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Lost in Translation: Retelling the Tale of Joan of Arc

Hannah Jones, Pennsylvania

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Ever since Joan of Arc was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431, historians have studied her lengthy trial interrogations for a glimpse of who Joan the person was. They've offered society both pious and saucy descriptions, portrayed her as a "religious mystic, rebellious girl..."unnatural" transvestite," an Amazon, a schizophrenic, a patriot and, depending upon who you read, a common or uncommon woman of the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{57} Lacking a definitive conclusion, historians, musicians, popular literary figures, modern filmmakers, and other larger social groups have gone on to portray her in their own ways: canonizing her as a saint, promoting her to the rank of France's national heroine, and characterizing her in literature. With primary documents offering no clues as to Joan's physical appearance—aside from her shortly cropped hair—inspired artists' paintbrushes have since flown in all directions. In an attempt to organize the diverse collection of portrayals, much revered Jehannic scholar, Regine Pernoud, argued in the 1998 English translation of her book, \textit{Joan of Arc: Her Story}, that most of the images of Joan fit into "three major traditions: Joan the shepherdess to whom the saints appear, Joan the female soldier carrying armor, the sword, and the standard; and finally, Joan the saint at the stake in Rouen."\textsuperscript{58} However, a close examination of Joan in film, literature, art, and music reaching back as far as 1429 offers what I would argue is a fourth tradition that Pernoud either overlooked or neglected. This fourth category defines Joan with terms and imagery familiar to contemporary audiences—the then-existing society each work was created and presented within—most often concerning issues of morality, courage, and honor, so as to mold Joan into an updated role model. This fourth tradition can be further subdivided into three distinct approaches which generations have used when updating Joan: \textit{attributing} characteristics appealing by contemporary standards to her, \textit{transporting} her to a contemporary setting, and \textit{translating} her within the context of contemporary circumstances.

The act of attributing characteristics to her first began when Joan, still galloping across battlefields, was fastened upon the literary page by Christine De Pizan in the 1429 poem "Ditie De Jehanne D'Arc." Full of praise and admiration for Joan, the poem went so far as to describe her as the reason why "the sun began to shine again" in the gloomy, war-torn France of 1429. By comparing Joan's deeds to "bless[ed] virt[u]ous" Moses who "in the same way...led us out of evil" and by describing her as "always ha[ving] her eyes fixed on God...nowhere does her devotion even falter," De Pizan used Biblical language every audience member would have been familiar with to portray Joan as an instrument of God, unwavering in her religious loyalty. In this way, Joan becomes a figure of honor, respect, and pioussness. Using this basis, De Pizan then turned to the purpose of her poem: using Joan's star status for the feminist cause. As Christine McWebb, author of the article "Joan of Arc and Christine De Pizan" wrote, the poem not only marked "the beginning of a long tradition of mythifying Joan of Arc's legendary life," but De Pizan also used this myth as "an emblem of female heroism," thereby transforming Joan into a pro-feminist figurehead.\textsuperscript{59} In

one stanza, De Pizan wrote that this pure, God-sent, country-saving woman did “something that 5,000 men could not have done,” emphasizing her admirable strength and military skill. In this way, De Pizan tried to grab the attention of male readers, humble them in the face of achievements a teenage girl could do better than troops of Frenchmen. By continuously reflecting upon Joan’s strength—which De Pizan insisted is greater than either legendary hero, Hector or Achilles—the poem attempted to depict Joan as better than any man; of greater quality, virtue, and purpose than any man. When describing Joan’s good deeds of patriotism, national defense, heavenly obedience, and military success, De Pizan extended her praise to a community: “What honor,” De Pizan exclaimed, “for the female sex!” In doing this, De Pizan attempted to construct a link between Joan and the feminist campaign. She claimed Joan’s great deeds as reflecting upon her gender and thereby used her to further promote her own “demands on men to change their attitude towards women.” This relabeling and resulting symbolic claim to Joan’s leadership was simply the first in a long line of examples in which authors used Joan of Arc for a contemporary purpose.60

Instead of personality traits, the artist of the 1581 painting Portrait de l’Hôtell de Ville attributed physical characteristics to Joan so that her image better fit the prevailing female appearance norms of the day and therefore made her a more appropriate role model. As historian Ellen Ecker Dolgin explained the historiography of Joan through art, “artists have been able to conceive her according to their own individual tastes, and/or those of the era they lived in.”61 Instead of her armor, Joan sports a dress with long sleeves and a tight bodice embellished with fine embroidery along the square neckline and narrowly cinched waist. From the waist cascades a wide pleated skirt that stretches beyond the limits of the painting, assumedly ending at an appropriate length. She also wears a chain-linked necklace, a far cry from chainmail, and a feathered headdress of sorts, while her indistinct hair subtly falls behind her puffed sleeved shoulders. With a handkerchief in her left hand, her head tilts coyishly to the side as her lips form a teasing Mona Lisa smile. The single indication of who she is and what she does is grasped delicately in her right hand: a thin sword, held in a way more appropriate for a parasol than a weapon. This model of femininity was consistent with contemporary expectations. No matter how historically accurate it might have been, a painting portraying a woman in men’s clothes would not have been considered an ideal role model for young women. By tweaking the image, the artist transformed Joan into a more appropriate version of someone contemporary audiences would admire.62

Another artist, Jean Auguste Dominique similarly altered and updated Joan in a way to make her more relatable to the contemporary audiences of 1854. Though wearing the full suit of armor, a peach colored length of fabric, wrapping skirt-like, around her waist, allowing only the side angle of an armored thigh and knee to peak through softens the militaristic image. Her hair is again long, though tied back in a ponytail with only hints of wispy ends revealing themselves. Again, the historical record was disregarded in favor of a

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60 For all the quotations from Christine de Pizan, see Ditie De Jehanne D’Arc, ed. Angus J. Kennedy and Kenneth Varty (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1977), 41, 44, 45, 46.
61 See Ellen Ecker Dolgin, Modernizing Joan of Arc, 97, for quote.
62 For further examination of the work, see Appendix A.
more feminine portrayal in accordance with modern fashion. Despite the typically male attire, this Joan is undeniably female. At the same time, Joan is firmly linked with praiseworthy characteristics. With her bare hand resting on the altar, and a crowd kneeling in prayer behind her, her gaze glued to the heavens, and a discrete golden halo circling her head, the painter endows Joan with symbols of religious purity and respect. A backdrop of fleur-de-lis and Joan’s tight grip on her banner pole projects an image of national reverence and military victory. In this way, the painting blended the admirable achievements with an emphasized focus on her gender to make Joan less of a challenge to contemporary female expectations.

Artists continued the tradition in the 1890s by mixing modern female fashion trends with Joan’s not-so-mainstream battlefield behavior. Jeanne d’Arc, a sculpture by Emmanuel Fremiet, offers Joan riding erect and proud atop a sturdy warhorse with a circle of leaves crowning her head and a long, thick braid swinging down her back. Eugene Grasset’s similarly titled drawing offers a Joan with long hair, reaching past her shoulders, while adding a cumbersome, dress-like covering to her outfit which hides most of the armored suit underneath. Smoke billows and boils in the sky and arrows fly towards her while Joan delicately rests a hand over her heart. This portrayed Joan as in alignment with contemporary femininity. Instead of disregarding physical indications of gender, these artistic presentations highlighted them. This phenomenon is most evident in the drawing by Grasset. The 1890s was a transition period in women’s fashion, as the corseted hourglass figure slowly melted into the straighter cut and shape of the twenty-first century flapper. Joan maintains an elegant S posture similar to the Victorian model common upon the pages of the era’s fashion magazines, while also possessing the same desirable extreme height, leanness, belt-cinched waist, and delicately understated, flattened chest. By thus attributing trendy characteristics to Joan, she became both a role and fashion model consistent with the era’s similarly prominent female figures.

In a slightly different approach, William Shakespeare made Joan attractive to the intended contemporary English audience by contributing wicked and immoral characteristics to her. The English public at large would have still resented this Maid who defeated their troops in the Hundred Years’ War; Joan of Arc was someone they loved to hate. To satisfy this demand, in his play Henry the Sixth Part I, Shakespeare had Joan act out the part of a slutty “La Pucelle.” Perhaps with the intention of providing supernatural reasons as to why she was so successful in battle and to nurse the injured English ego, she was also described as “a witch” and a “damned sorceress.” In Act III, Scene iii, Joan gives a speech convincing a traitorous Burgundian to return to his initial loyalties and fight for the French side. She is so suspiciously persuasive that it implies enchantment. “Either she hath bewitch’d me,” the Burgundian soldier explains, “or nature makes me suddenly relent.” The end of the play confirms all subtle implications when Joan, using “ancient incantations,” calls evil spirits to her aid on the battlefield, chanting until thunder erupts and the fiends appear. “Take my soul, my body, soul and all,” she offers a trade, “before that England give the French the foil.” Shakespeare continued on to make a liar and a hypocrite

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63 For further examination of the artwork, see Appendix B.
64 For further details, examine Appendix C and D. For further information about female fashion in the 1890s, see Tara Magins, The History of Fashion and Dress. http://www.costumes.orgg/classes/fashiodress/TurnoftheCentury.htm.
of Joan when on the stake she insists that she “never had to do with wicked spirits.” Squirmimg, trying to escape her fate, Joan is further portrayed as a liar when she suddenly calls out that she’s “with child, ye bloody homicides,” and the characteristic of impurity is added to the list when she begins to cast out important names such as Reignier, the King of Naples, as the father. An English character laughs at her plea: “I think she knows not well, there were so many, whom she may accuse.” In this way, Shakespeare reinterpreted Joan into a figure that, though hardly cast in an admirable light or even cast a bone of virtue, would please the intended contemporary audience.65

Tchaikovsky’s little known opera, The Maid of Orleans, similarly sought to satisfy contemporary audience members by providing a romanticizing twist updating peasant girl Joan into a more dramatically interesting character. The orchestra sets the scene for love, loss, danger, and seductive romance. The introductory music itself is romantic with rich vibrato among the string sections, accompanied by a harp, an instrument usually associated with heavenly persons and themes. The music then dips into a frightening section of thundering timpani, warning trumpet blares, and a crescendo of fast fleeing strings. The forbidden romance begins when angels command Joan to give up hope “for earthly love, no wedding candles shall be lit for you.” In the third act, her promise is tested when on the battlefield she meets Lionel, a Burgundian who is “touched by [her] blossoming beauty,” and who begs her to run away with him. The focus of the other songs involves internal struggles of temptation rather than war. Attributing love-sick characteristics to her, the history textbook version of Joan is remolded into the melodramatic lead in a tale of doomed, star-crossed lovers. With no reference to God, her country, or war, this Joan spends the opera desperate to overcome her situation and tormented that she cannot simply run away from her responsibilities to instead live a life of passion. The opera transformed Joan from a military and religious figure into the more audience-attractive Juliet of France.

The opera also projects anogical symbols upon her that most audience members would easily identify. The most obvious Biblical meaning surfaces when French peasants flee their ransacked and burning village, carrying a heavy wooden cross on their backs, mirroring the image of Christ laboring over his own death. Joan then steps up to the cross and leans against it, both foreshadowing her burning and reminiscent of the crucifixion of Christ. In this moment, Joan’s self-sacrifice for her troops symbolizes Jesus’s self-sacrifice for his followers.66

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc by the Sieur Louis de Conte (her page and secretary) Freely translated out of the ancient French into modern English from the original unpublished manuscript in the national archives of France by Jean Francois Alden by Mark Twain, first published in 1896, updated Joan by attributing qualities to her considered most admirable by Twain’s contemporary American reader audience. As Dolgin put it, “what American’s found so important, so endearing about Joan’s story [was that] she was “self-made,” a product of “the people,” a victim of a repressive ideology.”67 Indeed, Twain

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65 For all William Shakespeare quotations, see The First Part of Henry the Sixth: With Introduction, Notes, Glossary, Critical Comments and Method of Study (New York: The University Society, 1901), 75, 102, 101, 109, 110.
66 For this work, I utilized the edition available in The Maid of Orleans, produced by Boris Pokrovsky, 150 minutes, Kultur, 1990, 1 DVD.
67 For quote, see Ellen Ecker Dolgin, Modernizing Joan of Arc, 81.
portrayed Joan as a wholesome, homegrown character, possessing tried, true, and respected traits. His admiration for her is evident by his frequent and lengthy praises. The nicknames that Twain gave her—“ Bashful” “the Patriot” “Beautiful,” and this was not merely because of the extraordinary beauty of her face and form, but because of the loveliness of her character. And one other—the Brave”—offers the fullest characterization of his vision of Joan. The book goes on to describe her as truthful, honest, selfless, modest, brave, compassionate, steadfast, generous, gentle, spellbindingly persuasive, “as blameless as the very flowers of the fields” and “spotlessly pure in mind and body.” In this, Joan is the well-rounded character who fulfills the role of the dedicated soldier who Americans appreciate, the caring volunteer Americans encourage, as well as the honest Abe the American court system idealizes. Joan was “patriotism embodied,” he wrote, “concreted, made flesh, and palpable to the touch and visible to the eye.” As a nation overflowing with songs concerning love of one’s country, there is little higher praise in American culture. However, Twain did indeed go further and higher by describing her as “the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only one,” implying her ranking of second only to Christ. By doing this, Twain gave the audience a vivid image of this woman being everything that is good. While an entire religious body strives to live their lives as Jesus would, ranking Joan in this way implied that people should follow in her noble footsteps and take a few life lessons from her as well. Heaping compliments upon each other, Twain rendered Joan into the embodiment of all that is good, pure, and admirable; the role model for others to follow. Not only did he admire her, but Twain constructed a vision of Joan that was tailored to command admiration from all who read about her, as well as command a following.68

The 1912 Ringling Brother’s poster advertising “An Inspiring, Vivid Picture of Bewildering Splendor and Patriotic Zeal, the Magnificent Coronation Procession of Charles VII,” featuring Joan of Arc and 1200 other characters, dedicated a parade not to Charles, but to Joan’s patriotism. The purpose of a parade is to showcase impressive skills, costumes, and victories. The focus of this particular event was on the patriotism, passion, and dedication of Joan of Arc and thereby demanded the contemporary society to gear their attention towards these qualities. The existence of the parade implied that she was a fine person, worthy of leading the parade. Such a reward of attention would lead society to the conclusion that being as patriotic, loyal, and dedicated as Joan of Arc leads to such admiration. Joan thereby became the role model of patriotism worthy of contemporary imitation.69

Similarly, in the patriotic song written at the opening of World War I by Alfred Bryan and Willie Weston with music by Jack Wells, “Joan of Arc (They Are Calling You),” Joan is portrayed as a leader worthy of military admiration centuries later. The song was intended to be a call from WWI soldiers to Joan of Arc up in heaven, begging her to “come anew,” meaning to reincarnate in some way, and allow her revisiting spirit to “guide [them] through” and “lead [her] France to victory.” As they struggle, the soldiers see Joan as the

68 For all Mark Twain quotations, see Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc by the Sieur Louis de Conte (her page and secretary) Freely translated out of the ancient French into modern English from the original unpublished manuscript in the national archives of France by Jean Francois Alden (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1899), 36, 200, xi-xiii, 287, xviii.

69 For further examination of poster details, see Appendix E.
savior who embodies all of the leadership qualities and military success tactics they are in such desperate need of. Her qualities are universally appreciated on the battlefield no matter what the era. However, the song never specifically describes what characteristics make her presence so desirable. They believe she could rally the "drooping Fleur-de-lis" and wipe away the "tears of Normandy," but the song never states how she will do this or what qualities she processes that will make this miraculous victory possible. This absence of specific definition therefore allows the imagination to run wild and contribute every good quality to her.\(^7\)

In 1920 the Catholic Church granted Joan the official status of "saint" and, influenced by this, director Carl Theodore Dreyer soon after offered society a new portrayal, attributing saintly characteristics to her in accordance with her contemporary social status. An anagogical reading of the title itself, *The Passion of Jeanne d'Arc*, echoes the relation to the familiar phrase, 'passion of Christ.' Indeed, Joan's silent suffering throughout the trial scenes could be construed as reminiscent of the prolonged persecution of Jesus. The film begins with introductory text, talking about the trial documents and how reading them reveals "the real Joan, not in Armor, but simple and human. A young woman who died for her country...a young pious woman." Serving as a condensed version of the trial, the entire film consists of close-up shots of the judges jeering faces and Joan's suffering one. She cries steadily with dramatic single tears etching pathways down her cheeks. When she answers questions, she is passionate in her declarations, adamant, clear, and stoutly confident in her responses. However, half the time it seems as if Joan's mind is elsewhere—perhaps distracted by a conversation with her heavenly sent voices—as she stares upwards as if begging God for mercy. So dazed is she at one point that when one of the judges spits upon her face, she remains completely un-phased. Alone in her cell, she sobs and hicups uncontrollably, calming down only when the barred window pane casts a cross-like shadow. As the trial goes on, Joan becomes increasingly lifeless, passive when attacked by guards, her drooping eyelids closed and resting for longer periods of time, her head wobbling limply with the continued slew of questions, hanging to the side as if her neck no longer has the strength to hold it up. Slowly, she is drained of both energy and life, just as Christ himself wilted on the Cross. Dedicated to the devotion that led her to this suffering fate, this film translates Joan into the tragic martyr the society had recently chosen to remember her as.\(^7\)

The 1948 film *Joan of Arc: Portrait of a Legend* starring Ingrid Bergman attributed characteristic traits including strength, independence, and a do-it-yourself attitude that was attractive to an audience of WWII-era women. Instead of begging on her knees for people to heed her as earlier film productions did, Bergman is a powerful speaker, whose voice instantly demands silence; her enthralling passion as she speaks to crowds of soldiers similarly demands obedience. Unlike previous films, where Joan was a damsel in distress, constantly requiring the assistance of a man, Bergman's interpretation of Joan is unapologetically independent and self-reliant. Constantly composed, she never crumbles

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\(^7\) For quotes and portrayal, see *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, directed by Carl Th. Dreyer, 82 minutes, Gaument, 1928, 1 DVD.
into hysteria. This portrayal instead echoes the steel fiber strength of the new Rosie the Riveter popularized in film, posters, and society.\textsuperscript{72}

Though Giuseppe Verdi’s opera \textit{Giovanna D’Arco} was originally performed in 1845, the 1990 film production most easily accessible to the modern Joan fan or opera buff associates Joan with symbolic imagery familiar to modern audiences that effectively canonizes her while demonizing her persecutors in turn. The prologue consists of crowds of black clad peasants milling around, many carrying large wooden crosses upon their back. This biblical image comparing the humility of the French peasants to that of Christ, who had to labor over his own crucifixion, would be familiar to most audiences. The image thus portrays Joan’s countrymen as the victims and those that suppress them as the demons. When the English troops appear in the first act, set in Orleans, they sport blood red cloaks that resemble Ku Klux Klan outfits. This link between a later-generation evil and the enemies of Joan’s era heightens the audience’s demonization of the English. By attributing the updated imagery to Joan, her situation becomes more comprehensible to a contemporary audience.\textsuperscript{73}

The 1916 silent film \textit{Joan the Woman}, produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille, similarly provides Ku Klux Klan imagery to update the contemporary understanding of Joan’s situation. Utilizing flashbacks, the film provides the scene of when head judge Bishop Pierre Cauchon leads Joan, exhausted and frightened, into the torture chamber. She is immediately surrounded by the white cloaks and pointed white hoods that are symbolic of the twentieth century KKK. Another detail that implies the contemporary influence is the purpose of these figures: to terrify those they deem as a threat to society. The figures are successful in this when Joan’s lips begin to tremble, her eyes widen, she clutches her chest, utters a silent scream, and attempts to escape the grasp of her captors and flee the room. These white cloaked figures were no coincidence of costume, but a clear footnote to contemporary society that assisted the audience in understanding Joan’s terror by comparing it to a social experience they would be familiar with.

The film also portrays Joan as a damsels in distress, attributing features like helplessness and flirtation to update her into a contemporary romantic lead. The fantasized romance that develops between DeMille’s Joan and a Burgundian soldier transforms Joan into a mainstream stereotype which is easily recognized by contemporary audiences. Before the film begins, text appears to introduce the heroine: “the Girl Patriot, who fought with men, was loved by men, and killed by men—yet withal retained the heart of a woman.” The only way, it seems, the film can portray her heart as being positively female is by having her fall in deep, true, and forbidden love with a man. Scenes of courtship begin between Joan and the wounded Eric Trent when she hides him and nurses him back to health in the hayloft. Revived, he places an apparently heated kiss upon her hand. “What wilt thou do with me Englishman?” Joan, fanning herself, asks. Though he runs away to rejoin the Burgundian army, they meet each other again several times on the battlefield. Joan frequently fulfills the role of the damsel in distress as she begs on bended

\textsuperscript{72} To see Ingrid Bergman’s performance, see \textit{Joan of Arc: A portrait of a Legend}, produced by Walter Wanger, directed by Victor Fleming, 100 minutes, MCMXII Sterling Entertainment Group, 1948, 1 DVD. For further Joan performances by Bergman, see \textit{Giovanna D’Arco al rogo}, directed by Roberto Rossellini, 70 mintes, Ripley’s Home Video, 1954, 1 DVD.

\textsuperscript{73} See \textit{Giovanna D’Arco}, directed by Werner Herzog and Henning Von Gierke, 127 minutes, Kulture, 1990, 1 DVD, for further viewing.
knees for her life while Eric Trent swoops in, the typical knight in shining armor, to save his lady. The damsel image is reinforced by her historically inaccurate gauzy white dress, complete with dramatic bell sleeves and a ground-sweeping train. In this way, Joan's womanhood is modified to appeal to contemporary audiences.\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{Joan the Woman} also utilizes the transportation method, by having her ghost haunt the WWI trenches, to update Joan. In the introductory text, the film insists that “Joan of Arc is not dead. She can never die—and in the war-torn land she loved so well, her Spirit fights today,” thereby encouraging the idea that Joan’s spirit lives on, campaigns behind the fighting troops, and that even death could not cease her continued support of her country. The film then formally opens to “An English Trench Somewhere in France,” during WWI. A soldier starts hacking at the underground wall next to his cot with a hatchet and is rewarded with the discovery of a rotting iron sword. Holding the weapon aloft, suddenly Joan appears wearing an armor plate overtop a flowing white dress. Glowing angelically, she commands the soldier to undertake a patriotic suicide mission. In this way, Joan is portrayed as an inspirational wartime figure whose courage on the battlefield and dedication to her country is a commendable quality contemporary soldiers who continue to defend France should emulate.

By altering history, Voltaire’s 1755 burlesque in \textit{The Virgin of Orleans} transported Joan into the corrupt Church which Voltaire associated with his own era. Voltaire’s Joan—“a course, even doltish peasant who loves to kill English, rides a winged ass, and frequently appears nude”—was surrounded by priests who violently and pleasurably rape women, until interrupted by the barging entrance of a lovesick youth. “Distressed but not surprised,” such priests would return to Church “to chant a mass.”\textsuperscript{75} Acting as if it was the most natural habit in the world, the priest committed a violent sin and then turned around to portray a façade of moral leadership. This setting, this Church, was an institution—according to Voltaire—of 1755, not 1430. The story illustrates that, were Joan to have lived in his time when the Church was this corrupt, she would have had to struggle to preserve her virginity, surprisingly intact despite the fact that “her tanned breasts, firm as rock, enticed the hands of the robe, the helmet, and the cowl.”\textsuperscript{76} The majority of the plot therefore focuses upon a series of close-call rapes and lusty incidents that threaten the preservation of her purity. According to Voltaire, women possessing great beauty and a sexually alluring figure were oftentimes preyed upon by the men of the cloth. If Joan had time traveled to the eighteenth century, “the hands of the robe” wouldn’t have been able to restrain themselves.\textsuperscript{77}

Late twentieth century music producers gave Joan new life as a starlet in the Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark music video for “Maid of Orleans (The Waltz Joan of Arc),” in which Joan was plucked from her era and transported to the 1980s. Set in a dorm room, Joan looses a game of chess to a college boy while dressed in full armor. The game is a symbolic representation of Joan and her experience in the terms of a board game. In the game, representative of the Hundred Years’ War, Joan commanded many troops, but she

\textsuperscript{74} For the quotes, see \textbf{Joan the Woman}, produced and directed by Cecil B. DeMille, 137 minutes, MMI Image Entertainment, 1916, 1 DVD.

\textsuperscript{75} For quote, see Regine Pernoud, \textit{Joan of Arc: Her Story}, 238. For a similar view, see translator Howard Nelson’s Forward, \textit{The Virgin of Orleans or Joan of Arc} (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1965), 7.

\textsuperscript{76} For the rape scene and quote, see Voltaire, \textit{The Virgin}, 73 and 15.

\textsuperscript{77} Voltaire, \textit{The Virgin}, 15.
was “checkmated” at Paris, lost her king and his protection, and then proceeded to essentially lose the game when she was burned at the stake. This transportation was done with the purpose of reinterpreting who Joan was for the audience by placing her in a familiar situation.  

Joan is yet again transported—this time into the form of a women's aerobic drill sergeant—into contemporary society in the 1988 film Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure. Literally kidnapped from a church in the middle of a prayer, Joan is thrust into a time machine and transported forward several centuries. Portrayed as most at home in the local gym, obsessed with intense training and exercise Joan is updated into a contemporary character. Her military enthusiasm is converted into a contemporary interest in physical strength and health. She is portrayed as energetic and robust instead of manly. By doing this, audiences could better understand who Joan was by how she would fit into contemporary society.

A 1918 war poster targeted at British buyers used the third approach—translation—to reinterpret Joan into a contemporary role model for character, virtue, and patriotism, a “rallying point” for the war effort. Using only red, white, and blue color, a red-outlined Joan in full armor and cropped hair points a sword aloft in front of her, while casting a gaze over her shoulder, assumedly to encourage her following troops to the charge. “Joan of Arc Saved France,” the capital white letters say, “Women of Britain, Save Your Country, buy War Saving Certificates,” with the “Save Your Country” extra embolden in bright red. If Joan fought for her country, the very least modern women could do is buy a few mealy certificates that supported their troops. The poster implied that women must follow Joan's honorable example to be considered as patriotic, influential, and respected as Joan of Arc. With Joan serving as the symbol of ultimate patriotism, British women are practically guilted into doing their minute consumer deed, now raised to the status of a patriotic duty.

A similar 1919 poster targeted at American consumers effectively translated Joan into the same wartime icon contemporary women should mimic. Presented by the United States Treasury Department, this Joan holds a sword, but her pretty face gazes upon the heavens instead. Be like Joan, the poster encourages, do your part, be involved in the war effort, and help save your country.

Influenced by the new and popular study of psychology, playwright George Bernard Shaw presented a flip, hip, and modern Saint Joan whose vernacular language and attitude translated her into the flapper of both the Middle Ages and the stage. Framing the storyline with scenes set decades after Joan’s death, with King Charles now an old man, Joan’s ghost visits him in a dream. As others have noted, this “dream sequence...[shows] that Shaw is acknowledging the 1920’s fascination with and admiration for psychology.”

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78 To see this portrayal, see OMD “Maid of Orleans (The Waltz of Joan of Arc)” music video, available on YouTube at time of this writing (January, 2010) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gQ4Ub4TnM.
79 For further examination of their portrayal, see Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure, directed by Stephen Hereck, produced by Scott Kroopf, Michael S. Murphey, and Joel Soisson, 90 minutes, Nelson Entertainment, 1988, 1 DVD.
81 For further examination of the visual, see Appendix F.
82 See Appendix G.
83 For quote, see Ellen Ecker Dolgin, Modernizing Joan of Arc, 125.
that the king has a guilty conscious about not saving Joan from the fire, he dreams of having conversations with her about the good memories to perhaps relieve himself of guilty feelings. In the dream, Joan is friendly and teasing, familiarly calling the king “Charlie,” a modern nickname. Such contemporary dialogue and audacious behavior have earned the play criticism that Joan is a super-flapper rather than a Middle Ages maiden. This vernacular language surfaces again when during the trial Joan calls one of the judges a “noodle master.” In this role, Joan is confident, clever, and bold like the boyish “new women” of the 20s. Essentially, “Shaw put a modern girl on stage,” at a time when women’s roles were changing and “Joan’s boyishness became easier to understand: her cropped hairdo was ‘sensible.’” She’s confident, funny, clever, and bold like the modern woman and, in the 1957 film version, director Otto Preminger interpreted Shaw’s Joan with a flat-chest, delicate, pixi-hair cut, pretty Jean Seymour who presents herself more as a saucy modern girl rather than a competitive warrior; more comfortable in a flapper dress than a suit-of-armor.

The 1932 play, Joan of the Stockyards, again translated who Joan would be by placing her and her passion for a cause in the context of a contemporary setting. Playwright Bertold Brecht constantly used “vernacular language...to update the situation and emotions.” The reincarnate Joan—renamed Joan Dark—is dressed in early 20th century clothes, painted with some poverty-induced soot and grunge, placed on the streets of Chicago among the marching, chanting ranks of the Black Straw Hat Mission group, using phrases like “God’s word...is sweeter than whipped cream.” The mission group refers to themselves as “the Soldiers of the Lord...an army and when [they] are on the march [they] have to fight crime and misery, those forces that want to drag us down” with the purpose of “remind[ing] men of the Lord whom they have all forgotten, and to bring back their souls to Him.” This enthusiastic and penny-poor missions group is a translation of Joan’s religious fever and humble peasant roots; a translation of the army troops she once led. The original Joan strove to have her rough French troops behave as men of God and did so by banishing all loose women—medieval groupies—from the campsite, forbidding course language, and requiring all soldiers to pray before battle, similar to how Joan Dark’s mission to return many lost Chicago souls to the Lord.

Joan’s cause was also translated from saving France into something more “closely aligned to the radical labor movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries,” updated to the plight of the modern union and a concern with class conflict. The plot focuses upon the greedy slaughterhouse owners who close the stockyard gates and leave hundreds of jobless workers wandering hungry in the streets. Joan campaigns for the rights of the meatpacking Union members. To achieve her goals, a “fearless” Joan appeals to owner Mr.

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84 For quote, see Bernard Shaw’s Saint Joan, directed by Otto Preminger, 110 minutes, Warner Home Video, 1957, 1 VHS.
86 To see Jean’s performance, see Bernard Shaw’s Saint Joan, directed by Otto Preminger, 1957.
87 See Dolgin, Modernizing, 139 for quotation.
89 See Dolgin, Modernizing, 145.
Mauler to reopen the gates for the workers and gives a Marxist inspired speech analyzing the structure of society:

“Come on up, then we’ll all be on top,” but if you look closely you’ll see something hidden between the ones on top and the ones below that looks like a path but is not a path—It’s a plank and now you can see it quite clearly, it is a seesaw, this whole system is a seesaw, with two ends that depend on one another, and those on top sit up there only because the others sit below.\(^{90}\)

The system, she argues, is flawed. There is no real fairness to it, because not everyone can be on top at the same time. The similarity between both Joan’s continues with the failing health of Joan Dark. After weeks of poor nourishment and protesting in the bitter winter weather, Joan Dark catches pneumonia and, close to death, begins babbling and hallucinating. Again, the play obediently followed the structure of how Joan of Arc was to be updated: handed the characteristics of a strong sense of faith, a high sense of moral purpose, a noble cause to fight and sacrifice for the people. This transcription allows “Joan’s story to be ours...[found]...in our own consciences, and our individual capacities for compassion.”\(^{91}\) Portrayed as the “working-class radical,” Joan Dark has become someone who the contemporary audience can relate to on a moral and missionary level.\(^{92}\)

The 1948 film *The Miracle of the Bells* also reinterpreted Joan’s person and cause by reincarnating her in the form of Olga Treskova, a poor Polish immigrant who grew up in a bleak coaling town outside of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She grows up to become an actress and gets her big break when, despite her understudy status, she gets the part of Joan of Arc in a Hollywood film. Though fighting a losing battle with tuberculosis she contracted from the excessive amounts of inhaled coal dust, Olga performs an inspired, passionate, and eloquent Joan. At one point, Olga says that “I didn’t play Joan alone. A lot of people have played her before. People you’ve never seen or heard.” In saying this, Olga implies that there is a little bit of Joan of Arc in everyone and that there have been translations of Joan ever since the original, rising from the ranks of the downtrodden and fighting to protect them. Olga explains her own connection to Joan: I did this movie for “all the poor, sad people of Coal Town...[who] just work and die and all the nice things inside them doesn’t get out. I came out of them.” Olga saw her noble purpose as being responsible to inspire and bring hope to the depressed and hopeless people of her coal mining hometown. In the end, again paralleling Joan of Arc’s story, Olga sacrificed her health and her life for her people, hoping to free them of their destitution and inspire a little religious faith in them all again. At her funeral service, the priest, played by a young Frank Sinatra, says that “the saints came to Joan of Arc because she believed in God and she wanted to help someone, the people of France. Olga believed in God just as much and she wanted to help the people of Coal Town just as much.” The film goes on to label what Olga did as a miracle. Her mission and her death “tore the bitterness and doubts from the

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\(^{90}\) For both “fearless” quote and block quote, see Brecht, *Seven Plays*, 171 and 225, respectively.

\(^{91}\) For quotation, see Dolgin, *Modernization*, 153.

people and brought them back to God.” Olga’s life, as a news radio station announces it at the end of the movie, “reads like a modern day saint.”

In one episode of the popular children’s television show dedicated to presenting and translating classical literature, Wishbone, entitled “Bone of Arc,” offers a parallel between Twain’s version of Joan and the experience of a young female character, Sam, thereby translating Joan’s struggle and persecution into an experience more familiar to the average American child: a girl trying to lead a soccer team to victory in an all-boys league. She defies ridicule because her “friends need her.” This becomes her cause and she battles upon the sports field, a lone female leader and athletic superstar among a crowd of men. There is even a trial-like scene at the end of the episode when the league board decides to disqualify Sam and hand the hard-won victory to the opposing team. This episode, advocating for equal gender rights and treatment, set in a courtroom like setting, could be seen as contemporary commentary on fighting against sex discrimination. It gives the young audience the message that girls can do anything boys can do, and can excel beyond their male counterparts. Sam served as the reinterpretation of what Joan of Arc would have done if faced with similar contemporary circumstances.

The two season long teenage drama Joan of Arcadia, used translation to reinterpret who Joan was through an understanding of who she would be today in the clicky hierarchy of a high school hallway: just a typical American teenager, complete with insecurities and imperfections. At least, Joan Girardi was typical until one night she hears a voice whispering her name while she sleeps and she meets God, the actual deity, who appears every episode in a different human body. In this way, Joan Girardi’s experiences follow Joan of Arc’s life, in a downscaled high school translation, merging history with what teenagers experience in modern day. Her cause is to be an “instrument of God,” to be a “catalyst,” that sparks change in her friends, family, and the strangers she meets. Converting the first command Joan of Arc heard—“be good”—Joan Girardi is ordered to achieve the typical things that our society attributes to good kids: sign up for AP classes and get A’s. God also orders Joan Girardi to take up wholesome hobbies such as boat-building, double-dutch jump roping, and volunteering at an after school abused children program. Reflecting one vein of portrayals attributed to the original Joan over the years, Joan Girardi’s peers see her behavior as weird and un-cool; in their eyes she is an oddball and social outcast. Perhaps a reflection of the same line of historiography, reruns of this show appear frequently on none other than the SciFi channel, implying that her relationship with God best fits among the fantasy and alien dramas typical to the network.

The show also deals with the psychology-fueled perception that Joan was mentally ill. At the end of the first season, Joan Girardi gets sick, admits aloud that she’s been seeing God, and, as a translation of Joan of Arc’s imprisonment and trial, Joan Girardi is committed to a mental ward for the summer. While locked up, she has a crisis of faith, doubting the truth of her relationship with God, the voice, and visions stop appearing, just like when Joan of Arc considered denying her voices to save her life and they fell silent. Joan of

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93 See The Miracle of the Bells, directed by Irving Pichel, 120 minutes, Republic Pictures, 1948, 1 VHS, for quotations.
94 For this episode on film, see Wishbone: Bone of Arc, produced by Betty Buckley, directed by Fred Holmes, 30 minutes, PolyGram Video, 1996, 1 VHS.
Arcadia therefore uses a modern social science and understanding of mental illness to interpret who Joan was and what she did in a new way.95

This complex tradition of historiography has made Joan, for many, a symbol; for others, as Donald Spoto wrote, “she is so familiar as to have become, almost a cliché.”96 Attributing contemporary characteristics, transporting, and translating Joan of Arc have been done to the point that she has become a self-defined term easily bandied about in modern language. For example, in the 2008 song, “Lenders in the Temple,” by Conor Oberest, he warns “watch your back [because of] the Ides of March,” referring to the fortune a soothsayer told Julius Caesar foreseeing future danger which turned out to be his assassination. “Cut your hair like Joan of Arc, disguise your will they’ll find you out,” the song continues to recommend, associating her short hair with a fear-inspired attempt at self-protection. Though historically inaccurate, Joan of Arc means, in this song, a person who camouflages who they are to protect themselves from threats.97 Similarly, in the 1999 song “She’s So High,” instead of describing Joan of Arc, she becomes a descriptive term in and of herself. In the music video, “Joan of Arc” is used to describe the confident, carefree attitude of a beautiful, playfully impish, oddball girl who frolics and tightrope walks around a city while wearing fake feathered wings and a pair of aviator cap and goggles, happily oblivious to the strange looks she receives. Clearly an admirer, the narrator describes her as “high society,” “perfect,” a member of “first class” society, and on the same level as “Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, and Aphrodite.” Joan’s name is therefore used as a compliment, an indication of quality. The song goes on to describe her as wholesome and natural, using the modern image that “she’s blood, flesh and bone, no tucks or silicone,” meaning she neither puts on fake appearances nor stoops to the level of cosmetic surgery. The song attempts to tug Joan out of the world of myth and legend with the lyric “she’s touch, smell, sight, taste and sound.” Instead of an intangible fiction of fairytales and history books, the song insists that the characteristics Joan possessed are real; touchable, smell-able, seeable, taste-able, and hearable qualities physically incarnate in an enchanting girl.98

The English publication of Pernoud’s work in 1998 certainly did not interrupt the longstanding practice of updating Joan. As evidence shows, Joan has been portrayed as a shepherdess, soldier, saint, and modern girl; furthermore, there are hundreds of works I did not elaborate upon that illustrate this fact.99 However, this is practically old news. The

95 For all Joan of Arcadia references, see Joan of Arcadia: Season One, created by Barbara Hall, 1035 minutes, Sony Pictures Television, 2003/4, 6 DVDs. Though less consistent with historical events, Joan of Arcadia: Season Two, created by Barbara Hall, 968 minutes, Sony Pictures Television, 2004, 6 DVDs continues the portrayal of a confused, oddball, struggling to do good by God’s command teenager.
97 Song available at time of this writing (December, 2010) at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-fYcpxmvrk.
98 This music video available at time of this writing (January 2010) on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIOM9O-0U.
rise of the new, apparently 20\textsuperscript{th} century phenomenon of using Joan of Arc as an independent term of description indicates two fresher truths: that the methods of portraying her are in constant evolution and that a fifth tradition has recently developed, worthy of further study. The portrayals of Joan of Arc are in constant flux and they deserve to be frequently revisited and reexamined. If the pattern remains consistent, a scholar may someday identify a yet unpracticed sixth tradition.

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Appendix F
Appendix G