Lastly, Lanford Wilson's *Book of Days* (1998) shares a similar construction to Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* (1946) in that it is a play about a Joan of Arc play.

Bogus Joan

A couple of years after Joan of Arc's execution in 1431, rumors circulated that she was alive. In 1436, the most famous fictional Joan made her first public appearance. The woman's true identity was Claude des Armoises. She managed to live as Joan of Arc for nearly four years. One reason for her success was that Joan's brother, Petite-Jean, lent credibility to Armoises. On August 5, 1436, Petite-Jean appeared in Orléans claiming to have news from Joan for the King. The *Chronicle* of Dean of Saint-Thibault-de-Metz provides the first historical record of the resurrection of Joan of Arc:

In the year 1436 [...] Joan the Maid, who had been in France, came to the Barn of the Elms near Saint-Privas; she was brought there to speak to some of the lords of Metz, and called herself Claude, and the very same day there came to see her her [sic] two brothers [...] And they believed that she had been burned; but when they saw her they recognized her and she also recognized them (Pernoud and Clin 234).

Armoises, as Joan of Arc, was the honored guest at a great banquet in Orléans on July 18, 1439. Later, the citizens of Orléans gave Armoises money for "the good she had done for the city during the siege" (Pernoud and Clin 234). Eventually, Armoises confessed the truth to the University of Paris around 1440. After the nullification trial and verdict of 1456, there could no longer be any hope that Joan of Arc had survived.

This "Bogus Joan" provides the foundation for Virginia Scott's *Bogus Joan* (1992). Scott explains her inspiration for the play:

The play is not meant to be historically accurate. I began by asking: if Joan was not burned at the stake in 1431, who was? and what would it be like to live for many years after one was officially dead? (Scott 1).

Bogus Joan is set in 1455, twenty-four years after the (supposed) execution of Joan of Arc in Rouen. Joan is now a 43-year-old wife and mother, and lives her life in relative seclusion. Joan is dying of “bonerot”—a colloquial term for breast cancer. Her children— (adopted) son Guillaume and daughter Solange—have returned home to care for Joan in her final days. As the play progresses, several secrets are revealed: Joan is involved in a lesbian relationship; Guillaume’s mother was burnt in Joan’s place, making Joan his only guardian; Solange is the product of the rape Joan endured while in prison, but also the reason Joan could not be publically executed; and, the Church still keeps tabs on Joan to ensure that she does not reveal her true identity to the public.

Scott’s Joan appears to have nothing in common with the historical Joan. She no longer hears voices, nor claims to have any faith in God.

Guillaume: Was there a time when you did believe? Or was it all an act?

Joan: All what?

Guillaume: You were ‘called’ by God. You heard ‘voices.’ You rode off to save France.

Joan: If there is a god, what possible reason could he have to want to save France.

Guillaume: And the Voices?

Joan: Oh...I don’t know. I’ve forgotten most of it. I liked the battles. Maybe I heard voices, maybe I just wanted to get away from home (Scott 24-25).

Joan’s life was spared, but the experience turned her heart against the Church.

The spiritual force in the play is Joan’s daughter, Solange. Solange pleads with her to make her peace with God before it is too late. Unfortunately, Joan’s resentment towards the Church has poisoned her against God, “Well, look what submitting to the will of God got me the last time I tried it” (Scott 29). Despite Joan’s cynicism, Solange believes that God will heal Joan. Joan consents to let Solange pray for healing, but warns

her: “Baby, if there is a god, will it help you to think he’s far too exalted to worry about one middle-aged woman with bonerot” (Scott 36). Miraculously, Joan is healed, but she does not welcome this turn of events, “Not again. Oh, god damn it, not again!” (Scott 36).

The second act takes place six months after Joan has been healed. She is the recipient of a miracle, but even a miracle cannot restore her faith. Joan admits to the audience, “There are times when I am forced to entertain the hypothesis that God exists. Though I despise Him” (Scott 38).

News spreads that Joan has been healed, and she receives a visit from Church officials. The men tell Joan of the Church’s mission to rehabilitate Joan of Arc’s reputation, and they disclose the plans to make Joan a saint by asserting that a woman in Domrémy (Joan) had been healed through the intercession of Joan of Arc. The fact that the same Church that sentenced her to death will now rehabilitate her reputation for political gain infuriates Joan. She cries:

I can barely remember that I loved living. I’ve spent my whole life dying.
Your church is a church of death. Your god is a god of death. You have
condemned me to an endless life of death (Scott 62).

In other words, Joan was never truly saved from death because from the day she became Joan the Maid, her life was no longer her own. In fact, death would have been a release.

In the end, Joan regrets her past and wishes she could have lived her life on her own terms, not as a warrior or saint. She says, “That’s what corrupts us, you know. That terrible need to *be* somebody. To be singled out. To be significant” (Scott 72).

Scott's characterization of Joan exposes a recurrent theme: the good die young. Marina Warner phrases it eloquently: "The life and death of Joan of Arc have been told since 1431 according to ancient laws of narrative in the West: the hero must die before his time" (Warner 273). Through death, Joan may be idealized and her image molded to reflect her heroism and none of her faults. Scott's Joan experiences the dangers of a living legend and, in some ways, validates our cultural perception that a heroic death is more favorable than a life of falsehood.

The possibility of Joan of Arc's survival calls into question the validity of her religious conviction—which Scott fulfills through her portrayal of a cynical Joan. As Marina Warner observed:

Death does not set the seal on her innocence; her life is the measure of her character. It is better to live for a cause than to die for it. Yet this simple axiom has been obliterated in our necrophiliac culture's ideology of heroism [...] But it is tacitly fundamental to our concept of Joan's heroism that she died to testify to her truthfulness [...] the very idea of survival appears to taint Joan's life with insincerity (Warner 272).

Joan's death is powerful because it symbolized her loyalty. Her faith was so strong that she was willing to die rather than compromise her integrity. By dying young, Joan never grows up, nor has the chance to become disillusioned with God. Her death guarantees her purity. Joan of Arc will always symbolize innocence because she died in service to the purity of her beliefs.

Bogus Joan (1992) deviates from the idealized, inspirational Joan of Arc. The play illustrates the fickle nature of man. As men, we are fallible, not even our faith can change that. Perhaps that is why the idea of a cowardly Joan of Arc is so upsetting because if Joan of Arc could be so flawed, what is left to aspire to? *Bogus Joan* negates

the spirituality of the Joan of Arc legend. The play is an example of disillusionment, first Joan's own disillusionment with God, and then, society's disillusion towards her.

Joan of Arc in the Autumn

Don Nigro's *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* (1998) blurs the line between truth and illusion and examines the power of perception. The one-act play features Joan of Arc, seated on a bench, as she remembers her trial and execution. At first, it appears that Joan is in the afterlife, but perhaps does not fully understand that she has died. She speaks of a recurring dream she has where "[...] everything is burning" (Nigro 57). She speaks of the fire with detachment, almost as if she were a spectator and not the victim. This sense of disconnect is the crux of the play: is this really Joan of Arc, or is this girl an imposter?

The most important aspect of *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* is the question of identity. The character Joan has lost connection with herself, she has no true identity.

Her memories are equal parts reflective and hesitant. She says:

My brothers say that I am Joan, and so I must be, as I remember dying in the fire. And they should know. They're her brothers. And my brothers. And her sister is dead, and so is mine, and everything is a mystery play, and so it must follow that this play which is her play, is my play (Nigro 59).

However, Joan's reasoning is flawed. For example, Joan says "I know I hear voices because my voices tell me I hear voices" (Nigro 59). This circular reasoning traps Joan in a world of ambiguity. Only she can know the truth of her character, and yet she seeks validation from outside sources.

One clue to the character Joan's identity is found in the preface. Nigro wrote, "In 1436, Joan's brothers announced that she was still alive, and three years later they came

to Orleans [sic] with a young woman they insisted was Joan” (Nigro 56). If Joan believes she is Joan of Arc on hearsay, then it is possible that she has been coached into the role of Joan of Arc. Joan offers little in terms of explanation:

There were rumors I didn’t die in the fire. But I know I must have died because I can feel the burning still, inside my skin, inside me like an incubus. I wear my flesh like clothing. What does it matter what clothing I wear, what flesh? These questions of identity are bottomless, they are a hall of mirrors (Nigro 59).

In other words, nothing is as it appears. Whether she is the actual Joan of Arc becomes irrelevant. We accept that she is Joan of Arc because we want to believe in her as strongly as she begins to believe in herself. “The most serious question in the world is, can one trust one’s own voices, or can’t one? But already it was too late. I’d made my choice” (Nigro 66).

Another facet of *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* is the juxtaposition of innocence and cruelty. Joan must retain her innocence in order to carry out her function as a sacrifice, a role that she has been groomed for since childhood. Joan recalls:

In our little walled garden, the birds and animals would come and eat right from my hand. Papa said rather than let me go he would drown me with his own hands. My father had very strong hands (Nigro 57).

Even as a child Joan was threatened with male violence. The play reveals her interactions with men that result in violence. Her father threatened to drown her, Charles VII betrayed her, and her judges sent her to the flames. The only male influence in her life that has not subjected her to cruelty is Saint Michael. Thus, it is natural that Joan would close herself off sexually to man and attempt to fulfill her need for intimacy through her spirituality.

An interesting characteristic of Nigro's Joan is her sexuality. Joan speaks of her encounters with Saint Michael as a sensual experience, "[...] I can feel his warm breath on my face, and I am strong, I'm a warrior. Saint Michael is very handsome" (Nigro 62). Joan longs for intimacy, but is unable to achieve it because it is forbidden. Her fear and desire culminate in erotic fantasies:

Sometimes in the night I long to touch them and be touched by them. But I fear their touch. I fear all touching, and yet I crave it more than anything. For I think that what we fear and what we want are often the same thing. I do not know if Saint Michael has hair or not. But once I dreamed he touched me in a place— (Nigro 62).

Joan struggles with her sexual desires because they are taboo. She says "Virginity was my destiny. And yet in my dreams there was often copulation" (Nigro 65). As Joan tries to reconcile her feelings, she comments that she killed only one person—an army prostitute.

But why was I so angry at her? I was consumed with passion, and the voices were gabbling in my head. Why am I so obsessed with these lost women? Something in them torments me. I think of them lying naked and a fire burns in my head (Nigro 71).

One interpretation is that Joan is denying her own homosexual feelings and thus destroys the source of her torment. However, there is no evidence within the text to support that Nigro's Joan is a lesbian. All of her sexual fantasies are dependent on men—she does not eroticize encounters with Saint Margaret or Saint Catherine, it is only Saint Michael. Perhaps what torments Joan is that these women epitomize carnal desire, and symbolize the earthly pleasure that Joan is denied. Thus, Joan's motivation for killing the prostitute is not her sexual desire for women, but that this woman glories in her own sexuality.

Marina Warner suggests the links between the fetish of sexual pleasure-in-pain and martyrdom (271). Martyrdom is the ultimate suffering, and one could argue that martyred saints experience a degree of pleasure in their suffering, akin to religious euphoria, because their suffering is the ultimate proof of their love for God. The character Joan divulges the erotic element of her faith: “When I pray, I feel that god is making tender love [sic] me” (Nigro 69). Thus, Joan experiences sensual pleasure through her spirituality and close connection to God.

The religious fetishism extends beyond Joan’s relationship to her voices. Her role as prisoner exposes the eroticism of a dominant/submissive relationship. Joan even describes her enemy as a dominant sexual partner: “The English had inserted themselves in France like a man inserts himself into a woman” (Nigro 69). Moreover, the judges are not out for justice or Joan’s rehabilitation; rather, the trial provides an arena for male sexual fantasies. It is a perversion of power—illustrated by the voyeurism and bondage Joan describes—that motivates her judges.

The first thing they did, of course, was test me for virginity. Even the Duke of Bedford peeped from behind a curtain to look at my legs [...] Then they built an iron cage for me in which I could be held upright, chained by the neck, feet and hands. I was their darkest and most thrilling fantasy, a helpless virgin chained in a cage (Nigro 75).

The judges derive sexual pleasure through her submission and project their fantasies upon her. The eroticism comes from the ability to watch her suffering. The judges hide behind religion, as Joan wryly comments, “When men are about to do something cowardly and shameful, they give a sermon first” (Nigro 78).

Don Nigro's *Joan of Arc in the Autumn* (1998) is the story of a young, naïve girl who is trying to find her place in the world. Her issues with sexual desire give her a humanizing quality. Perhaps this Joan is an imposter, who merely assumed the role of Joan of Arc, but she just might be the real heroine who for the first time is being honest with herself.

Wholly Joan's

Erik Ehn's *Wholly Joan's* (1988) is the first in Ehn's cycle of saint plays. The play presents a condensed version of Joan of Arc's life in order to trace her spiritual journey from her first encounter with her voices to her execution. For this purpose, Joan's life is divided into three sections: Scene One: The Capture; Scene Two: The Defense; and Scene Three: The Burning.

In Scene One: The Capture, Joan struggles to accept God's call and her destiny. Joan tells God, "You want me to love to hear you, but you can't make me" (Ehn 3). Joan is suspicious of God's intentions and admits, "I know what it feels like to be in the dead center with you [...] But I know that the center is a target" (Ehn 3).

Ehn's Joan exhibits a tenacity that is not often attributed to the heroine. In the preface to The Saint Plays, Ehn wrote "[...] but the plays are religious chiefly in the sense that they look at individuals as inappropriately cast in division" (Ehn ix). It is important to remember that Joan of Arc was not *born* a saint, she was *made* into one. Ehn's Joan understands the danger of such close communion with God, yet chooses to accept Him. Thus, Joan's spirituality is her choice. God chose Joan to be her vessel, and Joan chose to open herself to His power. Thus Joan is an example of Ehn's desire to explore faith

and spirituality. Ehn states, “The subject matter is exploded biography, or the means by which the self is overmastered by the acts of the imagination, by acts of faith” (Ehn ix). Finally, Joan cannot resist God’s power and relents, “Okay. My God, I’m a lover. Jesus, I love you. Holy Ghost, I can’t resist” (Ehn 4). Again, Joan’s relationship to God equates an intimacy most ascribe to a lover. Her devotion and passion extend beyond the ordinary.

Next, Scene Two: The Defense opens with Joan in a jail cell. A crowd has gathered to demand her release, and two guards are posted in Joan’s cell. Joan tells the two guards:

You’re killing me because something loves me more than you know how. I got a lover with a cleaner eye and a longer stride than all your tech can crank [...] Try and stop me, and I’ll become the most powerful woman on the face of the earth (Ehn 5).

As previously stated, Joan’s relationship with God extends beyond the ordinary. In fact, it is so far removed from our understanding that it verges on the unnatural. The relationship with God is unique and, as she had predicted, made her a target. Joan is destroyed because the world does not understand. The guards must interpret Joan’s unworldliness in a way that fits into the confines of their world, which is why they charge her with witchcraft. It is easier to believe that Joan’s voices are from malevolent forces than God.

The last scene of the play is Scene Three: The Burning. It features Joan in full armor and tied to a stake. As she burns, Joan cries out to God:

You are always moving towards me, and are moving me towards you, and you are always clear light, with the feel of cool water. As fierce as any burning gets, you are always cool and moving (Ehn 6).

Joan is so full of religious euphoria that the physical pain has no effect on her. She describes God's love as cool water that quenches the burning fire, but water is also necessary for life, and is a symbol of rebirth. Joan needs God's love in order to live and through his love, she is reborn.

Before Joan dies, she wills her heart to God. She says:

Happy Valentine's day, God Almighty. You get my heart. I have nothing—no troops, no luck. Nothing to give you but a heart that listens. No love is stronger. No heart more abandoned (Ehn 6).

The fire has stripped away all of Joan's earthy glory and all that remains is her love. She is spiritually exposed. She has nothing to hide behind. Even though Joan died, they could not destroy her love. Her heart was the only remnant of the heroine. After her body has burnt away, her heart remained "BECAUSE HER HEART IS HOTTER THAN THE FIRE" (Ehn 6).

Erik Ehn's *Wholly Joan's* (1988) traces the spiritual journey of Joan of Arc, and her path from reluctant messenger to glorified martyr. Ehn presents Joan's communion with God as a love story. Joan dies for her love, and finds self-fulfillment through her martyrdom.

Book of Days

Lanford Wilson's *Book of Days* (1998) is set in the fictional small town of Dublin Missouri, where a community theatre is in rehearsal for their production of Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*. The close-knit community is shaken up by the death of the most affluent member of the town, Walt Bates; but Ruth Hoch, the actress who plays Joan in *Saint Joan* suspects foul-play. David Sheward wrote in his review of *Book of Days*:

Basically, he [Lanford Wilson] pits creative people who are passionate about quality and justice against right-wingers whose primary concern is money and appearance. Guess who wins the moral victory? (Sheward 48).

Ruth Hoch represents the faction that is passionate about justice, so it is appropriate that she begins to identify with Joan of Arc. As the play progresses, the audience witnesses Ruth's evolution from a reluctant leading lady into a confident woman. For example, when Ruth learns she has been cast as Joan of Arc, she tells her husband "I'm all wrong for this; I'm a hundred years too old, my eyes are wrong" (Wilson 4). This illustrates Ruth's self-doubt and insecurity. She is too focused on external appearance. Joan of Arc was not important because of her beauty, but because of her spirit.

The similarities between Ruth and Joan of Arc are introduced early in the play.

The director of *Saint Joan*, Boyd Middleton, recognizes Ruth's potential immediately:

The thing is, she is Joan; knows fire arms, used to hunt in the woods with her dad. And that total commitment to her convictions. The tenacity of a bulldog. Not a romantic bone in her body. Joan was a warrior. Where can you find authority like that today? (Wilson 14).

At first, Ruth doubts her ability to portray Joan, much like Joan of Arc initially doubted her ability to carry out her mission. Both Ruth and Joan of Arc had to learn to trust their instincts.

This ability to trust one's instincts forms the foundation of *Book of Days*. When Walt Bates turns up dead, Ruth is the only person in town who suspects that his death was not an accident. Ruth must rely on her intuition to uncover the truth. Unfortunately, no one believes Ruth; and, like Joan of Arc, Ruth is persecuted for her beliefs.

Another interesting aspect of *Book of Days* is the parallel between how the religious authorities of the fifteenth century judged Joan, and how the religious

community judges Ruth. This tension is foreshadowed through Ruth's explanation of her performance. Ruth describes the connection she feels with Joan:

Ruth: Rehearsals didn't tell me what it was going to be—Those judges are so—*fixed*. It doesn't matter what I say, they only have their *law* or *career*, there's no talking to them. I couldn't reach them at all. They're just so *fixed!* Intractable. They wouldn't listen to me. Deliberately trapping me, saying things they knew perfectly well how I had to answer them before they asked me.

Len: 'Joan' couldn't reach them you're saying.

Ruth: Well, it's always been Joan, but it wasn't Joan tonight. It was me. And those bastards just hewed to their straight and narrow.... [...] Making the Church Militant believe me. Believe *in* me (Wilson 71-72).

This sentiment is reflected as Ruth begins to unravel the mystery of Walt's death. Her suspicions make her an outcast of her community, and when she uncovers the truth, she is desperate to have the authorities believe her. Meanwhile, the religious authority in Ruth's world, Reverend Groves, must deflect attention from Ruth's allegations to protect the identity of the killer. The mastermind of the murder plot was Walt's own son, James Bates, who had his father killed in order to receive his inheritance; but, James is a key political figure in town. Reverend Groves does not want anything to hinder James's road to political office. Reverend Groves justifies his actions as for the greater good. The parallel between Ruth and Joan of Arc is encapsulated by Ruth's statement:

But the thing is, it hasn't changed. In six hundred years! They were just hiding behind dogma and power and they still do. Refusing to hear or see anything other than their blind... What's different? (Wilson 49).

The last thing Ruth tells Reverend Groves is reminiscent of Joan of Arc: "You may think you're doing the right thing, Reverend, and I honestly believe you're a good man. But your counsel is of the devil" (Wilson 101).

Lanford Wilson's *Book of Days* (1998) is an example of how Joan of Arc continues to be a source of inspiration in the twentieth century. The parallels between Joan's life and modern society, and the power of her legend illustrate our need for Joan of Arc today. The character Ruth could be anyone. In this context, Wilson proves that Joan of Arc is an accessible role-model.

Joan of Arc the survivor symbolizes society's need for understanding by either creating an alternate ending to Joan's legend, or exploring the roots of her spirituality. Joan the survivor hinges on the power of faith, and attempts to reconcile our skepticism with our search to have something to believe in. Perhaps we are looking for a cause to fight for, a reason to believe.

CONCLUSION

An interesting link between the plays explored in *The Changing Face of Joan of Arc: The Appropriation of Joan of Arc in twentieth-century American Theatre* relate to the presentation of the Joan of Arc legend. Of the eleven plays analyzed, eight of the plays featured a meta-theatrical structure. Perhaps it is because the legend of Joan of Arc lends itself to theatricality. Maybe it is that, on some level, we wish we had control over Joan's fate. If Joan's life is a performance then her death appears to be less of a cruelty and more of inevitability.

Each generation interprets Joan of Arc in a different way, but all use Joan in relation to cultural context. The first half of the twentieth century explored Joan the warrior and Joan the martyr, both images in some way shaped by the effects of war. The second half of the twentieth century explored Joan the woman and Joan the survivor. These images reflected the evolution of society in terms of women's rights, and reconciling our place in the world. What does the twenty-first century hold for Joan of Arc? Anne Llewellyn Barstow stated:

I learned from the responses that women today do still turn to Joan; they do so in order to seek support in becoming independent, self-defined persons. They are drawn to her heroic, larger-than-life career in order to conceive of *their* lives in new and nontraditional ways. Women drawn to paths usually closed to or frowned upon for females take inspiration from her (Barstow 285).

It is fitting that the theatre impulse of twenty-first century theatre, so far, adheres to this idea of interpreting Joan in new and nontraditional ways. On July 21, 2009, the *New York Times* reported a new Joan of Arc play performed by New York theatre company, Gorilla Rep. The play, *Joan of Arc* by Robert Ackerman, was performed outdoors in Fort

Tryon Park in Manhattan, New York. The theatre company's website suggested patrons "wear sneakers" as the audience had to move from location to locations during the course of the play. Next, a reference to Joan of Arc appears in *Palace of the End*, a monologue show that revolves around the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners. As Michael Billington reported for *The Guardian* from the London production at the Arcola Theatre in 2010:

What is shocking about the first story, based on the experiences of Lynndie England (court-martialed for her treatment of Iraqi captives in Abu Ghraib), is the character's self-certainty. Convincingly played by Jade Williams, she sees herself not as a miscreant but as a martyr to the liberal establishment, and robustly compares herself to Joan of Arc (36).

Even as recently as November 2011, Joan of Arc graced the stage in a cabaret-style performance in Buffalo, New York. The Torn Space Theater in conjunction with Real Dream Cabaret produced *The Outlaw Show*. Colin Dabkowski's review referred to it as "[...] a long-germinating and thoroughly wacky interactive spectacle [...]" (Dabkowski G12). *The Outlaw Show* takes place in purgatory filled with such characters as Lizzie Borden, Timothy Leary, Antigone, and Joan of Arc.

Joan of Arc has become a fixture of American theatre. Her image and legend are adapted to reflect the needs and culture of its time. During the First and Second World War, America needed a hero. In the aftermath of the hardships of war, America had to learn to adapt to this post-war world. In some ways, Joan of Arc carried us through the twentieth century, and we continue to look to her for guidance as we move forward.

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VITA

Boni Newberry was born 8 October 1984, in North Little Rock Arkansas. She realized her love for the theatre after attending a touring-performance of *West Side Story* at the age of thirteen, and was fortunate enough to attend a summer theatre camp at the Arkansas Children's Theatre, where she developed a passion for performance. Boni moved to Fort Worth, Texas at the age of fifteen. She became actively involved in her high school's drama department and won several awards for her performance in U.I.L O.A.P productions including All-Star Cast (2002 and 2003), and Best Actress in *Zone* (2003). After graduating high school, Boni attended Stephen F. Austin State University where she received her B.F.A in performance, and studied abroad at Rose Bruford College in Sidcup, England and The Institut del Teatre in Barcelona, Spain.

In the fall of 2010, Boni started the Master of Arts program at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. During her time at UMKC, she was fortunate enough to perform and serve as dramaturg in various shows. After graduation, Boni hopes to pursue a career in literary management, and appear onstage in local productions.