

## SCHILLER GOES TRANSNATIONAL: JULIE PAUCKER AND ROBERT SCHUSTER'S 'MALALAI – DIE AFGHANISCHE JUNGFRAU VON ORLEANS' (2017)

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### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Julie Paucker and Robert Schuster's 'MALALAI – Die afghanische Jungfrau von Orléans' (2017), paying special attention to the constructions and contestations of gender and nation in this recent re-working of Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801). Paucker radically re-configures Schiller's play, whose engagement with the concept of nation allowed subsequent interpretations to view it as a nationalist text depicting a symbolic figure for a German nation that did not as yet exist, by centring on nineteenth-century Afghan folk hero Malalai of Maiwand and placing her in dialogue with her Franco-German counterpart. Set against past and present conflict in Afghanistan, migration to Europe, and the 'refugee crisis' in Germany, 'MALALAI' engages two geographically and culturally disparate myths. Whilst Paucker's version of Schiller's text elaborates an intertextual negotiation with the past, her transnational adaptation of a national narrative undermines and transcends the nationalism and Eurocentrism which have marked much of modern Jeanne d'Arc-reception to date. Through its multilingual and multinational politics of performance, 'MALALAI' resists re-writing Schiller's *Jungfrau* as an example of a major literature, positing instead a centre/periphery shift as a way of attending to historical and political development on a global level.

Dieser Artikel untersucht Julie Paucker und Robert Schusters 'MALALAI – Die afghanische Jungfrau von Orléans' (2017) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Konstruktionen von Geschlecht und Nation in dieser unlängst erschienenen Adaption von Friedrich Schillers *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801). Schillers Drama, dessen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Konzept der Nation nationalistische Interpretationen in der Rezeption der Folgezeit ermöglichte, wird von Paucker auf radikale Weise rekonfiguriert, indem Malalai von Maiwand, die afghanische Volksheldin des 19. Jahrhunderts, in den Mittelpunkt des Stücks gerückt und in einen Dialog mit ihrem französisch-deutschen Gegenstück gestellt wird. Vor dem Hintergrund von vergangenem und gegenwärtigem Konflikt in Afghanistan, der Migration nach Europa und der 'Flüchtlingskrise' in Deutschland lässt 'MALALAI' zwei geografisch und kulturell disparate Mythen ineinandergreifen. Pauckers Version des Schiller'schen Textes ist eine intertextuelle Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit; ihre transnationale Adaption eines nationalen Narrativs stellt Nationalismus und Eurozentrismus, welche die moderne Jeanne d'Arc-Rezeption wesentlich geprägt haben, in Frage. Durch eine multilinguale und multinationale Aufführungspraxis widersetzt sich 'MALALAI' der Neuschreibung von Schillers *Jungfrau* als Beispiel einer Majoritäts-Literatur. Stattdessen wird eine Verschiebung von Zentrum und Peripherie postuliert, um

historischen und politischen Entwicklungen auf globaler Ebene Rechnung zu tragen.

Jeanne d'Arc, symbol of the French nation,<sup>1</sup> made her first German appearance of note in Friedrich Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* in 1801.<sup>2</sup> Schiller began work on his 'romantische Tragödie' just after the first French invasions of southern German territories in 1796, inspired by a subject matter which combined 'das weibliche, das heroische und das göttliche selbst'.<sup>3</sup> Depicting a psychomachy between Johanna's divine mission and personal desires, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* premiered to 'electrifying'<sup>4</sup> effect. The play, intended to speak 'zu dem Herzen',<sup>5</sup> was reportedly pronounced by Goethe to be 'Schiller's best'.<sup>6</sup> It proved extremely popular during the poet's lifetime and in the century following his death, ranking as the most widely performed drama on Berlin stages between 1786 and 1885 despite ongoing critical reception that can only be described as fraught.<sup>7</sup> Its overwhelming success in the nineteenth century may have been due to its appeal to nation-building desires amongst German audiences, who could see in the female protagonist a symbolic figure for a nation that did not as yet exist.<sup>8</sup> German reception in the first half of the twentieth-century was shaped by overt nationalism, as when Friedrich August von Kaulbach's painting 'Germania' (1914), capturing German military prowess at the

<sup>1</sup> 'Cette dernière figure de passé fut aussi la première du temps qui commençait. En elle apparurent à la fois la Vierge...et déjà la Patrie', Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 19 vols, Paris 1841, V, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> For earlier German appearances, see J. Knight Bostock, 'The Maid of Orleans in German Literature', *MLR*, 22/3 (1927), 298–309.

<sup>3</sup> Schiller in a letter to Ifland, 5 August 1803, in Friedrich Schiller, *Briefe II, 1795–1805*, ed. Norbert Oellers, Frankfurt a. M. 2002, p. 668.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Schiller's description of the premiere at Weimar, letter to Körner of 12 May 1803, in Schiller, *Briefe II* (note 3), p. 658.

<sup>5</sup> Schiller's letter to Göschen, 10 February 1802, in *Schillers Werke, Nationalausgabe*, ed. Norbert Oellers and Siegfried Seidel, 42 vols, Weimar 1986, XXXI, p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Schiller's letter to Körner of 13 May 1801, in Schiller, *Briefe II* (note 3), p. 571.

<sup>7</sup> Albert Ludwig, *Schiller und die deutsche Nachwelt*, Berlin 1909, p. 490. Ludwig lists 1,926 performances of Schiller's plays at the Königliche Theater in Berlin between 1786 and 1885, exceeding those of any other playwright, of which 336 were of *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. Despite popular and critical success, Schiller's drama has encountered substantial criticism from colleagues and scholars since its first appearance; see e.g. Hebbel's damning critique of it as 'ein hohles Überpinseln der Wahrheit mit idealer Schminke' (Christian Friedrich Hebbel, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Richard Maria Werner, 15 vols, Berlin 1901–3, IX, p. 267).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Rüdiger Safranski: 'In diese Begeisterung mischten sich die ersten vaterländischen Gefühle, die wenig später in den antinapoleonischen Befreiungskriegen heftig hervorbrachen. Man verstand die "Jungfrau von Orleans" nicht nur als romantisches Zauberspiel, sondern man vernahm darin auch eine politische Botschaft. Man sah in ihr die militante Mystikerin der nationalen Wiedergeburt Frankreichs. Könnte man in Deutschland eine solche charismatische Führergestalt nicht auch ganz gut gebrauchen? Schiller hatte eine Politik der Erlösung auf die Bühne gezaubert. [...] Wer wollte – und es wollten viele – konnte im französischen Schicksal des 15. Jahrhunderts das gegenwärtige deutsche wiedererkennen' (Rüdiger Safranski, *Schiller oder Die Erfindung des Deutschen Idealismus*, Munich 2014, p. 485).

beginning of World War I, drew explicitly on a passage from Schiller's portrayal of the heroine.<sup>9</sup> Twenty years later, Joseph Goebbels singled out Johanna as the most remarkable of the poet's 'erhabene Heldinnen',<sup>10</sup> cementing the text's status within National Socialist appropriation of Schiller, which saw it as the depiction of a 'wahre Volksheld[in]' fighting for the salvation of a 'zerbrochene[s] und geknechtete[s] Volk'.<sup>11</sup> Following World War II, the drama has largely been met with scepticism, due to its Romantic excesses and promotion of nationalism and warmongering. In 1993, Volker Meid pronounced it to be 'kaum noch spielbar'.<sup>12</sup> But although often regarded as problematic in the twenty-first century, Schiller's 'Wort-Oper'<sup>13</sup> is still frequently performed on German-language stages,<sup>14</sup> suggesting an ongoing interest in Schiller's treatment of national sentiment and the transformative potential of 'vaterländische Kraft'.<sup>15</sup>

This article examines an example of *Jungfrau von Orleans* reception that deviates from these prevailing tendencies in the play's 'Wirkungsgeschichte': Julie Paucker and Robert Schuster's 'MALALAI – Die afghanische Jungfrau von Orléans nach Friedrich Schiller' (2017) is marked by an innovative, transnational approach. The dramaturge, Paucker, and the director, Schuster, engage with the question of nation and nationalism in Schiller's text by placing the Franco-German icon in dialogue with the nineteenth-century Afghan folk heroine Malalai of Maiwand. Thus their version reflects on and goes beyond 'a stable concept of nation-based identity', which is an essential strategy in the context of literary de-territorialisation manifest in the transnational as defined by Braun and Schofield in their recent account.<sup>16</sup> Set against past and present

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Beauty or Beast. The Woman Warrior in the German Imagination from the Renaissance to the Present*, Oxford 2010, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> In a speech on the occasion of Schiller's 175th birthday celebrations in Weimar on 10 November 1934, quoted after Georg Ruppelt, *Schiller im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland. Der Versuch einer Gleichschaltung*, Stuttgart 1979, p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Hans Fabricius, *Schiller als Kampfgenosse Hitlers: Nationalsozialismus in Schillers Dramen*, Berlin 1934, p. 73. The full passage in the chapter on *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, 'Glaubenskraft und Volkserlösung', reads as follows: 'Nur aus dem tiefen Glauben an das Göttliche kann die Kraft zur Erlösung eines zerbrochenen und geknechteten Volkes erwachsen. [...] Der wahre Volksheld ist immer auch ein Gotteskämpfer.'

<sup>12</sup> See Volker Meid, *Metzler Literatur Chronik. Werke deutschsprachiger Autoren*, Stuttgart and Weimar 1993, p. 317. For an overview of shifts in critical and scholarly appraisal, see e.g. Frank M. Fowler, 'Sight and Insight in Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*', *MLR*, 68/2 (1973), 367–79.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Mann, *Essays*, ed. Hermann Kurzke and Stephan Stachorski, 6 vols, Frankfurt a. M. 1997, VI, p. 337.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, performances at Staatsschauspiel Dresden 2012, Deutsches Theater Berlin 2014, Schauspielhaus Hamburg 2015, Schauspielhaus Zürich 2015, Theater Bielefeld 2018/19, Schauspiel Köln 2021, amongst many others in recent years.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Pfaff, 'König René oder die Geschichte. Zu Schillers *Jungfrau von Orleans*', in *Schiller und die höfische Welt*, ed. Achim Aurnhammer *et al.*, Tübingen 1994, pp. 407–21 (p. 415).

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Braun and Benedict Schofield, 'Introduction: Transnationalizing German Studies', in *Transnational German Studies*, Liverpool 2020, pp. 1–13 (p. 4). The concept of the German nation was still in flux when Schiller was writing *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 4f.).

conflict in Afghanistan, migration to Europe and the 'refugee crisis' in Germany, 'MALALAI' marks an intervention in the adaptation of Schiller's play, and of the figure of Jeanne d'Arc more generally, by casting new light on the role of cultural outsiders and their transformative potential within hegemonic systems. I analyse the exchange in 'MALALAI' between two geographically and culturally disparate myths, both of which have had a nation-building function, and have been exploited by nationalist forces. After providing an overview of historical context and literary precedents, I investigate the de-centring and destabilising strategies Paucker and Schuster employ in the performative transnational adaptation of a national narrative. I then consider the representation of Johanna and Malalai as 'anomalous' females, who alternatively rise above and conform with a heteronormative gender order so as to ensure the rescue of the nation state. I hope to show that the interpolation of the Afghan legend into Schiller's text removes ideological limitations from the figure of Johanna and re-configures her as a figure of resistance to imperial and misogynistic politics. 'MALALAI' resists re-writing Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* as an example of a major literature, positing instead a centre-periphery shift that deploys Schiller's heroine as a transnational figure for whom the centrality of Germanness has been displaced.<sup>17</sup> The play thus transcends the Eurocentrism evident in much of modern Jeanne d'Arc-reception to date. The resultant text places Johanna in a system of plurality, defined as 'intersecting and crosscutting flows of [...] ideas [...] and people back and forth over borders',<sup>18</sup> leading to an encounter with the cultural, geographical, and historical other. That this occurs simultaneously with 'the nation's continued salience' is one of the key features of transnationalism, as Hermann, Smith-Prei and Taberner remind us in their study of this concept in German-language literature.<sup>19</sup>

#### SCHILLER'S *DIE JUNGFRAU VON ORLEANS*, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND LITERARY PRECEDENTS

Since her execution in 1431, the figure of Jeanne d'Arc has been the subject of a striking number of transcultural and trans-period adaptations, appropriating her into very different national, political, religious, and cultural contexts. A medieval figure eminently suited to adaptation in the modern world, Jeanne's adaptability is related to the nascent concept of the nation state inscribed in her person. Born into a peasant family at Domrémy in north-east France in c.1412, Jeanne reported receiving visions

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>18</sup> Elisabeth Herrmann, Carrie Smith-Prei, and Stuart Taberner, 'Introduction: Contemporary German-Language Literature and Transnationalism', in *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature*, Rochester, NY 2015, pp. 1–16 (p. 1).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Archangel Michael and Saints Margaret and Catherine instructing her to support Charles VII, the then dauphin of France, and to aid him in recovering France from English domination during the Hundred Years' War.<sup>20</sup> Charles VII sent her to Orleans as part of a relief mission; following military success and his coronation, Jeanne was captured by Burgundian soldiers, handed over to the English for a spectacular amount of money and tried at Rouen, the seat of the English occupation government. She was found guilty of heresy because of her insistence on the veracity of her visions, regarded as a way of communing with God whilst bypassing church authorities, and also on account of her cross-dressing:<sup>21</sup> she dressed like a man, mostly for practical reasons, but in so doing transgressed the sex/gender order of her time. Burnt at the stake at the age of nineteen, Jeanne was pronounced innocent and declared a martyr by Pope Callixtus III twenty-five years later, before her eventual canonisation in 1920.

The first literary engagement with Jeanne occurred during her lifetime, in Christine de Pisan's *Ditié de Jeanne d'Arc* (1429):

XXIV: Considerée ta personne,/Qui es une jeune pucelle,/A qui Dieu force et pouvoir donne/D'estre le champion et celle/Qui donne à France la mamelle/De paix et douce norriture,/Et ruer jus la gent rebelle,/Véez bien chose oultre nature!

XXXIV: Hee! quel honneur au femenin/Sexe! Que Dieu l'ayme il appert,/Quant tout ce grant pueple chenin,/Par qui tout le regne ert desert,/Par femme est sours et recouvert,/Ce que C<sup>m</sup> hommes [fait] n'eussent,/Et les traictres mis à desert!/A peine devant ne le creussent.<sup>22</sup>

Foregrounding the aspect of the maternal by homing in on Jeanne's nourishing breast whilst simultaneously referring to her to as 'jeune pucelle' suggests both a contradiction in terms and an early fixation on her bodily status. Jeanne is depicted as subverting gender expectations by surpassing the traditionally 'stronger' sex; yet in doing so she is not shown to be transgressive as what she does is not against nature but beyond it ('oultre') and facilitated by God. Christine links France and

<sup>20</sup> E.g. Régine Pernoud, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, London 2000.

<sup>21</sup> As explained in the trial transcripts, see *Les Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, ed. Georges Duby and Andrée Duby, Paris 1973.

<sup>22</sup> 'When we take your person into account, you who are a young maiden, to whom God gives the strength and power to be the champion who casts the rebels down and feeds France with the sweet, nourishing milk of peace, here indeed is something quite extraordinary! [...] Oh! What honour for the female sex! It is perfectly obvious that God has special regard for it when all these wretched people who destroyed the whole Kingdom – now recovered and made safe by a woman, something that 5000 men could not have done – and the traitors have been exterminated. Before the event they would scarcely have believed this possible.' (Christine de Pisan, *Ditié de Jeanne d'Arc*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty, Oxford 1977; tr. Kennedy/Varty, [http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/Joan\\_of\\_Arc/OLR/crditiie.pdf](http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/Joan_of_Arc/OLR/crditiie.pdf) (accessed 31 July 2021)).

the kingdom/realm to female heroism, inscribing the concept of nation-building in the figure of Jeanne whilst also validating female exceptionality. At a time when European identity was constituted through a shared vision of a non-Christian 'other',<sup>23</sup> Christine casts Jeanne as a crusader waging a holy war at home against the invading English represented as heathen Saracens (XLIII). The pre-modern figure of Jeanne stands for the idea of enforcing boundaries, just as the idea of the nation state rests on linguistic, cultural, and ideological difference. This constitutes a template which could easily be transposed from the juxtaposition of French vs English in the original constellation to other national but also supranational identities, such as Christian vs non-Christian, or European vs non-European. Later, it was Jeanne's dual role as victim and hero, to borrow Gerd Krumeich's descriptor, that made the idea of the nation palpable at a time when the people replacing a divinely appointed ruler as the new sovereign were in need of a symbol.<sup>24</sup>

Subsequent adaptations of Jeanne's life drew substantially on the Latin trial transcripts, histories, and, eventually, prior works of literature. Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* was composed in response to Voltaire's mock epic *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (written c.1730, first published c.1755), which has the virgin ride into battle naked on a donkey. In this iconoclastic text, Jeanne is tasked with leading France to victory by temporarily defending her virginity against animals, clerics, and aristocrats, before whole-heartedly indulging in the pleasures of the flesh once she has accomplished her mission. It was in explicit opposition to Voltaire's radical mockery that Schiller attempted to 'reconstitute the miraculous as aesthetic illusion', a desire born out of the need for poetic surrogates that would replace the gods the modern world had left behind.<sup>25</sup> Having meticulously worked through the trial transcripts, he sought to transform the historical material into poetic motifs and decided on important alterations to the nature and sequence of historical events. These included portraying Johanna as killing in combat, and having her die in battle, not at the stake.<sup>26</sup> Schiller's aim in devising the tragedy was not to 'von geschenehen Dingen unterrichten', but rather to 'rühren'; he viewed the genre as 'poetische Nachahmung einer mitleidwürdigen Handlung, [...] dadurch [...] der historischen entgegengesetzt' (*Über die tragische Kunst*; my emphasis).<sup>27</sup> Begun in 1800, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* was written against the background of

<sup>23</sup> Cf. e.g. Jaques LeGoff, *The Birth of Europe*, tr. Janet Lloyd, Oxford 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Gerd Krumeich, *Jeanne d'Arc in der Geschichte. Historiographie – Politik – Kultur*, Sigmaringen 1989, pp. 12–14.

<sup>25</sup> Dieter Borchmeyer, 'Wallenstein', in *A Companion to the Works of Friedrich Schiller*, ed. Steven Martinson, Rochester 2005, pp. 189–211 (p. 194).

<sup>26</sup> Another deviation from historical fact is that the French are unified prior to Johanna's death in Schiller's version, following the Burgundians' initial alignment with the English.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke, Kleinere prosaische Schriften*, 3 vols (= *SW*, vols 15–17), Karlsruhe 1817, XVII, p. 131.



Schiller's personal experience of French imperialism, with French troops having invaded Stuttgart, where Schiller's family was based, during the First Coalition War in Baden in 1796.<sup>28</sup> These recent historical events cast the French in the role of perpetrators rather than victims of imperialistic aggression. The figure of the self-sacrificing 'Retter' (*J*, III, 3, 2013) driven to bloodshed by national chauvinism,<sup>29</sup> who leads her people to unity in the face of foreign occupation, must have interested Schiller as a political writer engaging with the question of German prospects for nationhood.

Like Christine before him, Schiller presents Jeanne as exceptional. She places herself beyond the male-female binary:

Nicht mein Geschlecht beschwöre! Nenne mich nicht Weib.  
Gleichwie die körperlosen Geister, die nicht frein  
Auf ird'sche Weise, schließ ich mich an kein Geschlecht  
Der Menschen an, und dieser Panzer deckt kein Herz. (*J*, II, 7, 1608–11)<sup>30</sup>

Johanna's attempt to resist a heteronormative, binary order is intrinsically linked to her ability to transcend conventional gender roles and overcome the limitations of the physical (cf. her description as 'körperlos').<sup>31</sup> Yet she does not do so by choice, but by divine order. Against allegations of abnormality from family members, Burgundian and English opponents, and even supporters, with her father Thibaut, for one, construing her lack of interest in men as 'eine schwere Irrung der Natur' (*J*, Prologue, 2, 62) and ascribing to her 'ein männlich Herz' (*J*, Prologue, 3, 196), she asserts that she is 'die Kriegerin des höchsten Gottes' (*J*, III, 4, 2203). Her unquestioning response to God's command ironically sees her realigned with tropes of female servitude and submission. There are repeated parallels between Johanna and Mary, both holy virgins, but it is Mary, the embodiment of female perfection, who, in the view of the young woman, forces her to overcome her aversion to the steel of the sword: 'Du rüstest den unkriegerischen Arm mit Kraft' (*J*, II, 7, 1678).

Johanna's non-normativity, further reinforced by her outsider status in terms of class, is seen to oscillate between mutually exclusive poles. She is described as '[w]ie eine Kriegesgöttin, schön zugleich/Und schrecklich anzusehn' (*J*, I, 9, 956–7), and is alternatively referred to as

<sup>28</sup> See Jeffrey L. High, 'Schiller, "merely political Revolutions", the personal Drama of Occupation and the Wars of Independence', in *Schiller: National Poet – Poet of Nations. A Birmingham Symposium*, ed. Nicholas Martin, Amsterdam and New York 2006, pp. 219–40 (p. 240).

<sup>29</sup> Matthias Luserke, 'Deutungsaspekte', in *Friedrich Schiller. Dramen IV*, ed. M. Luserke, 12 vols, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, V, pp. 658–64 (p. 661).

<sup>30</sup> All quotations from Friedrich Schiller, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, in *Friedrich Schiller. Dramen IV*, ed. Matthias Luserke, Frankfurt a. M. 1996 (subsequently cited in the text as *J*).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. also Albrecht Koschorke, 'Schillers "Jungfrau von Orleans" und die Geschlechterpolitik der Französischen Revolution', in *Friedrich Schiller und der Weg in die Moderne*, ed. Walter Hinderer, Würzburg 2006, pp. 243–59 (e.g. p. 249).

‘Fürchterliche’/‘Schreckliche’/‘Grimmige’ (*J*, II, 6, 1555/1566/1576), and ‘liebliche[...] Gestalt’ representing the ‘zärtliche[s] Geschlecht[...]’ (*J*, II, 7, 1605–6). Just as terror and beauty exist side by side in her person, she is seen to be possessed by God and devil alike. Johanna regards herself as ‘Gottgesandte’ (*J*, II, 10, 1764), Dunois refers to her as ‘Göttliche’ (*J*, I, 10, 1129), and even the Duke of Burgundy is struck by her ‘himmlische Gewalt’ (*J*, II, 10, 1802). At a different point in time, however, Burgundy states that it is the devil who has defeated the English and their associates through her (*J*, II, 1, 1246). In the eyes of the English, Johanna is a ‘jungfräuliche[r] Teufel’ (*J*, II, 3, 1480), and a ‘Gauklerin’, sorceress (*J*, II, 5, 1546), in cahoots with ‘Höllengeister’ (*J*, II, 7, 1674). She is said to possess ‘Satanskünste’ (*J*, II, 9, 1703), is a ‘buhlerische Circe’ (*J*, II, 10, 1709) and ‘Teufelsdirne’ (*J*, II, 10, 1714) as well as ‘Sirene’ (*J*, II, 10, 1743), whilst the king wonders if she might be truly superhuman (*J*, IV, 10, 2963–9). Discourse moves quickly from viewing her as virginal and virtuous to regarding her as sensual, promiscuous, and morally dubious, conflating her sexual and moral status in the process. Whilst all (male) characters talk *about* Johanna and assign conflicting interpretations to her gender, sexuality, and morality, she is at pains to maintain her ‘purity’ by remaining a non-binary, non-sexual being so as to defy categorisation and overcome the physical (cf. *J*, II, 7, 1608–11).

Johanna momentarily betrays her mission when she falls in love with Englishman Lionel. She considers herself to no longer be the ‘blindes Werkzeug’ demanded by God (*J*, IV, 1, 2578) and as such no longer worthy of carrying the Marian flag during Charles’ coronation ceremony (*J*, IV, 3). Her charisma collapses and she is suspected of witchcraft (*J*, V, 4, 3140), and when Thibaut suggests that she has sold her soul to the devil she does not even contradict him (*J*, IV, 11), accepting the paternal authority represented by father, king, and God without question. Ultimately, she foregoes both love and life in order to lead the French to victory and undo her ostracisation, leading to her apotheosis. Schiller’s tragedy illustrates the classical tension between ‘Pflicht’ und ‘Neigung’: ‘Erhabenheit’ is reached through the protagonist’s final self-sacrifice, which sees her overcome any sensual drives. Acting no longer under divine compulsion, but out of her own volition, Johanna’s transgressive attributes recede as her character develops, but it is only when she sacrifices herself in battle that her condemnation as witch is abandoned unequivocally. In the end, the ‘zarte Jungfrau unter Waffen’ (*J*, V, 2, 3081) willingly submits to her ‘Volk’ (*J*, V, 14, 3525), her ‘König’ (*J*, V, 14, 3529), and ‘Frankreichs Fahnen’ (*J*, V, 14, 3529). Following her death in battle, Charles orders the French flags to be lowered onto her expiring body; thus she is silenced, the state renewed, and paternalistic structures are restored. As she relinquishes all agency, the king pronounces Johanna to be ‘heilig wie die Engel’ (*J*, V, 14, 3523) and ‘ruhig wie ein schlafend Kind’ (*J*, V, 14, 3509), infantilising her in her dying moments. In order for boundaries between peoples (here: French vs English, and, by inference, German vs French) to be



maintained, clear divisions between the sexes have to be re-asserted, which means that female passivity needs to be re-established. Unlike in Christine's poem, female anomaly is regarded with suspicion: as a female transgressing not only gender norms, but also ontological categories, Johanna must be annihilated once the rescue of the state, to which she has been instrumental, is achieved.

DE-CENTRING SCHILLER: PAUCKER/SCHUSTER'S *DIE AFGHANISCHE JUNGFRAU VON ORLEANS*

During the subsequent German Wars of Liberation from the First French Empire (1813), Schiller's text and its protagonist became stylised as a symbol of emerging German nationalism,<sup>32</sup> decades before Germany became a unified nation in 1871. The fact that a play featuring a French figure was censored in some of the French-occupied German states on account of its incitement to nationalism<sup>33</sup> underscores the extent to which the emphasis on nation-building inherent in the narrative of Jeanne lent itself to adaptation across national borders. Whilst at first sight there may appear to be an almost paradoxical contradiction between Jeanne's instrumentalisation for national(ist) purposes and the circulation of her myth beyond national borders, her global appeal is undeniable. Her myth is relevant even at a time when the nation-state's status as a primary mediator of cultural and political identity has come under unprecedented pressure, as Julie Paucker and Robert Schuster's self-declared 'transnational' adaptation of Schiller's canonical work demonstrates. According to Schuster, the idea for the play, entitled 'MALALAI – Die afghanische Jungfrau von Orléans' (2017), originated as an immediate response to the attacks on the Paris newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015.<sup>34</sup> To counteract what they saw as an increasingly nation-state-based response to European-wide problems in the wake of these terrorist events, the artists wanted to come up with a project in which French and German actors, as a 'Zeichen der Verständigung', would engage not only with each other but also with actors from a non-European country.

Somewhat ironically, the joint production by the French-German KULA Compagnie (named KULA after a ceremonial exchange system in Papua New Guinea used to create community amongst inhabitants of the territory's diverse islands) and Ensemble AZDAR from Kabul became possible only at the second attempt. Initially, the Afghan artists were

<sup>32</sup> As expressed in the iconic line, 'Was ist unschuldig, heilig, menschlich gut,/wenn es der Kampf nicht ist um's Vaterland?' (*J*, II, 10, 1782–3), often singled out in the reception of the play.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Christine Hellmich, *Die Hamburger Bühnenmanuskripte von Schillers Drama 'Die Jungfrau von Orleans'*, Berne 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Schuster, in interview, <http://www.unique-online.de/drei-jungfrauen-und-ein-krieg/9628/> (accessed 1 July 2020).

denied entry to Germany since the Foreign Office did not consider their 'Rückkehrprognose' likely to be positive. The second time round, their colleagues, as well as citizens of Weimar, had to act as sponsors for the six actors, personally guaranteeing their return to Kabul. Even so, they were not allowed to be accompanied by their wives, who had to stay at home to ensure that the men would travel back to Afghanistan. Paucker/Schuster's multilingual production in German, English, French, Hebrew, Farsi, Dari, and Pashto, supported by German and French funding bodies, finally premiered in August 2017 at the Deutsches Nationaltheater Weimar with a cast made up of French, Afghan, German, and Israeli actors.

The play relates the French national hero as configured in Schiller's drama to the Afghan legend of Malalai of Maiwand, a nineteenth-century freedom fighter opposing British colonial powers; and juxtaposes the liberation of France during the Hundred Years' War with the ongoing struggle to consolidate Afghan independence. Paucker/Schuster deploy a number of destabilising strategies that modify Schiller's text and undermine the trajectory of a straightforward national(ist) narrative. This includes the use of diachronicity, with three distinct time periods permeating one another, namely 1430/31, the time of the historical Jeanne; the time of the origin of Schiller's play, 1801, and the subsequent Wars of Liberation; and a multilayered present which incorporates nineteenth- and twenty-first-century conflict in Afghanistan as well as the contemporary migrant crisis in Germany. There are three Jeanne, performed by two French actors and one Israeli respectively, as well as multiple Malalai. Only the Jeanne are played by female actors, all other characters, including the Malalai, by male ones. Schiller's English characters are played by Germans; thus, they embody not only the fifteenth-century occupiers of France but also the nineteenth-century oppressors of Afghanistan, whilst simultaneously alluding to the twenty-first-century German military presence in the country. Members of the Afghan ensemble, on the other hand, play French characters (though these are, alternatively, at times represented by French actors), which aligns them with the oppressed nation in the original Schiller version; in addition, they voice Afghan/Pakistani figures as well as appearing 'as themselves'.

As fifteenth-century France under duress comes to stand in for Afghanistan, England as its oppressor represents Europe in general. In this equation, Europe is in a critical state: as Afghan actor Mahfouz comments, 'Europa verendet am Hindukusch'\* ('MALALAI', III, p. 153; the asterisk indicates that this is a German translation of a passage originally delivered in a non-European language [*passim*]),<sup>35</sup> an allusion

<sup>35</sup> Quotations are from a copy of the (unpublished) multilingual script, subsequently cited as M, which provides translations of all passages into each actor's language. Where the original spoken language is European, I quote it in the main body of the text, providing the translation from the script in a footnote; where the spoken language is non-European, I cite the German translation,

to a speech by the former German Minister of Defence, Peter Struck, in which he justified German military presence in Afghanistan by insisting that '[u]nsere Sicherheit wird nicht nur, aber auch am Hindukusch verteidigt'.<sup>36</sup> Referring to the fight against international terrorism where it was said to be 'at home', Struck's statement sets out a clear 'us vs them' mentality that pitches Europe against the Middle East and equates an entire region/country with terrorism. This attitude is counterbalanced by the Afghan actor Sulaiman rejoicing, 'Das Stück ist auf unserer Seite'\* (M, III, p. 157), which suggests that, due to their parallel alignment, France's triumph over England in the original text should be equated with Afghanistan's eventual liberation from Western powers.

The multinational cast creates ongoing confusion amongst the performers themselves (e.g. Talbot: 'Höchste Zeit, dass jemand diesen *Afghanen – äh Franzosen* – mal den Marsch bläst'; M, I, p. 30, my emphasis), pointing to the fact that national allegiance can be assigned and performed in an almost arbitrary way. The sense of chaos arising from this is compounded by the accompanying multilingualism: each actor speaks in their own language, leading to a Babelian experience for performers and audiences alike which the surtitles cannot quite dissolve, echoing the 'unverständliche[s] Gemisch' (*J*, Prologue, 3, 222–3) of languages audible above war-torn Orleans in Schiller (see below). With this comes a critique of linguistic imperialism, as voiced by Malalai/Mahfouz:

Die, die Euch zusehen, verstehen mich nicht. Aber sie können lesen, was ich gesagt habe. Um uns zu verstehen, sprechen wir miteinander Englisch. Die Sprache derer, die von uns allen schon einmal der Feind waren. Wir treffen uns mit unterschiedlichen Formen der Vereinfachung in einer Sprache, die einen riesigen Wortschatz hat, weil sie sich alles einverleibt, was ihr begegnet.\* (M, IV, p. 187)

English is merely a language of translation, a *lingua franca* reduced to pure functionality and regarded with suspicion due to its imperialistic connotations. German, on the other hand, the language of Schiller's play, becomes one language of many. German is present throughout in the subtitles, but it is spoken only by the German actors cast as Englishmen, as well as by a few contemporary German characters casually inserted by Paucker. This means, of course, that Johanna, Schiller's protagonist, is denied full German-language representation, a significant instance of disallowing automatic association of a 'native' language with any of the play's characters.

marked by an asterisk, in the main text. Any linguistic/orthographic inaccuracies are due to the fact that this is very much a working document. To audiences, the German text is visible throughout the performance via surtitles. The script was made available to the author by Julie Paucker.

<sup>36</sup> Statement by Defence Minister Peter Struck, outlining the new course of the 'Bundeswehr', 11 March 2004, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/regierungserklaerung-des-bundesministers-fuer-verteidigung-dr-peter-struck-792688> (accessed 26 November 2020).

All these diverse linguistic, ethnic, temporal, and geopolitical levels are rooted in the experience of war as a universal experience that unites continents and centuries. Afghan actor Mahfouz, in the role of Thibaut, exclaims 'DER KRIEG KOMMT!'<sup>37</sup>, explaining to his European counterparts: 'Der Krieg wird auch wieder zu euch kommen. Der Krieg ändert alles. Ihr erinnert euch nicht mehr so gut, deswegen denkt ihr, Schiller ist nicht aktuell, aber das Haupt des Krieges erhebt sich schneller, als ihr denkt'\* (M, Prologue, p. 4). This assertion suggests that, at the time of performance, Schiller's text is of more immediate relevance away from his country of origin. Talk of refugees and reference to contemporary 'Auffanglager' (M, I, p. 7), hinting at repercussions of the nation state's failure to protect its citizens, merge seamlessly with the original Schiller passage depicting Orleans as a city at war:

So goss sich eine Kriegeswolke aus  
 Von Völkern über Orleans Gefilde,  
 Und von der Sprachen unverständlichem  
 Gemisch verworren dumpf erbraus't das Lager.  
 (J, Prologue, 3, 220–3 [M, p. 17])

This is set against the Afghan actors' personal experience of the consequences of daily violence, which assumes scenic form in the play. In December 2014, a play about the survivors of terror attacks entitled *Heartbeat: the Silence After the Explosion*, premiered by the AZDAR ensemble in Kabul, suffered a suicide bombing; the sixteen-year-old suicide bomber and a visitor were killed, and forty people were injured. At the beginning of 'MALALAI', the actors are holding the T-shirts they were wearing on the night of the suicide bombing. Since then, they have not been able to perform at home and the premiere in Weimar is their first performance since the explosion. Thus Paucker/Schuster's play also speaks of the traumatisation of the artists, their reconquering of the stage, and the power of art as a moment of freedom; it stresses the importance of international artistic cooperation, whilst presenting moments of performative rupture and productive insecurity.<sup>37</sup>

The detail of the T-shirts, so deeply entangled with the Afghan actors' lived experience, provides one of the first moments of interaction between disparate temporal and geographical levels. When the three Jeannes each ask for one of the T-shirts, only to be told, much to everyone's amusement, that they were a 'man's size' (see M, Prologue, p. 15), this is an updating of

<sup>37</sup> See e.g. Afghan actor Gulab's speech: 'Ich, Gulab Jan Bamik, trage eine Krone und bin euer König./Ich bin so froh und dankbar, dass ich spielen kann./Mit euch spielen kann./Dass ich euer verrückter Theaterkönig sein kann./Und keine Angst habe./Dass ihr mein Theaterpublikum seid./Und keine Angst habt' (M, IV, p. 199). On the concept of 'productive insecurity', see Ulrike Garde and Meg Mumford, *Postdramatic Reality Theatre and Productive Insecurity: Destabilizing Encounters with the Unfamiliar in Theatre from Sidney and Berlin*, New York 2013.

the passage in Schiller where Johanna requests a mysterious helmet denied her because it is considered unsuitable for the head of a maiden. The Jeannes' response, 'Il est à moi, il m'appartient' (M, Prologue, p. 16),<sup>38</sup> adapting Schiller *verbatim*, convinces Raimond (Edris) to let them have their way in an acknowledgement of their manly heart ('Wohl ziemt ihr dieser kriegerische Schmuck,/Denn ihre Brust verschließt ein männlich Herz'\*; J, Prologue, 3, 195–6/M, Prologue, p. 16). This scene suggests the transnational and transtemporal validity of restrictive gender stereotypes from the fifteenth to the twenty-first century in European and non-European countries alike.

Paucker further de-centres Schiller's text through some deliberate interventions in his script that relate to its grounding in Christian culture. She excises explicit Western-centric references to Christian superiority, such as 'Hier scheiterte der Heiden Macht. Hier war/Das erste Kreuz' (J, Prologue, 3, 337–8), which alludes to Christian victories over non-Christian powers in the area.<sup>39</sup> In addition, she inserts mention of Muslim rulers like caliphs and sultans into Thibaut's dream detailing Jeanne's ability to command respect from worldly and religious rulers: 'Und ich, ihr Vater, ihre beiden Schwestern/Und alle Fürsten, Grafen, Erzbischöfe./Kalifen und Sultane, Der König selber,/neigten sich vor ihr'\* (M, Prologue, p. 10; my emphasis). Removing the inherently anti-Muslim, Christian bias from Johanna's trajectory prepares an appropriate backdrop to the subsequent insertion into the text of a non-Christian figure in a way that is non-antagonistic.

The Eurocentrism of the original subject matter is challenged further when the European actors verbalise Orientalist stereotypes *vis-à-vis* their Afghan colleagues: 'Der Hof von Karl VII damals war ein Desaster. Wir dachten uns, das passt, die [Afghanen] können sich das gut vorstellen' (Jonas as Talbot; M, I, p. 31). Likewise, Charles' mother Isabeau, in a mixture of German and French, refers to 'afghanische Verhältnisse, toutes ces groupe[s] et diese warlords qui se déchirent ... Totales Chaos im Land. Keine Führung. Tous les trains en retard. Alle Züge in Verspätung' (M, I, p. 33). In this vein, the conflict generated by notions of Western cultural superiority is thematised throughout the play and in the interaction between the performers. When the Afghan players remind themselves that what they are asked to do in Weimar is '[d]eutsch/europäisches klassisches Theater spielen'\*; they are immediately patronised by a German actor chastising them: 'Ha[b]t [ihr] eigentlich das Stück schonmal gelesen? Schiller? Wir spielen hier Schiller, nicht "Die Bombe in Kabul"' (M, Prologue, p. 15). At the same time, a Western sense of superiority is openly critiqued in the context of postcolonial responsibility, such as when

<sup>38</sup> 'Mine is it – it belongs to me' [*sic*].

<sup>39</sup> For example, victory over the Huns in 451, near Rheims; and over the Umayyads, Muslim invaders from Spain, in 732, near Tours and Poitiers.

(French) Isabeau expresses relief that the English have arrived in order to sort things out and (Afghan) Dunois replies: 'Phänomenal dieser Dünkel. Als ob die desaströse Lage in anderen Ländern nichts mit euch zu tun hätte'\* (M, I, p. 33). This Eurocentric attitude culminates in the sequence where the descriptor of the simultaneously beautiful and terrifying goddess of war (M, I, p. 23), originally referring to Johanna, prompts Afghan actor Edris to exclaim: 'Hey, jetzt erzählst du ja doch die Geschichte von Malalai!'\* (M, I, p. 52), to which Homan responds 'Nein, das ist Schiller'\*; before Suleiman explains to the audience 'Die Geschichten sind fast gleich'\* (M, I, p. 53). French actor Romaric dismisses the Afghan story as no more than a *copy* of the French one ('Copié quoi'; M, I, p. 53), but Afghan Gulab affirms the veracity of it as a historical event: 'Nein, das ist wirklich so passiert. Die Afghanen haben die Engländer besiegt, dank einer Frau. Malalai war ein armes Hirtenmädchen...'\* (M, I, p. 53).

#### JOHANNA VS MALALAI

Paucker makes some subtle modifications to Schiller's Johanna, in line with the overall de-centring described in the previous section, in order to prepare the ground for the insertion of Malalai as a corresponding figure. As we have seen, Schiller's representation of Johanna is characterised by dichotomies, she is alternatively seen as saint or witch/whore.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, she exists beyond a binary order, which renders her presence both powerful and unsettling. In Paucker's adaptation, this is generally echoed in statements such as 'Je ne peux pas me marier et fermer ma gueule' (M, Prologue, p. 25).<sup>41</sup> However, instances of Johanna's deliberate opting out of a heteronormative binary are toned down, references to her being 'the devil's whore' (*J*, II, 10, 1714) are omitted, and allusions to her deriving her *raison d'être* from Mary are substantially reduced, making her a more fitting subject for comparison with a figure of non-Christian background. Nonetheless, Paucker's Johanna keeps some of the deviance in Schiller, evident – for example – in her being viewed as 'schwere Irrung der Natur'\* (M, Prologue, p. 7). Likewise, the male characters' desire to force Johanna back into a heteronormative order by turning her into an object of sexual gratification is retained, as when Lionel insinuates that Karl is Johanna's

<sup>40</sup> According to Michael Hadley, '[b]y offering his audience various perspectives on perceived realities, [Schiller] highlights the state of ontological insecurity which lies just below the horizon of his characters' view'; M. Hadley, 'Moral Dichotomies in Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*. Reflections on the Prologue', in *Crisis and Commitment. Studies in German and Russian Literature in Honour of J. W. Dyck*, ed. John Whiston and Harry Loewen, Waterloo 1983, pp. 56–68 (p. 65).

<sup>41</sup> 'I cannot marry and shut my mouth'.



lover and suggests a gang rape by the English army in order to 'normalize' her status (M, II, p. 93).<sup>42</sup>

The parallel between Johanna/Jeanne and Malalai is introduced early on by Mahfouz, with the focus placed on each woman's fight for her nation:

[I]ch spiele den Vater von Jeanne d'Arc. Ich würde lieber den Vater von Malalai spielen, aber das geht leider nicht. Ist zu gefährlich für uns. Heißes Thema in Afghanistan: Malalai von Maiwand, *die Mutter der Nation*. Gestorben auf dem Schlachtfeld. Malalai Joya, Politikerin. Brauchte 12 Security guards. Malalai [*sic*] Yousafzai, Friedensnobelpreisträgerin. Hat man in den Kopf geschossen, da war sie 15. Malalai Kakar, die Polizistin: Erschossen. Jeannes werden nicht erschossen. Oder zumindest nicht mehr. *Wir spielen Jeanne d'Arc. Ist in Ordnung. Es ist im Grunde ja die gleiche Geschichte.*\* (M, Prologue, p. 3; my emphasis)

The key figure here is Malalai of Maiwand, a nineteenth-century Afghan woman who, during the second British-Indian occupation of Afghanistan in the late 1880s, went forward in battle when morale was flagging, using her veil as a flag, and spurred her countrymen to victory.<sup>43</sup> She was killed by British troops at eighteen or nineteen years of age and is nowadays regarded as a national hero in Afghanistan; an example of resistance against British imperialism, she has been immortalised by Pashtun poet Ajmal Khattak. Her name and fate are echoed by other Malalai: Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist advocating female education who was shot in the head by the Taliban and later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; Malalai Joya, an Afghan activist and politician who was dismissed from parliament after denouncing the presence of warlords and war criminals in the Afghan parliament; and Malalai Kakar, a high-profile policewoman in Afghanistan who was assassinated by the Taliban in 2008.

A traditional 'landai' in Pashto establishes Malalai of Maiwand as a romantic figure: 'Ka Pah Maiwand Kay Shaheed Na Sh'way kh'day'go La'Lia Bay-Nangay ta daye sA-teena/Khal ba da yar la weno kegdam, che shenke bagh ke gul gulab wosharmawena' ('With a drop of my sweetheart's blood,/Shed in defense of the Motherland/Will I put a beauty spot on my forehead,/Such as would put to shame the rose in the garden'; M, I, p. 56).<sup>44</sup> This is what Malalai allegedly sang when her fiancé, who tried to protect her from the enemy and ran into battle in front of her, broke down mortally wounded. In marked contrast to Schiller's Johanna, who, prompted by the Virgin Mary, opts out of love but whose charisma temporarily collapses

<sup>42</sup> This is another example of a passage where Paucker adopts Schiller *verbatim*. [Lionel:] 'Denn lebend denk ich das Gespenst zu fangen./Und vor des Bastards Augen, ihres Buhlen/Trag ich auf diesen Armen sie herüber/Zur Lust des Heers, in das britann'sche Lager' (J, II, 3, 1488–91).

<sup>43</sup> Malalai of Maiwand was famed not just for storming into battle but also for tending to wounded soldiers.

<sup>44</sup> Malalai's mention of the 'Motherland' is in notable contrast to the 'Vaterland' which Schiller's Johanna refers to.

when she falls for the Englishman Lionel, legend casts Malalai in a conventional heterosexual relationship, albeit with virginal undertones, suggesting that the fixation on Johanna's marital/sexual status is present in the Malalai-narrative also. Just as Johanna's virginity served as a projection site for male phantasies in Schiller, Paucker has her male characters argue over the Jeannes' and the Malalai's desirability (M, III, pp. 121–2). A poem by the Pashtun poet, Ajmal Khattak, praising Malalai's singular beauty ('Meine Malalai lebt und sie loben die Schönheit anderer (Frauen)/Obwohl sie Augen haben, sind sie blind'\*; M, III, p. 122), is echoed by superlatives bestowed on her by the Afghan actors and followed by a discussion between Frenchmen Dunois and La Hire, characters taken from Schiller's play. Requesting the virgin as a gift from their sovereign, Dunois comes to the conclusion that he would rather kill her than see her in another's arms (M, III, p. 124). Such extreme possessiveness, which seeks to destroy what it cannot possess, at first appears to be in juxtaposition to Khattak's praise. And yet the latter's hyperbole also contributes to female objectification within a heteronormative framework, suggesting a rapidly sliding scale of oppression is at play here. This is subsequently affirmed when Paucker's French Jeanne explains to the Israeli Jeanne: 'Mais toi aussi, tu vas être vendue. Tu vas éveiller le désir du juge qui te punira d'autant plus durement que tu le repousseras. On te brûlera avec des flambeaux et tu seras rôtie dans l'huile' (M, IV, p. 184).<sup>45</sup> From there, it is only one short step to a reflection on the fate of Afghan women like Mallali Nurzi, who self-immolate to escape forced marriages. In the words of Malalai Joya speaking on their behalf, voiced by Afghan actor Mafouh, '[d]ie hunderte afghanische Frauen, die sich selbst in Brand stecken – sie verüben nicht nur Selbstmord, um ihrem Elend zu entkommen. Sie schreien nach Gerechtigkeit'\* (M, V, p. 26). The women's reaction to gendered oppression is reframed as an act of protest attempting to reclaim agency; as such, it is in stark opposition to the circumstances of the historical Jeanne's execution by fire at the hands of a patriarchal system.

As remarked previously, Johanna's desire to remain a non-binary, non-sexual being is at all times in conflict with male characters assigning different interpretations to her status. In Schiller, the king orders the flags to be lowered onto her body in a last attempt to inscribe her with semantic patterns that wipe out her individuality even after her demise.<sup>46</sup> Johanna's apotheosis following death in battle amounts to the renewal of the state through the restoration of paternalistic structures. Paucker modifies this by devising three different endings for her three Jeannes. These go beyond

<sup>45</sup> 'But you will be sold as well. You will awake the desire of the judge who will sentence you even harder [be]cause you will refuse him. You're supposed to be scorched with torches and roasted in oil'.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Hans-Georg Pott, 'Heiliger Krieg, Charisma und Märtyrertum in Schiller's romantischer Tragödie *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*', *Athenäum*, 20 (2010), 111–42 (139).

Schiller by encompassing Jeanne's historical death at the stake, punishment at the hands of contemporary fundamentalists, and the living hell of an oppressive heterosexual relationship. One Jeanne is tortured and dies in prison. Another chooses love and becomes a 'bourgeoise' (in the words of Julie Paucker<sup>47</sup>), which brings its own kind of torture when Lionel belittles her as his 'Honeybee' (M, V, p. 23) and 'jokes' that he will check whether she is still a virgin – an echo, perhaps, of the oppressive scenario of Schiller's Lionel announcing to Johanna in chains that all she needs to do is be his (J, V, 9, 3337) and renounce France in order to regain her freedom (e.g. J, V, 10, 3396). The third Jeanne is accused of having burnt a Koran, which in turn provokes a deadly attack from a Taliban fighter, an incident modelled on the killing of Farkhunda Malikzada in Kabul in 2015. Here, Paucker sidesteps allegations of religious fanaticism frequently levelled against Jeanne/Johanna by placing her precisely in opposition to fundamentalism.<sup>48</sup> These gruesome endings reinforce the parallel between the figure of Jeanne and that of Malalai: like the Jeannes in their final moments, the Malalai, too, are patronised and silenced by patriarchal societies. Such annihilation contrasts with the play's final focus on the belief in Afghan women's inspirational leadership as expressed by Nasir, reading a text by Malalai Joya: '[I]ch glaube, [...] [d]ass afghanische Frauen während unserer gesamten stolzen Geschichte ganz vorne mitgekämpft haben. Wie Malalai von Maiwand ermutigen sie uns, die Fahne aufzunehmen und den Kampf um Gerechtigkeit und Freiheit fortzuführen'\* (M, V, p. 31). Statements such as this validate the role of women in the fight for a nation's autonomy, recalling Schiller's enthusiastic pronouncement that 'das weibliche, das heroische und das göttliche selbst'<sup>49</sup> are united in the figure of Johanna, whilst the divine component is removed and female agency strengthened in Paucker/Schuster's rendition.

Paucker/Schuster's play concludes with a reflection on the current state (i.e. in 2017) of the Afghan nation's struggle for self-determination, which is seen to recall both France's invasion by England during the Hundred Years' War and German oppression under Napoleon: 'Noch immer ist die Lage in Afghanistan so, dass wir zwischen zwei Feinden zermalmt werden: den Taliban auf der einen und den US- und den NATO-Streitkräften und den Warlords auf der anderen Seite'\* (M, V, p. 27). The actors express confidence that neither this de-stabilisation and lack of autonomy

<sup>47</sup> In an email to the author of this article, 9 June 2019.

<sup>48</sup> The strong religious aura of e.g. Schiller's original character must be understood in the context of the history of the concept of nation, which originated as a substitute for religion. According to Josep Llobera, 'the nation, as a culturally defined community, is the highest symbolic value of modernity; it has been endowed with a quasi-sacred character equaled only by religion' (Josep R. Llobera, *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe*, Oxford 1994, p. ix). In Schiller, this is still very obvious; in Paucker/Schuster, Jeanne is a post-religious figure in opposition to religious fanaticism.

<sup>49</sup> Schiller in a letter to Iffland, 5 August 1803, in Schiller, *Briefe II* (note 3), p. 668.

*vis-à-vis* Western powers nor the subjugation of women will last forever (M, V 6, p. 28), borrowing the words of Malalai Joya once again: '[D]er Kampf Afghanistans um seine Unabhängigkeit dauer[t] schon Jahrhunderte [...]. Wir müssen [...] die nationale Einheit gegenüber unseren gemeinsamen Feinden aufrechterhalten'\* (M, V, p. 29; read by Gulab). In the play's final moments, Nasir re-claims the upbeat pronouncement uttered by Schiller's Johanna in the face of death, 'Kurz ist der Schmerz und ewig ist die Freude!'\* (M, V, p. 30). In their original context, these words reveal the extent of Johanna's commitment to the cause and her simultaneous instrumentalisation, but they are framed differently here: Nasir as Malalai Joya voicing Johanna hints at the female warrior's transformation from instrumentalised puppet to autonomous freedom fighter.

#### TRANSNATIONALISING JEANNE/JOHANNA

The final focus of 'MALALAI' on Afghanistan, replacing the French victory over England in Schiller, transcends the geopolitical and cultural Eurocentrism of the Jeanne d'Arc narrative. This stance is prepared earlier when Johanna's *alter ego*, the Black Knight, instructs her that 'Frankreich ist für dich zu klein./Afghanische Jeanne d'Arc, das wirst du sein!'\* (M, III, p. 160). She responds:

De quels pays, de quels malheurs inouïs?  
De quels pàturages inconnus, quelles langages inécoutées?  
Ma tâche donc est plus grande que je (ne) savais,  
La liberté de *notre* peuple n'était que le début.<sup>50</sup> (M, III, pp. 163–4)

Here, in Paucker's addition to Schiller's original text, Jeanne finds her own voice. She realises that the liberation of her own nation must result in the liberation of other nations and go hand in hand with the liberation of women and other oppressed groups:

Et en ouvrant mon cœur aux cris du peuple français  
Je ne suis pas arrivé à le renfermer pour  
Ne pas entendre les cris des opprimés d'ailleurs.  
Je ne sais pas dresser des murs, Définir des limites, découper des territoires  
Je ne l'ai jamais pu.<sup>51</sup> (M, V, p. 21)

Thus the national heroine becomes transnational by going beyond former boundaries of nation, stating '[j]e veux [...] que la différence ne

<sup>50</sup> 'Of what other homelands did he speak to me?/Of which countries['] unspeakable pain?/Of what glades unseen, languages unheard[...]d?/My quest it seems is larger than I knew/The freedom of our people just the beginning.'

<sup>51</sup> 'And by opening my heart to the screams of the French nation/I could not close it again afterwards/Not hear the screams of the oppressed people of other places/I can't build walls/Define limits, cut territories/I never could.'

fasse [plus] [de] différence'<sup>52</sup> (M, IV, p. 186). This dictum is reminiscent of Schiller's notion, expressed in the unpublished fragment 'Deutsche Größe' (c.1801), that 'das Reinmenschliche' should supersede the national, which is defined as limiting, transitory, and accidental.<sup>53</sup> According to Schuster, Schiller's play is testament to his dream of a bigger, humanist Germany, for which the concept of nation has a unifying rather than exclusionary meaning.<sup>54</sup> By removing national limitations from the figure of Jeanne/Johanna, Paucker/Schuster's adaptation arguably stays true to the spirit of Schiller's humane cosmopolitanism, which, whilst perhaps more explicitly present in 'Deutsche Größe', is certainly compatible with the playwright's handling of nationalism as a potentially destructive force in *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.

Paucker/Schuster's version of Schiller's play transcends the traditional antinomy between nationalism and transnationalism embodied in earlier incarnations of Jeanne, illustrating how they need not be mutually exclusive. As Braun/Schofield put it, 'the transnational does not negate the national, it coexists with it':<sup>55</sup> whilst the nation state remains a meaningful entity, allegiance to it is not to the exclusion of others' right to self-determination. Juxtaposing Johanna with a non-European counterpart de-territorialises the former<sup>56</sup> and foregrounds common denominators, such as Johanna/Malalai's outsider status, their non-normative behaviour in defiance of traditional gender roles, and the importance of sacrifice. It also shines a critical light on the self-effacement required of Schiller's heroine, and the religious zeal characteristic of her, both of which are present to a lesser degree in the framing of her latter-day counterparts. By having the Franco-German legend engage with her Afghan equivalent, Paucker and Schuster draw attention to the national instrumentalisation of women activists past and present. Where Schiller's Johanna had shown the need to re-enforce boundaries between the sexes in order for boundaries between nations to be securely established, Paucker/Schuster's Malalai presents as potentially freed from these restrictions, validating female leadership and exceptionality. The interpolation of the legendary Afghan woman, who is presented as an exceptional rather than an anomalous female, dissolves the gendered and national boundaries inscribed in the figure of Jeanne and re-configures her as an agent of resistance to imperial and misogynistic politics precisely through aligning her with a non-European sister-in-arms.

<sup>52</sup> 'I want [...] that the difference doesn't make any difference anymore.'

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Schiller's unpublished fragment 'Deutsche Größe'; and Maike Oergel, 'The German Identity, the German *Querelle* and the Ideal State: A Fresh Look at Schiller's Fragment *Deutsche Größe*', in Martin (ed.), *Schiller: National Poet – Poet of Nations* (note 28), pp. 241–56 (p. 254).

<sup>54</sup> 'eine übergeordnete, vereinende Bedeutung', <http://www.unique-online.de/drei-jungfrauen-und-ein-krieg/9628/> (accessed 1 July 2020). Cf. also Peter-André Alt, *Schiller. Leben, Werk, Zeit*, Munich 2000, who emphasises Schiller's focus on 'gesamteuropäische Themen' (p. 219).

<sup>55</sup> Braun and Schofield, 'Introduction: Transnationalizing German Studies' (note 16), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The appearance of multiple Jeannes as well as Malalai relativises the myth; at the same time, the multiplication of structurally similar scenarios amplifies the fact that the oppression of nations has a parallel in the oppression of women.

Paucker/Schuster's 'Die afghanische Jungfrau von Orléans' interrogates tradition, demonstrating how revisiting canonical works gives us a chance to rethink our contemporary political situations. Rather than being moved by a retrospective impetus, their adaptation is part of a new chapter in the hermeneutic afterlife of the Schiller classic. It is a chapter in which Germany has just as much to learn as the other imperial powers referred to in the text, something that is nowhere clearer than in the scene transposing Schiller's scenario to 2017 Germany where Jeanne and Malalai walk hand in hand in the wilderness: seeking shelter, they are turned away by a succession of German householders (M, V, p. 5). Faced with a Europe that emerges as a problematic and fractured entity, Paucker/Schuster posit combining intersectional and transnational approaches and advocate a supranational consensus extending beyond Europe where possible. By transnationalising Schiller, Paucker/Schuster demonstrate how the 'transnational mobility of peoples, concepts and policies' can result, through 'acts of linguistic and cultural translation, in increased understanding and the creation of transnationally imagined communities'.<sup>57</sup> If Schiller's 'Mädchen' insists on creating and reinforcing otherness in the shape of the nation state, Paucker/Schuster's heroines, doing away with the centuries-old template established by Christine de Pisan, show us how, at a time of the nation state's ongoing transformation, the figure of Jeanne can facilitate a dialogue both amongst Europeans and from European and non-European perspectives.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.