

**Nature in Mark Twain's
*Personal Recollections of
Joan of Arc.*
Pastoralism Revisited**

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“[...] I only needed to keep my historical road straight”; I “shoveled in as much fancy-work and invention on both sides of the historical road as I pleased.”

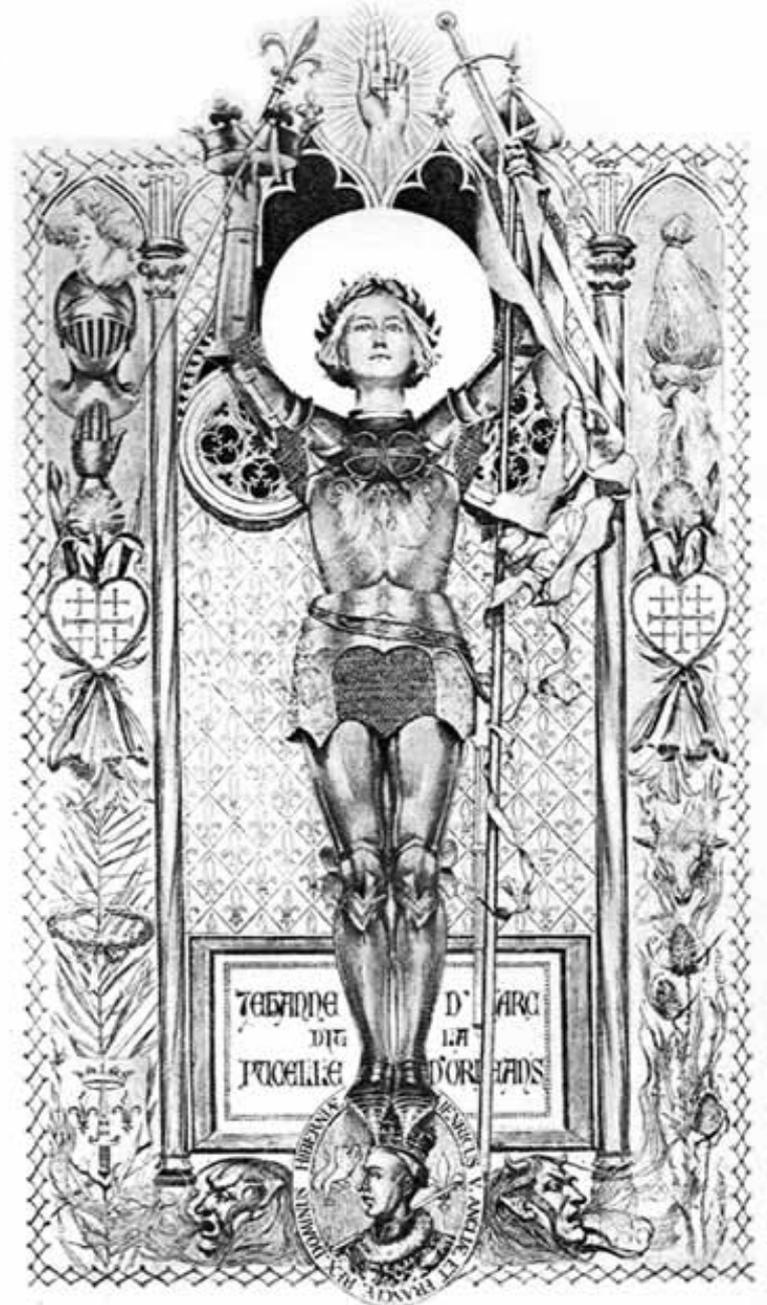
Letter to Henry Huttleston Rogers, January 29, 1895

I - The Myth of the Shepherdess

- “All she would take for herself [...] was leave to go back to her village home, and tend her sheep again [...].” (“Translator’s Preface”)
- Who taught the shepherd girl to do these marvels—she who could not read, and had had no opportunity to study the complex arts of war? I do not know any way to solve such a baffling riddle as that [...]. “It is a riddle which will never be guessed.”
- “the Riddle of the Ages”
- Michelet : a “living enigma”

The Maid of Orleans Frank Vincent Du Mond

Frontispiece
for the first edition of
*Personal Recollections of
Joan of Arc*
(Harper and Brothers,
1896)



Mark Twain, “Saint Joan of Arc” essay

“Almost invariably the artist remembers only one detail [...] of the personality of Joan of Arc: to wit, that she was a peasant girl” and “paints her as a strapping middle-aged fishwoman [...], and in her face the spirituality of a ham. He [...] forgets to observe that the supremely great souls are never lodged in gross bodies.” (Twain, “Saint Joan of Arc”, 1904)

- Howard Pyle
- “The artist should paint her *spirit*—then he could not fail to paint her body aright.”

“a lithe young slender figure, instinct with ‘the unbought grace of youth,’[...] the face beautiful, and transfigured with the light of that lustrous intellect and the fires of that unquenchable spirit.”

(Twain, “Saint Joan of Arc”, 1904)

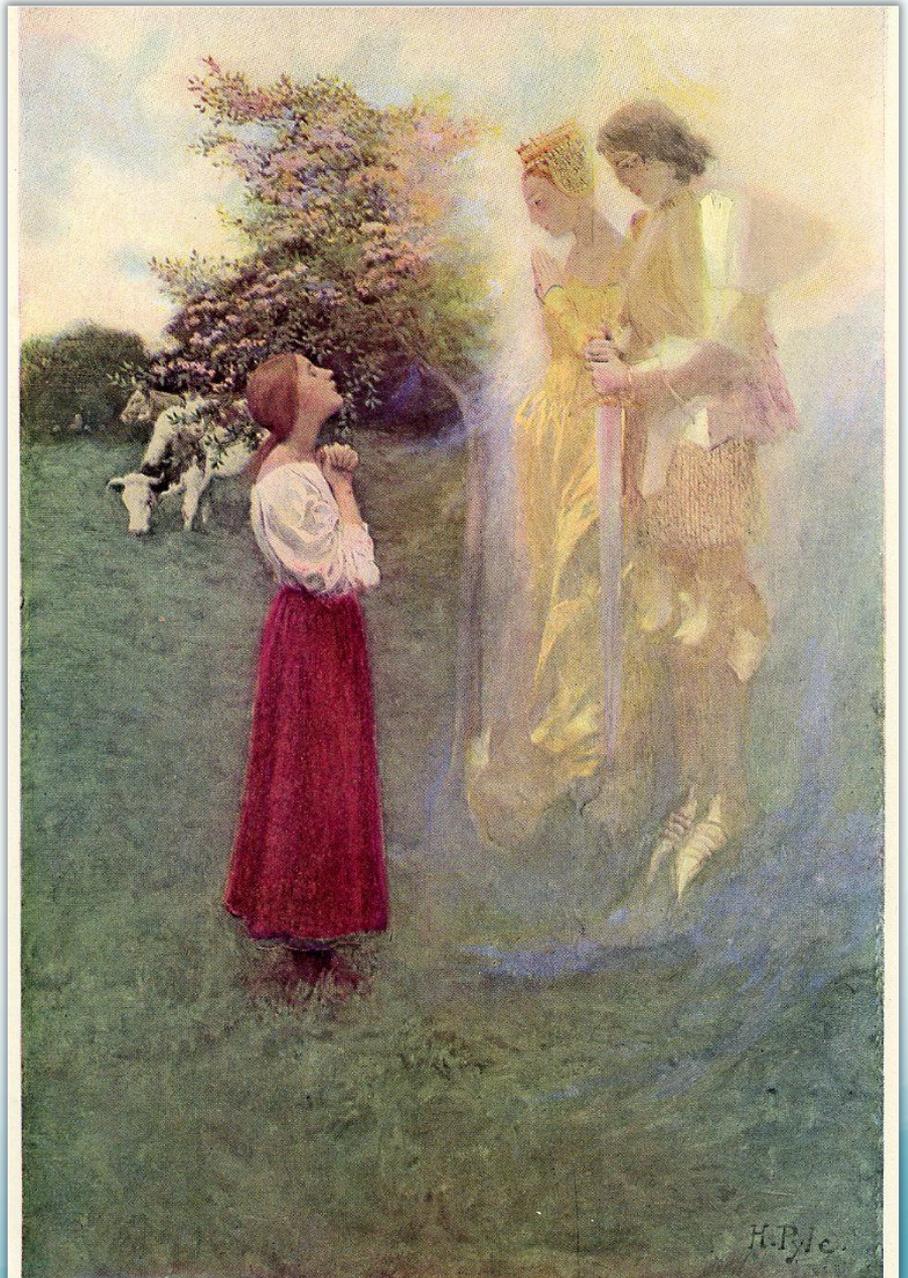
Howard Pyle

“She believed that she had daily speech with angels.”

Illustration to Mark Twain’s “Joan of Arc” essay in the Christmas issue of *Harper’s Magazine* in December 1904.

Reprinted as a frontispiece to the 1919 edition of the essay (New York: Harper Brothers, 1919).

Courtesy of Bryn Mawr College Library, Pennsylvania.



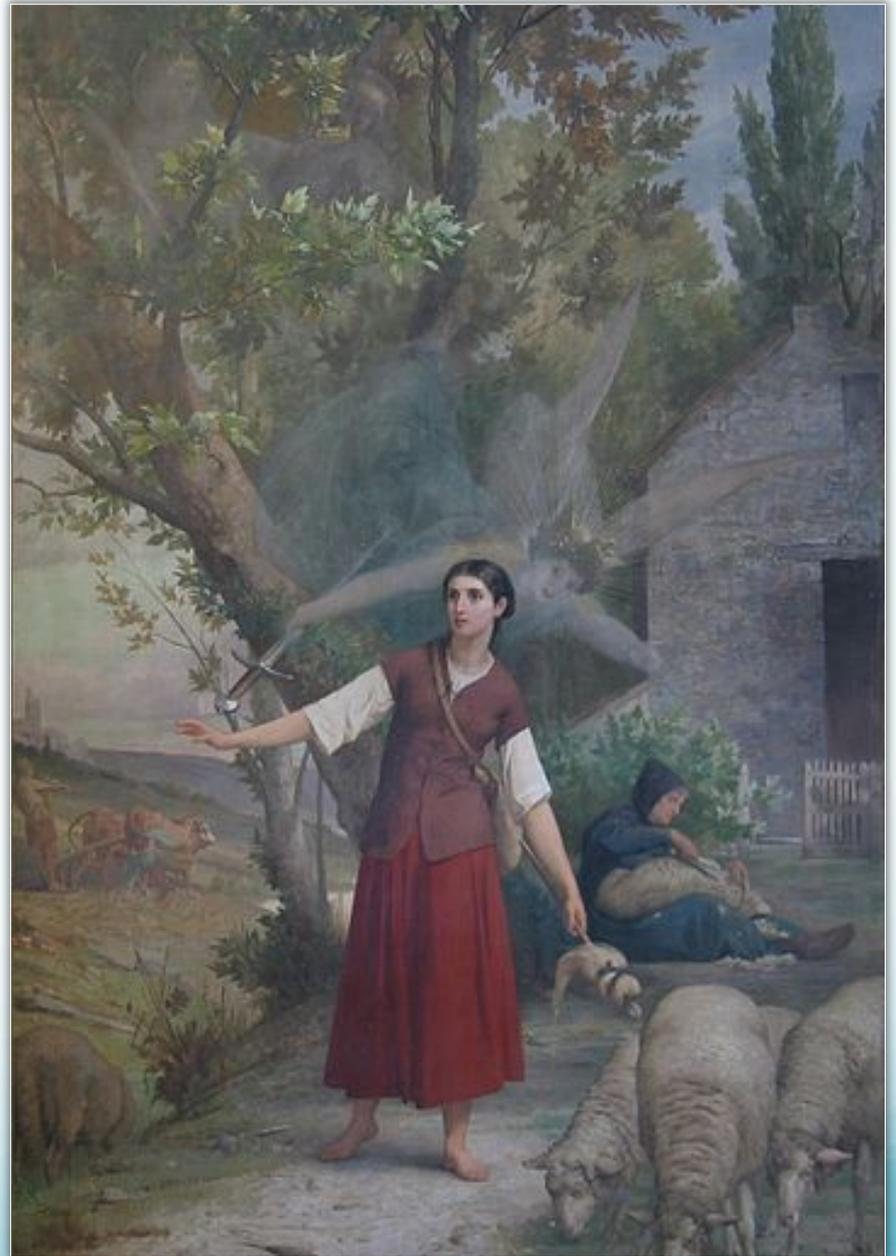
- The Armagnac vs the Burgundian
- **Comtesse A. De Chabannes**, *La Vierge Lorraine* (1874); chapter 1: “The Shepherdess”
- **Monseigneur Ricard**, *Jeanne d’Arc la Vénérable* (1894): “the heroic shepherdess” [*l’héroïque bergère*]
- **Lord Ronald Gower** *Joan of Arc* (1893): “The little maid sometimes helped her father’s labourers, and the idea has become general that Joan of Arc was a shepherdess; in reality, it was only an occasional occupation, and probably undertaken by Joan out of mere good-nature, seeing that her parents were well-to-do people.”
- **John O’Hagan** *Joan of Arc* (1893): “she attended almost wholly to the house, but rarely going to the fields to keep her father’s sheep.”
- **Jules Michelet**, *Jeanne d’Arc* (1841): “[...] ‘like a poor little shepherdess’ [...]”

Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Joan of Arc* (1879)



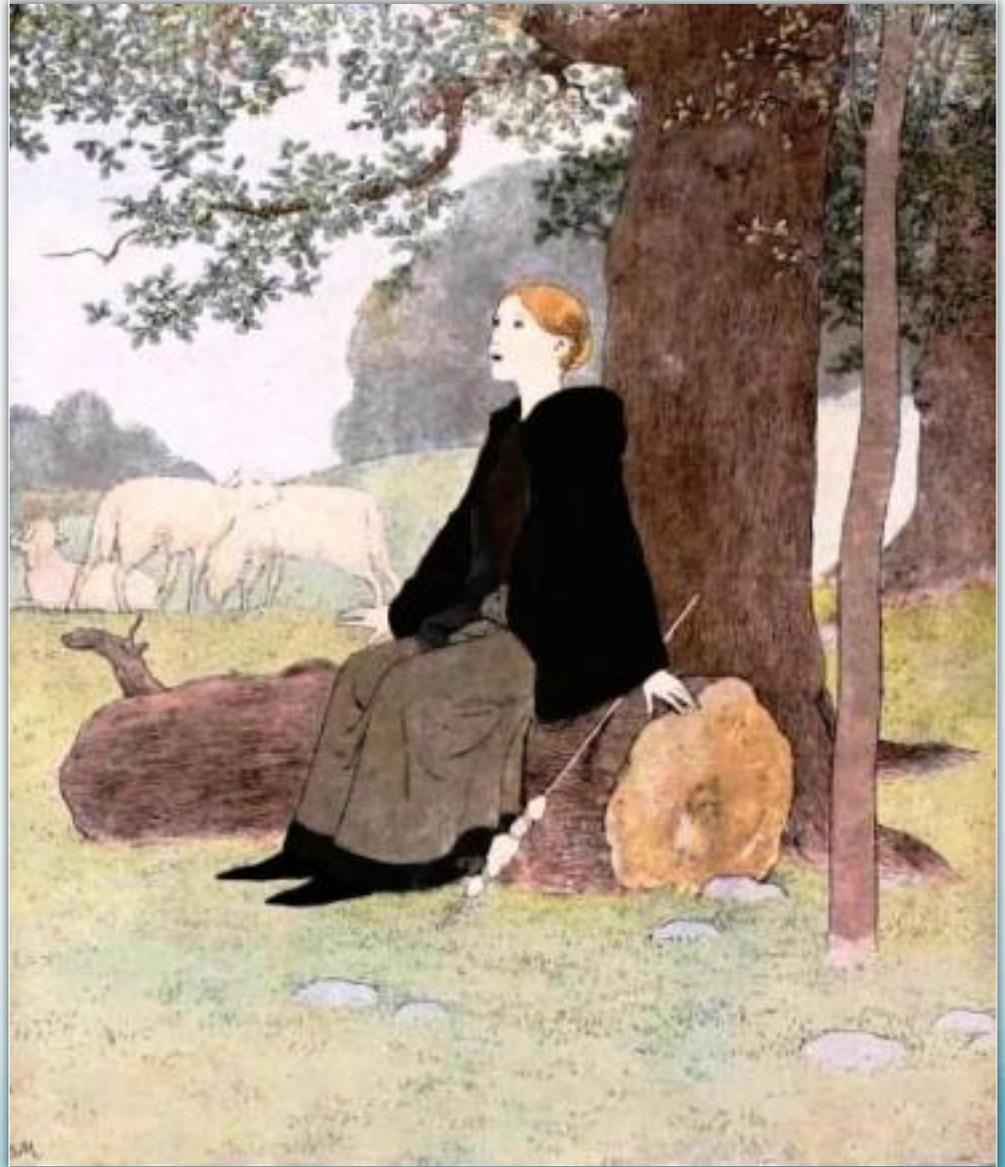
Jules Lenepveu

Joan of Arc, Shepherdess
(1886–90)



**Louis-Maurice
BOUTET DE MONVEL**

The Voices
(1896)



Louis-Maurice BOUTET DE MONVEL

The Vision and Inspiration (ca. 1907– early 1909)

Oil and gold leaf on canvas. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.



Gari Melchers
(1860–1932)

Joan of Arc



Albert Pinkham Ryder
(1848–1917)

Joan of Arc (1889)



- Gordon M. Sayre, “The Oxymoron of American Pastoralism” (*Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, vol. 69, n. 4, Winter 2013)

II- Dragons, Fairies, and the Tree: The Marvelous in Nature as a Retreat from History

- Leo Marx, “Pastoralism in America.” *Ideology and Classic American Literature*. Cambridge: CUP, 1986.
- Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. 1964. Oxford, New York : OUP, 2000.
- the *mirabilis*, *magicus*, and *miraculosus*

“It was as long as a tree, and had a body as big around as a tierce, and scales like overlapping great tiles, and deep ruby eyes as large as a cavalier’s hat, and an anchor-fluke on its tail as big as I don’t know what, but very big, even unusually so for a dragon, as everybody said who knew about dragons.”

“In the earliest times a hundred knights from many remote places in the earth would have gone in there [...] to kill the dragon [...] but in our time [...] the priest had become the one that abolished dragons.”

Kim Moreland, *The Medievalist Impulse in American Literature* (Charlottesville: U.P. of Virginia, 1996).

“The medievalist impulse expresses the desire for a golden past—an age of order, stability, beauty, and faith—at a time of radical change.”

In a noble open space carpeted with grass [...] stood a most majestic beech-tree with wide-reaching arms [...], and by it a limpid spring of cold water; and on summer days the children went there—oh, every summer for more than five hundred years—went there and sang and danced around the tree for hours together, [...] and it was most lovely and enjoyable. Also they made wreaths of flowers and hung them upon the tree and about the spring to please the fairies that lived there [...].

- locus amoenus
- pastourelle

“Song of the Children”

(*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*)

“Now what has kept your leaves so green [...]?”

The children’s tears!”

“And what has built you up so strong [...]?”

The children’s love!”

“Bide always green in our young hearts [...]!”

And we shall always youthful be,

Not heeding Time his flight”

“And when in exile wand’ring we

Shall fainting yearn for glimpse of thee”

“And You are but a *Thought*—a vagrant Thought, [...] a homeless Thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!” (No.44, *The Mysterious Stranger*)

**III - Joan of Arc's
Mystic and Visionary
Union with Nature**

- Joan of Arc as a “child of nature” (Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc. The Image of Female Heroism*. 1981. Oxford: OUP, 2013)
- “born child of the sun, natural comrade of the birds, and of all happy free creatures” (*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*)

“[...] all the outcast cats came and took up with her, and homeless or unlovable animals of other kinds heard about it and came, and these spread the matter to the other creatures, and they came also [...]. She was hospitable to them all, for an animal was an animal to her, and dear by mere reason of being an animal, no matter about its sort or social station”; “she would allow of no cages, no collars, no fetters, but left the creatures free to come and go as they liked [...].”

Twain's marginalia in Michelet's *Jeanne d'Arc*

- “She loved even animals; birds trusted her, to such a point that they ate from her hand.”
- “The animals and the fowls of the air came to her as formerly to the fathers of the desert in all the trust of God's peace.”
- Translated: “Birds eat from her hand.”

“The whiteness of this shadow was not like any other whiteness that we know of, except it be the whiteness of the lightnings, but even the lightnings are not so intense as it was, for one can look at them without hurt [...].”

Howard Pyle



Boutet de Monvel



“The shadow approached Joan slowly; the extremity of it reached her, flowed over her, clothed her in its awful splendor. In that immortal light her face, only humanly beautiful before, became divine; flooded with that transforming glory her mean peasant habit was become like to the raiment of the sun-clothed children of God [...].”

- Oscar Wilde, “The Young King” (1891)

Albert Pinkham Ryder
(1848–1917)

Joan of Arc (1889)



“Joan of Arc alias Mark Twain”

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