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Lorelei and the beautiful Lau:
The portrayal of water nymphs in seminal works of
19th century German literature

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on Lorelei and the beautiful Lau in its analysis of the portrayal of women in 19th century works of German literature with regards to water, love and death. It explores theories around the origins of a woman's connections with these elements, including her biological functions and her roles in society, as well as important historical influences on the (male) authors.

Lorelei and the beautiful Lau are two key figures within this discourse, as these water nymphs provide distinctive gender roles and enable an in-depth study into identity constructs and gender relations.

This thesis compares the images of Lorelei within seminal works of her saga and contrasts these depictions of dangerous femininity with Mörike's domesticated and relatively harmless water woman, Lau. In addition, the study of Lorelei brings with it aspects of European cultural and intellectual paradigms, as well as constructs of German cultural and national identity.

The analysis of these fictional characters exposes areas of significant friction in male-dominated Western culture. The water nymphs' portrayal reveals subtle and discernible forms of male dominance through the degradation, marginalisation and ostracism undergone by the female figures. It also reveals discord in societal standings and religious affiliations, as well as the dichotomy of nature and culture.

Through an understanding and analysis of these issues, the reader can better come to terms with humanity's differences and, like Lau, go on a journey of self-discovery, in which the reader may embrace parts of themselves they never knew they had or were missing.

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To the future readers of my thesis, I hope you find my topic as interesting as I have found it and that you are able to learn a thing or two (or a hundred!) from it, just as I have during my academic journey.

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Introduction

Concepts and ideas which merit naming are assigned words. These words in turn have connotations. Often both words and their connotations are culturally determined and are so natural and ingrained that it takes an outside perspective to learn the truth of what is inherently associated with what. I recently took part in a psychological experiment where I was to associate female and male names with leadership and supporter roles and different personality types. One first had to pair up stronger character traits with men's names and weaker traits with women's names. This was timed. The reverse was then measured, i.e., pairing stronger traits with women's names and weaker traits with men's. I noticed a very marked difference in my associations and found the first of the two exercises a lot easier, as the connections between 'dominant' and 'male' naturally flowed in my mind. Imagine my horror to discover that I, a modern female, still had subconscious tendencies towards submission to men, despite all women have done to fight for equality. How widespread is this in the modern day and age? I eagerly await the results of the psychological experiment. In the meantime, I have conducted a research project of my own, exploring how literature has portrayed women. I have focussed on the portrayal of the German water nymphs *Lorelei* and *the beautiful Lau*. This essay therefore addresses 19th century German literature in relation to women and water and, where applicable, death.

My specific focuses and research questions are:

- What image of women is created in the 19th century, particularly regarding dangerous femininity and the femme fatale?
- In which different ways are versions of the same female figure portrayed in the multiple significant contributions to the Lorelei Saga?
- How do these portrayals differ from the depictions of the beautiful Lau?
- What comparisons can be drawn between these mythical water nymphs?

This research report starts with the coverage of a range of essential pieces of background information and the literature findings established to date regarding women's connection to nature, their connection to water

and their connection to death. It then moves on to the portrayal of women in 19th century literature which includes the centuries leading up to this as well as male fantasies about *Wasserfrauen* and the Romantic era. A brief introduction to women archetypes and the nature of poems and short stories follows. The bulk of this essay explores and compares the creations of the *Lorelei* figures by Clemens Brentano, Joseph von Eichendorff and Heinrich Heine in their most famous works. Eduard Mörike's portrayal of the beautiful Lau then becomes the focus of the subsequent section and a review of the similarities and differences between these water nymphs follows. A conclusion sums up the findings of this piece of research and links back to answer the original aims of this project. Throughout comments are also made with regards to the authors' lives, their experiences and their relationships to women, as this may have influenced their portrayals of women in their writings.

This research project was put together by collecting the relevant literature and ascertaining the already established theories, which are presented under various headings in the first section. The second section presents an analysis using the close reading method. Because I have chosen very few pieces of work to look at, I have been able to go into considerable detail in aspects of my analysis. This strength of my research is counteracted by the weakness that I have only been able to include a very small percentage of the multitudes of Lorelei figures available in literature. I chose Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine as the authors whose depictions I wished to focus on because these three authors' work on *Wasserfrauen* has been widely distributed and quoted in German-speaking countries, so that they are arguably the most important contributors. This limits my research to works written solely by male authors who were dominant in shaping the discourse about women and nature in the 19th century but doesn't exclude problems also experienced by female authors when portraying women in literature.¹ This research has focussed solely on written works within the Lorelei saga and doesn't include visual or audio forms of art, such as paintings or songs. Although it would have been

¹ Renate Berger and Inge Stephan, 'Einleitung', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 1-9 (p. 8).

fascinating to analyse paintings of Lorelei figures, I opted for the written texts, because beauty-worth-dying-for, as these water women have in common, is seen differently in individual reader's minds than an actual physical appearance of a woman painted in artwork. I chose to compare these written works of Lorelei to Mörike's beautiful Lau's figure as Lau simultaneously provided plenty of similarities as well as differences to the Lorelei counterparts. This research is limited to the texts shown and can neither be transferred onto other texts nor interpreted as a definitive account of topic on the women and water and death, in which the field extends beyond literature into other areas, for example, cultural production.² In addition to analysing women, water and death, this research enables a better and more critical understanding of how we, as humans, construct our identities, as individuals and collectives and the relationships between entities. Each of the Lorelei poems analysed in more detail can be found in the Appendices. However, due to the length of the story of the beautiful Lau, this has not been included.

Women and Nature

One way in which human beings differ from other animal species is the fact that they adapt their environment to meet their own needs as opposed to adapting themselves to fit in with the environment around them. This has been happening for thousands of years. As far back as 6000BC the inhabitants of Jericho built impressive water tanks and stone constructions.³ These presumably served the function of water regulation (irrigation) and safety (defence mechanism) respectively. Humanity has come a long way since then in terms of adapting natural resources for maximum benefits to humanity. In addition to irrigation for better crops, we have greenhouses and elaborate world-wide transport and trade systems, enabling food types to be available even in the off-season. Our defence systems have developed to protect against the elements. We have heating and air conditioning units and can even build structures which can

² Ibid., (p. 9).

³ J.M. Roberts, *The New Penguin History of the World*, 4th edn (London: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 41.

withstand relatively large earthquakes. With the exception of tsunamis, storms and the weather, nature is more or less 'controlled' by us. In the Anthropocene Age humanity has changed the courses of rivers, created artificial lakes, dammed rivers, controlled forests' growth and even literally moved mountains. Human beings are the masters of control and this control allows us to provide for our every physiological need. As individuals, we require air, water and food for metabolic survival and clothing and shelter for warmth and protection. As a whole, we require reproduction and the afore-mentioned necessities for our offspring for the survival of the species. In modernity, these basic physiological needs are met easily and regularly due to the control we exert over nature. Over time, human beings have developed a new element of humanity, culture, where 'culture' here is defined as 'der Prozeß... in dem die Menschen sich ein System von Bedeutungsformen erschaffen und erhalten (Zeichen, Sprache, Kunstwerke etc.), das es ihnen ermöglicht, die Gegebenheiten ihrer vorgestellten Existenz als Naturwesen zu überschreiten, sie in ihrem Interesse zu verändern und zu kontrollieren.'⁴ Although both genders within humanity have contributed to and have access to the advantages our new cultural methods and technologies have brought, physiological differences have resulted in unequal access to this 'cultural' world. Females, who are regulated more so than men by their biological functions, such as menstruation, pregnancy and breastfeeding, were historically less able to enter into this 'cultural' world. Due to practical limitations, predominantly on time, in the past males were abler than females to develop 'culture'. As the development of pre-modern technology often required physical strength over extended periods of time and as the socio-political dynamics of pre-modern society often resulted in war and strife, females were disadvantaged from actively and fully engaging into the process of culture production. Thus the dichotomy of male and culture versus female and nature, that since Antiquity had been exacerbated by male-dominated religious and political agencies, came about.

⁴ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 59, Para. 6.

The relationship of women and nature is further enhanced by other natural parallels. Nature is an ever-renewing source of life and it is the women within humanity who sustain life in their wombs during pregnancy, bring life into the world through childbirth and nurse life through its initial phases through breastfeeding. As such, women play an integral part in the life cycle of humans. Just as nature has four seasons to rotate through various stages of fertility for the reproduction of species, so too do women's bodies undergo a monthly menstruation cycle. This happens to correspond to approximately the same length of time as a moon cycle creating yet another parallel between women and elements of nature. These biological distinctions of women are not a cultural (in the traditional sense of the word) distinction and exist/have existed regardless of historical era, geographical location or ethnic differences. Thus a natural connection between women and nature transcends time, location and ethnicity. This is demonstrated in early associations made by various cultures' belief systems and associations of nature as the 'earth-mother'. The ancient Mesopotamians (3000BC) had nature goddesses and the Greeks (1300BC) Mother Gaia. Within Inca, Roman, Slavic, Celtic, Hindu and many, many mythologies, nature is connected with women.⁵ Closer to home here in New Zealand, Maori have their own earth mother, Papatuanuku. The English expression 'Earth-Mother' or 'Mother Nature' (*Erdmutter* in German) makes an automatic lexical connection between nature and females and incorporates through the use of mother the sense of nurturing within nature, personifying nature as though it, or perhaps better said she, were a live being with life-bearing qualities. Moreover, these physiological restrictions of the female body affected women socially and psychologically.⁶ The time restrictions placed on a woman and the role she plays within the traditional family limits her and this thereby impacts on her psyche. Hence the association of nature and women is ultimately established not only by physiological similarities and

⁵ Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014); Ryewolf, *A to Z Listing of Gods and Goddesses*, ([n.p.]: The White Goddess, 2016) <http://www.thewhitegoddess.co.uk/divinity_of_the_day/a-_of_gods_and_goddesses.asp> [accessed 13 October 2016].

⁶ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 60.

associations but also strengthened by the social and psychological implications which result from these biological functions within the context of male-dominated societies.

Within the dichotomy of male and culture versus female and nature, an often un-reflected hierarchy exists. Culture is considered superior to nature because it goes above and beyond the simple necessities for survival. The association of women with nature can be perceived in many traditional male-dominated societies as lowering the status of women and giving men the green light to control women, as they would nature, for their own purposes. In many traditional socio-cultural and socio-religious discourses (including traditional forms of Christianity and Islam), the union of a man and a woman is perceived as a man lowering himself to a woman's level. Under these paradigms, a man's interest in a female body can be considered inferior to his station and as such forbidden. Historically, this has often resulted in a male's love-hate relationship to a woman's body.⁷ The notion of a 'polluting relationship' has resulted in cultures all over the globe establishing rituals for the 'Reinigung von natürlicher Verunreinigung' where 'die Natur [soll] sozialisiert, akkulturiert werden'.⁸ This ritual can involve water which brings us to the next important relationship with women, that of water.

Women and Water

In traditional Western (Aristotelian) worldviews, nature has four fundamental elements. These have often been personified as women in one way or another throughout Western works. Fire, air and earth have been known as salamanders, sylphs and pygmies, respectively. Water too has female equivalents with feminine water sprites coming in the forms of nymphs, naiads, nixies, mermaids, sirens and undine. In literature and the arts, the association of water with women is far more common than water with men, although mermen and water Gods, notably Poseidon, do exist.

⁷ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno as cited in Renate Berger and Inge Stephan, 'Einleitung', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 1-9 (p. 3).

⁸ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 60, Para. 2.

Just as it is easy to make a connection between women and nature and nature and women under a traditional worldview, it follows that a natural connection between water and women and vice versa exists. Biologically, many parts of a women's cycle revolve around liquid flowing: the flow of blood each month; the flow of milk from the breast; the flow of breaking waters prior to childbirth. In addition, parallels in functions can be seen between women and water. Women are a source of life (babies are born through women) and a source of nutrients to a growing baby – essential for survival. So too is water a source of life and an essential element in the nurturing of organic life and the survival of animate beings. Furthermore, childbirth raises the aspect of water within the womb. Foetuses grow in the amniotic sac together with amniotic fluid, thus all human life begins in 'water'. The essential role of water being a life-giving and connecting element can be summarised nicely by Loren Eiseley's comment that 'If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.'⁹

Elaine Morgen claims that the connection between women and water goes even deeper than these every-day occurrences and is rooted in a long evolutionary history. Her theory, developing on from the aquatic ape hypothesis, claims that women were ultimately 'saved' by water 12-14 million years ago. When the forests had stopped growing due to heat and the humans couldn't use the trees as protection anymore, women, who had been left at home with the babies, were able to escape predators by wading deeper into the coastline water in their upright position than the four legged carnivores hunting them. The constant contact with water caused the large loss of human body hair which in turn caused women's breasts to enlarge as babies could no longer hang from the hair and would feed from cradled arms. Sitting on the beach ground caused women's backsides to fatten up, which naturally pushed the female genitalia further and further forward. Human reproduction changed from the usual land mammal copulation from behind to a front-on encounter. According to Morgen, this resulted in women fighting back against threatening on-comer male mates and resulted in male violence and female submission in

⁹ Loren Eiseley, *The Immense Journey: An Imaginative Naturalist Explores the Mysteries of Man and Nature* (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 15.

the reproductive act (with the genes dying out of those men whose instincts told them to stop once submission was achieved). Petting, fondling and kissing developed to show that this frontal attack was not meant to be a threat and from this the human capacity for love grew. This theory suggests that sexual dimorphism has its roots both in natural and in social evolution and developments. It was ultimately the ocean/water and the mother-child relationship which produced the female body. Men on the other hand grew muscles due to hunting and warfare. If true, this theory makes the claim that the connection between water and women has been around for millennia.¹⁰

Morgen's afore-mentioned theory didn't exist until almost two centuries after the 19th century literature being looked at in this essay, so we can say with certainty that it was not the intention of these male writers to allude back to these specific primordial beginnings of water, women, violence and love in their works. I have included this theory here however because it offers a unique explanation concerning the origins of love and male violence as well as addressing the crucial role water has played in our survival.

Nonetheless a paradox of water exists with regards to human development and culture. It is both a live-giver and a life-taker, creator and destroyer, simultaneously desired and feared. With these inherent characteristics, water provides an apt metaphor for the expression of the male's love-hate relationship to the female body. In his book *Male Fantasies*, Klaus Theweleit cites countless examples of such metaphors in works in literature. Authors transfer the negative attributes of water – it can be too scarce, too abundant or filled with toxins – onto femininity and simultaneously express their desires to imbue themselves in or travel the 'vast oceans' of female connoted fluidity.¹¹

¹⁰ as cited in Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 288-294; Elaine Morgen, *I believe we evolved from aquatic apes* (Oxford, England: TEDGlobal, 2009) <https://www.ted.com/talks/elaine_morgan_says_we_evolved_from_aquatic_apes> [accessed 27 September 2016].

¹¹ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 359, Para. 1.

In some cultural contexts, water is not only perceived as destructive and dangerous, but also deadly. Stephan shows that in traditional male-dominated Western culture, the word 'mermaid' is often automatically associated with nature, eros and death and Theweleit demonstrates how love and desire flow through women in European literature as a strong cultural undercurrent.¹² This desire and love frequently lead to fear which in turn lead to violence.¹³ Violence leads to the spilling of blood which then forms a connective circle back onto traditional biological constructs of women, who share an association with blood in the form of their monthly menstrual cycle. Blood is also part of the birthing process, a process which is often associated with water, fear and trauma, even violence in male literature.¹⁴ In this discourse, women's bodily functions share a natural connection to water and blood. With blood's natural connection to pain and death, it is hardly surprising that the theme of women, water and death occurs again and again throughout works.

Women and Death

In male-dominated Western literature and art, women have often been associated with death. This theme, which appears as early as in, for example, ancient Greek culture, has existed in cultures all across the globe and remains a current theme these days.¹⁵ Life and death form a natural cycle and because women's biological functions connect so closely to life-giving, it is perhaps not surprising that a women's period, pregnancy and birthing could invoke ideas around death as well. De Beauvoir explains this idea and many others in her book, *The Second Sex*, which traces the mythological origins of the degradation, marginalisation and ostracism of women.¹⁶ She suggests that, particularly in traditional Christian discourses, men, who feel like 'fallen gods', dislike the fact that

¹² Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 122).

¹³ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 272; *Ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁵ Renate Berger and Inge Stephan, 'Einleitung', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 1-9 (p. 5).

¹⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989).

they originated in a woman's womb. In this line of thinking, the archetypal woman, 'Eve', is considered the cause of man's fallen state. According to De Beauvoir, men suppress women because a woman's regular creatural functions offer a constant reminder of their own less-than-ideal 'animal origins'. This is by no means helped by a man's desire for a woman, for such a 'creatural being'. Theweleit describes how literary men can view women's bodies as 'holes, swamps, pits of muck that can engulf' a man and cause, in a sense, his 'drowning' in an 'abyss' of lost self-control and death.¹⁷ These fears of loss of self-control and loss of power together with the sublimation of birth trauma and the confrontation with mortality through sexuality and life-giving, may then help explain central aspects of traditional male texts about femininity and death.

The following section traces literature portrayals of women and presents other less direct connections between women and death in 19th century German literature – the result of which is frequently related to men's contrived fantasies and cultural constructs that can be analysed with Stephan, De Beauvoir and Theweleit.

¹⁷ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. xiii, Para. 2.

The portrayal of women in 19th century literature

In pre-modern literature, women have been portrayed in a variety of stereo- or archetypical roles over the centuries. *Images of Women in Literature* by Mary Ferguson categorises women's archetypes and stereotypes under the headings: the wife, the mother, the old maid, the sex object, the mistress-seductress, the educated woman and the lady.¹⁸ This essay's main protagonists, the Lorelei figures, fit into Ferguson's mistress-seductress stereotype with their dangerous, all-ensnaring beauty and cunning. The next section explores the centuries prior to the portrayal of Lorelei in Romanticism in order to provide an understanding of how the discourse of the *Wasserfrau* as a seductress developed and how the main features portrayed in this discourse varied or changed.

From the 15th to the 19th century

Just as many forms of water can have a lifecycle of rising and falling, so too has the image of women and beauty been on a constant cycle of change throughout time, at one moment unbearable and salty and the next pure and filtered. The fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, which Theweleit showcases as having a drive towards monogamy and desexualisation, could be considered a low point for the image of women in Western literature.¹⁹ During this time, *Hexen* or witches – archetypes of fictitious works – came to hold a real and a literary place in human history. From 1450 to 1750 approximately 110,000 real life men and women were prosecuted for witchcraft and some 60,000 executed, usually burnt.²⁰ The overwhelming majority of 'witches' were women and this had come about as the result of a combination of some of these stereotypes: the portrayal of witches as females in earlier works of literature and art; women allegedly being 'morally weaker' and more likely to succumb to

¹⁸ Mary Anne Ferguson, *Images of Women in Literature*, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), p. 12-15.

¹⁹ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 324.

²⁰ Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 21.

temptation;²¹ the insatiable 'carnal lust' supposedly felt by women making them more sexually indulgent and inclined to take part in Satanic orgies on the Sabbath;²² a woman's job tendencies towards cooking, healing or midwifery and thus using herbs and arcane forms of knowledge; women having less physical strength and thereby needing to rely more on magic. As for individuals' traits, Levack says that period literature showed a woman's tendencies towards being sharp-tongued, bad-tempered and likely to use foul language and having a poor religious reputation. Overall, they exhibited 'inappropriate female behaviour'.²³

Levack also analyses the social contexts and literary repercussions of witchcraft discourses in Western pre-modernity. 'Witches' committed harmful acts, *Maleficia* (Latin for 'witchcrafts'), by way of mysterious or supernatural powers, which they had gained through a pact with the Devil himself.²⁴ In this way, witches were intrinsically linked to religion. What could have been a simple criminal act of murder or theft became heresy under this paradigm.

Levack found that throughout these 300 years, fluctuations occurred in numbers of witches accused and prosecuted. Initially the numbers increased, then they decreased, increased again and finally decreased before ceasing.²⁵ During the time of the later decrease which took place in the late 17th and early 18th century, noblewomen were gradually eroticised, whilst common women were simultaneously de-eroticised.²⁶ This meant that common men and women were often unable to experience the pleasurable sexual licences that were available to the nobility, particularly high-born men. The witch-hunts had a strong class aspect; extra-marital relations of women of the lower social classes made them more likely to be a target of the witch-hunters.

²¹ Kramer and Sprenger, as cited in Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 126, Para. 2.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 126, Para. 2.

²³ Garrett, as cited in Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 138, Para. 1; *Ibid.*, p. 123-138.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4-8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁶ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 324.

The 18th century is sometimes known as ‘the woman’s century’, as women gained more social power and philosophical and political discourses of the Enlightenment paved the way for more gender equality. There were more and more non-aristocratic and bourgeoisie women who obtained a formal education and gained access to public functions. For some, such as the mistresses of high aristocrats and monarchs (Madame du Barry, Madame de Pompadour, Wilhelmine Enke, *Gräfin* Cosel), the opportunity arose to use their sexuality to gain economic and political influence. New definitions of beauty arose and society saw women consciously reforming the shapes of their bodies for the purpose of obtaining prestige.²⁷ In both aristocratic and bourgeois circles, their feminine behaviour was also expected to please a man and women learnt to play instruments and dance and sing to provide social entertainment. Another aspect of being female which got more and more highlighted in 18th century literary discourses was the cultivated expression of feeling a yearning for intimacy and lovemaking.²⁸ If a late Baroque woman did not desire this, then something was wrong with her. The female genitalia became sexualised, as did a woman’s breasts and women took special powders to stop lactating after pregnancy.²⁹ What would have been a death wish with regards to fashion and body images in the centuries before became the idealised image of women in the 19th century; the voluptuousness and flamboyance of the Baroque beauty ideal then gave way to the soberer and slender body ideal of ‘Classicism’.

Literature painted images of such perfect modern women with beauty out of this world that it became an impossible image to strive to be.³⁰ Often theorised and provided by men, the desires and fantasies for the ideal body image and the ideal female personality created totally unrealistic expectations and were unattainable in the real world. No woman could realistically live up to these prospects and it was thus a fake image of a woman that was desired.³¹ This depersonalisation of real women by men

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 335-337.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

within their own fantasies inevitably led to disappointment, but it was often the women themselves who were blamed for the shortfalls. Men, who dominated the fashion industry as well as the social media and the book market, condemned the women for not living up to superhuman and goddess images and 19th century writers took revenge on these unobtainable images turning the beauties into caricatures and devils. As if their bodies had promised oceans of fulfilment, these women now fell prey to literary drownings and later authors sought revenge employing other water images.³² Thus 19th century literature often displayed a tendency to turn erotic women into all forms of deadly women: dangerous nymphs, devouring demons, witches, vampires and general femme fatales.

The 19th century

Romanticism and German speakers

Around 1800 another upheaval against earlier ideas was contributing to the image of women: a backlash against Enlightenment. Enlightenment revolved around ideas of reason and logic and its leaders believed that knowledge should be shared and contemplated widely. This included the contemplation and study of nature, which had been unable to be examined prior due to Pantheistic or creationist beliefs that it was analogous with or directly ordained by God.

Enlightenment circumvented this issue by personifying nature as female, thus allowing it to be examined and exploited. The disembodied practicality and reason of Enlightenment, together with the hard machine based factories of the Industrial Revolution and the stark utilitarianism of Capitalism, resulted in many aspects of modern 'civilisation and its discontents'.³³ Being increasingly alienated from the natural and traditional social environments of pre-industrial societies and the (supposed) immediate and 'authentic' access to corporeal beauty, Romantic theoreticians and poets started to express fantasies around beauty and

³² Ibid., p. 360-361.

³³ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, society and religion: Group psychology, Civilization and its discontents, and other works* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1985).

around a sense of wanting to reconnect with the past and with nature. Thus Romanticist discourses of nature that are often closely related to a re-assessment of gender-roles and attributes emerged.

Typical features within the Romantic Era included the importance of imagination, emotion and the creative individual; the past and nature were key elements.³⁴ Feelings, hopes, desires, dreams and searches for utopian times were explored. Erotic sensibilities and fantasies were believed to provide an interesting insight into not only the authors' states of mind but also 'the most profound instincts of humanity'.³⁵ Many Romantic authors were keenly aware of a chasm separating the (empirical) world of logic and reason from their inner spiritual and amorous desires and retreated into a world of fictional realms, fairy tale and mysticism.³⁶ They were however not always aware of this as a whole and it was not until later generations that critics were able to look back on works of the time and find similar attributes across texts and define the Romantic era as such.³⁷

The Romantic Era featured across different nations in Europe with English and French discourses influencing German discourses and vice versa. In German-speaking Europe, Romantic discourses in the area of literature, philosophy, music and the visual arts were particularly prominent and had arguably longer lasting and more far reaching political implications than in other European cultures. This has sometimes been explained by the fact that German-speaking Europe was politically more fragmented and less centralized than Western Europe and, as a result, the development of modern bourgeois society and the political Enlightenment appeared delayed. The sudden political changes in the wake of the French Revolution and the rapid industrialisation in Germany resulted in a widespread 'Romanticisation' of the 'good old times' as German-speaking

³⁴ Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 89-123.

³⁵ Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. by A. Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. ix; *Ibid.*, p. x, Para. 2.

³⁶ Stephen Cushman and Clare Cavanagh, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th edn (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 1221.

³⁷ Seamus Perry, 'Romanticism: The Brief History of a Concept', in *A companion to Romanticism*, ed. by Duncan Wu (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp. 3-11 (p. 4).

societies had less time than their Western neighbours to adopt to modernity.

Notable English Romanticists included artist and poet William Blake and poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Keats. French equivalents were Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Théophile Gautier and Alfred de Vigny. Amongst the German Romanticists were Tieck, Novalis, von Kleist, Hölderlin and Achim von Arnim, in addition to the authors of the texts being looked at in this essay. Within the German speaking world, the different eras of Romanticism, Early, Middle and Late, were situated in different centres. Jena, Heidelberg and Berlin corresponded to Early, Middle and Late, respectively. The most important phase in the context of this essay was the one based in Heidelberg, where Brentano was one of its leaders.

A particular political feature of Romanticism which arose within the philosophy and literature of this time was a sense of nation and nationhood. Amongst the authors using the German language, this was of particular importance to their identities, as there was not yet a unified Germany. The Holy Roman Empire had ceased to exist in 1803 as a result of the French Revolution and the early Napoleonic Wars and the Confederation of the Rhine had arisen under Napoleon's leadership. Napoleon was initially greeted with high expectations and as a potential liberator from the Central European 'Ancient Regime'; however, the German bourgeoisie and intellectuals came to regard Napoleon more and more as an occupier and tyrant following his coronation as Emperor. Under French occupation, feelings of nationalism grew amongst the German speakers and stimulated various forms of patriotic German literature. For example, the Brothers Grimm set out to collect fairy tales showing Germany's 'true essence' in light of its old myths and stories, thus attempting to document and revive the 'character of the nation' and distinguish it from Western cultures.³⁸ Other Romantic writers also took inspiration from previous myths and legends and used them for the

³⁸ Cay Dollerup, 'Translation as a Creative Force in Literature: The Birth of the European Bourgeois Fairy-Tale', *The Modern Language Review*, 90(1) (1995), 94-102
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/37332561995>> [accessed 18 September 2016], p. 99, Para. 4.

construction of modern forms of cultural and political identity. These Romantics looked to the pre-Christian and medieval myths for inspiration rather than directly to the ancient myths that were more closely associated with the Romance languages and Mediterranean cultures.³⁹ This patriotic desire for mythical identity construction during the Romantic era led to a new interest in local legends and myths and hence to stories about mermaids and other water spirits.⁴⁰

Water sprites are exceptionally prevalent in works of German Romantic literature and theory. The literature about water sprites allowed Romantic authors to express, combine and reflect on a diverse range of issues at the intersection of politics, gender-relations and the renewal of (supposedly) historical mythology. Stories about *Wasserfrauen* allowed them to express the ever-lasting tension that exists between humanity and nature and hence voice anti-modern sentiments, highlight the unrequited love between mankind and the environment and voice the progressing alienation of modern humanity from nature. In addition, many Romantic stories of water sprites inscribe into the narratives a subtext of gender theory, often displaying aspects of power and ideal gender roles, typically involving a human male trying to relate to and control a part-human female.⁴¹

This essay builds off the above outlined theories and historical and cultural contexts in later sections to explain and critically analyse how Brentano, Eichendorff, Heine and Mörike portrayed their water nymphs.

Myths and archetypes

The term myth comes from the Greek 'mythos' meaning 'a story or legend' and describes traditional stories involving gods and (super)human heroes. Such tales have been used for thousands of years as a way of explaining the origins of the world around us – a branch known as 'creation myths'. Exact definitions of myth vary and the terms 'legend' and 'folklore' are

³⁹ Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 129).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, (p. 128).

⁴¹ Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 46.

often used interchangeably.⁴² Amongst folk tradition, there are also fairy tales that sometimes overlap with myths. John Gardner defines fairy tales as ‘the place where myth and reality meet’ and he was amongst writers who believed in creating your own myths and folk and fairy tales.⁴³ This branch of ‘invented’ myths and fairy tales, *literare Mythe* and *Kunstmärchen*, is distinct from orally transmitted folklore, *volkstümliche Mythe* and *Volksmärchen*.

The creation of myths is a part of human creative and commemorative culture; they are created to ‘berichten, nennen, den Ursprung sagen: damit aber darstellen, festhalten, erklären’.⁴⁴

Myths and fairy tales include archetypal figures, such as witches, the wicked stepmother or the Fairy Godmother. Specific mythological characters can also be seen as archetypes, such as Hercules or Helen of Troy.⁴⁵ Archetypes can be considered mythological symbols of the subconscious. Carl Jung explains how the most common symbol in the unconscious is water and Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw go on to show how Western emotions are connected to water symbolism: we cry tears of joy and tears of sorrow.⁴⁶ John Gardner cites Medea as an example of an archetype known by name and she is similarly a feminine personification of water.⁴⁷ Though arguably not quite as famous as Medea, Lorelei is a legendary figure in German speaking countries and can be considered a seminal literary motif in 19th century German literature.

⁴² Michael Munro, ‘Mythology’, in *Chambers Dictionary of the Unexplained*, ed. by Una McGovern (London: Chambers Harrap, 2007) <<http://ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/chambun/mythology/0>> [accessed 7 October 2016], Para. 1; *Ibid.*, Para. 2.

⁴³ John Gardner, ‘Foreword’, in *German Literary Fairy Tales*, ed. by Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1983), pp. vii-xi (p. vii); *Ibid.*, (p. vii, footnote).

⁴⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, as cited in Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 60, Para. 1.

⁴⁵ John Gardner, ‘Foreword’, in *German Literary Fairy Tales*, ed. by Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1983), pp. vii-xi (p. vii); *Ibid.*, (p. ix).

⁴⁶ as cited in Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 182.

⁴⁷ John Gardner, ‘Foreword’, in *German Literary Fairy Tales*, ed. by Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1983), pp. vii-xi (p. vii).

According to Saporiti, archetypes pave the way to the basic patterns of the psyche.⁴⁸ The rewriting of mythical creatures, as is indeed what the authors of Lorelei were doing, shows a contemplation of (over-)simplified psychological aspects of gender, as well as of the male self and the female 'other'. The German speaking authors considered here were also attempting, by referring to archetypes, to discover what it meant to be 'German' and to redefine this through their works.

Poetry and the short story

Written literature exists in many forms: fiction as distinct from non-fiction; poetry as distinct from prose; novels as distinct from short stories or dramas. Each form is unique and has certain characteristics. The genres analysed in this essay are works of poetry and one short story. However, Brentano and Eichendorff incorporated their poems in their novels while Heine included his in his book of songs. This inclusion can be understood as an implementation of the Romantic idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* which transcends the demarcation of genres but also the demarcation of literature and myth. A brief background to the poems' contexts on the wider scale is included in each respective section.

Poetry is an intricate type of written expression in that words and grammar may be combined in new, previously unheard of forms, as an expression of art. The undefined structure and ambiguous logic within poetry can therefore have many interpretations, both at the time that it was written and centuries later. Because poems are often compact, word choice is important and so too are rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, punctuation and many other aspects. Paraphrasing a poem is therefore difficult or ineffective and so is the translation of one. For this reason, knowledge of German is required for a full understanding of this essay.

Short stories on the other hand are usually less compact than poems, but more so than novels. Themes and ideas within short stories are more explicit than in the clever encryptions that are poetry.

⁴⁸ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 11.

During late Romanticism, the epoch under consideration, lyrical poets often attempted to fuse seemingly incompatible genres and modes. This freedom of form allowed for symbolism between contradictory elements, such as myth and modern, culture and nature, passion and indifference. This also allowed the mood to swing back and forth.⁴⁹

The following section introduces the Lorelei rock and Lorelei's history in becoming the Lorelei known, loved and feared today.

⁴⁹ Stephen Cushman and Clare Cavanagh, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th edn (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 1221.

The Lorelei Saga

Introduction

Lorelei (German *Loreley*, also Lurley, Lore Lay) is the name of the 132m high, steep slate rock found near Sankt Goarshausen in Germany. It has played an important part in German politics, history, folklore, tourism and economics as well as the German mentality due to writers' and composers' portrayal of the rock as the abode of a beautiful and dangerous woman. The rock is located on the right bank of the Rhine River and causes a beautiful echo of the nearby falling water.⁵⁰ Although there are many different meanings attributed to *Loreley*, *Lurley* and the like, many theories suggest the sound it creates inspired its name. In 1905 Wilhelm Hertz offers the meaning *lur* as *elbisches Wesen*, whilst Luise Berthold traces the *lorren* or *lurren* aspect to the meaning of *heulen* (of wind) in his 1927 *Hessen-Nassauisches Volkswörterbuch*. More recently in 1981, Adolf Bach suggests it coming from *lauern*, but other suggestions have also been made including *Mondstein*, *summen* and *Tonwort*. Thus, most possible definitions of the name reflect the sound of the waterfall's echo, a sound which the rock has been famous for since the Middle Ages. The second part of the name, *lei* or *leia*, is said to have the meanings *Fels*, *Felsen* or *Schieferfelsen*.⁵¹

It is befitting that the different authors used different spellings of Lorelei in their works, because the Lorelei rock itself has undergone many spelling changes in history. Several of such spellings include *Lurlenberge*, *Lorleberg*, *Lurley*, *Loyrenberg* and *Lorlei*.⁵²

The Lorelei rock happens to be located at the most dangerous bend along the Rhine River (*Mittelrhein*) with its swift rapids and shallow rocks and

⁵⁰ 'Lorelei.' *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, ed. by Columbia University and Paul Lagasse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), <<http://ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/lorelei/0>> [accessed 12 October 2016].

⁵¹ Dr. Manfred Halfer, 'Loreley: Ein Beitrag zur Namendeutung', *Hansen-Blatt*, 50 (1997) <<http://www.loreleytal.com/hansenorden/hansen-blatt/1997nr50/loreley.htm>> [accessed 10 October 2016], (Para. 4-8); *Ibid.*, (Para. 26-28).

⁵² *Ibid.*, (Para. 11-23).

has caused many sailors' deaths over the centuries.⁵³ With these dangerous features and its natural echo, it has inspired many explanatory tales over the centuries. Back in the 13th century AD the rock was said to be the location of the fabulous mythical *Nibelungen* treasure which was able to bring inexhaustible sources of power to its holder.⁵⁴ Circa 1500 AD Konrad Celtes made mention of ancient tales attributing the echo to cave-dwelling forest deities and the following century Marquard Freher specified forest nymphs and oreads as the culprits.⁵⁵ Throughout the legends no single entity or named individual was attributed to the beautiful and beguiling sound. In *Godwi*, Brentano was the first to personify the echo as Lore Lay, a sad and beautiful sorceress.⁵⁶

Personifying and naming the rock gave the object a certain power and allowed a simpler process of recognition which in turn created the possibility of specific literary connotations and developments. Many other authors drew on this name to create their own distinct and unique versions, notably Eichendorff in *Waldgespräch*, von Loeben in *Loreley: Eine Sage vom Rhein* and Heine in *Die Loreley*. Each author depicted a slightly different character but, in essence, Lorelei was a beautiful woman who brought death to men. The legend of Lorelei became so popular that within a century Niklas Vogt, Schreiber, Simrock and 62 other composers had written Lorelei tales, including non-originally German versions such as Caroline M. Sawyer's *The Lady of Lurlei. A Legend of the Rhine*.⁵⁷ This American rendition shows how the tale had wandered outside of Europe. The wildfire-like spread of the tale can be credited to two things: firstly, the rich combination of the unhappy Undine – a popular figure for Romantic composers – in a distinct realistic location, where her call 'could still be heard'; and secondly, the relatively close-knit group of (Proto-) Romantic

⁵³ 'Lorelei.' *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, ed. by Columbia University and Paul Lagasse (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), <<http://ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/lorelei/0>> [accessed 12 October 2016].

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; World Trade Press, *Germany Society & Culture Complete Report: An All-Inclusive Profile Combining All of Our Society and Culture Reports (2)* (Petaluma, US: World Trade Press, 2010), p. 28.

⁵⁵ Ignace Feuerlicht, 'Heine's "Lorelei": Legend, Literature, Life', *The German Quarterly*, 53(1) (1980), 82-94 (p. 82).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, (p. 82-83).

⁵⁷ Allen Wilson Porterfield, 'Graf von Loeben and the Legend of Lorelei', *Modern Philology*, 13(6) (1915), 305-332 (p. 326); *Ibid.*, (p. 327).

writers which meant they all had an acute awareness of the others' renditions and could build off them.⁵⁸ These days literary Lorelei figures are still being created.⁵⁹

These legends have transformed the Lorelei rock into a major tourist destination which brings in thousands upon thousands of visitors each year. The visitors get a taste of the legends on tour and thus the tale continues to be spread two hundred years after its creative design by Brentano.⁶⁰

This essay focuses on three of the most seminal, if not the three most important, contributions to the Lorelei saga: Clemens Brentano's *Zu Bacharach am Rheine*, Joseph von Eichendorff's *Waldgespräch* and Heinrich Heine's *Die Loreley*. These authors' versions are important due to their artistic quality, uniqueness and popularity. Heinrich Heine's version is in fact so popular and important to German literature, German history and the German feeling of national identity that it credits its own separate mention as an entry in its own right in *The Oxford companion to German literature. Loreley, Die* directly follows *Lorelei* therein and refers specifically to the poem written by Heine and put to music by Silcher – such is its popularity and importance in Germany with practically folksong status.⁶¹ Moreover, despite Heine's Jewish heritage, the song continued to be a part of German folklore under Nazi Germany, but attributed to 'author unknown'.

Brentano and his portrayal of Lore Lay in 'Zu Bacharach am Rheine'

Clemens Brentano was born into a wealthy merchant family in Ehrenbreitstein (near today's Koblenz) in 1778. His grandmother was the

⁵⁸ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 84.

⁵⁹ Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 106.

⁶⁰ World Trade Press, *Germany Society & Culture Complete Report: An All-Inclusive Profile Combining All of Our Society and Culture Reports (2)* (Petaluma, US: World Trade Press, 2010), p. 28.

⁶¹ Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 570.

novelist Sophie von La Roche and his sister the well-known Goethe correspondent, Bettina von Arnim. Brentano's mother died when he was a teenager and his father attempted to steer him in the direction of the family business. However, Brentano's artistic nature led him in the direction of academic institutes and literary groups and he attended Halle and later Jena universities. It was here that he met influential peers (the Schlegel brothers, Fichte, Tieck) and his future wife, Sophie Mereau née Schubart. Not long after finishing university, Brentano published a satire on von Kotzebue's play *Gustav Wasa* and a year later, his romance novel *Godwi* was published. *Godwi* was an important novel for Romanticism due to its structural variance of the characters' playful interactions and its interspersed lyrical poetry.

Brentano's desire to express the revival of a German sense of nationalism led to the important and influential text *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a book of folksongs he and Achim v. Arnim had collected. Brentano's return to a strong Catholic faith in his 30s as a result of unrequited love ultimately caused him to relinquish his creative writings.⁶² He then produced other literary works, notably the unfinished religious poem collection *Romanzen vom Rosenkranz* which was published a decade after his death.⁶³

Brentano was a well-travelled poet and novelist and it has been claimed that nobody knew the Rhine quite like he did.⁶⁴ Although there were local legends involving creatures/spirits said to cause the echo in the Lorelei rock, Brentano was the first to apply the name of the rock to a 'person' and to personify the rock by name. Lore Lay features within the poem *Zu Bacharach am Rheine* in Brentano's 1800-1801 novel *Godwi*. Violette whose love to Godwi is not reciprocated – Godwi chooses her mother instead – sings the song about Lore Lay. The song tells how the spurning of love leads to devastation and loss all around. Thus it is an exaggerated emotional expression of Violette's traumatic experience. Although the Lore Lay character can be thought of as an adaption and amalgamation of various similar figures throughout historical tales, it brings a new element

⁶² Ibid., p. 112.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁴ Allen Wilson Porterfield, 'Graf von Loeben and the Legend of Lorelei', *Modern Philology*, 13(6) (1915), 305-332 (p. 313).

to mythology. The poem's name later became edited to *Lureley* and Brentano's produced a follow up Lorelei figure in his 1846 *Die Mährchen vom Rhein*.⁶⁵

Zu Bacharach am Rheine tells the story of a beautiful and fine sorceress who captures the hearts of any man who lays eyes upon her beauty. She feels cursed by her uncontrollable power to enthrall the male population and begs the local bishop to have mercy on her. Despite being a man of God, even he cannot escape her spell and he asks three knights to take her to an abbey to let her live out her days as a nun. As they are riding to the abbey, Lore Lay asks the knights if she may view her one true love's castle one last time. She climbs the cliff to get a good view of it and spots instead a small ship in the waters below which she insists must be her love's ship. In an effort to lay her eyes on him, she leans further and further over the edge of the cliff and falls off the edge down into the Rhine River below. The knights follow her to their own doom.

The poem, which has the form of a ballad, is similar in content and narrative structure to that of a saga or legendary tale. It is inspired by feelings of patriotism (*Rheinpatriotismus*) and includes Christian motifs and the Romantic notions of experience of emotion and feeling. It is through these feelings of mourning, sorrow and heartache over the loss of love, that the concepts within are to be understood.

Brentano's portrayal of Lore Lay is analysed in this essay under the following headings:

- as a sorceress, which includes her physical beauty and its connection to magic;
- as a spurned lover, which includes the concept of 'one and only' love;
- as a 'Saviour'.

Sorceress

Upon the immediate establishment of location, the first quatrain labels the protagonist (later stated to be Lore Lay) first and foremost a sorceress, goes on to add her beauty and fineness and finishes with the attraction

⁶⁵ Ibid., (p. 330).

this holds over men's hearts. A key idea which can be drawn from this is the perception that seduction has a magical element. Lore's seduction goes hand in hand with her being a beautiful and fine sorceress as opposed to a beautiful and fine commoner – the bishop's referral to her simply as Lore with the surname Lay gives the impression that she is merely a common girl. This idea was widely held in the previous centuries in relation to witchcraft. Women were thought to have 'insatiable carnal lust' and sorceresses had the magic and therefore the power (together with the quenchless desire) to dupe and lure men in.⁶⁶ Witchcraft is closely associated with religion, as powers are said to have come from a pact with the devil, God's antagonist. Lore Lay's burning eyes invoke these images of a fiery possession by a demon and Lore Lay herself is aware of her demonic powers and longs to be redeemed in death. Despite these connections to hell, even the 'geistliche Gewalt' is incapable of condemning Lore Lay to her desired 'Flammentod'.

Besides Lore Lay's generic state being described as 'schön' and 'traurig', predicate adjective pairs are used to describe Lore Lay's beauty: 'schön und fein(e)⁶⁷', 'sanft und wild(e)', 'rot und weiß', 'still und mild(e)'. These pairs include the contrasting pair *sanft* versus *wilde* to show Brentano's idea of the 'double nature' of the female, who, in traditional Christian discourses, was often simultaneously regarded as both 'good' and 'bad', as well as complementary ones. *Schön* and *feine* and *still* and *milde* enhance the image and the supposed anthropological dichotomy described.

Spurned lover

The beautiful Lore is miserable because her love has abandoned her. She highlights the theme of 'one and only' love, when she says: 'Denn alles muss verschwinden, Weil er nicht bei mir ist', where *er* refers to her first and only love, her *Schatz*. According to Theweleit, the concept of 'one and only' love assumed more prominence in the 16th and 17th centuries than in the Middle Ages and in its literary renderings, if nothing else, often

⁶⁶ Kramer and Sprenger, as cited in Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 126, Para. 2.

⁶⁷ the extra atavistic 'e' is present in the original, as it helps with rhythm.

surprisingly resulted in an inner rift and blurred lines between reality and illusion rather than the presupposed creation of more intimacy.⁶⁸ This blurring of lines is fatal for Lore, who confuses reality and illusion by convincing herself that the man in the ship below 'muss ihr Liebster sein' [emphasis added], when in fact a moment before, it was only 'soll'. Another interpretation of Lore's death is offered up by Anna Stuby. She sees Lore's death as a 'geplanter und beherzter Todessprung', an attempt to win back something of her inability to make decisions of her own accord and in this way claims that Lore's suicide can be seen as a feminist act of heroism with her courage and strength highlighted by the depth of her fall.⁶⁹ Regardless of explanation, both life and death are chained to either real or made up versions of love and connect back to the 'one-and-only' concept.⁷⁰

Lore's attraction is presumed to be the result of her having been spurned by her lover and, apart from herself, it ensnares everyone 'der meine [ihre] Augen sieht'. Her seeing her own image fills her with despair, 'Vor Schmerzen möcht' ich sterben, Wenn ich mein Bildnis seh'. It could be claimed that this foreshadows her death, as her death is preceded by Lore gazing down into the Rhine River. The water may well have acted as a mirror and reflected her image back onto herself. Lore does not behold herself as beautiful and it is certainly no new idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Theweleit submits that the sexualisation of bourgeois women in the 17th and 18th centuries led to beauty having severe constraints. A woman required a man in order to be beautiful, because it was he who determined if she was or was not beautiful – a woman's goal in life was to please a man, because it was only this which could lead to a fulfilled life.⁷¹ Lore shows how she shares this paradigm in that she does not feel her life is worth living without her *Schatz*. She requires his

⁶⁸ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 328-329.

⁶⁹ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 187, Para. 9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 187-188.

⁷¹ Klaus Theweleit, *Male fantasies: women, floods, bodies, history*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 334.

approval to feel valued and needs her love for him to be validated. With the loss of him to a distant land, she feels she should not live.

Not only is Lore spurned by her lover, she also spurns those attracted to her. She is therefore not just a victim of unrequited love, but also a perpetrator of this common Romantic theme. She is so fixed on her 'one and only' *Schatz* that she does not think to look at the other potential suitors. She 'lieb[t] keinen mehr' and neither encourages the new admirers nor attempts to enhance her beauty in any way in order to please them. By connecting 'female attractiveness' to the realm of dark magic and constructing male desire as an act of victimisation, Brentano's narrative conceals and exonerates the male-dominated social and political dimensions of gender relations.

Saviour

Lore Lay is not only portrayed as a beautiful common girl, as a witch and as a spurned lover, she is also portrayed as a religious figure. As previously mentioned, religion and witchcraft were closely connected in pre- and early modernity. In addition, due to similarities in practice, sometimes distinctions between the two blurred. According to Levack, the main differences between these were that religion was considered beneficial and was practised communally with a higher power being in control of possible, potentially delayed, results, while witchcraft was a harm inducing practice directly controlled by individuals who made immediate changes to the course of events.⁷² The bishop's referral to Lore's seductive powers as 'böser Zauberei' is overstated and comes from the position of a male-dominated institutionalised religion. Lore neither manipulates nor enjoys the attentions of the men; in fact, she despairs at the pain she causes men and thus she too views herself as a victim of her own beauty.

Although Brentano's Lore is personified as a 'demonic beauty', her own Christian soul is still intact deep inside and she is hopeful for salvation in a *Flammentod* which would purge the 'evil' inside her. However, the Bishop

⁷² Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 4-5.

denies her this and instead offers her salvation in that her soul can be cleansed by her becoming a nun. Whether deliberate or accidental, Lore's early death makes this impossible.

Prior to her demise, Lore Lay alludes to Christ to describe her situation. She insinuates that only through her death can men once again be able to find peace. Her death can be said to save the men, who would otherwise have to 'verderben' and for whom there is 'keine Rettung mehr'. The reader may feel sorry for Lore Lay. She is incapable of controlling her magic spell; her initial desire to be freed of her curse is not granted and her bright cheeks, 'rot und weiß', are to be turned into the dull 'schwarz und weiß' of a nun. However, the reader may equally not feel sorry for Lore Lay. Lore's desire to sacrifice herself can be said to be the result of her internalising the man's guilt. In this sense, it is Lore herself who brings about her own pain.

Adding to the motif of Saviour are three *Ritter*. These figures enhance the medieval feel of the poem whilst at the same time transferring the notions of honour and valour and saviour from Lore onto themselves. This is however in vain. They do not succeed in their mission and in fact die an unchristian death along with Lore Lay. The knights' appearance elicits an image of men clad in armour and can be said to be representative of the contrast between nature and civilisation and by extension nature and culture.⁷³

In summary, Brentano's Lore Lay's portrayal as these many figures depicts notions of Romantic inner conflict, religious inner torment and demonic self-destruction through her experiences of unrequited love, her desire to take her own life due to the pain she is causing the men around her and her recklessly throwing her supernatural self off the cliff to the deadly rocks below.

⁷³ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 192.

Eichendorff and his portrayal of Loreley in 'Waldgespräch'

Joseph von Eichendorff was born to a noble family in Łubowice Palace in Silesia, Prussia (Poland today) in 1788. He was educated on the private estate by tutors and spent his free time wandering through the tree covered countryside. He was born into a heavily religious family and was a devout Catholic his whole life. As a thirteen-year-old, he and his older brother were sent to Breslau Gymnasium and his later education took place at Halle and Heidelberg Universities. This swap in university was caused by Napoleon's seizure of Halle. As for many young men of his generation, the Napoleonic Wars fuelled Eichendorff's interest in patriotic literature and sentiments. After graduating university, Eichendorff visited major German-speaking cities and eventually studied in Vienna to be a civil servant. He subsequently volunteered to join the armed forces and served during the Napoleonic Wars in the campaigns 1813, 1814 and 1815 to 1816. He then worked as a civil servant and was shifted around the country with various promotions from 1816 to 1824. Arguably his most famous work, the novella, *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts*, was produced in 1826. He retired early in 1844 in Berlin due to health reasons and spent the remaining 13 years of his life in various European cities.⁷⁴

Eichendorff's free-roaming childhood is evidenced in his works through his portrayal of landscapes, as is his heartfelt faith with its religious symbolism. His poetry is often joy filled and talks of a hard-won struggle with rhythm and mood playing important roles in his works. He is considered one of Germany's greatest lyricists.⁷⁵

Many of Eichendorff's works contain multitudes of poems and this is where *Loreley* first surfaced. The poem *Loreley*, or *Waldgespräch* as it's more commonly known, was originally published in *Ahnung und Gegenwart*. The novel *Ahnung und Gegenwart* was composed in 1811, but not published until 1815, the years between Eichendorff's services in the military. Eichendorff had many inspirations for his work: Görres, whose late medieval German tales he'd especially made himself available for by

⁷⁴ Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 195; *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

finishing his law readings in the early hours of the morning; von Loeben and the folk poetry in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*; Brentano's ballad *Zu Bacharach am Rheine* which he had direct knowledge of; and of course, the discord in the world around him, i.e. Napoleon and the turmoil in European politics and culture.⁷⁶ In addition, his strong religious views formed his foundation of thought and he believed religion to be the foundation on which a nation should be built, 'weil ja die religiösen Gefühle und Überzeugungen überall das geheimnisvolle Senfkorn sind, aus dem die Gesamtbildung einer Nation emportreibt'.⁷⁷ With this in mind, Riley states that Eichendorff's message within *Ahnung und Gegenwart* is how a country or nation is incapable of having healthy politics, art or literature without a healthy ecclesiastical existence.⁷⁸ Therefore, whilst maintaining the Romantic image of nature, major underlying themes within the novel are religion based.

Given this strength of religious expression as a whole within the text and within Eichendorff's beliefs, Christian elements and symbolism in particular will be highlighted in this analysis of *Waldgespräch*. The following sections include the portrayal of Loreley:

- as a demonic witch, which includes nature being portrayed as requiring *Erlösung* in Eichendorff's Christian reading;
- as an embodiment of pagan nature, which includes the role of setting in the moral take-away;
- and as a two-faced/changeable creature, which includes the transfer of power between characters.

⁷⁶ Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 195; Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 93; Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 85.

⁷⁷ Joseph Eichendorff and Wilhelm Kosch, *Geschichte Der Poetischen Literatur Deutschlands* (Kempton: Kösel, 1906), p. 507.

⁷⁸ Thomas A. Riley, 'An Allegorical Interpretation of Eichendorff's "Ahnung und Gegenwart"', *The Modern Language Review*, 54(2) (Apr. 1959), 204-213 (p. 205).

Witch

Loreley is referred to directly as *die Hexe Loreley*, almost as if *Hexe* were such an integral part of her that it's her first name. The use of the word *die* also indicates to the reader how well known and how terrible she must have been. Her notoriety must have travelled far and wide for the passer-by to know who she is with little more than the nudging 'o flieh! Du weißt nicht, wer ich bin'.

In Eichendorff's poem there is the impression that Loreley is somehow being coerced into her behaviour. The idea that a witch is unable to control her own nature is one of the traditional ideas in witchcraft. Peter Lentwojt sums this up nicely: 'Auch wenn es ihr möglicherweise leid tut – sie warnt ihr männliches Gegenüber ja noch vor ihrem verderblichen Einfluß und rät ihm, zu fliehen – kann sie doch nicht gegen ihre Natur handeln und muß zwanghaft ihre Rolle zu Ende spielen.'⁷⁹

In the world in which we currently live, there is a distinction between murder and manslaughter where malice and voluntary intention offer the key distinctions between the killing types.⁸⁰ One such way of determining guilt is by motivation. Unless Loreley is a power-hungry dictator who kills anyone who does not do what they are told immediately, this poem does not offer a distinct motive to kill. She suffers pain from, presumably, her love's deceit. However, no voluntary malice appears to exist. In saying this, Loreley equally does not ask to be redeemed from her condition. As a symbol of nature, Eichendorff is suggesting that she, although she is more in need than anyone else, is not looking for *Erlösung* and presents nature in a different way from other works where nature is portrayed as *unerlösbar*.⁸¹ Because it is not a voluntary action on Loreley's part, she

⁷⁹ Peter Lentwojt, *Die Loreley in ihrer Landschaft: Romantische Dichtungsallegorie und Klischee - Ein literarisches Sujet bei Brentano, Eichendorff, Heine und anderen* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), p. 240.

⁸⁰ Legal Information Institute, *Murder* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Law School, 2009) <<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/murder>> [accessed 6 June 2016]; Legal Information Institute, *Manslaughter* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Law School, 2009) <<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/manslaughter>> [accessed 6 June 2016].

⁸¹ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 82, Para. 5.

can legally be considered free of guilt for this felony, but, on a deeper, metaphysical, level, she remains the dangerous epitome of 'fallenness'.

Loreley can be said to be behaving in a manner forced on her by her nature and is incapable of controlling it. This stands in contrast to the man, who, at least at the beginning, has a choice. He had a choice to go walking in this forest and had a choice as to whether or not he let himself be drawn into her gravitational field. Once he gets too close, he becomes ensnared and unable thereafter to escape. This ultimately results in his doom, but there was an element of choice initially. Loreley metaphorically connects her intoxicating beauty with the man's death on the silent bed of the forest floor – she stands for the imminent doom of the man's ego into the night and nature if he decides to cave in to the temptation of a seductress.⁸² A message from Eichendorff in this regard could be that each step you take in the wrong direction moves you further from the true path and pretty soon there may be no going back. Ever. As such, it is best to remain devoted to your culture and faith and not to lose yourself in the world of nature and temptation.

Embodied nature

The title *Waldgespräch* reveals the location prior to the beginning of the poem. However, the title make the setting seem innocent, almost as though it were the trees whispering to each other by way of the wind. This image is abolished immediately with the start of the poem, and replaced with a bleaker canvass: 'Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt'. The setting is thus a cold forest just after dusk and creates a foreboding mood for what will follow. This temporal setting carries other connotations through the motif in Romanticism, *Nacht*, which will be discussed in a later section. The forest is a metaphor for wilderness, nature and eros. Although 'Wald' denotes 'ein großes Gebiet, auf dem viele Bäume relativ dicht beieinander wachsen',⁸³ which implies danger and where one can neither see, nor

⁸² Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 117-122).

⁸³ "Wald", *TheFreeDictionary.com Deutsches Wörterbuch*. ([n.p.]: Farlex and partners, 2009) <<http://de.thefreedictionary.com/Wald>> [accessed 5 May 2016], Para. 1.

hear anything properly, it is also a secluded region, a place of retreat from civilisation. The forest can therefore be seen to act as an alternate setting, a symbol of nature, contrasting with a town, city or even a building, all of which can be symbolic of culture. Moreover, as Bernsmeier points out, the forest is 'wo das Mythische seinen Ursprung hat, wo die verführerischen heidnischen Gottheiten wohnen, die den falschen Weg weisen.'⁸⁴ By this reckoning, the fact the man is in the forest now shows his already having strayed from the right and true path. Thus Loreley, i.e. temptation, only has the ability to entice or enthrall a person once he has previously begun his journey down the wrong path. However, despite a loss of control, faith or 'morals', those tempted do not necessarily get lost in the Eichendorff's demonic *Naturnacht*; just those who aren't on their guard: 'Manches bleibt in Nacht verloren, Hüte dich, bleib' wach und munter!'⁸⁵

In the 19th century, there were realistic fears associated with amorous relationships outside of marriage. More serious consequences could occur back then, for example, contracting a sexually transmitted disease or causing an unwanted pregnancy which would bring with it life-long financial and personal obligations on the part of the man. Thus temptation explored could have dire consequences. This is indeed the case for the man in *Waldgespräch*, who loses himself to Loreley forever.

The theme of mythical and heathenistic nature, as symbolised by Loreley, is juxtaposed with the transmitter of culture, the male, in this poem where pagan nature has the last laugh.

Two-faced/Changeable creature

At the beginning, the man shows an initial feeling of sympathy for the lone woman rider in the darkening and potential dangerous place. This feeling is added to as she shares her sorrows and past experiences with men. However, the end of the second verse suddenly poses an important rhetorical question to the man, 'Du weißt nicht, wer ich bin'. This feels

⁸⁴ Helmut Bernsmeier, *Literaturwissen Joseph von Eichendorff* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2000), p. 128.

⁸⁵ Joseph von Eichendorff, *Eichendorff, Werke in einem Band* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1995) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/joseph-von-eichendorff-gedichte-4294/105>> [accessed 10 December 2016].

somewhat sinister as it follows 'o flieh!' and implies he is currently in more danger than she is and foreshadows his future. The reader at this point is also wondering who she could be. The man slowly pieces together who she is but by the time he has determined she is *die Hexe Lorelei*, it is already too late for him and he is stuck in her web. In Loreley's final sentence, she turns his initial words back on him: 'es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt; kommst nimmermehr aus diesem Wald'. This shows the shift in power which has occurred and with it the change of roles. At the start it is the man who is saying, 'Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt', and who wishes to show his dominance to the 'Braut': 'Ich führ dich heim!' But in the end, Loreley has the final say. By the final stage most readers' feelings of sympathy have transferred onto the male. The ending is left open as to whether or not Loreley immediately kills him or if she just has some form of gravitational pull over him meaning he will forever remain lost within the forest, just as ships go missing in the Bermuda Triangle.

The man's offer to take Loreley home at the beginning of the poem could be interpreted in two different ways. It may be a chivalrous, gentlemanly offer to escort her – she is a lone female out in the forest as night-time nears – to the safety of her home. Or as Alexander von Bormann points out, it may be his expression of wanting to take control of her. It is after all not a question, but a hard and fast statement, verging on a command.⁸⁶

Similar to traditional Christian notions of nature, Loreley presents two different sides of her 'personality' in this poem. At the beginning, the witch Loreley, a form of fallen nature, voices a warning imploring the man to leave; however, once the man has identified her, she takes this demonisation of herself on board and presents herself as a threat.⁸⁷ In this way, Eichendorff encompasses within his Loreley character both of the different aspects of female 'nature' which Paracelsus found represented by *Wasserfrauen*: the positive aspects of Undine and the negative aspects

⁸⁶ Alexander von Bormann, "Das zertrümmerte Alte" Zu Eichendorffs Lorelei-Romanze "Waldgespräch", in *Gedichte und Interpretationen Klassik und Romantik*, ed. by Wulf Segebrecht (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1998), pp. 306-319 (p. 311).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, (p. 311).

of Melusine.⁸⁸ This can be said to show the double natured-ness of a woman.

Eichendorff's *Waldhexe Loreley* is presented within a two-person dialogical *Ballade* mixing the epic, the lyrical and the dramatic. The poem's form is geometrical with two sets of quatrains alternating between the two figures and the man's opening words regarding *spät*, *kalt* and *Wald* from which he offers protection forming the witch's closing words which instead offer destruction.

Heine and his portrayal of Loreley in 'Die Loreley'

Heinrich Heine (born Harry) was born to Jewish parents in Düsseldorf in 1797 and was educated at the local Lyceum. After failing at running his own business in Hamburg, he studied at various universities and graduated in Berlin with a degree in Law. Due to anti-Semitism, Heine converted to Lutheranism in an attempt to enhance his chances of employment and recognition as a writer. This was unsuccessful and he supported himself with his writings. As a 34 year-old, Heine moved to Paris and continued to write. Around this time, he started showing symptoms of an illness which later paralysed him. Bedridden for his final eight years of life he continued to write and publish until his death in 1856. Heine was married to a French woman in 1841 though there is much speculation regarding possible incestuous love.⁸⁹

At the time of Heine's birth and schooling, Düsseldorf was under French occupation and the city later became part of the Kingdom of Prussia. Napoleon was defeated in 1815 and his political era which had set out to spread the ideas of the French Revolution but had ended in a reactionary dictatorship had dissolved. Following the Napoleonic Wars, the political settlement of the Vienna Congress spelt the end of democratic and constitutional republican possibilities in Prussia and evoked Heine's fierce

⁸⁸ Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 131).

⁸⁹ Cengage Learning Gale, *A Study Guide for Heinrich Heine's "The Lorelei"* (Michigan: The Gale Group, 2016), Sect. 2; Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 374-375.

criticism. Heine also wrote criticisms of German mentalities and the political and cultural authoritarian leaders in German-speaking Europe and his works were banned for a time.⁹⁰ Poets like Heine felt an acute change at the time and were uncertain as to what the future would hold. Heine used irony and self-deprecating humour to express this tumultuous and disenchanting plight of 19th century poets.⁹¹ In addition to being influenced by this historical backdrop, Heine took inspiration from his teacher, Hegel, and his acquaintance, Karl Marx, regarding the history of ideas and socio-economic developments. Despite his keen interest in modern social theories and politics, part of Heine remained a romantic dreamer at heart, resulting in a tension he himself was keenly aware of.

Heine's most famous work is in fact the lyric poem '*Die Loreley*'. Its popularity can be attributed to both its *Lied* form and to Heine's mastery of aspects of Romanticism: its tropes and forms as well as its content, i.e., making nature a seductive attraction.⁹² *Die Loreley* was written in 1823 and published in his 1827 *Buch der Lieder*. The poem, or rather, the song, has aptly been set to music in more than 3000 compositions.⁹³

Heine was aware of various versions of Lorelei prior to creating his own and we can therefore consider the versions of Brentano, Eichendorff, von Loeben and Schreiber as influential factors.⁹⁴ Another possible influence on his poem may have been from his supposed incestuous love for his first cousin, Amalie. Loreley shares Amalie's blonde hair and fine features.⁹⁵ Amalie had married another man and this may have traumatised Heine and caused a resentful attitude and contempt for

⁹⁰ Cengage Learning Gale, *A Study Guide for Heinrich Heine's "The Lorelei"* (Michigan: The Gale Group, 2016), Sect. 2; Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 375.

⁹¹ Stephen Cushman and Clare Cavanagh, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th edn (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 565.

⁹² Ibid., p. 565; Theodor Karst, "'Ich Weiß Nicht, Was Soll Es Bedeuten.'" Heines Loreley: Gedicht Und Seine Vorläufer Im Unterricht', *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German*, 1 (1968), 36-53 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3529041>> [accessed 18 May 2016] (p. 37).

⁹³ 'Heinrich Heine', *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, 6th edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) <<http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/people/heine-heinrich.html>> [accessed 12 November 2016].

⁹⁴ Allen Wilson Porterfield, 'Graf von Loeben and the Legend of Lorelei', *Modern Philology*, 13(6) (1915), 305-332 (p. 317); Ibid., (p. 321); Ibid., (p. 326).

⁹⁵ Nathan Roth, 'The porphyria of Heinrich Heine', *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 10(2) (1978), 90-106, (p. 101).

humanity.⁹⁶ Heine's Loreley poem may have served to assuage his sorrows, be they sexual, marital, health-wise or political.⁹⁷ The emphasis Heine places on suffering and loneliness links him to other late Romantics, such as Byron.

Die Loreley is the second poem in the cycle of 'Heimkehr' poems in *Buch der Lieder*. The first poem, i.e. the one immediately prior, tells of a child enveloped by the darkness of night who sings a song which should rescue him from his fear. This is when the Loreley tale is sung. The poem following has a sad atmosphere and ends with a death wish. This context highlights the irony within the Loreley tale and can also be said to enhance the religious elements within the Loreley tale.⁹⁸

Heine's *Die Loreley* tells of a narrator's melancholic memory of a tale of a golden-haired maiden sitting atop a rock brushing her hair. The narrator's sadness stems from a sailor's tragic death on the rocks which was presumably caused by the maiden's violent song. The poem's narrative structure and word choices, 'ich weiß nicht', 'ich glaube', 'kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn' are suggestive of a memory or dream and the first-person narrator invites identification on the part of the reader. The specific elements analysed here regarding Heine's portrayal of Loreley are:

- as a mythical beauty, which includes Heine's irony;
- as a religious allegory and social metaphor;
- as a farewell tribute to Romanticism.

Mythical beauty

Heine starts his poem off ironically citing a tale 'aus alten Zeiten', knowing full well that Brentano had created the legend but two decades before, yet placing his legend before Brentano's. His irony continues as he uses present tense to tell the 'old' tale within a tale, which, given its non-specific aspects relating to time and event, has a myth-like feel to it. There is a

⁹⁶ Ibid., (p. 99).

⁹⁷ Ibid., (p. 104).

⁹⁸ Sven Hanuschek, 'Heinrich Heine, *Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten* (Lore-Ley, 1823/24). Eine Einführung', in *Orte kultureller Erinnerung: Die Loreley*, ed. by Jutta Assel and Georg Jäger, ([n.p.]: Goethezeitportal, 2016), pp. 12-20 <<http://www.goethezeitportal.de/wissen/topographische-ansichten/orte-kultureller-erinnerung-die-loreley.html>> [accessed 12 August 2016], p. 16, Para. 2.

singular occurrence to an individual which takes place at an unspecified point in the past. The mythical mood gives Loreley an archetypal air. The description of the setting immediately prior to her introduction acts as another backdrop. The gorgeously described landscapes project an enhanced atmosphere of beauty onto Loreley. She is 'die schönste Jungfrau' who has golden hair and possesses a golden comb and golden jewellery. These golden elements show her wealth and the specified items highlight her femininity. Heine's description of Loreley's appeal is not confined to the visualisation of attractive feminine and social aspects, but extends also to the sense of hearing. She is singing a song and it is her voice which enchants the sailor and makes him oblivious to the dangers of the nearby cliffs. Just as the landscape beautifully sets the scene and enhances Loreley's physical beauty, the song-like rhythm of the poem enhances this aural aspect of engagement. With her voice playing such an important role, Loreley alludes to images of sirens, such as those in Homer's *Odyssey*. The combination of the myth-like atmosphere and all-ensnaring beauty can similarly be thought of as an amalgamation of the characters of Echo and Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* – Heine's Loreley seems vain given her golden items and her brushing her hair, presumably into the reflection of the river. Moreover, this tale of vanity, seduction and perishability shares elements with the biblical tale of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Religious allegory and social metaphor

Napoleon's defeat in 1815 resulted in the discontinuation of equal rights to Jews and it was during this time that Heine wrote *Die Loreley*.⁹⁹ Heine felt alienated from mainstream 'German Christian' society and in this light, his poem can be representative of the segregation and suspicion of Jews at the time, or even of him as a politically active Jew specifically.¹⁰⁰ Within

⁹⁹ Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 117.

¹⁰⁰ Sven Hanuschek, 'Heinrich Heine, *Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten* (Lore-Ley, 1823/24). Eine Einführung', in *Orte kultureller Erinnerung: Die Loreley*, ed. by Jutta Assel and Georg Jäger, ([n.p.]: Goethezeitportal, 2016), pp. 12-20 <<http://www.goethezeitportal.de/wissen/topographische-ansichten/orte-kultureller-erinnerung-die-loreley.html>> [accessed 12 August 2016], p. 15, Para. 3.

this allegory the golden haired maiden is representative of native 'Germans' who somewhat obliviously cause destruction to Jews. The Jews, like the boatsman, are staring up at the Germans, wanting equality but not being given a chance to assimilate – the song entrals the sailor from the very beginning.¹⁰¹ Although Loreley is presumably looking down into the water which could act as a mirror into one's own soul, tragically she sees only outer beauty.

This symbolism can similarly be extended to a wider audience and be said to represent society on an economic rather than a religious plane. Heine's poem portrays Loreley as a woman of high social standing and shows a rift between the lower man and the higher woman. This is shown through Heine's use of spatial relationships. Loreley sits 'dort oben [on the mountain peak] wunderbar' whilst the sailor 'schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'. Furthermore, Loreley's various golden possessions and features emphasize her wealth and status. Gold was the most precious metal of the time and this, combined with the superlative 'schönste', shows how wealth and beauty go hand-in-hand to portray the desired idol. This clearly portrays a man's fantasy. It is a male narrator's retelling of the *Märchen* and his sadness can be attributed to the woman with so much feminine promise crushing the lower stationed. Her being portrayed in such a high light emphasises why his melancholia should be so deep.

Heine's use of a questioning narrator ('ich weiß nicht...'; 'ich glaube') to recount the tale highlights the concept of reality versus perception and the danger of illusion.¹⁰² Loreley stands for an imagined beauty contrasting with the mundane day-to-day boatsman. She comes from a well-off harmonious and serene world whilst the sailor has to cope with danger and uncertainty. He whose dreams are preoccupied by the world of greatness and beauty will ultimately fail in the real, harsh world.

Just as Heine can be said to be personifying 'the Germans' as Loreley, he can also be said to be personifying the German people as the sailor. They

¹⁰¹ Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 132-133.

¹⁰² Ignace Feuerlicht, 'Heine's "Lorelei": Legend, Literature, Life', *The German Quarterly*, 53(1) (1980), 82-94 (p. 90).

were so distracted by their love of emotion and myth and deviance from logic that they ended up drowning in the political upheavals of the times.¹⁰³

Farewell tribute to Romanticism

Poets of the time were unaware their works would later be grouped together under the title of Romanticism. They were also unaware of when their literary era would come to an end. Although Heine may not have intended this, his portrayal of Loreley can be seen as a farewell tribute to Romanticism. Romanticism often used elements of medieval tales and transformed nature and emotion in a poetic fashion. In Heine's rendition, he includes all four natural elements of nature to provide the setting for the 'Märchen aus alten Zeiten'. The elements of earth, fire, wind and water are represented by 'der Gipfel des Berges', 'Abendsonnenschein', 'die Luft' and 'der Rhein' respectively. This use of backdrop with the accompanying adjectives and verbs adds to the emotions and moods. Heine's backdrop of nature differs from other Romantic authors' depictions of blue sky and green forests and meadows in that it is not used for harmony or to represent the organic health of nature.¹⁰⁴ Heine instead can be said to use it to paint the transition of one poetic period to the next. The darkening air with the quietly flowing river, representative of time passing by, and the final rays of light from the setting sun provide a soothing ambience for a farewell. This coupled with Heine's narrator's reflection upon his own state of feelings highlights the balance between feelings and knowledge and dreams and reality and transitions beautifully from the era of Romanticism to that of Realism.¹⁰⁵

Heine's poem acts as an echo on the other Loreley poems already circulating at the time and could even be seen as a potential echo back onto mermaids such as those by Fouqué and Goethe (*Der Fischer*). Within

¹⁰³ Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 112.

¹⁰⁴ Harry Steinhauer, as cited in Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ Theodor Karst, "Ich Weiß Nicht, Was Soll Es Bedeuten." Heines Loreley: Gedicht Und Seine Vorläufer Im Unterricht', *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German*, 1 (1968), 36-53 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3529041>> [accessed 18 May 2016] (p. 49).

his own poem there is the sense of multiple echoes with 'ich glaube' echoing back onto 'ich weiß nicht', the term 'gold' being repeated and the action of brushing being repeated.¹⁰⁶

Heine's portrayal of Loreley can also be read as an analysis of Heine's relationship to Christianity, to Judaism and to Romanticism. His poem includes a mythical picture of an archetypal creature in an objective landscape which is being reflected upon with subjective sadness by a narrator. It is a Romantic poem, but there is a painful sweet tone in the sense it acts as a goodbye to the feelings of unity of Romanticism which may well be a poetic construction or dream in the first place. Hovering between 'romantische Ballade', encrypted political critique, 'Volkslied', mythological retelling and Romantic irony of Romanticism, Heine's poem can be considered the height and endpoint of Lorelei's saga.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Sven Hanuschek, 'Heinrich Heine, *Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten* (Lore-Ley, 1823/24). Eine Einführung', in *Orte kultureller Erinnerung: Die Loreley*, ed. by Jutta Assel and Georg Jäger, ([n.p.]: Goethezeitportal, 2016), pp. 12-20 <<http://www.goethezeitportal.de/wissen/topographische-ansichten/orte-kultureller-erinnerung-die-loreley.html>> [accessed 12 August 2016], p. 16, Para. 6.

¹⁰⁷ Theodor Karst, "'Ich Weiß Nicht, Was Soll Es Bedeuten.'" Heines Loreley: Gedicht Und Seine Vorläufer Im Unterricht', *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German*, 1 (1968), 36-53 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3529041>> [accessed 18 May 2016] (p. 48).

Comparisons

Authors' historical backgrounds

Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine were born approximately a decade apart and similarly produced their initial Lorelei figures a decade apart. They were therefore all in their early to mid-twenties at the time of their initial writings. Their works followed in the footsteps of the early German Romantics, Tieck and Novalis, and interestingly enough they had contact with one another at various different points in their lives.¹⁰⁸ They were all affected by the Napoleonic wars and can be, in my opinion, regarded as a team in terms of putting together the Lorelei figure known and loved so much today. Each of the later versions brought something new, but to a certain extent fed off the last. With Brentano's creation, Eichendorff's exemplification of the German Romantic revival of the folk-song tradition and Heine's wide distribution caused by its popularity, the three authors each played seminal roles in the generation and distribution of the Lorelei saga and the Lorelei discourse.¹⁰⁹

Although Brentano didn't create the legend completely from scratch, it was he who gave the rock within the Rhine River the singular Lorelei identity. The Rhine was to become a place of huge import and significance to the German speaking people. Without any natural borders around the German speaking people, rivers played an important role in geographical constructions of nationhood. Since the Middle Ages, the Rhine had been of particular contention amongst the Germans and the French. The French saw the Rhine as the border between countries while the Germans saw Father Rhine as flowing *through* the Fatherland, i.e. that German territory existed on both sides of the Rhine. Many cultural historians deem forests to have been the quintessential emblem of German identity prior to Romanticism. However, the political events of the time of Romanticism

¹⁰⁸ Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 103; *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁹ György Lukács, *German Realists in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), p. 56.

were influential in changing the importance of nature symbolism and transferring the symbol of 'national consciousness' onto the Rhine.¹¹⁰

Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine all belonged to the movement known as *Rheinromantik* which depicted the magnificent scenery of the Rhine and its medieval ruins and the authors bestowed upon these landscapes new meanings. They glorified the river's natural beauty connecting it to the mythological origins of the German nation. This geographical location became an area around which the Germans could metaphorically come together – they had a less centralised political system than France at the time. Heine, for example, who had exiled himself to France, continued to cherish Romantic images of the Rhine until his death, possibly from contextualising the Rhine as his linguistic and cultural home amidst the *Heimatverlust* he had endured.¹¹¹ The Lorelei figures were an important symbol of *Rheinromantik* which, together with other works such as *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, can be considered hugely influential, if not instrumental, in the rise of nationalist ideologies. Bismarck himself sang praises for Heine's version of Loreley, saying, 'daß Heine ein Liederdichter ist, neben dem nur Goethe genannt werden darf, und daß das Lied gerade eine spezifisch deutsche Dichtungsform ist'.¹¹²

Tales

Brentano writes a ballad about a medieval tale of a suffering sorceress who distraughtly throws herself into the Rhine over a faithless lover and is transformed into a siren who lures sailors to their deaths on the rocks. Eichendorff describes a dramatic scene about a wealthy witch riding a

¹¹⁰ Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 2004) <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/waikato/docDetail.action?docID=10328794>> [accessed 12 September 2016], p. 9.

¹¹¹ Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 113-118.

¹¹² Fritz Martini, as cited in Theodor Karst, "Ich Weiß Nicht, Was Soll Es Bedeuten." Heines Loreley: Gedicht Und Seine Vorläufer Im Unterricht', *Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German*, 1 (1968), 36-53 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/3529041>> [accessed 18 May 2016] (p. 36, Para.1).

horse through a forest at night. Heine composes a song in which a fairy tale details a nymph spending a fine evening atop a rock brushing her long golden hair singing to herself. These three female protagonists all seduce and harm men in various ways. Within the tales themselves, the different authors set their poems in different locations and use different styles and techniques to bring across their ideas. Whilst not being part of Lorelei's portrayal per se, these backdrops and techniques heavily influence the ideas which come out in the portrayal of Lorelei as well as enhance or change possible interpretations and their validities. This next section briefly compares these influential elements before examining the authors' direct portrayals of Lorelei.

Poetic techniques

In terms of narrative tense, Brentano opts for the simple past. This has a paradoxical effect: whilst distancing the reader from the event, his use of past tense simultaneously makes the story more realistic, as if it really happened a long time ago. Heine on the other hand uses a different technique to distance the readers from his Loreley fairy tale. He makes use of a somewhat invasive first person narrator who interrupts the flow of the *Märchen* and who offers his own uncertain thoughts to the tale. In contrast to Brentano's version, Heine's tale is told in the present tense, both the outer frame with the 'ich' narrator, and the inner picture, the tale of Loreley. This gives Heine's version a sense of immediacy, of the here and now, almost as if the ideas within occur anew each time the tale is told. Eichendorff's dialogue naturally occurs with the characters using the present tense, as they are in the process of interacting with one other. Their conversation includes the use of first and second person pronouns as they communicate information about themselves with each other. Brentano's ballad is told completely as a third person narrative and Heine also makes use of this narrative style in the Loreley section of his song. Heine's inner picture of Loreley contrasts with the outer frame in terms of person (first versus third), style (narrator versus narration) and era (modern-day versus myth). Although these contrasting aspects are co-mingled, Heine also manages to keep them separate. This is done through

his narrative structure. With the exception of quatrains three and four which Heine joins through repetition, each of the other stanzas changes subject. The first and last are the narrator's voice, the second is the background setting and the fifth revolves around the sailor. Eichendorff similarly utilises the stanzas to switch subject and each of his characters gets two quatrains. The speakers alternate and use eight predominantly monosyllabic words in iambic meter. Heine's lines vary between six and nine syllables over the six quatrains and tend to have three notably stressed syllables. Brentano's version is by far the longest. It has 26 quatrains, each with five to seven syllables per line, and he uses a similar meter to Eichendorff. Because his rendition is so much longer, it stands to reason that Brentano has more space to employ different techniques and also repetition. Brentano repeats words such as, 'Flammen', 'Augen', 'Herz', 'Zauber' as well as other phrases. Both Eichendorff and Heine also use repetition of phrases. All three poems rhyme and Brentano and Heine use an ABAB scheme (*Kreuzreim*), whilst Eichendorff chooses AABB (*Paarreim*).

In terms of writing style, Brentano uses inversion for the sake of rhyme, repetition, omission or the shortening of words for the sake of rhythm and overall makes use of 20 exclamation marks! These are incorporated for commands and emphasis. In addition, he includes one rhetorical question at the end. Eichendorff has 6 exclamation marks and it is of interest to note the lack of exclamation mark after the realisation 'Du bist die Hexe, Loreley'. This shows the semi-rhetorical nature of the statement and the incredulity of the male soon-to-be victim. Heine employs inversion to expose doubt, uses repetition for emphasis and to connect verses and although he makes no use of exclamation marks, he employs 3 semi-colons. In typical Heine fashion, his tale balances over-exaggeration with deeply sentimental Romantic notions and this demonstrates how his tale could, or perhaps should, be read both as 'eine tiefe Gefühlsäußerung' and as an ironic piece of work.

Background imagery/setting

Brentano sets his story in two locations more than ten kilometres apart, Bacharach and Loreley rock, and the protagonist goes on a horseback journey between the two. No mention is made as to time of day, but one imagines the events to all occur on the same day. Of the three renditions, Brentano's setting plays the least part within the story. This stands in contrast to the huge significance this geographical location played in his readerships' feelings of patriotism and the role this setting played in inspiring other authors' Lorelei characters. Eichendorff, for example, uses the rock as his witch's usual place of encounter with male victims, most probably her place of residence. He doesn't use this for his setting though, but makes use of an open forest which has a social background as a *Volkslied-Motif* – the forest had implications of the *Holzrecht* and *Wildrecht* farmers had prior to the land's capitalisation in the late 19th century and carried connotations 'als Hort urtümlicher Freiheit'.¹¹³

Heine ties into the original setting of Brentano and uses this as the setting of his entire tale of Loreley – we are not sure where the narrator is narrating from. Isolated areas, such as Eichendorff's forest and Heine's rock in the middle of the Rhine, also serve as settings where potential readers can delve into their own hidden desires away from the prying eyes of the world.

Both Eichendorff and Heine use the temporal setting of dusk turning into night. The *Nacht-Motif* was a popular motif of Romanticism. *Nacht* stands for a different reality as one can experience things on a different sensual and spiritual level in the dark of the night.¹¹⁴ It is a time of sleeping, where death can be seen as an eternal sleep, and of dreaming, where one has the opportunity to get to know one's own soul. Clara Schelling attributes scenes of seduction taking place at night to 'the fusion of the opposed

¹¹³ Alexander von Bormann, "Das zertrümmerte Alte" Zu Eichendorffs Lorelei-Romanze "Waldgespräch", in *Gedichte und Interpretationen Klassik und Romantik*, ed. by Wulf Segebrecht (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1998), pp. 306-319 (p. 314, Para. 2).

¹¹⁴ Birgit Roeder, 'Nachtstücke', in *Encyclopedia of the Romantic Era 1760-1850*, ed. by Christopher John Murray (New York; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004), pp. 374 (p. 374).

poles of light and darkness, [as] a symbol of the desire for conciliation of opposed elements and of the original identity of all things'.¹¹⁵

Brentano's symbolic geographical backdrop, used briefly by Eichendorff, plays the most important role in Heine's version, where it acts as a complex atmosphere-invoking complement to the tale inclusive of the elemental range.

The rock's main reason for its centuries-old widespread fame, its echo, features to varying degrees across the three poems. Brentano's creates a triple echo with his 'Lore Lay! Lore Lay! Lore Lay!' which symbolises either the three knights haunted calls or Lore Lay's restless soul's call from rejected love. Eichendorff includes the echo aspect through Loreley's repetition of her victim's dialogue. In Heine's version, there is a complete lack of communication between figures. The male sailor does not speak and Loreley's singing is not in response to anything. However, Heine himself can be said to create an echo in his poem in the sense that it refers back to Lore Lay, Loreley and other versions. The name was reverberating across Europe, ironically being dramatically changed and adapted each time – she was supposed to be a mythical creature, so how could these authors recreate her from their own fantasies, if their imaginations had not been a kind of echo chamber?

Just as Faust is attributed automatically to Goethe instead of the Faust stories of the 16th century, so is Lorelei attributed to Heine instead of, for example, Brentano's version. Perhaps Heine's version became more famous because the Rhine is more in the centre of the story. While Brentano, who was travelling the Rhine at the time he wrote the poem, used the river and the rock as inspiration, it was Heine who used them as a national symbol of mystery and freedom, appealing to the widespread 19th century German desire to construct a national and cultural identity. Due to the success of this tale, Lorelei has become intrinsically entwined with the rock in the minds of many Germans and the rock is no longer just a rock. These days a national monument of the girl combing her hair atop the rock is a world-famous tourist attraction.

¹¹⁵ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 85, Para. 6.

Lorelei figures

This next section compares the direct portrayals the authors made of their Lorelei figures with regards to beauty and religion/witchcraft. It finishes up by touching upon other versions these same three authors produced, showing how they continued to develop on their original portrayals and/or symbolism.

Beauty

In essence, Lorelei is a female figure whose beauty is so encapsulating that men are drawn into it and caused to suffer. The three different poetic versions looked at in this essay portray her beauty in different ways.

Although one can have beauty within, i.e. a beautiful soul, this is not the sort of beauty being referred to by these male authors. They refer to outer beauty, i.e. visible beauty and, additionally, in Heine's case, audible beauty. Authors have the ability to create new images of the world the way they desire it to be. These Lorelei figures are male fantasies, but at the same time, the authors had to adhere to social and moral customs and norms to make their figures relatable and to not alienate readers.

The way in which these authors appeal to different types of culturally and socially accepted beauty varies. Brentano portrays a friendly, soft-voiced girl with a beautiful body. Eichendorff brings elements of wealth (a horse and jewellery) and ideas around Christian pureness ('schöne Braut' and 'junger Leib') into his fantasy. Heine incorporates wealth (gold and social standing) and specifies his Loreley simply as 'die schönste Jungfrau', letting the archetype do the work and allowing her to become a symbol of imagined beauty. Of the three authors, Brentano details Lore Lay's physical beauty in the most depth, describing her face, her eyes and her cheeks in addition to her 'schön und feine' figure. Contrary to modern notions of beauty where happy is better, melancholia was encompassed within Romantic notions of beauty and so Brentano's 'traurig' added to Lore's beauty.

Neither Brentano nor Eichendorff mention hair, whilst hair plays an important role in Heine's portrayal of Loreley's beauty. In many literary traditions, hair has a natural connection to love and seduction and on top

of that, a siren's hair can represent a net used to ensnare her catch and moreover, the 'flowing abundance of her appetites'.¹¹⁶ The action of Heine's Loreley combing her hair again and again shares the same motion as the river's waves. This forms a connection between hair and water, complementing the background setting.

Heine's Loreley has 'goldenes Haar'. Gold neither tarnishes nor loses its value over time. It carries connotations of light and brightness, vitality and radiance. It is reminiscent of the warm sun bathing everything in light and bringing life, colour and meaning to the world. Umberto Eco describes light as 'the principle of all beauty', because it delights the senses and colour and beauty become apparent with light.¹¹⁷ Heine's use of golden hair moreover emphasised or appealed to some stereotypes about 'national physiognomy', as 'ethically pure' Germans were often considered to have blue eyes and blonde hair.

Heine's Loreley's golden hair also underscores and complements his already stated 'schönste Jungfrau' stereotype. Many young children have light hair which later darkens and thus light hair can be said to show youth and innocence and with it virginity.¹¹⁸ Eichendorff similarly produces a Loreley figure eliciting images of a *schöne Jungfrau*. Eichendorff indirectly portrays and enhances this idea by cleverly employing the adjective-noun combinations, 'wunderschön[er]... junge[r] Leib' and 'schöne Braut'. Brentano simply states 'Jungfrau' for his Lore Lay and she possesses a different type of innocence – she actively tries to remove herself from causing others grief and is thereby innocent of the crime she is committing. Just as Heine makes use of archetypes with his usage of 'die schönste Jungfrau', the transformation of Eichendorff's 'schöne Braut' into a 'Hexe' does as well. These three authors each present a *Jungfrau*, a term which carries connotations of a young, beautiful and innocent woman. However, the authors go on to reveal 'immoral', 'corrupt' or 'evil' 'sluts'. This contradicts the original imagery and shows how the women, though having the appearance of a *Jungfrau*, are in fact femme fatales.

¹¹⁶ Marina Warner, *From the BEAST to the BLONDE* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p. 406, Para. 3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

In addition to pleasing forms and types of physical body, other attributes of beauty are brought into the stories. Brentano makes mention to 'Worte still und mild' as part of his Lore Lay's 'Zauberkreis', thus incorporating her voice into her beauty. She verbally interacts with her victims, holding them enthralled, although it is initially her face and particularly her eyes which are said to hold her powers of enchantment. Eichendorff incorporates wealth as part of Loreley's allure and although she also interacts with her victims, no mention is made of an alluring voice in the 'predator-prey-like' conversation. This stands in contrast to Heine's Loreley who is more similar to a siren than the sorceress and witch within Brentano's and Eichendorff's renditions. It is the singing of Heine's Loreley which is directly attributed to distracting the sailor and causing his death.

Voice and water complement each other nicely, not only because this combination has been around since the ancient myths and their sirens, but also because it shares a place in our ontogenetic life which may have given rise to the myth: each of us listens to our mother's voice while we are in the amniotic fluid within the womb.¹¹⁹ Water and voice are thus connected on a primal level. Lorelei rock itself also has a natural connection between water and song as its waterfall and caverns produce its famous echo sound. The element of voice being brought into the fairy-tale myth thus accounts for why the water echoes as it does when it falls down the Lorelei rock in the Middle Rhine and for why it is such a perilous place to sail.

Heine's Loreley's voice being even more powerful than her physical beauty is reminiscent of Warner's description of the power of the seductiveness of a woman's tongue.¹²⁰ Heine can be said to be playing on a man's fear in this regard and this is ironic, because he himself, as an author with such mastery over words, uses his very tales to attract and enthrall readers and listeners around the globe over generations.

All three poems have male 'victims' and blame the woman's beauty for the man's behaviour. Ferguson explains how the mistress stereotype, although publicly disapproved of in most male-dominated societies, can

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 407.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 404.

also be admired due to the strength of the mistress' seductive abilities. The power she holds, to be capable of causing this, is incredible and this acts to exonerate the male who is pulled into it. Ferguson goes on to say that a few empirical studies also reveal how some modern women even strive to have this effect on men, feeling empowered by their abilities.¹²¹ This does not ring true for Brentano's Lore Lay who is simultaneously portrayed as a victim of this calling of hers. The same cannot be said for Eichendorff's and Heine's characters, neither of whom appear fazed by their abilities. In fact, Eichendorff's *Hexe* could be said to be taking advantage of her abilities. She is, after all, out riding in the forest at night-time, clearly unafraid for her own safety as a lone woman. Heine's Loreley just seems oblivious to what is going on. She is perhaps distracted by her own beauty and vanity thereof. No reason is given for why Heine's figure has come to cause such allure, besides perhaps her siren-like nature. Eichendorff on the other hand builds off Brentano's idea of spurned love and his *Hexe Loreley* has also suffered at the hands of men. If that were the case, William Congreve's paraphrased well known saying *Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned* is arguably well-suited to these fictional works.¹²² The subconscious psychological pain felt by these women could be the underlying cause of Brentano's Lore Lay's passive and Eichendorff's Loreley's active desire to enact revenge upon all men. Brentano's 'Zauberin', later labelled 'Jungfrau', Eichendorff's 'Hexe' and 'Braut' with the 'junge[n] Leib' and Heine's 'schönste Jungfrau' who acts as a siren all portray aspects of feminine 'innocence'. This is an intended effect by their creators. The innocent beauty acts as a lure and men become ensnared and/or bewitched by these virtuous seeming beings who later turn out to be witch and siren types. The interaction between Eichendorff's male 'victim' and *die Hexe Loreley* particularly highlights this. The man sees the young woman alone in the forest at night and immediately forces himself on her, saying 'du schöne Braut! Ich führ dich heim!' He makes it out as if she is weak and in need of assistance and that

¹²¹ Mary Anne Ferguson, *Images of Women in Literature*, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), p. 13.

¹²² William Congreve, *The Mourning Bride* (1697) <http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/William_Congreve> [accessed 14 November 2016], Act III, Scene 8.

he must be the one to provide this. Her rejection of him leads him to think other powers must be at play – she must be a witch to be capable of resisting his offer.¹²³ Although it was only after this outburst from him ‘Du bist die Hexe Loreley’ that she became this way, the man sees himself as the victim and moreover as a victim of female deception. Brentano similarly allows his ‘victims’ to be aware of and acknowledge their positions under Lore Lay’s spell, however no delay in enthralling occurs. The immediate laying of eyes upon Brentano’s Lore Lay causes entrapment, even to the godly bishop. Whether or not the knights are aware of her power over them is unknown; however, her spell causes them to lose their lives ‘ohn’ Priester und ohn’ Grab’, which shows how smitten they are. There is no contemplation of punishment for their reckless behaviour, just pure magnetism to her, notably even after her death. There is no way of knowing what, if anything, is going through the mind of Heine’s boatsman, for whom the only information on offer is that he ‘schaut nur hinauf in die Höh’, ‘ergr[iffen]’ as he is by ‘wildem Weh’ of the ‘Lied[s]’ ‘gewalt’ge Melodei’.

Religion and/or witchcraft

Each of the three authors includes different religious aspects in their respective portrayals of Lorelei. Brentano includes many direct Christian terms and ideas whilst Eichendorff has a religious moral which can be drawn and Heine uses symbolism to express his relationship with religion and society’s treatment thereof.

Brentano uses multiple religious terms, such as ‘Bischof’, ‘Christ’, ‘Nönnchen’ and ‘Kloster’, and both he and Heine indirectly refer to the Virgin Mother. Brentano’s Lore Lay is on her way to the abbey to become ‘Gottes Jungfrau’, a nun, or ‘bride of Christ’, a term which invokes imagery of the *Mutter Gottes* and *Jungfrau Maria*. Lore Lay is wanting to cleanse her Christian soul from the evil her ‘böse Zauberei’ is wreaking. Heine’s Loreley is indirectly associated with ‘Mary Mother of God’ through being ‘die schönste Jungfrau’ [emphasis added], a term reserved for Mary in

¹²³ Alexander von Bormann, “Das zertrümmerte Alte” Zu Eichendorffs Lorelei-Romanze “Waldgespräch”, in *Gedichte und Interpretationen Klassik und Romantik*, ed. by Wulf Segebrecht (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1998), pp. 306-319 (p. 311).

Catholic tradition. Moreover, the golden hair she has can be seen as a symbol of lightness and purity. Due to its lack of darkness, light coloured hair can be associated with cleanliness and freedom from taint and evil. The notions around fair hair can transfer into notions of a fair being and this was certainly the case when images of Mary started appearing with blonde hair in Western works of art from the 11th century onwards.¹²⁴ This stereotypical Christian depiction of Mary with fair hair may further extend to enhance Heine's concept and critique of it being the *Christian* Germans (as opposed to Jewish Germans) who were not allowing the Jewish Germans to assimilate.

Heine's Madonna poem ('Im Rhein, im schönen Strome'), referring to Stefan Lochner's *Madonna of the Rose Bower* painting (see Appendices 4 and 5), supports this reading. This poem occurs within an earlier part of *Buch der Lieder* as part of the cycle of poems, *Lyrisches Intermezzo*. In the poem, Heine juxtaposes heavenly and earthly love through his final verse mentioning both 'unsre liebe Frau' (Maria) and 'Die Augen, die Lippen, die Wänglein, Die gleichen der Liebsten genau'. These final two lines had been changed from the 1823 rendition in *Tragödien nebst einem lyrischen Intermezzo*: 'Es kommt und spricht ein Englein: Gegrüsst seist du, Marie!'¹²⁵ This, along with the following poem in the cycle of *Buch der Lieder* which talks of a loving embrace, can be considered to show 'Heine's impulse to blasphemy'.¹²⁶ According to William Rose, Heine's cycle of *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, along with aspects of *Die Heimkehr*, can be said to tell an autobiographical story and Heine himself said the arrangement of poems in *Buch der Lieder* was supposed to show 'a psychological self-portrait'.¹²⁷

Lochner's painting shares aspects with other painters' interpretations of Lorelei figures (compare Appendices 5, 6 and 7). *Madonna of the Rose Bower* combines music and awe for the woman (as in Carl Begas' 1835

¹²⁴ Marina Warner, *From the BEAST to the BLONDE* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p. 367.

¹²⁵ S.S. Prawer, 'The Early Love Poetry of Heinrich Heine. An Inquiry into Poetic Inspiration by William Rose and Heinrich Heine', *The Modern Language Review*, 58(1) (January, 1963), 138-140 (p. 139, Para. 3).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, (p. 139, Para. 3).

¹²⁷ Friedrich Hirth, as cited in William Rose, *The Early Love Poetry of Heinrich Heine: An Inquiry into Poetic Inspiration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. xiii, Para. 2; *Ibid.*, p. xi.

Lurelei) with the woman's absent expression on her face (as in Emil Krupa-Krupinski's 1899 *Loreley*) and symbols of innocence. Gold also has a striking place and a male figure overlooks the woman and the child. Brentano portrays his Lore Lay as both a saviour and a witch. These contradictory roles can be seen to serve a similar function to those of Eichendorff's witch who initially tries to save the passer-by and who ends up condemning him. These show a double-sidedness to the female nature as portrayed by male fantasies. She is both 'Heilige' and 'Hure', simultaneously innocent and a witch.

All three male authors demonise the female Lorelei, giving her supernatural powers of destruction and these powers bring about heathenistic death and/or the condemnation of a man's body and soul. Lorelei's portrayal as a seductress elicits religious images of Adam and Eve and original sin. These temptresses entice the men off the right path. Brentano's Lore Lay tempts the men off the cliff edge into eternal damnation; Eichendorff's Loreley tempts the man of culture and Christian faith into the world of nature and paganism forever condemning him; Heine's Loreley brings immediate death to the man who longingly yearns to be part of her world.

Many Romantic authors sought to join 'man' together with nature and create a harmony between the dichotomies of male and female and culture and nature, but what these authors show is the destructive nature of this symbiosis for the man. This is a paradox in that culture outranks nature in the 'natural hierarchy' of traditional Western world views. These male 'victims' are physically stronger than the woman, yet they are unable to pull themselves out of this union, if attraction occurs; they lose their identity. According to Sonia Saporiti, this shows a desire for indulgence which is simultaneously accompanied by a sense of fear of loss of control.¹²⁸ Eichendorff's victim demonstrates this when he calls on God to 'steh [ihm] bei', once he figures out she is the witch Loreley.

Both Eichendorff and Heine first draw the reader into their narratives of seduction, portraying the sweet alluring elements of their Loreley figures,

¹²⁸ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 80.

and later bring out the harmful aspects, just as the male 'victims' experience it. Brentano on the other hand warns the audience by introducing Lore Lay as a sorceress in the first stanza and this complements his Lore Lay character's aim to try and save her 'victims'. All three male authors engender seductive elements in their portrayals, yet neither *Zauberin Lore Lay*, *Hexe Loreley* nor *schönste Jungfrau Loreley* are blamed fully for their characters, characteristics or actions – it is associated with their 'nature' instead. Brentano and Eichendorff both combine the aspects of beauty and seduction together, as ingredients of a magical spell and attribute Lorelei's allure to sorcery/witchcraft. There was less than a decade between the final European witch burning in Posen in 1793 and Brentano's original 1800 to 1801 rendition of Lore Lay,¹²⁹ and both Brentano and Eichendorff make use of this recent idea, possibly still in the back of their readerships' minds. Heine in contrast attributes his Loreley's allure to ideas which were around long before Christianity. His Loreley, who exhibits signs of a siren, can be considered a type of elemental. Elementals have mythological origins and are soulless beings at one with nature.¹³⁰ Lorelei is thus portrayed as a demonic beauty who shares in her enticement and destruction of the male population by all three male authors to one degree or another.

Lorelei developments

The three representations of Lorelei figures under consideration here present a very small sample of the literary figures created. Tens of authors took it upon themselves to create their own versions and contribute to Lorelei's saga. Even these three authors, Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine, each published more than one such figure, developing on from their own and others' versions.

From 1810 to 1811, Brentano fashioned a follow up version of a witch called Lureley in *Die Mährchen vom Rhein* which was published

¹²⁹ Brian P. Levack, *The witch-hunt in early-modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 228.

¹³⁰ Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 130-132).

posthumously in 1847.¹³¹ She is an undine who sits around sadly combing her long blonde hair. She lives under the sea in a castle and causes storms which suck men and their boats down under the waves in a whirlpool. She has seven children, three of whose names are stated: *Akkord*, *Echo* and *Reim*. Besides the plain-to-see similarities between this and Heine's Loreley, this tale also speaks of disappointed love and Brentano may be using these Lorelei figures as a way of reconciling his own love situation.

Eichendorff includes many types of *Wasserfrauen* in his works and even though he does not name them Loreley, Lureley or the like, it is plain to see that they are Lorelei figures. For example, the poem, *Der stille Grund* which was published in 1837 as part of *Gedichte von Joseph Freiherrn von Eichendorff*, paints a typically Romantic moonlit valley in which a mermaid plaits her golden hair atop a rock near a stream and sings an enchanting song. Although clearly describing a Lorelei figure, this rendition differs in that the sailor has already been a victim of hers and it is the narrator who is being drawn in. Luckily for him, Christianity, in the form of *Morgenglocken*, breaks the spell and he is able to escape. Together with *Waldgespräch* this shows how Eichendorff has both active and passive equivalents of the story as well as happy and tragic endings on the part of the male. This perhaps shows his attitudes towards traditional Christianity and its claim to save 'man' from nature and darkness – a common theme across Eichendorff's works is that the Catholic faith is the answer to redemption from sin and temptation.¹³² The varying outcomes show a switch in attitude and potentially highlight moments of doubt in his religion and its abilities.

In Heine's case, he has, for example, *Herzliebchen in der Pfalz* and *Nächtliche Fahrt* which build off the ideas around Loreley. Yet perhaps a more impressive development from his *Die Loreley* poem is his *Der Rabbi von Bacharach*. This unfinished novel describes the life of a Rabbi and his wife and depicts Jewish persecution during medieval times. It perhaps

¹³¹ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 84.

¹³² Stephen Cushman and Clare Cavanagh, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th edn (Princeton, US: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 565.

shows how Heine was aware of how some of the Romantic notions of nation and religious discrimination could and possibly would lead to the aggressive nationalism evident a century later.

The Beautiful Lau

Introduction

Die Historie von der schönen Lau is a literary fairy tale (*Kunstmärchen*) told within Eduard Mörike's novella *das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein*. The short novel was published in 1853 and has since gone on to be published in five languages over 209 editions.¹³³ *Die Historie von der schönen Lau* was first published as a story in its own right twenty years after its initial publishing within *das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein* and has amassed its own 120 editions in English and German over the past century and a half.¹³⁴ It tells the tale of the beautiful water nymph, Lau, who has been banished due to her infertility. In order to be able to bear live children, she must overcome the deep sorrow within her and learn to laugh.

Because Mörike's novella was written in the second half of the 19th century, it doesn't belong within the same Romantic period as the Lorelei saga discussed in this essay thus far. Instead it belongs within the late Romanticism and Realism era. Within Realism, the presiding ideas were realistic elements. Mörike's use of a water spirit as the main protagonist is therefore non-conforming. This, together with his one-of-a-kind portrayal of his Melusine-like fairy-tale figure, make Mörike's work a unique literary piece.

The entire novella is written in a mix of local Swabian dialect and old biblical German and Mörike has included notes for the reader at the end of the story to explain word usages. These, along with the occasional direct address to the audience and the long sentences typical of old chronicles provide a notably story-telling style to the narrative. In addition, the historical and geographical settings of the novella and fairy tale are very specific and these, together with the antiquated vocabulary and a written version of the spoken dialect, amount to the impression of a chronicle of a distant past from the Middle Ages. The content moreover helps in this regard with the Melusine-like figure Lau featuring in the embedded

¹³³ WorldCat Identities, *Mörike, Eduard 1804-1875* (Dublin, Ohio: WorldCat, [n.d.]) <<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n50006096>> [accessed 20 October 2016].

¹³⁴ Ibid.

narrative. This story-within-a-story provides the basis on which the whole novella is built. It is a tale of self-discovery and suppressed sexuality and provides context and background for the frame narrative. Within the inner story, there is also another tale and so the seemingly never-ending layers to the narrative stand as a reminder of the equally extreme depths of the *Blautopf*, the deep lake or pool in which the beautiful Lau lives and where the story takes place.

The story of the beautiful Lau is one where multiple parallel relationships are explored: nature and culture, Christianity and Paganism and psychopathology and psychosexuality. These, along with similar themes within the entire novella, also produce the constant idea that '*Rettung kann nur dann erfolgen, wenn eine 'höhere Macht' sich gnädig einer 'armen Seele' annimmt*',¹³⁵ a theme also present in Mörike's 1836 novel *Der Schatz*.¹³⁶ These concepts will be explored in the next section in more detail along with the portrayal of the beautiful Lau following a brief introduction to their creator.

Eduard Mörike and the portrayal of Lau

Mörike was born in Ludwigsburg in 1804 as Eduard Friedrich Mörike. His physician father died when he was an early teen and Mörike was sent to school in Stuttgart and later Urach. He attended the Tübinger Stift and became a Protestant pastor. A year after working in parishes, he briefly decided he was better suited to other employment and tried his hand at journalism. However, he went back to clergy work almost immediately and simultaneously began publishing. His first works included poetry and the romance novel *Maler Nolten*. He lived a while with his mother and sister and later with his sister after his mother's death in 1841. His poor health and lack of enthusiasm for his pastoral duties resulted in his early retirement in 1843. He later dabbled in teaching alongside his writing. In terms of his love life, Mörike is said to have had an attachment to his cousin as a teenager and later to Maria Meyer, from whom Mörike appears

¹³⁵ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung 'Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein'* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 200, Para. 3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 200, footnote 731.

to have created the character Peregrina. His late marriage in 1851 to Margaret von Speeth lasted two decades before dissolving, but had been difficult due to his sister's role in his welfare. Mörike had an exceptional sensitivity to music in addition to emotional sympathy and his poems made popular songs.¹³⁷

Mörike was almost 50 years old at the time he wrote *Die Historie von der schönen Lau* but this was perhaps not his first attempt at such a character. Just as the Lorelei poems have been placed within the context of their historical development as well as within their own publications and as pieces of work in their own right, so too should the story of the beautiful Lau be given such context. *Die Historie von der schönen Lau* and *das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein* have been said to hold connections to Mörike's earlier novel *Maler Nolten*.¹³⁸ The later tale's female character, the beautiful Lau, can be considered a less dangerous and less feared modification of the original more complex character, 'eben eine *laue* Peregrina-Variation', based, as mentioned above, on his personal love life.¹³⁹ However, whilst the more mesmerising Elisabeth (Peregrina-figure) fails dramatically in her attempts to integrate into the bourgeois culture, the beautiful Lau has some success in this regard.

Lau's name is of particular note. Mörike reveals that it comes from the term *La* meaning *water*.¹⁴⁰ In form, Lau, resembles *Blau*, which cleverly refers to both the river *Blau* and the colour blue. The word *blau* appears frequently within the story and carries connotations of inner personal change and growth, perhaps an adaptation of Novalis' *blaue Blume* symbol.¹⁴¹ In English the connection between the name *Lau* and *blue* is not obvious, however there is the serendipitous connotation *sad* associated with the colour blue. Thus Lau's name symbolises her

¹³⁷ Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 633; *Ibid.*, p. 634.

¹³⁸ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 191.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 192, Para. 1.

¹⁴⁰ as cited in Eduard Mörike, *Die Historie von der schönen Lau: The story of Lau, the beautiful water nymph*, trans. by S. Foulkes, ed. by P. Schmid (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1996), p. 91, Para. 3.

¹⁴¹ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 98, Para. 1.

connection to water and the geographical setting as well as foretelling her inner development.

The portrayal of Lau holds many aspects which will be looked at under three categories:

1. her physical body, which includes her outward appearance, her sickness and her journey to health through laughing and the role of setting in this portrayal;
2. her subconscious as shown through her dream and how this elicits her relationship to Christianity;
3. her personality and her relationship to music.

Physical Body

Physically Lau is described as a beautiful, normal woman with the one exception of webbing between her digits due to her human mother having procreated with a male water spirit. Lau is therefore a *Mischwesen*, but is sometimes reduced solely to her watery half and referred to as *die Ente* or *der Fisch* or even the derogatory *Laubfrosch*. This is reminiscent of when humanity forgets itself and reduces children of mixed marriages to the supposedly 'lesser' desired half in an effort to segregate and discriminate. Human history abounds with examples of such abhorrent behaviour, notably from white (colonists) to non-white (indigenous) peoples. Victims of oppression may band together in an effort to reclaim what is rightfully theirs. Lau, for example, takes back the *Krakenzahn*, a magical object, similar to a Maori *taonga*, not because it is hers or for gain to herself, but because it is of the sea and therefore belongs to her people.

Lau is described as having a pale face, long flowing black hair and big blue eyes. At the end of the story, her eyes sparkle whilst her face is radiant and, given it is through the eyes that one can supposedly 'look into one's soul', her successful transformation becomes obvious here.

Lau may have the body of an adult, but her behaviour often mirrors that of a child. She dresses up in six different costumes a day and enjoys riddles. A Freudian theory gives a possible explanation for her childlike behaviour as her suffering from psychosis – an enforced regression which could be the result of her inner being having been separated from reality in the

outer world.¹⁴² This is further evidenced by Lau appearing beautiful to the outside eye, but being deeply sad within, as shown by her inability to laugh. The depth of this melancholia or depression is enhanced by her surroundings. The geographical setting of the tale is the town of Blaubeuren on the Alb and Lau's specific place of residence is the Blue Pool or *Blautopf*. *Blautopf* is an apt setting for Lau's psychological state at the beginning of the narrative. Jörg Zink, a native to the area, describes the pool as a cold, deep, turquoise-blue coloured pool which is 'im Grunde traurig',¹⁴³ and the fact that Lau sits at the bottom of this sad pool shows the depth of her sorrow.

Although the cause of her sadness is hinted at – family problems, particularly with males, who disapprove of her infertility – it is not explicitly stated and is open for interpretation. Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzonni propose that the '„Weg der Lau' ist „zugleich ein Prozeß der Angleichung an die Menschen"', and that her unexplained deep psychological pain is the result of her inability to live out and embrace the oppressed 'other side' of her cultural self.¹⁴⁴ As a real life human (as opposed to a fictional character) I can attest that this is indeed a critical part of personal development. I am a New Zealander with Polish roots and growing up I had what I can only describe as a 'hole in my heart' alongside an incredible yearning to go to Poland. Only once I had been to important family sites and seen and experienced what it meant to be Polish did this feeling go away and a complete sense of self and grounding emerge. This theory by Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzonni can be productively applied with regards to Lau's relaxing and her ability to find humour in various activities as she becomes more and more aware and trusting of her complex human-self and other humans.¹⁴⁵

Her place of residence as a symbolic element could be seen to further uphold this inference. Lau's home is an underwater cave, a safe water-

¹⁴² as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung „Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein"* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 117, Para. 1.

¹⁴³ Jörg Zink, *Wie die schöne Lau das Lachen lernte: und was beim Älterwerden sonst noch zu gewinnen ist* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1984), p. 19, Para. 1.

¹⁴⁴ as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung „Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein"* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 32, Para. 2; *Ibid.*, p. 166, Para. 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

filled place without light or contact to the world and could be interpreted as a mother's womb. As she comes out of the cave/womb into the world she can begin her life and slowly learn the ways of her 'other' side. This symbolism would complement Vögele's proposed 'Aufstieg der Wasserfrau' – where Lau's new realisations are marked by different advancements in her life as shown by the varying heights of her surroundings. *Blautopf*, *Kellerbrunnen* and *Wohnräume* are underground, at ground level and above ground respectively.¹⁴⁶ The changes in vertical height throughout the story complement her stages of development and correlate to her progressive growth in psychological, psychopathological and psychosexual being.

Subconscious State

Read in light of Freud's theories, the seemingly undamaged beautiful Lau suffers hidden psycho-somatic symptoms of deep psychological problems which are surface manifestations of deeply repressed conflicts. Analysing her dreams can help us understand her psychopathy because, according to Freud, dreams provide an excellent insight into the unconscious mind.¹⁴⁷

Lau's dream which results in her second laugh has erotic, psychosexual and psychological implications and connotations.¹⁴⁸ She dreams that a fat female water spirit is kissed by an abbot who then lies to God to hide his indiscretion. The kiss is so powerful that the sound echoes throughout the town's buildings. Bennholdt-Thomsen and Guzonni interpret the image of the fat female water spirit as Lau's mind merging a mother and daughter figure together, whereby the kiss clearly shows (daughter) Lau's wishes to have the erotic sexual experiences of the mother.¹⁴⁹ This successful encounter thus fulfils a secret desire of hers and the kiss from a man (other than her husband) is a psychologically freeing act, resulting in her

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 69, Para. 5.

¹⁴⁷ as cited in Saul McLeod, *Sigmund Freud* ([n.p.]: Simply Psychology, 2013) <<http://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html>> [date accessed 5 May 2016].

¹⁴⁸ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 127.

¹⁴⁹ as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 127.

ability and her choice to laugh. Fuchs and Günter talk of this psychosexual development of hers as an experience through which Lau becomes socialised into the world of man – her kissing a human man brings her closer to her human self.¹⁵⁰

In addition, the relationship gap between Christianity and Paganism closes in this scene, uniting as one. This recurring motif forms an important part to the story. Alongside the pagan Lau, Christian imagery abounds: the monastery, the abbot, the former convent and the Christmas crib. Until this moment, an antagonism has existed between heathen Lau and contrasting Christendom. The church, in the form of the monks, tried to control Lau and her connection with nature. The good Christian mother-like Frau Betha also tried to impart Christian ideas onto Lau, but to no avail. This act of love and union, the kiss between the abbot and the water spirit, brings the two worlds of belief together. Frau Betha's referral to this behaviour as a mischievous act of the devil symbolises how it can be considered a sin and would be met by disapproval from the Christian community.

In the union between a Pagan water-sprite and a Christian bishop, a double taboo is broken. Both the 'sad' Pagan natural view and the repressed Christian view on sexuality are overcome in the subversive and liberating embrace in the dream. According to Freud, subversion, taboo-breaking and liberation can all contribute to humour. The etymon of humour points to the fluid element of water. This idea is elaborated upon in a later section.

Personality

The description of the nymph by the town's people includes both the adjectives 'malicious' and 'beautiful' due to her erratic behaviour towards them. In my opinion, this is not a fair description of her, at least in terms of the story's later contents which give very little hint of maliciousness, barring two possible exceptions which turn out harmless: the outbursts at the monks and the kidnap of a cheeky boy who goaded her.

¹⁵⁰ as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung 'Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein'* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 128-129.

Lau's actions throughout the story show a sense of fairness, gratitude and generosity. Whilst her maids are happy to take freely, Lau tries to fairly compensate, as shown by the scene with the traveller and the *Krakenzahn*. Lau is at first shy around humans but becomes friendly over time. At the end of the story she shows her everlasting gratitude by gifting the inn a vessel permanently full of silver. But her generosity does not just appear at the end of the story. Before she has even laughed once, Lau gives an impressive gift to her mother figure, Frau Betha. It is a *Habergeist*: a humming top which has a large amethyst and comes in an ebony box with a golden cord. Its outer beauty is not what makes it an impressive gift, but rather the music it makes. It produces a beautiful sound and brings all who hear it into calmness. In addition, it attracts extra guests to the inn. The echoing reverberation of the beautiful music and the ultimate control it has over humans imitates a siren's voice except that instead of producing danger, it reduces and nullifies violence. Its musical beauty and allure bring about serenity and harmony rather than destruction and potential death.

On the topic of music within *die Historie von der schönen Lau*, the beautiful Lau's laugh is another type of healing sound. In the olden days laughing was seen as a sign of liveliness, freedom and life. If you laughed, you were devoid of fear and were a breathing, living entity capable of love and life and thus handing life to another or bringing life into this world.¹⁵¹ Under this paradigm the laughing is an appropriate healing method for the sad Lau in her journey towards bringing children into this world.

Conclusion

Mörike's story of the beautiful Lau contains much sorrow and pain and pulls the reader alongside the protagonist with its life-like story telling methods right through to the beautiful, joy-filled conclusion. It feels so real that I laughed out loud when I heard the surprising ending to the story with

¹⁵¹ Jörg Zink, *Wie die schöne Lau das Lachen lernte: und was beim Älterwerden sonst noch zu gewinnen ist* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1984), p. 21.

the plumb line and felt a deep sense of satisfaction at the gratifying ending of the tale.

This *Historie* is the story of the journey of 'a natural being' and 'a human soul',¹⁵² damaged at first and later healed and shows the unity of inner and outer health and beauty. Mörike cleverly enhances the portrayal of Lau's psychological, psychopathological and psychosexual developments with his staggered settings. Moreover, the beautiful *Mischwesen*, Lau, is a unique design of Mörike's, differing in many aspects from other Melusine-like figures who attempt to seduce humans in the hopes of getting a human soul and who leave death and destruction in their wake.

Lau's journey to happiness is made possible only with the help of the 'good Christian' mother-like figure Frau Betha. Perhaps Mörike is subtly trying to tell us that as long as the good Christian Mother Mary and by extension, God, are watching over and looking out for us, we will all be fine in the end. A further biblical message from this story could come from Lau's newly acquired ability to have children. The bible is replete with stories of older women (Sarah, Elisabeth) who thought they could not have children and who were then touched by God. This 'new life' is a reminder to Mörike's readers that they have the ability to turn over a new leaf at any given point in time, no matter our age or, as shown by Lau, our affliction. Lau shows how we have the choice each and every day to start over again and that if we have sunken into depression, we can overcome it through gratitude and hope and laughter and joy.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 20, Para. 2.

¹⁵³ Ibid., back inside cover.

Comparison of the portrayals of Lorelei figures and the beautiful Lau

Lorelei has practically legendary status in Germany and is known in part across other areas of the globe. Lau on the other hand is a lesser known water nymph. A simple google search shows 'Lorelei' topping 17 million hits as opposed to 'schöne Lau' which scrapes just over 500,000.¹⁵⁴ Up until now, no one has compared these fictional figures, although Alexander von Bormann makes a side remark suggesting Brentano's later Lureley figure from *Die Märchen vom Rhein* is comparable with Mörike's beautiful Lau.¹⁵⁵

This essay's comparison continues along on the same premise as the earlier section comparing Lorelei figures. It begins with observations regarding the authors and the era in which the portrayals of the figures were made and moves on to the comparison of the fictional characters themselves.

Authors and literary era

Just as Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine were all aware of one another's works, Mörike was similarly familiar with their texts. He was particularly interested in the patriotic works of Brentano and Arnim and had read Eichendorff's poetry too.¹⁵⁶ His letter to his brother in 1842 states also how he considers the Grimm's fairy tales to be 'einen goldenen Schatz wahrhafter Poesie'.¹⁵⁷ With this in mind and the fact that the temporal setting of *Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein* is when the city of Württemberg was starting out in its modern history, Mörike can be seen to be paying

¹⁵⁴ as at 15 December 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Alexander von Bormann, "Das zertrümmerte Alte" Zu Eichendorffs Lorelei-Romanze "Waldgespräch", in *Gedichte und Interpretationen Klassik und Romantik*, ed. by Wulf Segebrecht (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1998), pp. 306-319 (p. 307).

¹⁵⁶ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung 'Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein'* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 75.

¹⁵⁷ as cited in Isabel Gutiérrez Koester, *H. Chr. Andersen und E. Mörike: Die androgyne Wasserfrau als biedermeierliches Weiblichkeitsideal* (Universitat de Valencia: Federaci3n de Asociaciones de Germanistas, [n.d]), p. 15, Para. 3.

homage to the city of Württemberg.¹⁵⁸ Just as the three Lorelei authors incorporated the Rhine into their tales for a greater purpose, Mörike was similarly painting an important part of Württemberg history, consciously setting his work in a specific time and location in an attempt to raise readers' awareness of their city's past and future. However, his works, unlike those of the other three authors, tended not to be recognised as highly during his lifetime.¹⁵⁹

Although he was born with less than a decade separating him from Heine, Mörike's figure Lau didn't appear until almost three decades after Heine's Loreley. Mörike was almost 50 at the time, considerably older than the three Lorelei authors who were all in their twenties at the time of their characters' productions. He therefore created his Lau character in a different literary era to the others. Mörike shares aspects of style with Heine, as Heine's Loreley tale – a farewell tribute to Romanticism – incorporated aspects of Realism. Heine's technique incorporating a narrator highlights the difference between reality and illusion and Mörike's addressing the audience directly allows his reader or listener to reflect on the relationships between fiction and non-fiction.

Mörike was not a typical Realist writer in that he also included Romantic elements in his works. For example, Mörike's tale of Lau includes the Romantic notion that 'intricate connections' and 'mysterious forces' are used in a character's quest for identity.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Mörike uses nature to show mood. The lightning which Lau contentedly watches brings lightness to the dark all around, just as her second laugh brings lightness to her soul and causes the stormy weather to clear, revealing a beautiful moon standing bright above the castle.

Mörike was no stranger to fictionalised autobiography, as seen by his earlier novel *Maler Nolten*.¹⁶¹ Given this can be seen as a pre-runner for *das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein*, aspects of *Die Historie von der schönen*

¹⁵⁸ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 90; *Ibid.*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁹ Henry B. Garland and Mary Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature*, 2nd edn (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 633.

¹⁶⁰ Eda Sagarra and Peter Skrine, *A Companion to German Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 95, Para. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

Lau can be seen to be autobiographical.¹⁶² Brentano, Eichendorff and Heine included autobiographical aspects regarding unfulfilled love, religious salvation and religious discrimination. Just as Brentano was inspired through his trip along the Rhine, Mörike's visit to Blaubeuren with his brother in 1840 may well have inspired his tale which is now famous to all who live there.¹⁶³

Settings play a major role in the stories and three of the four authors make special use of the height of the setting: Mörike uses it to show *Lau*'s development; Brentano uses it to show depth of emotion; Heine uses it to show how great the distance is from commoner to aristocrat or Jew to Christian. Moreover, Mörike's choice of settings for *Lau*'s maturation shows a change which had occurred during the Biedermeier era, the period between Romanticism and Realism. He uses the kitchen, the cellar and the garden and represents here the change in women's roles – the patriarchal 19th century saw women removed from various business and political situations and pushed in the direction of the household.¹⁶⁴ This caused a domestication of women and the demonic beauties and seductive *Wasserfrauen* of Romanticism became sweet, childlike creatures who lost much of their erotic appeal.¹⁶⁵ This can be seen in the portrayals of Lorelei figures in contrast to Mörike's portrayal of *Lau*.

The water nymphs

The following section explores the portrayals of the different water nymphs. Unlike the Lorelei figures discussed, Mörike's *Lau* is a fairy-tale creature who is not demonic and who is relatively harmless. She should not be viewed as a development of a siren or Melusine but as her own type of *Wasserfrau*. Despite this, many parallels exist between the figures. This

¹⁶² Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 191.

¹⁶³ Peter Schmid, 'Epilogue', in Eduard Mörike, *Die Historie von der schönen Lau: The story of Lau, the beautiful water nymph*, trans. by S. Foulkes, ed. by P. Schmid (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1996), pp. 88-97 (p. 89).

¹⁶⁴ Isabel Gutiérrez Koester, *H. Chr. Andersen und E. Mörike: Die androgyne Wasserfrau als biedermeierliches Weiblichkeitsideal* (Universitat de Valencia: Federació de Asociaciones de Germanistas, [n.d]), p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

section builds off the Lorelei comparison earlier in this essay and continues under the following headings:

- Physical features
- Love discourse
- Musical elements
- Religious aspects

Physical features

The Lorelei figures and Lau in the works under consideration are all described as physically beautiful. The Lorelei figures are all humanoid, with the potential exception of Heine's. Both Brentano's Lore Lay, a common girl, and Eichendorff's Loreley, a woman riding a horse, are imagined as two legged beings. Heine's figure is more mythical and with her siren-like nature could potentially resemble more of a mermaid. In the ancient myths, sirens were said to be half-human and half-bird, with the top half being the human half. However, traditional Christian ideas mutated sirens into forms which more appropriately conformed to their paradigms equating women to sinners.¹⁶⁶ They made the siren more beautiful to enhance her abilities to seduce a man, by turning the ugly claws of the bird's feet into a sleek fish's tail. This aptly connected the woman with water, a force which was life-giving, yet also life-taking, and showed the woman's supposed double-sided nature. Heine's siren-like being could be considered 'die schönste Jungfrau' in the sense that she has added aural beauty and mysterious allure to her pure figure. Whether or not she resembles such a siren is unknown, however Heine's elicits such imagery in the reader's mind and some visual artists have shared that reading. Mörike's Lau more closely resembles this imagery in Heine's poem than that in Brentano or Eichendorff's in that she is a type of half-human, half-animal creature. This is physically manifested in her webbing between her toes and feet.

¹⁶⁶ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 41.

Hair also plays an important role in one's physical features. Similar to Heine's Loreley, Lau has long flowing hair, but unlike Heine's Loreley's, Lau's hair is black. In juxtaposition with Loreley's golden hair, Lau's hair is reminiscent of lead and with it the *Krakenzahn* she reclaims for her people. Just as the *Krakenzahn* has magical properties, so too does hair and it is often involved in binding spells, such as binding fate or desire.¹⁶⁷ The German proverb 'Ein Frauenhaar zieht stärker als ein Glockenseil' shows just how powerful hair is and although Brentano makes no mention specifically of hair, his Lore Lay's spell is reminiscent of these powerful aspects of hair. Just as hair is said to continue to grow even after death, Lore's spell continues to enthrall men after she has fallen.

Love discourse

Brentano's Lore Lay and Eichendorff's Loreley are both victims of unrequited love and deception. Lau suffers from a different type of loss of love. Even though both her father and her husband have banished her from her rightful home and she is portrayed as a fallen powerful female – she is a *Fürstentochter* – it is not this loss which causes Lau to suffer. She is affected by an inability to love herself. This is because she has never accepted and learnt about the human part within her. This causes a psychological imbalance resulting in her sadness, inability to laugh and an inability to bear live children. The psychological distress caused to Brentano's Lore Lay and Eichendorff's Loreley has different repercussions, transforming them into powerful, seductive creatures. This supernatural power extends however only over men. Lau also has a supernatural power, but this comes from her natural elemental self. She is able to cause flooding, manipulating the water flow, whilst Lorelei holds a power over men and water acts as a passive bringer of doom. Lau's power extends further than Lorelei's in that she can control many rivers, streams and springs and does not while herself away on a single rock (with the occasional outing, as in Eichendorff's rendition).

¹⁶⁷ Marina Warner, *From the BEAST to the BLONDE* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p. 363; *ibid.*, p. 371-374.

Brian Hayden mentions how male aspects of fertility centre around forests and land whilst aspects of female fertility centre around rivers.¹⁶⁸ The Danube, which happens to be the river into which the *Blau* flows, may be derived from the word 'Danu', the name of a Celtic water goddess. Lau, whose place of residence is in *Blautopf*, a particularly productive spring in Southern Germany, ironically is not fertile. Her sickness results in still-born children and Lau shares a connection with Lorelei in the sense that they are both connected to death. The fact that the personified river rock and the water sprite lead sinners (the adult males) and innocents (the unborn babies) to their deaths can be taken as an extension of the mythical notion that a river is the pathway to the realm of the dead.¹⁶⁹

Musical elements

Neither voice nor song play a major role in Brentano and Eichendorff's versions of the Lorelei Saga. This is heavily contrasted with the crucial role played by these musical elements in Heine's tale of Loreley and Mörike's story of Lau.

According to Anna Stuby, the female voice reached its peak as a symbol of chaos and order in the 19th century.¹⁷⁰ It could be shrill and show a woman's craziness or silent and show virtue. The female voice could stand as an overwhelming and violent song or as a quiet and unobtrusive feature. In Heine's song, Loreley's 'Gewalt'ge Melodei' acts in a destructive manner, drawing the sailor in and resulting in the destruction of his vessel on the rocks and the death of the sailor by drowning. Mörike's tale of Lau's learning to laugh on the other hand presents a different side to a woman's voice. Her laughter ultimately heals the rift inside her, resulting in an inner harmony and later the ability to procreate.

The motif of not being able to laugh plays a major role in Mörike's story. Before the beginning of the tale, Lau's mother-in-law, a full-blooded water sprite, has a prophecy regarding Lau's laughter – water elementals are

¹⁶⁸ as cited in Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 38.

¹⁶⁹ Sibylle Selbmann, as cited in Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 36.

¹⁷⁰ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 11.

sometimes portrayed as seers, because springs and ponds can be seen not just as a source of water, but also one of wisdom.¹⁷¹ She prophesises that Lau needs to laugh five times in order to be healed from her affliction. The number five is aptly chosen by Mörike as it is closely associated with sexuality and fertility as well as having a connection with Venus.¹⁷²

Just as Heine's siren's seductive voice has a sexual component, so too does Lau's laughter – she releases a laugh in sexual satisfaction at the abbot kissing the fat female water nymph in her dream. Renate Jurzik takes the sexual component of laughter one step further and explains how laughing uses the same muscles of contraction that a woman uses when she achieves orgasm and when she experiences contractions prior to childbirth.¹⁷³ This dream which results in Lau's second laugh can be said to show how her subconscious shares a connection with the mistress-seductress stereotype in that she is freeing an inner desire to have an affair. Lau is similar in this respect to the men in Lorelei who pursue 'inappropriate behaviour'. However, ultimately Lau becomes a unified being whilst the men lose themselves in this endeavour.

Although laughter is a healthy release of psychic energy, traditional Christianity often portrays some forms of laughter as sinful and to be feared. Modern pop cultures' talkative and cheerful women can similarly be regarded as mischief makers.¹⁷⁴ In a patriarchal society laughter can assume a socio-cultural function of controlling or protecting women in that it has the power to defy. Freud, for example, argues that humour is defiant and considers it a 'Triumph des Ichs'.¹⁷⁵ The term 'humour' comes from the Latin for 'fluid', suggesting the smooth flow of liquid and Mörike's tale

¹⁷¹ Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 35.

¹⁷² Joerg Sieger, as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 75.

¹⁷³ as cited in Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung ‚Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein‘* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 134.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134; Marina Warner, *From the BEAST to the BLONDE* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), p. 395.

¹⁷⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'Der Humor', in *Kleine Schriften I* ([n.p]: projekt.gutenberg.de, 2013) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/kleine-schriften-i-7123/29>> [accessed 10 December 2016], Para. 6.

of laughter thus invokes fluvial imagery.¹⁷⁶ Humourism, a medicinal philosophy dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, talks of different fluids which flow through the body linking mental and physical health.¹⁷⁷ With disturbances in this flow, blockages can occur and may result in depression. With the reintroduction of humour and musical flow (laughter) into her life, Lau can be said to be able to overcome this imbalance within her system.

Religious aspects

Religious elements abound in *Wasserfrauen* tales and the chosen stories of Lorelei and Lau are no exception. A commonly occurring concept which is an integral part of Christianity features to some degree across all four texts and is the concept of the human soul. The four figures are portrayed with varying certainties in terms of having or not having a soul. According to Brentano's poem, Lore Lay most certainly has a soul and she is looking to cleanse it. It is presumable that Eichendorff's witch has a soul, but one cannot know this with certainty. Heine's Loreley on the other hand while possibly having one, could equally not have one. Mörike's Lau may not have a human soul, as she is only half human.

Whilst many *Wasserfrauen* who lack a human soul, most notably Fouqué's Undine and Hans Christian Anderson's Little Mermaid, seek union with a human to gain a soul, Mörike's Lau does not appear to be interested in this and in this regard, is reminiscent of Eichendorff's *Hexe*, who is not seeking Christian *Erlösung*.

Just like Brentano, Mörike elicits constant religious images through his settings and characters. However, unlike Brentano's Lore Lay who has a 'Christian soul' and who fails in her attempt to reach a convent for redemption, Mörike's Lau is probably a soulless being who is ironically 'redeemed' in an old convent.

¹⁷⁶ "Humor", *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. (New York: Random House, Inc., 2016) <<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/humor?s=t>> [accessed 5 December 2016], Para. 11.

¹⁷⁷ Vivian Nutton, 'Humoralism', in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine, Volume 1*, ed. by William F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 281-291 (p. 281-282).

Mörrike's tale involves a lot of conflict between Christianity (particularly the monks and the abbot) and pagan nature (Lau). In Mörrike's tale, the monks and the abbot show the conflicted and tense relationship traditional Christianity has to pagan nature. As an elemental, Lau has the ability to control the flow of water, causing flooding from time to time. The local villagers bring gifts to appease Lau – ancient peoples considered floods to be punishment from furious gods and offered sacrifices in an effort to calm them.¹⁷⁸ The church disapproves of this and, unable to control Lau, stops the common people from bringing gifts instead. This creates discord between Lau and the church and highlights the friction between the Christian church and pagan nature. Although Mörrike himself was a Lutheran Pastor, in his Lau text he takes issue with traditional Christianity's problematic relationship with the often erratic but nonetheless not intrinsically 'demonic' forces of fertility and procreation. Being the epitome of the generous life giving forces in nature, Lau only lacks one – human – feature to become a holistic being: humour. Ironically, she shares this with representatives of ecclesiastical male domination (personified by the abbot) and it is in the ironic dream of their sexual union, in which their 'humour' is restored and in which the subversive powers of laughter and sexuality come into their own.

Unlike the Lorelei characters who are sinners under traditional Christianity because they are seductive females, Lau is not intrinsically bad, although she does have a mischievous and vindictive side. The abbot in her story however sees this differently and reflects the patriarchal society which sees sin in women and pagan nature. In real life, there have been many debates regarding the role of monotheistic religious attitudes towards the treatment of nature and water and how they changed from 400 A.D. when Christianity replaced polytheism as state religion across Europe. Water continues to play an important role in Christian rituals to this day, with practices such as baptism and the throwing of coins into wishing wells. This may have resulted from the heathenistic reverence and worship of

¹⁷⁸ Andrew Francis and Sylvie Shaw, *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion and Water* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 37.

water, dating back to ancient cultures.¹⁷⁹ Interestingly, it was during the Christian era that sirens came to be regarded as part fish as opposed to part bird. The separation the water makes between the nymphs attractive upper-body and her animal lower-part depicts her 'cunning and harmful abilities'.¹⁸⁰ Her newer, 'more attractive form' (both physically and culturally) gave her the ability to appeal to and ensnare more 'fish', where the fish symbolises the human, Christian soul.¹⁸¹

Nature versus culture

Like the religious aspects which are inherent in the portrayals of the Lorelei figures and Lau, aspects of nature and culture, often in conflict, similarly appear in all four tales. Being portrayed as half human, half nature, *Wasserfrauen* automatically invoke discord between nature and culture, and in the traditional Western genderisation of 'female' nature and 'male' culture, also between genders. The portrayal of a woman as an 'elemental being' degrades her, giving male dominated 'spiritual authorities' a green light to treat her as sub-human and control her. This is something the four authors have in common. The tales of the Lorelei figures have male 'victims', but behind the scenes the authors have used a subtle hint of violence in reducing the women's humanity.¹⁸² Thus the real victims of male dominated societies get portrayed as perpetrators. At the same time, this enables the authors to remove responsibility which would be associated with 'male rationality' from the woman and attribute it as 'guilt' to her nature instead: Brentano's Lore's as a sorceress; Eichendorff's Loreley's as a witch; Heine's Loreley's as a siren.

Mörrike's Lau, who is in fact both the protagonist and the victim, commits no crime except for her inattentiveness to embrace both sides of her nature. In this way, Lau most resembles Brentano's Lore Lay who is pained by her own 'nature'. However, unlike Lore Lay who is repressing the supernatural side of herself, Lau suppresses her human side. Both

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 41-42.

¹⁸⁰ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 42.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁸² Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 138).

forms of restraint have psychological suffering attached and result in dire consequences to their health – Lore Lay throws herself off a cliff ending her own life and Lau is unable to fulfil her dutiful role as a wife and bear live children. Heine's Loreley and Eichendorff's Loreley don't suffer in this regard because they appear to have accepted who they are, not giving a care in the world and, perhaps in Eichendorff's case, even embracing her second nature.

In the Lorelei tales, it is always the man who loses his 'identity' to nature. In Mörike's story, Lau has never gained her full identity and she is on an exploratory mission to fulfil herself. In some regards this is also what the male 'victims' are doing – seeking a union with the nature part of themselves, seeking an annihilation of themselves in their union.¹⁸³

However, in the Lorelei tales where the resolution lies in religion, the 'Christian soul' which is constructed as superior to nature and exists only in the realm of *Geist* and culture, gets lost in such a union. Lau's immersion on the other hand into human culture does not gain her a soul, but she comes to terms with herself and is able to reconcile her two different 'natures' inside her. The male 'victims' do not have the opportunity to achieve such a union because this is impossible under their religious premise. The Lorelei tales attempt to dissuade men and, by extension, culture from attempting to enter this 'lesser world'. Lau on the other hand exists under a different set of rules and is able to embrace her new cultural aspect, giving Mörike's fairy tale a typical happy ending. All four renditions share in exhibiting the typical features of the *Wasserfrau* motif. Frank Vögele sums this motif up nicely as a 'Spannungsverhältnis' between 'natürlich-unschuldig' and 'fremdartig-bedrohlich'.¹⁸⁴ Just as the Lorelei figures simultaneously invoke imagery of both 'Eve' (sin) and 'Mary' (purity), the Lau figure has two opposing sides to her pagan nature. She briefly shows her dark, threatening side when a boy is cheeky to her but predominantly shows her good-natured, friendly and peaceful side. Three of the four tales then follow the typical *Wasserfrau* plotline with culture, i.e.

¹⁸³ Sonia Saporiti, *Myth as Symbol: A Psychoanalytic Study in Contemporary German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. 80.

¹⁸⁴ Frank Vögele, *Leben als Hochseilakt: Studien zu Eduard Mörikes Erzählung 'Das Stuttgarter Hutzelmännlein'* (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2005), p. 92, Para. 4.

'the man', attempting to tame and control nature i.e. 'the woman'.¹⁸⁵ This is viewed in the portrayals of Brentano's Lore Lay, Eichendorff's Loreley and Mörike's Lau when the Pagan-natural-female engages with the Christian-cultural-male element of the story (Heine's Loreley does not interact with the man). The frequently occurring subversive traits of the *Wasserfrau* (desire, humour, visual and aural beauty) elude these attempts of male dominance, defying control, and prove her to be unpredictable and untameable.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

Conclusion

Water, which is such an integral part of life, moulds and adapts its shape to the constraints around it. It is associated with youth and beauty, pleasure and religious rituals, yet it can also be destructive in the form of floods and tsunamis. Just as water comes in many forms, so too do the portrayals of *Wasserfrauen* in ancient, old and modern myths, *Kunst-* and *Volksmärchen*, poems, visual works of art and musical pieces. In Romantic literature, *Wasserfrauen* figures simultaneously embody male desires and fears and where there is fear, violence follows shortly after.¹⁸⁶ These female figures are often oppressed, marginalised and ostracised by men.¹⁸⁷ Despite this, a contradiction arises in the male-dominated tales of *Wasserfrauen* and it is the man who is constructed as a 'victim' of the murderous sexuality of the woman, rather than the supposed dominating oppressor.¹⁸⁸

This essay has looked at two very different types of *Wasserfrauen*:

Lorelei is a figure who is synonymous with incredible seductive abilities, eroticism, feminine power and supernatural qualities. In male poetic renderings, she creates a threatening picture of 'femininity' and her tale is considered *Naturpoesie* despite its construction during the Romantic mythicising of the Rhine – a river that in the wake of Romantic tales has become considered 'as much the lifeblood of Germany as the Nile is to Egypt'.¹⁸⁹

Mörrike's **Lau** is a friendly female figure who is dependent upon others. She has been desexualised, banished from her home and paints a suffering picture of humanity. She has no power over men but can still

¹⁸⁶ "Body, Female", in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. by Friederike Ursula Eigler and Susanne Kord (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997), pp. 54-55 (p. 54).

¹⁸⁷ Anna Maria Stuby, *Liebe, Tod und Wasserfrau: Mythen des Weiblichen in der Literatur* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), p. 11.

¹⁸⁸ Inge Stephan, 'Weiblichkeit, Wasser und Tod', in *Weiblichkeit und Tod in der Literatur*, ed. by Renate Berger and Inge Stephan (Köln; Wien: Böhlau, 1987), pp. 117-139 (p. 139).

¹⁸⁹ Bernard Dieterle, as cited in Aurora Belle Romero, *Heute hat ein Gedicht mich wieder erschaffen: Origins of Poetic Identity in Rose Ausländer* (published doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 2016), p. 106; Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 2004) <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/waikato/docDetail.action?docID=10328794>> [accessed 12 September 2016], p. 9.

control the elements. In subversive dream sequences, however, Lau stands for an ironic reconciliation of the dichotomy of the natural and the spiritual realm in male-dominated Western philosophical discourses. She is a lesser known water nymph and presents an entirely different perspective on what it means to be a *Wasserfrau*.

Together the portrayals of the Lorelei and Lau figures highlight a very important friction in male-dominated Western culture, particularly in terms of 'opposing forces', be they gender, position in society, religious views or the dichotomy of nature and culture.

Further research developments upon these comparisons could include the analysis of musical compositions of Lorelei's tale to see how these pieces incorporate the musical aspects already present – aural beauty, seductive song and melody of rhythm. The analysis of Lau could be extended to encompass the local myths associated with *Blautopf*.

Just as Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* can be regarded as an attempt to rid himself of the need for suicide, so too may these Lorelei figures have been created in order for their authors to express and rid themselves of fears they had regarding women, wealth, religious doubt, religious persecution or deeper feelings of a fear of losing their masculinity or identity. I'd like to finish with the final two lines of Goethe's 1779 ballad *Der Fischer* which befittingly sum up the typical *Wasserfrau*:

'Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin,
Und ward nicht mehr gesehn.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Der Fischer', in *Goethes Schriften. Achter Band* (Leipzig: G. J. Göschen, 1789) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/johann-wolfgang-goethe-gedichte-3670/232>> [accessed 10 December 2016], Para. 4.

Appendices

Appendix 1 : *Zu Bacharach am Rheine*, by Clemens Brentano.¹⁹¹

Appendix 2 : *Waldgespräch*, by Joseph von Eichendorff.¹⁹²

Appendix 3 : *Die Lorelei*, by Heinrich Heine.¹⁹³

Appendix 4 : *Lyrisches Intermezzo XI*, by Heinrich Heine.¹⁹⁴

Appendix 5 : *Madonna of the Rose Bower*, by Stefan Lochner.¹⁹⁵

Appendix 6 : *Lurelei*, by Carl Begas.¹⁹⁶

Appendix 7 : *Loreley*, by Emil Krupa-Krupinski.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹¹ Clemens Brentano, 'Loreley', *Der Ewige Brunnen* ([n.p]: projekt.gutenberg.de, [n.d.]) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/clemens-brentano-gedichte-360/116>> [accessed 10 December 2016].

¹⁹² Joseph von Eichendorff, 'Waldgespräch', *Deutsche Balladen* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1995) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/joseph-von-eichendorff-gedichte-4294/221>> [accessed 10 December 2016].

¹⁹³ Heinrich Heine, 'Die Lorelei', *Reihe Hanser Werkausgabe. Heinrich Heine. Sämtliche Schriften in zwölf Bänden. Band 1: 1817-1840*, ed. by Klaus Briegleb (Munich; Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1976) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/heinrich-heine-gedichte-389/438>> [accessed 10 December 2016].

¹⁹⁴ Heinrich Heine, *Buch der Lieder* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1975) <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/buch-der-lieder-6673/7>> [accessed 10 December 2016], Poem XI.

¹⁹⁵ Stefan Lochner, *Madonna of the Rose Bower*, [Oil on wood]. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne. (c. 1440-1442). <<http://www.wallraf.museum/en/collections/middle-ages/masterpieces/stefan-lochner-madonna-of-the-rose-bower/the-highlight/>> [accessed 10 December 2016].

¹⁹⁶ Carl Joseph Begas, *Lurelei*, [Oil on canvas]. Begas Haus, Museum für Kunst und Regionalgeschichte Heinsberg. (1835). <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carl_joseph_begas_lurelei.jpg> [accessed 10 December 2016].

¹⁹⁷ Emil Krupa-Krupinski, *Loreley*, [Oil on canvas]. [n.p]. (1899). <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emil_Krupa-Krupinski_Loreley_1899.jpg> [accessed 10 December 2016].

Zu Bacharach am Rheine
wohnt' eine Zauberin,
die war so schön und feine
und riß viel Herzen hin.
Und machte viel zuschanden
der Männer rings umher,
aus ihren Liebesbanden
war keine Rettung mehr!
Der Bischof ließ sie laden
vor geistliche Gewalt
und mußte sie begnaden,
so schön war ihr' Gestalt.
Er sprach zu ihr gerühret:
"Du arme Lore Lay !
Wer hat dich denn verführet
zu böser Zauberei ?"
"Herr Bischof, laßt mich sterben,
ich bin des Lebens müd,
weil jeder muß verderben,
der meine Augen sieht'
Die Augen sind zwei Flammen,
mein Arm ein Zauberstab –
schickt mich in die Flammen,
o brechet mir den Stab!"
Ich kann dich nicht verdammen,
bis du mir erst bekennt,
warum in deinen Flammen
mein eignes Herz schon brennt!
Den Stab kann ich nicht brechen,
du schöne Lore Lay!
Ich müßte denn zerbrechen
mein eigen Herz entzwei!
"Herr Bischof, mit mir Armen
treibt nicht so bösen Spott
und bittet um Erbarmen
für mich den lieben Gott?
Ich darf nicht länger leben,
ich liebe keinen mehr, –
den Tod sollt Ihr mir geben,
drum kam ich zu Euch her!

Mein Schatz hat mich betrogen,
hat sich von mir gewandt,
ist fort von mir gezogen,
fort in ein fremdes Land.
Die Augen sanft und wilde,
die Wangen rot und weiß,
die Worte still und milde,
das ist mein Zauberkreis.
Ich selbst muß drin verderben,
das Herz tut mir so weh,
vor Schmerzen möcht' ich
sterben,
wenn ich mein Bildnis seh´.
Drum laß mein Recht mich finden,
mich sterben wie ein Christ,
denn alles muß verschwinden,
weil es nicht bei mir ist!"
Drei Ritter läßt er holen:
"Bringt sie ins Kloster hin!
Geh, Lore! Gott befohlen
sei dein berückter Sinn!
Du sollst ein Nönnchen werden,
ein Nönnchen schwarz und weiß,
bereite dich auf Erden
zu deines Todes Reis' !"
Zum Kloster sie nun ritten,
die Ritter alle drei
und traurig in der Mitten
die schöne Lore Lay.
"O Ritter, laßt mich gehen
auf diesen Felsen groß,
ich will noch einmal sehen
nach meines Lieben Schloß.
Ich will noch einmal sehen
wohl in den tiefen Rhein
und dann ins Kloster gehen
und Gottes Jungfrau sein!"
Der Felsen ist so jäh,
so steil ist seine Wand,

doch klimmt sie in die Höhe,
bis daß sie oben stand.

Es binden die drei Reiter
die Rosse unten an
und klettern immer weiter
zum Felsen auch hinan.

Die Jungfrau sprach: "Da gehet
ein Schifflin auf dem Rhein,
der in dem Schifflin stehet,
der soll mein Liebster sein !

Mein Herz wird mir so munter,
er muß mein Liebster sein !"
Da lehnt sie sich hinunter
und stürzt in den Rhein.

Die Ritter mußten sterben,
sie konnten nicht hinab;
sie mußten all´ verderben,
ohn´ Priester und ohn´ Grab!

Wer hat dies Lied gesungen?
Ein Schiffer auf dem Rhein,
und immer hat´s geklungen
von dem Dreirittstein:

Lore Lay!

Lore Lay!

Lore Lay!

Als wären es meiner drei!

Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt,
Was reitest du einsam durch den Wald?
Der Wald ist lang, du bist allein,
Du schöne Braut! Ich führ dich heim!

»Groß ist der Männer Trug und List,
Vor Schmerz mein Herz gebrochen ist,
Wohl irrt das Waldhorn her und hin,
O flieh! Du weißt nicht, wer ich bin.«

So reich geschmückt ist Roß und Weib,
So wunderschön der junge Leib,
Jetzt kenn ich dich – Gott steh mir bei!
Du bist die Hexe Loreley.¹⁹⁸

»Du kennst mich wohl – von hohem Stein
Schaut still mein Schloß tief in den Rhein.
Es ist schon spät, es wird schon kalt,
Kommst nimmermehr aus diesem Wald!«

¹⁹⁸ The 1995 print uses the spelling 'Lorelei', but in order to avoid confusion this report uses 'Lorelei' to refer to generic figures and 'Loreley' to refer to a specific author's figure.

Ich weiß nicht was soll es bedeuten,
Daß ich so traurig bin;
Ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten,
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.

Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,
Und ruhig fließt der Rhein;
Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt
Im Abendsonnenschein.

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
Dort oben wunderbar;
Ihr goldnes Geschmeide blitzet,
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar.

Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme
Und singt ein Lied dabei;
Das hat eine wundersame,
Gewaltige Melodei.

Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe
Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;
Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh.

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn;
Und das hat mir ihrem Singen
Die Loreley getan.

Im Rhein, im schönen Strome,
Da spiegelt sich in den Welln,
Mit seinem großen Dome,
Das große, heilige Köln.

Im Dom da steht ein Bildnis,
Auf goldenem Leder gemalt;
In meines Lebens Wildnis
Hats freundlich hineingestrahlt.

Es schweben Blumen und Englein
Um unsre liebe Frau;
Die Augen, die Lippen, die Wänglein,
Die gleichen der Liebsten genau.







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