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Transcript, Legend, and Art: The Thematology of Joan of Arc

From *The Merchant of Venice* to *Billy Budd, Sailor*, from *The Brothers Karamazov* to *The Stranger*, the law and its workings have provided backbone material for many literary classics which have shaped themselves, or at least their central episodes, around them, their problems and their spectacles, their language and their concepts of justice and jurisprudence. More interesting, however, is the fact that legal writing, which along with other written expressions has benefitted from the modern tendency to widen the category of literature, can now lay legitimate claim to artistic distinction. Not that the notion has no precedent: the *Federalist Papers*, Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois*, Plato's *Laws*, Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene*, and other 'non literary' works of this kind have found their way — unwarrantedly, in my opinion — into many an anthology of literature. But if by literature we assume certain standards and requirements based on qualities of style, imagery, drama, contrast, climax, description, irony, denouement, and characterization, then the claim must be invoked carefully.¹ The transcript of the trial of Joan of Arc in 1431 offers a case in point. It does not appear as simple, legal, raw material like the *Sermons of Strasbourg*. On the contrary, it can stand on its own as a literary accomplishment, and its inherent literary richness, not unlike Felix Frankfurter's 1927 account of *The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti*, is attested to by the thematology it has spawned. It stands by itself as a fully staged drama, and it has furnished a legend underlying a long chain of literary productions.

1 The issue of law in literature, while still insufficiently explored, has by now acquired any number of substantial points of scholarly reference. Law as literature, however, remains virgin territory. We can identify examples of law that is literature, beyond those examples of late medieval texts that are treated as literature even in traditional literary histories. I am thinking of a category which would include Mahatma Gandhi's 'Statement to the Tribunal of 1922 on charges of sedition, or Benjamin Cardozo's opinion on *Hines vs. the New York Central Railroad Co.* of 1921 (I have compared Gandhi's 'Statement' with Socrates' self-defense in Plato's *Apology* [certainly considered a work of literature]: Literary Counselors for the Defense: Socrates and Gandhi, 'University of

We know the story of Joan of Arc, the teen-aged peasant maiden from the region of Orléans, who claimed that she had seen visions and heard voices from Heaven (the Archangel Michael and Saints Catherine and Margaret) that urged her to assume leadership of the Dauphin's (the future Charles VII) hopelessly besieged armies and drive away the superior forces of the English under the Duke of Bedford and the Burgundians under the Duke of Burgundy. Her mission miraculously accomplished, she was nonetheless captured in 1430, and the English charged her with sorcery and devilry, thus casting a scourge of illegitimacy upon the French nationalism she had awakened, and the anglophile University of Paris provided the ecclesiastical authority for her indictment and condemnation. Under Chief Judge Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, sixty judges from the faculty interrogated her over fifteen days. Accurate transcriptions were made, of which three in Latin still exist. With only a modicum of inevitable rearrangement (in spirit not different from what a play director does to the script) to collapse many hours of trial into a few pages in order to avoid duplications and irrelevant digressions (involving letters of appointment, the formation of commissions, the preservation of statements, the appointment of notaries, rosters of names, and related matters, such as hearing mass, the denial to leave prison, etc.), the text of the transcript needs no basic editing. It emerges as an absorbing product of involuntary or spontaneous literature, as it were, which, in my opinion, more than challenges the conscious literary creations that followed in its wake, all derived in inspiration from Joan's simple yet bold, grand yet honest self-defense. I am reminded of the spontaneous, anonymous forces that sprang into Gothic cathedrals. It is perhaps not unusual for a trial transcript to inspire a work of literature, but usually such a text pro-

Harford Studies in Literature 16, ii/iii [1984] 104-10, and joined Richard Weisberg in the Cardozo example in our co-authored 'Literature and Law' in *Interrelations of Literature*, J.-P. Barricelli & J. Gibaldi, eds. (New York: Modern Language Association 1982) 168-73). Also to be explored is the category of law that becomes literature, as in Alessandro Manzoni's masterful *The Column of Infamy* of 1842, derived from a legal manuscript of 1630, on the issue of torture – historically, socially, psychologically, and legally understood (see my 'Jurisprudence in the XVIII Century From Manzoni's Viewpoint,' *University of Harford Studies in Literature*, 9, ii/iii [1977] 141-63), or as in Felix Frankfurter's arresting account of that landmark and infamous trial of Sacco and Vanzetti that gave rise to any number of literary works, including those of Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Dos Passos, James Thurber, and Upton Sinclair. Or to the transcript of the trial of Joan of Arc.

vides a mere outline from which a writer fleshes out a coherent and rounded drama. This is not the case with the transcript at hand.² At the outset, the usual legal amenities of identification, background, and occupation occur, followed immediately, however, by Joan's psychologically ingratiating self-portrayal as 'very much frightened' (L337, B78) when she first heard the voice. The question of her fear recedes. Any good writer would relish the contrast between the fearing girl and the fearless heroine, a contrast which serves to establish the veracity of her story. Indeed, Cauchon aimed to show that the voices came not from God but from evil spirits bent upon creating disorder rather than order in the kingdom, and that to further the unholy process Joan practiced witchcraft, complete with emblems (like her banner), imposed on others a false idolatry of herself, engaged in magic and transvestism, 'consulted demons and employed spells' (L336, B27), and fostered a presumptive disobedience to the higher authority of the Church. The whole transcript, then, is a masterpiece of dramatic tension, worthy of the finest in literature, between an unlettered innocent, acting as her own defense counsel, and the doctors of theology and law out to trip her if only on a single word into an avowal of guilt – in which maneuver they were ultimately unsuccessful. The trial rested not so much on the life and previous deeds of Joan as on what she would say in court. Interspersed throughout the pages of the transcript appears a series of images that highlight the literary movement: the voices particularly, which frame the transcript and which Joan rarely

2 I refer the reader to the conveniently telescoped transcription and notes provided in Ephraim London, *The World of Law: The Law as Literature* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1960) 335-45. For an original, Latin version, see Jules Quicherat, *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc, dite la Pucelle*, 5 vols. (Paris: J. Renouard et cie 1841-1849), or Pierre Champion, *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris: Honoré Champion 1921). Otherwise, in French translation, consult Georges & Andrée Duby's edition, *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris: Gallimard 1973), and in English, W.P. Barrett, trans., *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd. 1931). In this essay, I have given page references for both the London (L) and the Barrett (B) versions. In the trial transcripts as translated into Latin (see the Quicherat edition), quotations are given either in direct discourse, supposedly verbatim, or through allusions, in indirect discourse. London's short transcription relies on direct discourse passages, rearranges questions for greater coherence, 'but no liberties have been taken with the text' (p. 336). Indeed none has, if we look at the Latin. Barrett's far broader account has both discourses and contains a fuller range of detail material. My references stem from both types of discourse.

hears without their being 'accompanied also by light' (L337, B55), a concomitant image, and these form an allegorical trinity with the central sign of divinity and kingship, the crown. '[The] faces [of Saints Catherine and Margaret] are adorned with beautiful crowns, very rich and precious' (L337, B68), and an Angel brought a crown to her King: 'The crown signified that my King should possess the Kingdom of France...' [so] I said to the King, 'Sire, there is your sign – take it'' (L339, B100). The banner and the sword emerge symbolically as well, the former with which she led soldiers into miraculous victory, regarded diffidently by her prosecutors as a bedeviled instrument to induce magic, 'a standard with a spell' (L341, B162), and the latter for which, having her standard which she deems 'forty times better,' she has little use, though she had found it by revelation in the Church of St. Catherine, since '[she has] never killed anyone' (L342, B73).

In an ironic reversal, Cauchon and his colleagues, who should focus on the spiritual dimension of the problem, seem totally concerned with the physical, and it is the untutored, 'simple maiden' (L336, B55) who provides the religious reminders, a juxtaposition of the material and the godly that, in good literary fashion, adumbrates the climax of the conflict between prosecution and defense on the issue of the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. '[Did the voice awaken you] by touching you on the arm?' (L337, B61); 'These saints who show themselves to you, have they any hair?' (L338, B78)... Is there anything between their crowns and their hair?... In what likeness did Saint Michael appear to you – was he naked? – had he hair?' (L338, B81). The motive of this line of questioning is clear: the hope that Joan will make a fool of herself, attributing terrestrial physicality to divine essence. The prosecution does not overlook any of the five senses: 'Did you touch or kiss [the crown]? [L339, B108] ... Did [you hear the Angel] move along the ground from the door of the chamber? [L339, B200] ... Did [the crown] smell well? ... did it glitter?' [L339, B100] Again, 'Did you ever kiss or embrace Saint Catherine or Saint Margaret? – Did they smell good? – In embracing them, did you feel heat or anything else? – What part did you kiss, face or feet? And each time, as the defendant feels the intensity of the physical queries rising, she manages to curtail the dialogue claiming ignorance or shift its focus with clever conceptual diversions:

- Q. Did you see Saint Michael and these Angels bodily and in reality?
A. I saw them with my bodily eyes as well as I see you; but when they went from me, I wept. I should have liked to be taken away with them. (L338, B69)

- Q. Is [the saints'] hair long or hanging down?
A. I know nothing about it. I do not know if they have arms or other members. (L338, B78-9)

- Q. But how did the Clergy know it was an Angel [who appeared to the King in the presence of his retinue]?
A. By their knowledge and because they were clerics. (L340, B111)

- Q. Does your own party firmly believe that you are sent from God?
A. I do not know whether they do, and I refer you to their own opinion; but if they do not, nevertheless I am sent from God. (L337, B87)

I know nothing but by the revelation and order of God' (L342, B54) is her pervasive motif. To the frustration of her inquisitors, Joan conceals a challenging sophistication under her posture of ingenuousness. This concealment provides fine literary moments. Early on, she exclaims to the Bishop of Beauvais: 'You say you are my judge. Take care what you are doing; for in truth I am sent by God, and you place yourself in great danger' (L337, B61) – a clear warning that, through God, she is her own person and that the high magistrates may not succeed in bending the reed to the point of rupture. In fact, her intermittent refusals to answer with specifics has the effect of her sustaining her own objection to the subject broached. She has agreed to tell the truth, 'absolutely and simply' (B53), but only 'what concerns the trial' (B60) for there are matters concerning the King and the saints that are no business of the trial. 'There is as yet no reply to that, for I have not leave to answer' (B69); 'You will get no further reply today' (B84); 'That is not your case at all' (B80); 'Speak to me of it in three months' time: I will answer you' (B81); 'I have always told you that you will not drag this from my lips' (B216); 'You will not learn it from me' (B81-2); 'I have already declared that I could not tell you without perjury' (B216). The 'simple and unlearned creature' (B173), as she is called, explains to her prosecutors by way of caution: 'Perhaps you would ask such things as I would not tell' (B50), and she even invokes what sounds like the medieval version of the Fifth Amendment when asked if she had known by revelation whether she would escape: 'That is not in your case. Do you want me to speak against myself?' (B84). Again,

- Q. And what was Saint Michael like?
A. You will have no more answer from me; and I am not yet free to tell you. (B69)
- Q. This crown, had it a good odor?
A. I do not remember about it; I will think it over. Yes, it smelled good, and will smell good always, if it be well guarded, as it should be. (L339-40, B100)

Thus the physical image becomes adroitly converted into a noble metaphor. Joan is adept at not being confounded by the fathers:

Q. Do you know if Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret hate the English?

A. They love what God loves; they hate what God hates.

Q. Does God hate the English?

A. Of the love or hate God may have for the English or of what He will do for their souls, I know nothing ..., but I know quite well they will be put out of France ...

Q. Was God for the English when they were prospering in France?

A. I do not know if God hated the French; but I believe that He wished them to be defeated for their sins, if they were in sin. (L341, B126)

Q. Is it any merit of yours that God sent you this Angel?

A. He came for a great purpose... The angel came for the merits of the King and of the good Duke d'Orléans. (L341, B110)

She easily circumvents the issue of idolatry of her person by showing that she could not be accused of encouraging it:

Q. Do you know that the people of your party had services, masses, and prayers offered for you?

A. I know nothing of it; if they had any service, it was not by my order; but if they prayed for me, my opinion is they did not do ill.

Q. In what spirit did the people of your party kiss your hands and your garments?

A. Many came to see me willingly, but they kissed my hands as little as I could help. (L342, B87)

Her finest responses came to the most pointed questions, those for once having to do with the spiritual matter of her state of grace:

Q. When you confess, do you believe that you are in mortal sin?

A. I do not know if I have been in mortal sin, I do not believe that I have done the works thereof. Please God that I shall not do, and that I have not done, things by which my soul will be burdened. (L339, B81)

Q. Do you know if you are in the Grace of God?

A. If I am not, may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me. I should be the saddest creature in the world if I knew I were not in His grace. (L340-1, B63)

As someone has said, was there ever a better answer on cross-examination? For if Joan had said 'Yes, I am in a state of grace,' her answer would have constituted a presumption of her own salvation – the kind of argument for which the prosecutors would have taken her to ringing task; and if she had said 'No,' her answer would have been tantamount to a confession – which would have destroyed her case.³ It is easy to imagine Cauchon's powerless rage, and his silent admiration for Joan that feeds his rage. The frustration created by her manipulative ability resulted predictably in a serious threat of torture, the instruments for which had been already shown her in the tower, 'in order to restore [you] to the way and knowledge of truth' (B264), but Joan quickly challenged the validity of statements made under duress: 'Truly if you were to tear me limb from limb and separate my soul from my body, I would not tell you anything more: and if I did say anything, I should afterwards declare that you had compelled me to say it by force' (B279). The recommendation of torture was dropped on the unconvincing (for those times) grounds that it was 'neither necessary nor expedient' (B281-2).

Most suspicious for the fathers was the issue of transvestism, hinted at early in the transcript when an examiner asked about her vision 'whether the object that appears to you is male or female' (L338, B70). 'Was it God who prescribed to you the dress of a man?' And when Joan replied in a less than forthright affirmative, adding that dress mattered nothing, 'less than nothing,' the questioners pursued what they smelled to be a weakened premise: 'Did it appear to you that this command [from God] to take man's dress was lawful?' (L342, B70). The subsequent answers were shallow ('For this dress ..., I wish to have no other recompense but the salvation of my soul' [L343, B154]), but they were consistent with the relative inappropriateness of the tenor of the questions: 'Which would you prefer, to have a woman's dress to hear Mass, or to remain in man's dress and not hear it?' – to which Joan's reply was predictable. But true to her character by this stage of the inquiry she added the consciously bold and defiant words: 'And what say you, if I have sworn and promised to our King my Master not to put off this dress? Well, I would answer you this: have made for me a long dress down to the ground, without a train; give it to me to go to mass, and then on my return I will put on again the dress I have' (L343, B120). By now, Joan feels she has the edge, not legal but moral,

³ The thought is Charles Curtis', appearing as a footnote in London, *The Last as Literature*, 341.

on her adversaries. The accusation did not matter that she had 'utterly and shamelessly abandoned the modesty befitting her sex and indelicately put on the ill-fitting dress and state of men-at-arms' (B19); she would not dare betray God's will. The judges had difficulty in getting her to admit that in fact she preferred male to female attire, just as she preferred male to female company and employed only men in her administrative capacity.

The matter of characterization in the transcript, then, is more subtle than it seems. Joan is indeed a 'simple maiden,' in her own words, one who, after describing the voice as speaking French and being asked if Saint Margaret does not speak English, responds with charming ingenuity: 'Why should she speak English if she is not on the English side?' (B79). Or one who, asked if Saint Michael were naked, bemused: 'Do you think God has not wherewithal to clothe him?' (L338, B81). But, almost as if it were calculated by the self-conscious artistry of an author, as the trial unfolds, her personality, like the interrogation itself as a whole, acquires dramatic momentum, achieving a veritable crescendo which climaxes in her defiance of the court. The moral edge on her adversaries translates into victorious headiness. The paramount issue ultimately revolves around the theological, though for a free spirit like Joan in the final analysis spiritual, concept of the provenance of authority, heaven or earth, as represented respectively by God and the Church. Joan stands out as a fifteenth-century Sophoclean Antigone, the ancient heroine whose dilemma pits her notion of Greek divine law against the State law of Thebes incarnated in the dictatorial and peremptory figure of Creon. In Joan's case, the terminology refers to the Church Triumphant, 'God and the Saints, the Angels, and the Souls of the Saved' (L343, B124), as opposed to the Church Militant, 'the Pope ..., the Cardinals ..., the Clergy and all good Christians' (L343, B124-5). But the difference in terminology creates no difference in substance for her — 'Why do you make a difficulty?' (L343, B124) she asks naively — and so seen, the cosmic hierarchy leaves no doubt as to who occupies the uppermost echelon. Indeed, her white, silk-fringed banner bore the two holy names that merge the Militant and the Triumphant, 'Ihesus Maria' (L342, B73).

Arguing for the Church Militant, the prosecutor pronounced that 'this Church, regularly assembled, cannot err' (B77), not unlike Creon who claimed to act infallibly because his actions were sanctioned by the gods. Joan was asked if she would submit to this Church, and like Antigone, reliant on a naturally divine law that supersedes all earthly, political, man-made law, she firmly invites her own destruction. 'All the clergy of Rouen and Paris could not condemn [me], but by

law' (B213) — secular law, not divine. Her tragedy is the same as her Greek precursor's: her resistance and refusal. 'As to saying whether I will submit myself to the Church Militant, I will not now answer any more' (B125). Both heroines are admirable because, though frail, they do not bend. Like the pagan, the Christian Antigone will submit, that is, 'provided [the fathers] do not command anything impossible'; she will not deny her voices and their halos of light 'for anything in the world' (B225), for she will not revoke 'that which God has made [her] do...'. And in case, she adds with forthright pride, 'the Church should wish me to do anything contrary to the command which has been given me by God, I will not consent to it, whatever it may be' (L344, B225). Ultimately inseparable, the material and the godly remain distinguishable. Declared Antigone to Creon as she affirmed the rights of the individual and of private conscience over the State and its terrestrial laws: 'Yes, I believe myself to be subject to [our laws], but God must be served first' (L344) — or were these the words of Joan to Cauchon? Whether their speakers were driven by a complex of martyrdom, the arrogance of pride, or the heroism of nobility, the speeches are interchangeable. I am reminded of St. Thomas' admirable statement in the *Summa theologica* on behalf of natural law: either revealed religion disagrees with natural law, in which case it is wrong, or it agrees with it, in which case it is superfluous.

Joan of Arc, history tells us after the transcript, was condemned to burn at the stake on the public square in Rouen, proving her humanity by yielding for a moment to that former, fearing child inside her as she recoiled before the scaffold; she abjured her voices and revoked her Cauchon-labeled heresies (including her male clothing). But another voice, that of conscience, no doubt stimulated by the prospect of life imprisonment on a diet of bread and water, bade her symbolically to redon her warrior's attire, and so the relapsed heretic went to her fiery death⁴ when the Inquisition turned her over to lay authority, abandoned to the secular justice as a limb of Satan. There was a saying among children, said Joan early on in the transcript (it was alluded to later in the trial as well): 'Sometimes one is hanged for speaking the truth' (L338, B63). Antigone and Joan of Arc both spoke their truth, and died, each the defiant heroine of a moving piece of literature.

The historical reality of the trial passed into legend before it was even over — not an unusual passage on the basis of the events, but unusual

⁴ As we also know, the English were driven out of France, Pope Calixtus' jury in 1455 reexamined the trial and found Joan innocent, Cauchon's tomb was desecrated, and Joan was canonized in 1920.

because of its special charismatic qualities that bathed it in an atmosphere of myth. Other warrior adventuresses of the same period, like Colette de Corbie, hardly emerged as mythological figures, and the heroines of the Bible or Amazons of antiquity, the Deborahs and Penthésilæas, pale before Joan of Arc. Like Robin Hood, beyond historical legend, folklore has appropriated her, because, as her recent biographer Marina Warner has shown,⁵ she reflects psychological structures that predate her, such as rebellion against one's origin and limitations of birthright, or patriarchal incomprehension, or concealment of identity to escape these traumas and reject maturity. Much of this fits the patterns of tales like *Cinderella*, *Donkeyskin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and others.

Transvestism had already become an Inquisitional issue, and Joan came to see her male clothes as a welcome instrument of her martyrdom, relying for her defense of them only on God's and her voices' pleasure, and giving her single pragmatic reason quite late in the trial: to fight and stay chaste. Clearly, the injunction in *Deuteronomy* 22 against the 'abomination' of women that 'wear what pertaineth to man' is also the word of God, but, as Warner suggests, the reverse side of the same medal, for Joan her inalienable psychic reality, reveals transvestism as procuring the asexual, pure, spiritual life — which was her quest. 'Everything I have done that is good, I have done through my voices' (B182). Warner alludes to other women transvestites, in time all saints, like Joan herself: St. Thecla, who donned male clothes to transcend her sex while preaching and following St. Paul; Sts. Felicity and especially Perpetua, who rejected her father's plea to renounce her Christian faith; Joan's own St. Margaret, who escaped an unwanted husband, but then inspired the love of a girl who later accused her of fathering her child; St. Euphrosyne, revered in Compiègne where Joan was captured; St. Eugenia, also involved in a paternity suit; St. Uncumber, pledged to Christian virginity and crucified by her royal pagan father; St. Dymrna, also the daughter of a king who falls in love with her and pursues her to consummate an incestuous desire. When these young ladies reached sexual maturity, they became male, indeed proclaimed their manhood, to escape subjection, incest, and incomprehension in the spirit of *virtus* and *vir-tus*, and for this 'freedom' the monastery seemed an attractive refuge (in fact, St. Eugenia actually became the provost of an abbey).

In truth, Joan never proclaimed herself a man; the trial constantly reads, like a Homeric epithet, 'commonly called *The Maid*' (B19: *La Pucelle*). But her male clothes that she chose 'by [myself], nor at any one's request' (L342, B70) satisfied her psychologically that she could defy her parents (brought out during the trial under the label of 'disrespect' [B139]) who wanted to push her into marriage, escape from under the roof of her father who wanted to drown her, and lead men into battle to save her Dauphin, as in the most seductive myths and fairytales. If observed psychoanalytically, the world of fairytales often hints at a maiden's rejection of maturity through a desire to retain the freedom of childhood and avoid the complexities — sexual and otherwise — of adulthood with all of its male prohibitions. Sexlessness achieves this, and martyrdom conveniently ends the process of human development at a point beyond which begin the tribulations of incest and subjection. 'For the child-saint,' writes Warner, 'is rooted very much deeper in the human imagination than the axioms Christianity has only borrowed as its own, and are expressed in the most ancient deposit of human fantasy.'⁶

Out of this charmed legend grew a plethora of literary works, and when all is said and done, it remains questionable in my mind whether the voluntary art has any claim of superiority over the involuntary. Joan of Arc lived out her historical reality as *The Maid*, a child of God but of flesh and bones; for this reason, no sexually ambiguous angel could ever lay so much dramatic claim on the literary conscience whose enthusiasm is quickly kindled by the phenomenon of the bending reed that does not crack, in fact that resists and refuses. As Anatole France said, the trial presents history with its picture book of events that we can flip through;⁷ historians see the gaps between the pages, not in the flow of the trial which is constant and consistent, but in the silences or in the speculations, atmosphere, and anxieties outside the courtroom, not to mention the overall sense of spectacle, and these dark corners of legal accounts, purposely untouched by the empirical historian, are lighted with speculative colors by the literary artist. The historian may exclaim with his colleague Jacques Duron: 'For once we do not have to choose between legend and reality, for here they are one and the same,'⁸ but the writer enjoys his craft only when he can

5 See Joan of Arc: *The Image of Female Heroism* (London: Weidentfeld & Nicholson 1981), and her 'A Travesty of Justice,' *The Times* (August 22, 1981) 5.

6 M. Warner, 'A Travesty of Justice,' 5.

7 See Marie-Claire Bianquart, *Anatole France: Un Sceptique passionné* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy 1984) 273.

8 Jacques Duron, *Langue française, langue humaine* (Paris: Larousse 1969) 41.

blend the two – for, in the superior sense of transcendence, exactly how unreal is legend? Perhaps this is why, seeing how Joan defies history itself by being eternally doubted about her voices, her power, her sexuality, her perpetual defiance of earthly realities, her being everywhere and nowhere at home, strongly revered or rejected, in short, her angel and sorceress identities, the romantic historian Jules Michelet presented her in a series of tableaux – like France's picture book – but stressing the interplay of abstract qualities, like enthusiasm, fear, pride, humility, common sense and exaltation.⁹ Indeed, Joan stands at the center of her painting, but we do not see her fully – only her garments, her cut hair, her chains, and her judges' faces register mere expressions, like Daumier's lawyers.¹⁰

Every literary treatment is necessarily unfaithful to the raw reality of Joan's life and trial – necessarily and happily so, for each author writes from his own period and vision and stresses different valences of the common theme. Therefore, there can never be two identical characters called Joan of Arc.¹¹ Joan was still alive when Christine de Pisan dedicated the first literary treatment to her, *61* stanzas of 8 lines called 'Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc' (1429). It falls within the encomiastic tradition, praises the crowned Charles VII, the miraculous victories of 'la Pucelle de Dieu ordonnée,' and reflects not only contemporary optimism in France, for which land Joan embodies a divine destiny, but also and explicitly a joyful feminist attitude at a time when chivalry was on the decline. A woman has accomplished what thousands of men could not; Joan is then a symbol of God's favor of women: 'Hee! quel honneur au femenin / Sexe!' (stanza 34).

In a similar category of *encomium* fall the poems of Martial d'Auvergne and Martin Le Franc, both during the same century. But these were Frenchmen. It took an Englishman, well over a century later, to show Joan under a negative light. William Shakespeare, in *1 Henry VI* (1592), got his information from the chronicles of Edward Hall and Raphael Holinshed. The Elizabethans regarded Joan as an evil thing, in league with devils (Holinshed), as well as a liar and strumpet (Hall). Yet Shakespeare endows her in Act I with patriotism and eloquence:

9 Jules Michelet, *Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy 1857)

10 I owe this felicitous analogy to one of my graduate students, Alain Veylit.

11 I do not pretend, of course, to cover all the literary incarnations of Joan of Arc. I discussed what I believe to be the most important in part of a graduate seminar, and I am indebted to my students to thoughts they contributed:

Barry Crawford, Ruth Curl, Terri Frongia, Cheryl Lambert, Janet Moores, and Alain Veylit.

Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
my wit untrain'd in any kind of art.
...
God's mother deigned to appear to me
and in a vision full of majesty
will'd me to leave my base vocation
and free my country from calanity:

...
Glory is like a circle in the water,
which never ceaseth to enlarge itself
till by broad spreading it disperse to naught. (I, ii: II 72-81, 133-5)

But so much for the godly side, presented in the first three acts. Already in Act I for Talbot she is 'A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal / [who] drives back our troops and conquers as she lists: ... They call'd us for our fierceness English dogs; / now, like to whelps, we crying run away' (I, v: II 21-6). And in Act III, for him she remains a 'Foul fiend of France, and hag of all despite, / encompassed with thy lustful paramours!' (III, ii: II 52-3). The charge is verified in Act V, when Joan asks the underworld for help:

Now help, ye charming spells and periapts;
and ye choice spirits that admonish me
and give me signs of future accidents. [*Thunder*] (V, iii: II 2-4)

whereupon enter all the fiends. And during the ensuing fighting, Joan revealingly asks for 'leave to curse a while,' all of which reaches a climax when she tries to save herself from execution by declaring that she is with child, she who was sent to earth – her first play – 'to work exceeding miracles,' who never 'had to do with wicked spirits,' who was 'chaste and immaculate in very thought,' and who – when the first play did not work and resorted to her second – now would 'discover [her] infirmity ...': namely, 'I am with child, ye bloody homicides: murder not then the fruit within my womb' (V, iv: II 62-3). Imperturbably, the English remain with 'unrelenting hearts,' and Joan curses the race:

May never glorious sun reflex his beams
upon the country where you make abode;
but darkness and the gloomy shade of death
environ you, till mischief and despair
drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves! (V, iv: II 87-91)

It is interesting that a shade of ambiguity exists even within the English modality. But the ambiguity is dropped, as the Continent then takes over the theme for a while. Jean Chapelain wrote the 24 cantos of his epic *La Pucelle, ou la France déliée* in 1656 (the last 12 cantos, however, which include the trial, were not published until 1882). Intended, in the words of his contemporary Guez de Balzac, to make France famous, humiliate the [literary] presumption of Italy, embellish our century, and astonish posterity, Chapelain's work still falls immeasurably short of the epics of Ariosto and Tasso, and though for the first time it places a heroine, distinguished by her moral virtue, at the center of a genre whose heroes distinguished themselves by their military virtue, the whole effort, classically versified according to the literary rules of the day, remains hardly noteworthy. The first 12 cantos are a rhymed history of France that made Racine and Boileau laugh, and the second 12 encompass her trial and sentence (to which Chapelain devotes only 32 verses!), her pious death, and the concluding political events in France. The motifs of country, Christianity, and martyrdom for faith defer to the niceties and artifices of *préciosité* required by Chapelain's society, including a profusion of symbols, far from sparingly or appropriately used as they appear in the transcript of the trial, and an accompanying stress on allegory, where everybody stands for something (Dunois, Joan's friend, for Virtue; Charles the Dauphin for Weakness; TanneGuy for intelligence; Amaury for Perfidy; Gillion for thoughtless Paternal Love; Bedford for Ambition; Lyonnell for Sacrificing Love; Causson for Vileness; Agnès for Joan's opposite, Voluptuousness) and Joan herself is drained of the blood that had made her a Maid of flesh and bones. Said one critic: 'Instead of the real Joan, with her good sense and peasant ingenuity, her passionate love of France, her heroic modesty and feminine weakness also, her tears and horror of the flames that wish to devour her poor body, instead of a daughter of the people, so lively and so human, she is really too much the celestial maiden, Grace, and at that grace which is a little Jansenist, imperious, and always efficacious. The Man-God shuddered in dreaming of Calvary, asked that the chalice turn from him and sweating blood bathed the earth where he prayed; la pucelle has no weaknesses, she never seems to suffer, she opposes all the blows of fate and even in the throes of torture maintains a perfect serenity. She inspires neither pity nor admiration, because her heroism seems only indifference.'¹²

¹² Georges Collas, *Jean Chapelain* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints [1912] 1970) 241

Voltaire's 21 canto epic of 1775, *La Pucelle*, also deserves immersion into oblivion, but not for the same reason. The Enlightenment philosopher was a poor dramatist and a poorer poet, and his identifying with Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* in its random episodic structure did not enhance the quality of his presentation. Yet *La Pucelle* enjoyed international success (the renowned Italian poet Vincenzo Monti translated it, for example) because it is a mock-epic, treating a traditionally serious theme with humor and satire. 'Je ne suis né pour célébrer les saints' (Chant Premier, l. 1), are the opening words; the rest is caricature, a deliberate allegory aimed against hagiography, but less at Joan herself, says the historian Jerom Vercrussse, than at the absurd stories involving her.¹³ Indeed, Voltaire praised Joan in the same language as his contemporary David Hume: this admirable heroine, they wrote, to whom the more generous superstition of the ancients would have erected altars, was, on pretense of heresy and magic, delivered over to the flames and expiated, by that dreadful punishment, the signal services she had rendered to her prince and to her native country.¹⁴ If only one philosopher had been on the faculty of theology, muses the Frenchman. *La Pucelle*, however, belongs to the Enlightenment's battle against superstition and other pious absurdities that invigorate fanaticism, and through the device of ridicule, Voltaire separated history from legend. For apart from the notion of divine inspiration and the presence of St. Denis suggesting mystical guidance, Joan's real fight is to protect her virginity and that of others through repeated refusal of temptation and resistance to forcible attack upon her person (shades of St. Eugenia and St. Uncumber), which prowess leads by chance to the salvation of France. Interestingly, Chapelain at least gave the trial a handful of verses; Voltaire did not deal with it – or with the capture, judgment, and execution – at all, lest seriousness mar his levity. If *La Pucelle* has any value, it lies in the field of historiography, in promoting Hume's distinction between the miraculous and marvelous, rejecting the former and doubting the latter, unless there are empirical data, as in Joan's story, and not mere fantasies to admit the extraordinary.¹⁵ At least in this area, the play contributed more than Antonio

¹³ See Jerom Vercrussse, ed., *La Pucelle d'Orléans in Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* xvii (Geneva [Institut et Musée Voltaire]: Les Délices 1970) 124. A more literary analysis is found in Josef Eberlé, *Voltaire's Pucelle* (Stuttgart: Festschrift 1965/Aschaffenburg: Gesellschaft des Bibliophilen 1966).

¹⁴ Their language is almost identical. See David Hume, *History of England* (New York: Harper & Bros. 1850) 401, and Vercrussse, *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, 127.

¹⁵ Hume, *History of England*, 389

de Zamora's slightly earlier dramatic version, *La Doncella de Orléans*, portraying a trivialized Joan who could be any woman warrior. It is significant that in general the literary thematology of Joan of Arc after the eighteenth century accepts the marvelous, filling in its dark corners by dramatizing the links between the tableaux, but shuns the miraculous.

With the dawning of Romanticism, Robert Southey composed a long epic poem in ten books in 1796.¹⁶ The former miraculous now becomes the marvelous, in the form of 'enthusiasm ... of no uncommon kind' by virtue of which the 'missioned maid' or 'delegated damsel' accomplishes her mission. The Englishman, echoing the Shakespearean criticism, describes Joan as a pretender, but unwittingly so, an 'unknown imposter,' whose delusion enables her to act with conviction, so that the author easily eschews the fairytale format. Yet he has her emerge from one of Eve's ribs. With clear romantic leanings, the author, an admirer of the *Aeneid* and of the *Odyssey* over the *Iliad*, stresses the sense of nature – the naturalness of Joan, her activity herding sheep (which kept her outdoors since she found little love at home), her uncle Claude's wondrous tales in natural settings, and the simple, unadorned language used by Southey, untainted by the artifice of Chapelain's precious similes. 'In solitude [her] soul was nursed amid the loveliest scenes / of unpolluted nature' (ll. 239-41). He makes her fall in love with a shepherd, into whose mouth, given his sympathy for the French Revolution, he puts the revolutionary prophecy of the rights of man. If the French clergy believes Joan to be too lacking in doctrinal instruction to lead the Dauphin's forces, the 'martial maid' can only react with the word 'blasphemy [against nature],' and headstrongly goes to battle the following day. Southey wrote out of a sense of political revolution and anti-clericalism, both ideologies hidden imperfectly under the skirts of 'The Maid of Arc,' who turns out to enjoy no divine afflatus, but shows herself instead as a model of civic virtues.

In 1801, Friedrich von Schiller attempted to break through the recent impositions by historians concerning miracles and fill in the dark corners with his own classically restrained fantasy about Joan, abandoning the epic tonality and allowing the conventions of staged drama to exercise their rights.¹⁷ His play, *Die Jungfrau von Orléans*, also during

¹⁶ One might consult Ernest Bernhard-Kabish, *Robert Southey* (Boston: Twayne Publishers 1977), chapter 2, and Kenneth Curry, *Southey* (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan 1975).

¹⁷ Consult John Waterman, 'Die Jungfrau von Orléans in the Light of Schiller's Essays,' *German Quarterly* 25, iv (1952) 230-8, and Gerhard Saader in *Die Jungfrau von Orléans in Schillers Dramen: Neue Interpretationen*, Walter Hinderer, ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam 1979) 217-41.

the early Romantic years, gathers a number of thematic valences: Joan's purity, meaning no feminine interest in romance in comparison with the affairs of France; her marvelous ability to sway the Dauphin's court; her co-nationals' opposition (the Dauphin's mother herself is in league with the English and Burgundians); her rejection of immediate love, meaning the advances of the French knights Dunois and La Hire; her fallibility and subsequent guilt when smitten by love for the English knight Lionel;¹⁸ her own family's incomprehension (her father ascribes Joan's victories to her alliance with the Devil – in tenor no different from the complaints of St. Perpetua and St. Dymna); her defense by her suitor Raimond (an interpolation into the legend the way Rudolphe, her brother, was in Chapelain's construction); and her joining the fray victoriously outside the tower which held her prisoner after miraculously breaking her chains. There she is slain and ascends to heaven (in Chapelain's earlier version, she is not burned but taken to England and wondrously transported to a rock named St. Francis de Paul, where she leads a 'celestial life'). The Romantics, however, preferred the historical Joan, and while there was a certain Cornelian attraction in her conflict between love and duty, in her struggle with herself to expiate even the small moment of weakness that pushed her platonically into Lionel's arms, they appreciated exalted reality more than the out-of-reach idealism¹⁹ which she symbolized for Schiller. The images were there: the voices, light, crown, and the invincible banner, as we read in the transcript, but she also strikes down the enemy mercilessly – the beseeching Montgomery, the powerful Talbot – with her sword, until suddenly she discovers the beauty of Lionel. Good triumphs indisputably over evil (though not without the aid of a magic helmet), and Schiller sees this triumph rendered more noble with Joan's death on the battlefield. Again, no trial scene, let alone the issue of transvestism, lest idealism lose ground to legalities.

In 1847, Thomas De Quincey reflected a renewed interest in the heroine in his poem 'Joan of Arc,'²⁰ and as a late English romanticist underscored – as befits a user of opium – the visionary valence. Joan is a shepherdess of natural piety, whose doubt yields to the force of her promptings; she is a reed who submits to punishment but not to calumny about herself, and who dies grandly. She is not mystically

¹⁸ See Timothy F. Sellner, 'The Lionel Scene in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orléans*: A Psychological Interpretation,' *German Quarterly* 50 (1977) 264-82.

¹⁹ See Blakemore Evans, 'Die Jungfrau von Orléans: A Drama of Philosophical Idealism,' *Monatshefte* 35 (1943) 188-94.

²⁰ De Quincey's tribute to Joan has not received much critical attention: only passing references here and there.

related by name, as Michelet would have it, to St. John the Evangelist, the apostle of love and of mysterious visions; she is not Southey's revolutionary Charlotte Corday. She is a 'solitary maid,' a manifestation of the Virgin Mary, whose ransom pays for national deliverance and whose actions are played out on two levels: the historical, the restoration of the French throne despite the absence of approval by the council, and the spiritual, the imprisonment, trial, and execution abetted by Cauchon's selling himself to the English for ecclesiastical advancement. English malice, according to Michelet, tainted the coronation as the work of a witch, resulting in the need to try Joan, and De Quincey sees the diabolical features of the prosecution contrasted with the splendour of the defense — and the rapturous admiration of 10,000 at the execution. The author thus sheds a special light on the trial and its perfidious motivation. He makes a statement about it, which none of his predecessors had done, and finally brings the transcript into literary focus, if only by way of background to his poetic construction.

The Romantic generation tried further to capitalize on the legend; literature, historiography, and music seemed to vie with one another to champion the theme. But within its own cultural context it had been exhausted. Casimir Delavigne's *La Vie et la mort de Jeanne d'Arc* of 1819, a political ode forming part of *Les Messéniennes*; Alphonse de Lamartine's attempt at a collection of 'Great Lives' which includes an entry on Joan;²¹ Alexandre Soumet's desire to affirm the theories of Romanticism through his drama, *Jeanne d'Arc*, of 1825, while making shambles of history (Burgundy champions Joan, for instance); even in Spain Manuel Tamayo y Beus's impassioned 1847 drama *Juana de Arco*; and the admiring works of Joseph Fabre, who spent his life rehabilitating and glorifying the damsel of Domrémy in such works as his drama of 1890, *Jeanne d'Arc*, along with five historical works about her, added little to the fame. In music, one can count at least two score works inspired by Joan of Arc, from the early Romantic years into our own century. The names of Franz Liszt, Francesco Malipiero, Charles Gounod, Max Bruch, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Ernest Chausson, Mortz Moszkowski, Emil Nikolaus von Reznicek, Paul Pierné,

and Paul Paray stand out, not to mention the significant opera by Giuseppe Verdi.²² Charles Péguy tried to add a dimension to the fame in 1897, 1910, and 1913, when he wrote *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Le Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc*, and *La Tapisserie de Sainte Geneviève et de Jeanne d'Arc* respectively — a dramatic trilogy that puts into relief Joan's tribulations at the sight of hunger, plunder, and war (at thirteen, in *Le Mystère*, she is depressed at what she sees, and actually develops a character, unusual in portrayals of Joan, as she moves in the direction of heroism), disillusioning her about humanity and revealing Péguy's anti-clericalism in contrast to lofty moral sentiments and a sense of both the greatness and violence of faith.²³ The Dreyfus Affair had drawn him toward socialism as a political movement,²⁴ and the anti-establishmentarian tones are audible, as is the pedal-point of his transcendental, religiously pious mysticism. But in the twentieth century, the theme needed a more vigorous boost.

The trial had returned in an important way in Anatole France's historical biography *La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* of 1908, where legend is reduced to story, rationally based, and where episodes and citations, digressions and discussions, serve to explain legend without minimizing Joan's heroism. A veritable sense of pathos and humanity had emerged from this lengthy work, which was to lead to that stage masterpiece concerning a youth, an ambition, a command, a trial, and an aftermath, George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, *A Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and an Epilogue* of 1923, three years after Joan's canonization.²⁵ No miracles inform Shaw's work; her voices are objectifications of common

21 After the political *Le Conseiller du peuple* was forced to fold, from 1852 to 1854 he put together the admittedly 'generous' biographies of the historical and literary journal *Le Citoyen*: *Histoire de l'humanité par les grands hommes*. Along with Joan of Arc (1852), he contributed entries on Homer, Gutenberg, Nelson, Socrates, Cromwell, and Mme de Sévigné, among others.

22 Painters and sculptors, too, have made numerous contributions. Among them, the statues by Paul Dubois (Reims), Emmanuel Frémiet (Paris), Henri-Michel-Antoine Chapu (Louvre), and François Rude (Louvre) may be singled out, along with the paintings by Hippolyte-Paul Delaroche, Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Jean-Jacques Scherrer (Orléans), and the series by Jules-Eugène Lenepveu in Paris' Panthéon.

23 See Jean Onimus, 'Les Sources de la Jeanne d'Arc de Péguy,' *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* (July-September 1962) 381-99, and *Introduction aux Trois Mystères, Cahiers de l'Amitié de Charles Péguy* (Paris: Auguste Martin 1962).

24 Consult Nelly Jussem-Wilson, 'L'Affaire Jeanne d'Arc et l'affaire Dreyfus: Péguy et Notre jeunesse,' *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* (July-September 1962) 400-15, and Eugène van Isterbeck, 'Socialisme et poésie chez Péguy de la Jeanne d'Arc à l'affaire Dreyfus,' *Cahiers de l'Amitié de Charles Péguy* (Paris: Auguste Martin 1966).

25 A broad account may be found in Brian Tyson, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan* (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press 1982).

sense impulses in which she believes without being a De Quinceyan visionary. But the transcript does inform it, down to verbatim quotations (Scene 6, almost twice as long as any other scene), except that he changes the traditional configurations of many characters. The inquisitors, including Cauchon, are rehabilitated through their good faith, in contrast to the English, participating in the trial through their dignitaries, who intend to commit political assassination behind the mask of orthodoxy. In this setting, Joan's honest answers are viciated and misconstrued. If she signs a recantation, she quickly tears it up at the prospect of a lifetime removed from nature, the flowers and fields and streams (reminiscent of Southey's focus) and from the carefreeness of riding with the soldiers. A fantastic epilogue, taking place in 1456, finds the now exonerated Joan appearing in dream to the King, while a modern character foretells her coming sainthood — to which all bow, but all still fear to have her return to earth. Hence a new direction for Voltaire's irony.

Shaw draws upon his predecessors (though he was highly critical of Twain),²⁶ not to ennoble Joan like Christine de Pisan and Chapelain, or to defile her like Shakespeare, or to twist her into an ironic mold like Voltaire, or conversely to sublimate her like Schiller and Péguy, or simply to admire her like Southey and De Quincey, but to show her as a fully human being who does not perform miracles, who is at times petulant and saucy, self-righteous and proud, bitter and angry, fearful of pain and persecution, and who is always sincere and steadfast, direct and thoroughly devoted to her mission, and an inspiring leader who can arouse jealousy. Her male clothes were protective and natural for the occasion, so that the transvestite theme is subdued but subadjacent. She stands as one who resists and refuses, in accordance with that primitive innocence that resides in all of us, to join the civilization that surrounds us and impedes the freedom of pure movement. And in the process, Shaw suggests her as the forerunner of the two heresies of protestantism (the stress on the linear relationship between the individual conscience and God) and Nationalism (though in the hands of superior historical forces that make him a 'visible and human puppet,' Cauchon dutifully wants to save the Church, along with Joan's

soul, and maintain an unnationalistic status quo). This Shavian interpolation gives the legend a symbolic luster, though it distracts from the poignant humanity of the drama that comes through in the transcript.

It did not take Shaw any particular effort to break through the near blind worship of Joan that Quicherat had inspired in Mark Twain, whose *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* of 1903 makes the heroine, in the words of one commentator, 'an unimpeachable American school teacher in armor,'²⁷ and through the squabble between Twain's British counterpart Andrew Lang, in his *The Maid of France* (2nd ed., 1909), who also endows her with ladylike Victorian trappings, and Anatole France who had the gall to indicate that she possessed no political or military ability and that her success in the former category stemmed from good clerical prompting and in the latter from good tutoring by Dunois. Many are those, today, however, who consider Twain's Joan as the most veritable.²⁸ Joan's prism breaks out into many colors — and sometimes too many, if we consider Bertold Brecht's *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, broadcast in 1932, which looks at the causes of the great depression through an account of meat speculation in Chicago's stock market! Whatever the case, the renewed awareness of the potential of the Joan of Arc theme found new artistic directions, including Surrealism with its emphasis on women as the primal life force, if we turn to the poet Joseph Delteil (*Jeanne d'Arc*: 'Hymne au Lait' and 'Hymne au Verbe'), and psychic analysis. In the latter context, I may refer to Léon Denis' novel *Le Mystère de Jeanne d'Arc* of 1924 (incidentally, translated into English by Arthur Conan Doyle), where the author criticizes all preceding writers and historians, including France, and in an attempt to interrelate God and science — and here science and religious faith do not disagree — makes Joan a medium with psychical powers, yet still a 'spirit guide' messenger of God, though unaided by Him lest 'man ... lose the merit due his initiative.' The visionary emphasis of De Quincey is taken a logical step further.

26 For a comparative view, consult William Searle, 'Bernard Shaw and the Maid: A Vitalist View,' *The Saint and the Skeptics: Joan of Arc in the Work of Mark Twain, Anatole France, and Bernard Shaw* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1976), for Shaw, see pp. 97-138. Informative, with reprints of two Shaw pieces and twenty-three excerpted essays, is *Saint Joan Fifty Years After, 1923/24-1973/74*, Stanley Weintraub, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1973).

27 Ayot St. Lawrence, *Bernard Shaw: Seven Plays* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1951) 770

28 See Mentor L. Williams, 'Mark Twain's *Joan of Arc*,' *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review* 54 (1948) 243-50, and Roger B. Solomon, *Twain and the Image of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1961), chapter 8: 'The Cosmic Woman: Joan of Arc.'

Another artistic direction is, of course, film, though this is out of my immediate purview.²⁹ However, given the centrality of the trial and its transcript, I must mention at least the passion or trial of Joan as seen by directors Carl Dreyer and Robert Bresson, *La Passion de Sainte Jeanne d'Arc* of 1927 and *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* of 1961 respectively. Dreyer's expressionistic camera as well as Bresson's Kafkaesque camera fill in many of the dark corners of the transcript, though in highly expressive, fragmented ways suited to the filmic medium's special ability to play with our perceptions. Contrasts of light and shadow, unusual camera angles, close-ups, and silences, charge the events and especially the questioning with symbolic significance (Bresson's religious parallel with the Passion of Christ and Dreyer's philosophical suggestion of political oppression and revolution). In Spain, Romulo Gallegos wrote a dramatic script in 37 scenes in 1945 for a film that was never made, *La doncella*, six scenes of which are devoted to the trial. It is a headstrong and heroic but also exceedingly defiant and mocking Joan we have here, one who tosses her head back challengingly and laughs at her accusers, and who wants only the bread and water of her beloved Domrémy and not of their damnable prison. If her heroism was indifference in Chapelain, in Gallegos it is mockery. On the one hand, the fighting mood reflects the war years during which *La doncella* was written; on the other, the protagonist's sauciness maims the human drama that emerges from the transcript.

Mention must be made, too, of Paul Claudel's dramatic oratorio,³⁰ in collaboration with Arthur Honegger, *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* of 1937, which was filmed by Roberto Rossellini. Continuing in the episodic tradition by now well established as a way to embrace the legend (France, Michelet, Voltaire, Fabre, Péguy, Gallegos), the authors have Joan, on the pyre, revisit episodes of her life: childhood, fighting the English, the King's entrance into Reims, the crowd's accusation of sorcery, and the condemnation. Voltaire's sarcasms make their way into the oratorio; the caricatural capacity of musical atonalism fits well. And, to be sure, music is better capable than literature of filling in the dark corners. Unaccompanied spoken narrative, wordless, polyphony, songs a cappella or with instruments, sew together the episodic material. A book enters the picture: a dialogue between Joan and brother

²⁹ See Jean Bastiaire, 'De Christine de Pisan à Jean Anouilh: Jeanne d'Arc à travers la littérature,' *Études Cinématographiques* 18/19 (1962) 11-31. The same issue, entitled *Jeanne d'Arc à l'écran*, includes references to Rossellini, Dreyer, Bresson, and others.

³⁰ See J. Samson, *Paul Claudel, poète musicien* (Paris: Milieu du Monde 1947).

Dominique on the previous events takes us back to Anatole France's picture book, ultimately the true receptacle of the legend. 'I have come to you from Heaven with this book,' states the friar, and, referring to the scribes but almost prophetically (given all the books that will be written about her), Joan reacts: 'I have seen many pens working about me.' And to Dominique's 'All that makes a book,' she responds with sarcasm: '[Yes] ... all those pens moving ceaselessly around me ... all that made a book, and I don't know how to read.' Claudel sees the trial with greater complexity than the transcript allows, but rather than revert to the miraculous, for which everyone, including Shaw, has claimed rational explanations, this post-Enlightenment mystic rests his query with the marvelous, with the still unexplainable in human life.

The fury of so-called modern minds, mused Jean Anouilh, to explain mysteries [like miracles] has been one of the most naïve and stupid activities of this feeble human brain of ours ever since we have stuffed into it political and scientific notions.³¹ So much for the positivism of Anatole France. In 1952, the playwright composed a landmark drama on Joan's trial, *L'Alouette*.³² The play has contemporary overtones; with Gallegos he shares a concern for the war, and his pseudo-Shavian Cauchon echoes the rhetoric of Pétain ('Save what you can'). Before an Inquisitor who seems to hate the human race with his ideological clichés, Joan says imperiously 'No.' If any optimism exists in the historical process, it comes through faith, here understood as courage, not miracles. In Nietzschean fashion, 'the iron hand of necessity shakes the dice-box of chance.' Necessarily, the play is the trial, though again following the episodic tradition a series of flashbacks, akin to the strategy of the films or of the oratorio, takes us to events preceding it. Much of Antigone colors Anouilh's interpretation, and it is not by chance that he wrote another play called *Antigone*. Heroines of refusal, they both shape their profiles around the notion of the *exemplum*, and as a member of the existentialist movement, even without the political awareness of a Sartre or a Camus, Anouilh makes their exemplary essence measurably the sum of their existence.

³¹ A good collection of critical essays is *Les Critiques de notre temps et Anouilh. Les Critiques de notre temps* collection (Paris: Garnier frères 1977); see pp. 43-53.

³² See Ingeborg Langmann, 'Die Darstellung der Jeanne d'Arc in Anouilhs *L'Alouette*,' *Die Neuren Sprachen* 18, iv (1966) 157-65; H. Linke, 'Dramaturgie des Wunders in Anouilhs Schauspiel *L'Alouette*,' *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 69, i/ii, iii/iv (1959) 46-80 and 129-49 respectively; and Jean Maudit, 'Chronique de théâtre: *L'Alouette* de Jean Anouilh,' *Études* (January 1954).

No artistic, literary incarnation of Joan, however, matches her human character in that *exemplum* of involuntary literature we know as the transcript of her trial. In their own way, admittedly some more some less, most examples achieve a measure of literary significance – symbolically, historically, structurally, philosophically, psychologically – but none encompasses so vividly the *living* drama. Aesthetic pretensions always militate against naturalness, and the incontrovertible fact of Joan's simple sincerity invites successful literary treatment only with difficulty, since the self-conscious artist likes to probe for deeper meanings. Therefore, we can say that what were The Maid's voices to her in the transcript are The Maid's voices to us – authentic, real, live, both evocative and invocative, natural and sublime. The Joan of Arc of the transcript has a living voice, an actuality and a presence that her literary counterparts cannot have, neither Schiller's heroine who does not even resemble her, nor Shaw's, who at times does. Her voice is her triumph over oblivion. In the words of Claudel's Dominique, 'The angels in heaven have translated [the book] for all time.'

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Le Fond des Choses selon Francis Ponge et quelques autres

Enfin, ce ne sont pas "les vagues" qu'il a l'intention de regarder, mais une seule vague, c'est tout: il veut éviter les sensations indéterminées et se propose pour chacun de ses actes un objet limité et précis.

Italo Calvino, *Palomar*

Un écrivain français dont le renoncement à la jouissance trahissait une passion plutôt pathétique, s'inquiétait de ce que la littérature de son époque ait été gagnée par 'l'ostentation du rien.' Cela, disait-il, était grave. Il en donnait pour exemple ce fait convainquant: un de ses cadets avait résolu de tuer froidement quelque chose qui, bon an mal an, lui avait permis de vivre de longues années: le roman psychologique. Quoi qu'annistié par un attendrissant geste de clémence, le coupable n'en était pas moins découvert et mis sur la sellette. Alain Robbe-Grillet avait entreint une loi sacrée. Mais - et voici ce qui étouffe -, M. François Mauriac s'empresait de supposer que l'erreur de son jeune confrère était redevable de la lecture d'un poème en prose dont Jean Paulhan lui avait aussi conseillé la délectation. Il s'agissait du *Cageot* - d'un certain Francis Ponge, croyait-il. Par bonheur, l'on est aujourd'hui en droit de constater que Ponge n'aurait pas dans une catégorie que Claude Mauriac, le fils du demandeur, avait forgée - sans doute pour plus tard s'y lui-même ranger. Non! le nouveau classiciste ne pourrait être taxé d'"allitérateur" puisque leur parti pris de ne pas savoir ce qu'en réalité ils veulent, de ne pas vouloir le savoir, ce refus de le chercher, cet acharnement à s'éloigner de ce qu'ils désirent (que c'est frappant chez un Bataille!),¹ s'accorderait mal avec l'idée qu'il se faisait du poème de Ponge. M. François Mauriac confessait d'ailleurs que la

1 François Mauriac, *Mémoires intérieurs*. Collection 'Le Livre de poche' (Paris: Flammarion 1959) 316