

***Henry VI Part 1* for Children:**

Joan of Arc in Quiller-Couch's *Historical Tales from Shakespeare*

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Abstract

This paper attempts to reveal how Quiller-Couch's retold story of *Henry VI. Part 1* altered the representation of Joan of Arc. The first part surveys Shakespeare's place in history education and analyses Quiller-Couch's preface. The second part compares the representation of Joan between Shakespeare's play and Quiller-Couch's retold story. Through these, this paper claims that Joan of Arc in Quiller-Couch's version is represented as a figure who is rather opposite from Shakespeare. The images of Joan as a prostitute and a witch are omitted in Quiller-Couch, as a result of omitting contemptuous treatment of Joan by English nobles.

Keywords : Shakespeare, *Henry VI. Part 1*, *Retellings for Children*

I. Introduction

For about 400 years, Shakespeare's plays, performed on stage and published as scholarly or popular edition, have gained a wide audience and readership. They have also been adapted to various forms such as TV and film versions. Though retold prose story is one of these popular adapted forms, much fewer researches on retold stories have been undertaken so far than those on TV and film versions.

Of course, there are researches on retold stories, and recently, more and more academic attention has been paid, especially since Stanley Wells gave a lecture on "Tales from Shakespeare" for British Academy. After Wells, scholars such as Janet Bottoms and Velma Bourgeois Richmond develop the researches on this area. However, many topics still remain to be developed, and how *Henry VI. Part 1* was adapted to a retold story by Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, the topic discussed in this paper, is among those yet to be researched in detail.

Analysing Quiller-Couch's retold version is also significant in the area on patriotism in history education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Though scholars on the British imperialism in education in that period have repeatedly pointed out the significance of English literature in education for imperialism and patriotism,¹ few researches have been undertaken to show how English literature were involved in this aspect. Analysing Quiller-Couch's retelling of *Henry VI. Part 1* could thus

be one of the contributions to this area of research.

This paper consists of two parts. The first part surveys Shakespeare's place in history education and analyses Quiller-Couch's preface. The second part compares the representation of Joan of Arc between Shakespeare's play and Quiller-Couch's retold story. Through these analyses, this paper attempts to reveal how the representation of Joan of Arc is altered in Quiller-Couch's retold story.

II-1. Shakespeare's Place in History Education

Shakespeare's history plays played a significant role in history education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as there are frequent references to Shakespeare's history plays as useful materials for children to understand English history, in the books on history teaching at that time. For example, M. W. Keatinge's *Teaching of History* (1910), an influential "guideline for history teaching" (Castle 5), admitted the merit of Shakespeare's histories in learning history:

They are in many cases too important merely to be introduced into the history lesson for illustrative purposes, and should therefore be read in the hours devoted to English Literature and correlated with the English History... and an attempt should be made to give boys some knowledge of the contents of all Shakespeare's English plays, of which an

inexpensive edition can be procured, while one or two of them can be read carefully during the year (207).

This kind of favourable view to Shakespeare's histories for the better understanding of English history was common in the books of history education, as observed in such authors as Archer and Jarvis.² It would therefore be quite possible to state that the use of Shakespeare's history plays as supplementary materials were regarded as necessary from the view point of history educators.

II-2. Quiller-Couch's Preface to the *Historical Tales*

While Shakespeare's history plays were thought to be very useful in history education, the difficulty of Shakespeare's plays for children was frequently pointed out. Quiller-Couch discusses that "our own experience seemed to show that many young readers fight shy of them..., being deterred perhaps by the dramatic form and partly by the sophisticated language" (iii). As this reveals, the "dramatic form" and "the sophisticated language," in which Shakespeare's histories are written were thought to prevent children from reading Shakespeare.

To solve the problem, Quiller-Couch intends, in retelling Shakespeare's histories, to make them easier. This intention of him is expressed in his question below.

Is it possible, by throwing the stories into plain narrative form, and making the language more ordinary, to represent these vivid pictures so that young readers may be attracted to them—yet reverently, and in the hope that from our tale, if simple, copies they may be led on and attracted to his rich and wonderful work? (iii)

The phrases such as "plain narrative form" and "the language more ordinary" imply his attention to simplify Shakespeare's histories. By doing this, he wants "young readers" to experience and "to be attracted to" Shakespeare's histories.

Quiller-Couch's *Historical Tales from Shakespeare* was published in this context. In addition, Quiller-Couch's preface reveals the fact that Shakespeare's history plays were also considered a useful medium for embedding patriotism into children's minds.

Of True and fervent patriotism these plays are full... It has been said that the real hero of Shakespeare's historical plays is England; and no one can read them and be deaf to the ringing, vibrating note of pride, of almost fierce joy to be an Englishman, to have inherited the liberties of so great a country and be a partaker in her glory. (v)

Quiller-Couch also indicated, in his preface, what kind of patriotism is presented in his *Historical Tales*: "no writer with a conscience could repeat that portrait for the children in whom are bound up our hopes of a better England than we shall see" (v). Here, "that portrait" refers to "the slanderous portrait of Joan of Arc" (v). He argues that the authors "with a conscience" would not represent her just as Shakespeare did because they expected to present "a better England" for children's future. Moreover, he declared that he omits such an injurious representation of Joan of Arc as follows:

It is enough to say that here they will not given the chance; since to-day, if ever, it is necessary to insist that no patriotism can be true which gives to a boy no knightliness or to a girl no gentleness of heart. (v)

The reason Quiller-Couch deleted the defamatory representation of her is to keep children's patriotism full of "knightliness" for boys and "gentleness" for girls. What was unacceptable to Quiller-Couch seems to be English people's attitudes to Joan of Arc. The English people's harsh behaviour to her contradicted "a better England," "knightliness," and "gentleness" which he intended to represent as patriotism in his *Historical Tales*. It follows that he wanted to present children the figure of England without a fault by omitting episodes causing bad impression upon the readers' country. Therefore, the analysis of Quiller-Couch's *Henry VI* could reveal one of the influential retold authors' views of what patriotism should be like at that time.

III-1. Joan of Arc in Shakespeare

This section analyses how Joan of Arc is represented in Shakespeare's *King Henry VI. Part 1*.³

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Joan is first introduced by Bastard, who tells that she is a sacred figure, blessed by “a vision” sent from the place of God:

A holy maid hither with me I bring,
Which by a vision sent to her from heaven
Ordained is to raise this tedious siege
And drive the English forth the bounds of France.
(1.2.51-54)

Joan also represents herself as sacred, repeating the content of Bastard’s speech more in detail:

God’s mother deigned to appear to me
And, in a vision full of majesty,
Willed me to leave my base vocation
And free my country from calamity:
Her aid she promised and assured success.
With those clear rays which she infused on me,
That beauty am I blessed with, which you may see.
(1.2.74-86)

According to her, she was blessed by “God’s mother,” Saint Mary and ordered to save France from England. Mary gave her light making her beautiful.

This image of sacredness are frequently represented, especially in the beginning part of the play. Clear examples of it are that characters use words representing sacredness several times, in order to refer to Joan. Table 1 below is the list of them.

Line(s)	Name	Speech
1.2.51	Bastard	A <u>holy</u> maid hither with me I bring,
1.4.101	Messenger	A <u>holy prophetess</u> , new risen up –
1.5.43	Charles	<u>Divinest</u> creature, Astraea’s daughter,
1.5.47	Charles	France, triumph in thy glorious <u>prophetess</u> .
1.5.68	Charles	Bur Joan de Puzel shall be France’s <u>saint</u> .
2.1.49	Bastard	Tut, <u>holy</u> Joan was his defensive guard.

Table 1. Words representing Joan’s sacredness (underlines mine)

Obviously, the adjectives like “holy” and “divinest,” and the noun “prophetess” and “saint” could give readers or audience the sacred image of Joan.

In addition to these words, Joan is repeatedly related to great female historical or mythical figures and a Roman goddess in the scene of her first appearance (1.2.). Among these are “the nine sybils of old Rome” (56), “an Amazon” (104), “Deborah” (105), “Helen, the mother of great Constantine” (142), “Saint Phillip’s daughters” (143), and “Venus” (144). The comparison with them emphasises the greatness and sacredness of Joan.

The sacred Joan can also be observed in her supernatural abilities mentioned and represented in the play. They are the ability to foretell things and that to distinguish people whom she has never met.

Her foretelling skills are mentioned several times. As I mentioned above, she is called “prophetess” (1.4.102; 1.5.47). What she can do by “[t]he spirit of deep prophecy” is, Bastard says, to see “[w]hat’s past and what’s to come” (1.2.55, 57).

She is able to recognise people whom she meets for the first time, This power is revealed in Joan’s speech:

Reignier, is’t thou that thinkest to beguile me?
Where is the Dolphine? come, come from behind
I know thee well, though never seen before.
Be not amazed, there’s nothing hid from me.
(1.2.65-68)

When she comes to see Charles, he orders Reignier to see Joan, pretending to be Charles, so that they can see “what skill she hath” (1.2.63). She soon, however, the man is Reignier, not Charles.

The second notable characteristic of Joan represented in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI. Part 1* is that she is frequently defined as a prostitute. This characteristic is mainly uttered in the speeches of English nobles. The table 2 is the list of words representing Joan as a prostitute.

Line(s)	Name	Speech
1.4.106	Talbot	Puzel or <u>pussel</u> , Dolphin or dogfish,
1.5.12	Talbot	But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet.
2.2.28	Burgandy	Am sure I scared the Dolphin and his <u>trull</u> ,
3.2.44	Burgandy	Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless <u>courtesan</u> .
4.4. 152-3*	John	He answered thus: 'Young Talbot was not born To be the pillage of a <u>giglot wench</u> '.
5.3.32	Shepherd	Dost thou deny thy father, cursed <u>drab</u> ?
5.3.84	York	<u>Strumpet</u> , thy words condemn thy brat and thee.

Table 2. Words Representing Joan as a Prostitute (underlines mine)

*Though the speaker of these lines is Joan, I assign them to John Talbot, as they are Joan's report of what John said.

The underlined words, such as "pussell," "trull," "courtesan," "giglot wench," "drab," and "[s]trumpet," do all have direct or indirect implication of prostitution. It seems acceptable to state that readers and audience would have an image of a prostitute in Joan's character.

Joan tries to deny such pejoratively alleged representation when she was captured and sentenced to be burned.

No – misconceived, Joan of Aire hath been
A virgin from her tender infancy,
Chaste and immaculate in very thought,
Whose maiden-blood, thus rigorously effused,
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.
(5.3.49-53)

She claims her virginity, in order to protect her life, though this attempt is not at all effective. Finding her virginity useless to save her life, she changes her statement completely, claiming she is pregnant in this way:

Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.
I am with child ye bloody himicides:
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although ye hale me to a violent death. (5.3.60-64)

She insists that pregnant female has a "privilege" to evade death, and that she should be, therefore, exempt from death. After this speech, however, she first states that the father of the baby is Alençon ("It was Alençon that enjoyed my love" (5.3.73)). Then immediately, she changes the father's name into Reignier (" 'Twas neither Charles, nor yet the Duke I named, / But Reignier, King of Naples, that prevailed" (5.3.77-78)). This change, for York and Warwick, proves that Joan is like a indecent prostitute:

YORK

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well,
There were so many, whom she may accuse.

WARWICK

It's sign she hath been liberal and free. (5.3.80-82)

York and Warwick assert that not knowing the father due to having sexual intercourse with lots of men is the proof for her to be a prostitute. Her representation as a prostitute is thus emphasized at the death of Joan of Arc.

Joan of Arc is also represented as a devil or a witch in *Henry VI. Part 1*. Table 3 is a list of words that represent Joan's character as a devil or a witch.

Line(s)	Name	Speech
1.5.5-6	Talbot	<u>Devil</u> , or <u>devil's dam</u> , I'll conjure thee – Blood will I draw on thee – thou art a <u>witch</u> –
1.5.21	Talbot	A <u>witch</u> by fear, not force, like Hannibal
3.2.37	Talbot	Puzel, that <u>witch</u> , that damned sorceress,
3.2.44	Burgandy	Scoff on, vile <u>fiend</u> and shameless courtesan.

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3.2.51	Talbot	Foul <u>fiend</u> of France and hag of all despite,
3.2.63	Talbot	I speak not to that railing <u>Hecate</u> ,
5.2.55	York	See how ugly <u>witch</u> doth bend her brows
5.2.63	York	Fell banning hag, <u>enchantress</u> , hold thy tongue.
5.3.1	York	Bring forth that <u>sorceress</u> condemned to burn.
5.3.93	Yoerk	Thou foul <u>accursed minister of hell</u>

Table 3. Words Representing Joan as a Devil or a Witch (underlines mine)

The underlined words show that the play represents Joan as a devil or a witch clearly.

In addition to these direct references to Joan as a devil or a witch, there are those to Joan's use of witchcraft, though they are one-sidedly labelled by English nobles. They always connect Joan's success in the battles to witchcraft.

The first example can be observed when France defeats English siege of Orleans. At the battle, the Earl of Salisbury is killed by gunner's boy's shoot (1.4.) and then French army, led by Charles and Joan, carry the attack to English siege. Defeating England, Charles and Joan enter on the walls of Orleans. Talbot's speech after the battle comments the result of the battle that English defeat is caused by "their deceit, / Contrived by art and baleful sorcery" (2.1.14-15). Bedford, Regent of France, agrees with this view as follows:

Coward of France! How much he wrongs his fame,
Despairing of his own arms' fortitude,
To join with witches and the help of hell.
(2.1.16-18)

This quotation again suggests the French use of sorcery. Bedford believes France is supported by a witch and hell.

The next instance is represented in the scene of the battle at Rouen, where Joan disguises herself "as a poor peasant" (3.2.0.SD), cheating the watch, entering Rouen, and then calling French army into Rouen (3.2.1-34). According to Burns, the trick Joan uses here is not originally Joan's, but one of English general's in Hall's

The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York (1548).⁴ Burns argues that by this alteration, Joan's "trickster-like" figure and English "chivalric codes of behaviour" are emphasised (205n.). Talbot's speech soon after French attack strengthens Joan's cowardly conduct, referring to witchcraft:

France, thou shalt rue this treason with thy tears,
If Talbot but survive thy treachery.
Puzel, that witch, that damned sorceress,
Hath wrought this hellish mischief unawares,
That hardly we escaped the pride of France.
(3.2.35-39).

This speech often uses the words that has strong reference to witchcraft: "witch," "damned sorceress," and "hellish mischief." Thus, with the reference to witchcraft, Joan's malicious figure is highlighted in Shakespeare.

Thirdly, the episode of Joan's persuasion to get Burgandy to betray English court and to join French includes the indication of her use of witchcraft. When Charles orders Joan to induce Burgandy to participate in France, he says, "Speak, Puzel, and enchant him with thy words" (3.3.40). And listening to her persuasion, Burgandy, wavering, says that "Either she hath bewitched me with her words, / Or nature makes me suddenly relent" (3.3.58-59). Both of Charles's and Burgandy's speech include the words indicating Joan's use of magic ("enchant" in Charles and "bewitched" in Burgandy). As Burns discusses, what Joan uses here is only "rhetorical skill." However, the use of these words reminds us of her witchcraft again.

The last and direct example of Joan's use of magic is represented in the part just before Joan is captured. Before her capture, Joan summons the devils to help her as follows:

Now help, ye charming spells and periapts,
And ye, choice spirits that admonish me
And give me signs of future accidents. *Thunder*
You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the north,
Appear, and aid me in this enterprise. (5.2.23-28)

This is the direct evidence that Joan uses witchcraft, the

“*Thunder*” in the stage direction foregoing the atmosphere of witchcraft. After Joan’s summons, “*Fiends*” (5.2.28SD) appear on the stage, proving Joan’s ability to be true.

Joan’s speeches to friends show that she has been keeping in touch with the devils:

Where I was wont to feed you with my blood,
I’ll lop a member off and give it you
In earnest of a further benefit
So you do condescend to help me know.
(5.2.35-38)

In this quotation, she reveals that she gave her blood to the fiends many times. She offers additional sacrifice, “a member” (= a limb), if they help her. Together with Joan’s later speech, “My ancient incantations are too weak, / And hell too strong for me to buckle with” (5.2.48-49), this speech, therefore, discloses Joan’s constant usage of witchcraft.

When Joan is captured by York, she is condemned to be burned, as York’s speeches “Curse, miscreant, when thou com’st to the stake” (5.2.65) and “Bring forth that sorceress condemned to burn” (5.3.1) show. This cruelty was frequently recorded as the punishment for witches. What is notable here is that no sympathy is expressed by any character in the play. Rather, York and Warwick order the executors to strengthen the force of fire: Warwick commands them to “[s]pare for no faggots, let there be enough” and “[p]lace barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake”(5.3.56, 57).

As I have been analysing, Joan of Arc in Shakespeare’s *Henry VI. Part 1* is represented as a holy maid, prostitute, and witch at the same time. These representations collaborate to construct the complicated image of Joan of Arc in the play.

III-2. Joan of Arc in Quiller-Couch

This section discusses how Quiller-Couch treats and represents Joan of Arc, surveying the three characteristics discussed in the previous section. Analysing Quiller-Couch’s treatment of Joan, I would like to reveal what Quiller-Couch’s patriotism was.

Joan as a sacred figure can be observed in

Quiller-Couch, too. Like Shakespeare’s play, Joan in Quiller-Couch states her sacredness:

The heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, to be lieutenant of Himself who is the King of France. (218-19)

In the retelling, in addition, more objective view of her sacredness is told by a narrator:

In her walks now she saw visions—the mother of God between the trees: St. Michael standing in a slant of light between the green boughs and calling on her to save France; there was pity in Heaven (said he) for the fair realm of France. (218)

While Joan as a sacred figure is faithfully maintained, the representation of her as a prostitute is completely omitted in Quiller-Couch. There is no direct reference to her as such, nor does she claim her pregnancy at her death, hence her indecencies, which York and Warwick denounce in Shakespeare, are concealed in Quiller-Couch. The reason for this is because these sexual expressions are thought to be inappropriate for young readers.

The representation of Joan as a witch is also mentioned in Quiller-Couch. However, the tone and the content of it observed in the retold story is considerably different from that in Shakespeare, especially with regard to the existence of Joan’s magic and English attitude toward Joan at death.

Actually, Joan is mentioned as a witch in Quiller-Couch as well: “To them she was a sorceress and her triumphs procured by the Evil One” (225). However, the direct evidence for her witchcraft, summoning the devils, is completely omitted. Moreover, the denial of her being a witch not only by Joan herself but also by “an ecclesiastical court” (225) is shown in Quiller-Couch’s version. The court clearly denies her to be a witch judging from the sentences below:

she was tried as a witch before an ecclesiastical court presided over by the Bishop of Beauvais. Their questions failed to entangle her” (225).

In spite of the court's conclusion, English soldiers force Joan to be burned at the stake as follows:

The brutal soldiers tore her from the hands of the clergy and hurried her to the stake, but their tongues fell silent at her beautiful composure (225).

There are two points to be noted here: the brutality of English soldiers and Joan's calmness. Both of these seem to result from the denial of her being a witch. With this, English soldiers should burn her at the stake without any evidence, and Joan does not have to refute eagerly their claim.

In addition, her last is represented as martyrdom. The narrator of the story narrates the death of her:

"Yes!" she cried; "my voices *were* of God!" and with those triumphant words the head of this incomparable martyr sank on her breast. (226)

The direct use of the word "martyr," and her last voice for God emphasise this aspect together.

Even an English soldier admits her to be a "martyr:" "'We are lost," muttered an English soldier standing in the crowd; "we have burned a saint" (226). Thus, what the last of Joan and the English soldier's response to it lay emphasis on are the sacredness of Joan, not Joan's witch-like quality at all.

IV. Conclusion

As I have discussed so far, Joan of Arc in Quiller-Couch's retold story of *Henry VI. Part 1* is represented quite differently from Joan in Shakespeare. This difference derives clearly from the two reasons: the omission of sexual expression and that of English nobles' contemptuous attitude toward Joan. The former results in omitting the representation of Joan as a prostitute. The latter leads to omitting Joan's quality as a witch. Thus, Joan of Arc's quality represented in Quiller-Couch is rather opposite to that in Shakespeare. While Shakespeare's Joan is killed as a prostitute and a witch, Quiller-Couch's Joan is killed as a sacred martyr. Though

it can be stated that Quiller-Couch's patriotism is to make Joan of Arc a nobler figure than Shakespeare, further research on how this representation of Joan worked in the context of education for English patriotism should be undertaken in order to reveal what Quiller-Couch's patriotism in *Historical Tales from Shakespeare* was like.

Notes

¹ See MacKenzie 174, for example.

² See Jarvis 170 and Archer 177.

³ All quotations from *Henry VI. Part 1* is from *Henry VI. Part 1*, The Arden Shakespeare, ed., Edward Burns (London: Cengage Learning, 2000).

⁴ This is one of Shakespeare's main sources for *Henry VI. Part 1*.

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(提出日 平成 27 年 1 月 9 日)