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Joan of Arc in New Age Spirituality

This paper explores New Age interpretations of Joan of Arc, both as a fifteenth-century woman and as a spiritual being. The central focus is on messages believed to be from Joan (or “Jeanne”), channeled by Starla Hinman. I analyze the content and impact of these messages, and conclude that a new archetype of Joan has emerged—as a woman of the future who can positively transform the world. Additionally, I discuss five ways in which spiritual seekers perceive Joan today: as a mystic, an ascended master, a personification of the divine feminine, a torch-bearer of the Holy Grail, and the embodiment of Michaelic and Marian essences.

*I am Jeanne, and I come to strengthen you.*¹

THE STORY of Joan of Arc is stirring, even to those not interested in religion. At seventeen, she inspired a despairing French army to turn the tables on invaders, reversing almost one hundred years of defeat in a couple

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¹ “Jeanne d’Arc” (Starla Hinman, channel), message to author, January 19, 2012.

of months. In her subsequent capture and trial at Rouen in 1431, she took on the force of the Inquisition, challenging the spiritual superiority of her accusers. While for centuries scholars have analyzed and interpreted her life, for most people Joan's appeal is emotional—she is the courageous individual who stood against extreme odds. When director Robert Bresson was asked whether his film of Joan of Arc would offer an explanation of her life, he replied: “One does not explain greatness, one tries to attune oneself to it.”²

In this essay I pursue Bresson's idea and discuss how Joan is invoked in New Age spirituality, particularly channeling, to enable participants to attune themselves to greatness.³ As the name “New Age” suggests, the underlying theme of the movement is that humanity is on the crest of a new spiritual era, and individuals are spiritually evolving to make this quantum leap. In New Age thought, Joan is one of several ascended masters (spiritually enlightened beings) who inspire and guide seekers through this process to become all they can be. Channeler Starla Hinman is believed to be transmitting messages from Joan of Arc and other historical figures that are identified as ascended masters, in what is perceived to be a critical time in history.⁴

There is no shortage of literature on Joan's life—she is said to be the third most documented person in history (the first two being Jesus and Napoleon).⁵ Of particular significance is Marina Warner's book *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism*. Writing in the early 1980s, Warner examined how people have interpreted Joan over the centuries, and suggested she embodies several ideals, including virgin, martyr, saint, and child-peasant.⁶ I propose that Joan is experienced differently in the twenty-first century—as an archetype of the woman of the future.

A challenge of this research has been translating material that people experience in expanded states of consciousness in a way that can be analyzed by the academic community. It would require a major paradigm shift, similar to the shift from Newtonian to quantum physics, for scholars to view Joan as a

² Bresson cited in Régine Pernoud, *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses* (London: Scarborough House, 1982), 277.

³ I wish to thank Carolyn Kinane for being the insightful, gifted, and sensitive editor every writer wishes they had. I am also indebted to Starla Hinman whose work blew all the doors open in my research and gave me a radical, new perspective.

⁴ Starla Hinman, *Lady Portia and the Ascended Masters*, <http://www.starbird1.net/>.

⁵ Joan M. Edmunds, *The Mission of Joan of Arc* (Forest Row: Temple Lodge Publishing, 2008), 1.

⁶ Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).

multi-dimensional being, rather than a medieval personage. To facilitate dialogue, I include questions I asked during private communications that may be similar to questions other scholars have, while at the same time staying focused on the parts of the research that matter most to those involved.

This essay is divided into three main parts. I begin by outlining how the historical information about Joan's life resonates with New Age thought. Next I describe the ways by which different groups of spiritual seekers perceive Joan today. These sections provide a background to my third section detailing the channeled messages believed to be from Joan, including her advice for people today. I conclude that perceptions of Joan have evolved full circle as she is re-experienced today as a live presence who helps people attune themselves, as Bresson says, to greatness.

Joan of Arc's Life and How it Resonates with New Age Thought

At first glance, Christianity in fifteenth-century France—with its ecclesiastical hierarchies and witch hunts—may seem at odds with contemporary spirituality. However, the religious landscape has several parallels. Life in medieval Europe was permeated by a sense of religious ardor, almost everyone believed in spirits, and deeply religious people often experienced visions and voices.⁷ This ethos fits comfortably with New Age spirituality, which is similarly based on the premise that all of life is interconnected with vibrating frequencies of energies to which spiritual people attune.⁸ The difference between the cosmologies is often semantic—in contemporary literature, words like “energy,” “consciousness,” and “light” are usually used instead of words like “Holy Spirit” and “God.”⁹

Another link between medieval religion and New Age spirituality is that both are receptive to angels and saints.¹⁰ The New Age movement has a growing (but diffuse) angelology, and the book *The Physics of Angels* shows

⁷ For a summary of late medieval religion in relation to Joan, see Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 1–20. Although the discussion is a little dated, Barstow is one of the few authors who focuses on material about northern France in the fifteenth century.

⁸ Paul Heelas, *The New Age Movement: Religion, Culture and Society in the Age of Post-modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 225–26.

⁹ For a fuller discussion, see Catherine L. Albanese, “The Subtle Energies of Spirit: Explorations in Metaphysical and New Age Spirituality,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67, no. 2 (1999): 305–24.

¹⁰ Hildegard of Bingen, Padre Pio, and Francis of Assisi are particularly popular saints.

parallels between Einstein's description of photons and medieval scholars' depictions of angels.¹¹ Saint Michael, the archangel said by Joan to have come to her, is held in high esteem in many spiritual circles as the defender of the oppressed. There are Michael messages, websites, books, paintings, and music.¹²

There are also parallels between the accounts of medieval women's mystical experiences and the experiences described by mystically-inclined New Agers today. Both tend to speak of "Mother, Father God" (although this was not endorsed by the medieval church) and Julian of Norwich went as far as describing the risen Jesus as both male and female.¹³ Additionally, both groups see their ultimate goal as ascending into divine union, which medieval mystics described as marriage to Christ, and New Agers describe as enlightenment. In both cases this involves some type of spiritual crown—a gold one, crown of thorns, or halo for medieval mystics, and for New Agers the connection of the seventh chakra (energy centre) at the top of the head with the divine luminous being.¹⁴

Of the female mystics, Joan resonates today because she was action-orientated and this-worldly, rather than contemplative and institutionalized. While many women mystics were confined to convents, forced to submit to confessors, and encouraged to fast and self-flagellate, Joan was astride a horse, rallying men, and saving France. She seems to have been untainted by the servility, deprivation, and crucifixion pondering that characterized much medieval religion—her battles were with flesh and blood soldiers, rather than past sins and invisible demons.

Consequently, Joan's spiritual experiences seem to be more appealing today than those of other mystics. According to her testimony and eye-witness accounts, she received explicit, practical advice from spiritual beings.¹⁵ Her

¹¹ Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake, *The Physics of Angels: Exploring the Realm Where Science and Spirit Meet* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996).

¹² Including the Enya song, "The Celts," which was reputedly inspired by him. ("Archangel Michael: Humanities [*sic*] Protector," *Squidoo*, 2013, <http://www.squidoo.com/archangel-michael>.)

¹³ *Ibid.*, 297; Julian of Norwich, "Excerpts from 'Revelations of Divine Love,'" in Elizabeth Spearing, ed., *Medieval Writings on Female Spirituality*, Penguin Classics (New York, London: Penguin Books, 2002), 175–206.

¹⁴ For a New Age interpretation of coronation see Paco Alarcon Kahan, *The Violet Light: The Power that Changes Everything* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005), 212.

¹⁵ The *Procès de Condamnation* records Joan's testimony during her trial for heresy, and the *Procès de Réhabilitation* (also called the *Procès en Nullité*) contains eye-witness testimony from the retrial that cleared her twenty years later.

voices gave her intelligence information (a French defeat at Rouvray 150 miles away), the inside story about those she was dealing with (the military leaders at Orléans were withholding information, Catherine de la Rochelle's revelations were untrustworthy), instructions on strategy (where to find her sword, where and when to make unexpected maneuvers), forewarnings of events (a weapon would fire where d'Alençon was standing, she would be wounded at Les Tourelles, and later captured), and advice about how to respond to her critics (to speak boldly, plus more specific advice). This overtly practical content contrasts with the subtle, other-worldly ideas of many medieval mystics' messages, and is in keeping with the New Age preference for practical experience over theoretical considerations.¹⁶

Another alluring aspect of Joan to New Agers is that her life illustrates New Age tenets. There could be few better examples of the New Age belief that the mind has vast powers capable of overriding reality than the historical records of the battles Joan led. The accounts contain many descriptions of sudden, dramatic twists to events that enabled Joan's army to win, to the extent that large numbers of invaders deserted because they believed she was using "sorcery."¹⁷ These events resonate with New Age thought because one of its primary aims is to show participants how they can create miracles in their lives by aligning their "vibrational" energies (thoughts, beliefs, and emotions) with divine energy.¹⁸

Additionally, Joan's leadership in battle exemplifies the teaching that a person who masters this alignment is "more charismatic, more attractive, more effective, and more powerful than a group of millions who have not."¹⁹ At her retrial, many soldiers testified that it was Joan's unwavering faith that lit a fire in their hearts. Jean de Metz, the first knight to follow Joan, said he was impressed by her lack of fear: "I had absolute faith in her; her words and her ardent faith in God inflamed me."²⁰ This comment dovetails with the

¹⁶ As Wouter Hanegraaff notes, New Agers elevate the practical, phenomenal experience over theoretical considerations: *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 187.

¹⁷ Report of the Duke of Bedford to King Henry, Nicholas H. Nicolas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, 1386–1542* (G. Eyre & A. Spottis Woode, London, 1834–47), cited by Larissa Juliet Taylor, *The Virgin Warrior: The Life and Death of Joan of Arc* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 72.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret* (New York: Beyond Words Publishing, 2006).

¹⁹ Esther and Jerry Hicks, *The Vortex: Where the Law of Attraction Assembles all Co-operative Relationships* (New York, Hay House, 2009), 8.

²⁰ Timothy Wilson-Smith, *Joan of Arc: Maid, Myth and History* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2006), 108.

highest goal of spiritual ascension, which is to be free from energies stemming from fear so that one sees things from a divine perspective.

Perhaps the strongest link between Joan and New Age spirituality is her defense of personal conviction, and her refusal at her trial to submit to the church if it contradicted the spiritual messages she was getting. The role the church played in history is one reason for New Agers' mistrust of religious authorities, who—as one participant put it—“persecuted every beautiful person God sent.”²¹ Underlying this mistrust is the suspicion that the Catholic Church falsified and obscured Jesus's messages and exploited those who loved him. Joan's responses to Inquisitors are well documented, but the more interesting question is: “What was not said?” Joan's statement that her voices told her that the lead inquisitor was a false prophet²² leaves a tantalizing hint that she may have known further things that it was unsafe to talk about at the time.

Ultimately, Joan is appealing to New Agers because she herself brought in a new age. Her trial and death exposed the corruption of the church, and when her posthumous retrial discredited it further, the power of the Inquisition in France was broken. While martyrdom is not a common theme in New Age spirituality, Joan's story links well with its primary message: “Trust the universe.”²³ According to this principle, challenges are part of the divine plan in action. The tragedy of Joan's death benefited generations to come, and today few people can recall the names of those who condemned Joan, but many people know her name.

Five New Age Interpretations of Joan

Novelist John Steinbeck once commented that everyone who studies Joan's trial finds a “corroboration of his convictions, no matter what they may be.”²⁴ A distinctive feature of most New Age participants' interpretations of Joan is that, rather than simply appropriating her name, they seek her input into their beliefs and are open to expanding their everyday lives and their state of consciousness in response. In this section I explore five ways in which

²¹ “Lisa,” personal communication. For a fuller discussion of New Agers' thoughts on religious authorities, see Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, 322–24.

²² *Trial of Condemnation*, English translation, 1903, Section 21, “Monday May 28th,” <http://www.stjoan-center.com/Trials/sec21.html>.

²³ This phrase possibly originated from Gary Zukav's book *The Seat of the Soul* (New York: Fireside, 1989) 240, and has been popularised by Oprah Winfrey.

²⁴ John Steinbeck, “The Joan in All of Us,” *The Saturday Review*, January 14, 1956, 17.

spiritual seekers perceive Joan today—as a mystic, an ascended master, a personification of the divine feminine, a torch-bearer of the Holy Grail, and the embodiment of Michaelic and Marian essences. In keeping with the liberal nature of the New Age movement, these interpretations are personal choices.

Mystic

New Age literature tends to portray the historical Joan as a mystic whose life inspires “lightworkers.”²⁵ The term lightworker was popularized by Doreen Virtue in 1997 and refers to a person who has awakened to a spiritual call to serve humanity by working with energies of higher realms, particularly angelic energies.²⁶ Pamela Kribbe claims that there are 150 million lightworkers worldwide, and that their ultimate goal is to facilitate the anticipated new era of heaven on earth.²⁷ As one online participant puts it, “We are here to create a new world with inspiration as our weapon and love as our shield.”²⁸

Lightworkers tend to believe that everyone can live an extraordinary life, so long as they “follow their bliss” and work for the highest good of everyone.²⁹ Paul Walsh-Roberts, an author who runs international workshops assisting people to work with higher dimensional energy, stresses that the inspiration Joan received is available to everyone. He likens her to other historic “warriors of the evolutionary spirit” such as Einstein and Copernicus, who show what can be accomplished when an individual rises out of mediocrity and injustice, forgets about the approval of others, and ignores conventional thinking about limitations.³⁰

²⁵ For example: David Donahoo, “Lightworkers—Archangel Michael Inspires and Teaches,” *New Age Blog*, March 13, 2008, <http://www.thenewageblog.com/lightworkers-archangel-michael-inspires-teaches/>; Sarah Mclean, “Modern Mysticism,” *Mclean Meditation Institute*, 2011, <http://www.sedonameditation.com/ModernMystics.html>; Marcia Quinn Noren, *Joan of Arc: The Mystic Legacy* (Santa Cruz County: Golden Fields Press, 2011).

²⁶ Doreen Virtue, *The Lightworker’s Way: Awakening Your Spiritual Power to Know and Heal* (New York: Hay House, 1997).

²⁷ Pamela Kribbe, “The Lightworker,” *The Awakening*, September 5, 2010, <http://hiddenlighthouse.wordpress.com/2012/11/04/the-lightworker-2/>.

²⁸ “Think with Your Heart,” 2012, <http://thinkwithyourheart.com/>.

²⁹ The popular phrase “follow your bliss” is from Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Anchor, 1991), 113.

³⁰ Paul Walsh-Roberts, *Opening to Life* (Auckland: LightofLife Media, 2006), 82.

Ascended Master

According to several New Age websites, Joan is an ascended master—that is, a spiritually enlightened being who has attained ascension (union of the self with the divine) and returns to earth to guide others.³¹ Each ascended master has a specialty, and Joan’s expertise is in helping people become fully empowered. There are several reports on the internet of people feeling an intimate connection with Joan, and sensing she is leading them.³²

Ascended masters come from a range of religions and historical periods, and two other medieval Catholic saints who are identified as ascended masters are Francis of Assisi and Bernard of Clairvaux. Additionally, esoteric literature suggests several ascended masters had famous incarnations during the medieval period, most notably El Morya as the real-life person on whom the legendary Merlin is based, and Saint Germain as the person on whom stories of King Arthur are based.³³

Divine Feminine

Additionally, Joan is sometimes described in New Age writings as “goddess like.”³⁴ As spiritual counselor Phillip Jones observes, her life resonates with seekers today because she exemplifies the “sacred feminine,” in other words divine energy in a female body.³⁵ Phillip and his wife Ana Jones lead pilgrimages to locations in France associated with women like Joan of Arc and Mary Magdalene, who personify the sacred feminine (according to legend, Mary went to France after Jesus’s death). He believes that people today are

³¹ For example: Kaia Ra, “The Ascended Masters,” 2011, <http://www.kaiara.com/what-is-spirit-walking/the-ascended-masters-2/>; Marcia McMahon, “Ascended Masters,” 2004, http://www.angelfire.com/mb2/diana_speaks/ascendedmasters.html.

³² For example, Kathleen McIntire, “Joan of Arc Warrior Energy: Birth Within Me,” 2010, <http://www.soaringinlight.com/fierce-feminine>; Message from “Purple Sage”, Star Seed Hotline, April 1, 2011, <http://starseedhotline.ning.com/forum/topics/athena-and-avatars>; Sandy Stevenson, “Return of the Holy Grail to France,” December 1997, <http://lightascension.com/arts/holygrailreturnedtoFrance.htm>.

³³ Tellis S. Papastavro, *The Gnosis and The Law* (Tucson: New Age Study of Humanity’s Purpose, 1972).

³⁴ Laurie Brockway, “Call Forth Your Spiritual Warrior with Joan of Arc,” 2006, http://www.soulfulliving.com/summer06for_the_goddess.htm; see also Julie Loar, *Goddesses for Every Day* (Novato: New World Library, 2011).

³⁵ Ana and Phillip Jones, *Archangel Michael and his Historical Appearances in Mystical France*, audio recording, June 15, 2012, <http://www.mysticalfrance.com/Teleconferences.html>.

still affected by events that happened in medieval France. Noting that the authorities killed Joan and tried to suppress her power, Jones asks: “Can we make it happen again today?”³⁶

In accord with New Age democratic values, the aim of embracing the divine feminine is not to denigrate or usurp the masculine, but rather to balance it. Participants seek to harmonize male and female energies in their own lives. Joan exemplifies this ideal as she combined both male and female characteristics, taking on a strong leadership role traditionally associated with men, yet also weeping for the dead at the battle of Orléans. Those seeking enlightenment believe this balance brings true spiritual power.

Torch-bearer of the Holy Grail

The focus on the divine feminine has led to a resurgence of interest in Joan’s spiritual connection to Mary Magdalene, fuelled by books and movies about the Holy Grail.³⁷ Two centuries before Joan was born, French ecclesiastical authorities massacred up to twenty thousand Cathars, who held that Mary was a leading apostle who had an intimate relationship with Jesus, and that everyone (not just Jesus) was a manifestation of the divine.³⁸ The 1945 discovery of the Nag Hammadi scrolls shows these beliefs were also held in early Christianity,³⁹ but appear to have been suppressed by the Church. The significance of this in relation to Joan is that her standard, ring, and most of her letters bore the names *Jhesus Maria*. According to popular books about the Holy Grail, “Maria” referred to Mary Magdalene, and ecclesiastical authorities executed Joan because they feared she would expose information they had suppressed.⁴⁰

Some authors, though not necessarily New Age ones, see the Grail as a set of ancient documents containing Jesus’s original teachings and relation-

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ For example: Kathleen McGowan, *The Book of Love* (New York: Pocket Books, 2010); Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Anchor, 2009) and the film of the same name directed by Ron Howard (2006, Columbia Pictures); Laurence Gardner, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail* (London: Penguin, 2001).

³⁸ However, historians acknowledge that information on Cathar beliefs is based on polemics justifying the killings and on confessions at Inquisition trials: John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

³⁹ Gospels of Thomas, Philip, Mary and the Pistis Sophia in James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978).

⁴⁰ McGowan, *Book of Love*; Gardner, *Bloodline of the Holy Grail*.

ship with Mary Magdalene, and a bloodline the church tried to extinguish with crusades and inquisitions.⁴¹ An additional interpretation, which is both Jungian and New Age, is that the original Grail story-tellers composed the tales as allegories. Accordingly, the sought-after chalice is the seeker filled with the elixir of love and light and the bloodline is the discovery of one's own Christhood.⁴²

Embodiment of Michaelic and Marian Essences

Several writers have also drawn parallels between Joan's life and the lives of historic and legendary Grail figures, particularly Merlin, King Arthur, and the Lady of the Lake.⁴³ Ronna Herman, an influential spiritual channeler, suggests that one of the reasons for the enduring appeal of Joan and the Holy Grail figures is that they emanate the essences of Archangel Michael and Mary Mother of Jesus.⁴⁴ She suggests these essences were experienced by humans before they were born, and therefore the stories resonate on an unconscious level.⁴⁵ Many New Agers also believe these essences travel in ley lines (electromagnetic waves) that converge in places like the Tor in Glastonbury.

A few New Age writers have also noted that the stories of Joan, Merlin, King Arthur, and the Lady of the Lake all feature a sacred sword, which is associated with the rightful king and has a special power that makes its owner invulnerable to evil. They suggest the sword is a symbol to awaken the truth of one's divinity and to discover the kingdom of heaven within.⁴⁶ Joan's sword was lost and King Arthur's sword was given back to the Lady of the Lake to be retrieved by the rightful heir in a future time. For many New Agers, that time is now, and the heir is everyone.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*; Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* (New York: Dell, 1983).

⁴² John Matthews, *The Elements of the Grail Tradition* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996); "King Arthur and the Camelot Sagas," *Temple of the Presence*, 2013, http://www.templeofthepresence.org/king_arthur.htm.

⁴³ For example, Ronna Herman, "The Michael Mary Connection," *The Spirit of Ma'at* 4, no. 2, 2003, <http://www.spiritofmaat.com/archive/sep4/aamichl.htm>; Steve Robertson, "Enlightenment, Duality and the Sword of Truth," *HuffPost Healthy Living*, October 23, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-robertson/enlightenment_b_1989781.html.

⁴⁴ Herman, *ibid*. She adds that avatars like Rama and Krishna also bore these essences.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

⁴⁶ Robertson, "Enlightenment, Duality"; Spirit Eagle, "Telepathic Communication," *Archive of Archangel Michael Messages*, 2006, <http://thegoldenangel.us/?cat=8&paged=2>.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Spirit Eagle, *ibid*.

Channeling Experiences

Messages believed to be from Joan have recently been made available via channeling. Channeling is a process by which an individual goes into a non-ordinary state of consciousness and a perceived higher consciousness, such as an ascended master, speaks through him or her in the first person.⁴⁸ The practice is possibly the single most definitive aspect of New Age spirituality,⁴⁹ and most authorities estimate the number of channelers worldwide to be in the tens of thousands.⁵⁰ While there are no statistics on the number of people who get guidance from channelers, between nine and fifteen percent of Americans believe in “channeling, or allowing a ‘spirit being’ to temporarily assume control of a human body during a trance.”⁵¹ The basis of channeling—the belief in spirit beings—is relatively widespread, with seventy-seven percent of Americans believing in angels.⁵²

Starla Hinman, a spiritual channeler located in Arizona, has published messages believed to be from Joan as part of a group of messages from ascended masters and beings from higher realms, including “Lady Portia,” “Saint Germain,” and “Jeshua” (Jesus).⁵³ In these messages, Joan uses her French name Jeanne, and in keeping with this I will use the name Jeanne when referring to them, while retaining the name Joan when referring to the historical person.

I have focused my research on these messages for three reasons. First, they have an aesthetic and intuitive appeal: they give a sense of Jeanne’s presence today, rather than as an unapproachable figure available only from history books. Second, the messages are publicly available in audio and print on Starla’s website. Third, while several people claim the ability to give messages from Joan, Starla has an established reputation as a channeler and her

⁴⁸ For fuller discussions, see Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, 23–24; Arthur Hastings, *With the Tongues of Men and Angels: A Study of Channeling* (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991).

⁴⁹ J. Gordon Melton, “New Thought and the New Age,” in James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton, eds., *Perspectives on the New Age* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 21.

⁵⁰ Jean-Marie Decuyper, “Channeling: Sick or Scientific?” *Journal of the Society for Psychological Research* 63, no. 856 (1999): 193–202, statistic on 195.

⁵¹ David W. Moore, “Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal,” June 16, 2005, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/16915/three-four-americans-believe-paranormal.aspx>.

⁵² Associated Press, *GfK Poll*, December 2011, http://surveys.ap.org/data/GfK/AP-GfK Poll December 2011 Topline_Santa.pdf.

⁵³ Starla Hinman’s website, <http://www.starbird1.net>.

work has been published in the *Sedona Journal of Emergence*, a New Age journal that publishes selected, non-basic messages from top channelers, and has thirty to forty thousand international subscribers.⁵⁴

Jeanne's messages were first transmitted in 2010 and took place in the period leading up to the expected new spiritual era, which many believe was activated in late December 2012. Participants understand them to be part of a larger body of messages that will subsequently be revealed. Most of the communications were transmitted at fortnightly tele-seminar energy events at Starla's house in Tucson, Arizona. The purpose of the energy events is to allow energies to come through to help seekers spiritually ascend (in other words, to live with the highest awareness and knowledge) and to bring healing to the earth.

Starla has a maximum of ten people in the room, and these are people who, she says, "can run extremely high frequencies of spiritual energies in their bodies." Almost all are women. They assist by meditating to create a vortex of spiritual energy so the "beings of light" can do energy work and healing.⁵⁵ Participants from across the United States join in on the free conference line, and those living in other parts of the world listen to the event via audio recordings.

In channeling circles, most people say that the spiritual energies are the vital ingredient of the messages.⁵⁶ Words are simply an articulation of these energies, like lyrics to a song. At the energy events, it is not unusual for those present to report mystical feelings of being overwhelmed with luminous energies of love, beauty, creativity, and power. Starla's description of channeling Jeanne captures the sense of exhilaration well.

Then just as the meditation was being brought to a close, I was aware of a dynamic presence in the room—I felt her presence before I "saw" her image.

It was Jeanne! Jeanne d'Arc. She was on her horse and he was huge! Larger than life-size, and he was standing just on the edge of our circle!

Jeanne was beautiful! She was in full battle armor—like she wore at the Siege of Orléans, at her great victory. And she had

⁵⁴ Statistic from the subscriptions manager, personal communication to Starla Hinman, February 20, 2013. The articles are in the shortened version of Starla's name—Star.

⁵⁵ Starla Hinman, email to author, January 25, 2013.

⁵⁶ Walsh-Roberts, *Opening to Life*, 161.

her flag, her “standard” in one hand, and the bridle reins of this magnificent horse in the other. The energy that was radiating off this image of her was unbelievable. It was her energy as well as the power of Archangel Michael, which she consciously channeled to inspire and protect her soldiers at battle.

I had never felt such a strong presence from her before, and I was in tears, just looking at her.

I could hear what she was saying, and at one point she was speaking through me to those in the room. It was a message of such strength and inspiration, to never give up, no matter what is going on in your life. Keep going and know that the Angels are protecting you. Meet your challenges head-on, and never stop believing in yourself.

You could feel the power of her presence, as her soldiers must have felt it—because many times, through the power of Archangel Michael, which she radiated, they succeed in doing the “impossible” and overcoming much larger forces, to emerge victorious! And she still inspires—to this day!⁵⁷

As well as feeling deeply moved during the events, participants report long-term effects of healing and lightness of being.⁵⁸

The Communications

The messages offer a strong impression of Jeanne’s nature as she speaks about her life, empathizes with listeners’ challenges and encourages them to respond courageously.

Success Through Love, Trust, and Inspiration

A theme that runs like a golden thread through the communications is that everything Joan did was done from the level of feeling, inspiration, and heart.⁵⁹ She was a teenage girl, not a hardened military commander immune

⁵⁷ Starla Hinman, “The New Normal for 2012: An Appearance by Joan of Arc,” October 14, 2011, <http://www.starbird1.net/2011/10>.

⁵⁸ For example, the testimonials on the “Lady Portia and the Ascended Masters” website, <http://www.starbird1.net/testimonials>.

⁵⁹ Starla Hinman, email to author October 20, 2012.

to the brutalities of war. She felt everything deeply (weeping, for example, over the deaths of her enemies) and she led from the heart, using feeling, intuition, and communications with spiritual realms. The invaders had never come across a highly sensitive military commander; they had no way of understanding her, and no effective way of dealing with her. Their own strategy was based on power, control and logic, and Joan's intuitive leadership and unpredictable maneuvers proved deadly to them.⁶⁰

The messages concur with historical testimony that Joan's fearlessness and personal magnetism were based in her unshakable trust in divine beings. Jeanne says she was "merely a humble servant of the divine," and that if it were not for the love she felt and the spiritual beings helping her, she could never have done what she did.⁶¹ Jeanne speaks of the saints' visits to her when she was young, and confirms she saw them in physical form. She recalls how the "radiance of this light" healed her and changed her life so she was never the same again.⁶² Jeanne stresses that her assistance from spirit beings and resulting victories were not rare strokes of good fortune, but experiences that are available for everyone. (In a personal communication, Starla added that much of this assistance came to Jeanne through inner knowing and feelings, rather than the audible words.⁶³)

Of the spirit beings, Jeanne speaks a lot of Archangel Michael. She says Michael played a vital role in the French victories: leading the battles, enfold-ing her in his light, and keeping the enemies' swords from reaching her.⁶⁴ Jeanne's messages further suggest that her military maneuvers (later praised by Napoleon) and her words that roused demoralized soldiers to heroism were also from Michael. Michael, she says, can transform all the elements of a situation in an instant⁶⁵—a comment that links back to the battle of Les Tourelles and similar events detailed at her retrial.

Jeanne additionally credits her success to "Jesus and Mary," whose names she had on her standard.⁶⁶ She does not say whether she is referring to Mary

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "Jeanne d'Arc Addresses the Light Angels" (Starla Hinman, channel), audio recording, class 30, <http://www.starbird1.net/free-ascended-master-audios-2>.

⁶² "Jeanne d'Arc" (Starla Hinman, channel), audio recording, class 51, <http://www.starbird1.net/free-ascended-master-audios-2>.

⁶³ Starla Hinman, email to author June 12, 2013.

⁶⁴ "Jeanne d'Arc Addresses the Light Angels."

⁶⁵ "Jeanne d'Arc" (Starla Hinman, channel), message to author, January 19, 2012.

⁶⁶ "Jeanne d'Arc" (Starla Hinman, channel), "The Return of the Goddess," *Sedona Journal of Emergence*, January 5, 2012, <http://www.starbird1.net/2012/01>.

Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, or both, but towards the end of the message she sends blessings from “Jeshua, Mary the Magdalene, and Mother Mary.”⁶⁷ Her use of the definite article (“the Magdalene”) is worth noting, given that it is not currently known whether the Biblical word “Magdalene” refers to the town Magdala or a quality (the Aramaic word translates as exalted, tower, great, with connotations of elegance and magnificence).⁶⁸

The following excerpt gives another indication as to why soldiers fought so willingly for Joan. The scene most likely refers initially to the liberation of Orléans and then widens to include all the battles.

It was their great power that protected my life in battle, and no-one could stop the will of God on that day. Tremendous healings occurred there, not by my ability alone, but by the grace, love and power of the God and Goddess presence, as channeled to and through me by the ones known as Jesus and Mary. Their miraculous presence saved us many times from what was a sure death at the hands of our enemies. They enriched us with their love, and empowered us with their strength, and we were saved.⁶⁹

Healings are not explicitly described in any known fifteenth-century records, though they are implied by soldiers’ testimonies of Joan’s holiness and power.⁷⁰

Historical Questions

In addition to the mention of unrecorded healings, the messages include segments about aspects of Joan’s life that have been lost to history. With the exception of the information about Charles, which was a response to a direct question, these sections arose when Jeanne was illustrating a spiritual point.

Perhaps the most enduring historical question is what the seventeen-year-old Joan said to the Dauphin Charles when she convinced him to allow her

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Marvin Meyer and Esther De Boer, *The Gospels of Mary: The Secret Tradition of Mary Magdalene the Companion of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004), ix.

⁶⁹ “Jeanne d’Arc” (Starla Hinman, channel), “By Your Hand May the Will of God be Done on Earth,” class 71 audio recording, July 10, 2012, <http://www.starbird1.net/free-ascended-master-audios-2>.

⁷⁰ Soldiers’ impressions discussed in Stephen W. Richey, *Joan of Arc: The Warrior Saint* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 109–13.

to lead France into battle. The current messages from Jeanne suggest the information was what New Agers call a channeled message and Christians call a prophetic message, as Jeanne speaks of channeling Archangel Michael and Jesus. If so, Charles's statement that Joan said things she could not have known may refer to information that he was the rightful heir to the throne, as well as prayers Charles uttered that were too personal to be repeated. Jeanne does, however, offer a glimpse of a brief segment that is not private, during a message in which she urges listeners not to be afraid of the truth of who they are.

I stand before you now as I stood before the King of France—to give him the strength to do what he must do for his people. And I say the same to you as I said to him long ago: “The people await you sire. They await your great presence to lead them forward in the knowledge of what must be done for the will of God to be once again returning to earth. That all may be done by his hand, and the hand of his son’—and his many daughters on earth, I would add.⁷¹

A further issue that has captured the public imagination is why Charles did not help Joan when she was taken prisoner. Writers, film makers, and even historians have portrayed Charles as a selfish man who abandoned Joan after she got him his crown.⁷² In a private session with Starla channeling Jeanne, I asked about his apparent inaction. Jeanne said the simplified answer was that Charles wanted to help in his heart, but the political situation at the time (involving warring factions working clandestinely to gain control of France) placed him in a tenuous situation and diverted vast resources from the Treasury. This left insufficient money to pay the type of ransom that would have been demanded for her release. “He was not a strong man, and a stronger person might have pushed through this and attempted to do more, but I did not (and do not now) bear him any ill will,” she said.⁷³

A final question—and one that no amount of historical scholarship can answer—is what went through Joan's mind just before she was burned at the

⁷¹ “Jeanne d’Arc,” “By Your Hand.”

⁷² Film examples include *Joan of Arc*, directed by Christian Duguay (1999, CBS & CBA, mini-series); *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*, directed by Luc Besson (1999, Gaumont, motion picture). Writers and scholars include Warner, *Joan of Arc*, 110; Pernoud, *Joan of Arc by herself*, 158. Wilson-Smith is relatively sympathetic to Charles, *Joan of Arc: Maid*, 143.

⁷³ “Jeanne d’Arc” (Starla Hinman, channel), message to author, August 1, 2012.

stake. Eye-witness accounts show the execution was unusually cruel (the common practice of first striking the person unconscious did not occur) and the scribe Manchon later testified that he was so “shaken” he remained “terror-stricken for a month.”⁷⁴ Jeanne’s narrative, however, has a different focus, and she portrays her execution as a transcendent lifting of her spirit:

I was held within the hand of God by these beautiful ones [including Jesus, Mary Mother of Jesus, and Archangel Michael] who stood by on either side of me, as the flames leapt up at my feet, and I was not afraid to die because I could see their faces on either side of me, smiling with the most magnificent love, and I knew where I was going. This is the blessing that can come to each of you in your time of trouble or in the happy moments of your life.⁷⁵

An additional channeled source says that because her consciousness was lifted before the flames seared her skin, she did not suffer pain, even though her human body was going through the movements and her brain was responding.⁷⁶

In describing the meaning of her death, Jeanne uses the archetypal metaphors of light and dark. She says “there was much darkness in France at the time” and she incarnated to raise the energies of light and to embody the Christ presence.⁷⁷ She relates the flames that consumed her body to spiritual fire that purifies, and says that, by her death, dark energies that had collected in the physical form in France were transmuted into light. Through the flames, she says, the country was set free, in the same way that the “the fire of consciousness” in the heart of each listener is liberating them.⁷⁸

In relating the fire at the stake to the “fire of consciousness,” Jeanne is referring to both the essence of divine energy and the path to it. In medieval times, alchemists experimented with fire to turn base metals into gold, and, to the initiated, this meant rekindling the flame in the heart to purify the

⁷⁴ Craig Taylor (translator), *Joan of Arc, La Pucelle* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), 330.

⁷⁵ “Jeanne d’Arc” (Starla Hinman, channel), audio recording, class 41, <http://www.starbird1.net/free-ascended-master-audios-2>.

⁷⁶ “Abraham” (Joy Deerness, channel), message to author, March 27, 1997.

⁷⁷ “Jeanne d’Arc Addresses the Light Angels,” class 30.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

soul.⁷⁹ In channeled teachings today, participants are introduced to flame invocations, in which they call upon and visualize flames of the sacred fire (such as the violet flame of transmutation and the gold flame of wisdom) to reunite with divine intelligence.⁸⁰

Jeanne's Advice for Today

Jeanne's message is that she will help seekers live a life of courage and authenticity in which they use their gifts fully and become more than they ever thought they could be. She acknowledges the challenges listeners are experiencing, and says she knows what it is like to be on "the battlefield of life" and to "feel beaten down by circumstances." However, she wants people to know they have been lied to when told they were incapable of achieving things and "trampled down by limiting beliefs that were never true" of them.⁸¹ The reality, Jeanne says, is that everyone can easily exceed all the boundaries they have set for themselves, and others have set for them.

She advises listeners to do as she did—to trust who they are deep within, to pay attention to their heart, and to call on spiritual beings for assistance. "We are but a breath away," she says.⁸² Triggering associations with how she transformed Charles from a powerless man to a triumphant king, Jeanne offers to lead seekers to the throne room of their divinity. For the journey she gives them the gifts of her shield, her armor of light, her sword of wisdom, as well as her love.

One of Jeanne's messages is primarily directed at women. In a transmission in January 2012, she urges women to develop their strength and power as much as they have developed their love nature.⁸³ Her words are characteristically emboldening: "Bring forth your strength!" "You are every bit as powerful as men!" When women balance their love with strength, Jeanne says, the current disequilibrium on earth (with male energies predominating) will be harmonized, and this will alleviate stressful social conditions. She adds that both sexes will benefit as men "have become tired under the weight of

⁷⁹ Allison Coudert, *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (London: Wildwood House, 1980), 80–107.

⁸⁰ Aurelia Louise Jones, *The Seven Sacred Flames* (Redding: Mount Shasta Light Publishing, 2007).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Jeanne d'Arc, class 41.

⁸³ Jeanne d'Arc, "The Return of the Goddess."

expressing strength on earth.”⁸⁴ Commenting on the messages, Starla suggests that Jeanne may be the archetype of the new female that is beginning to appear on earth.⁸⁵

Dialogue about the Channeled Material

The ideological content of the messages raises questions about the historical Joan’s beliefs, and I discussed these with Starla. As noted earlier, there is a hint in the trial record that Joan knew things it was unsafe to talk about at the time. Starla says she believes Joan had much esoteric knowledge (including information on Mary Magdalene) that she did not reveal because the spiritual realms were her source of strength, and to be effective she needed to keep them pure. Consequently, she was reluctant to open her private world to the disruptive energies and influences that often surrounded her life.⁸⁶

A further issue arising from the messages is that they seem to contradict occasional statements in historical accounts that imply Joan had a medieval concept of God. In particular, D’Alençon testified at Joan’s retrial that, as thousands of armed invaders descended on them, Joan urged the men not to flee, exclaiming, “God has sent them to us for us to punish them.”⁸⁷ Starla suggests that the emotional context of the invasion has to be taken into account.⁸⁸ A possible sentence uttered to boost frightened men to defend themselves from slaughter cannot reasonably be subjected to theological analysis. She adds that much of what has been written about Joan may be erroneous, as people’s ability to understand and accurately remember what she said was influenced by the military, religious, and political thought of the time. Such ambiguities are why, Starla says, the new messages are important, as people can now understand Joan with the benefit of today’s spiritual knowledge and information.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Starla Hinman, email to author, January 1, 2013.

⁸⁶ Starla Hinman, email to author, June 12, 2013.

⁸⁷ Régine Pernoud, *The Retrial of Joan of Arc: The Evidence for her Vindication* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 159.

⁸⁸ Starla Hinman, email to author, June 12, 2013.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

After surveying centuries of scholarship on Joan, French scholar Egide Jeanné concluded that Joan cannot be studied objectively—the story is too powerful.⁹⁰ This challenge is heightened when discussing Jeanne's communications in which it is her presence, as much as her words, that is experienced as powerful. In twenty-first century New Age spirituality, Joan ceases to be an unattainable ideal adored from afar and is instead experienced as closely as if she were physically here. Six hundred years after her birth and almost nine thousand kilometers from where she lived, people report her energy seeping through them. She is seen astride a horse—a symbol of unbridled passion and intense feelings—the flesh and blood incarnation of powerful forces.⁹¹ She holds a standard with the words *Jhesus Maria*, representing the male and female divinity. Her words inspire, giving a glimpse of why the soldiers fought so bravely for her. It is as if the fifteenth century and the present have merged.

The post-mortem archetypes of Joan as virgin, saint, martyr and child-peasant are replaced with a new archetype of the woman of the future. This new archetype encompasses several others: the goddess who emanates energies of love, beauty and strength, the prophet who shows up in a seemingly hopeless situation, the sacred warrior who drives out invaders, the visionary who inspires audacious possibilities, the hero who boldly faces danger, the mentor who imparts wisdom, and the savior who devotes her life to a cause much greater than herself.

Psychologists tell us that the search for meaning is one of the most powerful human drives.⁹² We may not always be conscious of it, but it can surface acutely at certain times of our lives, especially when our future is uncertain. Jeanne's messages satisfy this search in two ways. First, she suggests

⁹⁰ Égide Jeanné, *L'image de la Pucelle d'Orléans dans la littérature historique française depuis Voltaire* (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1935), cited in Barstow, *Joan of Arc: Heretic*, 127.

⁹¹ Carl G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, vol. 9, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 247.

⁹² Michael F. Steger, et al., "Understanding the Search for Meaning in Life: Personality, Cognitive Style, and the Dynamic Between Seeking and Experiencing Meaning," *Journal of Personality* 76, no. 2 (2008): 199–208; Salvatore R. Maddi, "The Search for Meaning," in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, ed. William J. Arnold and Monte M. Page (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 137–86; Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

that people can exceed all limitations and positively transform their world by believing in themselves and by being guided by spirit. Second, she offers to lead people to the “throne room of their divinity,” to help them reclaim their inner power and be the highest, most noble version of themselves. Her presence and words transport participants back not just to fifteenth-century France, but also to the hope of finding the Holy Grail. To quote *King Lear*, “the wheel has come full circle.”