Joan of Orc: A Reading of Twain's French Fantasy Through Blake's *America: A Prophecy*

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"There is one chivalric idol, one legendary embodiment of pure womanhood," Leslie Fiedler writes of Twain in *Love and Death in the American Novel,* "he could never forget: Joan of Arc. In her, Twain was able to invest the baffled virgin-worship of the Protestant American male - remaking her, in her suffering and tragic triumph, into the image of Clarissa Harlowe, of whom, to be sure, he may never have heard."

Fiedler's assessment of Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896) sums up what has become the established reading of the novel: its narration sloppy, its sentiment gushy, its Victorian idealism grotesquely out of place in the deepening despair of Twain's later work, the novel is a freak, a sport, an aberration produced by a writer who never quite knew what he was doing and who therefore blundered at least as often as he scored. Fiedler continues his indictment:

For a good American like Twain, all offenses are offenses against the woman; to be born is to rack the mother with pain; to be married is to blaspheme against purity; to have a child is to set a seal on such blasphemy, publish it to the world. Simply to be a man is to be impure, to betray, and there is nothing to do but to kneel ... at the feet of the offended female and cry for forgiveness. Twain's study is more an act of expiation than a book; and for this reason he worked at it as he worked at no other book ... It is, however, precisely the piety of *Joan of Arc* which makes it unreadable to all but the most grossly sentimental. When it appeared in 1896, it was already absurdly old-fashioned, a piece of romantic medievalism that out-Scotted Scott.

Yes: but this is extreme. *Joan of Arc* is unreadable, one might say, to those who insist on reading it as sheer "baffled virgin-worship." Certainly, Twain's Victorian imagination ran powerfully to sentiment; the Wilkes episode in *Huckleberry Finn* and Hank's French retreat with Sandy in the
Connecticut Yankee are just as “grossly sentimental” as Joan. What Fiedler fails to see in the novel, however, and what Twain criticism has consistently failed to see, is how Twain is here beginning to explore the Romanticism he had despised all his life in search of new answers to the old problems. The Yankee, which preceded Joan by seven years, had led Twain into an imaginative cul-de-sac: if even the American hero sent back in time to the medieval source of Western civilization is unable to redirect the flow of time, if even a world-historical figure like Hank Morgan fails to usher ignorant man into the American millennium, wherein lies salvation? What hope was there for America, whose mighty Revolution had petered out into the exciting but treacherous industrialism of the Gilded Age—whose messianic moment was fast becoming assimilated to the mundane crises and meaningless triumphs of an unredeemed world? Where was there freedom, if not in America? Twain's late work traces a number of these explorations, culminating in the unfinished "Mysterious Stranger" manuscripts; and I want to suggest that, so far from being untypical of these explorations, Joan of Arc marked a truly fruitful turning in Twain's understanding, a turning onto the road that would lead to "The Mysterious Stranger." To show how this is true I propose to juxtapose Twain's novel with another work and another literary figure Twain had probably never heard of—not Clarissa Harlowe but Blake's Orc, from the early America: A Prophecy (1793).

For anyone familiar with the careers of these two writers, this is an odd pairing in any number of senses. William Blake (1757–1827), who died eight years before Samuel Clemens (1835–1910) was born, was an early and encyclopedically innovative Romantic writer, painter, and (by trade) engraver; Twain achieved his reputation as a no-nonsense realist, a sneerer at all Romantic fripperies and fancies, and came very late (as I am going to claim here) to Romanticism, toward the end of his long life. Twain cut his literary teeth on insouciant debunkings of the European culture-worship fostered by Romantics like Blake a generation or two before, and offered in place of that worship a rough-and-ready American pragmatism, the commonsensical, hard-headed humor and straight talk of the American West. Unlike Twain, who from Innocents Abroad (1869) to the Autobiography (1924) always reached his public in a big way, Blake was neglected, even despised, during his lifetime; his collected works did not see print until nearly a century after his death. Twain sought (and generally found) modes of expression that would allow both profundity and lucidity; Blake thought of himself in similar terms, but never found a broad readership with his intensely mythopoeic, densely allusive works.
And yet, as I want to argue, the resemblance between Twain's late work and Blake's early prophecies is remarkable. Most clearly in *Joan of Arc* and the "Mysterious Stranger" manuscripts he left unfinished at his death, Twain began late in life to struggle toward the fundamental insights of the great Romantics - towards a visionary or spiritual truth beyond all outward trappings of Romanticism, a vision of self-transformation shorn of all frills. Here, for example, are the concluding words to the Sieur Louis de Conte's letter to his great-great-grand-nephews and -nieces, the introduction to *Joan of Arc*:

As the years and the decades drifted by, and the spectacle of the marvellous child's meteor-flight across the war-firmament of France and its extinction in the smoke-clouds of the stake receded deeper and deeper into the past and grew ever more strange and wonderful and divine and pathetic, I came to comprehend and recognize her at last for what she was - the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One. (2)

Twain's pious parenthesis, "save only One," of course, implies the association that Blake makes explicit: *Orc* was not only like Christ but an embodiment of the same fiery creative energy that Christ embodied, the same visionary imagination that Twain breathes into Joan. Twain's relative caution is understandable in the dual light of Blake's dismal failure to reach an audience in his own day (or for a century after) and of Twain's long career as a popular writer, a writer whose (perhaps subconscious) task had always been not to oppose the public but to work out the implications of its beliefs. In any case, the Sieur's pious restraint translates in the context of the novel as a whole, anticipated by the very Blakean contrast between "the marvellous child's meteor-flight" and "its extinction in the smoke-clouds of the stake," into a much bolder claim: Joan *is* Christ, a human Christ whose apparent divinity is revealed as an untapped humanity. She is, to put that differently, a Romantic Messiah, a visionary creator (not for nothing do the priests chant the *Veni Creator* as she approaches Orleans) whose most distinctive feature is not her virginity but her power to free man's imprisoned spirit. Here for example is Queen Yolande's appraisal of Joan, set against a passage from Plate 15 of Blake's *America*:

And whether she comes of God or no, there is that in her heart that raises her above man - high above all men that breathe in France today - for in her is that mysterious something that puts heart into soldier?, and turns mobs of cowards into armies of fighters that forget what fear is when they are in that presence - fighters who go into battle with joy in their eyes and songs on their lips, and sweep over the field like a storm - that is the spirit that can save France, and that alone, come it whence it may! (102)
The doors of marriage are open, and the Priests in rustling scales
Rush into reptile coverts, hiding from the fires of Orc,
That play around the golden roofs in wreaths of fierce desire,
Leaving the females naked and glowing with the lusts of youth

For the female spirits of the dead pining in bonds of religion;
Run from their fetters reddening, & in long drawn arches sitting;
They feel the nerves of youth renew, and desires of ancient times,
Over their pale limbs as a vine when the tender grape appears

Orc and Joan bring life into a deathly reptilian world, fiery light into
darkness, joy into fear, flashing storms into hidden coverts. And very
much in the spirit of Blake's radical confusion of traditional moral
associations (Orc as Devil as visionary energy, Urizen as Angel as
oppressive authority), Twain has the Queen moot entirely the question
of origin, the source of Joan's power: "And whether she comes of God
or no, there is that in her heart that raises her above men." It is the
visionary spirit in her that counts, the transformative power of supreme
humanity, the ability to create men out of worms - and not, as the
Church insists, her relation to abstract theological concepts like God and
Satan.

The most interesting difference between these two passages, perhaps,
lies in the sex of the two protagonists: where Orc is male and described
as "Leaving the females naked and glowing with the lusts of youth,"
Joan is female and described as breathing a lusty warlike spirit into men.
This makes an enormous difference, of course: the most powerful charge
against Joan at her trial is the unnaturalness of her career, of a woman,
or rather a seventeen-year-old girl, running off to war without her
parents' approval and in men's dress, shaming her sex and wreaking
gory destruction. Joan's patience with this line of questioning is short:
"As to the matter of women's work, there's plenty to do it" (394), a reply
more redolent of twentieth-century feminism than of Victorian virgin-
worship. Compared to Blake, in fact, with his traditional conception of
Orc as active man(kind), the daughter of Urthona and the other females
as passive nature, Twain's invocation of Joan is bold: not only does it not
matter whether the visionary power comes from God or from Satan, it
makes no difference whether it is embodied in a man or woman. The
chief thing is that it be enlivening. In Joan, Fiedler complains, "Twain
was able to invest the baffled virgin-worship of the Protestant American
male" - but as so often in his finest work, we see that investment pay off
for Twain in unexpected ways. What begins - if Fiedler is right, and
there is no reason to suspect that he isn't - as a guilty sense of male
betrayal is transformed in Twain's imagination into a celebratory sense
of the absolute miracle of human energy, which can be contained by
neither moral codes nor traditional sex roles. Fiedler's reluctance to grant Joan the full force of her vision, we might say in the context of Twain's novel, is finally congruent with the Church's unwillingness to admit that she comes from God, and perhaps even with Blake's assignment to Orc of a male body.

What Twain is realizing, what his confrontation with the Maid of Orleans is forcing him gradually to accept, is something like the spiritual or imaginative source of human ills: where Hank Morgan had dramatized and finally disproved his creator's belief that a little Yankee know-how would straighten up medieval Britain in a hurry, Twain is now increasingly compelled to look beyond material panaceas to the power of mind. His diagnosis of the problem in Joan grows out of the Yankee's conclusion that habit is the jailer; but now the longed-for jailbreak no longer relies on a little pragmatic education and a handful of "labor-saving devices," but on vision:

There are some that never know how to change. Circumstances may change, but those people are never able to see that they have got to change too, to meet those circumstances. All that they know is the one beaten track that their fathers and grandfathers have followed and that they themselves have followed in their turn. If an earthquake come and rip the land to chaos, and that beaten track now lead over precipices and into morasses, those people can't learn that they must strike out a new road - no; they will march stupidly along and follow the old one to death and perdition. Men, there's a new state of things; and a surpassing military genius has perceived it with her clear eye. And a new road is required, and that same clear eye has noted where it must go, and has marked it out for us. (229–30)

And Blake agrees:

The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations; The grave is burst, the spices shed, the linen wrapped up; The bones of death, the cov'ring clay, the sinews shrunk & dry'd. Reviving shake, inspiring move, breathing! awakening! Spring like redeemed captives when their bonds & bars are burst; ... Let the enchained soul rise and look out: his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open. (53; 6.1-10)

Let the enchained soul rise and look out: his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open. That is, they already are open: not that they have been closed for thirty years and now have been opened, but rather that his eyes have been shut to their openness all these years and now finally see that they are open. Like Orc, the fiery comet whose light opens blinded eyes to see their own freedom, Joan is the military genius whose "clear eye" has penetrated the darkness to see the new road out of
prison. Her most potent weapon is not the sword (she doesn't carry one) but the contagion of her spirit - the power of her vision to occupy the minds and bodies of those around her. Twain, the hard-headed American pragmatist, is slowly learning the lesson of the Romantics: that evil in the world is a mental phenomenon, a force that will yield not to Gatling guns but to spirited human thought.

Significantly enough, Joan and Orc oppose their visionary might to a common enemy, the King of England, who in the American mythology Blake adopts and Twain inherits stands for all the oppressive power of the Old World. He is joined in that terror-inspiring role by the Church, which both Blake and Twain associate with an insidious mental oppression, a spiritual subversion of man's noblest energies from within. (As in the Yankee, of course, Twain's attack on the Church is here reduced synecdochically to an attack on the Roman Catholic church; but the force of his attack remains essentially congruent with Blake's.) Church and King for both writers represent precisely the drive to conformity, the blind adherence to tradition, the desperate attempt of the unimaginative to put visionary energy under lock and key lest it threaten the stifling stability of habit. Joan and Orc muster against the authority an explosive power, the power of vision or sight, the power to see through the blinders of habit to the New World that already surrounds us: a power that for both writers was always a.k.a. America. Centrally present in Blake's poem, implicitly present in Twain's novel, the New World for both was finally more than a place - it was a state of mind:

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Then had America been lost, o'erwhelm'd by the Atlantic,  
And Earth had lost another portion of the infinite, (56: 14:17–18)
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except that fiery Orc, spirit of the American Revolution, crashes in to roll back the waves.

But how, Twain asks, can America have gone so far wrong, as it was increasingly clear it had? How can the democratic impulses that drive Joan and Hank Morgan (and Twain himself) be so mercilessly mewed up? What has happened to the American Dream? It is the ironic fate of both Joan and Orc to fail in the end; somehow the apocalypse never quite comes about, despite their hopeful proclamations that "The times are ended" (54; 8:2), despite the vast contagiousness of their visions. Habit is ever stronger; the visionary hero infects the people, but the infection too succumbs to habit. Or, in the symbolic language that Twain here shares with Blake, ice finally proves stronger than fire (cf. America 57; 16:1–15):
Still France made no move. How do I account for it? I think there is only one way. You will remember that whenever Joan was not at the front, the French held back and ventured nothing; that whenever she led, they swept everything before them, so long as they could see her white armor or her banner; that every time she fell wounded or was reported killed—as at Compiegne—they broke in panic and fled like sheep. I argue from this that they had undergone no real transformation as yet; that at bottom they were still under the spell of a timorousness born of generations of unsuccess, and a lack of confidence in each other and in their leaders born of old and bitter experience in the way of treacheries of all sorts— for their kings had been treacherous to their great vassal and to their generals, and these in turn were treacherous to the head of the state and to each other. The soldiery found that they could depend utterly on Joan, and upon her alone. With her gone, everything was gone. She was the sun that melted the frozen torrents and set them boiling; with that sun removed, they froze again, and the army and all France became what they had been before, mere dead corpses—that and nothing more; incapable of thought, hope, ambition, or motion. (332)

In an important sense, Orc and Joan are buried in the same snows, there to wait the twelve or four hundred years until the resurgence of visionary spirit in the French Revolution. The fierce fiery energy tapped by both heroes is a catalytic force that comes and goes in cycles, as Northrop Frye suggests in his classic theory of the “Orc cycle”: Orc not only opposes the icy snows of Urizen, he finally grows into him, and from him back into Orc. It is the seasonal cycle, ultimately, an organic or natural cycle that in Blake's terms suggests an underlying femininity to Orc, a sensitivity to cyclical change that ties him all the more closely to Joan. Here is Frye:

Blake calls war enslaved energy, and the energy he means is the organic energy of Orc. Organic energy, which exists in the world of Generation, is primarily sexual energy, hence war is a perversion of the sexual impulse. The sexual impulse should lead to the higher imaginative state in which the object is not only seen but loved. Love in its turn should lead us to the still higher state where there is no external object at all. The sense of an eternally external world frustrates this rise in the sexual impulse, and so perverts it from creation to destruction. In passing from the state of love to the state of creation the beloved object becomes a creature and ceases to become objective: it surrenders its "female" or independent quality and takes its form from the will as well as the desire of its creator.4

The Maid of Orleans does, of course, redirect her sexual impulse into war, but neither out of a fear of sex nor out of an inordinate love of virginity (nor, one is tempted to add, necessarily out of surrender to the virgin-worship of her creator). Joan's goal is the realm of love, or what Blake called Beulah, but in her impatience she makes a detour through the realm of Generation: nothing is happening, the political leaders are impotent to stop the encroachment of chaos on the French garden of her childhood, and she decides to take political action, military action, direct action in the material world. Her final destination, given her by her
Voices, looms over all: "They promised to lead me to Paradise" (366). But her detour enmires her, thwarts her, finally destroys her. Here is the destination:

In a noble open space carpeted with grass on the high ground towards Vaucouleurs stood a most majestic beech-tree with wide-reaching arms and a grand spread of shade, 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, refreshing themselves at the spring from time to time, 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; for they liked that, being idle innocent little creatures, as all fairies are, and fond of anything delicate and pretty like wild flowers put together in that way And in return for this attention the fairies did any friendly thing they could for the children, such as keeping the spring always full and clear and cold, and driving away serpents and insects that sting; and so there was never any unkindness between the fairies and the children during more than five hundred years – tradition said a thousand – but only the warmest affection and the most perfect trust and confidence. (9–10)

But as Joan and her playmates reach adulthood, a series of upheavals destroy this garden home. First the fairies are banished by the village priest; then the Hundred Years' War intrudes upon the village's ancient peace, desolating and terrorizing it; then Joan leads her playmates against this "ogre" of a war (Blake calls it a dragon), into "exile." Progressive loss generates a productive nostalgia, a longing for return that drives Joan from beginning to end: "I know," the Sieur says, "that when the Children of the Tree die in a far land, then – if they be at peace with God – they turn their longing eyes towards home, and there, far-shining, as through a rift in a cloud that curtains heaven, they see the soft picture of the Fairy Tree, clothed in a dream of golden light" (11).

In a Freudian perspective, of course, the crime is growing up: the innocent garden is a childhood fantasy that is destroyed by the onslaught of adult sexuality, which Joan futilely represses in an attempt to regain her lost "home." But a reductive psychoanalysis does not diminish the immense imaginative power of such repression. If Twain's idealization of Joan's repression amounts to maudlin sentimentalism, it is a form of sentimentalism that empowers the entire Romantic movement in art. If Joan fails (or refuses) to grow up, so too did Blake – or, at any rate, so did Blake wish he could refuse to grow up, or wish he could return to a state of childlike innocence.

But of course he could not; nor could Joan, nor could Twain. In our world Romantic dreams are doomed to destruction. Confronted with that necessity, of course – and Twain had been confronted with it
repeatedly in his writing since Huckleberry Finn - the writer is ultimately compelled to dissipate all dreams of success, or else to displace worldly dreams into the mind: alternatives that were to chart out the divergent paths of literary modernism. Twain chose the latter, a Romantic course in which he is anticipated by Blake (and followed by Joyce). If Joan and Orc fail in their revolutionary aims, fail to bring about the apocalyptic transformation through political action, perhaps (and this is the ultimate Romantic hope) their very failure will bring success in the reader's mind:

Whether or not Orc is to win (and history and Blake's poetry alike will prove that he cannot) his effect upon human faculties is a permanent one. Desire shall fail, but the gates are consumed, and man is opened to infinity if he will but see his own freedom. Blake's last line [to America] is precise and foreboding: the flames burnt round the heavens and men's abodes. For the flames to burn through the heavens would liberate mankind from spatial limitations, but also from the security of his fixed conceptual position. America is at once Blake's fiercest tribute to our Promethean potential and yet also a warning that to be unbound will be an experience that must be paid for by a loss of the comforting certainties of most fallen experience.5

This is Harold Bloom in Blake's Apocalypse, claiming with Blake that Orc's effect on the reader truly is permanent: an arch-Romantic claim that Bloom's work of the 1970s would radically qualify.6 The realist in Twain too had long resisted conclusions like this, but significantly, the failure of Joan to answer the compelling questions drove him to rely more and more explicitly, more and more consciously, on just this kind of faith in the visionary imagination. Suppose the farce that we call human existence is just that - a farce, the collective creation of our fallen imaginations that is maintained as "reality" only by habit. Suppose American freedom is to be found not by lighting out for some geographical territory, nor by staging an Industrial Revolution in the distant past, nor through inspired military action against an oppressor, but precisely through the radical liberation of the mind from what Harold Bloom calls "the security of [our]fixed conceptual position" ...

This is, as I have argued elsewhere,' the very direction Twain was headed in his last, unfinished novel, "The Mysterious Stranger," particularly in the concluding chapter to the third version, the section which Alfred Bigelow Paine and Frederick A. Duneka tacked on to the body of "The Chronicle of Young Satan" to form the notorious Mysterious Stranger.6 Here is the crucial paragraph:

Nothing exists; all is a dream. God - man - the world - the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars - a dream, all a dream; they have no existence. Nothing exists save empty
space – and you, And you are not you – you have no body, no blood, no bones, you are but a thought. I myself have no existence, I am but a dream – your dream, creature of your imagination. In a moment you will have realized this, then you will banish me from your visions and I shall dissolve into the nothingness out of which you made me. ... I am perishing already – I am falling; I am passing away. In a little while you will be alone in shareless space, to wander its limitless solitudes without friend or comrade forever – for you will remain a Thought, the only existent Thought, and by your nature inextinguishable, indestructible. But I your poor servant have revealed you to yourself and set you free. Dream other dreams, and better! (404; ellipsis Twain's)

August Feldman's self-revelation is a removal of the veil of "reality," that false reality constructed by our fallen imaginations to protect our fearful selves from the truth. Revealed to himself, therefore, August is freed from the blinders of habit, from all the "pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks" (405), to create anew: to dream better dreams, better gods, better worlds, better men and women into shadowy existence. Twain imagines this revelation as loss, loss of the external world that seemed so substantial; but to despair of this loss is to remain squarely within the positivistic world view that Twain is attacking here. Our complacent sense of the world's "reality," for Blake as for the late Twain, is precisely the greatest obstacle to our freedom; and if neither Blake nor Twain can quite imagine what lies beyond the apocalyptic destruction of the old world view, that does not necessarily diminish the force of the revelation. Twain leaves us, finally, with powerful images of transition: Huck about to light out for the Territory, Hank trapped between two eras thirteen centuries apart in time, Joan's France taking its first stumbling steps toward democracy, and August revealed to himself as a thought, a mind stripped of the old dreams and poised on the verge of dreaming new. In no case can Twain himself be sure of what lies beyond the threshold to which he brings his characters; his concern is always with the route by which they come there and the pragmatic consequences that route might have for our lives. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* it is a route of blind, unconscious flight; in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* it is a bold attempt to redirect the flow of time by industrializing medieval Britain; in *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* it is a visionary battle against the force of habit in the world; and in "44; or, the Mysterious Stranger" it becomes a visionary battle against the force of habit in the mind. Twain's path, stumbling and semi-conscious as it may have been, is certainly coherent: it moves from a lively but ultimately deadend realism toward an increasingly hopeful apocalyptic fantasy.

Of course, if I am right in naming Twain's train of thought Blakean
and Romantic, Fiedler too is right in calling it "already absurdly old-fashioned": Twain came to Romanticism late, absurdly late, if you like, and perhaps never quite realized what it was he was coming to. Nor does the coherence of Twain's explorations in the late work necessarily diminish any of the gross sentimentality of Joan of Arc. I am not, that is, arguing for a reassessment of Joan as Twain's "best book," as he himself called it. What I am arguing for instead is a recognition that the book is no aberration: that it marks just as important and incisive a stage in Twain's progress toward the radical Romanticism of "The Mysterious Stranger" as America: A Prophecy does in Blake's progress to Jerusalem. If Joan of Arc is not Twain's best book, it is far from his worst; unlike all of the Tom Sawyer books, for example, it is charged with vision, and distinguished by all the imaginative risks and technical faults that characterize Twain's most important writing. Like Huck and the Yankee, Joan of Arc was a technical failure whose value for Twain was very fruitfully heuristic: surely reason enough to command our considered attention.

NOTES


2. Dismissals of Joan are universal commonplaces of Twain criticism; for one recent example, see John Seeley's otherwise excellent introduction to the facsimile edition of the novel that I will be using here (Hartford, Conn.: The Stowe-Day Foundation, 1980): "Mark Twain's little Saint is the Victorian Joan because Mark Twain was the Victorian writer, haloed warts and all. His Joan of Arc was created from his private fantasies concerning women and was further modified by the tastes of the family circle to which Mark Twain subjected his writings, but she is also representative of Victorian notions of heroic womanhood and is sister to that monumental virgin with the profile of Michelangelo's David who even yet guards the portals to the New World - a gift, like Saint Joan, from the people of France" (n.p.). See also William Searle, The Saint and the Skeptics: Joan of Arc in the Work of Mark Twain, Anatole France, and Bernard Shaw (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1976). For a view that is closer to mine, see James D. Wilson, "In Quest of Redemptive Vision: Mark Twain's Joan of Arc," Texas Studies in Language and Literature 20 (1978), pp. 181-98.


6. I am thinking, of course, of Bloom's "anxiety of influence" theory, in which it is precisely the impermanence of poetic presence that leads strong (mis)readers to recreate a work by repeating it, troping on it. See esp. The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry (1973; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), A Map of Misreading (New


9. "I like Joan of Arc best of all my books; & it is the best; I know it perfectly well. And besides, it furnished me seven times the pleasure afforded me by any of the others: 12 years of preparation & 2 years of writing. The others needed no preparation, & got none." Cited in Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York, 1912):2:1034.