To Gaze or Not to Gaze: The Nineteenth-century *Der arme Heinrich* from *Volksbuch* to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'Miracle Rhyme'[1]

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Abstract

Hartmann von Aue's twelfth-century ***Der arme Heinrich*** was the subject of a **nineteenth-century *Volksbuch*** tradition inspired by the nationally focused **medievalism** of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The *Volksbücher* adaptations published by **Gustav Schwab**, **Karl Simrock**, and **Gotthard Oswald Marbach** responded to and criticized one another through **text** and **image**, focusing their activity on the figure of a naked teenager, watched covertly by her future husband. In 1846, **Dante Gabriel Rossetti** translated Marbach's text into **English**. This article examines how the same **gender** politics which were employed for **nationalist** purposes in a **German** setting become an end in themselves in English **translation**.

In December 1813, two months after Napoleon's army was forced to retreat from Germany following their defeat at Leipzig, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm announced their intention to publish an edition and translation of an 'altdeutsche Sage' ('old German legend'): Hartmann von Aue's late-twelfth-century *Der arme Heinrich* (Poor Henry).[3] When the book appeared

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[3] *Kleinere Schriften von Wilhelm Grimm*, ed. by Gustav Hinrichs, 4 vols (Berlin: Dümmler, 1882), II, 504. This announcement, written 'by' both brothers, originally appeared in the

two years later,[4] the Grimms opened it with a heavy-handed metaphor, associating their version of the medieval poem with the contemporary German national triumph over France:

> In dieser Zeit […] ward die Bearbeitung eines alten, in sich deutschen, Gedichts als ein geringes Opfer dargebracht. Jetzt hat sich unser gesammtes Vaterland in seinem Blut von dem französischen Aussatz wieder geheilt und zu Jugend-Leben gestärkt.[5]

> (At this time […] this edition of an old, intrinsically German poem was offered up as a small sacrifice. Our entire fatherland has now, through its blood, healed itself from the French leprosy and strengthened itself to youthful life.)

Heidelbergische Jahrbücher der Litteratur, VI (1813), Intelligenzblatt XII, 105-06. Three years earlier, Johann Gustav Büsching had also produced a 'woefully inadequate' modern translation, which does not seem to have influenced later *Volksbücher* versions: Rüdiger Krohn, 'A Tale of Sacrifice and Love: Literary Way Stations of the "Arme Heinrich" from the Brothers Grimm to Tankred Dorst', in *A Companion to the Works of Hartmann von Aue*, ed. by Francis G. Gentry (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), pp. 223–53 (p. 224); Johann Gustav Büsching, *Der arme Heinrich, eine altdeutsche Erzählung* (Zurich: Füssli und Compagnie, 1810); *Hartmann von Aue: 'Der arme Heinrich'*, ed. by Hermann Paul and Kurt Gärtner, Altdeutsche Textbibliothek, 18th edn (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). Quotations from the Middle High German *Der arme Heinrich* (MHG *DaH*) refer to this edition. Translations into English are my own.

[4] *'Der arme Heinrich' von Hartmann von Aue*, ed. and trans. by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1815).

[5] *Der arme Heinrich*, Grimm and Grimm, preface unpaginated.

This nationalistic thrust was carried through strongly in those nineteenth-century versions of *Der arme Heinrich* styled as *Volksbücher*, particularly those produced by Gustav Schwab, Karl Simrock, and Gotthard Oswald Marbach.[6] The authors and publishers of these adaptations reacted to and against one another through text and image, claiming different kinds of authority as mediators of the Middle Ages. The focus of much of this activity is the figure of a bound and naked teenage girl, watched through a hole in the wall by her future husband, a passage understood quite differently in the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. Marbach's often loose adaptation soon found its way into the hands of an eighteen-year-old Dante Gabriel Rossetti who carried over Marbach's textual treatment of the girl.[7] Rejecting the contemporary nationalistic aspects of his source, Rossetti nonetheless amplified Marbach's restrictive gender politics. This article uses this clear example of 'the heroine's body as the locus of interpretation' to examine how the same gender- and sexual-conservatism, supposedly legitimized through a medieval source, and employed for nationalist purposes in a German setting, became ends in themselves in English translation.[8]

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[6] Gustav Schwab, *Das Buch der schönsten Geschichten und Sagen*, Bibliothek der deutschen Literatur, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Liesching, 1836); Karl Simrock, 'Der arme Heinrich', in *Die deutschen Volksbücher gesammelt und in ihrer ursprünglichen Echtheit hergestellt von Karl Simrock mit Holzschnitten*, 13 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Brönner, Winter, 1845-67), VI (1847), 171–203; Gotthard Oswald Marbach, *Der arme Heinrich*, Volksbücher, 32 (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1842). Quotations from Marbach refer to this edition (Marbach, *DaH*).

[7] Dante Gabriel Rossetti will hereafter be referred to as 'Rossetti'. Other Rossetti family members will be referred to by their full names.

[8] Helena Michie, *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies* (Oxford

Der arme Heinrich was probably Hartmann von Aue's penultimate narrative work, and was most likely written during the 1190s. The text tells of a virtuous knight – the Heinrich of the title – who is struck with leprosy and withdraws to his tenants' farm. After he has been with this family for three years, he confides to them that the only available cure is that a virgin must willingly give her life's blood for his. The daughter of the family – still a child – offers to do so, persuading all concerned on the basis that this will result in life for Heinrich, earthly prosperity for her family, and salvation for herself. She and Heinrich travel to Salerno, where the deed will be done. The doctor in Salerno is suspicious that the girl is not acting of her own free will. He takes her aside, questions her, and describes in graphic terms what is going to happen to her: she will be stripped naked, and her heart will be cut from her body. He concludes that a child was never hurt so badly. But the girl laughs, and assures Heinrich 'ich mache iuch schiere gesunt' ('I will soon make you well') (MHG *DaH*, l. 1179). The doctor then leads her to his workroom, whereupon she strips naked, completely unashamed. He binds her to the table, and begins to sharpen his knife. The sound catches Heinrich's attention, and he finds a hole in the wall to look through. Upon seeing her, his conscience is triggered, and he proclaims 'ich enwil des kindes tôt niht sehen' ('I do not wish to see this child's death') (MHG *DaH*, l. 1256). After a brief argument, the doctor allows him into the room, where the procedure is halted – to the girl's fury and despair. But God rewards him, curing him of his disease and the girl of her misery. They are married, and go to Heaven after their deaths.

Hartmann's *Der arme Heinrich*, forgotten for several hundred years, attracted substantial attention across the nineteenth century, but the roots of its modern reception lie in

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University Press, 1987), p. 4.

1784, with the publication of Christoph Heinrich Myller's *Samlung deutscher Gedichte*.[9]

While this was the first printed edition of the medieval text, it did not include a translation,

and so did not reach a wide audience for some decades. Johann Gustav Büsching's 1810

translation notwithstanding,[10] the text remained essentially off-limits to non-scholars until the

publication of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's distinctly political edition and prose translation in

1815. The brothers envisaged a specific format whereby the text would fulfil its purpose,

writing: 'Eine Übertragung in die heutige Sprache wird diese altdeutsche Sage zu einem

allgemein lesbaren Volksbuch machen' ('a translation into contemporary language will make

this old German legend into a universally readable book for the people').[11] *Volksbuch* is a

contested term, and the Grimm Brothers, who were open about their nationalistic reasons for

producing an edition of the text, plainly did not use it with reference to a strictly historical

category, but in a cultural and content-based sense, and from an ideological perspective. The

choice of text was deliberate: they understood Hartmann's *Der arme Heinrich* as a kind of

forerunner for their own work, 'editing and shaping existing folk material' and rooted in so-

called *Volkspoesie*.[12] The search for a unifying national identity through the medium of

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[9] Christoph Heinrich Myller, *Samlung deutscher Gedichte aus dem XII. XIII. und XIV.*

Iahrhundert (Berlin: Christian Sigismund Spener, 1784).

[10] Goethe's response to Büsching's translation was that, while the poem itself was estimable

('schätzenswerth') in itself, it nonetheless produced in him physical and aesthetic pain

('physisch- und ästhetischen Schmerz'): *Goethes Werke*, 133 vols (Weimar: Hermann

Böhlau, 1887-1919), XXXVI: *Tag- und Jahreshefte als Ergänzung meiner sonstigen*

Bekenntnisse, von 1707 bis 1822 (1893), 72–73.

[11] For the reference, see the start of note 1 above.

[12] Ann Schmiesing, 'A Bicentennial Trio: Reading the "Kinder- Und Hausmärchen" in the

medievalism was especially pronounced in nineteenth-century Germany,[13] as the opposing uses of the term *Volksbuch* exemplify. As a historical, bibliographical designation, *Volksbuch* is a term for popular German narrative literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[14] Were the definition this clear-cut, David Blamires would be quite right to argue that *Der arme Heinrich* 'really has no claim to be included in a collection of *Volksbücher*, since the poem disappeared from currency in the fourteenth century and was not rediscovered until the late eighteenth century'.[15] Adhering to this period-based categorization of the term *Volksbuch* in opposition to one based on content, Hans Joachim Kreutzer writes that the term does not refer to 'volkstümliche oder "triviale" Literatur schlechthin' ('simply folktales or trivial literature').[17] Yet the term was widely appropriated to mean just this – popular, nationally relevant reading matter – and these are clearly the grounds upon which the Grimms used the term, and upon which subsequent German writers, compilers, and translators published *Der arme Heinrich* in collections of *Volksbücher*.

The Grimms' ambition to be 'allgemein lesbar' was not achieved until the Swabian clergyman Gustav Schwab included a prose translation of *Der arme Heinrich*, heavily based on theirs, in his collection of *Volksbücher*, the *Buch der schönsten Geschichten und Sagen für*

Context of the Grimms' "Deutsche Sagen" and Edition of "Der arme Heinrich"', *Colloquia Germanica*, 45 (2012), 354–68 (p. 363).

[13] Francis G. Gentry and Ulrich Müller, 'The Reception of the Middle Ages in Germany: An Overview', *Studies in Medievalism*, 3 (1991), 399–422 (p. 403).

[14] Hans Joachim Kreutzer, *Der Mythos vom Volksbuch* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977), p. 1.

[15] 'The Later Texts in Gustav Schwab's "Volksbücher": Origins and Character', *Modern Language Review*, 94 (1999), 110–21 (pp. 110-11).

[17] *Der Mythos vom Volksbuch*, p. 1.

Alt und Jung ('Book of the Loveliest Stories and Legends for Old and Young'). Schwab, with Ludwig Uhland and Justinus Kerner, was a member of the local school of Romantic poets. He draws on the Grimms' understanding of *Volksbücher*, beginning his introduction: 'Die Sagen unserer Volksbücher sind Ausfluß und Quelle der reichsten Poesie. Entsprungen großentheils aus dem alten Born germanischer Nationaldichtung, bleiben sie dem Volke theuer'. ('The legends in our *Volksbücher* are the outflow and source of the richest poetry. Rising in great part from the ancient spring of German national literature, they remained dear to the people'). He states quite clearly that he has included *Der arme Heinrich* on the basis of its substance – it is 'um seines engelreinen Inhaltes willen, diesen Volkssagen beigegeben worden' ('adjoined to these folk tales because of the angelic purity of its content').[18] Schwab thus evidently regards his chosen texts as thematically linked and, given his opening statement, the supposed purity of *Der arme Heinrich* is therefore an enduring national virtue – indeed his readers will see 'daß die schönste Dichtung mit Religion und Tugend in ewigem Bunde steht' ('that the most beautiful poetry is eternally intertwined with religion and virtue').[19] Blamires credits Schwab's decision to include *Der arme Heinrich* in this collection of *Volksbücher* with inspiring Marbach (1842) and Simrock (1847) to do the same.[20] Whatever inspired Simrock to include a new prose translation of *Der arme Heinrich* in his collection – and it was more likely Marbach than Schwab – Simrock, who was an established

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[18] *Die deutschen Volksbücher: für Jung und Alt wieder erzählt*, ed. by Gustav Schwab, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Liesching, 1836), I, v, viii. Schwab's use of the term *Volkssage* ('folk legend') as a synonym for *Volksbuch* further illustrates his liberal understanding of the latter term. His *Der arme Heinrich* contains few deviations from the Grimm translation.

[19] *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, I, vi.

[20] 'The Later Texts in Gustav Schwab's "Volksbücher"', p. 111.

philologist, felt it necessary to lay out an argument for its inclusion under the heading of *Volksbuch*. He conceded that it was not one of those narratives 'welche seit Jahrhunderten auf Märkten und Kramläden feil geboten worden sind. Es ist also nicht Volksbuch' ('which have been offered for sale in markets and little shops for centuries, and so is not a *Volksbuch*'). But despite this historical categorization, there is some room for flexibility: he views his inclusion of the text as righting a historical wrong, 'da ich vielmehr überzeugt bin, es hätte längst Volksbuch zu werden verdient und würde es auch geworden sein, wenn man es in den ersten Jahrhunderten nach Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst dem Volk dargeboten hätte' ('for I am entirely convinced that it would by now have merited becoming a *Volksbuch*, and indeed would have done so, had it been presented to the people in the early centuries after the invention of print').[21] *Volksbücher*, he writes, ought 'unser noch immer allzuschwach athmendes Nationalbewustsein [sic] kräftigen zu helfen' ('to assist with strengthening the breath of our national consciousness, which is still all too weak').[22] His inclusion of *Der arme Heinrich* suggests that he views it as a text with the potential to do just that. But rather than endorsing a content-based understanding of the term *Volksbuch*, Simrock rewrites history as it ought to have been to conform to his historical, bibliographical categorization. He creates a Middle Ages capable of sustaining a centuries-long tradition of a text which was, in fact, forgotten, in order to further his openly nationalistic agenda.[23]

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[21] *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, VI (1847), p. 173.

[22] *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, I (1845), xiv.

[23] For medievalism as the 'process of creating the Middle Ages', see Richard J. Utz and T.A. Shippey, 'Introduction: Medievalism in the Modern World: Introductory Perspectives', in *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie J. Workman*, ed. by Richard J. Utz and T. A. Shippey, Making the Middle Ages (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 1–13 (p. 5).

Gotthard Oswald Marbach, Richard Wagner's brother-in-law and an associate professor at the University of Leipzig,[24] did not enter into the debate over what constituted a *Volksbuch*. He issued his *Volksbücher* series without preface or introduction, and as quickly as possible, yet a similar nationalistic drive is evident through his alterations to the medieval text. The first volume appeared in 1838, and *Der arme Heinrich*, issued four years later, was volume thirty-two. In Marbach's hands, the narrative underwent significant changes, many concerning the unnamed girl. It is through her that Simrock, as well as Schwab's posthumous publishers, focused their objections to Marbach's adaptation. That she should take on such significance is characteristic of the nineteenth-century reception of medieval literature, in which nineteenth-century gender roles and relations are often laid over their medieval equivalents in order to legitimize contemporary social norms. This was not an apolitical strategy: many writers 'may have noticed with tacit approval the degree to which its [medieval history's] available sources marginalized and romanticized the lives and social roles of women', whereas 'most writers concerned with improving the lot of contemporary women looked elsewhere for their models'.[25] And when such expectations were partially and not fully met, the medieval text could be modified for the nineteenth century. In Germany,

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[24] Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, 'Marbach, Gotthard Oswald', *Katalog der deutschen Nationalbibliothek*, 2017 <http://d-nb.info/gnd/104225564> [accessed 27 April 2018]; Universität Leipzig, 'Prof. Dr. phil. Gotthard Oswald Marbach', *Professorenkatalog der Universität Leipzig* <http://research.uni-leipzig.de/catalogus-professorum-lipsiensium/leipzig/Marbach_909/> [accessed 27 April 2018].

[25] Florence Saunders Boos, 'Alternative Victorian Futures: "Historicism", *Past and Present* and *A Dream of John Ball*', in *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Florence Saunders Boos (New York and London: Garland, 1992), pp. 3–37 (pp. 9–10).

this tactic served not only a social, but also a national purpose.[26] In the aftermath of the failed revolution of 1848-49, Karl Weinhold wrote in his *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter* (1851):

> Deutsche Frauen werden die deutschen Männer beßern und unsere Geschichte retten müßen, nicht durch Amazonenzüge, aber durch die Macht edler Herzen und gewaltiger Weiblichkeit. In dem Leben der Familie, in der Ehe liegt unsere Hoffnung, welche wahnsinnige [sic] zerstören möchten.[27]

> (German women will reform German men and will have to rescue our history, not through Amazonian traits, but through the power of noble hearts and powerful femininity. In family life, in marriage, lies our hope, which madmen want to destroy.)

Weinhold's statement exemplifies the recourse to medieval literature in order to demand higher moral standards of women than men and to emphasize chastity, as well as the device of invoking domestic images of medieval femininity for a national purpose. Female power, in his understanding, was both nationally specific and virtue-based. It lay, according to Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'in sittlich-keuscher Verehrung durch die Männer. Die germanische Frau

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[26] Birgit Kochskämper, 'Die germanistische Mediävistik und das Geschlechterverhältnis: Forschungen und Perspektiven', in *Germanistische Mediävistik*, ed. by Volker Honemann and Tomas Tomasek, 2nd edn (Münster, Hamburg and London: LIT Verlag, 2000), pp. 309–52 (p. 312).

[27] *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zu den Hausalterhümern der Germanen* (Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1851), p. iv.

sei dem Mann zwar stets rechtlich untergeordnet, sittlich aber übergeordnet gewesen' ('in morally chaste veneration by men. The Germanic woman was always legally subordinate to men, but morally superior').[28] Marbach's treatment of the unnamed girl reflects this approach, as do the responses to his interventions within the German tradition.

The richest episode for analysis is the aborted sacrifice, where Marbach's revisions, and his peers' objections to those revisions, come to the fore. In his text, Marbach seeks to reduce, or even eliminate, what he views as the voyeuristic and erotic elements in *Der arme Heinrich*. The situation is more complex than he imagines. In the medieval text, the girl strips in front of the doctor, and 'si enschamte sich niht eins hâres grôz' ('she was not remotely ashamed [i.e. not as much as a hair]') (MHG *DaH*, l. 1196). She then lies down to await her death. Heinrich hears the knife being sharpened, but it is through spying on a naked female body through a hole in the wall that his conscience is triggered:

nu begunde er suochen unde spehen,	Now he began to search until he
unz daz er durch die want	found a hole through the wall, and
ein loch gânde vant,	through the gap he saw her, naked
und ersach si durch die schrunden	and bound. Her body was utterly
nacket und gebunden.	delightful. He looked at her and at
ir lîp der was vil minneclich.	himself and had a change of heart.
nû sach er si an unde sich	
und gewan einen niuwen muot	
(MHG *DaH*, ll. 1228-1235)	

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[28] 'Väter der Frauengeschichte? Das Geschlecht als historiographische Kategorie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 262 (1996), 39–71 (p. 62).

Yet this cannot be read as straightforwardly erotic. This situation is quite different from the frequent examples of literary knights gazing at fully clothed ladies.[29] Ralf Schlechtweg-Jahn ascribes both a societal and a religious significance to the girl's physical body. The societal significance is clear from her first appearance in the text, at least to the audience. As Schlechtweg-Jahn explains, she is much too beautiful to be a farmer's daughter: her appearance makes it clear that she does not belong with others of her social class, who are typically depicted in courtly literature as unattractive, but with those of courtly standing, who are expected to be attractive.[30] The religious significance of the girl's body, meanwhile, appears once her sacrifice is set in motion, and her lack of shame, as she lies naked on the operating table, is an essential part of this.[31] As in Eden, nakedness is not a source of sin, but a marker of innocence. But when Heinrich looks through the hole in the wall and sees her naked body, he instead becomes aware of its societal significance, and recognizes her, through her physical perfection, as *minneclich*: worthy of love (and marriage) in courtly society. While post-medieval readers might understand a man looking through a crack at an unaware and naked woman as erotically charged, not to mention voyeuristic, modern

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[29] James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 38–39.

[30] 'Das Mädchen auf dem Opfertisch: Genderkonstrukte in Hartmanns "Der arme Heinrich"', in *Glaube und Geschlecht: Fromme Frauen – Spirituelle Erfahrungen – Religiöse Traditionen*, ed. by Ruth Albrecht, Annette Bühler-Dietrich, and Florentine Strzelcyk (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), pp. 47–48.

[31] Ibid., p. 52.

scholarship counsels against such a reading of medieval texts.[32] Naked bodies do not play a

part in sexual desire in German courtly literature because physical sexual difference between

male and female bodies does not feature.[33] It is clothing which often gives crucial

information about the sexual attractiveness, gender, and social status of its medieval wearer,

whether literary or historical.[34] But clothing can be deceptive: in Hartmann's *Erec*, Enite's

courtly body is recognizable despite, and literally through, her misleading tattered rags.[35]

Similarly, although Heinrich has the girl dressed in 'rîchiu kleit' ('splendid clothing') (MHG

DaH, l. 1022) before departing for Salerno, he needs to see her naked body in order to

understand that that, too, is courtly.

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[32] See Schlechtweg-Jahn, p. 56; and Amanda Hopkins, '"wordy vnthur wede": Clothing,

Nakedness and the Erotic in some Romances of Medieval Britain', in *The Erotic in the*

Literature of Medieval Britain edited by Amanda Hopkins, ed. by Amanda Hopkins and Cory

James Rushton (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 53–70.

[33]Schultz, *Courtly Love*, pp. 27–28.

[34] Hopkins; Madeline H. Caviness, 'Hats and Veils: There's No Such Thing as Freedom of

Choice, and It's a Good Thing Too', in *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies*, ed. by

Laine E. Doggett and Daniel E. O'Sullivan (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), pp. 73–96;

Schlechtweg-Jahn, pp. 46–47.

[35] *Hartmann von Aue: 'Erec'*, ed. by Thomas Cramer, 27th edn (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer

Taschenbuch Verlag, 2007), ll. 323-41. E. Jane Burns discusses the use of clothing to

'subvert indications of class and rank' in medieval French literature (see *Courtly Love*

Undressed: Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture (Philadelphia: University

of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 3).

From her decision until the hole-in-the-wall scene then, the significance of the girl's body has been self-determined and religious. She has chosen to undergo pain and to sacrifice her life in order to save Heinrich and win her own salvation. For this purpose she must be naked, and so she has removed her clothes and readied her body for the knife. But once Heinrich sees her naked through the wall, and ascribes a societal significance to her body, we see the unravelling of the girl's autonomy and the reestablishment of male-dominated order. Until Heinrich spies on her through the wall, her nakedness (and impending death) serve her chosen religious purpose. Heinrich's gaze imbues them with a separate, societal meaning, over which she has no control.[36]

The process is quite different in Marbach. Marbach reads nakedness as inherently erotic, and thus finds it necessary to provide an explanation as to why it is not. When the girl strips, she 'schämt sich nicht' ('is not ashamed') because 'ihre Unschuld ist ihr Waffen' ('her innocence is her weapon') (p. 42). In Marbach's adaptation, the defence against the possibility of shame induced by nakedness is much stronger Hartmann's. Hartmann can simply confirm that she was unashamed – this is a function of the religious significance of her body. Marbach also explicitly invokes humanity's original state, implicit in the medieval text. The girl's eagerness to remove her clothes and appear 'So bloß, wie sie ihr Gott geschaffen' ('as naked as her God made her') emphasises her oneness with divine creation, and her difference from the 'Greis' ('old man') watching her with his knife (Marbach *DaH*, p. 42). Even more importantly, Marbach, taking a modern voyeuristic reading of the hole-in-

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[36] This analysis builds on earlier scholarship which viewed the scene as voyeuristic and erotic, but which also focused on the transformative power of Heinrich's gaze. See Kerry Shea, 'The H(I)Men Under the Kn(Eye)Fe: Erotic Violence in Hartmann's "Der Arme Heinrich"', *Exemplaria*, 6 (1994), 385–403.

the-wall episode, eliminates it and any attendant bodily focus, rewriting the text to avoid its

being understood erotically. Upon hearing the sound of the knife, Heinrich:

eilet zu der Thüre hin	hurries to the door
Und will hinein – sie ist	wanting to go in, but it is locked.
verschlossen.	Then his eyes gushed
Da hat sein Auge sich ergossen	With hot tears.
In heißen Tränen.	
(Marbach, *DaH*, p. 43)	

This replaces the spying section. Heinrich's conscience is triggered before he sees the girl

bound and naked, rather than *because* he sees her bound and naked. When Heinrich bursts

into the room, we read:

Heinrich sah das Mägdelein	Heinrich saw the little maiden,
Dort auf dem Tisch gebunden liegen,	lying bound upon the table,
Bereit, den Tod zu übersiegen.	ready to conquer death. Then
Da sprach er: 'Meister, höret mich,	he said, 'Master, listen to me.
Dieß Kind ist also wonniglich,	This child is so delightful that I
Ich kann sein Sterben nicht ersehn.	cannot see her death. May
Gott's Wille mag an mir geschehen.	God's will happen to me. I will
Was ich versprach, will ich euch geben,	give you what I promised, but
Doch laßt die treue Magd am Leben.'	leave the faithful maiden
(Marbach, *DaH*, p. 44)	alive'.

The diminutive 'Mägdelein' heads off erotic readings immediately and, after the reference to the girl as bound upon the table, Marbach diverts focus away from the physical by reminding the audience that she is – Christ-like – in the process of conquering death. What is implicit in the medieval text becomes overt in the nineteenth-century one. That Heinrich's appeal culminates in a reference to the girl as 'treu' ('faithful') not anchored in the medieval text, where she is simply 'die maget' ('the maiden') (MHG *DaH*, l. 1280), suggests that the qualities of her character are the real reason behind his decision, and calls to mind overtly nationalistic invocations – like Weinhold's – of women possessing superior moral and spiritual fortitude to men, and, through it, saving men (and thus the nation) from their baser instincts. In a sense, Marbach has lighted upon the fact that Heinrich is driven, not by the girl's physical body per se, but by what is inherent to her. In his version, though, it is not the girl's courtliness, but her religious virtue, which saves Heinrich from himself, and it is conveyed to the audience through her character, not through her body. Marbach simultaneously uses his medieval source as an authority for nationalistically inflected morally chaste veneration of women by men, while censoring the same medieval source's potential voyeurism, itself a later addition.

Ludwig Richter's woodcut at this point strongly implies that it is indeed this assumed voyeurism and its covert nature to which Marbach particularly objects. Two men are staring at the girl, but there is no secrecy in their gaze. The girl is depicted as sexually mature, despite the fact that she cannot be more than thirteen in this scene. While the girl, as depicted here, reflects her salvific potential in Hartmann's and Marbach's texts and feels no shame incentivizing her to cover herself, the image does not correspond to any moment in either text. In both she is still bound at Heinrich's entrance, and the subsequent ~~aversion~~ rejection of her attempt to sacrifice her life leaves her inconsolable with grief. The composition of this image, though, is illuminating. It corresponds to John Berger's influential analysis of the

European nude, showing a posed feminine ideal, in which the female figure is looking away from the clothed male figure of her (soon-to-be) lover and out of the picture towards the male spectator.[37] As María del Mar Pérez-Gil puts it, 'female nudity in art has often been perspectivized through the male gaze'.[38] The act of gazing, so consciously removed from the text, is reinserted visually through this image, but it can no longer be conceived of as spying, and Marbach's reader is also invited to participate.

[Figure 1:

https://books.google.ie/books?id=334UAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA45#v=onepage&q&f=false]

(Ludwig Richter, for Marbach, *DaH*, p. 45. Ghent University Library, BIB.BL.008744)

Marbach's interventions, both textual and visual, prompted responses within the German tradition of *Der arme Heinrich Volksbücher*. These were partly expressed through the medium of illustration – appropriately, for Marbach had been the first to include images in a *Volksbuch* version of the text.[39] Karl Simrock's 1847 multi-volume *Die deutschen Volksbücher* contains unattributed woodcuts;[40] his *Der arme Heinrich* was illustrated with

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[37] *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin, 1972), chap. 3.

[38] 'Undressing the Virgin Mary: Nudity and Gendered Art', *Feminist Theology*, 25 (2017), 208–21 (p. 218).

[39] Ursula Rautenberg, *Das 'Volksbuch vom armen Heinrich': Studien zur Rezeption Hartmanns von Aue im 19. Jahrhundert und zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Übersetzung Wilhelm Grimms* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1985), p. 241.

[40] Rautenberg was unable to trace the identity of the illustrator; it was not Friedrich Wilhelm Gubitz, who had illustrated the first five volumes of Simrock's *Volksbücher* (*Das 'Volksbuch*

three: the girl kneeling at Heinrich's feet; the girl's reunion with her mother; and – crucially –

the girl bound on the table as Heinrich peers through the hole in the wall.[41]

[Figure 2:

https://books.google.ie/books?id=fq07AAAAcAAJ&dq=Die%20deutschen%20Volksb%C3

%BCcher%20simrock%20vol%206&pg=PA197#v=onepage&q&f=false]

(Simrock, 'Der arme Heinrich' (*Volksbücher*), p. 197. Robarts Library, Toronto)

In the introduction to his *Volksbücher* collection, Simrock laid out the kinds of errors he was

attempting to combat. It soon becomes clear that he has Marbach in his sights. Indeed,

Simrock seems to have blamed himself for the existence of Marbach's *Volksbücher* series,

for which he had extremely low regard. During the preparation of his own editions, he writes,

'durch meine eigene Indiscretion eine Leipziger Buchhandlung auf diese Literatur

aufmerksam wurde, und sich, da ich bald darauf andere Verpflichtungen eingegangen war,

einen dortigen Literaten zum Herausgeber wählte' ('[through my own indiscretion, a Leipzig

bookseller became aware of this literature and, because I was soon occupied with other

obligations, chose a local litterateur as editor'). He leaves no doubt of his opinions on the

quality of Marbach's series, condemning it for both 'Geschwindigkeit und Wohlfeilheit'

('haste and cheapness').[42]

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vom armen Heinrich', p. 239).

[41] *Die deutschen Volksbücher* , VI (1847), 180, 201, and 197.

[42] Ibid., I, xi–xii. There is no doubt that Simrock is referring to Marbach; his sixth

Volksbücher volume (which includes *Der arme Heinrich*) includes as an appendix a review

originally printed in the *Hannoversche Morgenzeitung* quoting the reference to Marbach, and

Der arme Heinrich, which Simrock considered to be the third pinnacle of medieval German literary achievement,[43] provided a particular outlet for this distaste. Twelve years before Marbach, he had already produced a rhymed translation.[44] Over the course of his life, he returned to it several times, constantly seeking to improve his translations, yet was never satisfied with his work.[45] In the sixth volume of his *Volksbücher* (1847), he finally produced

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identifying him by name.

[43] *Der arme Heinrich des Hartmann von Aue*, trans. by Karl Simrock (Heilbronn: Heinninger, 1875), p. v. The other high points were the *Nibelungenlied* and the lyric poetry of Walther von der Vogelweide.

[44] *Der arme Heinrich: Ein erzählendes Gedicht metrisch übersetzt von K. Simrock.*, trans. by Karl Joseph Simrock, Bibliothek der deutschen Literatur (Berlin: Laue, 1830).In the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* review, the reviewer was largely complimentary, although attention was drawn to a small number of perceived minor failures of fidelity to the original (E. D. J., 'Berlin, in d. Laue'schen Buchhandl.: "Der arme Heinrich" (,) ein erzählendes Gedicht des Hartman von Aue. Metrisch übersetzt von Karl Simrock. Nebst der Sage von "Amicus und Amelius" und verwandten Gedichten des Uebersetzers. 1830. XXXII u. 110 S. kl. 8. (18.gr.)', *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, Ergänzungsblätter 2.66–67 (1831), 137–48).

[45] In 1854, Simrock republished the bibliographical information from his 1830 edition, with a new translation: Karl Joseph Simrock, *Altdeutsches Lesebuch in neudeutscher Sprache* (Stuttgart: Cotta'scher Verlag, 1854), pp. 261–83. Later he discarded that too, and when the translation was reissued in 1875, wrote in the introduction, 'Mein erster Uebersetzungversuch, Berlin 1830, hatte mich selbst nicht befriedigt […] eine zweite in meinem *Altdeutschen Lesebuch in neudeutscher Sprache* hatte Manches gebeßert; aber auch

a *Volksbuch* edition of *Der arme Heinrich* to rival and criticize Marbach's. Through his inclusion of an image specifically depicting the hole-in-the-wall scene,[46] along with his comments in the series introduction, Simrock casts himself as the authoritative mediator of the text. This illustration emphasises fidelity to the precise events of the narrative, calling to mind Simrock's earlier criticism of 'die Scheere der modernen Prüderie, der geschworenen Feindin der Volksliteratur' ('the scissors of modern prudery, the sworn enemy of folk literature').[47] Yet despite his philological conscience, Simrock evidently maintained some reservations about depicting what could be held to be voyeurism by a contemporary audience, and Heinrich's position in the frame allows the illustrator to cut off the seeing part of his face. Through the particular construction of this image, we are able to see both Heinrich peering through a hole in the wall and what he is looking at – all while managing to obscure the girl's nakedness, but make its existence clear. Almost every ingredient in the image is calculated as a response to Marbach: most importantly to his textual alterations, but

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die hier vorgelegte wird noch viel zu wünschen übrig laßen und damit wieder auf das Original hinweisen wie es alle Uebersetzungen wollen und sollen' ('I was not personally happy with my first attempt at translation (Berlin, 1830). A second attempt in my *Old German Reader in the New German Language* improved on much, but even this translation will leave much to be desired, and thus direct you to the original – as all translations ought') (*Der arme Heinrich des Hartmann von Aue* , pp. vii–viii). His *Volksbuch* translation was yet another version.

[46] In the introduction, Simrock took care to describe the illustrations as woodcuts which 'dem Geist des Inhalts entsprechen' ('correspond to the spirit of the contents') (*Die deutschen Volksbücher* , I (1845), xii).

[47] Ibid., I, x.

also to the titillating construction of his image, which does not respond to the textual content

of his translation, but to the predilections of the male gaze. Simrock's image moralizingly

anchors the male gaze back in the text, issuing a rebuke to the 'Sensationshunger des Lesers'

('reader's hunger for sensation').[48] Through his criticisms of Marbach, Simrock asserts the

primacy of the scholar as the modern creator of the Middle Ages – and therefore the figure

authorized to reinvigorate the German national consciousness.[49]

Schwab, meanwhile, did not include images in any of the three editions of his *Buch*

der schönsten Geschichten und Sagen published during his lifetime (1836, 1843, and 1847),

other than a frontispiece by Wilhelm Hensel from *Genovefa*, introduced in the second edition.

The fourth edition was issued in 1859, nine years after his death, with a full complement of

woodcuts. *Der arme Heinrich* was illustrated by Adolf Ehrhardt, whose composition of

images suggests that he had access to Marbach's *Der arme Heinrich*, and used his own

illustrations both to invoke and to criticize those included by Marbach. Two images in each

text make this relationship clear: the incident in which the girl is with her parents in their bed

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[48] Rautenberg, *Das 'Volksbuch vom armen Heinrich'*, p. 240.

[49] Ottmar F.H. Schönhuth published a *Volksbuch* edition of *Der arme Heinrich* in 1850 (*Der
arme Heinrich* (Reutlingen: Fleischhauer und Spohn, 1850)). Schönhuth's version contains
one woodcut, on the title page, depicting the hole-in-the-wall scene. Schönhuth's translation
is based on the Grimm version, although some vocabulary choices suggest that he may also
have had access to Simrock's translation (presumably the *Volksbuch* version of 1847). This
may have influenced his decision to include the hole-in-the-wall woodcut. Schönhuth may
also be visually criticizing Marbach, but neither the choreography of the image nor any
paratext provides evidence for this.

and they are weeping at her decision; and the moment after the girl's sacrificial death has been averted.

[Figure 3 (Marbach, *DaH*, p. 30. Ghent University Library, BIB.BL.008744):

https://books.google.ie/books?id=334UAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA30#v=onepage&q&f=false]

[Figure 4 (Schwab, 'Der arme Heinrich', *Die deutschen Volksbücher* (1859), p. 83. Compare Figure 3.):

https://books.google.ie/books?id=jcYFAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA83#v=onepage&q&f=false] [50]

[Figure 5 (Schwab, 'Der arme Heinrich', (1859), p. 88. Compare Figure 1.):

https://books.google.ie/books?id=jcYFAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA88#v=onepage&q&f=false]

In the images of the girl with her weeping parents in their bed, the choreography of the image is so close to Marbach's as to call it strongly to mind. Marbach has again included an image with overtones of the voyeurism he thinks to strip from his text: we are looking into an area which we might expect to be screened off, spying on a private family moment. The relationship of the second two images is more interesting. The setting is similar in both images: a backdrop of stone arches. The girl, appearing as an adult woman, sits on the table with her hair long and loose, the two men to one side of her, her flowing clothes in disarray. But here the similarities end. The Schwab version, which follows the Grimm translation closely, makes no bones about the fact that Heinrich's conscience was triggered when he 'sah durch einen Riß, wie sie gebunden dalag, und ihre Gestalt so gar schön und lieblich war' ('saw through a crack how she lay there, bound, and her form was so beautiful and lovely'),

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[50] *Die deutschen Volksbücher: für Jung und Alt wieder erzählt*, ed. by Gustav Schwab, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Liesching, 1859).

nor has Schwab failed to tell us that the girl 'riß sie [die Kleider] mit Hast in der Nath entzwei, bis sie gewandlos dastand; aber sie schämte sich dessen nicht' ('ripped her clothes with haste in two down the seam, so that she stood there without any clothes, but she was not ashamed of this').[51] While Marbach, as we have seen, represents visually the male gaze at the naked female body removed from the text, Ehrhardt has done the opposite. In Marbach we have a nude female figure who knows she is being seen by others in the woodcut as well as by the spectator; in Ehrhardt the female figure has been covered up by the artist, and through her body language she also turns away the gaze of the men in the picture. Schwab evidently had not considered the textual content of *Der arme Heinrich* unsuitable for a broad readership; indeed he had written in his introduction, 'Besonders werden jüngere Leser […] von der Poesie dieser Sagen […] ergriffen und gerührt werden' ('Younger readers in particular will be gripped and touched by the poetry of these legends'), and this introduction was carried through to the 1859 edition.[52] But to depict events visually as they appear in the text seems not to have been considered appropriate by the 1859 publishers, and so visually, if not textually, Heinrich averts his gaze from the 'wonniglich' ('delightful') girl.[53] Marbach goes visually far beyond the events narrated and Schwab's editors, in echoing the construction of the scene as depicted by Marbach's illustrator, deliver a specific rebuke.

Between Marbach's and Simrock's *Volksbücher*, *Der arme Heinrich* crossed the Channel. When Dante Gabriel Rossetti began experimenting with medieval German literature

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[51] Schwab, *Volksbücher* (1859), pp. 87, 86. Schwab has removed 'und nackt' which, in the Grimm translation, appears as 'gewandlos und nackt' ('unclothed and naked') and 'nackt und gebunden' ('naked and bound') (*Der arme Heinrich*, p. 24).

[52] Schwab, *Volksbücher* (1836), I, vi; Schwab, *Volksbücher* (1859), p. vii.

[53] Schwab, *Volksbücher* (1859*)*, p. 87.

in 1846, he had been learning the 'newly fashionable' German language for just four years, and *Der arme Heinrich*, rebranded as *Henry the Leper: A Swabian Miracle Rhyme*, was the only result of this endeavour.[54] It was not, however, published until after his death, when it was included in the *Collected Edition* of his works in 1886.[55]

Rossetti never reached a high linguistic standard in German, and in later life forgot much of what he had learned.[56] It therefore seems unlikely that he had much competence in earlier forms of the language, yet little attention has been focused on the immediate source for *Henry the Leper*. William P. Trent, who, in 1905, wrote the introduction to the only standalone edition, considered the possibility of modern sources for the work, proposing as particularly likely candidates the Grimm translation of 1815 or Karl Simrock's 1830 version,

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[54] See Dinah Roe, *The Rossettis in Wonderland: A Victorian Family History* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011), p. 46; and Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Michael Rossetti, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family-Letters, with a Memoir by William Michael Rossetti*, 2 vols (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), I, 87; subsequent references to this edition will be identified as *Letters*. The first volume of this work consists entirely of William Michael Rossetti's memoir. Rossetti first made an unsuccessful attempt to translate the *Nibelungenlied* (1845). This did not get further than the fifth *âventiure* and had disappeared without trace by the time of the memoir (*Letters*, I, 104).

[55] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Henry the Leper: A Swabian Miracle-Rhyme', in *The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, 2 vols (London: Ellis and Scrutton, 1886), II, 420–60. Quotations from Rossetti refer to this edition (*HtL*): Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Henry the Leper: A Swabian Miracle-Rhyme', in *The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911), pp. 507–32.

[56] *Letters*, I, 87.

but did not enquire further.[57] But Gotthard Oswald Marbach was a far more up-to-date

source. The British Museum had acquired a copy of his translation on 6 December 1843, the

year after its publication.[58] Just two years later, so William Michael Rossetti tells us, his

brother began to make 'continual incursions into the Old Reading-room of the British

Museum'.[59] Rossetti's entire experience of *Der arme Heinrich* was thus filtered through

Marbach. When, then, his *Henry the Leper* is understood not as a paraphrase of Hartmann's

Der arme Heinrich, as it is often described,[60] but as a translation of Marbach's adaptation, it

becomes possible to disentangle Rossetti's revisions from Marbach's, and thus to discern

Rossetti's own stamp on the text, and set his English translation in the context of the other

Volksbücher versions.

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[57] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Henry the Leper*, 2 vols (Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1905), II, xv.

[58] The following information was received by email in response to an enquiry about the date

of acquisition: 'Within the *Volksbücher* volume at shelfmark 1079.f.19 the *Der arme*

Heinrich has pencil annotations (in addition to a red British Museum stamp) indicating it was

the 290th item accessioned into the library by purchase on 6 December 1843.' Hannah

Graves, 'RE: Enquiry about Date of Acquisition of Item', 31 October 2017; 'Registers of

Accessions BM/DPB/1/1: 1837-1849, Volume 11, 5 July 1842 - 11 Jan 1843 (DH52/11)', 5,

British Library Corporate Archives Department of Printed Books.

[59] *Letters*, I, 105.

[60] See, for example, Jerome McGann, 'Henry the Leper. A Swabian Miracle-Rhyme. by

Hartmann von Aue (A.D. 1100-1200) - Collection Introduction', *Rossetti Archive*, 2008

<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1846.raw.html> [accessed 27 April 2018]. The 1905

Bibliophile Society edition of *Henry the Leper* includes the detail 'paraphrased by Dante

Gabriel Rossetti' on the title page.

Medievalism had taken a different course in England. While, as in Germany, 'the central characteristic of Victorian medievalism [was] that it represented less an attempt to recapture the past "as it really was" than a projection of current ideals back into time',[61] and nostalgic medievalism was relevant to conceptions of gender and nation,[62] 'the medievalism of nineteenth-century England was not the same as that of Germany […] and nationalism does not supply some sort of "key to all medievalisms"'.[63] Nationalism recedes into the background of Rossetti's translation and interpretation of Marbach's *Der arme Heinrich*. He makes no attempt to anglicize the content of the text, but he also refuses to present it as literature of national relevance for Germany. The re-designation as a *Swabian Miracle Rhyme* links it to a region within Germany, negating any notions of pan-Germanic relevance. The term 'Miracle Rhyme', meanwhile, identifies it as archaic, drawing on the same religious association which led him to use the term *Songs of the Art Catholic* to imply 'mediæval and unmodern'.[64] The title seems to attempt to dissuade Rossetti's contemporaries from reading a moral or political message in the work. This attempted depoliticization of the material is one of many aspects speaking to its place very early in Rossetti's career. Matthew Potolsky

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[61] Rosemary Jann, 'Democratic Myths in Victorian Medievalism', *Browning Institute Studies*, 8 (1980), 129–49 (p. 129).

[62] Jeni Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales: Gender, Class and Histories* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 165.

[63] Matthew Bevis, 'Victorian Medievalisms', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry*, ed. by Matthew Bevis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 166–83 (p. 169).

[64] William Michael Rossetti, 'Notes by William Michael Rossetti' in Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: Ellis, 1911), pp. 645-684 (p. 661).

identifies a turning point two years later, when, 'spurred by the hopes and frustrations that followed in the wake of the 1848 revolutions, Rossetti […] forged an innovative language for translating the political into the erotic, the aesthetic, and the personal'.[65] Weinhold, motivated by the same events, used similar inspirations for his political purposes. The young Rossetti's translation seeks to avoid both the erotic and the political, creating a work which, in its conventional depiction of de-sexualized, domestic femininity, is far from what Robert Buchanan would later attack as the 'Fleshly School of Poetry'.[66] But by amplifying the gender politics of a recent nationalistic adaptation of a medieval source, Rossetti gives the impression of using a quasi-medieval model to reinforce contemporary wholesome domestic images of femininity. *Henry the Leper* is typical of the Victorian nostalgic medievalism which romanticizes female characters, reducing their agency and foregrounding their purity, attractiveness, and domesticity.

Rossetti also lacked Simrock's and Marbach's familiarity with the source text. He was not yet an established literary or artistic figure, nor was he creating a popular translation for the reading public. He was seemingly unaware of the other modern German translations of *Der arme Heinrich* published before he began his work in 1846, and made no use of those available on his return to the text twenty-five years later. To gain some indication of his approach to the task of translation, we must look forward to 1861, when Rossetti wrote in the preface to *The Early Italian Poets*:

The life-blood of rhymed translation is this, – that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be

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[65] 'Eros and Revolution: Rossetti and Swinburne on Continental Politics', *Victorian Studies*, 57 (2015), 585–610 (p. 606).

[66] *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day* (London: Strahan & Co., 1872)

to endow a fresh nation, as far as possible, with one more possession of beauty.

Poetry not being an exact science, literality of rendering is altogether secondary to

this chief aim. I say *literality*, – not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing.[67]

This was written fifteen years after translating *Henry the Leper*, and ten years before he

returned to it in 1871 to add some finishing touches, apparently in both cases for personal

amusement, and without thought of public consumption. The text, though, remained

substantially the product of 1846.[68] Fifteen years of experience may bring a new outlook, a

refinement of skill, or any number of other changes, but some form of this approach to

translation seems to have been at play in *Henry the Leper*. Rossetti had, after all, begun his

translations from the early Italian poets in 1845, before he had begun work on *Henry the*

Leper.[69] The issue of his philosophy of translation and its bearing on *Henry the Leper* is

complicated by his failure to master even modern German,[70] let alone Middle High German.

An intermediary translation was therefore a necessity, but the specific choice of Marbach is

likely to have been dictated by the British Museum's holdings. If it held a copy of Büsching's

or the Grimms' *Der arme Heinrich* at the time, it does not appear to do so any longer, while

its copies of Simrock's 1830 translation and Myller's edition of the medieval text were

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[67] Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Early Italian Poets* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1861), p. viii.

[68] As William Michael Rossetti explained in his memoir, 'Probably he cut out some juvenilities, but it remains substantially and essentially the performance of his adolescence' (*Letters*, I, 105.

[69] Ibid., I, 105.

[70] McGann, 'Henry the Leper'.

acquired in 1861 and 1850 respectively.[71] By the time he returned to *Henry the Leper* in 1871, therefore, the British Museum held another translation of *Der arme Heinrich*, as well as a Middle High German edition. Rossetti's initial use of Marbach was thus almost certainly a coincidence, but his decision not to consult these other resources in 1871 or, if he did, not to alter his translation to reflect Hartmann's narrative, was not. In any case, as Rossetti had not learned any more German by 1871 – indeed his brother suggests that he had forgotten almost all that he had once known – his intention cannot have been to increase fidelity to his source when he returned to the piece.[72] Despite the chance that first led him to Marbach, the fact that Rossetti decided to produce his own translation from what he knew to be a recent version

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[71] This information was received by email in response to an enquiry about the dates of acquisition: Jessica Gregory, 'RE: Enquiry about Date of Acquisition of Item', 14 February 2018; Department of Printed Books, 'Acquisitions Invoices Register: DH5/15 – 1861 July 3 – 1862 June 7', 1862, British Library Corporate Archives Department of Printed Books. The British Museum copy of Marbach's 1847 *Volksbuch* edition was either never collected, or has been misplaced, and so the date of acquisition, if it was acquired, cannot be traced. While the British Museum acquired a copy of Schwab's *Sagen des klassischen altertums* in 1843, its copy of his collection of *Volksbücher, Buch der schönsten Geschichten und Sagen* (third edition, 1838) was not purchased until 1874, three years after Rossetti had finished editing *Henry the Leper*: Jessica Gregory, 'RE: Enquiry about Date of Acquisition of Item', 19 February 2018; Department of Printed Books, 'Accessions Register: DH52/13 (1843 June 1 – Oct 14)', 1843, British Library Corporate Archives Department of Printed Books; Department of Printed Books, 'Acquisitions Invoices, DH5/33 (1874 June 10 – 1874 Dec 29)', 1874, British Library Corporate Archives Department of Printed Books.

[72] *Letters* , I, 87.

suggests that it was the content of the text which appealed, and that 'literality of rendering' was, even at this stage, entirely secondary to an aim to produce 'one more possession of beauty' for 'a fresh nation'. ~~England~~. The knowledge that he was working from a modern interpretation, moreover, offered the freedom to deviate further from the words in his source or, as his brother put it, to introduce 'a certain heightened and spontaneous colouring of his own'.[73] Rossetti, though, did not highlight his own alterations to the text, and he wrote Marbach out of the picture, offering *Henry the Leper* as 'a Swabian Miracle-Rhyme by Hartmann von Auë'. Like Simrock, who assigned *Der arme Heinrich* to the category of *Volksbuch* on the grounds that it deserved to be a *Volksbuch* and would have been so anyway, had the historical circumstances been different, Rossetti and his brother engage in the 'process of creating the Middle Ages' by presenting the text to an English-speaking audience as a translation of a medieval work, without mentioning either the immediate and modern version which preceded it, nor Rossetti's own alteration of that source.[74] Rossetti therefore becomes an unquestioned mediator of the Middle Ages, with the authority to present medieval society as a model for the modern world.

Rossetti's two-stage alteration can be illustrated by the girl's introduction in the text. Both stages of nineteenth-century adjustments, Marbach's and Rossetti's, are evident here. The girl's age at Heinrich's arrival on the farm is usually given in published editions as eight,[75] although the B recension adds four years and describes her as twelve, thus making

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[73] *Letters* , I, 105.

[74] We cannot know whether William Michael Rossetti, who prepared the text for publication after Rossetti's death was aware of his brother's use of Marbach; it may therefore have been either or both brothers responsible for obscuring *Henry the Leper*'s immediate source.

[75] Early editors, including the Grimms and Karl Lachmann, chose eight, both for text-critical

her of marriageable age on her first meeting with Heinrich.[76] As Hans-Jochen Schiewer

explains, the age change is part of a series of conventionalizing alterations which reduce the

status differences in the text, privilege literacy over orality, and emphasize the girl's

difference from her family.[77] In the A recension, Hartmann introduces her thus:

under den eine maget,	Amongst them [the children]
ein kint von ahte jâren.	was a girl, a child of eight
daz kunde gebâren	years, who conducted herself
sô rehte güetlîchen.	so virtuously that she would
diu enwolde nie entwîchen	never be separated from her
von ir herren einen vuoz.	lord by as much as a foot. She
umbe sîn hulde und sînen gruoz	served him always for his
diente sî im alle wege	favour and his greeting, with
mit ir güetlîchen phlege.	her dear care. She was also so
si was ouch sô genæme	lovely that she could well have
daz si wol gezæme	been the emperor's child, with
ze kinde dem rîche	her beauty. The others ensured

and content-related reasons (Hans-Jochen Schiewer, 'Acht oder zwölf: die Rolle der

Meierstochter im ‚Armen Heinrich' Hartmanns von Aue', in *Literarische Leben.*

Rollenentwürfe in der Literatur des Hoch und Spätmittelalters: Festschrift für Volker

Mertens zum 65. Geburtstag (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002), pp. 649–67 (p. 649)).

[76] Ibid., p. 652.

[77] Ibid., p. 655. B also ends with Heinrich becoming a cathedral canon and the girl entering a

convent, rather than with their marriage.

an ir wætlîche.

    Die andern hâten den sin

daz si ze rehter mâze in

wol gemîden kunden;

sô vlôch si zallen stunden

zim und niender anderswar.

si was sîn kurzwîle gar.

sî hete ir gemüete

mit reiner kindes güete

an ir herren gewant,

daz man si zallen zîten vant

under sînem vuoze.

mit süezer unmuoze

wonte si ir herren bî.

(MHG *DaH*, ll. 302-327)

that they avoided him as much as possible. She always went to him and nowhere else: she was his entire entertainment. Her thoughts, with a child's pure goodness, were turned towards her lord, for she was always found at his feet. She stayed with her lord with sweet diligence.

Hartmann introduces her in the context of her virtuous and hard-working family. She knows her place in the hierarchy (at her lord's feet), and is possessed of the kinds of spiritual and physical virtues we expect to find in hagiography – and it is through these virtues alone that she is distinguished from the rest of her family. Like them, though, she remains nameless. Her care for others immediately finds an object in Heinrich, and distinguishes her from her peers. With Marbach, some of Hartmann's details make it through, and some do not. Marbach is more interested in precisely how she is beautiful and precisely how Heinrich is repellent:

Darunter war ein Mägdelein,
Gar lieblich munter, zart und fein,
Das nun im zehnten Jahre war,
Mit einem klaren Augenpaar,
Und rothen Wänglein, lichtem Haar
Und holden Zügen wunderbar.

Es war das gute liebe Kind
Dem kranken Herrn so treu gesinnt,
Daß selten sie von seinen Füßen
Entwich und für ein freundlich Grüßen
Ihm willig diente allezeit.
Die andern alle flohen weit
Den kranken beulenvollen Mann,
Sie aber ging zu ihm heran
So oft es ihr nur möglich war.
Ihr kindlich Herz war immerdar
Ihm zugethan und stets bereit,
Die schwere Pein, das harte Leid
Mit Zärtlichkeit ihm zu versüßen,
Und lächelnd saß sie ihm zu Füßen.

Marbach, *DaH* (p. 15)

Among them was a maiden, delightfully cheerful, gentle and dainty, who was now ten years old. She had clear eyes and red cheeks, fair hair, and wonderfully lovely features. The dear, good child was so loyal to her sick lord that she scarcely left his feet and eagerly served him always in search of a friendly greeting. The others all avoided the sick man, who was covered in boils. But she came to him as often as possible. Her child's heart was forever devoted to him, and always ready to sweeten his great pain and his severe suffering with her tenderness, and she sat smiling by his feet.

As in the B recension, the girl is a focus of Marbach's conventionalizing changes. He describes her as conforming to the nineteenth-century ideals of femininity extolled soon after

by Weinhold, both in terms of her appearance and her character. The 'reiner kindes güete' ('child's pure goodness') exhibited by Hartmann's girl corresponds in itself to this schema, but Marbach heightens it, adding additional references to her sweet nature which also serve to make her relationship with Heinrich more personal. He inserts a description of her as the 'gute liebe Kind' ('good, dear child') and her 'süezer unmuoze' ('sweet diligence') becomes 'Zärtlichkeit' ('tenderness') to 'versüßen' ('sweeten') his pain and suffering. She is no longer simply found at his feet, but sits there smiling. The initial description of her as 'Gar lieblich munter, zart und fein' ('delightfully cheerful, gentle and dainty'), meanwhile, combines physical and psychological qualities, associating her delightful personality with her attractive appearance.[78] Marbach fleshes out her appearance, which remains beautiful, but non-specific in Hartmann's narrative. The details given may be fairly conventional, but they are designed to create a specific image imbued with nationally relevant symbolism, and her fair hair is key to that. Germania, the female personification of Germany, was typically depicted with golden hair.[79] Only nine years after Marbach's adaptation, Weinhold drew attention to 'schönes Gesicht, weiße Haut und blondes Har' ('beautiful face, white skin, and blonde hair') as

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[78] The association of beauty and goodness is to be found throughout medieval literature, not least in *Der arme Heinrich*; Marbach simply brings it front and centre when introducing the girl.

[79] For the use of Germania as a national symbol, see Bettina Brandt, *Germania und ihre Söhne: Repräsentationen von Nation, Geschlecht und Politik in der Moderne* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Lothar Gall, 'Die Germania als Symbol nationaler Identität im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Gottingen aus dem Jahre 1993* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), pp. 35–88.

typical features of German women, inherited from the Goths.[80] Marbach's additions, as ever, are not neutral: the girl willing to sacrifice her own life for the male protagonist conforms to this national archetype, and is rooted in the Middle Ages. Marbach neglects to suggest that she has any kind of beauty one might not expect in a peasant (a further indication that he saw little significance to her body beyond its sexual desirability), and increases her age from eight to ten, making her thirteen by the time she arrives in Salerno. Both of these changes are also related to propriety: she poses no threat to the social hierarchy before divine intervention, and will be in her teens by the time of her marriage.

Rossetti follows Marbach's ideas closely. That Marbach is his source is immediately clear from the details of the girl's appearance which have been carried across from Marbach, but do not have their origin in Hartmann's text, including the colours invoked in her physical description and the addition of two years to her age:

Among them was a little maid,

Red-cheeked, in yellow locks arrayed,

Whose tenth year was just passing her;

With eyes most innocently clear,

Sweet smiles that soothe, sweet tones that lull;

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[80] *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter*, p. 139. Weinhold invokes the idea of an original Germanic people and seeks a historical model for gender roles and relations (see Gabriele Osthaus, '"Die Macht edler Herzen und gewaltiger Weiblichkeit": Zwei frühe Beiträge zur Sitation der Frau im Mittelalter: Karl Weinhold und Karl Bücher', in *Der frauwen buoch: Versuche zu einer feministischen Mediävistik*, ed. by Ingrid Bennewitz (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1989), pp. 399–431 (p. 407).

Of gracious semblance wonderful.

For her sick lord the dear good child

Was full of tender thoughts and mild.

Rarely from sitting at his feet

She rose; because his speech was sweet,

To serve him she was proud and glad.

Great fear her little playmates had

At the sight of the loathly wight;

But she, as often as she might,

Went to him and with him would stay;

And her heart unto him alway

Clave as a child's heart cleaves: his pain

And grief that ever must remain,

With childish grace she soothed the while,

And sat her at his feet with a smile. (*HtL*, pp. 511-512)

This, though, is no direct parroting of Marbach's text in English. Rossetti has not only put aside 'literality of rendering' in service of verse, but emphasizes particular details, sometimes through variation. And his attention falls exactly where Marbach's did before him: on her character and appearance, and how these two aspects complement one another. Her hair is not just light, but a more eye-catching 'yellow'. Golden-haired female characters were particularly significant in Victorian literature – as Elisabeth G. Gitter has pointed out, 'When she was saintly […] the gold on her head was her aureole, her crown, the outward sign of her

inner blessedness and innocence'.[81] While Marbach presumably also draws on this symbolism, Rossetti's focus is on the girl's external appearance as indicative of her moral qualities. Details with a nationalist inflection added by Marbach are instead used by Rossetti to create an image of feminine virtue in line with the idea that 'female virginity functioned as a promise of innocence, purity, and passivity'.[82]. This becomes clearer two lines later. The girl's eyes, which made no appearance in Hartmann's depiction, are now not just clear, as Marbach describes them, but 'most innocently clear'. This innocence is carried throughout her description; the blandly described 'andern' (others') are now her 'playmates', and this focus is particularly prominent towards the end of the extract, where her 'Zärtlichkeit' ('tenderness') becomes 'childish grace'. Rossetti's description of Henry as 'the loathly wight' surpasses Marbach's additional emphasis on Heinrich's repulsive appearance: 'wight' had already acquired negative or supernatural implications by this point and therefore lacks the neutrality of 'Mann', even one covered in boils.[83] This is contrasted with the pride and gladness with which the girl serves him, rather than doing so in search of his favour, and serves again to underscore her goodness and innocence. And in Rossetti's hands the tenderness of the relationship becomes reciprocal: her 'sweet smiles' and 'sweet tones' are met by his 'speech [which] was sweet'. This sanitization on the parts of both translators is typical of their approaches to the text as a whole, and is encapsulated in the treatment of a

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[81] 'The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination', *PMLA*, 99 (1984), 936–54 (p. 943).

[82] Carol Engelhardt Herringer, *Victorians and the Virgin Mary: Religion and Gender in England, 1830-1885* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 49.

[83] 'Wight, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228973> [accessed 21 February 2018].

line only a little further along. Hartmann writes that 'er sî sîn gemahel hiez' ('he called her his wife') (MHG *DaH*, l. 341). There is no suggestion that this is to be taken humorously, but as a sign of the affection Heinrich feels for the girl. Marbach renders this as:

> Und er zu scherzen selbst begann,
>
> Sie sei sein Frauchen, er ihr Mann. (Marbach, *DaH*, p. 16)

> ([And he himself began to jest: she was his little wife and he her husband.)]

Marbach begins the process, introducing the assertion that the nickname is a joke, and including a diminutive to signal to his audience that the relationship is still one of adult and child. Rossetti then translates Marbach as:

> And he would even say jestingly,
>
> His own good little wife was she. (*HtL*, p. 512)

Rossetti removes the new reference to Henry as her husband, reducing the implication of a reciprocal spousal relationship, and adds the description that she is 'good'. Once again, Rossetti finds an opportunity to emphasize her moral character. Taken together, these two stages of appropriation reduce the moral complexity of the original, eulogizing the girl, both physically and psychologically, stressing Heinrich/Henry's repellent appearance, and sanitizing the relationship. They call to mind the nineteenth-century popularity of the fairy-tale motif of the beautiful maiden and her hideous suitor through their increasingly

unambiguous depiction of the girl's attractiveness and purity, juxtaposed with the visual horror of Heinrich/Henry.[84]

While Simrock was likely reacting to Marbach's deviations from Hartmann's text, and Ehrhardt (or Schwab's editor) seems to have had a youthful target audience in mind, Rossetti reproduced Marbach's alterations simply because he was unaware that Marbach's text differed significantly from Hartmann's. Although he does introduce variations, he may have considered them as much alterations of Hartmann's text as of the translated intermediary. He is, nonetheless, the first post-Marbach entry in this *Der arme Heinrich Volksbuch* tradition, and he anticipates some of Ehrhardt's reservations. In doing so, he illustrates a cross-cultural impulse towards modesty. He not only replicates the omission of the spying through the hole in the wall, but shows even more hesitancy over the elements of the episode which might be interpreted as risqué. The girl's innocence is not Marbach's weapon, but a barrier. Rossetti symbolically re-clothes her, writing that she was:

As naked as God had fashion'd her:

Only her innocence clothèd her. (*HtL*, p. 526)

His translation pre-empts Ehrhardt's visual intervention, in which the girl is physically re-clothed. Rossetti then follows Marbach quite precisely. Henry too is stirred by the sound of the knife – not to looking, but to action. He:

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[84] See, for example: Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (London: Random House, 1994), pp. 276–77; Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, 'Beautiful Maidens, Hideous Suitors: Victorian Fairy Tales and the Process of Civilization', *Marvels & Tales*, 24 (2010), 272–96.

made a great haste unto the door,

And would have gone in, but it was shut.

Then his eyes burn'd, as he stood without,

In scalding tears. (*HtL*, p. 526)

Henry then demands entry to the room, and at length the doctor agrees, whereupon:

Henry look'd on the damozel,

Where she lay bound, body and limb,

Waiting Death's stroke, to conquer him.

'Hear me', said he, 'worshipful sir;

It is horrible thus to look on her:

Rather the burthen of God's might

I choose to suffer, than this sight.

What I have said, that will I give;

But let thou the brave maiden live.' (*HtL*, p. 527)

His reaction is a deviation both from Hartmann and from Marbach. Where Marbach's Heinrich sees something pleasing to the eye, Rossetti's Henry sees only the 'horrible' aspect of the scene. The sight of the girl lying there bound horrifies Henry in and of itself. Marbach's Heinrich is horrified by the prospect of her death, but still appreciative of her appearance, as emphasized by the accompanying picture. At this moment, in Rossetti's translation, and in his immediate source, we see themes characteristic of his mature work: a

passive, vulnerable, and beautiful female figure, strongly associated with salvation, and
visually depicted with an asymmetry of gaze – the men looking at the woman, and the
woman looking elsewhere – which would be a common theme in Pre-Raphaelite art.[85]
Andrea Henderson points to

> Rossetti's mature paintings, those of the 1860s and 1870s, the typical subject of which
> is a woman who is, implicitly, the focus of intense subjective desire and, at the same
> time, the 'receptacle' of extraordinary 'powers' and 'forces'. [She is] lushly beautiful
> and often absorbed in a reverie that invites voyeurism.[86]

The girl, as she appears in Richter's (Marbach's) image, is precisely this kind of figure: the
intense desire to which Henderson refers is etched into the male figures in the image, and the
audience is invited to participate. The distress which follows her release in the text is not
depicted; instead she seems still to possess power over life and death. Yet Rossetti does not
engage with these themes. He responds solely to the text, ignoring the conflicting message
transmitted in the image. His decision to change Heinrich's reaction from desire to horror

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[85] Rossetti (along with the other Pre-Raphaelites) had a propensity to paint beautiful women
on the verge of death (see Emily J. Orlando, '"That I May Not Faint, or Die, or Swoon":
Reviving Pre-Raphaelite Women', *Women's Studies*, 38 (2009), 611–46). Rossetti's *Fazio's
Mistress*, painted to accompany his translation of the fourteenth-century canzone, *His
Portrait of his Lady, Angiola of Verona*, explores some of these ideas (see Brian Donnelly,
Reading Dante Gabriel Rossetti: The Painter as Poet (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 114).

[86] 'The "Gold Bar of Heaven": Framing Objectivity in D. G. Rossetti's Poetry and Painting',
ELH, 76 (2009), 911–29 (p. 912).

corresponds to his intention to create something of beauty, and to sacrifice literal meaning in service of the poetic form – an entirely different strategy from the philologist Simrock's search for literalism. Rossetti finds something less than beautiful in his source and rewrites it, changing male desire to male horror.

There are elements in *Henry the Leper*, though, which presage later developments in Rossetti's work. Both he and Marbach maintain (textually) the girl's anger and despair, as presented by Hartmann, at the failure of her plan, through which she proves herself in as much need of a cure as her future husband. This extreme grief may itself provide a key to Rossetti's choice of text. D. M. R. Bentley identifies the late 1840s as when Rossetti's fascination with the 'the physical effects and manifestations in women of intense mental, emotional, and spiritual states' began to emerge.[87] Translating *Der arme Heinrich* gave him the opportunity to explore all of these manifestations within an extant framework, from the girl's ecstasy at the promise of a heavenly crown to her anguish at her loss of immediate salvation – and loss of her own control, which brings her (and us) back to the conventional, submissive femininity emphasized by Marbach and Rossetti. This loss of control is exemplified at the close of the poem, when the girl gives no view on the marriage. Marbach and Rossetti go beyond her acquiescent silence as depicted by Hartmann, introducing the statement that it is 'Henry's choice'; 'Wie sich Herr Heinrich selbst entschieden' ('as Sir Henry himself decided')] (*HtL*, p. 532; Marbach, *DaH*, p. 54). That framework, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, in Germany and in England, reflects concepts like those

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[87] 'Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Absurd", Antiquarian, and "Modern-Antique" Medievalism(s): *Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, *The Bride's Prelude*, and "Stratton Water"', *Victorian Poetry*, 51 (2013), 99–125 (p. 110).

invoked by Weinhold, and which were presented directly to a female readership in nineteenth-century periodicals:

> Women are to be a moral force, but always submissive to male authority. If they have a transcendent ideology, it is Duty. They share a version of the national past that often is expressed as accounts of remarkable, heroic women.[88]

The girl's determination to give her life for her feudal lord is certainly redolent of duty and of moral force, even heroism, but until the moment that her death is averted, she is in control of the narrative. Through Heinrich's/Henry's refusal of her sacrifice, and her subsequent mad grief, she becomes submissive to Heinrich's/Henry's male authority – which she had refused to do when male authority was embodied by figures such as her father or the doctor. Anchoring contemporary gender politics in supposed historical precedent continued throughout the nineteenth century. Donald E. Hall suggests that 'social quiescence became a subject for nostalgic remembrance later in the century for some male writers and their characters'.[89] This type of nostalgic remembrance is precisely what we see at the narrative's conclusion in the German and English adaptations of *Der arme Heinrich*. In the German adaptations, and particularly in Marbach's rewriting, the girl's role is infused with the sense of the national past to which Connors and MacDonald refer. Marbach cleanses the medieval

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[88] Linda E. Connors and Mary Lu MacDonald, *National Identity in Great Britain and British North America, 1815-1851: The Role of Nineteenth-Century Periodicals* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 122.

[89] *Fixing Patriarchy: Feminism and Mid-Victorian Male Novelists* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 5.

text of supposedly erotic elements, while his images tell a different story: we move from a perceived transgressive fictional action to a culturally sanctioned gaze from characters and audience. In the 1859 edition of Schwab, and Simrock's 1847 translation, objections to Marbach's Middle Ages are focused visually through the prism of the semi-clothed female body. A supposedly medieval girl stands in the one case for contemporary modesty, and in the other for the role of the scholar as the primary interpreter of the Middle Ages, including for the general public – but in each case, the primary purpose, for which the girl is simply a tool, is the incitement of national pride through recourse to what the Grimms described as an 'old, intrinsically German poem'. Rossetti's situation is more complex. With the subtitle *A Swabian Miracle Rhyme,* Rossetti makes the aestheticist claim that his translation is of no contemporary political relevance, simply endowing the nation 'with one more possession of beauty', and this apolitical approach may indeed be true as far as nationalism goes, but his treatment of the girl reinforces contemporary gender politics. A succession of nineteenth-century translators, poets, and artists, then, have clothed and unclothed the twelfth-century female protagonist, literally and symbolically, and always in service of a broader ideal: just as the twelfth-century girl was an instrument in Heinrich's physical and societal healing, so the nineteenth-century girl is an instrument in the construction of idealised medieval-inspired contemporary femininity, which, while it can also be an end in itself, is an integral part of nineteenth-century German nationalism.

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